

THIS IS EVERYTHING I KNOW ABOUT MY ATTACKER IN ONE MEDIUM-SIZED SENTENCE:

AZURE IS AN ILLUSION-CASTER WHO WAS NAMED FOR THE COLOR OF HER EYES.

BUT IF I HAVE TO BE HONEST, HER EYES WERE NOT THE FIRST THING I NOTICED.

# A LOOK OF FEAR

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AZAR!

AZURE, DO YOU UNDERSTAND ENGLISH? CAN YOU SPEAK?



"CAN YOU SPEAK?" WHAT AM I THINKING? NO MOUTH.

MY HEART IS BEATING. I PAUSE TO TAKE A LONG, DEEP BREATH...



...AND REMIND MYSELF THERE IS NO REASON TO BE AFRAID OF A FACELESS GIRL.

I HAVE SEEN MUCH WORSE.

I HAVE FOUGHT MUCH WORSE.



I WAS BORN TO MUCH WORSE.

AZURE, I AM NOT YOUR ENEMY. THERE IS NO REASON FOR US TO--



AZAR!

I DREW YOU FROM THE DARKNESS.

I NOW RETURN YOU TO IT.

THIS CANNOT BE REAL. IT HAS TO BE ANOTHER ILLUSION. AND IF IT IS AN ILLUSION, IT CANNOT HURT ME.



AZURE! GET OUT OF MY HEAD!



STAY OUT OF MY--

GONE...



I SHOULD SEARCH FOR HER...

... BUT I AM DRAINED...



...AND NOT NEARLY READY FOR YET ANOTHER BATTLE.





HER FACE IS STRANGE, AND DISTURBING.

I SHOULD BE BETTER THAN TO RESPOND TO SOMETHING DIFFERENT WITH FEAR.



BUT I DID. WHAT DOES THAT SAY ABOUT ME?

WAS SHE BORN THAT WAY?



NO. THAT IS NOT IMPORTANT.

WHAT I NEED TO KNOW IS, WHOSE SIDE IS SHE ON? DO I FIGHT HER, HER PURSUERS, OR...



BUT... HOW DOES SHE BREATHE? HOW DOES SHE EAT?

STOP. THAT IS NOT IMPORTANT. WHAT SHE LOOKS LIKE IS IRRELEVANT.



SHE CREATED A TRIGON ILLUSION. HOW DOES SHE KNOW ABOUT HIM?

DID SHE READ MY THOUGHTS, OR, AZAR HELP US ALL...



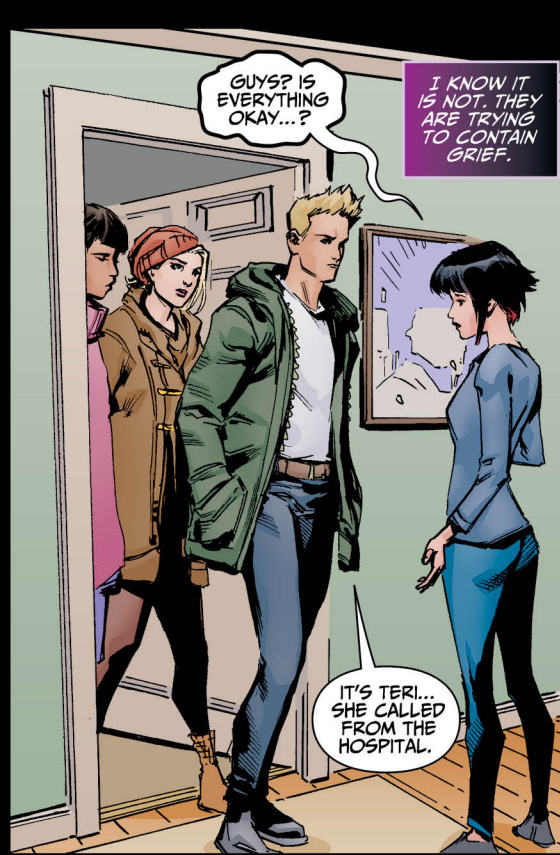
...DOES SHE BELONG TO HIM?



**DING**

DOORBELL.

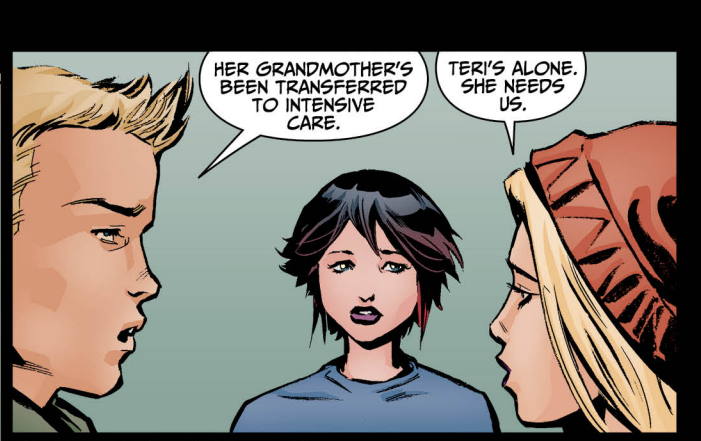
DISTRACTION. THANK AZAR. RIGHT NOW I NEED A GOOD DISTRACTION.



GUYS? IS EVERYTHING OKAY...?

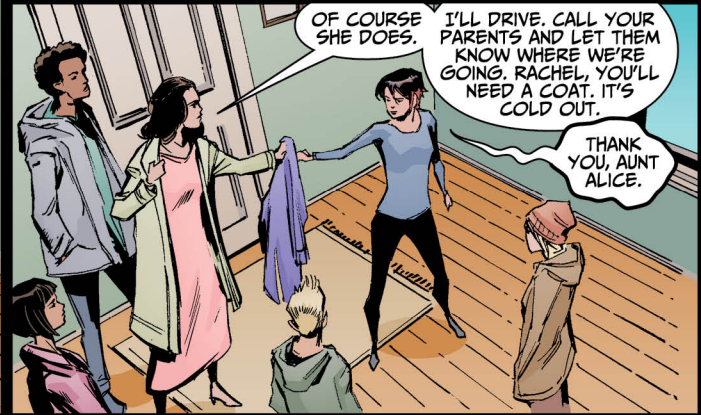
I KNOW IT IS NOT. THEY ARE TRYING TO CONTAIN GRIEF.

IT'S TERI... SHE CALLED FROM THE HOSPITAL.



HER GRANDMOTHER'S BEEN TRANSFERRED TO INTENSIVE CARE.

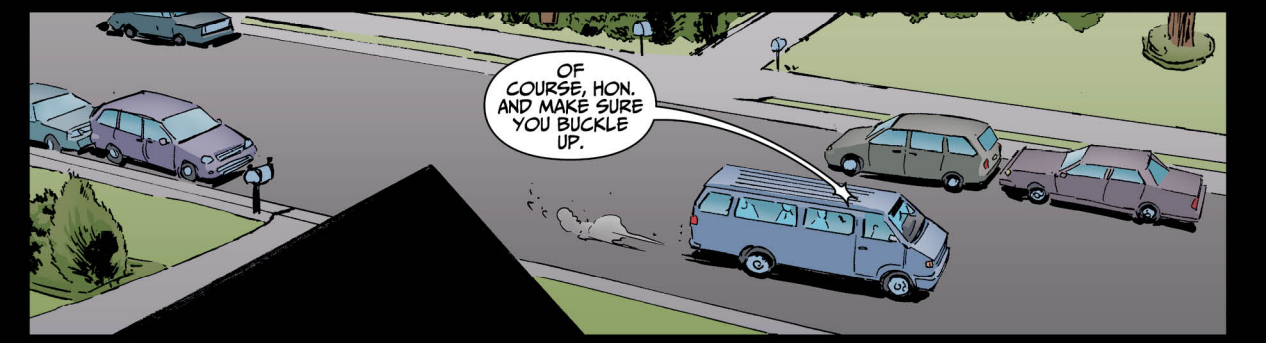
TERI'S ALONE. SHE NEEDS US.



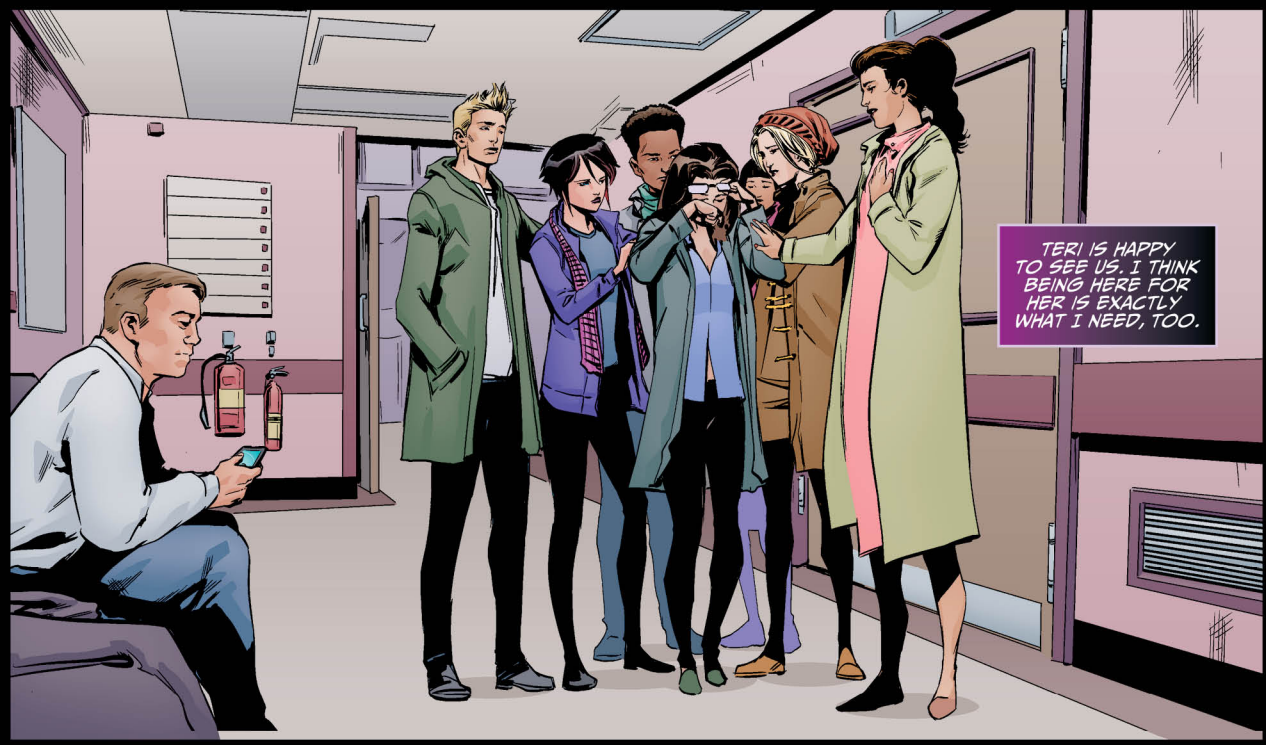
OF COURSE SHE DOES.

I'LL DRIVE. CALL YOUR PARENTS AND LET THEM KNOW WHERE WE'RE GOING. RACHEL, YOU'LL NEED A COAT. IT'S COLD OUT.

THANK YOU, AUNT ALICE.



OF COURSE, HON. AND MAKE SURE YOU BUCKLE UP.



TERI IS HAPPY TO SEE US. I THINK BEING HERE FOR HER IS EXACTLY WHAT I NEED, TOO.