

ESPECIALLY THE
MOMENTS I WAS
WITH HIM.

WITH BELATUCADROS.

IF YOU'RE
TRYING TO
SHOCK ME,
IT WON'T
WORK.

NOT AT
ALL--

--I'M
DEMONSTRATING
THE **DEPTHS**
TO WHICH THORN
WILL SINK.

THE **PAIN**
HE WILL GLADLY
CAUSE...

ALABAMA KISS CONCLUSION: DRAIN YOU

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red thorn is created
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...TO GET
THAT WHICH HE
DESIRES.



YEAH--I ALREADY FIGURED HE WAS NO ANGEL. BUT WHAT **YOU** DID TO **HIM**?

ALL THOSE YEARS AGO...

I DRAINED THORN OF HIS POWER.

STRIPPED THE MEAT FROM HIS BONES, AND BURIED HIM.

WHY?



BECAUSE I **DESPISE** THORN AND EVERY **THOUGHT** HE HAS EVER CONCEIVED.

AND THE WORLD I WANTED TO **CREATE** COULD NOT COME TO BE... AS LONG AS HE STILL WALKED THE EARTH.



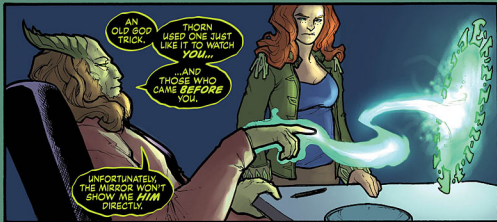
IT DIDN'T REALLY MATTER WHAT HE SAID...



...I'D PRETTY MUCH ALREADY DECIDED THEY WERE **BOTH** BAD NEWS.



WHAT IS THIS THING ANYWAY?



AN OLD GOD TRICK.

THORN USED ONE JUST LIKE IT TO WATCH **YOU**...

...AND THOSE WHO CAME **BEFORE** YOU.

UNFORTUNATELY, THE MIRROR WON'T SHOW ME **HIM** DIRECTLY.



BUT IT *HAS* ALLOWED ME TO SEE WHAT THORN HAS BEEN *DOING* TO YOU.



YOUR HIP FLASK... MAY I?



THE... RED CAP WINE?

YES, ADDICTIVE, WOULDN'T YOU SAY? DESPITE THE TERRIBLE *TASTE*...



THERE'S A REASON FOR THAT. HE'S BEEN *ADDING* SOMETHING *SPECIAL* BEFORE LEAVING IT BY YOUR DOOR.

SOMETHING TO BUILD YOU UP. TO MAKE YOU AN OBEIDENT, STRONG *SOLDIER*.



SEE IT SWIRL IN THERE?

GODBLOOD.

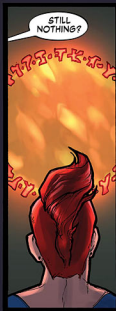


BLOOD?!

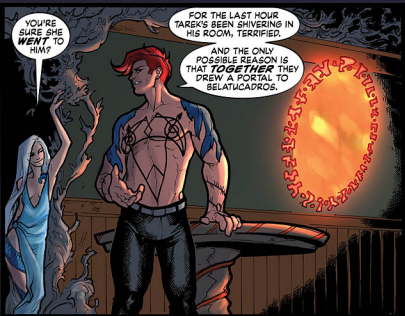
WHOSE?



YOUR *SISTER'S*, OF COURSE.



STILL NOTHING?



YOU'RE SURE SHE WENT TO HIM?

FOR THE LAST HOUR TAREK'S BEEN SHIVERING IN HIS ROOM, TERRIFIED.

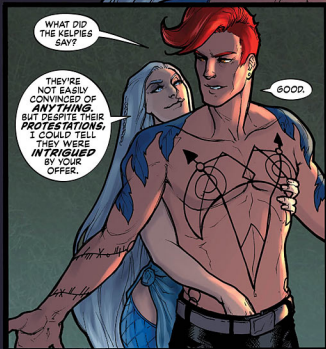
AND THE ONLY POSSIBLE REASON IS THAT **TOGETHER** THEY DREW A PORTAL TO BELATUCADROS.



HEH. YOUR PRETTY LITTLE TROJAN HORSE IS ALMOST AS HEADSTRONG AS YOU...

BUT AS LONG AS SHE'S WITH **HIM** I CANNOT SEE HER.

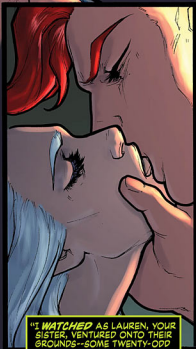
NOT UNTIL THEY PART COMPANY...



WHAT DID THE KELPIES SAY?

THEY'RE NOT EASILY CONVINCED OF **ANYTHING**. BUT DESPITE THEIR **PROTESTATIONS**, I COULD TELL THEY WERE **INTRIGUED** BY YOUR OFFER.

GOOD.



"I **WATCHED** AS LAUREN, YOUR SISTER, VENTURED ONTO THEIR GROUNDS--SOME TWENTY-ODD YEARS AGO..."

OF COURSE, THE RED CAPS HAVE KILLED **THOUSANDS.**

ANYONE WHO **TRESPASSES** ON RED CAP LAND, AS PER ANCIENT ACCORDANCES...LOSES THEIR RIGHT TO OWNERSHIP OF THEIR OWN **BLOOD.**

YOU'VE SEEN THEIR **BLEEDING POOL,** I IMAGINE?

...LAUREN.

I... YES.

BUT THAT'S ALL **HUMAN BLOOD.**

ON THE **RARE** OCCASION THEY STUMBLE UPON ONE OF YOUR KIND--A **TRUE** DESCENDANT OF THE OLD PAGAN GODS...

...THEY HAVE A **SPECIAL PLACE** FOR THE STUFF THEY WRING OUT. AN INTRICATELY CARVED **EWER.**

"THEIR LEADER, STANASH, DYED HIS HAT WITH YOUR **SISTER'S BLOOD.**

"IT MADE HIM ALMOST **INVULNERABLE.** THAT'S THE REASON THORN NEEDED YOU TO PULL YOUR LITTLE **STUNT.**

"STANASH DIDN'T HAVE MUCH LEFT--HE WAS DOWN TO THE LAST OF LAUREN'S NINE PINTS.

"NOW STANASH IS DEAD, AND SINCE YOUR DRAWING **REWROTE** THE HISTORY OF THIS WORLD, HE **HAS BEEN DEAD** FOR FIVE HUNDRED YEARS.

"BECAUSE OF YOU..."

"...THE RED CAPS' EWER OF GOD-BLOOD IS FULL AGAIN!

"AND IT ALL BELONGS TO THORN."

