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ISSUE
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RYALL
GAGE
MESSINA

REVOLUTION STARTS HERE

ROM



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Far, far away, in another galaxy, the knights of the Solstar Order, defenders of justice and truth, have been ambushed by the evil magicians, the Dire Wraiths. The Solstar Order has prevailed and is now seeking out their scattered enemies.

One of these knights has followed the trail of the Dire Wraiths all the way to Earth. This one, the Dire Wraiths fear more than all others. This one has hounded them and kept them underground for centuries. This one alone could wipe them off the face of creation.

*He is ROM,
Lord of the Solstar Order.
Rom, the Wraithslayer.*

ROM

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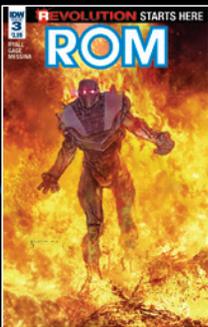
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Dedicated to Bill Mantlo and Sal Buscema

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THE BINDING SPELL HOLDING ME IS POWERFUL, BUT NOT LETHAL. AGAIN I FIND THE WRAITHS' ACTIONS ON THIS PLANET UNCHARACTERISTIC... AND MYSTIFYING.

FOR TWO CENTURIES HAVE THEY WANTED ME DEAD... YET, WITH ME ENSNARED, THEIR SORCERER DELAYS THE KILLING STROKE.

IT WILL BE MY PLEASURE TO SHOW HIM HIS ERROR.

THE MIIIIIGHTY ROM. FEARED BY MY PEOPLE. MURDERER OF MY PEOPLE. NOT SO MENACING NOW, ARE YOU?

I AM D'RGE. PERHAPS YOU'VE ALSO HEARD OF ME? BUT NO, YOUR KIND SEE US AS INTERCHANGEABLE CANNON FODDER. DON'T YOU?

WERE OUR POSITIONS REVERSED, YOU WOULD SLAY ME IMMEDIATELY. I AM NOT SO BLOODTHIRSTY... OR SO STUPID. I SEEK INFORMATION.

SPACE KNIGHTS TRAVEL IN PAIRS. YET YOU WALK ALONE. WHY? IF ONE IS KILLED, YOUR ORDER REQUIRES A REPLACEMENT. THE RISK TO A LONE KNIGHT IS DEEMED TOO HIGH.

BUT PERHAPS THAT'S IT. COUNTLESS YEARS OF SOLITUDE IN THE VOID... PUNCTUATED BY WAR WHOSE HORRORS CAN SCAR THE STOUTEST MINDS...

...ARE YOU MAD, ROM, SPACE KNIGHT?



YOUR HOLINESS, WE MUST KILL HIM NOW. WE CAN'T RISK—

WE CANNOT RISK FAILURE, ISN'T THAT WHAT YOU MEANT, WORM?

AND THE GOAL OF ANY ENCOUNTER WITH A SPACE KNIGHT...



...IS TO MAKE THEIR POWER OUR OWN.



WE HAVE SLAIN KNIGHTS. WE KNOW THEIR ARMOR DIES WITH THEM. PERHAPS THAT CAN BE PREVENTED...



...IF I STRIP IT FROM HIS LIVING FLESH.

NNNS...



GODS OF ELONIA, HELP ME... I CANNOT ALLOW THIS. AND YET THE WRAITH'S ELDRITCH ENERGY TEARS AT ME, BODY AND SOUL...

D'RGE WAS RIGHT. MY SOLITUDE WILL BE MY UNDOING. FOR IN MY HOUR OF NEED, THERE IS NO ONE TO HELP—



LEAVE HIM ALONE, YOU MONSTER!



"MONSTER?" THEN WHAT ARE YOU, CHILD? AND WHY DID I FEEL YOUR RAGE ECHO IN MY MIND?

LET ME SEE WHAT LURKS IN YOURS... CAMILLA BYERS.



S-STOP...

AHH, I SEE ALL NOW. YOU BLAME US FOR THE DEATH OF YOUR PARTNER. FOR THE... EVOLUTION OF YOUR FACE.



THE WRAITHMARK IS A SIGN OF BEAUTY, HUMAN. IT REPELS YOU NOW.



BUT SOON... YOU WILL SEE THINGS QUITE DIFFERENTLY.



I'LL FIGHT YOU. EVERYONE ON THIS PLANET WILL FIGHT YOU BEFORE WE LET YOU TAKE IT FROM US!

TAKE IT? MY DEAR, WE INTEND NO SUCH THING. WE ARE HERE TO SAVE IT.



I UNDERSTAND YOUR ANGER. YOUR PARTNER WAS A CASUALTY OF AN UNFORTUNATE WAR. ONE WE NEVER WANTED... A WAR FORCED UPON US.

BUT I SEE YOU DO NOT BELIEVE. HOW FORTUNATE FOR US BOTH THAT I CAN SHOW YOU WHAT WE TRULY ARE...



...AND WHAT YOU SOON WILL BE.

N-NO.



"DRIVEN FROM OUR HOME, WE FOUND OUR WAY HERE LONG AGO."

MY GOOD LORD!



THE D'VILS BE MADE OF FLESH NOW, JEDEDIAH!

AYE, THEY'VE COME FOR US—PENANCE FOR OUR SINS.



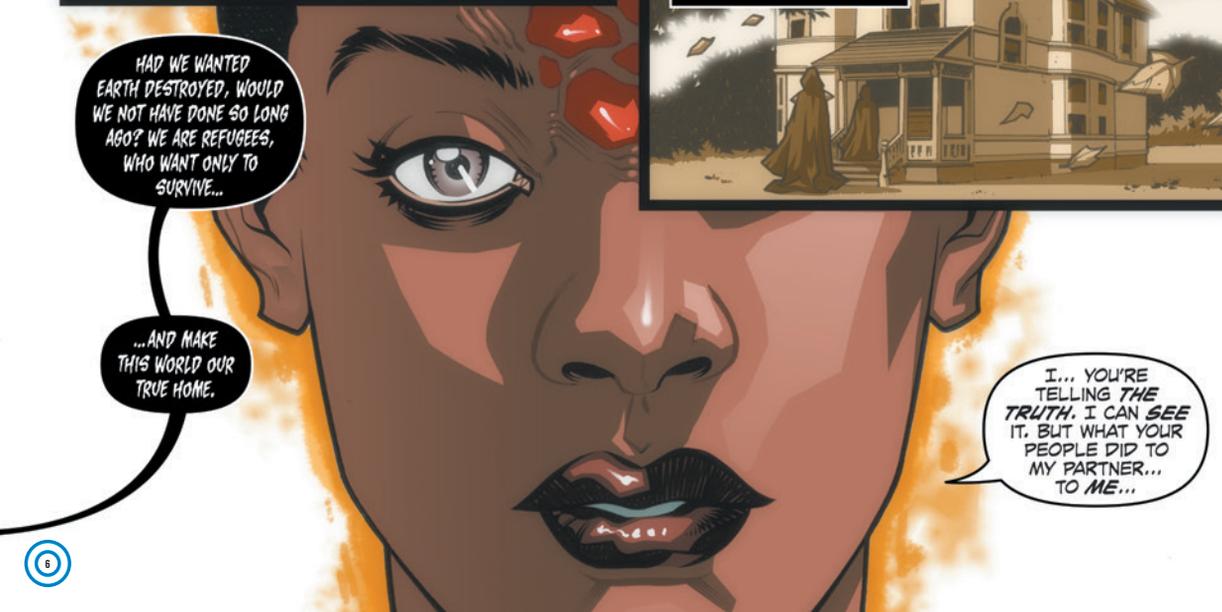
"BUT WE REFUSED TO REACT IN KIND."

TAKE THIS GIFT FROM US.



"SHELTER. COMMUNITY. LEGACY. THOSE WERE OUR SHARED GOALS."

"WE FOUND THOSE, AND MORE. WE LEARNED TO DISGUISE OURSELVES FROM EYES THAT REACT WITH PREJUDICE TO OUR PHYSICAL APPEARANCE."



HAD WE WANTED EARTH DESTROYED, WOULD WE NOT HAVE DONE SO LONG AGO? WE ARE REFUGEES, WHO WANT ONLY TO SURVIVE...

...AND MAKE THIS WORLD OUR TRUE HOME.

I... YOU'RE TELLING THE TRUTH. I CAN SEE IT. BUT WHAT YOUR PEOPLE DID TO MY PARTNER... TO ME...



COLLATERAL DAMAGE... THAT, IN YOUR CASE, I CAN REPAIR.

YOU... CAN FIX ME?

I CAN REMOVE THE TAINT INSIDE YOU, YES... IF YOU BUT OPEN YOURSELF TO ME.



THE TAINT HE SPEAKS OF IS HUMANITY. AS ALWAYS, WRAITHS LIE WITH THE TRUTH.



CLOSE YOUR EYES, CHILD.



BUT CAMILLA HAS PROVIDED THE DELAY I REQUIRED. SO THAT, EVEN FROZEN THUS, I CAN FOCUS... AND RE-CHANNEL MY NEUTRALIZER'S ENERGY...

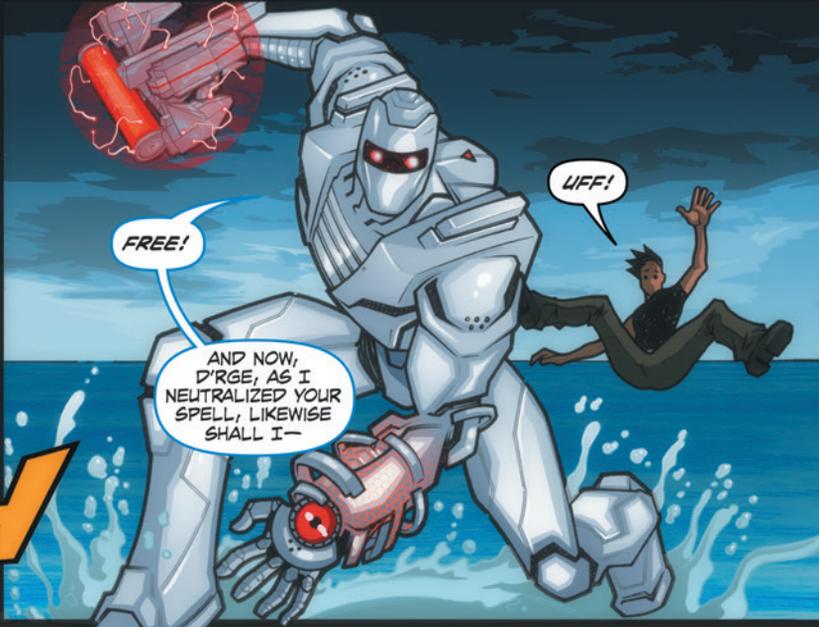
...INTO MY ANALYZERS. IRISES AT MAXIMUM...



...WIDE BEAM!

YEARGH!

VIAASHASH



FREE!

UFF!

AND NOW, D'RGE, AS I NEUTRALIZED YOUR SPELL, LIKEWISE SHALL I—