

NOT REALLY SURE HOW I GOT MYSELF INTO THIS.

LAST THING I REMEMBER, I WAS OPENING A WATERFALL ON SOME CREEPS AT SCHOOL (PROBABLY NOT MY MOST HEROIC MOMENT)--

--WHEN THESE STRANGERS SHOWED UP, STOPPED TIME AND CONVINCED ME TO RIFT TO A WORLD SO DIFFERENT...YET ODDLY FAMILIAR.

I SEE ERNIE BUT SHE DOESN'T SEE ME. WHAT AM I DOING HERE? WHY AM I DOING THIS?

HAVE TO KEEP IT TOGETHER AND REMEMBER, I'M HERE FOR THE GREATER GOOD.

BUT WHOSE GREATER GOOD?

DON'T WORRY ABOUT YOUR FRIEND-- SHE'LL BE FINE.

SIDEWAYS, IT'S BEST WE GET GOING.

THE SEVENTH SOLDIER

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THE LESS TIME WE SPEND HERE, THE BETTER.

SOMETHING WE AGREE ON, ZATANNA...



...AND I GOT YOU HERE AS PROMISED.

HOW SO? WEREN'T YOU SUPPOSED TO DELIVER US TO THE SITE OF OUR MISSING COMRADE--THE MANHATTAN GUARDIAN?! HE'S NOWHERE TO BE SEEN.

YOU'RE RIGHT. THAT'S HOW MY POWERS WORK, BUT NOT EXACTLY HOW THEY WORK.

OKAY, LET'S TRY IT THIS WAY--ANY IDEA WHERE WE ARE?

WHEN I RIFT, LOCATIONS GET DISTORTED, THE GREATER THE DISTANCE, THE GREATER THE DISTORTION.

SO...YOU HAVE NO IDEA.



NOT A CLUE.



ONE THING'S FOR SURE. THIS IS CLEARLY THE NETHER REALM KNOWN AS THE DARK MULTIVERSE.

LISTEN, RIFTING DIMENSIONS IS NEW FOR ME.



BUT ONE MORE RIFT AND WE SHOULD FIND YOUR MISSING FRI--

--WHAT THE...?

I CAN'T BE STUCK HERE.



"HOW CAN I GET BACK HOME?"

WITH A SIMPLE WORD, ZATANNA FROZE TIME AROUND DEREK'S SCHOOL.

AND AS IF SOME UNSEEN TIMER RUNG...



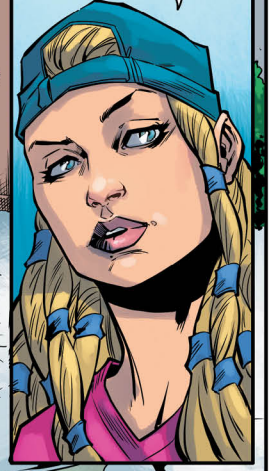
...THE WORLD STARTED UP AGAIN.

I'M WET. WHY AM I WET?

DID WE MISS A RAINSTORM OR SOMETHING?

--ER FOR YOU. HUH?

DEREK. WHAT HAVE YOU DONE NOW?





YOU SURE THIS IS THE RIGHT DIRECTION?

THE DARK MULTIVERSE IS AN EVER SHIFTING LANDSCAPE OF CREATION AND UNCREATION, MADE OF WORLDS STILLBORN OR SOON TO BE ABORTED. THEIR EXISTENCE IS FLEETING.

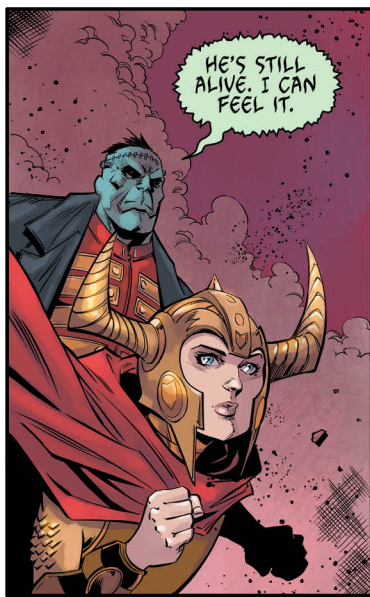


THIS MUST BE THE RIGHT DIRECTION, SINCE THERE IS NO WORLD BEHIND US.

MAYBE WE SHOULD WALK A LITTLE FASTER.

HE'S RIGHT. A QUICKER PACE IS NEEDED. EVERY SECOND PUTS OUR COMRADE AT GREATER RISK.

THAT'S IF HE'S STILL ALIVE, SHINING KNIGHT.



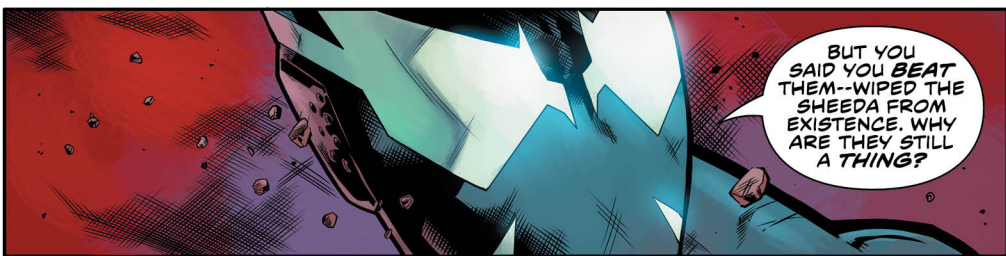
HE'S STILL ALIVE. I CAN FEEL IT.



IF THE GUARDIAN SURVIVES, SO DO THE SHEEDA.



OF COURSE THEY LIVE, MISTER MIRACLE. THEY ARE THE FINAL STEP IN HUMANKIND'S EVOLUTION. ALL THEY KNOW IS HOW TO SURVIVE AND SLAUGHTER.



BUT YOU SAID YOU BEAT THEM--WIPED THE SHEEDA FROM EXISTENCE. WHY ARE THEY STILL A THING?

BECAUSE, DEAR DEREK, EVENTS WERE SET IN MOTION MONTHS AGO, AND WE ARE ONLY FEELING THEIR TRUE REPERCUSSIONS NOW.

"THE DARK MULTIVERSE WAS DISCOVERED BY A TEAM KNOWN AS THE CHALLENGERS. LIKENING IT TO THE OPPOSING SIDE OF THE MULTIVERSE, THEY SET OUT TO EXPLORE THE LINKDOWN."

"INSTEAD OF DISCOVERING NEW WORLDS, SOME FORGOTTEN WORLDS FOUND US. DARKENED VERSIONS OF OUR GREATEST HEROES BROUGHT OUR VERY EXISTENCE TO THE BRINK OF DESTRUCTION."

"EVEN WORSE, SOMEHOW, THE SHEEDA FOUND A WAY BACK INTO OUR WORLD."

"THE MANHATTAN GUARDIAN WENT INTO GOTHAM WHEN CHALLENGERS MOUNTAIN REAPPEARED."



THAT'S WHEN HE WAS LOST.

GOTHAM? MOUNTAIN? I WAS THERE WHEN IT HAPPENED...

IF THAT'S TRULY THE CASE, PERHAPS OUR MEETING MIGHT BE MORE THAN CIRCUMSTANCE.

