

In Cairo, they had called me an adventurer. In Athens they called me a philosopher.



But at my small museum in the quiet American city of St. Roch in the first decades of the twentieth century, I was an archaeologist.



The job itself never changed. The human story is a mystery told by a billion unreliable narrators, and for the duration of our species I have been nothing more than a detective.

THE EGYPTIAN WING

The Jewels of Nabu
Kandhaqi Artifacts



THE TOMB OF CHAY-ARA



The mission was always the same. To carry forward the torch of discovery and reveal the secrets hiding in the darkest shadows.



The truth buried deep beneath millennia of human memory.

We had found them over many lifetimes,
lurking out of sight in human history,
unchanging, all-seeing.

We had long heard rumors of the
Rhyiming Demon of Camelot. Brothers
who kept secrets and mysteries. The
man as old as America. The grove of
ancient humanoid plants. Of Sorcerers,
Shining Knights, Cavemen, and
Phantom Strangers of all stripes.

DARK DAYS

THE CASTING

SCOTT SNYDER & JAMES TYNION IV **writers**
JIM LEE, ANDY KUBERT & JOHN ROMITA JR. **pencils**
SCOTT WILLIAMS, KLAUS JANSON & DANNY MIKI **inks**
ALEX SINCLAIR & JEREMIAH SKIPPER **color**
STEVE WANDS **letters**
LEE, WILLIAMS & SINCLAIR **cover**
KUBERT & BRAD ANDERSON **variant cover**
JOHN ROMITA JR., MIKI & SINCLAIR **variant cover**
DAVE WIELGOSZ **assistant editor**
REBECCA TAYLOR **associate editor**
MARK BOYLE **editor**
BATMAN **created by** BOB KANE **with** BILL FINGER,
Wonder Woman **created by** WILLIAM MOULTON MARSTON



None had ever
thought to bring
them together.

The Immortals.



I told them what I now knew. That our lives did not begin in Egypt. That they began generations earlier...The dark priest Flath-Set, he had not cast us down this path of reincarnation.



He had taken our pasts away from us.



He had obscured the truth behind the metal we wore in our wings and belts in service of something darker than any mortal could comprehend.



A figure stepped from the back. His voice was like the low rumble of thunder.

He spoke of the metal that changed everything, and the terrible being that it had brought forth.



The being from beyond all our understanding.



AL GHUL... DO YOU SEE WHAT I SEE?

YES, MS. SEWARD. I DO.

The being that was cast out, and sought desperately to return.

To tear down all that was light in the world, and drag it into the dark.



And the truth would hit us like lightning.



METHANA, GREECE.

SKRRRRRRRRRRRR



KRAAK



ENOUGH, AMPHITRION.



THIS HUMAN FALLS UNDER THE PROTECTION OF THEMYSIRA.

I AM CERTAIN BATMAN WAS ABOUT TO POLITELY ASK FOR SAFE PASSAGE TO YOUR PATRON'S TEMPLE.

(I WAS GOING TO DO THAT NEXT.)



YOU SHOULD HAVE CALLED ME, BRUCE. THIS IS NOT A PART OF THE WORLD ANY MORTAL SHOULD WALK ALONE.



I PROMISE YOU, DIANA. I WOULDN'T BE HERE IF IT WEREN'T ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY. I'M SO DAMN CLOSE TO THE ANSWERS I NEED TO MAKE SENSE OF ALL I'VE SEEN...

I NEED SOMEONE WITH A GREATER PERSPECTIVE. SOMEONE WHO WAS THERE, WHEN THIS WAS ALL SET IN MOTION.

HOW DID YOU DISCOVER THE ENTRANCE TO THIS PLACE?



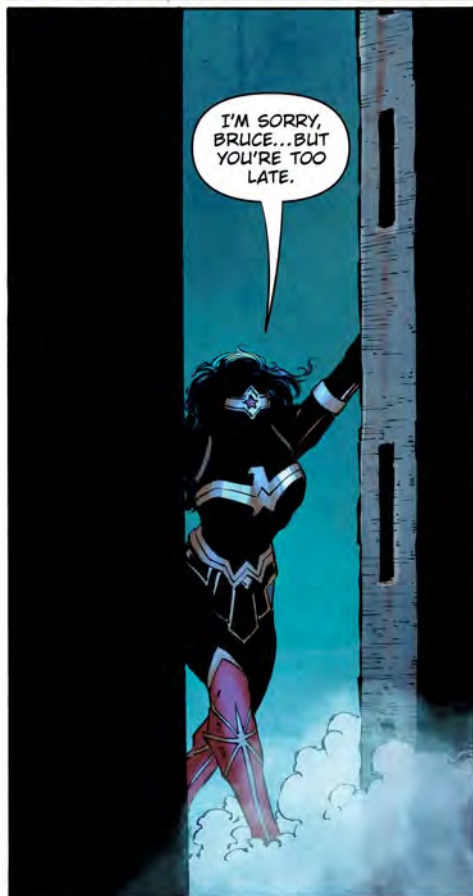
I FOUND A SCROLL FROM A DEATH CULT OF SMITH WORKERS BURIED IN THE ALPS, DATING BACK TO 200 A.D..

THEY DESCRIBED THE TREACHEROUS PATH TO THE GREAT FORGE OF HEPHAESTUS.

THEY WOULD THROW THEMSELVES IN THE FIRE WHEN THEY REACHED IT. THEY WOULD BECOME THE FUEL OF HIS CREATIONS THEMSELVES.

AND THAT'S WHAT YOU WISH, BRUCE? MAKE YOURSELF A SACRIFICE TO THE GODS? THERE ARE EASIER WAYS.

DIANA... I NEED TO SPEAK WITH HIM.

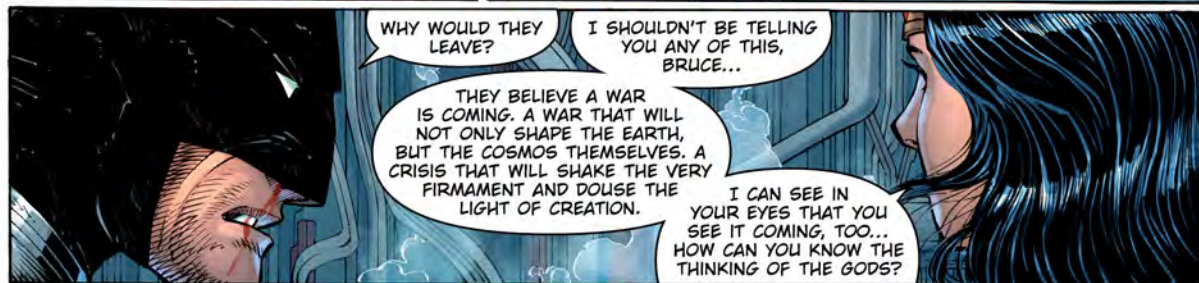


I'M SORRY, BRUCE... BUT YOU'RE TOO LATE.



THE GODS HAVE ABANDONED EARTH.

THEY HAVE BARRED THE GATES OF OLYMPUS BEHIND THEM.

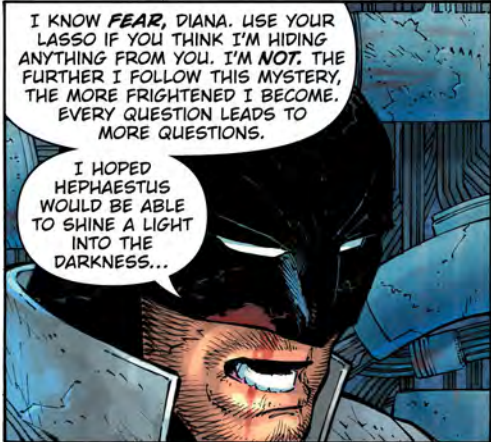


WHY WOULD THEY LEAVE?

I SHOULDN'T BE TELLING YOU ANY OF THIS, BRUCE...

THEY BELIEVE A WAR IS COMING. A WAR THAT WILL NOT ONLY SHAPE THE EARTH, BUT THE COSMOS THEMSELVES. A CRISIS THAT WILL SHAKE THE VERY FIRMAMENT AND DOUSE THE LIGHT OF CREATION.

I CAN SEE IN YOUR EYES THAT YOU SEE IT COMING, TOO... HOW CAN YOU KNOW THE THINKING OF THE GODS?



I KNOW **FEAR**, DIANA. USE YOUR LASSO IF YOU THINK I'M HIDING ANYTHING FROM YOU. I'M **NOT**. THE FURTHER I FOLLOW THIS MYSTERY, THE MORE FRIGHTENED I BECOME. EVERY QUESTION LEADS TO MORE QUESTIONS.

I HOPED HEPHAESTUS WOULD BE ABLE TO SHINE A LIGHT INTO THE DARKNESS...



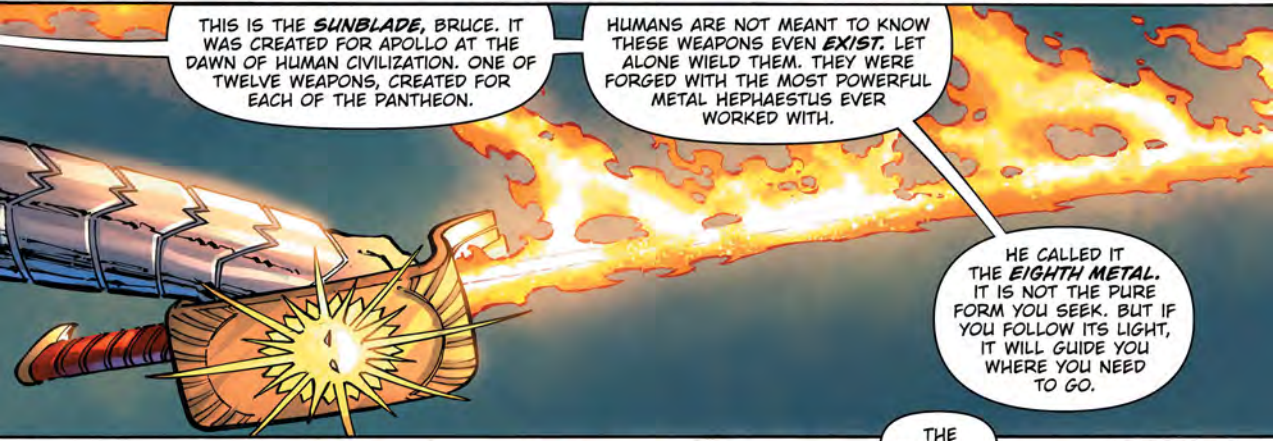
HE MAY STILL.

BEFORE I CAME TO YOU I HAD A VISION. THE GREAT HOUND, WAR-FORM OF HEPHAESTUS, SAT BEFORE ME WITH EYES OF FIRE AND TOLD ME I WOULD NEED TO COME HERE.

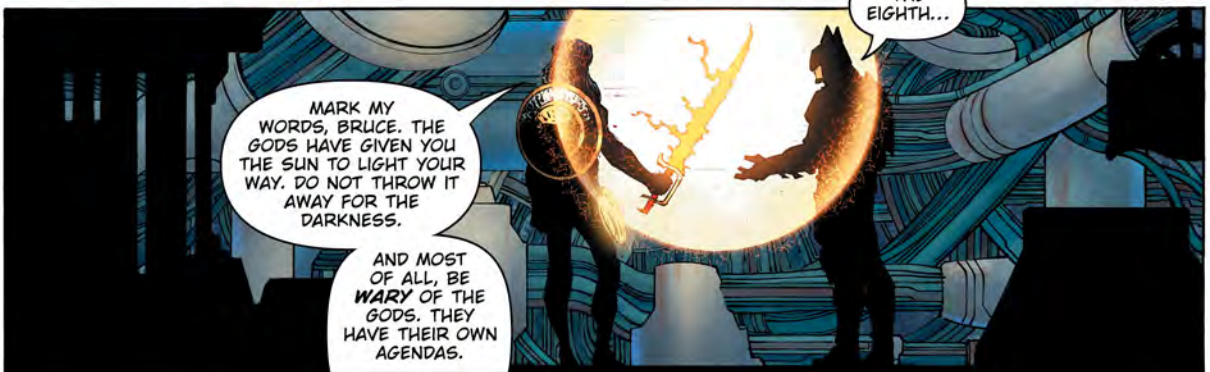
AND THAT I WOULD NEED TO GIVE YOU THIS.

THIS IS THE **SUNBLADE**, BRUCE. IT WAS CREATED FOR APOLLO AT THE DAWN OF HUMAN CIVILIZATION. ONE OF TWELVE WEAPONS, CREATED FOR EACH OF THE PANTHEON.

HUMANS ARE NOT MEANT TO KNOW THESE WEAPONS EVEN **EXIST**. LET ALONE WIELD THEM. THEY WERE FORGED WITH THE MOST POWERFUL METAL HEPHAESTUS EVER WORKED WITH.



HE CALLED IT THE **EIGHTH METAL**. IT IS NOT THE PURE FORM YOU SEEK. BUT IF YOU FOLLOW ITS LIGHT, IT WILL GUIDE YOU WHERE YOU NEED TO GO.



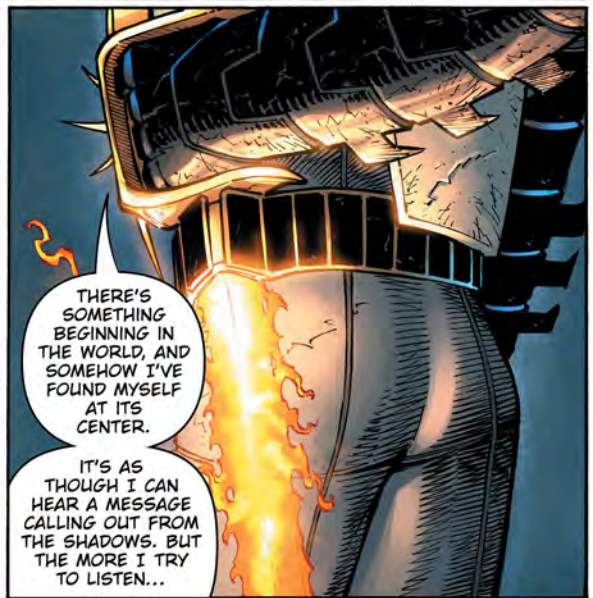
MARK MY WORDS, BRUCE. THE GODS HAVE GIVEN YOU THE SUN TO LIGHT YOUR WAY. DO NOT THROW IT AWAY FOR THE DARKNESS.

AND MOST OF ALL, BE **WARY** OF THE GODS. THEY HAVE THEIR OWN AGENDAS.

THE EIGHTH...



SO DO I.



THERE'S SOMETHING BEGINNING IN THE WORLD, AND SOMEHOW I'VE FOUND MYSELF AT ITS CENTER.

IT'S AS THOUGH I CAN HEAR A MESSAGE CALLING OUT FROM THE SHADOWS. BUT THE MORE I TRY TO LISTEN...