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It was a *bad* time.

And no matter what *any* of us did, it just seemed to get worse.

I'd added about twenty or thirty extra *rooms* to the house. But even so, my mom would still keep bumping into--my *mom*.

And the *temperature* would instantly drop to, like, zero Kelvin.

I think Aisa was doing it on purpose. Probing the wound, to see how much it *hurt*.

But there was more going on there, and I didn't see it. Total parentfail.

Diva was like a caged *animal*. She couldn't go out without getting herself *arrested*, and without her powers she was a sitting duck.

My dad(s) just *brooded*. Trying to come up with some way of squaring a circle that hadn't been *tried* before and turned out to be useless.

So if anyone was flying the flag for *normal*, it was me and Danny.

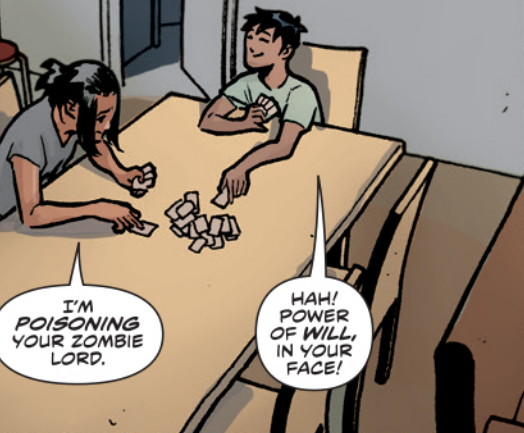
Mostly because there was some comfort in just *pretending*.

So it was kind of a *relief* when the doorbell rang.

Because it felt like *anything* had to be better than this.

I'M POISONING YOUR ZOMBIE LORD.

HAH! POWER OF WILL, IN YOUR FACE!



Which I guess just goes to *show*, doesn't it?

YES?

UH--I NEED TO SPEAK TO MR. WINTERS. IF HE'S HERE.

DOES HE KNOW YOU?

You never *ever* know when you've got it good.

YEAH, I'M *GUESSWORK*. OR JUST A FEELING, SOMETIMES.

WE CONQUERED PART OF MEXICO TOGETHER, SO HE PROBABLY...

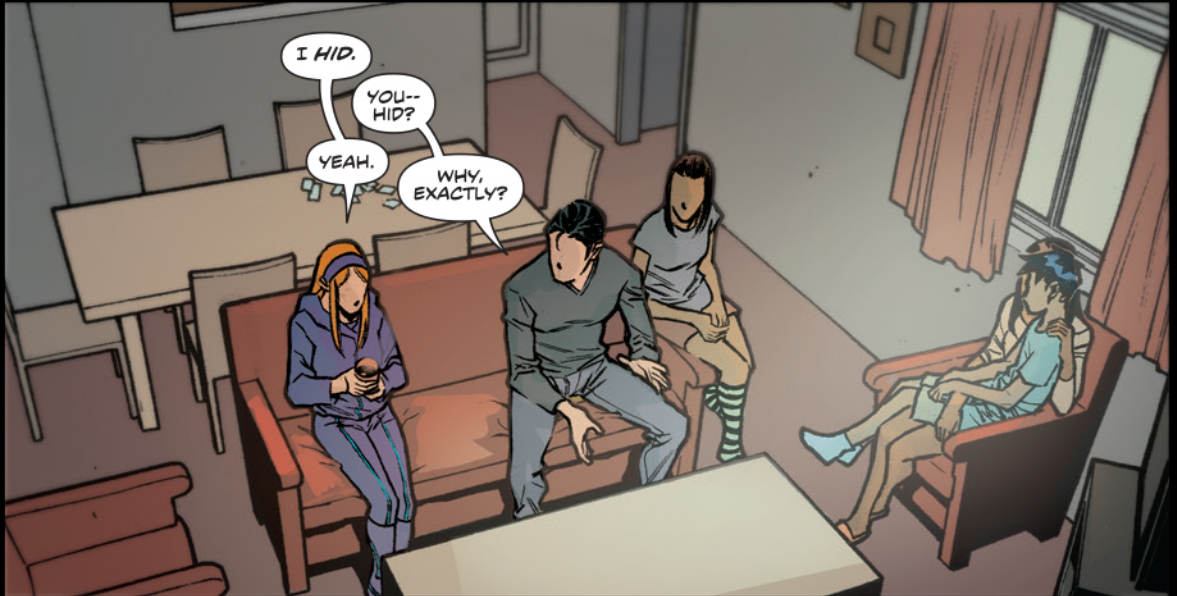
...COULD YOU TELL HIM IT'S ABOUT THE END OF THE WORLD?

**SCORCHED
EARTH**
PART 3 OF 3



IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN, CHRISTINA.

I SAW THAT YOU WEREN'T WITH THE OTHERS IN THE DESERT, AND I WAS CONCERNED FOR YOU.



I HID.

YOU--HID?

YEAH.

WHY, EXACTLY?



I LIKE MY MIND THE WAY IT IS. WHAT YOU WERE GOING TO DO--BRINGING ALL THEIR MEMORIES BACK--IT WOULD JUST HAVE MIXED ME UP.

AND I'M ALREADY MIXED UP ENOUGH. I'VE GOT TO TRY TO KEEP MY HEAD CLEAR, WITH ALL THE BAD STUFF THAT'S COMING.



THE BAD STUFF CAME. ULTRAMAR THREW A WHOLE ARMY AT US, BUT WE BEAT THEM BACK. AND TRACEY--

"T."

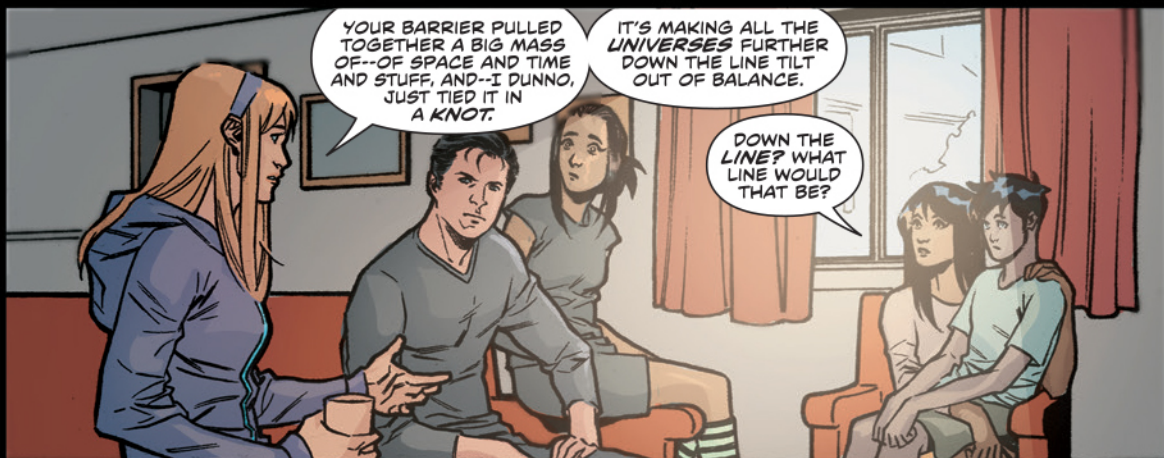
--BUILT A BARRIER BETWEEN THE WORLDS. THEY CAN'T HURT US NOW.



THE BARRIER IS PART OF THE PROBLEM.

IT'S WHAT? IT'S HOW? HOW IS THAT?

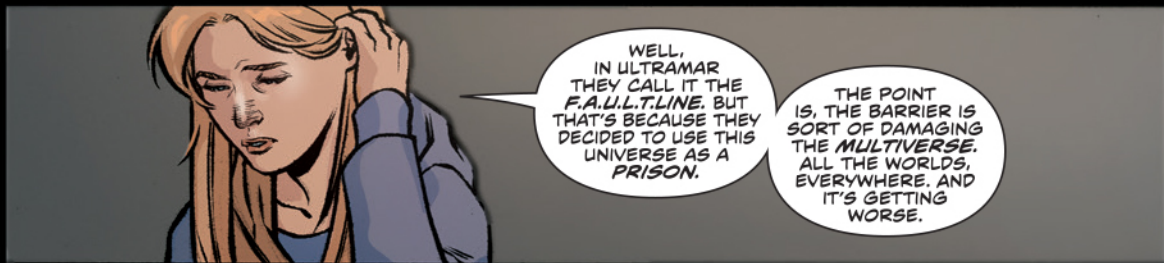
TERZA, I'M SO SORRY. I HATE TO BE THE ONE TO TELL YOU THIS.



YOUR BARRIER PULLED TOGETHER A BIG MASS OF--OF SPACE AND TIME AND STUFF, AND--I DUNNO, JUST TIED IT IN A KNOT.

IT'S MAKING ALL THE UNIVERSES FURTHER DOWN THE LINE TILT OUT OF BALANCE.

DOWN THE LINE? WHAT LINE WOULD THAT BE?



WELL, IN ULTRAMAR THEY CALL IT THE F.A.U.L.T. LINE. BUT THAT'S BECAUSE THEY DECIDED TO USE THIS UNIVERSE AS A PRISON.

THE POINT IS, THE BARRIER IS SORT OF DAMAGING THE MULTIVERSE. ALL THE WORLDS, EVERYWHERE, AND IT'S GETTING WORSE.



BUT IF WE DROP THE BARRIER--

THEY'LL ROLL RIGHT IN WITH SOMETHING CALLED SCORCHED EARTH. AND IT WILL BE TERRIBLE.

SO TERRIBLE I DON'T KNOW HOW TO SAY IT. THEY'RE READY THE SECOND THAT WALL GOES DOWN.



THEN WE'RE DAMNED IF WE DO AND DAMNED IF WE DON'T.

THE BARRIER HAS TO FALL SOONER OR LATER. IF I GET SICK, OR LOSE MY POWERS.

OR IF I WERE TO DIE--



RIGHT. PLUS, YOUR MOM AND DIVA CAN'T LIVE THIS WAY. ESPECIALLY YOUR MOM.

THAT'S WHY SHE TRIED TO KILL HERSELF.



WHY SHE...?

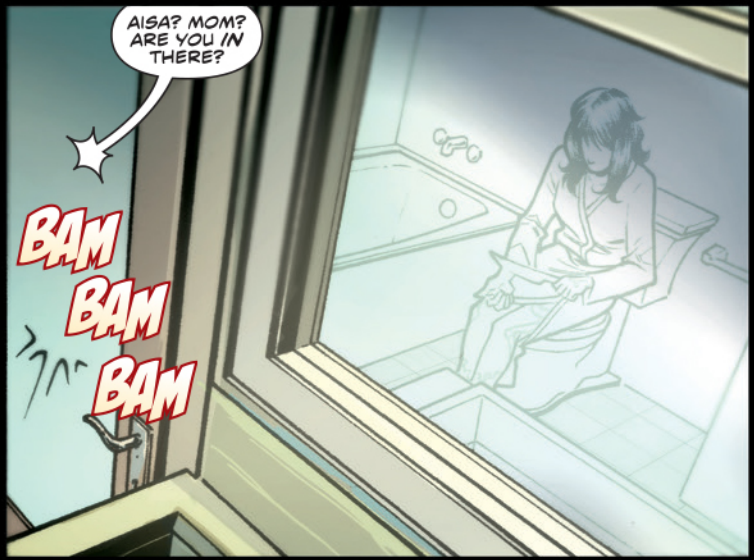
OH, WAIT.

DID THAT NOT HAPPEN YET?



I-I'M SORRY.

I TOLD YOU I GET MIXED UP, SOMETIMES, ABOUT--



AISA? MOM? ARE YOU IN THERE?

**BAM
BAM
BAM**



STOP IT! STOP IT RIGHT NOW!

PUT THAT KNIFE DOWN!

MY GOD!



I LOCKED THE DOOR FOR A REASON.

I KNOW, AND I VAPORIZED IT FOR A REASON!

NO, JUST NO. I'M NOT LETTING YOU DO THIS.



BUT IT'S MY RIGHT, TERZA. AND YOU CAN'T STOP ME.

ALL YOU CAN DO IS TO REGISTER AN OBJECTION, WHICH YOU'VE NOW DONE.