



THE DEATH-DEFYING

DOCTOR MIRAGE

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DOCTOR MIRAGE® #4 (of 5)
DECEMBER 2014

VALIANT ENTERTAINMENT LLC.

Office of publication:

424 West 33rd Street,

New York, NY 10001

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Printed in the USA.

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First Printing.

The story so far..



Doctor Mirage talks to the dead...but the only spirit she couldn't reach was her late husband, Hwen.

Today, Shan Fong-Mirage is haunted and raw. Since losing her husband and partner, the professional paranormal investigator has been working through her grief and struggling to keep herself together. Reluctantly, Mirage agreed to a lucrative freelance job, in order to save the beloved home she shared with Hwen. She met an eccentric billionaire named Linton March, who asked Mirage to sever the binding that tethered him to a powerful, otherworldly creature kept prisoner in his basement. Mirage was about to refuse the shady job, when the prisoner secretly told her that if she accepted, she could seek the spirit of Li Hwen Mirage in the underworld, with the Pale Mistress.

Mirage filled her coat pockets with objects of spiritual power, performed an arcane rite, stepped outside her physical body, and crossed an astral doorway from her home office into the worlds beyond ours. But she didn't know March had friends. Fellow members of March's Cold War-era team of occult researchers found out that he had hired Mirage. For enslaving this creature's power to their will decades ago, these five men became wealthy, long-lived, and successful—but March wanted to cut them out.

On the other side, Mirage discovered that the wall separating our world from the beyond was crumbling—torn to pieces by irresponsible magic users like March and his cronies, who take power from other worlds without repairing the rift. Should the wall crumble any further, a demon named Ivros stands at the head of an invading army, determined to take our world in a reign of blood. Ivros was about to capture Mirage for her power, but she tricked him into a cage that can only be opened by someone who will take your place. It was a gamble, because if Ivros gets out, Shan's obliged to owe him a favor.

In the physical world, March's team of occultists found the location of Shan's unconscious body inside her home, and abducted her, unawares. But within the worlds of the dead, Shan finally arrived at the court of the Pale Mistress, a capricious deity who wanted what only the Mirages could give her: an item imbued with the spirits of the dead at sea...a staff lost at the bottom of the ocean when Hwen and Shan drowned, and only Shan was resuscitated. The staff had belonged to the Pale Mistress's favorite trophy...the inanimate spirit of Hwen Mirage!

**SAINYABULI PROVINCE, LAOS.
SIXTY-FIVE YEARS AGO.**

--AND AS BEFORE THE FIVE COME TOGETHER AND--*****%!**

HOW LONG BEFORE WE HAVE TO REPORT IN?

ANOTHER DAY OR TWO. COMMAND THINKS WE'RE IN THAILAND TRAPPING HIM A YETI.

THE CANDLES ARE NEARLY GONE, MARCH. GET ON WITH IT.

SORRY. I'M TRANSLATING AS I GO AND DORRMANN'S HANDWRITING WAS CRAP.

--AND TAKE WITH THE BLOOD THE BOND AND GATHER UP...

...TO THEMSELVES THE FRATERNITY OF DOMINION OVER THE WILL AND SAY THE WORDS...

...THE WILL OF THIS POWER IS OUR WILL...

...AND BY OUR BOND IS THIS POWER...

...ENSLAVED TO US!

UNH--!



IT--
IT WORKED.
MY GOD.
IT WORKED.

CAN
YOU FEEL IT?
I CAN FEEL IT.
LIKE SPARKS
IN MY GUT.

MY SKIN IS
SCREAMING.



IT CAN GIVE
US ANYTHING WE
DESIRE?

SERVANT.
TELL ME--
YOU MUST DO
WHAT WE ASK?
ANYTHING?

WITHIN
THE LIMITS
OF MY
ABILITY...



...I AM
FORCED BY
THE BOND
NOW THRICE
USURPED...

"...TO DO YOUR BIDDING."

OFFICE OF
DR. NATALIE MARAIS.
BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA.

WHAT GOOD
ARE YOU IF YOU
WON'T HELP ME
RIP HIS HEART
OUT?

THEY
IGNORED ME TOO.
YOU ARE JUST
LIKE THEM...
CRUEL CHILD.

MY BROTHER'S
FAMILY SLAUGHTERED.
I SHALL NOT REST UNTIL
I KNOW...

I HAVE
WAITED LONG
ENOUGH FOR MY
REVENGE. ATTEND
ME, WRETCH.

WHAT A
PATHETIC
FAILURE
YOU ARE.
YOU'LL FIND
HER LIKE
I SAID--

DIGAND
DIGANDDIGANDDIG--
MY POOR LOST
BONES...

LET ME IN.
JUST LET ME
IN AND I'LL FIND
MY EYES.
LET ME IN.

SHAN...?

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO.

STOP... PLEASE STOP.
NOT HERE PLEASE STOP
I CAN'T DO IT PLEASE...
CAN'T BREATHE...

SHAN,
TRY AND
FOCUS ON THE
SOUND OF MY
VOICE.

REMEMBER
LAST TIME? WE
TALKED ABOUT
FIGURING OUT WHAT
PAIN IS THEIRS, AND
WHAT'S YOURS?

I...

IT'S...
YES--

I'M
DROWNING,
NAT.

IT CAN FEEL LIKE THAT, YES.
IT MIGHT MAKE YOU WANT TO
PULL THEIR VOICES AND FEELINGS
OUT, LIKE PULLING YOUR HAIR.

DO YOU REMEMBER,
YOU HAD SOME THINGS
YOU WISHED YOU HAD
SAID TO THEM, OTHER
TIMES WHEN IT'S BEEN
LIKE THIS?

DO YOU
WANT TO TRY
IT NOW...?



...TELLING THEM, LIKE YOU PRACTICED?

I'LL-- I CAN TRY.



L-LISTEN TO ME. ALL OF YOU.

I KNOW YOU'RE SCARED AND TIRED AND SAD AND ANGRY...



...A LOT OF YOU FEEL TRAPPED AND NEED HELP GOING ON.

JUST 'CAUSE I CAN HEAR YOU DOESN'T MEAN I'M SOME KIND OF SERVANT.

I WANT TO HELP, BUT IF YOU MAKE ME FEEL LIKE YOU DO, I CAN'T. SO JUST...



...JUST--JUST STOP CROWDING AND YELLING AND BEING MEAN.

JUST STOP. PLEASE.



THAT WAS REALLY BRAVE, SHAN. HOW DO YOU FEEL?

GOOD. THEY NEVER LISTENED BEFORE.

DOCTOR NAT? UM--DO YOUR PATIENTS EVER FEEL... HEAVY? LIKE THE GHOSTS?

IT CAN BE HARD WORK, BECAUSE I CARE. I KNOW YOU UNDERSTAND THAT.

SO I DO A LOT OF GARDENING. WORKING OUTDOORS HELPS ME LISTEN TO MY OWN FEELINGS...

"...AND THAT'S ALSO WHY I'M SO FIRM ABOUT MY APPOINTMENT CALENDAR."

**HOME OF SHAN AND HWEN MIRAGE.
SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA.
TEN YEARS AGO.**

NOT NOW,
GUYS...

YOU KNOW
I'M OFF THE
CLOCK.

THEY
SEEM EXTRA
NOISY TONIGHT,
SHAN.

DOES IT
BUG THEM? THAT
THE TAT WILL LET
YOU CLOSE THE
BLINDS?

MOST OF
THEM GET THAT I
NEED SOME PRIVACY.
A FEW ARE
NERVOUS.

VIOLET
AND MONA
WON'T LIKE IT
WHEN THEY
FIND OUT.

TOO BAD.
LITTLE
PERVS--

HWEN. THEY
WERE OUR AGE
WHEN THEY DIED,
BUT...REALLY...
SHELTERED.

THEY'RE...
CURIOUS.

I ALWAYS
FEEL LIKE I
CAN HEAR THEM
GIGGLING.
IT'S ICKY.

GEEZ,
CRAZY LEGS!
HOLD STILL!

BWAH! I LOVE SO MUCH
THAT YOU TAKE FLUID SAMPLES
FROM POSSESSION SITES AND
DO POST-POST-MORTEMS
ON ZOMBIES...

...BUT
THAT'S
WHAT
YOU CALL
ICKY.