



image

318

DIGITAL
EDITION

TODD MCFARLANE

CARLO BARBERI

SPAWN



**THE KING
IS COMING**

MCFARLANE
+fco



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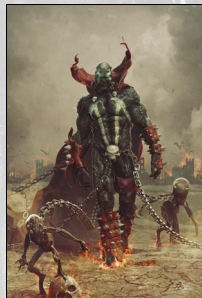
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SPAWN CREATED BY
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PREVIOUSLY IN SPAWN

Previously: Cult of Omega – Omega has been defeated and dragged down into his own prison by the Plague. But what awaits him at the bottom may be even worse... Spawn and his recent adversary, Medieval Spawn escape the island together but how long will this truce last?



WITH HIS OPTIONS LIMITED, SPAWN HAD TO MAKE A CHOICE: STAND AND FIGHT OR RETREAT. AS MUCH AS HIS WARRIOR BLOOD WANTED TO STAY...

...THE ISLAND THEY WERE BATTLING ON HAD BECOME TOO UNSTABLE.

THOUGH IT MEANT LEAVING BEHIND TWO FALLEN ALLIES, IN MONOLITH AND OVERT-KILL, SPAWN KNEW HE'D HAVE TO REGAIN SOME OF HIS STRENGTH BACK IF HE WAS TO EVER RETURN THERE AGAIN.

PLUS, HE NEEDS TIME TO ACCESS WHAT JUST HAPPENED THREE HELLSPAWNS--THE OMEGA, MEDIEVAL AND PLAGUE VERSIONS--APPEARED ON THAT ISLAND BUT THEIR AURAS WERE NEVER CAPTURED IN HIS COMPUTER ANALYSIS.

SOMETHING, OR SOMEONE IS DESPERATELY TRYING TO HIDE SOMETHING. SOMETHING DEADLY.

FOR NOW, A TRIP THROUGH THE DARKNESS WILL BUY HIM THE TIME. ENOUGH FOR HIM TO FIND ANSWERS TO SOME OF HIS QUESTIONS.

EVENTUALLY, THEY SPILL FROM THE SHADOWS LANDING BACK AT SPAWN'S HIDDEN SANCTUARY.

WHAT IS THIS PLACE? IS IT SAFE?

THAT DEPENDS.

WHY'D YOU COME TO THAT ISLAND IN THE FIRST PLACE?

ARE YOU BLIND? I CAME TO HELP!

I DIDN'T ASK FOR ANY.

SAPPED OF POWER, SPAWN FIGHTS TO KEEP HIS BALANCE. TRAVELING IN THE DARK WITH SUCH A LARGE PASSENGER HAS TAKEN AN ADDED TOLL.

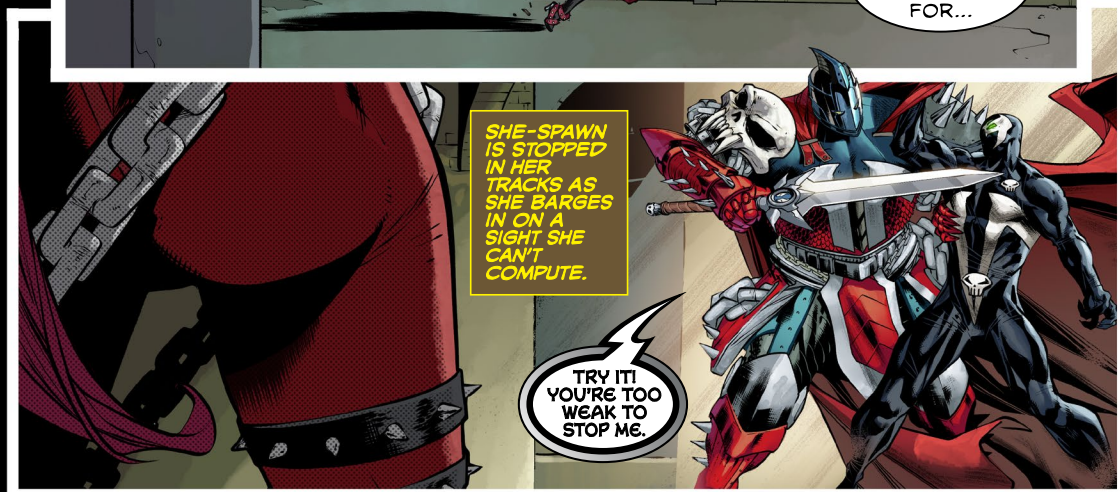
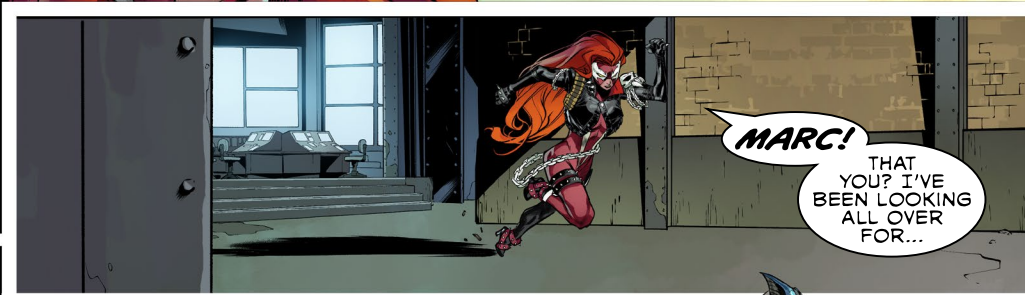
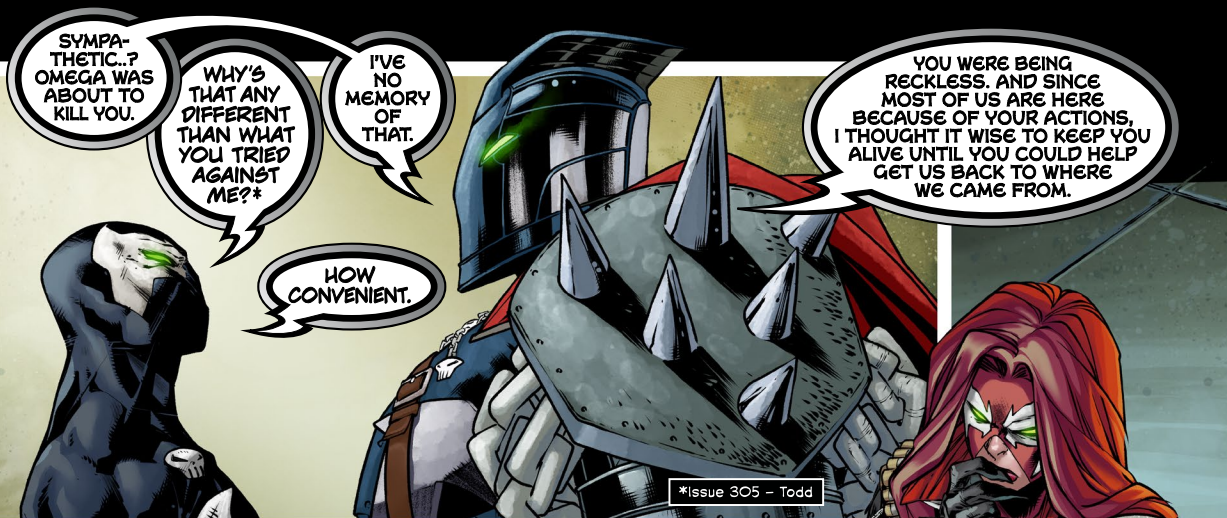
YOU NEED REST. WE CAN SORT THIS OUT LATER.

NO!

WE'LL TALK NOW! I'M NOT TURNING MY BACK ON YOU, NOT UNTIL I GET SOME ANSWERS.

THIS IS WHY YOU'LL NEVER WIN. NOT UNTIL YOU LEARN TO TRUST OTHERS.

LIKE YOU? WHY, BECAUSE YOU JOINED MY SIDE FOR A FEW MINUTES? YOU KNOW HOW MANY ENEMIES HAVE PRETENDED TO BE SYMPATHETIC TO MY WAR?





BACK
THE F*CK
AWAY FROM
HIM!

NOW!

A FEMALE?

I DIDN'T
THINK
HELL WOULD
EVER CHOOSE
THEIR
KIND.

I'M ABOUT
TO GET REALLY
PISSED OFF! AND
YOU KNOW WHAT
HAPPENS WHEN
'MY KIND' GET
ANGRY?

YOUR
WEAPON, IT
CAN'T
HURT ME.

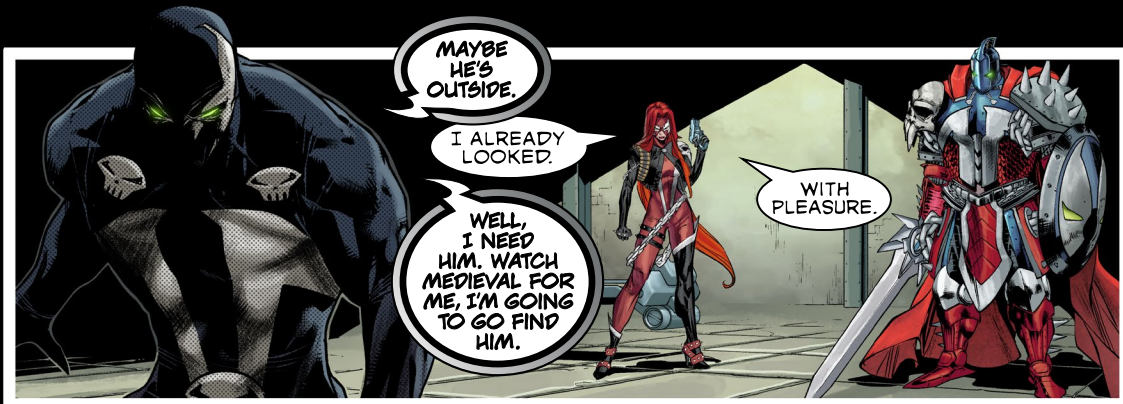
MAYBE.
BUT I BET
YOUR ARMOR
ISN'T COVERING
YOUR NUTSACK.
SO...YOUR
MOVE!

YOU
WANT TO
TELL ME
WHAT'S GOING
ON HERE,
SPAWN?

I WILL,
BUT NOT
NOW.
WHERE'S
MARC?

HE'S GONE.
I CAN'T FIND
HIM ANYWHERE,
THOUGHT
HE WAS WITH
YOU.

HE
HAS TO
BE HERE.
HE CAN'T
"SHADOW
TRAVEL"
WITHOUT
ONE OF
US.



MAYBE
HE'S
OUTSIDE.

I ALREADY
LOOKED.

WELL,
I NEED
HIM. WATCH
MEDIEVAL FOR
ME, I'M GOING
TO GO FIND
HIM.

WITH
PLEASURE.

THIS IS
ABSURD.

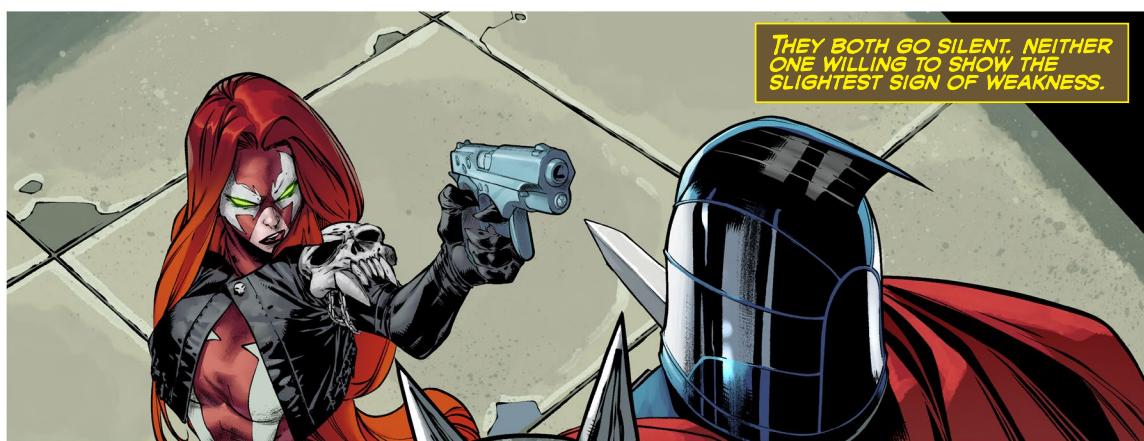
I'LL TELL
YOU WHAT'S
ABSURD...THAT
SPAWN BROUGHT
YOU HERE IN THE
FIRST PLACE.

I SAVED
HIM. HE WAS
RETURNING THE
FAVOR.

SEEMS
ODD YOU'D
WANT TO SKEWER
HIM THEN WITH YOUR
SWORD. OR DID I
MISINTERPRET
SOMETHING?

YOU ARE
QUITE A
MAGNIFICENT
CREATURE.

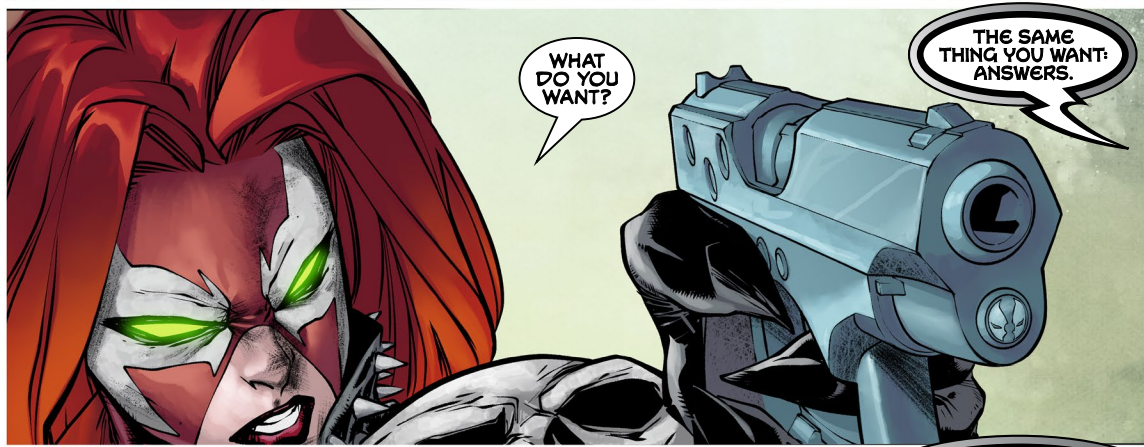
WISH
I COULD
SAY THE SAME.
IN THE MEAN-
TIME, STOP WITH
YOUR FRAT-BOY
POSING. YOUR
TYPE BORES
ME.



THEY BOTH GO SILENT. NEITHER ONE WILLING TO SHOW THE SLIGHTEST SIGN OF WEAKNESS.



YOU MUST BE A NEW HELLSPAWN. OTHERWISE, YOU WOULD SENSE I AM NOT A THREAT TO YOU.



WHAT DO YOU WANT?

THE SAME THING YOU WANT: ANSWERS.



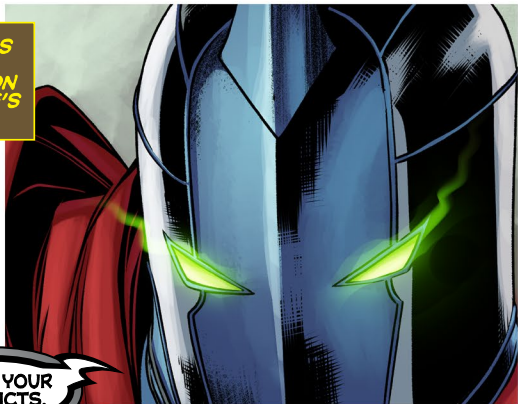
GO HELP SPAWN FIND YOUR FRIEND. I WON'T MOVE FROM THIS SPOT. YOU HAVE MY WORD ON THAT.

IS THAT SO?

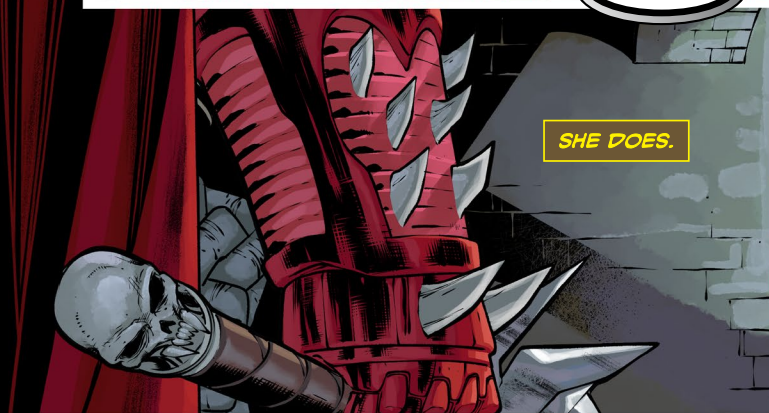
YES. AND MY HUMBLE APOLOGIES IF I OFFENDED YOU WITH MY PRIOR LANGUAGE.



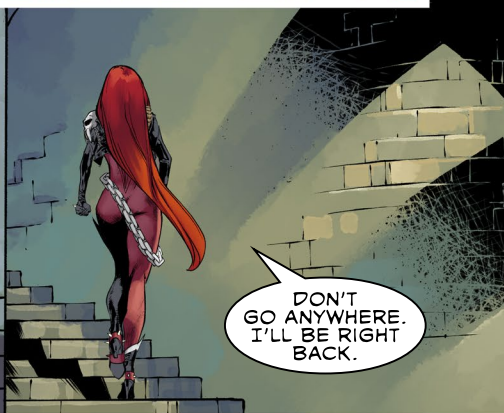
SHE GIVES HIM NO INDICATION WHAT SHE'S THINKING.



TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS.



SHE DOES.



DON'T GO ANYWHERE. I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.

MINUTES LATER.



ANY LUCK?

WHAT'RE YOU DOING? WHERE'S MEDIEVAL, YOU DIDN'T LEAVE HIM ALONE, DID YOU?

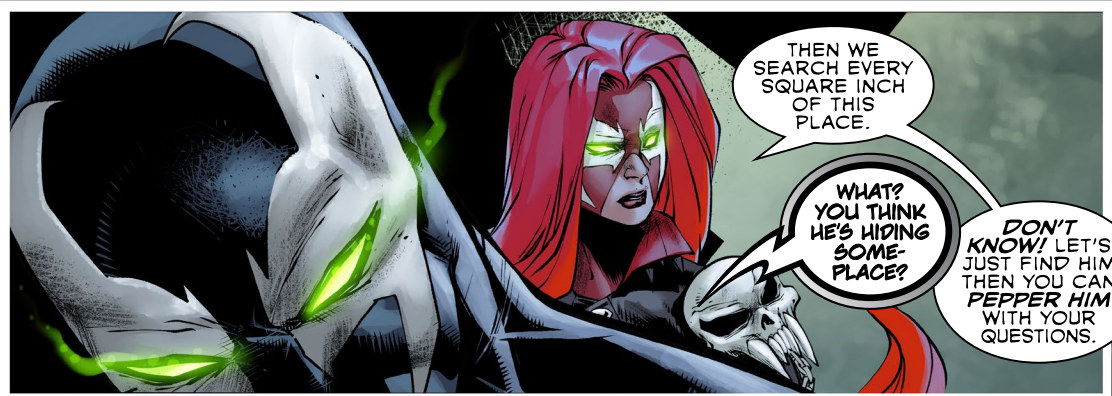
HE'S FINE, DON'T WORRY ABOUT HIM.

FINE? HE TRIED TO KILL ME.

THEN HE SAVED YOU. SO YOU'RE BOTH EVEN NOW. **GET OVER IT!** I'M MORE CONCERNED ABOUT MARC AND WHERE THE HELL HE WENT TO. IS IT POSSIBLE SOMEONE BREACHED THIS PLACE?



NO.



THEN WE
SEARCH EVERY
SQUARE INCH
OF THIS
PLACE.

WHAT?
YOU THINK
HE'S HIDING
SOME-
PLACE?

**DON'T
KNOW!** LET'S
JUST FIND HIM
THEN YOU CAN
PEPPER HIM
WITH YOUR
QUESTIONS.

**EVENUALLY,
A LOUD NOISE
CATCHES THEIR
ATTENTION.**



MARC?!



MY
GOD,
ARE YOU
OKAY? WHAT
HAPPENED
TO YOU,
WHY'RE YOU
SITTING
HERE?

I...
DON'T
KNOW.

DO YOU
NEED A
DOCTOR?

NO.
I'M
FINE.

YOU
SURE?

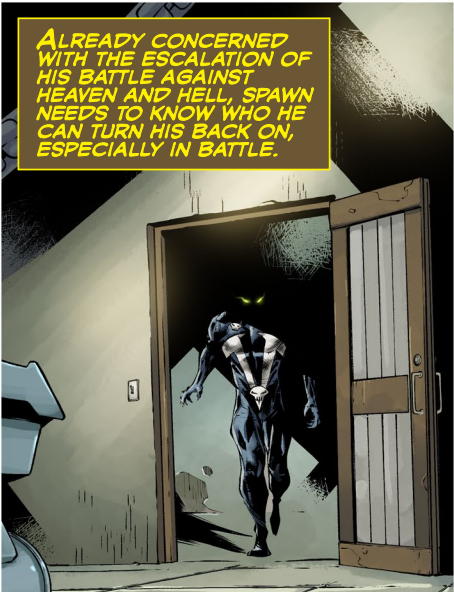
I THINK SO.
SOMEHOW I
WAS LOOKING AT
MY LAPTOP,
THEN...



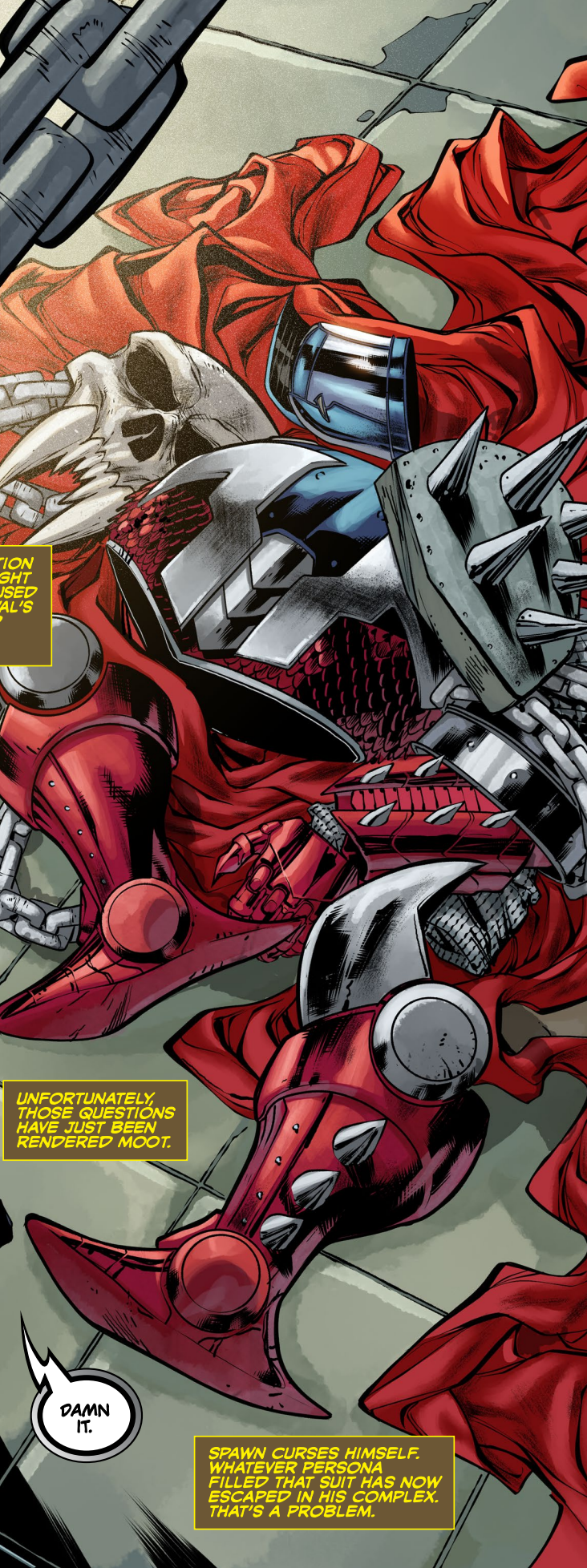
THEN
I WAS HERE.
I CAN'T
REMEMBER
WHY--OR
HOW.

THEN
WHAT?





ALREADY CONCERNED WITH THE ESCALATION OF HIS BATTLE AGAINST HEAVEN AND HELL, SPAWN NEEDS TO KNOW WHO HE CAN TURN HIS BACK ON, ESPECIALLY IN BATTLE.



HE SAW THE LEVEL OF DETERMINATION MEDIEVAL SPAWN GAVE IN THEIR FIGHT AGAINST OMEGA SPAWN. WHAT CONFUSED HIM WAS THE SUDDEN SHIFT IN MEDIEVAL'S ALLIANCE. WHY DID HE DO IT? AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, HOW DID THE ARMOR RE-ANIMATE ITSELF?



UNFORTUNATELY, THOSE QUESTIONS HAVE JUST BEEN RENDERED MOOT.

DAMN IT.

SPAWN CURSES HIMSELF. WHATEVER PERSONA FILLED THAT SUIT HAS NOW ESCAPED IN HIS COMPLEX. THAT'S A PROBLEM.



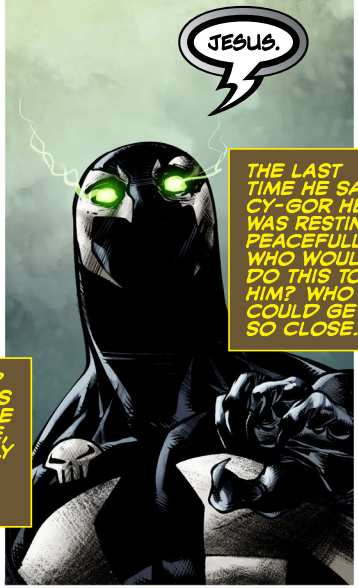
SOME-ONE'S PLAYING GAMES.



AND HE'S IN NO MOOD TO PLAY BACK.

BECAUSE VISITORS KEEP DISAPPEARING FROM HIS PLACE. FIRST IT WAS THE FREAK, THEN THE CURSE, BUT IF SOMEONE ACTUALLY ENTERED HIS BUILDING HE WOULD KNOW. HE WOULD 'FEEL' IT.

OR MAYBE HE WOULDN'T, NOT IN HIS WEAKENED STATE, NOT WHILE HE'S AT A FRACTION OF HIS NORMAL POWERS. EITHER WAY HE NEEDS TO TAKE STOCK IN THE REST OF HIS COMPOUND.



JESUS.

THE LAST TIME HE SAW CY-GOR HE WAS RESTING PEACEFULLY. WHO WOULD DO THIS TO HIM? WHO COULD GET SO CLOSE...



...TO BE ABLE TO TORTURE HIM?



Snap POP Snap



I'M TRYING, JESSICA, I... JUST DON'T REMEMBER. I'M SORRY.

I GET IT. BUT ANYTHING WOULD HELP. WHAT ABOUT THE TIME? YOU REMEMBER SEEING IT ON ANY OF THE COMPUTER SCREENS?

ELEVEN-THIRTY, MAYBE.

IF THAT'S TRUE, THEN YOU WERE BLACKED OUT OVER THREE HOURS.

AND SOMEWHERE IN THAT TIME YOU WENT TO THE LAB. OR SOMEONE DRAGGED YOU THERE. UNLESS THERE'S ANOTHER REASON YOUR GLASSES WERE ON THE FLOOR THERE?

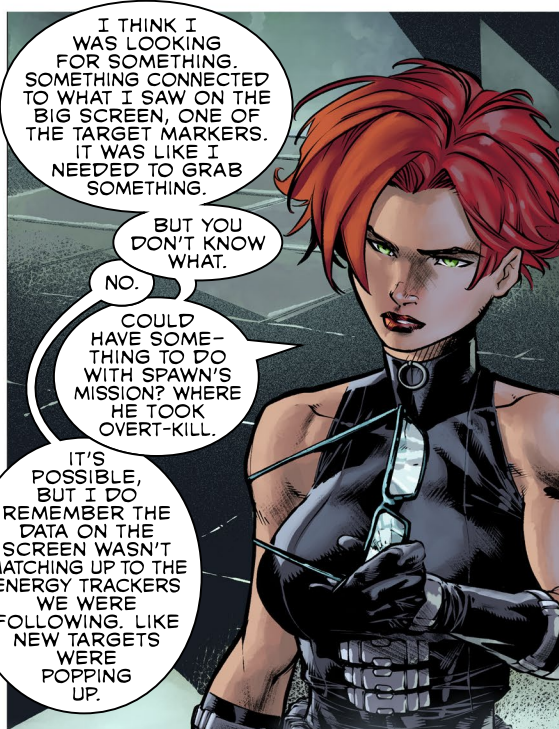




Wait.

YOU'RE
RIGHT, I DID
GO INTO THE
LAB.

TO DO
WHAT?



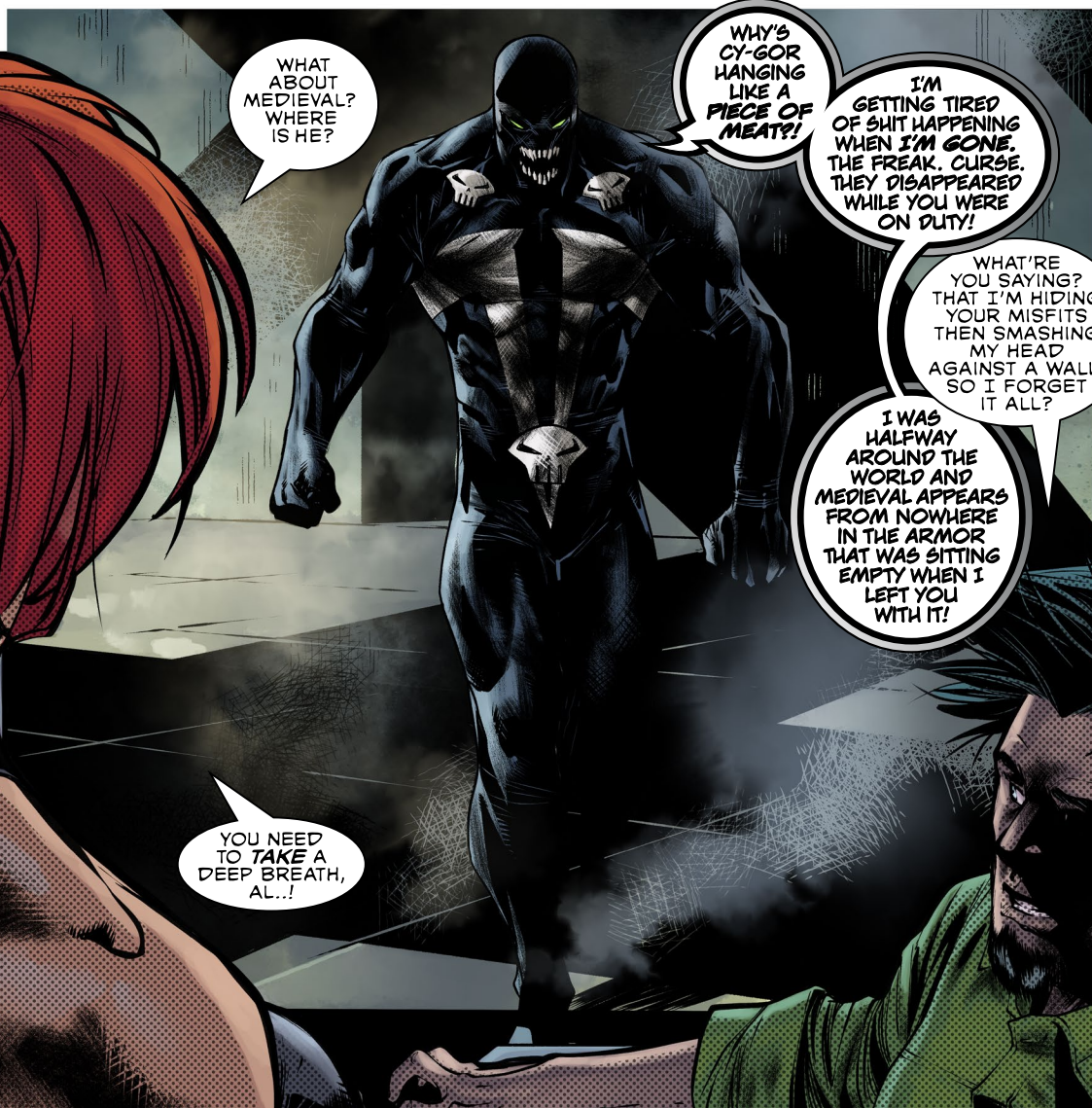
I THINK I
WAS LOOKING
FOR SOMETHING.
SOMETHING CONNECTED
TO WHAT I SAW ON THE
BIG SCREEN, ONE OF
THE TARGET MARKERS.
IT WAS LIKE I
NEEDED TO GRAB
SOMETHING.

BUT YOU
DON'T KNOW
WHAT.

NO.

COULD
HAVE SOME-
THING TO DO
WITH SPAWN'S
MISSION? WHERE
HE TOOK
OVERT-KILL.

IT'S
POSSIBLE,
BUT I DO
REMEMBER THE
DATA ON THE
SCREEN WASN'T
MATCHING UP TO THE
ENERGY TRACKERS
WE WERE
FOLLOWING. LIKE
NEW TARGETS
WERE
POPPING
UP.



WHAT
ABOUT
MEDIEVAL?
WHERE
IS HE?

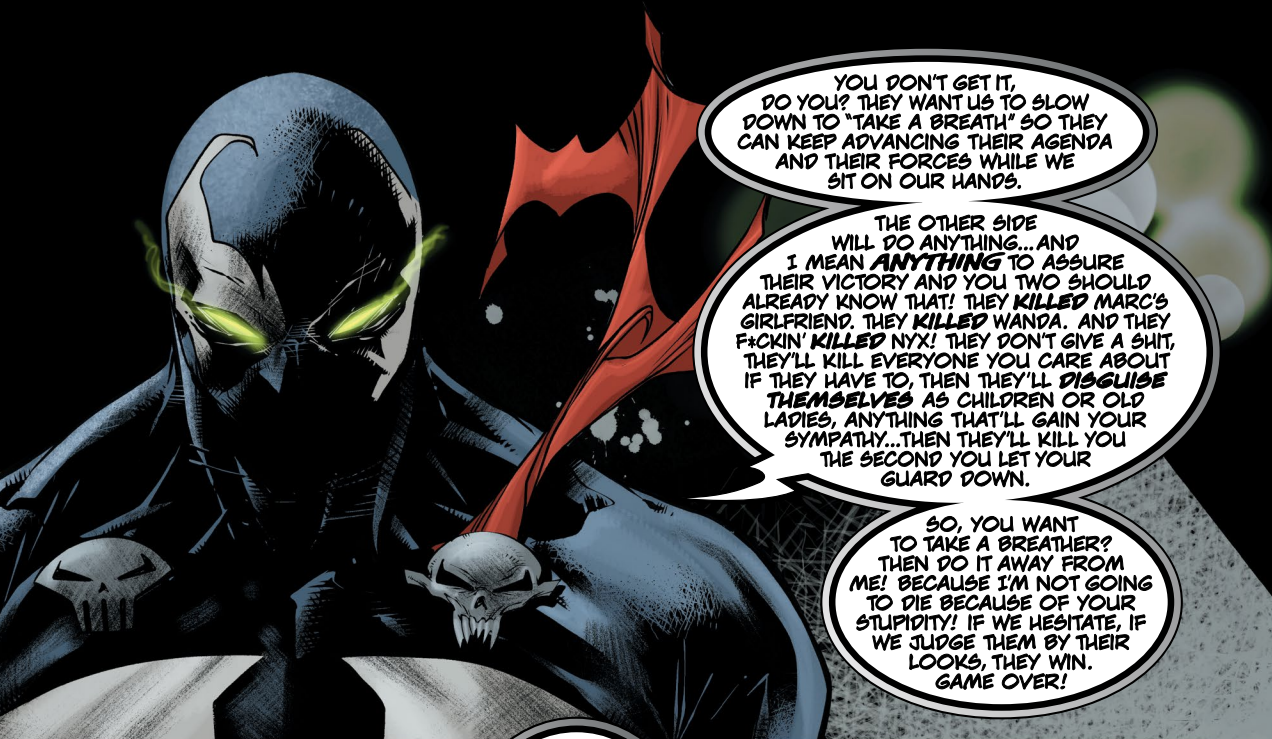
WHY'S
CY-GOR
HANGING
LIKE A
PIECE OF
MEAT?!

I'M
GETTING
TIRED
OF SHIT
HAPPENING
WHEN I'M
GONE.
THE FREAK. CURSE.
THEY DISAPPEARED
WHILE YOU WERE
ON DUTY!

WHAT'RE
YOU SAYING?
THAT I'M HIDING
YOUR MISFITS
THEN SMASHING
MY HEAD
AGAINST A WALL,
SO I FORGET
IT ALL?

I WAS
HALFWAY
AROUND THE
WORLD AND
MEDIEVAL APPEARS
FROM NOWHERE
IN THE ARMOR
THAT WAS SITTING
EMPTY WHEN I
LEFT YOU
WITH IT!

YOU NEED
TO *TAKE* A
DEEP BREATH,
AL...!



YOU DON'T GET IT, DO YOU? THEY WANT US TO SLOW DOWN TO 'TAKE A BREATH' SO THEY CAN KEEP ADVANCING THEIR AGENDA AND THEIR FORCES WHILE WE SIT ON OUR HANDS.

THE OTHER SIDE WILL DO ANYTHING...AND I MEAN **ANYTHING** TO ASSURE THEIR VICTORY AND YOU TWO SHOULD ALREADY KNOW THAT! THEY **KILLED** MARC'S GIRLFRIEND. THEY **KILLED** WANDA. AND THEY **F*CKIN' KILLED** NYX! THEY DON'T GIVE A SHIT, THEY'LL KILL EVERYONE YOU CARE ABOUT IF THEY HAVE TO, THEN THEY'LL **DISGUISE THEMSELVES** AS CHILDREN OR OLD LADIES, ANYTHING THAT'LL GAIN YOUR SYMPATHY...THEN THEY'LL KILL YOU THE SECOND YOU LET YOUR GUARD DOWN.

SO, YOU WANT TO TAKE A BREATH? THEN DO IT AWAY FROM ME! BECAUSE I'M NOT GOING TO DIE BECAUSE OF YOUR STUPIDITY! IF WE HESITATE, IF WE JUDGE THEM BY THEIR LOOKS, THEY WIN. **GAME OVER!**



SO, WHAT'RE WE SUPPOSED TO DO?



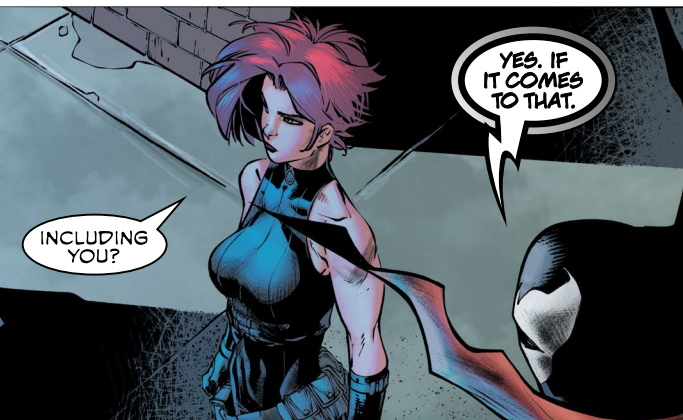
DON'T TRUST YOUR EYES, BECAUSE YOU MAY HAVE TO SHOOT A 5-YEAR-OLD THROUGH THE SKULL SOME-DAY.



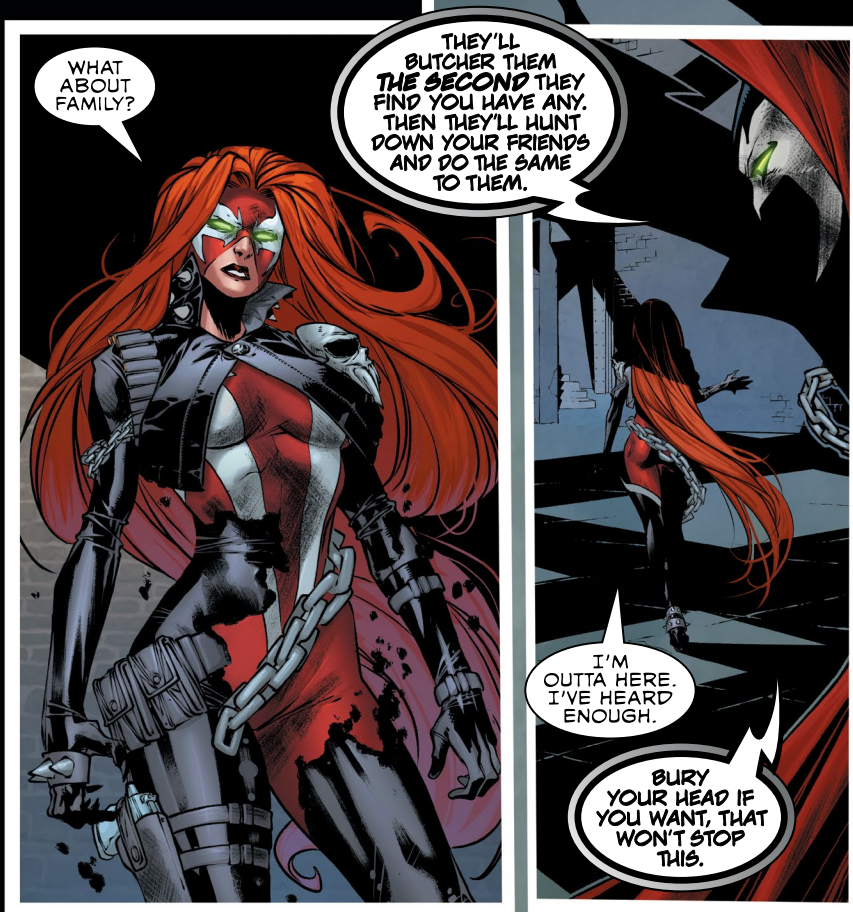
AND THE MOMENT WHEN YOU THINK THEY DON'T DESERVE THAT FATE, OR THEIR HUMAN FORM PLEADS WITH YOU TO SPARE THEM... THAT'S THE MOMENT YOU PUT **TWO BULLETS** IN THEIR HEAD. ASSUME ANYONE YOU TALK TO IS ONE OF THEM. **TRUST NO ONE.**



INCLUDING YOU?



YES. IF IT COMES TO THAT.



WHAT ABOUT FAMILY?

THEY'LL BUTCHER THEM **THE SECOND** THEY FIND YOU HAVE ANY. THEN THEY'LL HUNT DOWN YOUR FRIENDS AND DO THE SAME TO THEM.

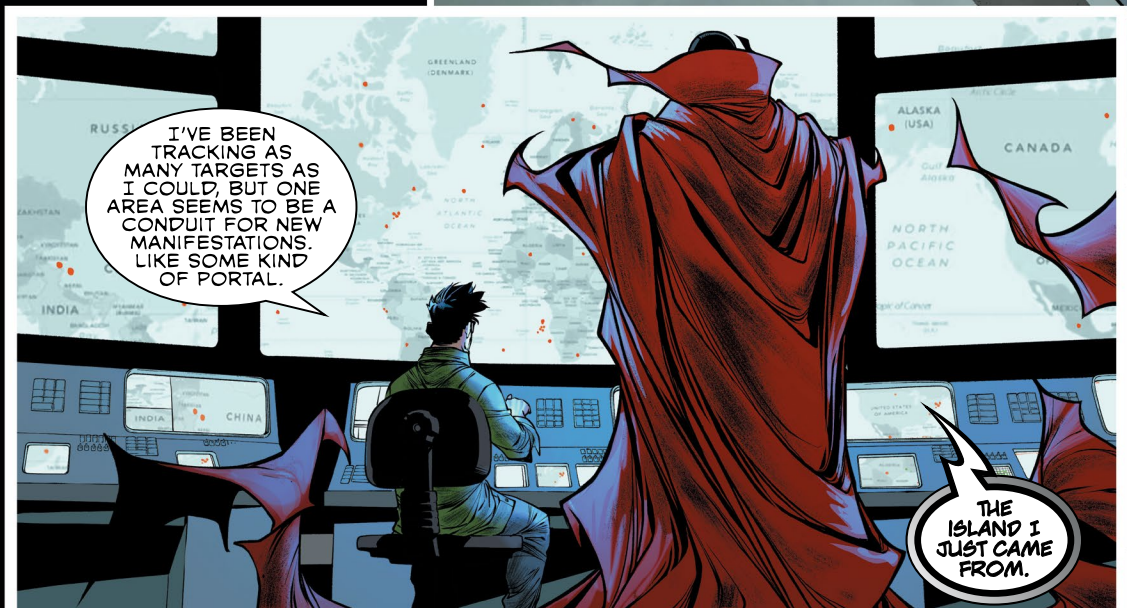
I'M OUTTA HERE. I'VE HEARD ENOUGH.

BURY YOUR HEAD IF YOU WANT, THAT WON'T STOP THIS.



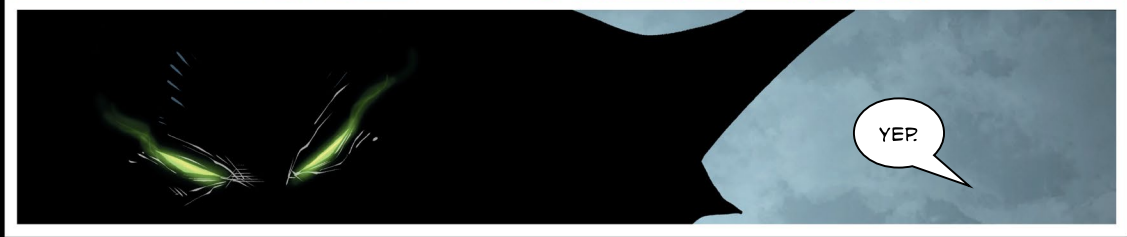
THERE'RE DOZENS OF FACTIONS, MARC, THEY'LL FIGHT US AND EACH OTHER.

I THINK THEIR APOCALYPSE HAS ALREADY STARTED. I NEED TO SHOW YOU SOMETHING ON THE COMPUTERS.



I'VE BEEN TRACKING AS MANY TARGETS AS I COULD, BUT ONE AREA SEEMS TO BE A CONDUIT FOR NEW MANIFESTATIONS. LIKE SOME KIND OF PORTAL.

THE ISLAND I JUST CAME FROM.

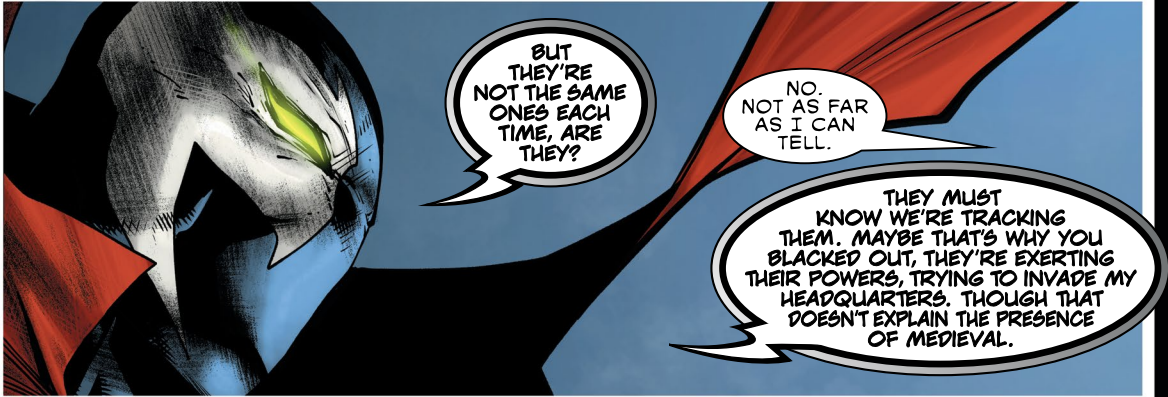


YEP.



THERE HAS TO BE A HOLE, SOME DIMENSIONAL HOLE THEY'RE EXPLOITING.

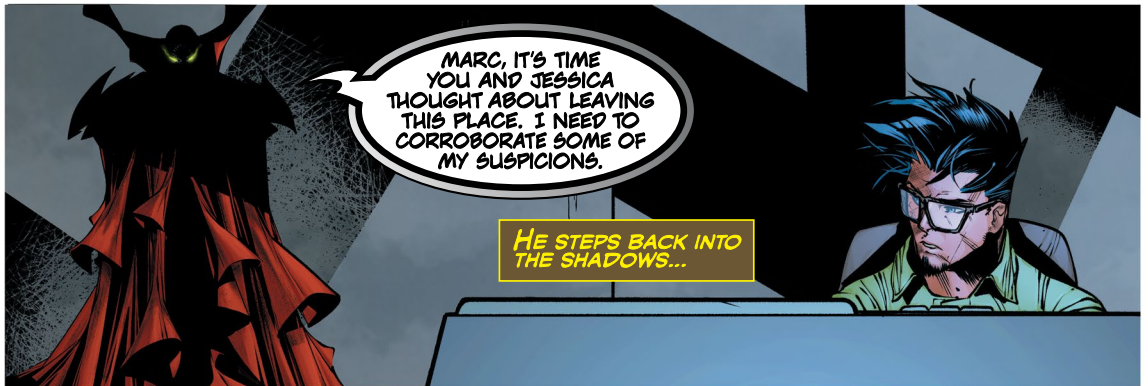
I THINK THAT'S WHAT I WAS LOOKING AT WHEN I BLACKED OUT. TARGETS KEEP DISAPPEARING THEN RE-APPEARING.



BUT THEY'RE NOT THE SAME ONES EACH TIME, ARE THEY?

NO. NOT AS FAR AS I CAN TELL.

THEY MUST KNOW WE'RE TRACKING THEM. MAYBE THAT'S WHY YOU BLACKED OUT, THEY'RE EXERTING THEIR POWERS, TRYING TO INVADE MY HEADQUARTERS. THOUGH THAT DOESN'T EXPLAIN THE PRESENCE OF MEDIEVAL.



MARC, IT'S TIME YOU AND JESSICA THOUGHT ABOUT LEAVING THIS PLACE. I NEED TO CORROBORATE SOME OF MY SUSPICIONS.

HE STEPS BACK INTO THE SHADOWS...



...REAPPEARING THOUSANDS OF MILES AWAY IN BERLIN.



WE CONTINUE TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM DOZENS OF NATIONS AROUND THE GLOBE. THEY CONTINUE TO BE HIT WITH AFTERSHOCKS FROM THE EARTHQUAKES THEY'VE EXPERIENCED BUT, AS OUR REPORTERS HAVE TOLD YOU, THE AMOUNT OF DAMAGE, THANKFULLY, FAR EXCEEDS THE NUMBER OF LIVES LOST, AT LEAST TO THIS POINT.

A TOTAL OF 58 DEATHS HAVE BEEN VERIFIED FROM ALL KNOWN QUAKE AREAS. THIS IS FEWER THAN THREE PEOPLE PER EPICENTER. FALLEN BUILDINGS AND CRACKED ROADS SEEM TO BE CREATING THE MOST DIFFICULTIES IN THE URBAN AREAS, WHILE RURAL AREAS ARE FACING SHORTAGES OF EMERGENCY SUPPLIES. WE WILL BRING YOU ANY UPDATES AS THEY COME IN.

BUT WE NOW SHIFT OUR ATTENTION TO ANOTHER SET OF REPORTS. FIRES, EXPLOSIONS AND GUNFIRE ARE INCREASING THE SENSE OF PANIC IN SOME REMOTE AREAS, BOTH HERE IN THE U.S. AND INTERNATIONALLY. A FEW EYEWITNESSES SAID THEY SAW FLASHES OF WHAT APPEARED TO BE A RED CAPE AT SOME OF THESE COMPLEXES...



SOME ARE SPECULATING THAT THE MYSTERIOUS CAPE BELONGS TO THE MAN WHO HAS RECENTLY IDENTIFIED HIMSELF AS **LT. COLONEL AL SIMMONS**, THOUGH ALL RECORDS INDICATE THE ACTUAL COLONEL SIMMONS DIED **YEARS AGO** IN THE LINE OF DUTY. ALL RECORDS OF THE EVENTS LEADING TO SIMMONS' DEATH HAVE THUS FAR BEEN KEPT AWAY FROM THE PUBLIC, THOUGH A FEW MEDIA OUTLETS HAVE FILED LAWSUITS, THROUGH THE **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT**, TO COMPEL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TO UNSEAL ANY OF HIS RECORDS.

NONE OF THIS, HOWEVER, EXPLAINS WHO THIS "NEW" AL SIMMONS IS, OR WHY HE MAY NOW BE INVOLVED IN WHAT APPEAR TO BE RANDOM ACTS OF SABOTAGE IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES. GIVEN THE DISTANCE BETWEEN THE VARIOUS COUNTRIES REPORTING HIS PRESENCE, THOUGH, IT'S **IM-POSSIBLE** TO BELIEVE THAT IT COULD BE THE SAME PERSON. A BETTER EXPLANATION IS THERE MAY NOW BE A **GROUP** OF INDIVIDUALS TAKING UP THE SAME CAUSE AS OUR **MYSTERIOUS MR. SIMMONS**.



THE REASON OUR GOVERNMENT DOESN'T WANT TO DIVULGE **ANY INFORMATION** ABOUT THE WELL-ESTABLISHED DISTANT-HISTORY DEATH OF COLONEL SIMMONS... AND A HANDFUL OF OTHER OFFICERS WHO DIED AROUND THE SAME TIME, OVER FIVE YEARS AGO... IS BECAUSE... **AS USUAL**...THEY'RE...**HIDING**...SOMETHING!

AND THERE'S ONLY ONE EXPLANATION THAT MAKES ANY SENSE. MY SOURCES TELL ME, WITHOUT HESITATION, THAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT

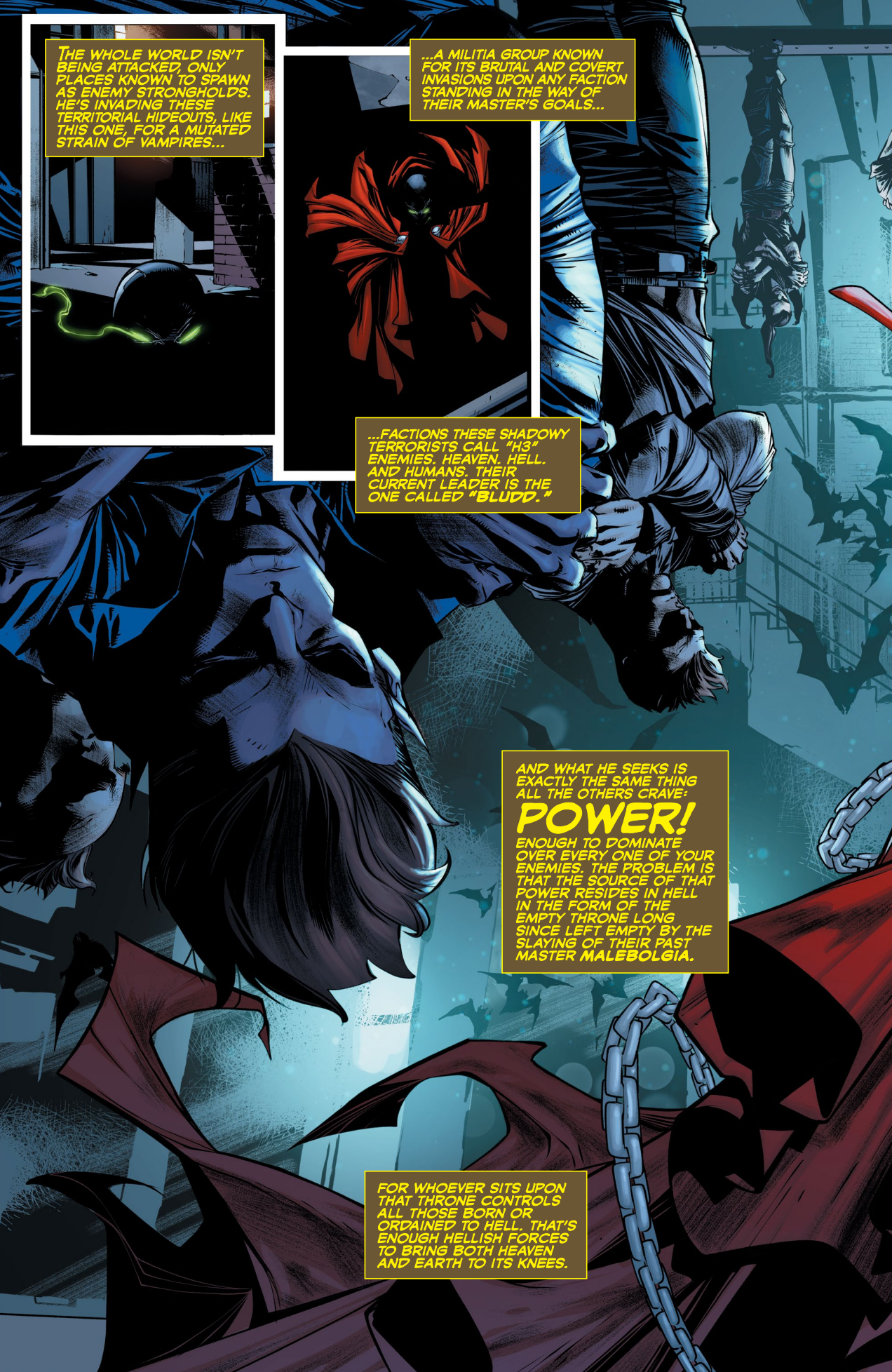
CLONING!

FOR DECADES, WE'VE ALL HEARD WHISPERS ABOUT HOW CHINA AND RUSSIA HAVE BEEN TRYING TO PERFECT THE DUPLICATION OF ANY AND ALL **D.N.A. FIBERS**... WELL, **IT'S HERE!** AND WE SHOULD ALL BE CONCERNED BECAUSE SOON THEY'LL BE USING IT TO KILL MOST OF US CONSERVATIVES AND REPLACE US WITH CLONES OF OURSELVES SO THEY CAN CONTROL HOW WE **VOTE!**

OBVIOUSLY, ALL THE EARTHQUAKES HAPPENING ALL AROUND US ARE NOTHING BUT A **CONCENTRATED EFFORT** BY A **MULTI-NATIONAL CABAL** TO SEE IF THEY CAN ALSO 'CLONE' EARTHQUAKES. WE'RE UNDER GLOBAL ATTACK!!! EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US!



0:3:1:3



THE WHOLE WORLD ISN'T BEING ATTACKED, ONLY PLACES KNOWN TO SPAWN AS ENEMY STRONGHOLDS. HE'S INVADING THESE TERRITORIAL HIDEOUTS, LIKE THIS ONE, FOR A MUTATED STRAIN OF VAMPIRES...

...A MILITIA GROUP KNOWN FOR ITS BRUTAL AND COVERT INVASIONS UPON ANY FACTION STANDING IN THE WAY OF THEIR MASTER'S GOALS...

...FACTIONS THESE SHADOWY TERRORISTS CALL "H3" ENEMIES. HEAVEN, HELL, AND HUMANS. THEIR CURRENT LEADER IS THE ONE CALLED "BLUDD."

AND WHAT HE SEEKS IS EXACTLY THE SAME THING ALL THE OTHERS CRAVE:

POWER!

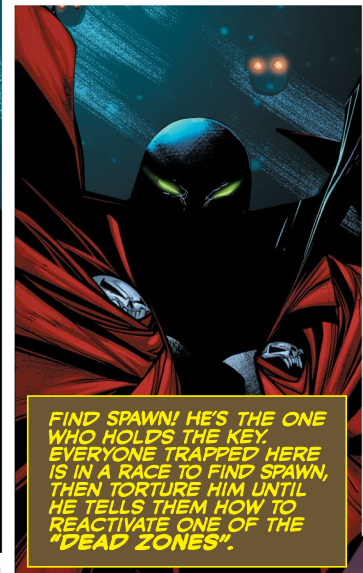
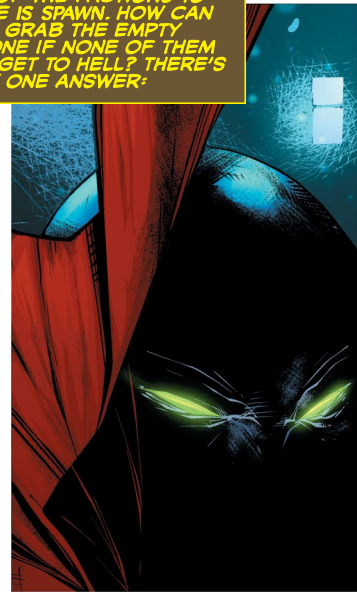
ENOUGH TO DOMINATE OVER EVERY ONE OF YOUR ENEMIES. THE PROBLEM IS THAT THE SOURCE OF THAT POWER RESIDES IN HELL IN THE FORM OF THE EMPTY THRONE LONG SINCE LEFT EMPTY BY THE SLAYING OF THEIR PAST MASTER MALEBOLGIA.

FOR WHOEVER SITS UPON THAT THRONE CONTROLS ALL THOSE BORN OR ORDAINED TO HELL. THAT'S ENOUGH HELLISH FORCES TO BRING BOTH HEAVEN AND EARTH TO ITS KNEES.



SO, A MASSIVE SCRUM HAS BEGUN TO PLAY OUT ON EARTH AS ALL THE 'SHADOW PLAYERS' ATTEMPT TO FIND ANY CRACK IN THE NOW LOCKED 'DEAD ZONES' SCATTERED ACROSS THE GLOBE.

THE PERSON THEY BLAME FOR LOCKING THEM ALL ON EARTH WITH NO WAY FOR ANY OF THE FACTIONS TO LEAVE IS SPAWN. HOW CAN THEY GRAB THE EMPTY THRONE IF NONE OF THEM CAN GET TO HELL? THERE'S ONLY ONE ANSWER:



FIND SPAWN! HE'S THE ONE WHO HOLDS THE KEY. EVERYONE TRAPPED HERE IS IN A RACE TO FIND SPAWN, THEN TORTURE HIM UNTIL HE TELLS THEM HOW TO REACTIVATE ONE OF THE "DEAD ZONES".

WHAT ALL OF THEM ARE
SOON TO FIND OUT IS THAT
SPAWN IS SEARCHING FOR
ANSWERS TOO. AND HE'LL
CIRCLE THE GLOBE TEN
TIMES OVER TO FIND A
WAY TO STOP ALL THE
INSANITY HE'S UNLEASHED.

BECAUSE HE KNOWS IF ANY
OF THEM FIND A FLAW IN
HIS BARRICADES THAT
PERSON WILL NOT ONLY BE
ABLE TO HARNESS THE
POWER AND ENERGY OF
HELL, BUT THEY WILL ALSO
BECOME ITS NEW KING!

SPAWN WILL DIE BEFORE
LETTING THAT HAPPEN, SO
HIS QUEST BEGINS BY GOING
TO AS MANY DARK CORNERS
OF THE WORLD AS HE NEEDS.

HE WILL GET HIS ANSWERS...!

FIND OUT MORE IN

SPAWN
UNIVERSITY



TOWN'S VERSE

COMING JUNE 2021

SPAWNING GROUND

PRESENTS:

THE BREAKDOWN

INTERVIEW WITH TODD McFARLANE

28 years ago, you brought Spawn to the world. There have been many mini-series, 1-Shots and spin-offs, why was this the right time to start a new Spawn Ongoing series?

Actually, I should have done something like this years ago. In fact, as far back as the first year of Image Comics formation, in 1992, the original founders all talked about possibly sharing our characters in some bigger playground. That never came to be, but I never stopped wanting to see some kind of universe put together. But as time passed and a couple of the original founders left Image Comics, it became apparent that all of us getting together wasn't going to happen. So, I tucked the idea away in the back of my brain talking about it off and on over the years. Then once I was nearing issue #300 of the SPAWN comic, I thought it might make a perfect catalyst to actually put something together. So, this is what I am calling the Spawn Universe (which will get a name change down the line so it will be a more encompassing of a brand not centered exclusively around Spawn-type characters).

There have been some teasers out already about the 3 new Ongoing titles. Can you give a sneak peek at what fans might expect?

Sure. Beginning in June (with the release of **SPAWN'S UNIVERSE #1**), I will introduce readers to three new monthly titles. The first (coming in August), is titled **KING SPAWN** and will be a companion book to the original Spawn comic, meaning you can get your Spawn fix twice a month. Then in October, the fans will get a pretty red-hot character in a book called **GUNSLINGER SPAWN #1**. For those not familiar with this guy, I keep saying that I think he can be my 'breakout' character from this new universe launch. The stories will tell tales both about the modern and the western Gunslinger character. Lastly, in December, will come a new super-hero team book called **THE SCORCHED** (since they've all been burnt at some



Issue 1 cover by **TODD McFARLANE**

point in their lives). This group will begin with a bunch of characters already in existence, but my plan is to rotate the team roster so that readers will get to see a wide array of heroes and villains.

In an industry filled with re-boots and re-launches of titles and characters, why do you think that Spawn has stood the test of time?

That's a good question! To tell you the truth, I'm just as surprised as everyone else at his longevity and success. Back in 1992 when Image Comics was first launched, I knew that the first few issues

of my new SPAWN title would sell well as I was just coming off of my run on the Spider-Man title at Marvel. But there was no way for me to be able to predict that after nearly 30 years, my character would still resonate with readers... or that I would still be at the helm of the book. Only Erik Larsen and Savage Dragon has had a more focused creator run for so long, since 1992. But I do think that Spawn's attitude and no-nonsense approach along with that big red cape have played a big part, too.

In the past few years, you have chosen to re-visit some classic characters from the series. One character in particular, Gunslinger Spawn has proven to be a huge fan favorite. Why do you think that is?

First off, he just looks cool. Comics are a visual medium (unlike novels) so the look of a character can play a huge part in why some readers respond to any hero or villain. Obviously, Gunslinger with his tall hat and bullet straps and his long trench coat, all give off a pretty tough guy vibe. Then add in that he is capable of defending himself with an assortment of guns and weapons and you have the making of a classic "loner" type character that many fans seem to be attracted to. And I think that his popularity is



Issue 309 cover by **TODD MCFARLANE**

only going to grow bigger as readers see more pages about him and his past. And just wait until they get to see what Brett Booth and Kevin Keane are doing with him artistically. He has the potential to be a huge breakout character. That's why he will be getting his own monthly title soon (coming in October).

What are you most excited about with the upcoming Spawn's Universe?

To just begin! Look, it's been nearly three decades since the introduction of SPAWN #1 when we launched Image Comics back in 1992, so this concept of growing it into something much, much bigger has been living inside me for quite a while. I just decided that it was time to actually put it in motion and stop thinking about it and just do it! So, whatever plans I may think I have sorted out... this is literally just the first few strides in a race that I see as a long marathon, meaning that however excited I am now at the start of all this, hopefully it will be nothing compared with what will come out of it in the next few years and the next few decades. The unknown can be a thrilling ride if you aren't scared of it.

Obviously, it is going to take dozens and dozens of wonderful creators to get me to the goal of being able to create a meaningful universe filled with characters that people care about, but like I said this is but the beginning and I know the biggest thrills will still be ahead of me.



Spawn's Universe cover by **J. SCOTT CAMPBELL**



Do you have a question for Todd about the upcoming Spawn's Universe? If so, e-mail it to us at: spawningground@mcfarlane.com, and next month, we'll pick a few for Todd to answer!

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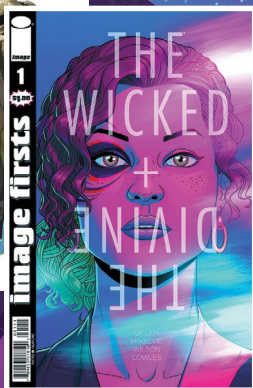
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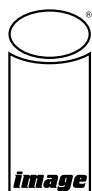
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