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WONDER WOMAN®



BATTLES END!

BY JOHN BYRNE



THE WIND BLOWS HOT
ACROSS THE BROKEN
LAND.

THE SOFT SIGH OF ITS
PASSAGE IS THE ONLY
SOUND IN A LANDSCAPE
THAT BUT A HEARTBEAT
PAST RANG LOUD WITH THE
TERRIBLE MUSIC OF WAR.

BUT THE WAR IS OVER
NOW. THE BATTLE IS ENDED.

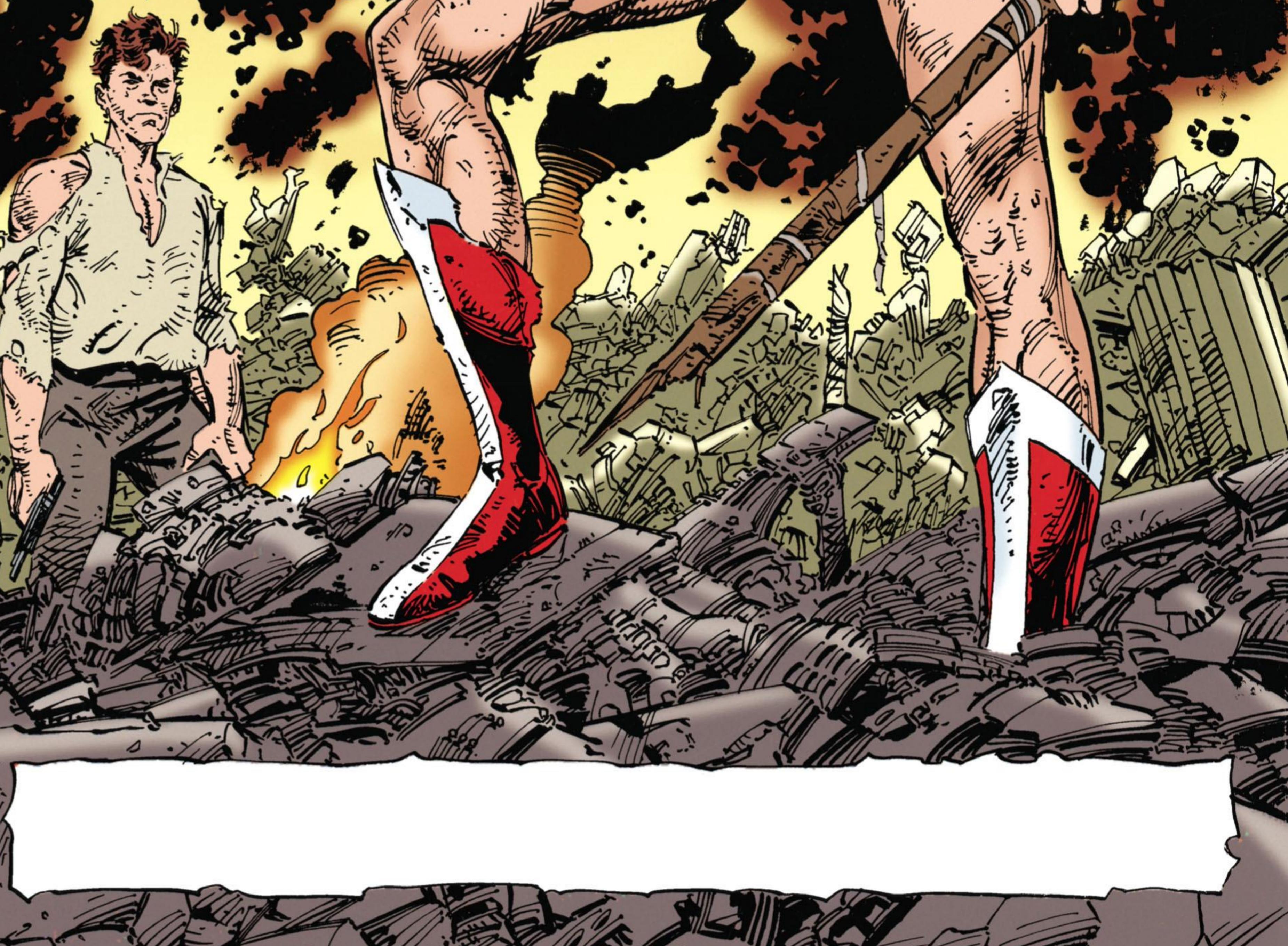
AND THE ERSTWHILE
PRINCESS OF THIS
SHATTERED KINGDOM
LOOKS DOWN UPON THE
CORPSE OF HER DOMAIN...

...AND WONDERS WHY SHE
HAS NO TEARS TO SHED.
WONDERS WHY THE CENTER
OF HER BEING FEELS SO
EMPTY...

...AS THOUGH THE VERY
ESSENCE OF HER SOUL HAS
BEEN SLICKED DRY, TO
LEAVE HER NOTHING BUT A
FRAGILE, HOLLOW SHELL.

A SHELL SUCH AS A BREEZE
MIGHT EASILY SHRINK AND
DESTROY.

LITTLE REMAINS, IT SEEMS,
OF THE AMAZON WARRIOR
AN AWED AND SOMETIMES
DISBELIEVING WORLD HAS
COME TO KNOW AS...



WONDER WOMAN

THESE WERE HER SISTERS,
HER AUNTS, COUSINS, HER
MANY MOTHERS.

THE AMAZONS OF
THEMYSCIRA, WHO RAISED
HER AS ONE OF THEM, AS
THE CHILD NONE OF THEM
COULD BEAR HERSELF...

SECOND GENESIS

PART

FOUR

...FROM THAT DAY THE
LEGENDS TELL SHE WAS
CALLED FORTH FROM
LIFELESS CLAY TO SATISFY
THE LONGINGS OF A
LONELY QUEEN.

WELL DONE,
WONDER WOMAN.
YOUR WARRIORS
FOUGHT WELL.

I AM SUFFICIENTLY
IMPRESSED TO
SAY THIS DAY IS
YOURS.

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SPARE ME
YOUR SARCASM,
LORD OF
APOKOLIPS.

THERE IS NO
VICTORY TO BE
CLAIMED FROM
SO MUCH
BLOODSHED.

NOT EVEN
FOR THE
WINNER.

AND SUCH A
SENSELESS
BATTLE IN THE
END...

...SINCE THAT
WHICH I SOUGHT
CONTINUES TO
ELUDE ME.

AND SINCE
YOUR WARRIOR
PERISHED...

...WHILE
MINE DID
NOT.

THE LAST
RESPITE OF DEATH
IS THEIRS ONLY
WHEN I CHOOSE
TO GRANT IT!

FAREWELL,
THEN, PRINCESS
DIANA.

IT WOULD SEEM
THE KNOWLEDGE
I CRAVE IS NOT
HERE FOR ME TO
TAKE.

I HAVE NO
DOUBT OUR
PATHS WILL
CROSS AGAIN.

I REMAIN CONVINCED
YOU ARE THE DOORWAY
TO WHAT I SEEK. IT
REMAINS ONLY TO
FIND THE PROPER KEY.

WE SHALL MEET
AGAIN. BUT FOR NOW,
I LEAVE
YOU TO BURY YOUR
DEAD IN PEACE!

UNH!

DIANA...

MIKE...

MIKE...

SHHHH...
SHHHHH...

MIKE...

I'M HERE,
DIANA. FOR AS
LONG AS YOU
NEED ME...

...I'LL
ALWAYS BE
HERE

LET THE SANDS FLOW
THROUGH THE HOURGLASS
NOW. ONE HOUR FOLLOWS
ANOTHER, AS EACH DAY
FOLLOWS THE NEXT...

TWO DAYS LATER.

THE LAST OF THE FALLEN
HAVE BEEN GATHERED
FROM THE BATTLEFIELD.

THE BREEZES NOW ARE
STILL. THE SILENCE OF THE
AFTERMATH HAS BEEN
REPLACED WITH THE SLOW,
RHYTHMIC BEATING OF A
FUNERALE DRUM...

...AND THE UNEARTHLY
TRILLING OF TWO
THOUSAND AMAZONS GIVING
VOICE TO THEIR GRIEF.

WE HAVE THE
TALLY, PRINCESS.
ONE THOUSAND, SEVEN
HUNDRED AND SIXTY
FELL IN BATTLE. OF THEM,
ONLY FIVE HUNDRED
AND EIGHT SURVIVED.

TWELVE HUNDRED!
TWELVE HUNDRED
DEAD! NEARLY
HALF OUR NUMBER!

AND WHAT OF
MY MOTHER? I
DO NOT SEE HER
HERE.

IS QUEEN
HIPPOLYTA TO
BE NUMBERED
AMONGST THE
LOST?

WHY, NO,
PRINCESS.
SHE...

PRINCESS...
THE TIME
HAS COME.

BUT BEFORE YOU
DO WHAT YOU
MUST DO...

...THIS OUTSIDER
MUST REMOVE HIM-
SELF TO A PLACE
FROM WHICH HE
CANNOT SEE OR BE
SEEN.

ER... SURE.
I... UNDERSTAND.
YOU'VE GOT SOME
HEAVY STUFF TO
TAKE CARE OF...

NO!

PRINCESS!
YOU CANNOT MEAN
TO LET THIS...
STRANGER SEE THE
SACRED CEREMONIES
OF THE SLAIN?

THAT IS
PRECISELY WHAT
I MEAN. THIS MAN
STOOD BY ME IN THE
VERY HEART OF
BATTLE.

HE HAS
EARNED HIS
PLACE IN THE
CEREMONY.

ER... LOOK...
ER... YOUR MAJESTY,
IT'S OKAY. I CAN
JUST...

NO, MIKE. THERE
IS NOTHING YOU
HAVE NEED TO
SAY.

I AM PRINCESS
OF THEMYSCIRA,
AND THEREFORE
SECOND ONLY TO
MY MOTHER.

MINE IS THE
DECISION, AND
I HAVE MADE
IT.

BE IT UPON
YOUR HEAD THEN,
PRINCESS.

LET THE
SACRED FLAMES
BE LIT.

YES.

"LET THE PURIFYING FLAMES TRANSPORT OUR FALLEN SISTERS TO A PLACE WHERE THEY CAN FINALLY KNOW PEACE."



... WHILE WHAT THE
AMAZONS MIGHT THINK AN
AGE...

... FOUR THOUSAND MILES
AWAY MIGHT SEEM A
SINGLE FLUTTER OF AN
AGING HEART.

ARE YOU WELL,
MISTRESS? THAT
LAST SESSION IN
THE RENEWING
FLAMES...

... TOOK NEARLY
AS MUCH FROM ME
AS IT GAVE, YES.

THE PROCESS OF
REJUVENATION
EXACTS A GREATER
PRICE WITH EACH
APPLICATION.

WHICH IS WHY
IT IS INCREASINGLY
IMPERATIVE THAT
WE COMPLETE MY
COLLECTION.

TELL ME WHAT MORE
YOU HAVE LEARNED
OF WONDER WOMAN,
AS I SLEPT.

PRECIOUS
LITTLE,
MISTRESS.

THERE IS NO DOUBT
THAT SHE IS HERE,
IN GATEWAY CITY

...BUT SHE HAS
NOT BEEN SEEN
FOR THE
BETTER PART OF
A WEEK.

THEN YOU WOULD
BE WELL ADVISED
TO SPLIT APART THE
VERY HEAVENS AND
EARTH TO FIND HER
ONCE AGAIN.

MISTRESS!

...OOH-HH...

I AM COLD, WARLY!
MY BLOOD IS ICE-
WATER! MY BONES ARE
ALL OF FROZEN
STONE!

I HAVE GOOD NEWS AT LEAST, MISTRESS. JASON BLOOD HAS BEEN SEEN IN LONDON. ALREADY YOUR AGENTS ARE MONITORING HIS EVERY MOVE.

...LONDON...

...SO FAR... AND YET... I MUST DO WHAT I MUST DO...

I AM WEAK ALMOST TO THE POINT OF DEATH...

...BUT I SHALL NOT LET THE REAPER TAKE ME SO LONG AS THERE IS A SINGLE BREATH REMAINING IN THIS FAILING SHELL!

"LET THE SPELL OF TRANSPORTATION NOW BE CAST!"

"LET IT SWIRL ABOUT THE ANCIENT STONE AND TIMBER OF THIS HOUSE."

"LET IT CARRY ALL ACROSS THE BROAD FACE OF THE WORLD..."

"...THAT I MAY CLAIM ANOTHER NECESSARY INGREDIENT FOR THE POTION THAT WILL FOREVER FREE ME OF THIS COFFIN OF FLESH!!"

ELSEWHERE...

ON THE ISLAND ONCE
CALLED PARADISE, THE
WORK OF HEALING HAS
BEGUN.

MOST POWERFUL OF ALL
THE AMAZONS, IT HAS
FALLEN TO DIANA TO CLEAR
AWAY THE RUINS OF ONE
AGE...

...SO THAT THE BUILDING OF
ANOTHER MAY BEGIN.

MANY MUST SURELY BE THE THOUGHTS THAT FILL HER MIND THIS DAY.

MANY AND DARK.

BUT IT IS NOT FOR US TO KNOW THOSE THOUGHTS.

NOT FOR US TO SHARE THE WEIGHT OF PAIN SHE BEARS UPON HER SUPPLE SHOULDERS.

AND FOR THIS, LET US NOW BE TRULY GRATEFUL!

PRINCESS, THE TIME HAS COME FOR US TO TALK.

IT HAS INDEED.

AND WE CAN BEGIN WITH THE FATE OF MY MOTHER. WHERE IS HIPPOLYTA?

GONE,
PRINCESS.

IN THE WEEKS
THAT FOLLOWED
YOUR DEPARTURE
FROM THEMYSCIRA,
SHE FELL DEEPER
AND DEEPER INTO
DEPRESSION.

"IN TIME, THAT DEPRESSION
BECAME SO GREAT IT
CONSUMED HER EVERY
WAKING MOMENT."

WHAT CAN BE
DONE ABOUT
THE QUEEN?

IN HER PRESENT
STATE SHE IS
NOTHING MORE
THAN A
FIGUREHEAD.

TRUE.

BUT WHAT
CAN WE DO? SHE
WAS APPOINTED
BY THE GODS
THEMSELVES.



BUT THOSE GODS
SEEM LATELY TO
HAVE TURNED THEIR
EYES AWAY FROM
US, SISTER.

OUR PRAYERS
PASS
INTO THE VOID,
UNNOTICED.

THE TIME FOR
DISCUSSION
IS PASSED!

HMM..?

NOW IS
THE TIME FOR
ACTION.

QUEEN
HIPPOLYTA!

PHILIPPUS..?
WHY DO YOU
ADDRESS ME
IN SUCH A
TONE?



MY QUEEN, YOU KNOW ME TO BE ONE WHO HAS SERVED THE THRONE OF THEMYSCIRA LOYALLY FOR ALL OUR THOUSANDS OF YEARS.

YOU KNOW I WOULD NOT SPEAK THUS TO YOU UNLESS THE NEED WAS GREATER THAN THE DEMANDS OF FEALTY.

YES... SAY ON, PHILIPPUS.

MAJESTY, IN THE DAYS SINCE ARTEMIS FELL AND DIANA DEPARTED, YOU HAVE SERVED US ONLY POORLY AS A QUEEN.

THROUGHOUT THE KINGDOM THE ABSENCE OF YOUR HAND AND WISDOM IS FELT BY ALL.

I KNOW.

AND SO I HAVE AT LAST COME TO A DECISION.

THE GODS APPOINTED ME TO THIS ROLE, AND THEY ALONE CAN TAKE THE CROWN AWAY FROM ME.

STILL, IT LIES WITHIN THE PROVINCE OF MY POWER THAT I MAY PASS SOME PORTION OF MY AUTHORITY TO ANOTHER.

THIS, THEN, I NOW CHOOSE TO DO.

MAJESTY..?

THOUGH I CANNOT
WITHIN MY LIFE RELINQUISH
THE BURDEN OF MY CROWN,
I CAN APPOINT ANOTHER TO
SIT IN MY PLACE IN MY
ABSENCE.

I MEAN TO LEAVE
PARADISE ISLAND,
PHILIPPUS. AND I CHOOSE
YOU TO RULE HERE
IN MY STEAD...

...FOR HOWEVER
MANY YEARS I
MAY BE GONE.

YEARS...?
MAJESTY...

LET NO MORE
BE SAID OF THE
MATTER.

LET NO NOTICE
BE TAKEN OF MY
DEPARTURE. I SHALL
LEAVE UNDER THE
COVER OF NIGHT,
ALONE IN A SMALL
BOAT.

AND WHEREVER
I MAY
GO...

"...LET IT BE A
SECRET KNOWN TO
NONE BUT THE
WIND AND THE TIDE."

AND SAYING
THIS, SHE LEFT,
NOT TO BE SEEN
AGAIN BY ANY HERE
ON THEMYSCIRA.

...NO...

NO!!

DIANA??

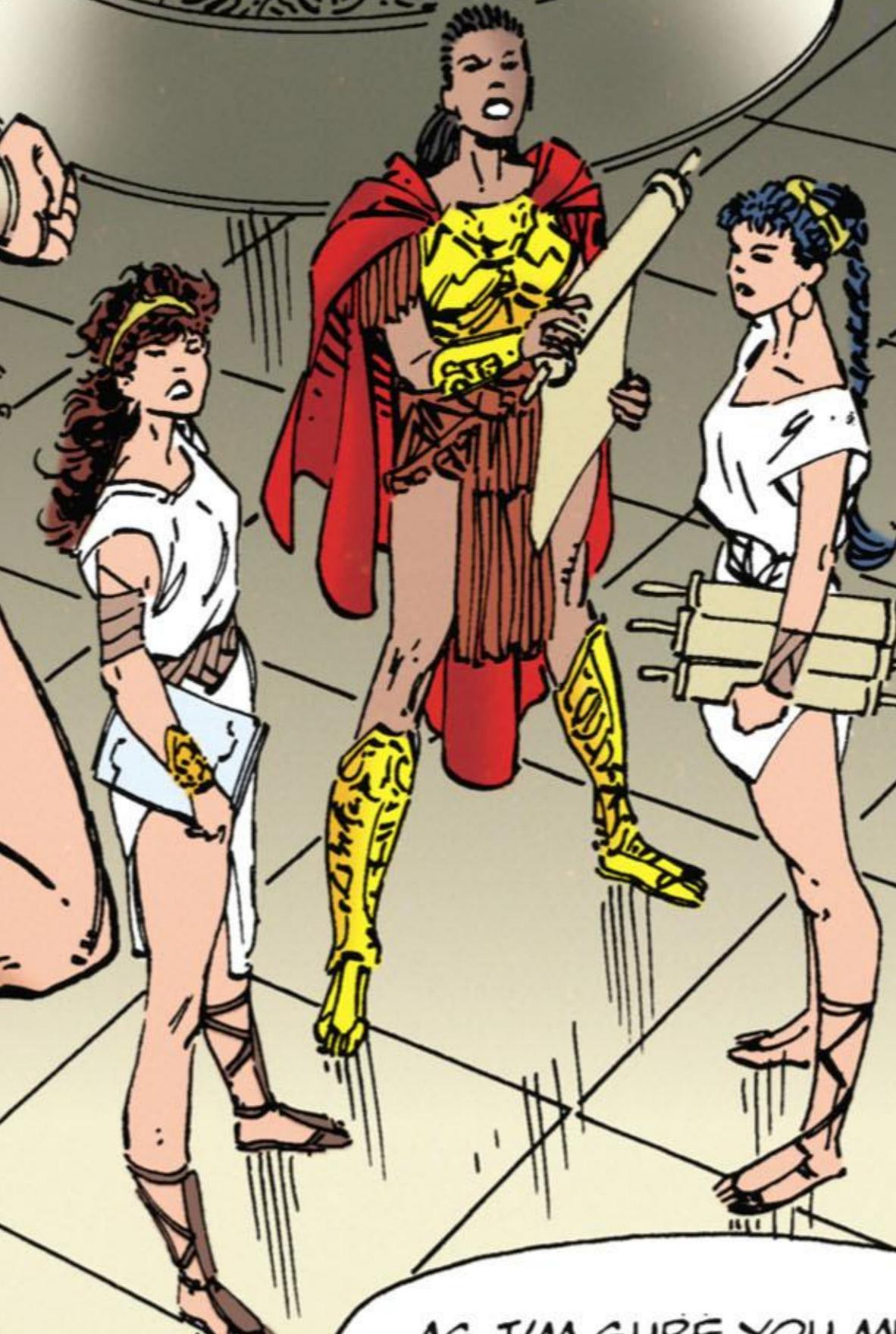
"YOU KNOW, I DON'T THINK IT REALLY OCCURRED TO ME UNTIL JUST NOW-- NOT ALL YOU AMAZONS ARE AS POWERFUL AS WONDER WOMAN, ARE YOU?"

"NO. WE ARE EACH OF US MUCH STRONGER THAN A MORTAL MAN OR WOMAN, BUT ONLY PRINCESS DIANA HAS BEEN SO BLESSED BY THE GODS."

"THOUGH AT PRESENT I SUSPECT SHE FEELS HERSELF NOT SO GREATLY BLESSED AT ALL!"

"PHILIPPUS!"

"WELCOME, PRINCESS. I AM SORRY I HAVE NOT HAD THE OPPORTUNITY BEFORE NOW TO GREET YOU IN A PROPER FASHION."



"MY MOTHER. WHERE IS HIPPOLYTA???"



"CLAIM...?"

"AS I'M SURE YOU MUST HAVE BEEN TOLD BY NOW, PRINCESS, SHE IS NO LONGER HERE. WE SEARCHED THE ISLAND FROM ONE END TO THE OTHER, AND FOUND NO TRACE OF HER."

"AND NOW IT IS MY TURN TO ASK A QUESTION."

"NOW THAT YOU HAVE RETURNED TO THEMYSCIRA, IS IT YOUR INTENT TO CLAIM THE THRONE?"



"IT IS YOUR RIGHT, PRINCESS. YOU ARE THE TRUE HEIR TO THE CROWN."

DO IT WONDER WOMAN! FROM WHAT I KNOW OF YOU, I CAN'T THINK OF ANYONE WHO'D MAKE A BETTER QUEEN OF THE AMAZONS!

...QUEEN...

ALL MY LIFE I HAVE KNOWN A DAY LIKE THIS WOULD SURELY COME.

ALL MY LIFE I HAVE KNOWN I WOULD EVENTUALLY BE CALLED UPON TO WEAR THE CROWN.

BUT ALWAYS, WHEN IMAGINATION PAINTED THAT SCENE IN MY MIND, I SAW IT AS THE NATURAL CONSEQUENCE OF MY MOTHER'S DEATH.

NOT A CONSEQUENCE OF HER SELF-BANISHMENT FOLLOWING A SHAMEFUL MISUSE OF THE POWER THE GODS GRANTED HER.

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, WONDER WOMAN?

I THINK YOU HAVE JUST SAID IT FOR ME, MIKE.

TO WEAR A CROWN AND SIT UPON A THRONE REQUIRES MUCH MORE THAN THE ARBITRARY DICTATES OF LINEAGE.

HIPPOLYTA'S DAUGHTER I MAY BE, IN THE EYES OF THE AMAZONS AND THE GODS...

...BUT I WAS NOT TRAINED TO BE THE KIND OF LEADER THEMYSCIRA NEEDS NOW OVER ALL.

WEEKS AGO I LEFT THIS ISLAND, CERTAIN IN MY MIND IT WOULD BE YEARS BEFORE I WOULD EVER FEEL AGAIN HER SOIL BENEATH MY FEET.

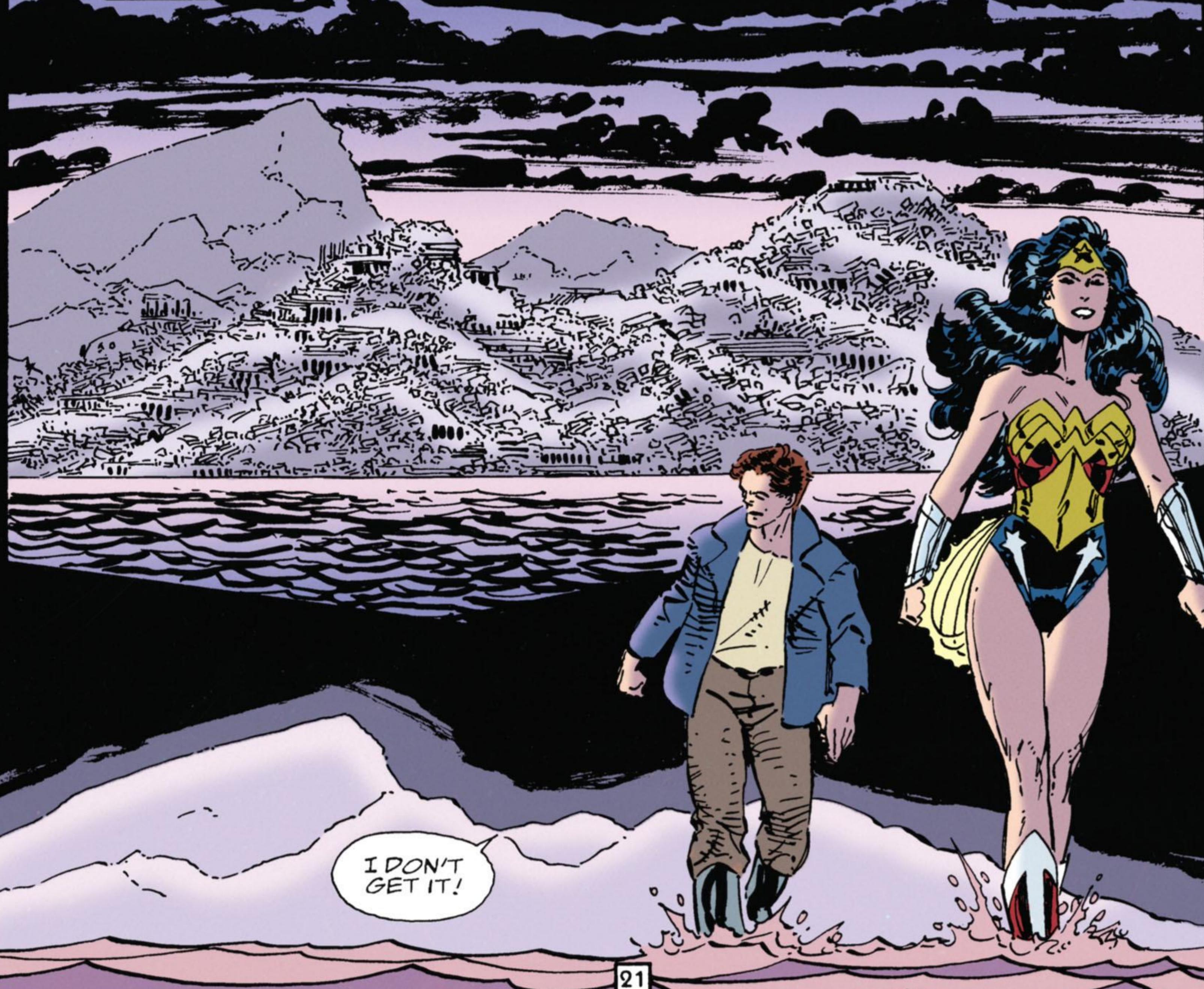
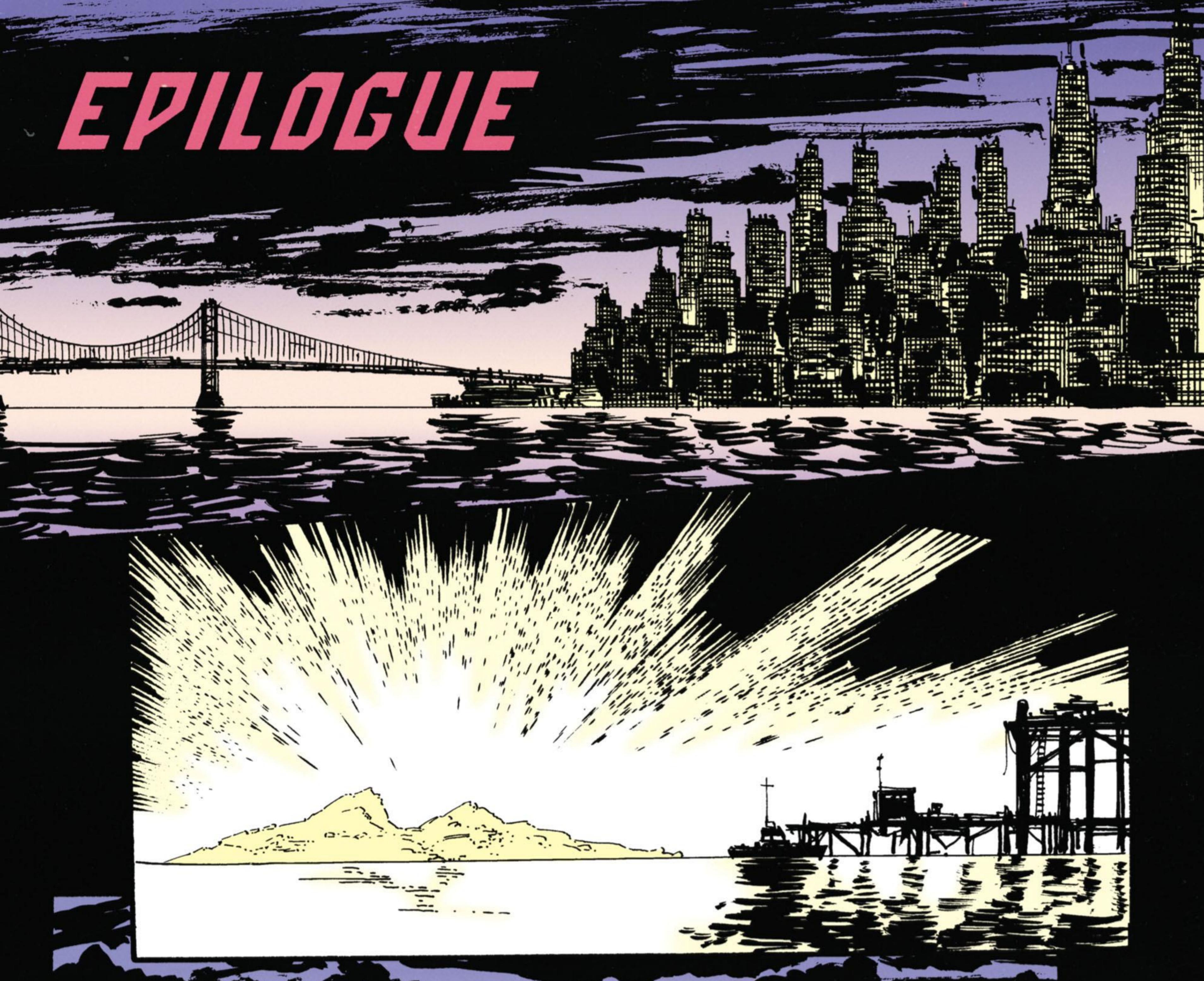
A CRUEL FATE CHOSE NOT TO LET THAT BE THE CASE, HOWEVER--THOUGH IN MY RETURN I HAVE LEARNED ONLY THAT MY DECISION WAS THE RIGHT ONE.

RULE HERE, PHILIPPIUS. RULE WISELY, AND IN MY MOTHER'S NAME, THE THRONE IS NOT FOR ME.

MY LOT HAS BEEN CAST ANOTHER WAY. I AM NOT A RULER, NOT A QUEEN.

NOW AND FOREVER, I AM WONDER WOMAN!

EPILOGUE



I ALWAYS THOUGHT PARADISE ISLAND WAS SUPPOSED TO BE IN THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE OR SOMETHING -- NOT OFF THE COAST OF CALIFORNIA!!

THE MYSCIRA IS NOT PART OF THIS WORLD AS YOU KNOW IT, MIKE.

IT EXISTS ON ANOTHER PLANE, AND WHEN IT TOUCHES ON THE WORLD OF MAN...

...IT DOES SO IN WHATEVER PLACE MY SISTERS CHOOSE FOR IT.

THAT, MORE THAN ANYTHING, MAKES IT IMPOSSIBLE TO KNOW WHERE MY MOTHER MIGHT HAVE GONE.

YOU'RE REALLY NOT GONNA SEARCH FOR HER, THEN?

NO. THIS IS A TIME TO LOOK FORWARD, NOT BACK.

ALL MY LIFE I HAVE BEEN ONE THING, NOW IT IS AT LAST TIME TO BE... SOMETHING ELSE.

I SUSPECT THAT WILL BE CLOSER TO MY TRUE SELF THAN ANYTHING I HAVE KNOWN BEFORE.

WELL, ANYTHING I CAN DO TO HELP...

I THINK YOU CAN BE OF GREAT HELP, MICHAEL SCHORR! I AM ABOUT TO EMBARK ON A QUEST FOR THE FUTURE.

COME, MIKE. COME AND HELP ME FIND IT!

GLADLY.

BUT... I DID WANT TO ASK...

DO YOU REALLY KNOW SUPERMAN...?

NEXT: LIFELINES!