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The Adventures of
**AUGUSTA
WILND**
THE LAST STORY



DEMATTEIS • GOGTZILAS • BADILLA

The Adventures of AUGUSTA WIND

THE LAST STORY

STORY SO FAR:

After attempting—and failing—to rescue Sadley Mistaykin from the nightmares of Gloomworld, Augusta and her friends decide to bring the fight directly to their enemy. They set off to find the Story Killer, only to discover that the Killer has found them!

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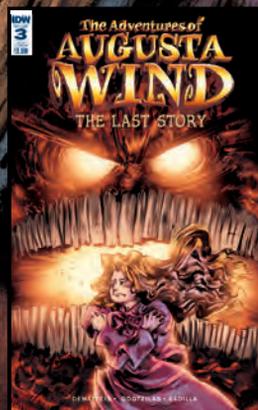
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BUT, ALIVE OR DEAD, THIS ISN'T MY STORY. THIS IS THE EXTRAORDINARY ACCOUNT OF THE GIRL WITH THE UMBRELLA...

The Adventures of AUGUSTA WIND

BOOK TWO: THE LAST STORY CHAPTER THREE: OMEGUS

HELLO, WIND—WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU.

HAVEN'T WE, CHILDREN?

NO SOONER HAD AUGUSTA, MR. SNABBIT, UPTON SNUFF AND THE OMNIPHANT ESCAPED FROM THE NIGHTMARES OF GLOOMWORLD, THEN THEY FOUND THEMSELVES FACE-TO-FACE WITH THE ENEMY THEY'D LONG BEEN HUNTING:

THE UN-DREAMER WHOSE GOAL WAS TO ERASE EVERY CHARACTER EVER IMAGINED, EVERY PLOT, EVERY THEME, EVERY TALE EVER TOLD. THE BEAST ONCE KNOWN AS THE TERRIBLE SOMETHING, BUT ULTIMATELY REVEALED AS...



...THE STORY KILLER.

STRANGE, ISN'T IT? YOU SET OUT IN SEARCH OF ME—HOPING TO FREE THE TELLERS UPON WHOSE IMAGINATIONS THE ENTIRE STORIVERSE RESTS—

—BUT RATHER THAN HIDE FROM YOU, I ALLOW YOU TO FIND ME!

RATHER KIND OF ME—DON'T YOU THINK?

DON'T LISTEN TO HIM!

OR HER. OR WHATEVER IT IS!

HIS EVERY THOUGHT IS A CORRUPTION! HIS EVERY WORD IS A LIE!

IF YOU WANT TO SHOW US KINDNESS—THEN RELEASE THE TELLERS AND—

OMNIPHANT?

HOW SMALL... HOW INEFFECTUAL... THEY ARE NOW. I COULD CRUSH THEM INTO DUST WITHOUT EFFORT— REMOVING THEM FROM YOUR STORY SO COMPLETELY—

—THAT YOU WOULDN'T REMEMBER THAT THEY EVER EXISTED.

BUT I WON'T DO THAT, AUGUSTA— BECAUSE I'M NOT THE MONSTER YOU IMAGINE ME TO BE. NO—

—I'M YOUR FRIEND. PERHAPS THE BEST FRIEND YOU'VE EVER HAD.

AND ALL I REALLY WANT TO DO IS TALK...JUST THE TWO OF US—

HHRRNN

Upton?

—GIRL TO GIRL.

"YOU'RE NOT A GIRL OR A MAN," AUGUSTA SAID, WILLING HERSELF TO A TOWERING HEIGHT THAT EQUALED THE STORY KILLER'S, CALLING UP EVERY SHRED OF BRAVADO AND DEFIANCE SHE COULD MUSTER, "ALTHOUGH YOU'VE PLAYED AT BEING BOTH! NO—"

—YOU'RE JUST A... THING THAT WRAPS ITSELF IN WHATEVER FORM SUITS YOUR MOOD— AND YOUR DARK INTENTIONS!

YOU DESTROYED CASTLE ZERO! KIDNAPPED THE TELLERS!

CHASED ME TO EARTH AND—

OH, MY DEAR, SWEET, EVER-SO NAIVE AUGUSTA—

—YOU DON'T REALLY KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT WHO I AM...WHAT I'VE BEEN THROUGH...AND THE GOOD I HOPE TO ACHIEVE.

"GOOD"? YOU?

YES. ARE YOU, PERHAPS, SO ATTACHED TO YOUR DISTORTED IMAGE OF ME—

—THAT YOU'RE AFRAID TO HEAR THE TRUTH?

I'M NOT AFRAID OF ANYTHING! I—

Uh... Hello up there!

WHAT IS IT, SNABBIT?

Shouldn't we be running for our lives instead of listening to that lunatic's lies?

RUN IF YOU MUST. THIS... "LUNATIC" WON'T TRY TO STOP YOU.

BUT IF YOU HARBOR ANY HOPES OF SAVING THE TELLERS—AND THE STORIVERSE YOU SO DEARLY LOVE—I'D STRONGLY CONSIDER STAYING—

—AND HEARING WHAT I HAVE TO SAY.

DESPITE HER BRAVE WORDS, AUGUSTA WAS AFRAID. WHO WOULDN'T BE?

TELL ME.

BUT IT'S HOW WE MANAGE OUR FEAR THAT REALLY MATTERS...

...IN THE END.

EXCELLENT.

NO TRICKS NOW, WIND. NO SECRET PLANS. JUST SIT UPON THE STARS AND LISTEN WITH AN OPEN MIND AND HEART—

— TO A STORY
THAT BEGINS,
AS ALL GOOD
STORIES MUST:

ONCE
UPON A
TIME...

...THERE WAS A SLEEPER ON THE OCEAN OF
STORY. AND FROM HIS COSMIC IMAGINATION,
FROM HIS DEEPEST DREAMS, THE LIMITLESS
STORIVERSE SPANG: EVERY BEING AND
THING, EVERY TALE THAT EVER WAS...

...SPREADING OUT
ACROSS THE NOW AND
THEN, THE WOULD-BE,
COULD-BE AND MAY-BE.

ALL OF THIS WAS BORN OUT OF THE
SLEEPER'S LONELINESS; FOR TO BE
INFINITELY ONE, AS S/HE WAS, IS
ALSO TO BE INFINITELY ALONE. AND
S/HE NEEDED SOMETHING TO FILL
THAT DESPERATE NEED.

SHE NEEDED STORY.

SO THE SLEEPER PLACED AN
ASPECT OF HERSELF, AN
INTIMATE PART OF HER OWN
CONSCIOUSNESS, IN THE HEART
OF THE ENDLESS STORIVERSE:
A TELLER—RESPONSIBLE FOR
KEEPING THE COSMIC TALE
ALIVE AND GROWING: STORIES
WITHIN STORIES, EXPANDING
OUT INTO FOREVER.

AND YOU, AUGUSTA WIND, WERE
THE FIRST TELLER ENTRUSTED
WITH THIS TERRIBLE, WONDERFUL
TASK. BORN, OUT OF A DREAM,
ON NOWHERE ISLAND, WHERE YOU,
IN TURN, DREAMED THE OTHER
TELLERS INTO BEING.

OR SO YOU'VE BEEN
LED TO BELIEVE.

BUT YOU WEREN'T THE FIRST, AUGUSTA WIND. THERE WAS A TELLER BEFORE YOU: BORN FROM THE HEART OF THE SLEEPER'S DESIRES. CHARGED WITH A RAW POWER ALMOST EQUAL TO HIS OWN. CALL HER THE PRIME TELLER. CALL HER... CALL HER...



...OMEGUS!