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387



DOCTOR STRANGE



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Flame
POPOPO
POPOPOKER

Vegas-Style
ROLL DICE
WITH VILLAINS

STEPHEN STRANGE WAS A PREEMINENT SURGEON UNTIL A CAR ACCIDENT DAMAGED THE NERVES IN HIS HANDS. HIS EGO DROVE HIM TO SCOUR THE GLOBE FOR A MIRACLE CURE. INSTEAD, HE FOUND A MYSTERIOUS WIZARD CALLED THE ANCIENT ONE WHO TAUGHT HIM MAGIC AND THAT THERE ARE THINGS IN THIS WORLD BIGGER THAN HIMSELF. THESE LESSONS ENABLED STEPHEN TO BECOME THE SORCERER SUPREME, EARTH'S FIRST DEFENSE AGAINST ALL MANNER OF MAGICAL THREATS. HIS PATIENTS CALL HIM...

DOCTOR STRANGE

LAST
TIME...

STEPHEN STRANGE IS ONCE AGAIN THE SORCERER SUPREME AFTER A BRIEF PERIOD IN WHICH "LORD OF LIES" LOKI HAD TRICKED STEPHEN INTO BELIEVING LOKI WAS THE RIGHTFUL TITLEHOLDER. FOR HIS FIRST ACT BACK IN THE CLOAK, STRANGE WANTED TO REDEEM HIMSELF TO THE WORLD AND THE FRIENDS HE'D DISAPPOINTED. HE RESTORED LAS VEGAS AND THE CITIZENS WHO'D LOST THEIR LIVES DURING HYDRA'S RAID...AND INADVERTENTLY ALLOWED THE MANIFESTATION OF MEPHISTO'S HELLISH HOTEL *INFERNO* ON THE STRIP, RELEASING THE DEMON'S POWER. MEPHISTO OFFERED TO LEAVE IF STRANGE COULD WIN A GAME OF BRIMSTONE BLACKJACK, BUT STEPHEN CHEATED, FORFEITING THE DEAL AND EARNING MEPHISTO'S WRATH, DOLED OUT BY THE NOW-POSSESSED THOR.

THE EVENTS OF THIS ISSUE TAKE PLACE CONCURRENTLY WITH THOSE IN *DOCTOR STRANGE: DAMNATION #2*.

"BLEEDING NEON"
PART TWO

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AS A DOCTOR, I SHOULD BE ABLE TO TELL YOU WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME.

(I CAN'T. I ONLY KNOW IT'S BAD. THAT A DEMONIC THOR SHATTERED MY LEGS WITH A BURNING HAMMER.)

AS THIS REALM'S APPOINTED AND *RIGHTFUL* SORCERER SUPREME...I SHOULD BE ABLE TO FIX THIS. ALL OF THIS.



(I CAN'T. I CAN BARELY KEEP A THOUGHT IN MY HEAD. FIGHTING JUST TO STAY CONSCIOUS.)

AS A MAN... I SHOULD...

...I SHOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER TO THOSE AROUND ME...

THEN...THEN MAYBE I WOULDN'T DIE ALO--

STEPHEN! STEPHEN, CAN YOU HEAR ME?!



WONG?

STEPHEN? I CAN'T SEE YOU. CAN BARELY HEAR YOU. TOO MUCH DEMONIC RESONANCE IN HERE.

LISTEN TO ME VERY CLOSELY.





"YOU ARE NOT ALONE."

"BATS CAME TO ME. HE TOLD ME WHAT HAPPENED. WHAT YOU HAVE DONE."

"I'VE ASSEMBLED A GROUP OF FIGHTERS TO COME AND HELP YOU, STEPHEN."



"GHOST RIDER, ELSA BLOODSTONE, VOODOO AND MAN-THING, BLADE, MOON KNIGHT, IRON FIST AND--"



"WONG, I DON'T UNDERSTAND. WHY THEM? THEY'RE ALL--"

"DAMNED OR DEAD? YES, THEY ARE. THAT'S QUITE BY DESIGN."



"YOU SEE, STEPHEN, WHILE YOU'VE BEEN INSIDE THE CASINO DOING GOD KNOWS WHAT, LAS VEGAS HAS QUITE LITERALLY GONE TO HELL.

"ANY SLIGHT SIN, ANY INFRACTION, IS NOW PUNISHABLE BY FORFEIT OF ONE'S SOUL TO MEPHISTO.

"I'M AFRAID THE AVENGERS FOUND THIS OUT THE HARD WAY.

"BUT OUR CREW, WELL, THOSE OF THEM THAT STILL HAVE SOULS WOULDN'T EXACTLY BE THE MOST DESIRABLE ACQUISITIONS FOR EVEN THE LOWLIEST OF DEMONS.

"IT'S NOT IDEAL, BUT WE HAVE A PLAN. AND WE'RE ON OUR WAY."



ALL YOU NEED TO DO IS BE ON YOUR FEET AND READY TO LEAVE WHEN WE SHOW UP.



CAN YOU DO THAT, STEPHEN?



...
YES.



OKAY. STAY PUT. WE'RE ON OUR WAY. AND... STEPHEN...

BE CAREFUL, OLD FRIEND. THIS ISN'T LIKE THE OTHER TIMES.



WONG, WONG...MY LEGS...I CAN'T...

STEPHEN? CAN YOU STILL HEAR ME?

...PLEASE, HELP...