

PAGE ONE

Panel 1: Wide shot of Marley Pak (13 years old) sitting up in bed, half-asleep, eyes drooping, staring at her alarm clock. The clock reads 3:15 AM. The room is dark, but the faint glow from a streetlamp outside her window outlines her figure. The room is filled with band posters, books, and comics, all with a spooky, punk vibe.

1. **Marley** (caption): It wasn't a bad dream that woke me up. It was that *feeling* you get when someone is watching you.

Panel 2: Close-up of Marley's eyes. Her pupils widen as she senses something off. Her brow furrows with concern, trying to brush off the eerie sensation.

2. **Marley** (caption): I tried to ignore it. I turned over and closed my eyes...

Panel 3: Medium shot of Marley tossing her blanket off her body, annoyed but uneasy, sitting up fully, but too scared to swing her feet off the bed.

3. **Marley** (caption): I should've stayed in bed.
4. **Marley** (caption): But I was also like, c'mon, Marley... you're thirteen.

Panel 4: Shot from the floor, looking up at Marley as she peers down, willing herself to check under the bed.

5. **Marley** (caption): You can't be scared of monsters under the bed.

Panel 5: Close-up of Marley's hand reaching down to the floor, about to lift the edge of the bed skirt, oblivious to the faint glow intensifying under the bed.

6. **Marley** (caption): So, I stupidly looked under the bed.

PAGE TWO

Panel 1: Full shot as a massive clawed hand bursts out from under the bed, wrapping itself around Marley's legs and torso. The hand is long, thin, and grotesque, covered in dark, writhing shadows. The clawed hand violently yanks Marley's body to the floor. Her eyes are wide with panic.

1. **MARLEY** (muffled scream): Mmmmmph!

Panel 2: Close-up of Marley's face, horrified, as the shadowy hand pulls her under. Her fingers claw at the floor, trying to stop herself from being sucked into the glowing portal under her bed.

2. **SFX** (floor scratching): SCRCHHHHHHH!
3. **Marley** (caption): People don't tell you this part about growing up...

Panel 3: A medium shot from the other side of the glowing portal shows Marley being pulled through. The shadows twist and warp around her. The dark, eerie portal opens into the decaying landscape of the NetherRealm. It would be cool if this shot felt like we're looking at the NetherRealm upside down.

4. **Marley** (caption): ...that one minute you're fine, and the next your world gets yanked out from under you.

PAGE THREE

Splash: Marley tumbles through a swirling vortex of dark clouds and eerie, shadowy figures. Below her, the grotesque, twisted landscape of **The NetherRealm** stretches out like a nightmare from a Hieronymus Bosch painting—warped and terrifying. (see: tinyurl.com/BOSCHELL).



Hollowkin, with clawed hands and twisted faces, are waiting, eager to grab her. They're monstrous, with elongated limbs and faces resembling **skulls**. Design these guys however you want, but I would pull inspiration from something like this:

<https://static.wikia.nocookie.net/villains/images/c/c9/Hollowkin.jpg/revision/latest?cb=20120730185858>

NOTE: We want to keep this book for all ages, so let's not lean too hard into anything super graphic. I don't want to neuter the horror of the NetherRealm, so I think it's essential to find the right balance.

1. **Hollowkin 1:** Ssshe'sss ours!
2. **Hollowkin 2:** *For the massster!*
3. **Marley** (caption): I didn't know where I was. Or what was happening, but I knew it was about to get way worse.

What could be cool is having the titles formed out of the sand. Play around with it.

Marley's Monsters

PART 1: "There's A World"

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PAGE FOUR

Panel 1: Marley Pak (13) sits in her classroom, looking bored with her hand on her cheek as she listens to her teacher. She doesn't notice yet, but her dad, Scott Pak, watches her with a look of sadness on his face. Despite his efforts to appear strong, the weight of his grief makes him look much older than his mid-40s. In front of Scott, the Principal strides towards the classroom door.

1. **Marley** (caption): And as bad as it was about to get, nothing would top the worst day of my life...
2. **Marley** (caption): It started as a normal day. Dad rushed out, late for work. Mom dropped me off at school. PB&J for lunch.
3. **Marley** (caption): Another boring Monday.

Panel 2: The Principal enters, looking apologetic to the teacher and distressed at the news they're about to deliver.

4. **Marley** (caption): I was zoned out, half-listening to Mrs. Wallace talk about fractions, when I received the worst news of my life.
5. **Principal:** Sorry to interrupt your class, Mrs. Wallace, but I need Marley Pak to come with me. Her father is here to take her home.

Panel 3: Marley silently gathers her things and follows the Principal to the hallway, where her dad's still watching. As she exits, all eyes in the classroom are on Marley.

NO COPY.

Panel 4: Marley and Scott are in the parking lot, nearing his car. Marley stops in her tracks to demand some answers.

6. **Marley** (caption): I didn't say anything until we were outside the school.
7. **Marley** (caption): But the whole time, I could feel something wasn't right.
8. **Marley:** What's going on, Dad? Why are you picking me up early? Where's Mom?

Panel 5: Scott turns to her and takes a deep breath before delivering the devastating news. Marley gasps and covers her mouth in shock.

9. **Scott Pak:** There's no easy way to... Munchkin... Your mom...
10. **Scott Pak:** She's... she's gone. I'm so sorry.
11. **Marley** (caption): It didn't make sense. The words hit me, but they didn't stick.

PAGE FIVE

Panel 1: A few days have passed since the previous page, and Marley's in her pajamas, still in bed in her room. Marley's room has cool punk band posters on the walls. Let's throw a poster for my previous book, "Galaxys For Hire," in there (I can get you art) and any creator-owned books you have. Also, the room should have a ton of books and comics, all mostly in the horror genre. All this cool stuff surrounds her, but she is still trying to process her loss.

1. **Marley** (caption): The next few days are a total blur.
2. **Marley** (caption): I don't eat that much. I can't sleep at all.
3. **Marley** (caption): Dad's like a zombie, shuffling around the house and turning the TV loud so I can't hear him sobbing.

Panel 2: At the wake, Marley sits alone near a refreshment table. She's deeply depressed as Scott sits down beside her.

4. **Scott Pak:** Hey, munchkin, how're you holding up?
5. **Marley:** Fine, I guess. I dunno.
6. **Scott Pak:** It's... normal not to know. Or to feel... all over the place.
7. **Marley:** Yeah.
8. **Scott Pak:** But we'll be okay. You know that, right?

Panel 4: Scott holds up a charm bracelet. The bracelet only has a few charms, but they're essential: a small key, a silhouette of a dog, a lightning bolt, and a tiny house. Something like the image below, but don't worry about too much detail.



9. **Scott Pak:** She would've wanted you to have these. She never took them off... not once in all the years I knew her.

PAGE SIX/SEVEN

Panel 1: Wide shot of the Squad as they burst onto the scene in full action mode. MEET THE SQUAD! Coming to rescue Marley. **FRANK, VASILE, URBI,** and **WERE-JILL** (werewolf-form Jill) - menacing and badass! Frank is at the front, swinging his massive club rippling with electricity, while Urbi conjures a whirlwind of sand, Vasile emerges from the shadows with his glowing nagaika whip, and Were-Jill lunges forward, teeth bared, going straight for a Hollowkin. Marley is on the ground, still wrapped in the Hollowkin's grip, wide-eyed with terror.

1. **FRANK:** Show's over, freaks! Time for the ska-core encore!
2. **URBI:** Every cycle begins in blood. This one is no differently.
3. **WERE-JILL:** Guess I'm having Hollowkin for dinner tonight.
4. **VASILE:** Stop quipping! Focus before they regroup.
5. **WERE-JILL:** I don't think Urbi's cryptic ramblings count as quips.

Panel 2: Close-up of Vasile, dark and brooding, as he raises his hand, casting shadow tendrils that lash out, grabbing a Hollowkin. The Hollowkin struggles in the grip.

6. **VASILE:** Shadows bend easily to those who understand them.
7. **FRANK** (Off-panel): Look who's quipping now!

Panel 3: Medium shot of Urbi as she makes SAND HANDS sprout from the ground, and they grab the Hollowkin, pulling them down.

8. **URBI:** The sands consume. All things return to dust in time.

Panel 4: An action shot of Were-Jill tearing into a Hollowkin, claws slashing, while she flashes a wild grin. Her fur is matted, and she's clearly enjoying the battle.

9. **WERE-JILL:** This is way better than chasing giant spiders!

Panel 5: Close-up of Frank, standing protectively over Marley, his club glowing in the dim light. He grins down at her with a kind, protective expression, even as chaos surrounds them.

10. **FRANK:** Don't worry, kiddo. Nobody's hurtin' you on my watch.

PAGE EIGHT

Panel 1: Marley's mid-air as Frank tosses her over his shoulder, and the ground completely consumes the Hollowkin. Urbi, Vasile, and Were-Jill observe as Marley struggles to escape Frank's hold.

1. **MARLEY:** HEY! Put me down!
2. **FRANK:** Easy, kiddo. We're the good guys.
3. **VASILE:** That isn't her, Frank. The face is the same but it's a different one.

Panel 2: Close-up of Urbi, her face serene as the ground completely consumes the remaining Hollowkin.

4. **URBI:** She bears the relics. Her form is but a vessel.

Panel 3: Medium shot of Were-Jill, reverting to her human form, grinning with sharp teeth still visible.

5. **WERE-JILL:** Just stick with us, you'll be okay... probably.
6. **FRANK:** (Off-panel) Not helping, Jill.

Panel 4: Wide shot of the whole Squad. Urbi, Vasile, and Were-Jill observe as Marley struggles to escape Frank's hold.

7. **MARLEY:** Get off me! Lemme go! SOMEONE HELP!
8. **FRANK:** Chill out, April! We're trying to save you here.

PAGE NINE

Panel 1: Frank lets Marley go, and she falls to the ground. She looks up at him with equal parts confusion and fear.

1. **VASILE:** Wait... she looks different... No. Younger.
2. **FRANK:** April, c'mon, it's us!

Panel 2: Marley explains that she's NOT April. That was her mother's name.

3. **MARLEY:** My name is Marley! April was my mom!
4. **FRANK:** Uh... say what now?

Panel 3: The Squad exchanges confused looks. Were-Jill transforms back into human form. Let's start her transformation in the background of Panel 3.

5. **JILL:** How long have we been stuck down here?
6. **VASILE:** Time is fluid here. Years collapse into days.
7. **FRANK:** Urbi? Is this her or not?
8. **URBI:** Her and not. The relics endure. They have chosen a new bearer.

Panel 4: Vasile points to the bracelet demanding an explanation. Marley looks a little frightened.

9. **VASILE:** Where did you get that? Who are you really!?
10. **MARLEY:** It was my mom's. Please don't eat me!
11. **VASILE:** And April?! Where is she?
12. **MARLEY:** Dead! Okay?! She's gone!

PAGE TEN

Panel 1: The squad shares a concerned look. Frank, in particular, takes this revelation the hardest. He looks genuinely sad. Urbi remains stoic but alarmed. Jill softens, almost motherly, as she reaches out to Marley to comfort her. Vasile bristles at the news, growing more frustrated with each panel.

1. **FRANK:** April's... gone? Ah, man...
2. **JILL:** Oof, that's rough, kid. Sorry about your mom. Heavy trip.
3. **VASILE:** So... where does this leave us?

Panel 2: Vasile's working things out in his head, trying to keep his frustration from boiling over. Marley holds charm bracelet tightly, her face a mix of fear and determination. Urbi remains calm, watching closely.

4. **VASILE:** If Tenybris claimed her, our mission may already be lost.
5. **MARLEY:** Who's Tenybris? Did he kill my mom?

Panel 3: Medium shot of Urbi inspecting the charm bracelet. Her expression is calm and unreadable as Marley stands frozen.

6. **URBI:** The prophecy stands. Our path is unbroken.
7. **VASILE:** Prophecies are ink on water if we can't trust the kid.

Panel 4: Wide shot of Frank, standing between Marley and Vasile. Marley looks down at the bracelet, resolute. Tension is evident between the group.

8. **FRANK:** Who says we can't trust her, Vasile? She's April's kid. Give her a chance.

Panel 5: Close-up of Vasile glaring at Frank, frustrated and angry. In the background, a shadowy figure begins to form behind Urbi, signaling the arrival of Tenybris' minions.

9. **VASILE:** Need I remind you that her mother's choice trapped us here? Why should we expect her daughter to be different?

PAGE ELEVEN

Panel 1: Medium shot of Frank standing protectively in front of Marley, his body language calm but firm. Vasile seethes, but Frank holds steady.

1. **FRANK:** We're not leaving her behind. End of story.
2. **URBI:** Yes, the relics must be shielded from Tenybris's reach.

Panel 2: Wide shot. Shadows at the edge of the temple peel back to reveal three towering **CTHULUMEN**—their humanoid bodies in dark suits, their heads writhing with tentacles. Fingers too long, six per hand. One drips black ichor that burns through the stone. Jill notices, mid-grin.

3. **JILL:** Uh, group therapy's over, dudes. We've got company.

Panel 3: One Cthulumen wraps Jill in its tentacles. Her eyes glaze as it presses into her mind. She pales. Marley is terrified.

4. **JILL:** Ghh—get... outta my head...
5. **Vasile:** Tenybris sends his Cthulumen. This is no coincidence.
6. **URBI:** Protect the girl. I will bind the creatures!

Panel 4: Two Cthulumen lunge toward Marley, long fingers twitching. Frank steps in front of her, club raised. Marley freezes in terror.

7. **FRANK:** RUN, KIDDO!

Panel 5:/6 Action sequence:

- Vasile blurs into vampiric speed, dodging a Cthulumen's tentacle strike.
 - He lashes out with his glowing whip, slicing through tentacles.
 - His fangs bared, nails slashing with surgical precision.
8. **SFX:** (Will add when we see the art)

PAGE TWELVE

Panel 1: Vasile's attack frees Jill. She collapses at his feet, pale and gasping as her strength slowly returns. More Cthulumen step forward from the shadows, black ichor dripping from their hands.

1. SFX when I see it.
2. JILL: ...not a fan... of brain-squids...

Panel 2: Frank swings his Two-Tone Bone, sparks flying as he carves into a Cthulumen's chest. The monster barely staggers, ichor steaming where the blade lands. He shouts to Urbi, who is gathering sand in her palms.

3. **FRANK:** Urbi, sand shield! NOW!

Panel 3: Urbi raises her arms. A swirling dome of sand forms, wrapping the team in a protective barrier. Outside, the Cthulumen slam against it, their black ichor eating away at the sand. Inside, tension is rising.

4. **URBI:** This barrier will not last.
5. **FRANK:** Marley, you gotta get us out of here. Vasile, show her!
6. **VASILE:** And if she falters, like her mother? Then we all perish.

Panel 4: Outside view. The Cthulumen hammer at the sand barrier. Their resonance hum shakes the structure, cracks forming. Black ink spreads where they touch.

7. SFX when I see it.

PAGE THIRTEEN

Panel 1: Inside the crumbling barrier. Vasile cradles an injured Jill. She manages a weak grin despite her pallor.

1. **JILL:** Frank's right... teach the kid... or we're toast.

Panel 2: Vasile grabs Marley's hand and closes his eyes, focusing his energy on guiding her. Marley looks up at him, her face a mix of fear and uncertainty, but a spark of determination is also starting to form.

2. **VASILE:** Fine.
3. **VASILE (to Marley):** Clear your mind. Use the home charm.
4. **VASILE:** The bracelet's charms draw on your will. Fear weakens them.

Panel 3: Urbi struggles to maintain the barrier as the Cthulumen continue to push through. The sand is starting to falter, and the pressure on the group is intense. Marley glances nervously at Frank, who reassures her.

5. **FRANK:** Breathe, kiddo. You've got this. We'll keep the suits off your back.

Panel 4: Marley clutches the HOUSE charm dangling from the bracelet.

6. **VASILE:** Picture safety. Picture walls that cannot fall.
7. **MARLEY (Caption):** I thought of a castle. The picture was fuzzy at first and then suddenly crystal clear in my mind.

Panel 5: A glowing blue portal opens on the ground below them.

8. **FRANK (off-panel):** Whoa! She did it.
9. **URBI (off-panel):** Hurry, my barrier wanes!

PAGE FOURTEEN

Panel 1: Urbi's barrier collapses. The Cthulumen press forward, tentacles writhing.

1. **FRANK:** Time to am-scray!

Panel 2: Frank leaps into the portal, Urbi carrying Jill close behind. Vasile and Marley remain. Marley peers into the swirling light, terrified.

2. **VASILE:** You are next, child.

Panel 3: Marley hesitates, unsure if she can trust this monster. Vasile squeezes her hand.

3. **VASILE:** First attempt, and you succeeded. Your mother would be proud.
4. **VASILE:** Now jump, unless you wish them to drink the marrow from your bones.

Panel 4: They leap together as the Cthulumen lunge.

5. **SFX** when I see it.

Panel 5: The portal slams shut. The Cthulumen let out a frustrated screech.

6. **CTHULUMEN:** SSSKRRRRREEEEE!

PAGE FIFTEEN

Panel 1: Marley and the group drop out of a portal onto a dirty marble floor. She crashes to the ground hard, and Vasile lands on his feet like a badass.

1. **MARLEY:** Ooof.
2. **FRANK:** How's Jill?
3. **URBI:** She will mend. But the darkness hunts still. We must move.

Panel 2: A wider panel to establish the new location. The team is in an abandoned temple. Design it as you see fit, but it should match the look already set for the NetherRealm.

4. **MARLEY:** What just happened? Where are we?
5. **FRANK:** The home charm brought us to a safe place.
6. **URBI:** Those objects of power make you a target, as they did for her.
7. **VASILE:** You must learn how to wield them.

Panel 3: The monsters continue their discussion. Jill's looking better in each panel as she heals.

8. **MARLEY:** Who is Tenybris?
9. **JILL:** Bad dude. King of the NetherRealm. He feeds on fear and has been hunting those charms.
10. **VASILE:** Your bloodline unlocks the relics' true power. That is why April was killed.
11. **JILL:** And now he's coming after you, kid.

Panel 4: Vasile faces Marley, looking a little intimidating. She stands defiantly.

12. **VASILE:** Hand them over. We'll send you home. Before you doom us all, as your mother did.
13. **MARLEY:** Not until you tell me what happened to my mom!

Panel 5: Vasile's frustration boils over. He throws his hands up in disgust.

14. **VASILE:** She left us to rot in this hell. And now her daughter stands here, unready, pretending to be brave. Now give me the damn bracelet!

PAGE SIXTEEN

Panel 1: Marley reels, tears in her eyes. His words cut deeper than she'll admit. She stumbles back, voice cracking. Frank shoves Vasile, furious.

1. **MARLEY:** Stop! Stop yelling at me!
2. **FRANK:** Enough, Vasile! She's just a child!
3. **VASILE:** Yes. She is a child... weak and scared.
4. **URBI:** Still your quarrel—this ground trembles—

Panel 2: The Cthuluqueen bursts from the wall behind Urbi—goddess-tall, body scaled and dripping slime, a monstrous Cthulhu head with writhing tentacles. Her claws dig into Urbi's shoulders, black slime searing her wrappings. Three Cthulumen trail behind her.

5. **CTHULUQUEEN:** GIVE ME THE GIRL!
6. **URBI:** AAARGH!

Panel 3: Jill morphs back into Werewolf form, fur bristling, teeth bared. Frank squares up. Vasile doesn't even flinch, still seething. Marley BOLTS in the background.

7. **WERE-JILL:** Get the kid, Frank! We'll keep slime-mommy busy!

Panel 4: Tentacles lash, cracking pillars. Black slime corrodes the stone floor. The Queen's command send the Cthulumen running after Marley.

8. **CTHULUQUEEN:** *FIND THE GIRL!*

Panel 5: Marley runs down a side corridor, leaving the others to battle.

9. **Marley** (caption): Hurt, scared and furious... I ran and didn't look back.

PAGE SEVENTEEN

Panel 1: Marley dashes down the temple halls, terrified. Tentacle shadows stretch along the walls.

1. **Marley** (caption): Tenybris. The bracelet. Mom fought this...evil, and never told me? Did she die for it? Am I next?

Panel 2: She turns a corner—dead end. Behind her, several Cthulumen are reaching out for her.

2. **Marley** (caption): And then there was nowhere left to run. Except...
3. **MARLEY:** A portal!

Panel 3: She fumbles with the key, shaking. Tentacles snake into the panel edges.

4. **MARLEY:** Come on... come on...

Panel 4: A tentacle whips around her arm, slime burning into her skin. She screams.

5. **MARLEY:** EEYAGH!

PAGE EIGHTEEN

Panel 1: Frank's club BASHES into the tentacle, ichor spraying, electricity surging.

1. **SFX:** FWOOOOSH
2. **FRANK:** Hand off!

Panel 2: Marley stumbles free, color returning. Frank hacks at more tentacles pushing through the corridor.

3. SFX when I see it.

Panel 3: Frank kneels beside Marley, club still glowing with electricity.

4. **FRANK:** You okay?
5. **MARLEY:** It... hurts...burns. I want to go home.
6. **FRANK:** I know. But you're tougher than you think.

Panel 4: Frank understands but is worried about his friends. He lightly grabs her wrist to indicate the charm bracelet.

7. **FRANK:** Listen, I promise to get you home. But first, my friends need help. And only you can use this properly.

Panel 5: Frank begs for Marley's help, promising to tell her how to get home.

8. **FRANK:** The bracelet's powerful, but you're the one who makes it work.

PAGE NINETEEN

Panel 1: Back in the temple hall. Urbi summons sand-soldiers, Jill claws furiously, Vasile lashes with whip and fangs. The Queen towers above, ichor dripping, laughter echoing.

1. **FRANK CAPTION:** "Each charm has its own gift - The key charm can open portals anywhere - places you've been and even memories from your past."

Panel 2: The Queen shatters sand-soldiers with one swipe. Jill's claws skid uselessly across scales. Vasile dodges crushing tentacles..

2. **FRANK CAPTION:** "Clear mind, steady heart. Only then can you unleash their power."

Panel 3: Back to Marley and Frank. Marley touches the key charm.

3. **MARLEY:** So I just think of a place? Can it send me home?
4. **FRANK:** Yeah. But it can also stop the Cthuluqueen...
5. **MARLEY:** Won't she just hurt people wherever I send her?

Panel 4: Frank continues to explain stuff to Marley.

6. **FRANK:** Not if you send her to a memory. She'll be stuck in a moment that already happened - she can't change it or hurt anyone there.
7. **FRANK:** Plus, memories full of love burn creatures like her worse than fire.

Panel 5: The battle surges. The Queen smashes through Urbi's sand barrier, knocking her aside. Vasile gets wrapped in tentacles, Jill pinned under slime.

8. **FRANK CAPTION:** "You can save us all, Marley."

PAGE TWENTY

Panel 1: The Queen lifts Urbi by the neck, slime sizzling against her wrappings.

1. **CTHULUQUEEN:** *The girl, now, or all of you drown in despair.*
2. **URBI** (straining): Herald... of the abyss...

Panel 2: Marley steps from behind a column, holding up her arm with the bracelet. Fear in her eyes—but standing tall.

3. **MARLEY:** You want me? Then come get me.
4. **CTHULUQUEEN:** Yes... soon child, you will be reunited with your mother in oblivion.

Panel 3: Close on Marley turning the key. A portal rips open—glowing, humming with sound. The light is warm and bright.

5. **MARLEY:** You love my mother so much, why don't you say hi to her.

Panel 4: The Queen shrieks as the portal's glow slams into her, tentacles writhing. Frank barrels in, shoulder-checking her straight into the opening. Vasile yanks Marley clear.

6. **CTHULUQUEEN:** *NOOOO!!*
7. **VASILE:** I've got you.

Panel 5: Reveal: the portal spits the Queen out into a sunny front yard. She's in front of Marley's house. Through the front window we should see Marley and her mom on the couch watching TV.

8. **CTHULUQUEEN:** *EEEEAAAGGGHHHH! What is this?! IT BURNS!*

PAGE TWENTY-ONE

Panel 1: With the threat vanquished, the team gathers around Marley.

1. **FRANK:** You handled that like a pro!
2. **JILL:** So... where'd you send her?
3. **MARLEY:** I trapped her in one of my favorite memories. She can see what real love looks like, but she can never destroy it.

Panel 2: Vasile's not impressed. Marley stands her ground. Frank confesses something huge.

4. **VASILE:** And now I suppose you'll abandon us like April did.
5. **MARLEY:** Maybe my mom ditched you 'cause you're so rude.
6. **FRANK:** Enough! April didn't abandon us!

Panel 3: Frank confesses as the group listens in silence.

7. **FRANK:** I... I sent her away.
8. **FRANK:** She was my friend. And I couldn't stand losing her.

Panel 4: Frank defends his choices. Vasile is furious.

9. **FRANK:** I thought keeping her out meant keeping her safe.
10. **VASILE:** And trapped us here with no escape as a result!
11. **FRANK:** I screwed up. I know. I'm sorry.

Panel 5: Silence. The Squad stands in the ruined temple. Marley stares at the bracelet, eyes full of questions.

PAGE TWENTY-TWO

Panel 1: Vasile's pissed. Jill is more understanding. Urbi's stoic as usual.

1. **JILL:** We all mess up, big guy.
2. **VASILE:** Some mistakes are unforgivable.
3. **URBI:** Our mission remains: stop Tenybris.
4. **VASILE:** And for that, we need the charms. The girl needs to hand them over.

Panel 2: Marley speaks up for herself now as the group listens intently. Vasile's arms are crossed; he's the toughest nut to crack. But Marley doesn't want to leave.

5. **MARLEY:** No way, emo Dracula. I'm not going anywhere until I find out what happened to my mom.

Panel 3: Closer on Marley, determined as ever to stop Tenybris.

6. **MARLEY:** I get that you don't trust me. I don't trust all of you either. But if stopping this bad guy means no one else gets hurt, then I'm all in.
7. **MARLEY:** So, where do we start?

Panel 4: The Squad gathers at a cliff's edge, gazing out at Tenybris's dark, foreboding castle in the distance. The landscape of the NetherRealm is hostile, with twisted terrain and an ominous sky. Urbi points toward the castle, signaling the journey ahead.

8. **URBI:** Tenybris hides behind those walls, protected by all manner of evil. His quest to break your world is endless.
9. **URBI:** Our path is perilous. Not all will survive. Do you understand the risks?
10. **MARLEY:** Yeah... I do.

Panel 5: Frank steps forward, cutting the tension, and his tone becomes more pragmatic. The group turns back to face him as he suggests a new direction.

11. **Frank:** First things first. We need a real plan, and we can't make one here.
12. **FRANK:** Let's regroup in the human world. We'll figure out our next move there.

Panel 6: Close-up of Marley holding the key charm, her hand trembling slightly as she prepares to open the portal. She's still nervous but determined.

13. **Marley:** Alright, my place it is.

Panel 7: The portal begins to glow, and the Squad steps forward, preparing to cross back into the human world. The portal's energy creates swirling light and shadow around them.

14. **SFX:** VWOOOM

PAGE TWENTY-THREE

Panel 1: Cut to Tenybris's castle in the NetherRealm. A line of Hollowkin continues to march toward the throne room, each one carrying a human captive. We see monstrous figures resembling slasher movie villains (think a Jason Voorhees type, a ghostly girl with long black hair like Samara, and a demonic figure reminiscent of *The Conjuring*). These creatures are carrying human captives toward Tenybris. The castle looms ominously in the distance.

1. **Tenybris:** She used the key charm again... interesting. But she's only just begun to understand the power she holds.

Panel 2: Inside the castle, the Hollowkin deliver their captives. Show the humans in the captives' line as terrified kids, all dressed in modern PJs or sleepwear. The interior is twisted, dark, and horrifying, with the captured humans trembling in fear, still dressed in their sleepwear from the human world.

2. **Tenybris:** Once I have the bracelet...

Panel 3: Inside Tenybris' throne room, we reveal more of his army. Perhaps we see a demonic doll (think *Annabelle*), a figure with multiple heads (body horror), and more twisted takes on slasher and paranormal tropes. Tenybris appears as a figure cloaked in ethereal darkness, embodying the essence of a primordial void. Their form is fluid, almost mist-like at the edges. Shades whirl around them, forming tendrils that seem to absorb light. Eyes are black voids. Maybe something like this:



3. **Tenybris:** Nothing will stop me from tearing down the walls between your world and ours.

Panel 4: Tenybris turns to his companion—Marley's mother, April, now a ghostly prisoner bound in chains, standing beside him. Her eyes are filled with sorrow as she watches Tenybris's power grow.

4. **Tenybris:** Not even your daughter.

TO BE CONTINUED...