

The chief conceit of Convergence is that time lines are living things. They are born, they grow and mature, they age and decay, and then they die. Braniac is in the business of saving pieces of dead timelines, like cell cultures harvested from terminal patients moments before they expire. To extend the metaphor, Telos, Braniac's planetary lab assistant, even performs research on the harvested remains of the perished universes, probing and testing and examining the effects of different stimuli. Stories also have lifespans. Like the worlds of Convergence, they are born and grow. They can have children in a way, spawning more stories from their plotlines. In the fullness of time, they become senile and die. But stories can return. They can reincarnate, coming back in new forms with different titles and slightly altered settings and casts. Even more dramatically, they can often resurrect, arising after a period of quiescence in a slightly different form but recognizably as the same narrative. The problem is that sometimes stories should just stay dead. There is such a thing as a vampire plotline, a story that has long outlived its vitality and now keeps returning to siphon life out of other, younger, more vibrant tales. An event like Convergence, featuring as it does so many different characters from so many different books and so many different eras, might especially lend itself to such monstrosities. However, when the vampire appears it isn't in one of the tie-in stories, but the backbone weekly. Dick Grayson and Thomas Wayne find themselves facing a horde of Bat villains chasing them from the Gotham they have recently visited. The result is the end of Thomas in a spectacular but still anticlimactic act that eliminates one of the more interesting characters to have been introduced since the dawn of the now-defunct New 52. The further outcome is an encounter between Dick Grayson and a version of the Joker that ends in an homage to The Killing Joke. Alan Moore and Brian Bolland's story was undoubtedly original and powerful in 1988, but thirty years of referencing, copying, and exploring have left it set of hollow images and weary themes worthy only of a groan. More successful is the introduction of Skartaris, the 1970s version of Pellucidar that was hinted by the appearance of the sorcerer Deimos last issue. It turns out that Skartaris does indeed exist inside Telos in all its sword-and-sorcery glory. And inside one of the fantasy castles of that land, imprisoned by what may be a combination of sorcery and high technology, are a group of characters introduced as masters of time. Deimos appears determined to free them from their plight, but first he and his new allies will have to overcome Shakira, friend of the Warlord who was once the champion of Skartaris. And perhaps the Warlord himself? The post Convergence #3 appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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