

FANTASTIC FOUR 47
BY CARLOS PACHECO AND RAFAEL MARIN
WHAT A MAD MULTIVERSE

PAGE 1

CHAOS is on the loose in the whole world, as **ABRAXAS** has finally come!

Several panels to show:

Somewhere in India, a woman doesn't recognize her young newborn child, as it was a girl and not it is a boy!

And old English man recognises his son, dead as a hero in the Gulf War, preparing to go to a football match, flags and hooligan signals included. The man is puzzled. Has he dreamed with a past of glory for his son, now a simple troublemaker?

John Lennon is walking through Strawberry Field Park, while people look at him, because he is not dead. He is still wearing his famous glasses and his green Army jacket with the symbol of peace.

A US soldier in uniform, but with the SS symbol in his collar is walking Patton-like through 42nd Street, while the jewelers close their shops, frightened.

And then the camera goes back and see pure madness: people can't assimilate that worlds and alternities are merging. Cars crash. People jump from the windows of the buildings. Even strange octopus-like creatures (the inhabitants of another alternate Earth) crept puzzled by the madness.

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Now we get to see ABRAXAS walking through the chaos he is creating. He floats some centimeters from the floor, a real apparition. He seems happy, as he is the master and lord here, and he is having fun with the show. As the multiple worlds grow and mix, he becomes stronger. Remember: Abraxas acts to the universe like a cancer, while Galactus, as we'll reveal in the conclusion, acts like the red blood cells that work to stop the infection. Abraxas creates alternate worlds, multiplying the fabric of the multiverse... and perhaps one day will come when it will stretch too much.

He gets to the Baxter Building. Looks at one of the windows there.

CUT to the Baxter Building. In one of the rooms, in the very same window Abraxas is looking at, VALERIA RICHARDS has just gotten up from bed. She is

watching chaos.... and the misterious entity that comes towards the Building. Alarmed, she calls Franklin.

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But Franklin seems to have disappeared from the room... and from the BB as well!

She runs through the corridors of the BB crying Franklin«s name, her mom«s, Reed«s ...

And when she turns one of the corners she finds.... ABRAXAS is already there!

ABRAXAS looks at her, he seizes her.

Val uses her time jump to escape.

She keeps on running....

And Abraxas appears again at the end of the corridor.

She turns, enter a camera and seals it to avoid Abraxas to enter. Now she understands Franklin«s nightmares... and she remembers she has had those very similar nightmares only she had forgotten them after waking up!

She turns and murmurs.... Nita?

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There, convolving on the floor, is CHIMERA (Nita«s blue incarnation, who cannot breathe air). Nita has been altered from one universe to another... and now she is dying, as she cannot survive in an environment without water.

Val cries. Hold on , she cries, trying desperately to help her.

ABRAXAS knocks at the door, like the Big Bad Wolf, mocking the girl and the situation.

Val is terrorized. The door starts to tremble.

ABRAXAS finally pulls down the door and enters....

But Valeria is not there!

Abraxas can«t feel her presence anywhere in this universe. His face turns red, demoniacal.

Outside, everywhere, chaos rises.

Chimera dies.

PAGES 5-6

And while ABRAXAS is searching his domains in search of the girl, we are shown the fate of REED, SUE and BEN!. Though not exactly a double splash, in six or seven panels we get a glimpse of the different alternate realities the fast-travelling Fantastic Three are travelling before they get to their destinations! REED, SUE AND BEEN float in the ether between dimensions, travelling faster than light and time! This ether between alternate dimensions might be the equivalence of the Negative Zone for the Kree, a sort of limbo where bodies and souls are kept, as frozen. Reed had been investigating about that for several years now, since he learnt of the possibilities of the multiverse (baaaaaack in the days of Roy Thomas and John Buscema).

The double spread shows some alternate realities, as a sort of FAST-FORWARD view of the many miriads of universes Reed's gadget is making them travel in what seem mili-seconds.

A world where the rocket that gave the FF their powers didn't survive the cosmic rays and the future FF never existed...as it exploded!

A world where SUE RICHARDS became the stony-disfigured THING.

A world where DOCTOR DOOM tricks the Thing, making him believe Reed Richards don't want to cure him from his stonish state (as shown in the current 1234 FF miniseries)

A world where Johnny Storm is a formula-1 race champion...

A world where Reed Richards is chained to a wheel-chair, like Stephen Hawkins in ours....

And finally the 3 worlds that will be their destination.

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We start here SUSAN's quest for the information held in one of the alternate version's of his brother JOHNNY. NOTE: All 3 Earths we're going to visit will have elements that will make them look different (architecture, cars, clothes), apart from the fact there are or not alternate versions of the FF or other superheroes there.

The pages in Sue's adventure should be with a BLUE background (instead of white), to reinforce the idea of a world dominated by the underwater Empire of Atlantis.

Something falls to the floor, with a great crash. It's the little ball Reed sent to the alternate realities last issue. SUSAN STORM staggers. She is not dressed with the FF uniform, with a plain stylish dress.

She opens her eyes, after a moment of disorientation. Where can she be?

And a nervous woman who is holding a little boy in her arms asks if it's serious, doctor Storm. It's an emergency! The woman is a mother and her son was riding his bike when a car almost hit him. Trying to avoid the car, the kid fell and it seems his arm is badly hurt... (The kid is wearing a strange little hat with resemble those fancy submarine dresses the underwater people have always used in comic-strips).

The woman is calling for the help of DOCTOR STORM!

And Susan needs a couple of seconds to understand the woman is not talking of her late father Dr. Franklin Storm... but of SUSAN herself! She notices she is wearing a white robe... as the doctor she is! And recognises too the place she is in!

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Susan has a look around and finds she is in the office of Dr. Susan Storm, medicine doctor. And then Susan understands at once (clever girl) in this alternate world she has never met Reed Richards, she has studied in the University, and she uses her single name... (she sees her MD title on the wall)... REED'S gadget has allowed her to travel between dimensions, and to merge with the body of this other world's Susan Storm. This is what once was her own father medical office in the little town of Long Island they all used to live! Apparently, this Sue has inherited the job and the place...

...BUT our Sue has NO idea of medicine. How can she help the kid? How can she tell the mother she is not the doctor the mother is looking for?

The kid cries...

And Sue can't help it. She orders the mum to take him to the bed aside... while she frantically looks round... The mother asks then if she is going to use the X-Rays on the kid, to see if there is any broken bones.

Sue looks round. The machine is there. She doesn't understand how it works. She doesn't even know how to cure the kid.

It's a longshot. This world's Susan is not the Invisible Woman, but a single lady doctor. But now it's the Invisible Woman who is using her niche in this universe while the other Susan is floating in the limbo between dimensions (the place we showed on pages 5-6), save from Abraxas. The merger the gadget has provided them has allowed Sue to retain her own mind... perhaps she has retained the Invisible Woman powers as well?...

She distracts the mother, asking her to bring her please her sthetoscope, which is on the table....

...And focuses her powers on the kid, turning invisible the upper part of his arm....BINGO!

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It«s natural X-Rays, then. She checkes the bone and sees the muscles and bone don«t seem to be hurt. But the arm is out of its socket.

The kid cries. Sue distracts him with a couple of brave words... and uses a force field to place the arm in it«s socket... peeeerfectly.

Fiuuuu... she whistles for herself. Luckily it wasn«t a case of heart surgery.

She goes to the door with the mum and the kid, now with a bandage over his arm, to say farewell. She then notices the kid has a maritime design on his shirt... as well as the mother. Most of the cars in the street have long stilish fins and fishy mouths in the front design. They all resemble fish, even sharks... a matter of stupid fashion, perhaps? (We see now Sue has in one hand the little ball that will allow her to obtain his brother«s mind patterns next issue, the ball that fell to the floor when she arrived here)

... She turns to enter the house... AND SHE IS SHOCKED!. In front of her, there is an old crippled man she recognizes as **DOCTOR FRANKLIN STORM**, her late father. In this world, he is still alive. In this world, he was not sent to jail. In this world, he didn«t die... Sue needs to embrace him, to cry. It should be a very emotive scene.

But she cannot betray she is not the Susan this old man loves, the Susan that has renounced to the possibility of a brilliant carreer in NY city and remained in Long Island looking for an old man. She notices her father is bittered, not only because of his age and his poor health, which should be obvious. He is holding a newspaper where we can read the headlines ATLANTIS WILL GO ON.

And the man comments the Atlanteans are mad. This fool idea of bringing the ice asteroids from the Asteroid Belt in order to improve the quality and cuantity of the waters of their domain over the surface world is DANGEROUS! What will happen to the coast line? Won«t the waters rise? What will happen to the air-breathers of ATLANTERRA? (That«s the name of the world, then: not Earth, but Atlanterra, the world where Atlantis reigns supreme, where evolution allowed the Atlanteans to dominate the world, military and culturally).

Sue helps the old man to sit... and realises that as this world is dominated by ATLANTIS, the ecological problems are just the opposite as the ones in our world. She notices maritime desings in the furniture, a waterscape over the TV set on the wall, even a bottle of ATLANTIS COLA on a table.

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But this world's own fate should be none of her business, she reminds herself. She must find JOHNNY STORM, her brother, in whatever incarnation he may have in this world. Superhero or not. It's the balance of the very fabric of the universe what is at stake here if they don't get the information they need so that OUR JOHNNY remembers the clues to find the Supreme Nullifier. This world's problems will solve on their own... she must find Johnny....

And asks her father if he has heard of Johnny lately. The father closes his eyes, he is sad and angry. And says he doesn't care anymore. He has tried to bring them both up the best he could. It's not their fault if Johnny is now a wild boy, a street punk. Susan is puzzled. There is a bitter relationship between Johnny and her father in this world? Why?

Someone knocks at the back door. Another patient of Susan's?

She opens the door...

And **JOHNNY STORM** himself burst into the room! A moment of tension, as he has a gun in his hand. He seems worried, and is not at all the clean and pleasant boy we know in our universe! He is an outlaw.

Hi, Sis! Listen, we'll be brief. The cops were waitin' for us. We couldn't get into the jewelry, rats .

Mac is hurt. He needs attention, sis. Have a look at him and give us a couple of bucks and we'll get the heck out of here. Perhaps to Mexico, who knows. It's high enough there for the waters not to reach us .

A hurt man (Mac, whose real identity will be revealed next issue) enters the house, with long hair and a beard, a hobo like Johnny himself... Doctor Franklin Richards doesn't even reply to his son's salute: that's the reason of their enmity—Johnny is a delinquent! So Sue has found her brother... but not as she expected! How can he retrieve the information the kid must have somewhere?

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Johnny jumps when he hears a noise in the street.

Sue looks at the window....

And in the sky she sees a flight of ATLANTEAN WARSHIPS crossing the air!!!! Then she understands she is in a world politically dominated by the Atlanteans... and nothing she could do can change this fact!

CUT TO BEN'S QUEST NOW. The background of the pages in red.

Ben's own quest starts here. A sort of ray, the effect of traveling between dimensions, and void, THE THING appears in the middle of a crowded NY street! His civil clothes are completely torn!

Ben is momentarily puzzled! And he is taken out from his stupor when a woman cries in terror when she sees him!

Ben is in his rocky form, and bystanders, taxidrivers, cars and everybody seem horrified by his aspect! He has no time to react to the obvious fact that THIS WORLD HAS NEVER HEARD OF THE THING!

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A little boy is accusing him! The Russians were right, the Russians were right! A space monster is coming to eat all of us! Ben realises the kid is holding in his hand the red little ball he needs to catch this world's Johnny Storm's memories and return to his own dimension, as the ball has get to this world seconds before him!

He advances to the kid, trying to calm him.

It's in vain, of course. A bullet hits him in his brow!

Angry, the THING turns to see --A couple of NY cops are bravely trying to stop him from getting to the kid! And they are using their guns on him!

Whoa, whoa, whoa, Ben says. I'm one of the good guys, remember? Not a space monster!

The crowd, running because of his sudden appearance, make nervous comments about how suddenly a man turned into a rocky monster just in the middle of the street! Somebody should call the **Challengers!**

Understanding he is not going to have time to explain the whole story to these people, THE THING takes a piece of the floor and rises it as only the Thing can do it!

Yaaarggh, he must be as strong as the HULK!, exclaims one of the policeman.

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Ben jumps at the kid, rises him with a hand, gently....

And picks up the red ball. Sorry, kid, the pokeball is mine! Wouldn't you know where to find Reed Richards, uh?

The policemen surround him again. Ben has no time to lose...

The Thing dives for the hole! He understands he has no time for explanations when he has a mission to fulfill!

... and it's not the THING who lands in the now empty platform of the underground... but BEN GRIMM!!! (he has understood in this world Ben Grimm never got to be the THING as people don't know him, Ben is no stupid). This Ben Grimm is not the paunchy Ben we've met in last issues, but the former one we knew: strong, stylish, with hair and muscles... a sportsman. Ben comments now this Earth's guy had a healthy diet and drank little beer!

He hides in the shadows while the policemen get into the tunnels, looking for the Russian monster ...

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He goes up the stairs to get to the street.... And there he sees a building looming in the distance, with a great D (like the 4 in Freedom Plaza). Lots of people are running to and fro this place. There is PANIC all around.

Ben stops a bystander and asks him what the heck is happening. The man tells him the Russians say a big Alien has attacked them. Propaganda, the Challengers say.

They both turn to a TV shops, where we can see on a great screen the personality of **THE CHALLENGERS OF DOOM**: Doctor Victor von Doom, Doctor Reed Richards, Doctor Bruce Banner and Doctor Susan Storm. That's how Ben knows he was not aboard the rocket when the FF were hit by the cosmic rays. In this world, Doom and Reed were chums... and the Thing never got to pilot the damned ship! Sue was the pilot, so she is not the sweet Susan we know, but a harder woman... it seems at first sight.

The leader and spokesperson of the group, Doom, is making a declaration to all NY people, to all Earth as well: The Russians are trying to fool us with a stupid story of alien beings attacking Earth. These all are false pretenses. They want to cause panic. The Challengers of Doom ask the UN to ignore the Russians pleads. There is no menace. No alien being called GALACTUS has landed in the Red Square! Everything is a scam, a setup!

But Ben understands it's not a false story. GALACTUS has arrived to this other world, but in the Red Square. The FF don't exist here, and DOOM's megalomania (even if in this world he is a superhero) is going to... well, it's going to DOOM this Earth! How the hell is Ben going to find Johnny Storm in this world... if this world is going to end in a matter of hours?

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On the TV screens we see footage of the Red Square in Moscow and the nebulous figure of Galactus towering over the towers of the Russian center of power....

And again Doom's face alerting the population it's a HOAX. The Russians have proved to be the worst enemy of freedom and democracy the world has ever known since the Nazis... He is the proof, as they crushed his own motherland of Latveria and forced him to emigrate.

Now what they possibly want is revenge against the Challengers of Doom and the economical blockage the democracies are making on this economy, which won't be able to survive another decade. It's a trap... and the Challengers of Doom won't fall into it!

Ben turns to the man. Here or anywhere, ol'Vic's ego is gonna cause trouble. It's not a hoax, man, believe me. I know the Big G. Heck, in my own world the guy is dead... twice. If he wants to eat this world and nobody tries to stop him, he'll suck dry the planet's energy and...

The man looks at him as if he were crazy... and runs away!

Ben scratches his head. He is aware nobody is going to believe him here. Besides, he has a mission. To find Johnny Storm.... and as Sue Storm seems to be part of the Challengers of Doom (heck, what a cheesy name, he spits), she MUST know where her little brother is.

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He walks to the Doom Building. People on the street comment the new Russian plan. They seem happy now that the almost-omniscient Doctor Doom has calmed their fears...

Ben is surprised when he gets to the doors of the building... and the doors open when a scanner reads his eyes!

He enters the lobby. If he is not a member of the Challengers of Doom, how is it that he has clearance....?

And suddenly a trap closes on him, trapping him inside!

The four Challengers of Doom appear in front of him. Susan seems worried. The others 3, angry.

Grimm! , accuses Doom. You know you can't be here! There is a legal order that forbids you to approach your former wife Sue Storm! What are you doing here, didn't you beat her enough when she was your wife?

Oh, my! , exclaims Ben. He has come to a world where Galactus is going to have dinner in a matter of hours. A world where he is not the Thing. A world where he married Sue Storm.... and he divorced her! A world where he was a wife-beater? Oh, my! .

All of this, and now he is trapped, how can he find Johnny Storm?

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Time for REED'S journey. The world of DOC RICHARDS AND THE FIVE FOR THE FUTURE. The background of the pages in black.

Reed appears in a flash of light (that's the impression the jump through dimensions causes). And he discovers he is paralyzed.... and falling from the top of a big metallic structure!

Now we get to see REED is dressed in a sort of adventurer uniform, a little ridiculous perhaps, a mixture between Doc Savage and Blackhawk. He even has a sidearm on his hip (with holds a techno-gun in the 30's style, full of gadgets... but our REED doesn't know how to use it!)

A sort of thick rope involves him, stopping his fall...

And holding the rope we see a great man, with a grey coat and a brown mask covering his face. His pose (he is on a flying machine —a plane of the 1930's- another man is piloting) and his words identify him clearly: IT'S BEN GRIMM!!! (the idea is to portrait him as the Elephant Man of this world!). Hold on, Doc , Ben says. I'm not sure this prodigious brain of yours could make you survive this fall .

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That's how REED understands this counterpart of his alternate world has no stretching abilities. But his name... DOC ?

The plane lands, and we get to see the pilot is a young spectacled man: HENRY McCOY, here a youngster known as MISTER FERAL, a savage boy this world's Reed found and raised when he was a sort of Mowgly.

Three more men run to surround the plane and its 3 occupants. One of them REED recognises as FRANKLIN FOGGY NELSON, though his pose is that of a cocksure adventurer and not of a timid lawyer; in fact, he refers at himself as MISTER MIST NELSON. The other two men are MISTER STRANGE (this world's version of Stephen Strange, of course) and MISTER FIXIT (the engineer of the group, the Fixer in our world).. But all of them wear in a similar fashion, with a logo that mixes the letter F and number 5.

It's a pity this goddam MONOCLE escaped , comments Ben Grimm. I told ya that zeppelin of his was heavily protected. And the paralyzer he used on you could have been lethal, Doc .

Reed looks at the sky.... and sees the city landscape is different to the NY he lives in... It's also different to the NY of the 1930's we know. Now it's a cross between a design by TESLA and Metropolis. In the sky, the great figure of a GOLDEN ZEPPELIN that seems to dominate the whole city. In the zeppelin, the letter M (of MISTER MONOCLE, the villain of the story, a mixture of Robur the Conqueror, our Doctor Doom and the Monocle of our universe).

Reed understands at the moment his plan to travel through dimensions and not altering the fate of the multiverse and avoid the crisscrossing of multiple entities of the same individual (that is, two Reed Richards at the same time in the same universe), a problem that could have unfathomable consequences... as well as to alert the so-called Lord of the Alternity, Abraxas, has been a success. He also understands parallel universe don't necessarily have to be in the same temporal synchronicity, as they are virtually infinite.

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In this world Ben Grimm was the only one who travelled to space... in a cannonball shot from a Big Gun Reed had designed. He returned to Earth deformed because of the cosmic rays. Reed used his intelligence for justice and Ben (who was a whalehunter before he met Doc Richards) hid his deformity under the somewhat exotic clothes we've described so far. Soon they formed a group of adventurers, DOC FANTASTIC AND HIS FIVE FOR THE FUTURE. An all-male group with an old-fashioned misogynistic attitude... as we can see through their dialogues.

While the 6 men are commenting how THE MONOCLE has thwarted again their efforts to enter the flying fortress that dominates the air, and how this Zeppelin is draining all the energy of NY City, stopping all the machines, a woman approaches them.

It is SUE STORM, lady reporter.... and long-time eternal fiancé of Doc Fantastic. She wants to know what has happened... and Reed is too confused (still under the effects of the paralyzing ray of MISTER MONOCLE to explain).

The rest of the gang make funny comments about Reed behaves like a schoolboy when he sees a pretty face. NELSON comments he always has the same problem when he meets any of his 4 ex wives....

And Reed remembers his mission. The FF don't exist here. His alter ego is a hero Doc Savage style... Reed immediately finds his ability to reason is not as high in this world and in his original Earth. Could it be... No, he had never thought about it. Could it be that the cosmic rays AUGMENTED his intelligence, his brain, as well as his ability to stretch his body. If so, that's why this Reed Richards, being a very clever man, doesn't seem as capable as him.

Reed he turns to Sue and asks her at once where is his brother JOHNNY...

And Susan, saddened, says the effects of the shock must be stronger than they all imagined, as JOHNNY STORM **died** two years ago in a clash against this very same Monocle that now threatens NY city and the free world! (Uh-oh, in a world where Johnny Storms exists no more... how can Reed find the information he needs to....)

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... give our JOHNNY STORM the information he needs to find the SUPREME NULIFIER before Abraxas can have it.

A very big panel to show THE HUMAN TORCH in his nova-flame state and NOVA flying in parallel with him through the interstellar void, where almost no man has gone before...

There, in a nebula, the spaceship of GALACTUS, where once was the Supreme Nulifier... though it's sure it's not there anymore... And this is not the same spaceship of our Galactus, but of Nova's Galactus (that whose head was sent to Earth in the Annual)

They enter the spaceship..... midgets in a machine made for the proportions of the giant demi-god....

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...and only find the solitude of death.

CHANGE TO FRANKLIN'S DREAM. A garden, a tee, a strange paradise. This time Franklin is not running. He is there... as he has appeared there after escaping Abraxas.

Franklin looks round. It's the very same place of his dreams... BUT NOW IT'S NOT A DREAM.

Next to the tree, Valeria appears. She turns to him... but she smiles. She is not dead... but alive. Franklin says so.

Of course I'm not dead, silly boy , Valeria says. You saved me. Don't you remember? That was our plan all along, wasn't it? To escape to the place of your dreams before the boogey man caught us

A dark figure approaches to them from behind while they are talking.

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A big splash. The two kids turn to see... ROMA, the guardian of eternity. In the background, a group of children.

You are here at last, as Franklin asked me , Roma tells Valeria. Now it's time for us to start working. Time is almost up .

To be continued