



Shazam! #6
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Shazam!

Issue #6: "Speed"

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Kid Marvel soared across the Fawcett City skyline with the speed of Mercury, looking downwards for any signs of Black Adam. He knew that the villain was as mighty as Captain Marvel, and, since Captain Marvel had shared part of his power in order to save Freddy Freeman's life, possibly even more so. If that wasn't bad enough, Black Adam now wielded the Ibistick, granting him even more power. As Kid Marvel began to wonder whether finding Black Adam was such a good idea – maybe they'd be better off gathering allies to defeat him first – his thoughts were suddenly distracted by the red-and-gold figure of Captain Marvel speeding towards him.

"Any luck in finding him?" asked Captain Marvel, as he slowed down, hovering in the air next to Kid Marvel.

"No sign of him anywhere," replied the super-powered teenager. "Maybe he's using the power of the Ibistick to conceal himself. Anyway, do we really need to search the city? I thought you told me that when he returned, he said he was going to destroy you."

Suddenly, Captain Marvel's face went pale. "He also said that he was going to eliminate all traces of the wizard!"

Suddenly, Kid Marvel knew what Cap was thinking, and, an instant later, both of them were speeding through the sky toward the center of Fawcett City, seeking out the subway entrance that would lead them to the Rock of Eternity and the wizard Shazam.

Following closely behind Cap, Kid Marvel sped through the entrance,

down a dazzling tunnel, and past some grotesque carvings into the huge open cavern where only days earlier he'd been brought into the world.

"Wizard?!" gasped Captain Marvel in relief as he saw the elderly wizard sitting there in his chair. "I've come to warn you that Black Adam is back."

"I know, my Captain," Shazam replied. "He has only recently visited, and he left knowing about your father's death. Now, he seeks to destroy you."

"So, we just missed him?" said Kid Marvel in disbelief. "But if he was in Fawcett City, how could we have missed him? We looked everywhere."

"There was no point looking, child," the old wizard explained. "He was in disguise."

"He used the Ibistick?!" exclaimed Kid Marvel. "I knew it."

The wizard Shazam shook his head. "He doesn't need the Ibistick to disguise himself, child. He just has to say one word."

The two Marvels looked at the wizard, realization dawning, as Kid Marvel uttered the word:

"Shazam!"

Meanwhile, in Fawcett City, the wizard's name was said again, and, following an accompanying flash of lightning, Black Adam suddenly stood there.

As he accessed Theo's recent memories, Black Adam smiled to himself. The wizard Shazam had dared to say that he never used his power of wisdom, but he'd managed to evade the Marvels' search by reverting to Theo's body, leaving Theo to do the laborious job of researching this world that Adam was now going to take over. Soon he would have the world at his feet, but, earlier, Theo had the world at his fingertips, using this new wondrous internet technology to discover what had happened

in the years that Captain Marvel had stolen from Black Adam, to discover the whereabouts of C.C. Batson's son, Billy, and not just the whereabouts of his son.

Adam looked down at the gravestone before him, which Theo had brought him to. It was engraved with the names of Clarence Charles Batson and Marilyn Batson, and, just as Theo Adam had earlier paid his last respects to his colleague and one-time friend C.C. Batson, Black Adam now paid his respects to his worthy foe, the original Captain Marvel.

"Sorry I wasn't there for you at the end," he said. And then, slowly hovering away, he began to make his way towards the home of Billy Batson, determined to add yet another Batson grave to that cemetery.

Fawcett City flashed by Black Adam until he found himself standing at his destination: the corner of Parker and Binder, outside of the home of the new Captain Marvel, Billy Batson.

"Come out, Captain Marvel!" he yelled, his booming voice shattering the windows. "Come and face your destroyer!"

Inside the house, an old man recognized the voice immediately as Black Adam's, and knew that there was only one man who had ever succeeded in stopping him. Unfortunately that man had given his life to save the Earth a year or so before.

Still, he thought, maybe it was time for that hero to return.

Black Adam was growing impatient, as he hovered in front of the brownstone building. Maybe he should just tear down the building... or maybe just tear down the city – hopefully that would get this new Captain Marvel's attention.

Suddenly, the door of the building opened and an old man in a familiar, and tight-fitting, red-and-gold outfit emerged.

“What trick is this?” asked Black Adam, looking down at the portly figure standing before him.

“I’m Captain Marvel,” announced the figure with false bravado.

Black Adam looked at the figure skeptically. “But I heard you were dead. Indeed, I’ve just visited your grave.”

Dudley Batson stepped back. So, Black Adam knew all about his brother. It looked like his spending the last five minutes squeezing into an old Halloween costume had been a complete waste of time.

“I’m his brother,” admitted Dudley, putting up his fists, “but I’ve been given the powers of Captain Marvel by the wizard Shamaz.”

“You mean Shaz-” began Adam, and then smiled at the man standing before him. “You didn’t really think I’d say his name, did you?”

“Whose?” asked Dudley, feigning ignorance, while desperately sticking to his plan.

Black Adam allowed himself a brief smile at the old-timer’s persistence, and then pounced on him. “Do you know what your brother did to me?” he suddenly asked Dudley, who now found the villain standing next to him, gripping his costume with his fist.

“He put you in suspended animation for decades,” said Dudley, his eyes watering as he thought of what those same years had reduced his brother to, leaving him bed-ridden and senile, and almost wishing that his brother’s and Adam’s positions had been reversed.

“That’s right, old man. He stole all those years from me that I can never get back.”

“You should thank him,” blurted out Dudley.

“You can thank him for me,” said an enraged Black Adam, as his fist, traveling at the speed of Heru, rushed towards Dudley Batson’s head.

Meanwhile, in the office of a local high school radio station, Mary Bromfield's attention was suddenly distracted from her current phone conversation.

"Sorry, Mister Tawny. I realize animal rights is an important issue, but something more newsworthy's just come in," she said, as she heard the reports coming in over the radio of another sighting of Black Adam, and the apparent return of the original Captain Marvel, whom reportedly time hadn't been that kind to.

As she put down the phone and picked up her notebook, she realized that she didn't need to write down this address. It was the corner of Parker and Binder, around where her friend Billy lived, and also where the residents seemed to continuously be reporting sightings of lightning bolts. Boy, that was one weird neighborhood Billy chose to live in.

A few moments ago Captain Marvel had been at the Rock of Eternity, hatching a plan with Kid Marvel, when he'd seen Adam talking to his uncle on the wizard Shazam's magical historama, which displayed past and current events. Now, as he flew in, he saw Black Adam's fist heading towards his uncle's face.

"No!" he screamed, but, by the time that sound reached Black Adam's ears, Captain Marvel had already overtaken it, traveling at the speed of Mercury to interpose his hand between Black Adam's fist and Dudley's face.

As Adam's fist smashed into Captain Marvel's hand, the resulting sound, intermingled with a sonic boom and the sound of Cap's cry that had just reached him, almost deafened Dudley in the process.

"Well, it looks like you arrived just in time, Captain Marvel," said Black Adam, letting go of the old man, now that his real target had arrived.

"And he's not alone," said Kid Marvel, suddenly descending from the sky in front of the growing crowd of onlookers. As he stood beside Cap, Cap ushered his uncle away. "You better get away, Uncle..." He looked

at the crowd. "Marvel," he continued, in an attempt to conceal his secret identity, in the event that he and the crowd survived this encounter with Black Adam.

"So, how can you two stop me?" asked Adam, with a sneer. "Surely you're not going to try and make me say... "

"Shazam," said Kid Marvel, finishing the sentence when it was obvious that Black Adam wasn't going to. "No. We discussed it, but there's no real need. You're hardly a giant problem."

"There's just one of you," explained Captain Marvel, "and two of us. Defeating you should be no big deal."

"You don't think I'm a giant problem?" said Black Adam, pulling out the mystical Ibistick from his belt.

"The wizard Shazam explained to us that the Ibistick cannot be used for evil," said Kid Marvel with a smile, "so it's of no great use to you."

"Think again," said Black Adam, turning the Ibistick on himself, and suddenly energy was flowing through him making him grow bigger and bigger. "Making myself grow big isn't evil," he explained, as his giant fist grabbed hold of Captain Marvel, "but what I'm going to do to Captain Marvel... now, that's evil."

Mary Bromfield pedaled furiously as her bike took her past the diverted traffic, towards Billy's neighborhood. Suddenly she noticed the sky was growing dark, and looking up she saw a dark sky, and a golden lightning bolt filling that sky, in the distance, and then she spotted a dark-haired head atop that black sky and realized that this story had gotten bigger than even she had anticipated.

Yep, she said to herself, that's sure one weird neighborhood Billy Batson lives in.

As the giant Black Adam loomed over Fawcett City – with his body still growing bigger and bigger, and stronger and stronger, as the magic from the Ibistick enabled him to resolutely defy the cube-square law - Kid Marvel and Captain Marvel struggled, with the combined strength of Hercules, to prize open Black Adam’s grip on Captain Marvel.

Black Adam looked down and laughed as his grip closed hard, but then he opened his hand and saw nothing there, and then he started coughing as he felt something stuck at the back of his throat.

“He’s got the speed of Mercury,” explained Kid Marvel, as the puzzled, still-coughing Adam looked at his empty hand. “I just hope he’s gullet-proof.”

Black Adam swallowed hard and then his coughing stopped. “He was trying to choke me?” he asked in disbelief.

“No, now he’s right where he wants to be,” explained Kid Marvel. “You might have made a meal of him, but now it’s time for your just desserts.” Part of Kid Marvel winced at his awful puns, but the crowd down below was lapping it up, including a new arrival, Mary. He winked at her, dodging a blow of Black Adam’s at the same time, and then felt a bit guilty about it, since it was quite possible that, if things weren’t going to plan, Captain Marvel could currently be on his way to being digested.

Mary looked up and smiled at Kid Marvel, and then looked across at the ever-growing goliath that was Black Adam.

“I don’t suppose anyone here knows how he grew so large?” she asked the crowd, who were more interested in the battle than her question.

“He used the magical Ibistick,” exclaimed a deep voice from behind her.

She turned around to see a red-turbaned man standing beside her, who started to tell her all she wished to know. As she scribbled down all of the information in her notebook, from the man’s identity – the modestly-

named Ibis the Invincible – to the details of Black Adam’s origins, a thought occurred to her.

“I guess you could say that’s one major Fawcett pharaoh,” she mused, and then scrunched up her nose in disgust. Almost a great headline, but not quite.

Then she turned her attention back to Black Adam and wondered exactly what had happened to Captain Marvel.

In the dark red cavern of Black Adam’s stomach, Captain Marvel hovered over the acidic ocean bubbling away beneath him and prepared to do what he had to do. He might have had the wisdom of Solomon, but he could only guess at what would happen when he said his magic word. Maybe he would turn into Billy Batson and plunge into the deadly sea below, but it was a risk he had to take. Magic tended to be unpredictable at the best of times, and sometimes you just had to have faith.

“Shazam!” he yelled, maybe for the last time.

Black Adam looked down in astonishment as he saw the lightning bolt coming up at him from the clouds below. This wasn’t right. He hadn’t said his word. He was sure he hadn’t.

As the lightning bolt hit him and, blocked from its true target, turned him back to a gigantic Theo Adam, he started to say his magic word, but there, having now flown up from his stomach, was Captain Marvel, standing between his jaws, using the strength of Hercules to prevent him from closing his mouth.

As his massive tongue attempted to brush Captain Marvel away, Theo Adam saw Kid Marvel flying up from the clouds below to repeatedly punch him in the jaw... and then everything went black.

Captain Marvel and Kid Marvel grabbed hold of the unconscious Theo Adam to stop him from falling onto the crowd, while the Ibistick, no longer held by Black Adam's belt, now became a victim of gravity, plummeting down to the Earth below. Waiting for it there, the man next to Mary waved his hand at the Ibistick, halting its descent, and drawing it to him.

As Mary watched in the darkness - the shadow of Theo Adam now blocking out most of the sunlight - Ibis aimed the Ibistick at the mortal formerly known as Black Adam and its magical energies enveloped him. At first slowly, and then more quickly, Theo got smaller as the day got brighter, and soon he'd been reduced back to his normal size.

"Looks like that's another crisis averted," said Kid Marvel, landing from out of the sky next to Mary. "Need a lift home?"

"Sure," she said, turning to a new page of her notebook. "You can tell me the full story on the way."

As Captain Marvel looked down at Kid Marvel down below, chatting and laughing with Mary, he rolled his eyes, while elsewhere, at the Rock of Eternity, the wizard Shazam, viewing the same scene on the historama, allowed himself a smile. His champions had proved themselves worth today - albeit using unorthodox methods - and the threat of Black Adam had been averted. Turning his attention elsewhere on the historama he saw a podgy man with white hair and a raincoat standing in the crowd. The old man watched as Kid Marvel flew away, carrying both Mary Bromfield and her bike home, while Captain Marvel flew Ibis and Theo Adam back to the museum, no doubt to find yet another way to confine the villain.

As for the old man, he walked away, stopping first at a flower shop, and then, despite the chafing from the costume he was wearing under his coat, he made the long walk to the cemetery to see his brother and to tell him about the deeds his son had done that day.

The wizard Shazam then turned his head away from the historama,

leaving Dudley to his privacy, and turned his attention to the Seven Deadly Enemies of Man. He would have thought that Black Adam's defeat would have disheartened them, but they were more excited than ever. It could mean only one thing:

An even bigger crisis was brewing.

The End!

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Teen Titans #11 (2006)

Teen Titans: Tears for a Fallen Titan, Part 1.

One year later, everything has changed. But just what happened during the missing year? At a fallen friend's bedside, a pair of beleaguered heroes reminisce about the mission that tore the team apart...and the team that suffered beside them.

Teen Titans #12 (2006)

Teen Titans: Tears for a Fallen Titan, Part 2.

The Teen Titans and The New Outsiders join forces to bring down The Royal Flush Gangs!

Meanwhile, Nightwing and Batgirl hunt down The Joker, but to confront the Crown Prince of Crime, they must first confront that horrific night that still haunts their memories.

Teen Titans #13 (2006)

Teen Titans: New Year.

New Year - a time when the past meets the future, where old acquaintances cannot be forgotten, and where it's out with the old and in with the new, as Raven, still recovering from the wake-up call from hell, tries to come to terms with the changes during her missing year... including the new members.

Teen Titans #14 (2007)

Teen Titans: Titanic Days, Part 1.

The mysteries and secrets that have been building up finally look like they're unraveling, but it could all be too late as the Fearsome Five suddenly arrive and lay siege to Titans Tower.

Wonder Woman #14 (2007)

Wonder Woman: The Kronus Tablet, Conclusion.

Teen Titans #15 (2007)

Teen Titans: Titanic Days, Part 2.

Roy Harper gets a glimpse of tomorrow's Titans... but, if the Fearsome Five have their way, that tomorrow will never come.

Teen Titans #16 (2007)

Teen Titans: Titanic Days, Part 3.

Teen Titans #17 (2007)

Teen Titans: The Trigon Empire, Part 1.

The fate of the Titans, the Earth, and the Universe all hang in the balance as Raven's family reunion gets off to the shakiest of starts. Then, just when the Titans are at their lowest ebb, they suddenly find their problems taking on a whole new dimension.

Teen Titans #18 (2007)

Teen Titans: The Trigon Empire, Part 2.

Trigon's out to destroy the future and he's not going to let the Titans there stand in his way. Meanwhile, back in the present, an old enemy makes a reappearance and threatens to tear the remaining Titans apart.

Teen Titans #19 (2007)

Teen Titans: The Trigon Empire, Part 3.

With a shadow-being attacking them in the present and Trigon about to destroy their future, the Titans find themselves needing to make sacrifices, as the story concludes and the Titans' membership decreases.

Teen Titans #20 (2007)

Teen Titans: Final Words.

As their differing allegiances during the Crisis threaten to tear the Titans apart, Flamebird makes a final reappearance - but is she friend or foe. Plus, the secret of who built Titans Tower finally revealed, and Roy Harper finally settles on a name.

The Flash #22 (2008)

The Flash: Fables.

Once upon a time a tortoise beat a hare. Today, the Turtle attempts to repeat that feat, but this time the Flash can't stop running or all he values most will be taken from him!



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