



4
OF 8
DEC '09

BLACKEST NIGHT



GEOFF JOHNS • IVAN REIS • OCLAIR ALBERT • JOE PRADO



4
OF 8
DEC '09

BLACKEST NIGHT



GEOFF JOHNS • IVAN REIS • OCLAIR ALBERT • JOE PRADO



BLACKEST NIGHT



4
OF 8
DEC '09

GEOFF
JOHNS
IVAN
REIS
OCLAIR
ALBERT
JOE
PRADO

2MIGLIARI '09

WASHINGTON, D.C. THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA.



"DO YOU THINK BECAUSE SUPERMAN AND THE FLASH AND GREEN ARROW CHEATED DEATH BEFORE, THEY CAN CHEAT IT AGAIN?"

COAST CITY.



THEY CANNOT ESCAPE MY LORD. THEY WILL NOT.

POWER LEVELS 93.55%

"LET THERE BE LIGHT" SPARKED THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR.

OUR BLACKEST NIGHT WILL END IT.



"AND EVEN THE BRIGHTEST OF LIGHTS WILL BE BLOWN OUT."

THE INDIGO LANTERNS CLAIMED WE WOULD ONLY BE CAPABLE OF NEUTRALIZING THE BLACK RINGS WITH A GREEN LANTERN. AND YET THEY TELEPORT HAL JORDAN AWAY?



I GUESS THEY PRIORITIZED, MERA. FROM WHAT INDIGO-1 SAID, THEY NEED HAL TO RALLY TOGETHER THE OTHER CORPS, LOCATE THE SOURCE OF THE BLACK RINGS--

--AND PULL THE PLUG.

WHICH MEANS OUR JOB IS TO HOLD THE FORT UNTIL THE LITE-BRITE BRIGADE DO THEIR THING. THE FORT BEING EARTH.

WE NEED TO GET CLEAR OF HERE AND MAKE SURE EVERYONE'S UP TO SPEED.

WHERE'S FIRESTORM?



SPEAK OF
THE DEVIL AND
THE DEVIL SHALL
APPEAR.
COOL,
RIGHT?

BLACKEST NIGHT

GEOFF JOHNS WRITER • IVAN REIS PENCILLER • OCLAIR ALBERT & JOE PRADO INKERS
ALEX SINCLAIR COLORIST • NICK J. NAPOLITANO LETTERER • ADAM SCHLAGMAN ASSOC. EDITOR • EDDIE BERGANZA EDITOR
COVER: REIS • ALBERT • SINCLAIR ALT. COVER: RODOLFO MIGLIARI







MERA.
WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN DOING BEHIND MY BACK?



ARTHUR--
STAY HERE.

I DON'T STAY.

JUST KEEP THEM BACK, BARRY --



--FOR THREE MORE SECONDS.



TAKE A DEEP BREATH AND HOLD ON TIGHT. I'VE BEEN TINKERING WITH MY SIZE-CONTROLLING BELT, BUT I HAVEN'T DONE THIS BEFORE.

DONE WHAT?



9-1-1.
WHAT'S YOUR EMERGENCY?





YOU DON'T DESERVE A SAVIOR WHO SACRIFICED AS MUCH AS I DID TO PROTECT YOUR CORRUPT AND MISLED LIVES.

POWER LEVELS 95.44%

YOU DON'T DESERVE AZRAEL!



I WANT TO FEEL THE TERROR, BUT I'M IMMUNE TO IT, YOU SEE.
I USED MY FEAR GAS, OH, ONE TOO MANY TIMES.



RRRRRR!



I SCARE PEOPLE, BUT NOTHING CAN SCARE ME.



NOTHING...



POWER LEVELS 95.45%

NOTHING BUT THE BATMAN.

AIIIEEE



...NOT JUST THEM RISING ANYMORE, IT'S US TOO. I GOT VERIFICATION FROM THE CHEETAH THAT THE FORMERLY DECEASED DOCTOR POLARIS JUST RIPPED THE HEART OUT OF THE NEW ONE.

THE NEW WHO?

SECURITY LEVEL SIX ACTIVATED.



JOHN NICHOL, THE NEW DOCTOR POLARIS. HE WAS A MEMBER OF OUR SOCIETY AND MY CHIEF SOURCE OF INTEL ON THE BLUE BEETLE.

A TRAGIC LOSS, I'M SURE.

IT WAS FOR BUSINESS, LUTHOR.

MR. LUTHOR, CALCULATOR. I'M TIRED OF YOU PEOPLE GETTING TOO COMFORTABLE WITH ME. ANOTHER EXAMPLE: YOUR INVADING ONE OF MY PERSONAL LABS WITH THIS CALL. NO ONE HAS THIS NUMBER.

I GET PAID BECAUSE I HAVE ALL THE NUMBERS. EVEN YOURS.

ENTRIES FOUR, FIVE AND SIX SEALED.



DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY PEOPLE I'VE KILLED OVER THE YEARS? IF THE DEAD ARE RISING, I'LL HAVE MY OWN PROBLEMS. AND TO BE THOROUGHLY HONEST, I'M SICK OF YOU AND THE REST OF THOSE DELUSIONAL SCABS HUGGING THE EDGES OF MY GREATNESS AS IF SOMEHOW WE WERE ALL ON THE "SAME TEAM."



WE'RE NOT.

SUB-LAB NINETEEN SECURE.



AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED-- --IT'S EVERY MAN FOR HIMSELF.

"ONLY THE DEAD WITH EMOTIONAL TIES TO PEOPLE LIKE US ARE RISING. THE REST ARE STAYING IN THEIR GRAVES."



AT LEAST THAT'S SOMETHING.

SO IS THIS HEADACHE.
IT'S MORE LIKE BRAIN-FREEZE.

YOU TWO NEED TO FIND ALAN SCOTT. SEE IF HE CAN THIN THE UNDEAD HERDS WHILE I PLAY PAUL REVERE, RALLY THE TROOPS--

“--AND FIND SOMEONE WHO CAN HELP FREE FIRESTORM.”



SEARCHING.



OUR PHONE LINES ARE OVERLOADED. WHAT'S GOING ON OUT THERE?

MY WIFE AND SON ARE AT HOME. WHAT DO I DO?

TELL THEM TO STAY INDOORS AND KEEP CALM. TELL EVERYONE WHO CALLS IN TO DO THE SAME THING.

AND TELL THEM THE JUSTICE LEAGUE IS ON THIS.

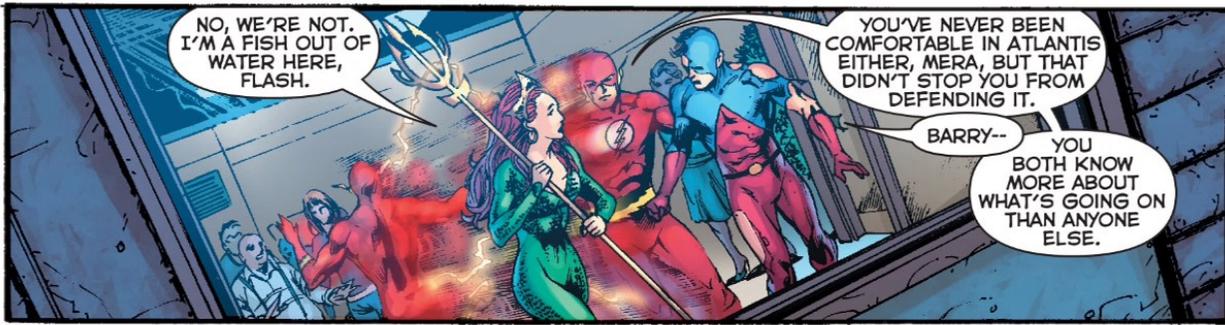


THE JUSTICE LEAGUE ISN'T ON ANYTHING YET, BARRY.

WE NEED TO GET SUPERMAN AND WONDER WOMAN.



RIGHT NOW YOU TWO ARE SUPERMAN AND WONDER WOMAN.



NO, WE'RE NOT. I'M A FISH OUT OF WATER HERE, FLASH.

YOU'VE NEVER BEEN COMFORTABLE IN ATLANTIS EITHER, MERA, BUT THAT DIDN'T STOP YOU FROM DEFENDING IT.

BARRY--

YOU BOTH KNOW MORE ABOUT WHAT'S GOING ON THAN ANYONE ELSE.



I KNOW YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH A LOT, RAY, WITH JEAN AND SUE. I KNOW YOU SHRANK DOWN AND DISAPPEARED AFTERWARDS.

BUT I ALSO KNOW YOU CAME BACK. YOU'RE HERE.

AND, SORRY FOR THE PUN, PAL, BUT IT'S TIME TO GROW THE HELL UP AND BE THE ATOM AGAIN.



ARTHUR IS GONE. MY SON. NOW GARTH. I HAVE NOTHING TO FIGHT FOR ANYMORE, FLASH.

FOR YOU, IT'S EASY TO FIND SOMETHING YOU BELONG UP HERE. YOU'RE NOT AN OUTSIDER.



ARE YOU KIDDING ME, MERA? DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW FRUSTRATING IT IS TO SLOW DOWN AND EVEN HAVE THIS CONVERSATION? OR ANY FOR THAT MATTER? YOU BOTH MIGHT FEEL LIKE OUTSIDERS RIGHT NOW, BUT LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING: THE JUSTICE LEAGUE IS MADE OF OUTSIDERS.

THE ONLY ONE OF US WHO DIDN'T WORRY ABOUT FITTING IN WAS HAL. HE LET THE REST OF THE WORLD FIT IN AROUND HIM.



WE'VE GOT A PLAN OF ACTION: PROTECT OUR PLANET UNTIL HAL AND THE CORPS SHUT DOWN THE SOURCE OF THE FLYING DEAD.

SO RIGHT NOW, GOD HELP ME FOR SAYING IT, AND IF YOU EVER TELL HIM I'LL DENY IT, WE NEED TO ACT A LITTLE MORE LIKE HAL.

WE NEED TO RUN IN, TAKE CHARGE AND KICK ASS LIKE WE WERE BORN TO.

AND RAY? MERA?

WE WERE BORN TO.





AGREED.
ATOM?
ATOM,
WHAT ARE YOU
DOING?

DIALING UP MR. TERRIFIC
AND ROUTING THE CALL
THROUGH ONE OF HIS
T-SPHERES. HE'LL BE WITH
ALAN SCOTT.

ONE
MORE LONG
DISTANCE
JUMP FOR YOU
AND ME.

I REALLY
WISH ONE OF
US COULD
FLY.



SEE YOU
AS SOON AS
I CAN.
AND
GOOD
LUCK.



IF I'M WONDER
WOMAN AND YOU'RE
SUPERMAN, WHAT'S
THAT MAKE HIM?



THE
FLASH.



YOU'VE REACHED THE
MOBILE OFFICE OF MICHAEL
HOLT. LEAVE A MESSAGE
AT THE BEEP.

HE'S NOT
ANSWERING.

JUST MEANS THE
RE-ENTRY WILL
BE A LITTLE
MORE
TURBULENT.
DO YOURSELF A
FAVOR AND TRY
TO KEEP YOUR
EYES OPEN THIS
TIME, MERA.



"FLYING THROUGH
FIBER OPTICS AND
BEING BEAMED FROM
SATELLITES ACROSS
EARTH PUTS ON ONE
HELLUVA LIGHT SHOW."

MANHATTAN.

YOUR ANGER BURNS SO BRIGHT, BUT YOU PROJECT ON TO EVERYONE EL--

FOR, I DON'T KNOW, THE SEVENTH TIME--

--SHUT YOUR ROTTING FACE!

YOU THINK YOUR MALIGNED PROFILE WAS A CASUALTY OF WAR, DAMAGE? AT LEAST YOU MADE IT OUT ALIVE.

THEY KEEP REPEATING THE SAME THING OVER AND OVER.

AND YOU KEEP BLOWING UP THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS ONLY TO WATCH THEM STITCH BACK TOGETHER.

WHAT ELSE AM I SUPPOSED TO DO, ATOM SMASHER? NOT EVEN MR. TERRIFIC HAS AN IDEA OF WHAT'S GOING--



A LITTLE MORE TURBULENCE?

SORRY.

AND SORRY FOR THAT T-SPHERE, MR. TERRIFIC. I'LL HAVE THE LEAGUE REIMBURSE YOU LATER.

ATOM?

ATOM?

DO ME A QUICK FAVOR, GUYS.

"POINT ME TO ALAN SCOTT."



THIS IS THE FLASH.

IF YOU'RE RECEIVING THIS, CHANCES ARE YOU ALREADY KNOW WHAT WE'RE UP AGAINST.

BLACK RINGS HAVE DESCENDED ON EARTH AND ARE RAISING OUR FRIENDS, FAMILY AND ENEMIES FROM THE DEAD--



BUT THESE BLACK LANTERNS ARE NOT THEM.

AND THEY ARE NOT UNSTOPPABLE.

GREEN LANTERN AND HIS CORPS HAVE SET OUT TO DESTROY THE SOURCE BEHIND THESE BLACK RINGS.



THAT LEAVES US HERE TO PROTECT EARTH UNTIL HE DOES.

THESE THINGS ARE ATTRACTED TO ALL KINDS OF EMOTIONAL OUTBURSTS POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE. SO FIRST THINGS FIRST, KEEP YOUR EMOTIONS IN CHECK.



THAT MEANS YOU, ARROW.



SECONDLY, WHEN EXPOSED TO INTENSE LIGHT, THEIR BLACK RINGS BECOME VULNERABLE. TRICK IS: THAT USUALLY INCLUDES THE POWER FROM A GREEN LANTERN'S RING. BUT SOME OF YOU OUT THERE MIGHT BE ABLE TO WEAKEN THE RINGS ENOUGH WITH YOUR OWN LIGHT TO DESTROY THEM.

"WE'RE ASKING ALL OF YOU ABLE TO SHINE--DO IT AS BRIGHTLY AS YOU CAN."

COAST CITY.

LIGHT IS EVERYTHING TO THEM.

POWER LEVELS 97.77%

ESPECIALLY IN THE END.

BUT THE TUNNEL OF LIGHT THEY SEE? IT LEADS TO WHERE THEY LEAST EXPECT:

THE GUARDIANS' ULTIMATE LIE.

IT'S HIDDEN HERE, BENEATH THE DEAD.

POWER LEVELS 97.79%



BARRY?

WALLY?

GOT YOUR MESSAGE AND SPREADING THE WORD.

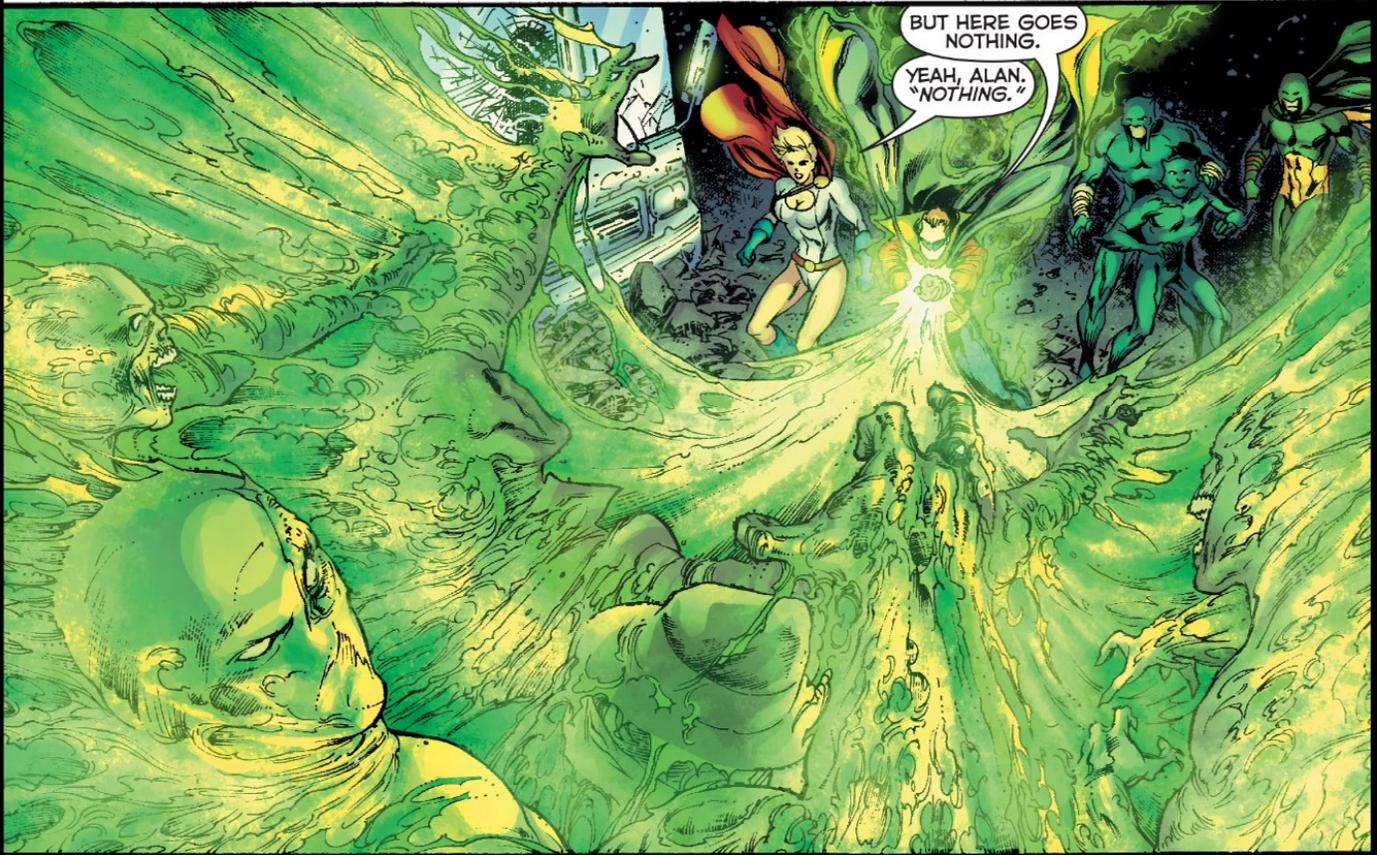
TITANS ARE READY TO FIGHT TOO, FLASHS. WHERE SHOULD WE GO?



"WHEREVER THERE'S TROUBLE, BART."



MY RING DOESN'T EXACTLY OPERATE LIKE HAL'S, ATOM. IT'S NOT CONNECTED TO THAT BATTERY OUT THERE ON OA. IT'S ITS OWN POWER SOURCE.



BUT HERE GOES NOTHING.

YEAH, ALAN. "NOTHING."



IT'S KEEPING THEM BACK, BUT FOR HOW LONG? AND WHAT CAN THE REST OF US DO?

PLENTY.

WWSH



WATER? WHAT'S SHE GONNA DO? DROWN THEM?

YOU CAN'T FEEL FEAR, DAMAGE. THAT'S JUST WHAT THEY WANT.

I'M NOT AFRAID, ATOM. I WAS POINTING OUT THE **ABSURDITY** OF TRYING TO SUFFOCATE THE DEAD.

MEANING YOU'RE COVERING UP FEAR WITH ATTITUDE.

WHY ARE YOU HANGING ON MY SHOULDER?

YOU'RE AL PRATT'S BOY.

THOUGH TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH, I WASN'T THAT AWARE OF YOUR FATHER UNTIL AFTER I TOOK THE NAME.

I DON'T WEAR THIS MASK FOR THE ATOM. I WEAR IT SO I **REMEMBER** NOT TO PULL MY PUNCHES LIKE THE REST OF YOU.

BECAUSE YOU'RE SCARED.

WELL, AFTER ALL OF THIS, WHO THE HELL WOULDN'T BE?!

DON'T LISTEN TO THE LITTLE MAN, SON.

AL?



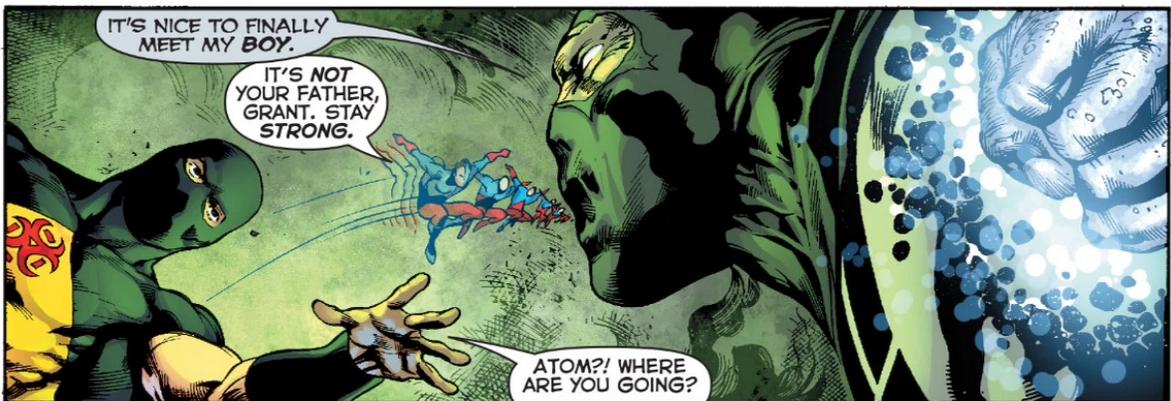
IT'S OKAY TO BE AFRAID.

AAAAH!



WHY WOULD YOU BURN AN OLD FRIEND, ALAN?

ATOM, IT'S NOT AFFECTING THEM!



IT'S NICE TO FINALLY MEET MY BOY.

IT'S NOT YOUR FATHER, GRANT. STAY STRONG.

ATOM?! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?



RAGE.

FEAR.

LOVE.

YOU'RE *ANGRY* WITH ME, AREN'T YOU? ALL THOSE YEARS AND I NEVER EVEN BOTHERED TO PLAY A GAME OF *CATCH*.

MY DAD NEVER KNEW ABOUT ME.

OF COURSE I DID. I JUST DIDN'T WANT YOU.



YOU'RE TRYING TO DETONATE YOUR FISTS THE SAME WAY I USED TO, BUT I CAN *ABSORB* YOUR POWER, SON. AND IF I CAN'T GET AT YOUR HEART THE *EASY* WAY--
--I'LL JUST BLOW YOU APART AND PICK THROUGH THE *PIECES*.

NOT IF I RESTRAIN YOUR "ATOMIC-PUNCH" WITH A LITTLE CREATIVE MOLECULAR JUGGLING.



NOW STAY THE HELL AWAY FROM HIM!



I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.

I DO. WE DO THIS YOUR WAY, GRANT. WE BEAT THEM DOWN AGAIN AND AGAIN UNTIL IT'S OVER.

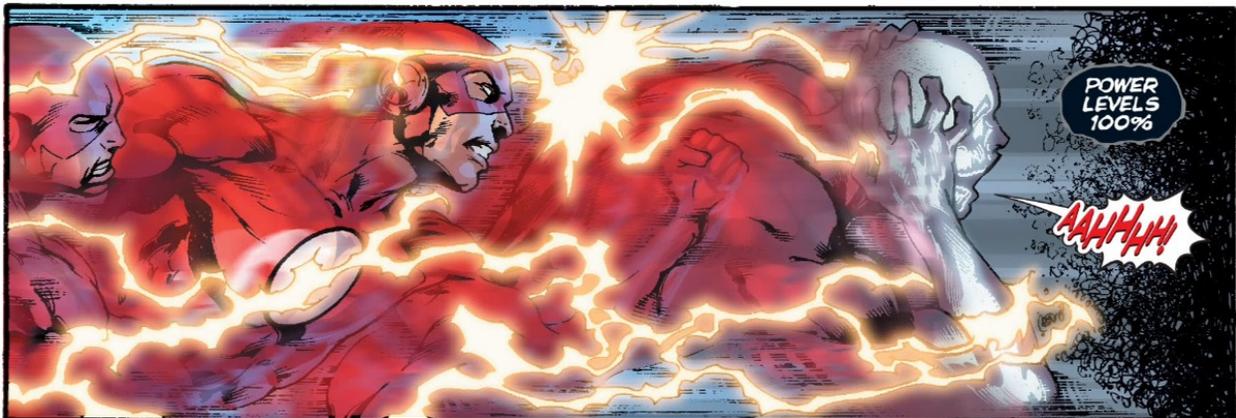
NOT FOR YOUR FATHER, BUT FOR THE REST OF THE WORLD.

THINK YOU CAN HANDLE THAT?



HELL, YEAH.

HOPE.







FLESH.



NEKRON.

RISE.



BARRY ALLEN, YOU OWE ME YOUR LIFE. YOU ALL DO.



NEXT:
**WHAT IS
NEKRON?**



THE BOOK OF THE BLACK

THE BURNED-IN THOUGHTS OF WILLIAM HAND:

CHAPTER 1, VERSE 3

IT'S LIKE CHRISTMAS MORNING.

I STAND OUTSIDE THE FRONT DOOR OF THE MORTUARY WHERE I LAID MY FAMILY TO REST. AND I WAIT. I WAIT FOR THE VOICE I'VE HEARD MY ENTIRE LIFE TO BE HEARD BY EVERYONE ELSE. I WAIT SURROUNDED BY THE DEAD, EACH GRAVE LIKE A SONG REMINDING ME OF A TIME IN MY LIFE.



THE BOY AT THE CORNER OF THE NORTHERN FENCE WAS HIT BY A CAR AND BURIED ON MY THIRTEENTH BIRTHDAY. I GOT A BOOK FROM MOTHER CALLED "BRAVE NEW WORLD." I READ IT THAT NIGHT SITTING ON HIS STONE. IT TOLD THE STORY OF A FUTURE WHERE WILLPOWER WAS ABSENT AND FORGOTTEN, DILUTED BY OUR OWN REPETITIVE ACTIONS OF TEMPORARY SATISFACTION. IT WAS ABOUT TOMORROW, NOW TODAY.

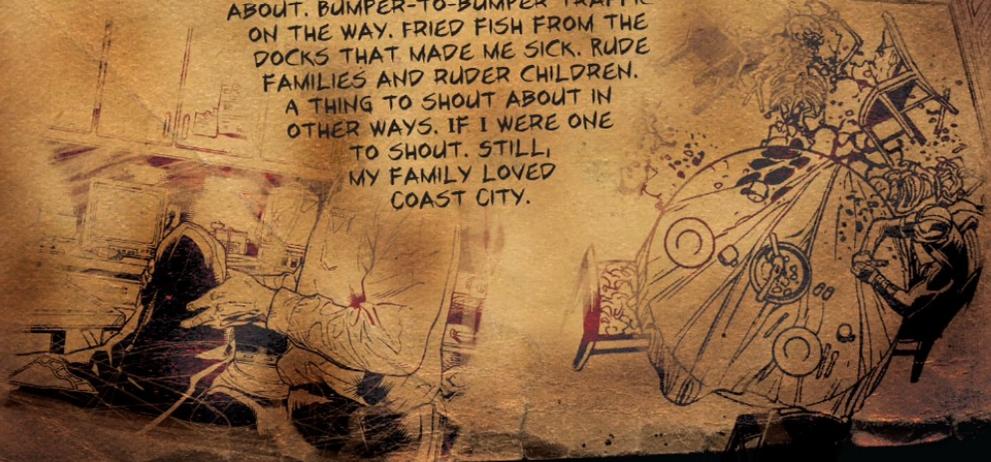
A WOMAN AND HER DAUGHTER JUST OFF THE MAIN DRIVE HAD TO BE EMBALMED TWICE. MY FATHER HAD ASKED FOR MY BROTHERS TO ASSIST HIM FOR THE FIRST TIME THAT FALL AFTERNOON, BUT THEIR CLUMSY HANDS AND WEAK WILLED STOMACHS MADE THE WOMAN AND HER DAUGHTER A TERRIBLE MESS. IT WAS THE ONLY TIME I HEARD MY MOTHER AND FATHER ARGUE AS LOUDLY AS THEY DID. AND AS MUCH AS MOTHER DISAPPROVED OF ME IN THE BASEMENT, THE WOMAN AND HER DAUGHTER HAD TO BE READY FOR VIEWING BY MORNING. MY FATHER AND I WORKED ALL NIGHT FIXING THE MISTAKES MY BROTHERS HAD MADE. HE THANKED ME FOR IT THAT NIGHT. HE EVEN LEFT ME ALONE WITH THEM FOR A MOMENT OR TWO.



BUT I WAS NOT ALLOWED IN THE BASEMENT AGAIN.

THEN THERE WAS THE OLDEST MAN IN THE LOT. BURIED BY THE OAK TREE I USED TO CLIMB. HE HAD SERVED IN THREE WARS AND SURVIVED CANCER. SOME MIGHT SAY HE HAD ESCAPED DEATH, BUT CLEARLY HE HAD NOT. NO ONE DOES. THE MAN WAS PUT TO REST ON THE HOTTEST DAY RECORDED IN COAST CITY. THE SUN BLAZED DOWN ON THE BLACK SUITS AND DRESSES. SWEATY HANDS CARRYING THE COFFIN SLIPPED, AND THE COFFIN CRACKED OPEN ON THE GROUND. THE OLD MAN SPILLED OUT, HIS EYES STARING UP INTO MINE AS IF TO SAY, "I THOUGHT I WOULD'VE BEAT IT."

WHEN ALL WAS SAID AND BURIED, MY FATHER PROCLAIMED TO OUR FAMILY THAT WE'D SPEND THE REST OF THE DAY AT THE CITY BEACH. MY BROTHERS SCRAMBLED WITH SMILES, STUMBLING OVER EACH OTHER TO GRAB THEIR BATHING SUITS. "A TRIP TO THE CITY!" THEY SHOUTED. AS IF IT WERE SUCH A THING TO SHOUT ABOUT. BUMPER-TO-BUMPER TRAFFIC ON THE WAY. FRIED FISH FROM THE DOCKS THAT MADE ME SICK. RUDE FAMILIES AND RUDER CHILDREN. A THING TO SHOUT ABOUT IN OTHER WAYS. IF I WERE ONE TO SHOUT. STILL, MY FAMILY LOVED COAST CITY.





SEVEN MILLION PEOPLE LOST
THEIR LIVES IN A FLASH OF ALIEN FIRE.
BUT YOU COULD SEE RIGHT THROUGH THOSE
POLITICIANS AND TALK SHOW HOSTS AS THEY
DRONED ON FOR DAYS AND WEEKS AFTER. BEYOND
THE "DEVASTATING" LOSS OF LIFE, THEY
FAILED TO MENTION ANYTHING COAST CITY
EVER HAD TO OFFER THAT OTHER CITIES
DID NOT. IT WAS SIMPLY, "HOME TO
THE GREEN LANTERN."

COAST CITY MEANT NOTHING.

BUT THINGS CHANGE.

GREEN LANTERN RETURNED.
COAST CITY RETURNED. AND WHEN IT WAS
THREATENED AGAIN, WHEN HAL JORDAN
FELT FEAR, THE PEOPLE OF COAST CITY
DID NOT. THEY STOOD THEIR GROUND
ALONGSIDE GREEN LANTERN.

IN THE WAKE OF OUR DARKNESS,
THE CITY SHINES AS BRIGHTLY AS GREEN
LANTERN DOES TONIGHT. THE PEOPLE
PUT LIGHTS IN THEIR WINDOWS AS A
SYMBOL AGAINST THE SKIES GROWING
DARK: THEY WILL STAND THEIR GROUND
AGAIN. THEY WILL BELIEVE IN TOMORROW.

COAST CITY.
THE CITY WITHOUT FEAR.

BUT A CITY FULL OF WILLPOWER.

A CITY GLOWING
BRIGHTER THAN ANY OTHER ON
EARTH. ALL THANKS TO GREEN
LANTERN. HE'S TURNED HIS FAMILY
AND FRIENDS INTO A MEAL
FOR MY LORD.

FOR NEKRON.

FOR THE SEVEN MILLION WHO DIED.

WHEN THE FIRST LIVING
CREATURE GAINED SENTIENCE AND
VOLUNTARILY MOVED, WILLPOWER
WAS BORN. IT IS THE MOST BASIC
ELEMENT OF SENTIENT EXISTENCE,
OFTEN OBSCURED BY THE
COMPLEXITY OF LIFE. THE
GUARDIANS KNEW THIS.
AS THEY KNEW
THE SECRET OF LIFE.

THEIR LIE WILL BE EXPOSED.

AND WILLPOWER
WILL NO LONGER
BE THEIRS TO
CONTROL.