

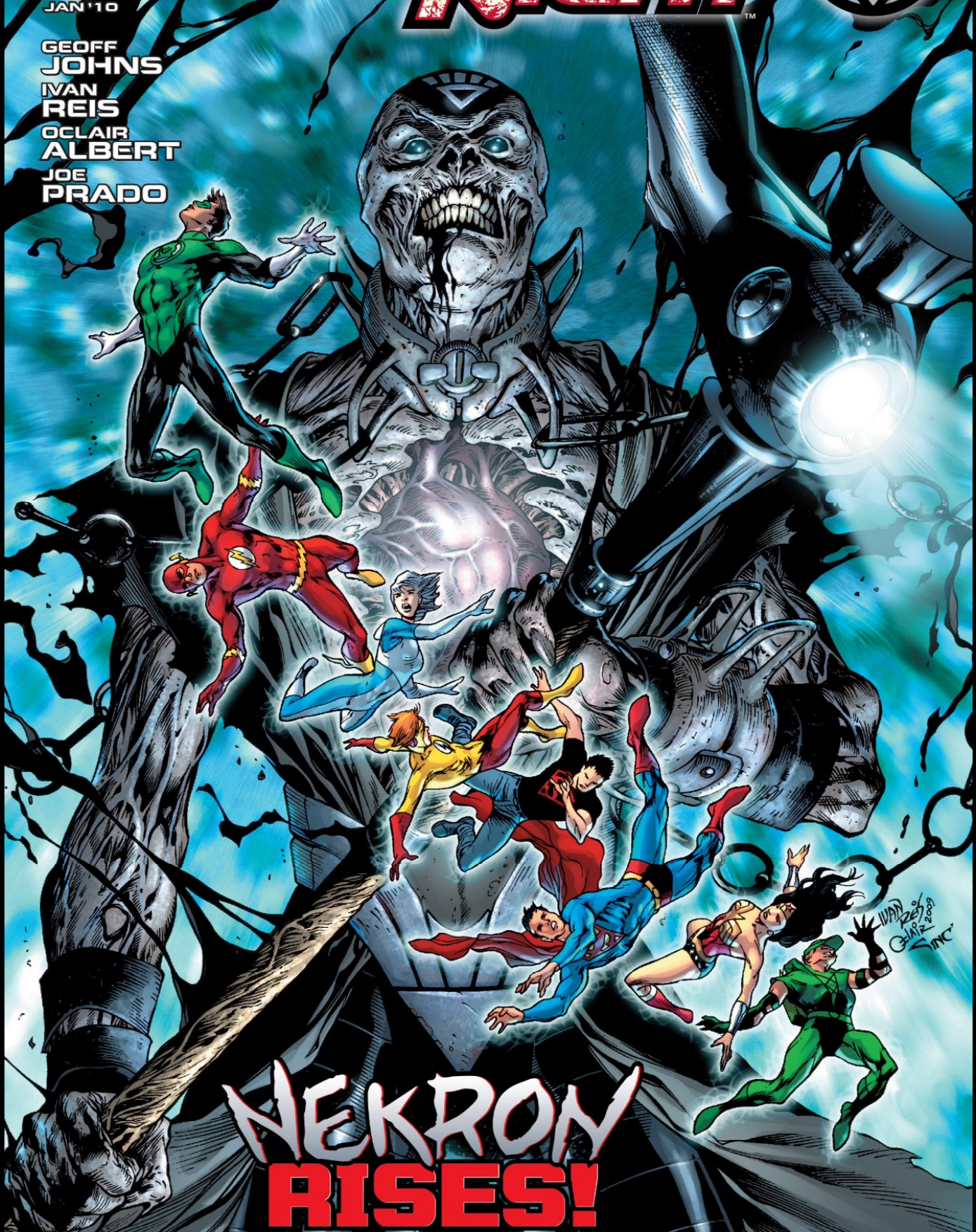


5  
OF 8

JAN '10

GEOFF  
JOHNS  
IVAN  
REIS  
OCLAIR  
ALBERT  
JOE  
PRADO

# BLACKEST NIGHT



# NEKRON RISES!

WAIN  
REIS  
OCLAIR  
ALBERT  
JOE PRADO





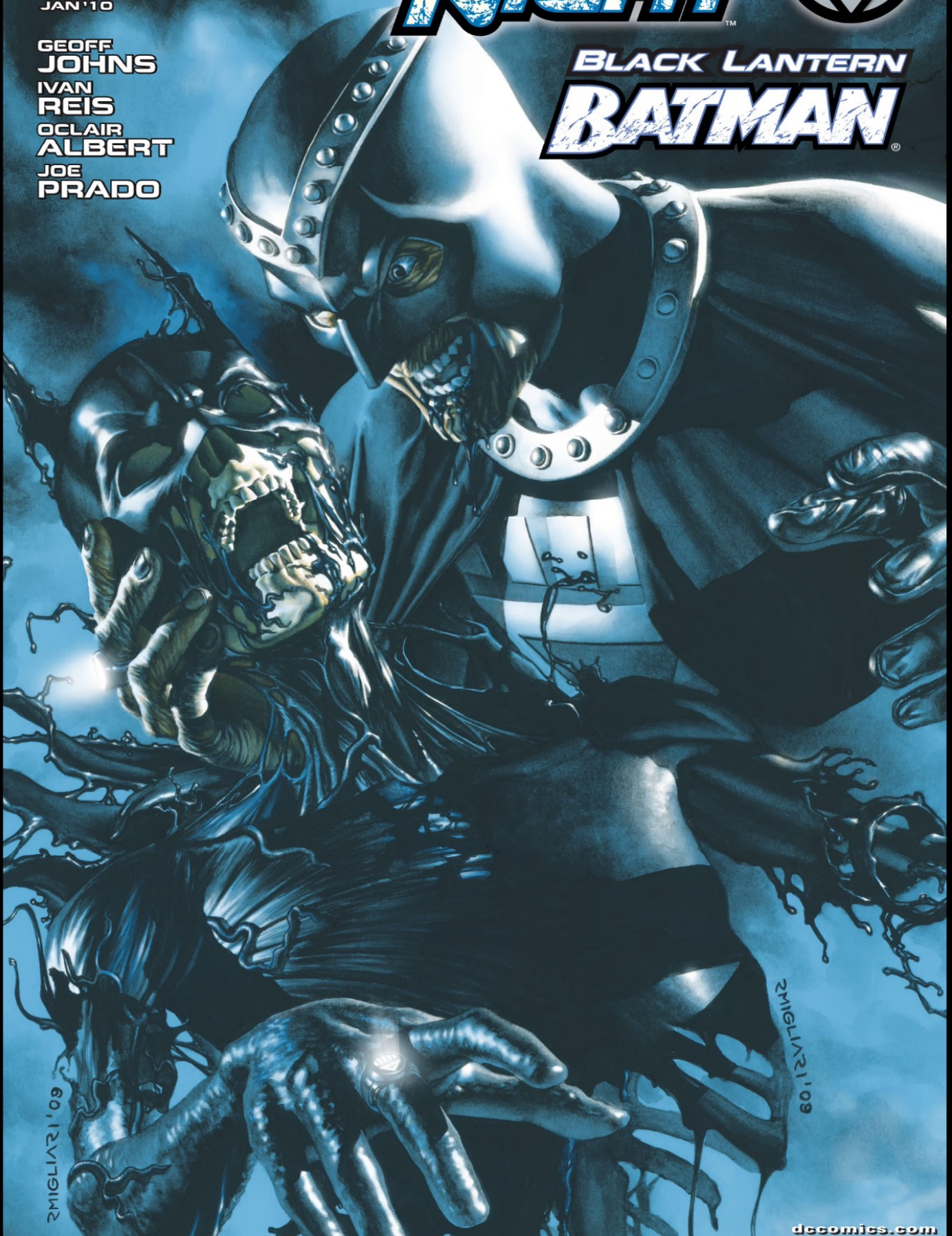
5  
OF 8  
JAN '10

# BLACKEST NIGHT



GEOFF  
JOHNS  
IVAN  
REIS  
OCLAIR  
ALBERT  
JOE  
PRADO

BLACK LANTERN  
BATMAN



RMIGLIARI '09

RMIGLIARI '09





5  
OF 8  
JAN '10

# BLACKEST NIGHT



GEOFF  
JOHNS  
IVAN  
REIS  
DELAIR  
ALBERT  
JOE  
PRADO





THE BLACKEST NIGHT WILL DESCEND UPON US ALL.  
WITHOUT PREJUDICE OR MERCY. WITHOUT REASON.  
THE SEVEN CORPS WILL FALL. AS WILL THE UNIVERSE.  
BACK TO A PLACE DEVOID OF LIGHT. OF EMOTION. OF LIFE.  
THE BOOK OF OAA, COSMIC REVELATIONS, VERSE 3

SPACE SECTOR 666.  
RYUT.

LIKE THE REST OF THE SELF-APPOINTED GUARDIANS, GANTHET AND SAYD WERE BORN ON THE PLANET MALTUS. THE WORLD WHERE LIFE FIRST BEGAN.

THAT GAVE THEM THE VALIDATION TO ACT AS THE ULTIMATE AUTHORITY FIGURES ON INTERGALACTIC ORDER.

THAT DOESN'T MEAN THEY'VE HANDLED IT ALL THAT WELL.

THE BLACK LANTERN IS NOT HERE.

"THE BLACK LANTERN IS NOT HERE." A REMARKABLY ASTUTE OBSERVATION, GANTHET.

OVER THE LAST YEAR, THE OTHER CORPS HAVE BEEN AT WAR.

BUT TODAY, FRIENDS, ENEMIES AND EX-GIRLFRIENDS HAVE TO STAND UNITED.

THIS HOLE IS EMPTY. THERE'S NOTHING WORSE THAN EMPTY!

HIP HIP HOORAY.

WHERE IS THE BLACK BATTERY, GUARDIAN SLIME?!

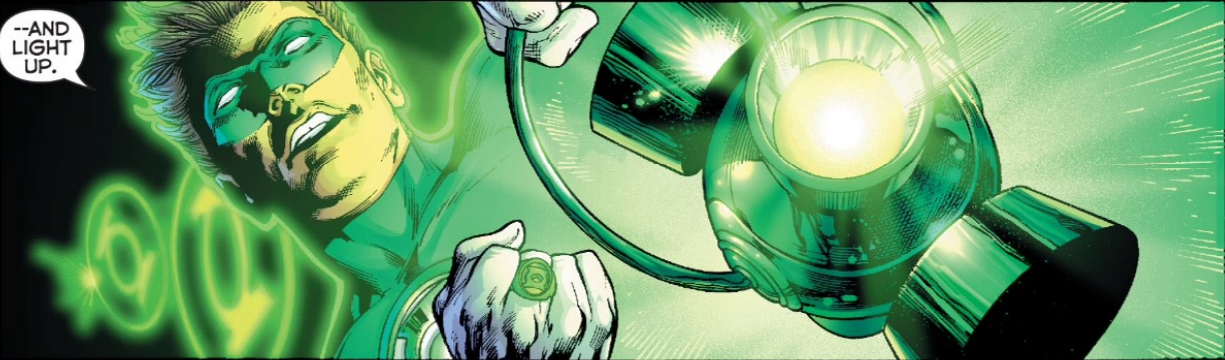
SAY IT, RED, DON'T SPRAY IT.

I SENSE THE GUARDIAN WHO BETRAYED US IS WITHIN THE BLACK LANTERN'S PRESENCE.

WE CAN TAKE US TO HER. AND TOGETHER WE CAN DESTROY THE DARKNESS BEHIND THIS.

THEN LET'S ALL SHUT UP--

--AND LIGHT UP.







IN BRIGHTEST DAY, IN BLACKEST NIGHT, NO EVIL SHALL ESCAPE MY SIGHT. LET THOSE WHO WORSHIP EVIL'S MIGHT BEWARE MY POWER GREEN LANTERN'S LIGHT!  
POWER LEVELS 100%.

WITH BLOOD AND RAGE OF CRIMSON RED, RIPPED FROM A CORPSE SO FRESHLY DEAD, TOGETHER WITH OUR HELLISH HATE, WE'LL BURN YOU ALL--THAT IS YOUR FATE!  
POWER LEVELS 100%.

FOR HEARTS LONG LOST AND FULL OF FRIGHT, FOR THOSE ALONE IN BLACKEST NIGHT, ACCEPT OUR RING AND JOIN OUR FIGHT. LOVE CONQUERS ALL WITH VIOLET LIGHT!  
POWER LEVELS 100%.

TOR LOREK SAN, BOR NAKKA MUR, NATROMI FLAN, TORNEK WOT UR, TER LANTERN KER LO ABIN SUR, TAAN LEX LEX NOK--FORMORROW SUR!  
POWER LEVELS 100%.

EH?

LARFLEEZE.

GREEN LANTERN.

ATROCITUS.

STAR SAPPHIRE.

IN BLACKEST DAY, IN BRIGHTEST NIGHT, BEWARE YOUR FEARS MADE INTO LIGHT. LET THOSE WHO TRY TO STOP WHAT'S RIGHT, BURN LIKE MY POWER, SINESTRO'S MIGHT!  
POWER LEVELS 100%.

SINESTRO.

IN FEARFUL DAY, IN RAGING NIGHT, WITH STRONG HEARTS FULL, OUR SOULS IGNITE, WHEN ALL SEEMS LOST IN THE WAR OF LIGHT, LOOK TO THE STARS--FOR HOPE BURNS BRIGHT!  
POWER LEVELS 100%.

SAINT WALKER.

# BLACKEST NIGHT

GEOFF JOHNS WRITER • IVAN REIS PENCILLER • OCLAIR ALBERT & JOE PRADO INKERS  
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COVER: REIS • ALBERT • SINCLAIR ALT. COVER: RODOLFO MIGLIARI





WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR, LARFLEEZE?

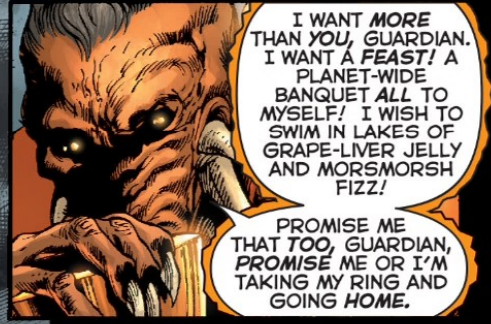
I'M HUNGRY.

AGAIN?



YOU VOWED TO ASSIST US AGAINST THE BLACK LANTERNS IN EXCHANGE FOR A GUARDIAN, LARFLEEZE.

I HAVE PLEDGED TO SACRIFICE MY FREEDOM AND SERVE YOU ONCE WE ELIMINATE THIS DARKNESS.



I WANT MORE THAN YOU, GUARDIAN. I WANT A FEAST! A PLANET-WIDE BANQUET ALL TO MYSELF! I WISH TO SWIM IN LAKES OF GRAPE-LIVER JELLY AND MORSMORSH FIZZ!

PROMISE ME THAT TOO, GUARDIAN, PROMISE ME OR I'M TAKING MY RING AND GOING HOME.



LET ME KILL HIM.

A PLAUSIBLE SOLUTION. WE CAN FOLLOW THE ORANGE RING TO WHATEVER GLUTTON IT LATCHES ONTO NEXT.

THIS IS NOT HIS FAULT, SINESTRO. LARFLEEZE'S HUNGER IS AN AFFLICTION. HE SUFFERS BECAUSE OF THE LIGHT HE WIELDS.

I BET IF I SHOVED THAT LANTERN DOWN HIS THROAT HE'D CHARGE RIGHT UP.



YOUR ATTACK ON THE BLUE LANTERNS IS FORGIVEN, LARFLEEZE. AS LONG AS YOU ARE WITHIN THE VICINITY OF MY BLUE LIGHT, YOU WILL FEEL NO HUNGER.

ALL WILL BE WELL.

MMM. YES. THE HUNGER FADES.



BUT I COULD GO FOR SOME DESSERT.



HERE'S THE CHERRY ON TOP.

YOW!

POWER LEVELS 100,000%.



THE RAINBOW RODEO'S LOCKED AND LOADED, GANTHET.

SO WHERE'D THIS BIG, BAD BLACK LANTERN GO?



EARTH.

COAST CITY.



WHAT YOU'VE  
DONE TO MY FRIENDS  
AND THESE POOR  
PEOPLE HAS GONE  
WAY BEYOND  
SACRILEGIOUS.



YOUR DEATH  
WAS THE FIRST,  
BARRY ALLEN OF  
EARTH.

AND YOUR  
REBIRTH THE  
LAST.

SO SAYS  
NEKRON.







IT'S INSTINCTUAL FOR PEOPLE LIKE YOU TO FIGHT AGAINST THE DARKNESS, FLASH, BUT DYING IS INEVITABLE. WE AGE BECAUSE WE AREN'T SUPPOSED TO BE HERE.

SO YOU WENT THROUGH MORE THAN A WARDROBE CHANGE SINCE I'VE BEEN GONE. WHAT'S YOUR STORY, BLACK HAND?

BEYOND SPEWING PHILOSOPHICAL NONSENSE?



I'M HAPPY NOW, FLASH. I'M DEAD.

LIKE YOU WERE.

THAT SKULL?

YOU WERE THE ONE THAT DUG UP BRUCE'S GRAVE!



GET YOUR DAMN HANDS OFF--

WAAAAHHH!

EMOTIONAL TETHER MANIFESTED.



SKETCH



BRUCE?

DON'T WORRY, FLASH. I WON'T DISTURB YOUR BODY. YOU AREN'T MY TYPE.

I'D HATE TO KNOW WHO IS.

DEDICATED TO THE SEVEN MILLION WHO DIED IN GREAT CITY FOREVER





NICE OF YOU TO SWING BY.

SO ONE GREEN LANTERN BADDIE.

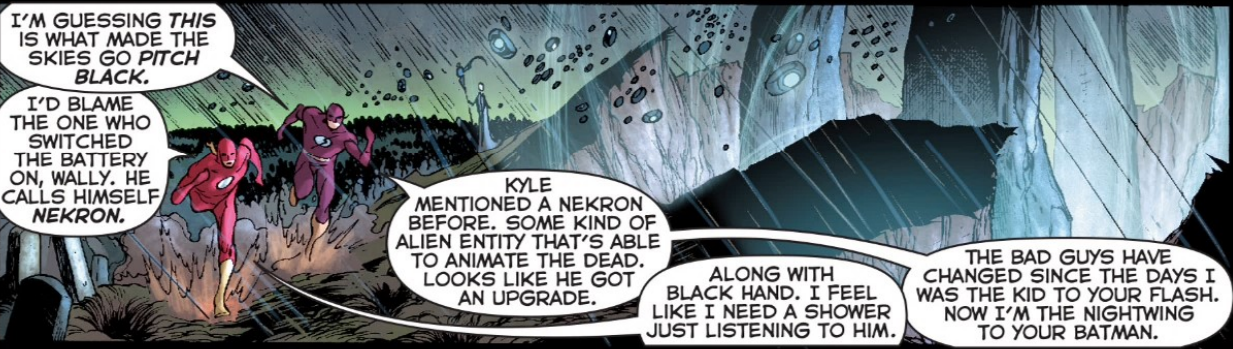


ONE GIANT SKELETON-GUY.

ONE FREAKY GUARDIAN.

gagagag!

AND A BLACK LANTERN IN A PEAR TREE.



I'M GUESSING THIS IS WHAT MADE THE SKIES GO PITCH BLACK.

I'D BLAME THE ONE WHO SWITCHED THE BATTERY ON, WALLY. HE CALLS HIMSELF NEKRON.

KYLE MENTIONED A NEKRON BEFORE. SOME KIND OF ALIEN ENTITY THAT'S ABLE TO ANIMATE THE DEAD. LOOKS LIKE HE GOT AN UPGRADE.

ALONG WITH BLACK HAND. I FEEL LIKE I NEED A SHOWER JUST LISTENING TO HIM.

THE BAD GUYS HAVE CHANGED SINCE THE DAYS I WAS THE KID TO YOUR FLASH. NOW I'M THE NIGHTWING TO YOUR BATMAN.



YOU'RE THE FLASH TO MY FLASH, WALLY. THE MORE THE MERRIER.

BUT ON TOP OF THE GRIM REAPER AND HIS HALLOWEEN TROUPE, WE'VE GOT SEVEN MILLION PEOPLE CLAWING THEIR WAY OUT OF THEIR GRAVES.

SO TELL ME YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE COMING.

WE DON'T HAVE A FLASH CORPS TO BACK US UP, BARRY --





-- BUT WE'VE GOT PLENTY OF FRIENDS.





GRANT EMERSON OF EARTH.

RISE.

STOP!  
LEAVE THE KID ALONE!



DAMAGE WAS MISUNDERSTOOD LIKE I WAS, RAY. NO ONE EVER BELIEVED IN HIM.

NOT UNTIL YOU CAME ALONG TONIGHT.

JEAN!

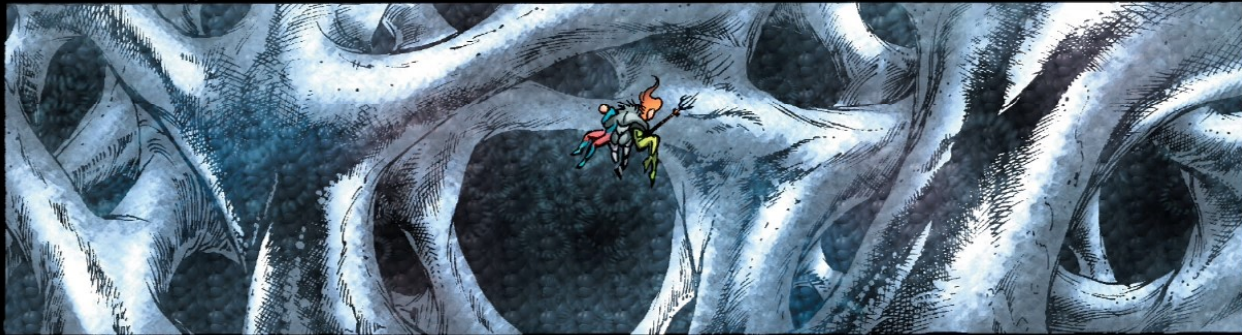


AND THAT GLIMMER OF HOPE YOU IGNITED IN HIM TASTED SO GOOD.

HOW ABOUT A LITTLE SOMETHING TO WASH IT DOWN?













"...WHICH LEADS ME TO THE BAD NEWS."

"DONNA TROY WAS BITTEN BY A BLACK LANTERN. AND SHE STARTED GETTING SICK."



YOU SHOULD'VE TAKEN HER TO DOCTOR MID-NITE OR S.T.A.R. LABS.

WE TRIED, WALLY. BUT DONNA SAID IF SHE WAS GOING DOWN, SHE WAS GOING DOWN FIGHTING--

--UM, WHERE ARE WE GOING? IS THAT THE BLACK LANTERN BOSS?

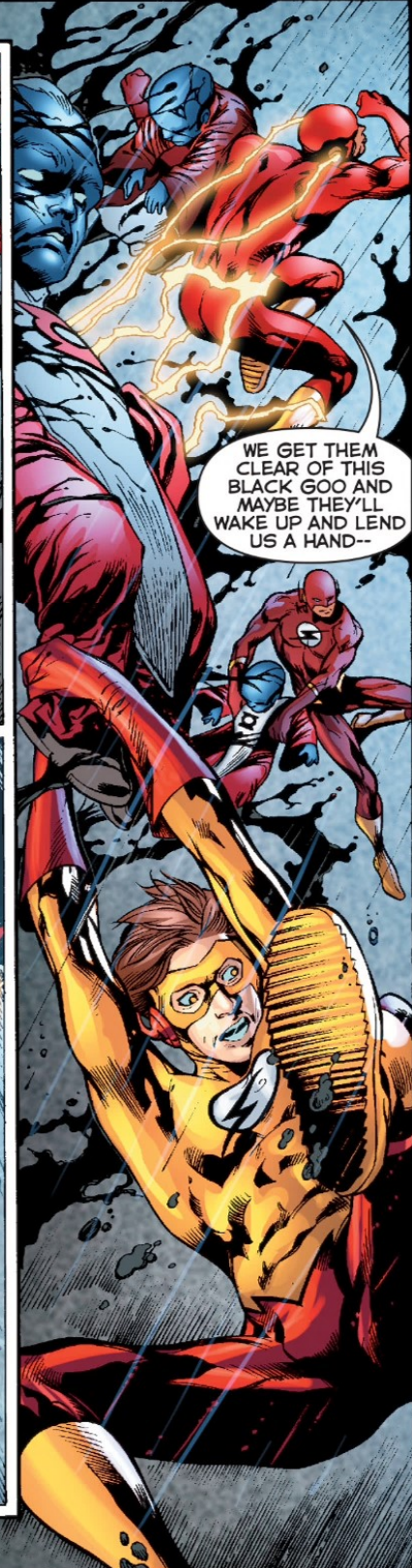
DON'T STOP RUNNING, BART. AND DON'T FOCUS ON HIM. FOCUS ON THE ALIENS FLOATING IN THE SKY.

WHO?

"THE GUARDIANS OF O.A."



WE MIGHT NOT HAVE GREEN LANTERNS TO HELP, BUT WE'VE GOT ONE STEP BETTER IF YOU'RE TALKING SHEER POWER.



WE GET THEM CLEAR OF THIS BLACK GOO AND MAYBE THEY'LL WAKE UP AND LEND US A HAND--









YOU LOOK LIKE YOU COULD USE SOME COLOR.

YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW MUCH I'VE BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO THIS.





**LANTERNS!**

YOU WILL FEED OUR LORD NEKRON!



YOUR WRANGLER DOES NOT DESERVE THE TITLE "LORD."

AND YOU DO NOT DESERVE TO BE CALLED A GUARDIAN.

NONE OF THEM DO.



A GUARDIAN?!

I WANT THIS ONE! SHE'S DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHERS. AND WHAT'S DIFFERENT IS WORTH MORE!



HEY, LARFLEEZE, I'D SEND THAT ONE BACK TO THE KITCHEN.

SHE'S OVERCOOKED.



SSNNCGNNOO~!





HAL! YOU'RE LATE!

YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THIS NEKRON?

THAT'S MY LINE.

THE CORPS HAS FACED HIM BEFORE. SOME KIND OF UNDEAD CREATURE WHO USES THE DECEASED AS PUPPETS. BUT THE BLACK RINGS ARE NEW.

NO WORRIES THOUGH. I BROUGHT THE COLOR-CODED CAVALRY.

THERE IT IS. THE CENTRAL BLACK LANTERN.

WE DESTROY THE LANTERN AND WE DESTROY EVERYTHING CONNECTED TO IT.

WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO?

WE MUST RECREATE THE WHITE LIGHT THAT GAVE BIRTH TO LIFE, SINESTRO.

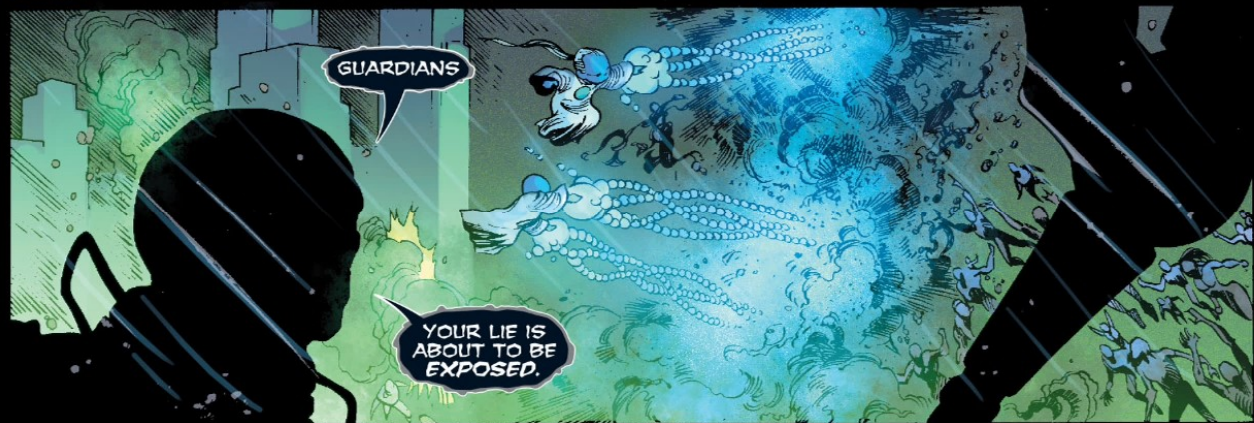
IT IS THE ANTI-THESIS OF THE DEATH POWERING THE BLACK LANTERN.





I THINK I SAW THIS ON A SATURDAY MORNING CARTOON.

ME TOO.



GUARDIANS

YOUR LIE IS ABOUT TO BE EXPOSED.



FLESH.



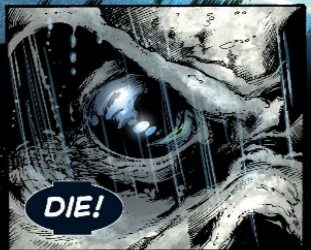
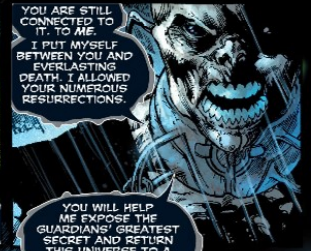




**RISE**











BRUCE?

WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO THEM?

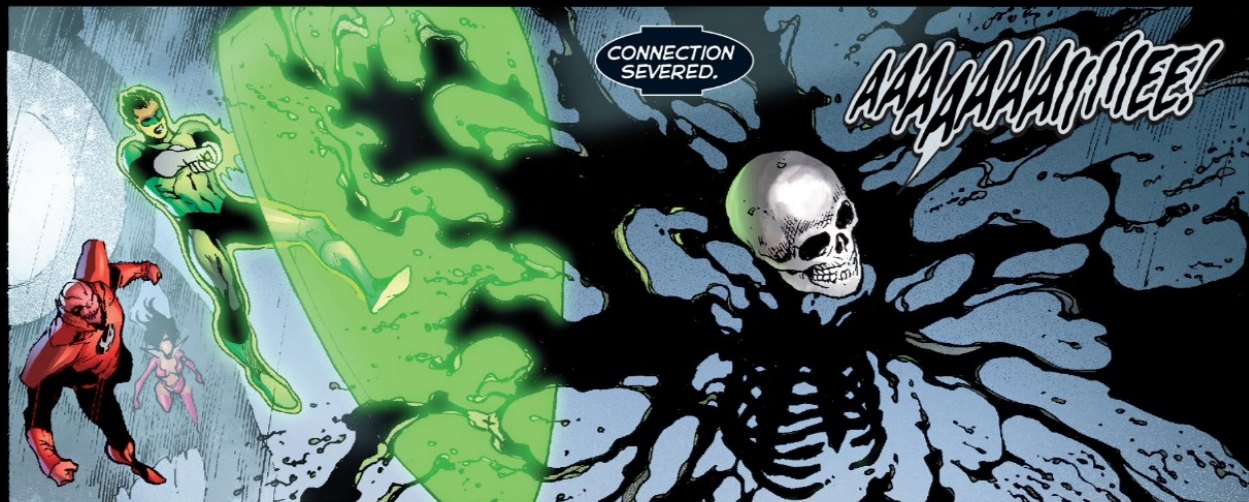
*FLASH*



*FLASH*



YOU HAVE SERVED YOUR PURPOSE, "BRUCE WAYNE." BACK TO REST.



CONNECTION SEVERED.

*AAAAAAAAAAAA!*





THE LIGHT AWAITS US!



HAL JORDAN OF EARTH-11



BARRY ALLEN OF EARTH-11

TEXT: DIE!



# THE BOOK OF THE BLACK

THE BURNED-IN THOUGHTS OF WILLIAM HAND:

## CHAPTER 1, VERSE 4

THEY ASKED MY MOTHER TO STOP BRINGING ME TO CHURCH.

I DON'T REMEMBER THE FIRST SUNDAY MY FAMILY AND I WENT TO COAST CITY UNITED METHODIST, BECAUSE MY MOTHER CARRIED ME IN EVERY SUNDAY BEFORE I COULD WALK, BUT I DO REMEMBER THE LAST.

LIKE ALWAYS, MY BROTHERS WOULD SING A LITTLE TOO LOUDLY, PURPOSEFULLY ALTERING WORDS IN THE HYMNALS INTO CLUSTERS OF JUVENILE JOKES. PULLING OUT THEIR CRAYONS AND DRAWING ON THE INSIDE COVER OF THE BIBLE, SCRIBBLING OVER THE MAPS OF THE MIDDLE EAST WITH PICTURES OF ANIMALS RELIEVING THEMSELVES. GIGGLING UNTIL MY FATHER STERNLY HUSHED THEM WITH A GRAB OF THEIR COLLARS AND PULLED THEIR TIES TIGHT. I NEVER JOINED MY BROTHERS IN THEIR ENDEAVORS TO ENTERTAIN THEMSELVES, THOUGH I THOUGHT IT STRANGE THEY WERE THE ONLY ONES IN THE PARISH SMILING, ALTHOUGH BRIEFLY.

"WHY IS NO ONE SMILING?" I ASKED MY MOTHER.

SHE WAS FRUSTRATED AND PREOCCUPIED WITH THE PREDICTABLE BEHAVIOR OF MY BROTHERS. HER HAIR HAD STARTED TO BREAK FREE FROM THE BUN ON HER HEAD. SHE PUSHED THE STRANDS OUT OF HER EYES, AVOIDING THE GLARES OF OTHER PARENTS AND EVEN MINISTER WOODS HIMSELF. "NEVER MIND," SHE SAID

BUT I ASKED AGAIN, "WHY IS NO ONE SMILING?"

SHE SNAPPED AT ME, "BECAUSE RIGHT NOW, GOD DOESN'T WANT US TO."

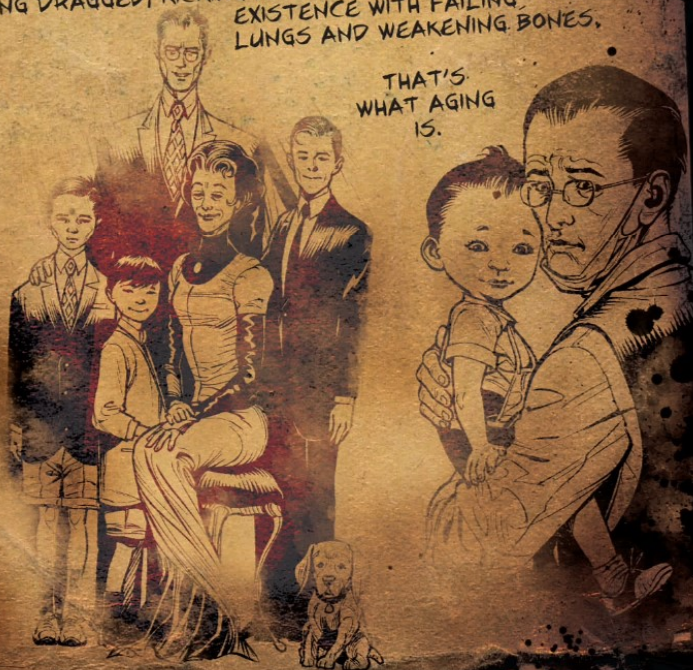
I KNOW NOW THAT SHE SIMPLY BLURTED THE FIRST THING THAT ROSE TO HER MIND, AN ATTEMPT TO GET HER CHILDREN TO BEHAVE. NOT UNLIKE THE THREAT SHE OFTEN MADE DURING OUR AFTERNOONS AT THE MALL, SHOPPING FOR THE HOLIDAYS, "IF YOU DON'T BEHAVE, SANTA WON'T COME!"

CHRISTMAS.

CHRISTMAS WITH MY GRANDMOTHER. SOMEHOW, SHE SAW THE DARKNESS LURKING WITHIN ME BEFORE ANYONE ELSE. EVEN ATROCITUS.

HER SKIN WAS STRETCHED OVER HER BRITTLE BONES. HER BREATH SMELLED LIKE STALE CRACKERS. SHE WAS AS CLOSE TO DEATH AS I WANTED TO BE. MAYBE THAT'S WHY SHE SAW WHO I REALLY WAS. THE HERALD OF DEATH. SHE WAS AFRAID OF IT. AND ME. SHE WAS BEING DRAGGED, KICKING AND SCREAMING, FROM EXISTENCE WITH FAILING LUNGS AND WEAKENING BONES.

THAT'S  
WHAT AGING  
IS.







AGING IS THE UNIVERSE TELLING YOU THAT YOU  
DON'T BELONG HERE. WE ARE THE TRESPASSERS  
OF THE PEACE IN R.I.P.


THAT'S WHAT NEKRON IS OFFERING THE UNIVERSE: PEACE.

IS HE FRIGHTENING?

HE SIMPLY TAKES THE FORM MOST SEE AS DEATH.  
AND PEOPLE ARE LIKE MY GRANDMOTHER. AFRAID OF SOMETHING  
SO ABSOLUTE. SOMETHING THAT WILL NOT HARM THEM WITH THE  
HARDSHIPS OF LIFE OR JUDGE THEM AS PEOPLE BELIEVE GOD  
WILL. DEATH BINDS ALL OF US. IT IS INDIVIDUAL AND  
COLLECTIVE TRANQUILITY.

SO WHAT HAPPENED TO GRANDMA THAT CHRISTMAS? THEY  
CALLED IT A TRAGIC ACCIDENT. THROUGH HER TEARS,  
MOTHER ASSURED US WE WOULD SEE HER IN HEAVEN ONE DAY.

I FELT SICK AT THE THOUGHT.



BUT THAT DAY WAS MONTHS BEFORE THIS ONE. MY  
LAST SUNDAY AT CHURCH. I ASKED MY MOTHER WHY  
GOD DIDN'T WANT US TO SMILE. SHE TOLD ME WE  
HAD TO SHOW RESPECT FOR THE LIFE WE'VE BEEN  
GIVEN. MY FATHER LEANED OVER AND WHISPERED  
TO ME, "EVERY DAY ABOVE GROUND IS A GOOD ONE."

THAT'S WHEN I KNEW WHY PEOPLE WERE HERE.

THEY WERE AFRAID.

AS MINISTER WOODS CONTINUED HIS SERMON, I HEARD THE  
VOICE I HAD OFTEN HEARD THROUGHOUT MY LIFE. THE VOICE  
OF NEKRON CALLING TO ME. ANSWERING QUESTIONS THAT NO  
ONE ELSE WOULD OR COULD. HE TOLD ME MINISTER WOODS  
WOULD DIE. HE TOLD ME THAT ONE DAY, I WOULD TOO. DIE.

I SMILED.

AND, SEEING ME AS ONE OF MY BROTHERS, MINISTER WOODS  
BECAME AGITATED. HE ASKED ME WHAT I WAS SMILING ABOUT.

I STOOD UP AND TOLD THE PARISH.

WE LEFT RIGHT AFTER THAT AMID  
A HUSH THROUGHOUT THE PEWS.

THE NEXT DAY, MINISTER WOODS WAS STABBED  
SEVENTEEN TIMES BY A HOMELESS MAN HE HAD INVITED INTO  
THE CHURCH FOR LUNCH.

I WAS SITTING WITH MY MOTHER WHEN SHE  
RECEIVED THE CALL. SHE STARED AT ME.  
SHE STARED AT ME FOR WHAT SEEMED LIKE HOURS.  
"I TOLD YOU," I SAID.

I SMILED AT HER,  
BUT SHE DID NOT SMILE BACK.

