



PROLOGUE **BLACKEST NIGHT**



43
E. SEP '09

GREEN LANTERN

**JOHNS
MAHNKE
ALAMY**





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*Sketches
+ Vet*



NO ONE IS SUPPOSED TO LIVE FOREVER.

AND YET, AS ONE OF THE SELF-PROCLAIMED GUARDIANS OF THE UNIVERSE, I HAVE.



I WAS THERE BILLIONS OF YEARS AGO WHEN WE FIRST DECIDED THAT THE ULTIMATE CAUSE OF CHAOS WAS EMOTION.

I WAS THERE WHEN WE ABANDONED EMOTION, AND SWORE TO SERVE AND PROTECT ALL SENTIENT LIFE IN THIS UNIVERSE AGAINST THE DARKEST OF EVIL.



I WAS THERE WHEN WE WERE FORCED TO REPLACE OUR INTERGALACTIC POLICE FORCE, THE ANDROID MANHUNTERS, AFTER A "PROGRAMMING ERROR" RESULTED IN THEIR EXTERMINATING AN ENTIRE SPACE SECTOR FULL OF LIFE.

I WAS THERE WHEN WE HARNESSSED THE EMERALD LIGHT OF WILLPOWER AND FORMED THE GREEN LANTERN CORPS.



I WAS THERE AS A LOYAL MEMBER OF THE GUARDIANS OF THE UNIVERSE FOR EONS.

BUT NO LONGER.

THERE IS AN ANCIENT PROPHECY WITHIN THE BOOK OF OA CALLED THE BLACKEST NIGHT. IT WARNS OF THE DANGERS OF ALLOWING OTHERS TO HARNESS THE POWER OF THE EMOTIONAL SPECTRUM--



--THE COALESCENCE OF EMOTIONS GIVEN OFF BY ALL SENTIENT BEINGS AND TRANSFORMED INTO POWER.

COSMIC REVELATIONS, VERSE 6 READS-- "THE LIGHT OF THE EMOTIONAL SPECTRUM WILL RISE! THE RED THROES OF RAGE, THE ORANGE LIGHT OF AVARICE, THE YELLOW FIRE OF FEAR, THE BLUE RAYS OF HOPE, THE INDIGO GLOW OF COMPASSION AND THE VIOLET AURA OF LOVE--



--AND IN THE CENTER OF IT ALL, THE GREEN MIGHT OF WILLPOWER.

"AND AS THE LIGHT RISES, SO SHALL AN UNKNOWN DARKNESS! A DARKNESS WITH NO SATIATION. A DARKNESS WITH NO LIFE."

I KNOW WHAT THE COMING DARKNESS IS. I SPEAK TO IT. I WORSHIP IT. I DO AS IT TELLS ME TO DO.

TODAY, IT DEMANDS THAT I OPEN THE BOOK OF THE BLACK.

MY GUARDIAN...

...I HUNGER.



AND TAKE PART IN THE BIRTH OF THE FIRST BLACK LANTERN...

COAST CITY.



THERE IS LIFE
AFTER DEATH.

A LIFE BURIED IN THE COLD,
WET EARTH. THE ONLY SOUNDS
MUFFLED SOBBING FROM
ABOVE. THE ONLY SIGHT
ETERNAL DARKNESS BELOW.

MY NAME IS
WILLIAM HAND.

ALTHOUGH I STILL
LIVE, MY HEART IS
FILLED WITH DEATH.

AND I AM
HAPPY.

BLACKEST NIGHT

PROLOGUE

TALE OF THE
BLACK LANTERN

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CONVERSION BY
WILDSTORM

THEY SAY THE JOURNEY IS AS IMPORTANT AS THE DESTINATION.

THE DESTINATION FOR US ALL IS DEATH.

THAT FINAL, EVERLASTING MOMENT OF DARKNESS THAT ENVELOPS ONE'S SELF IN JUDGMENT OF THEIR JOURNEY. THEN THE DARKNESS TAKES ALL THE PAIN AND TROUBLE AND WORRY AWAY--

--FOREVER.

OR, IT IS SUPPOSED TO BE FOREVER. DEATH HAS BEEN CHEATED MANY TIMES IN THIS UNIVERSE--

--BECAUSE SOMEONE ALLOWS IT.

I HEAR DEATH CALLING MY NAME.

I HAVE FOR AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER.

MY FAMILY WORKED AND LIVED AT THEIR MORTUARY ON THE EDGE OF COAST CITY.

MY FATHER AND MOTHER. MY TWO BROTHERS.

AND ME.

THE MIDDLE CHILD.

MY FIRST MEMORY WAS LEARNING TO WALK--

--AND FINDING MY FATHER AT WORK.

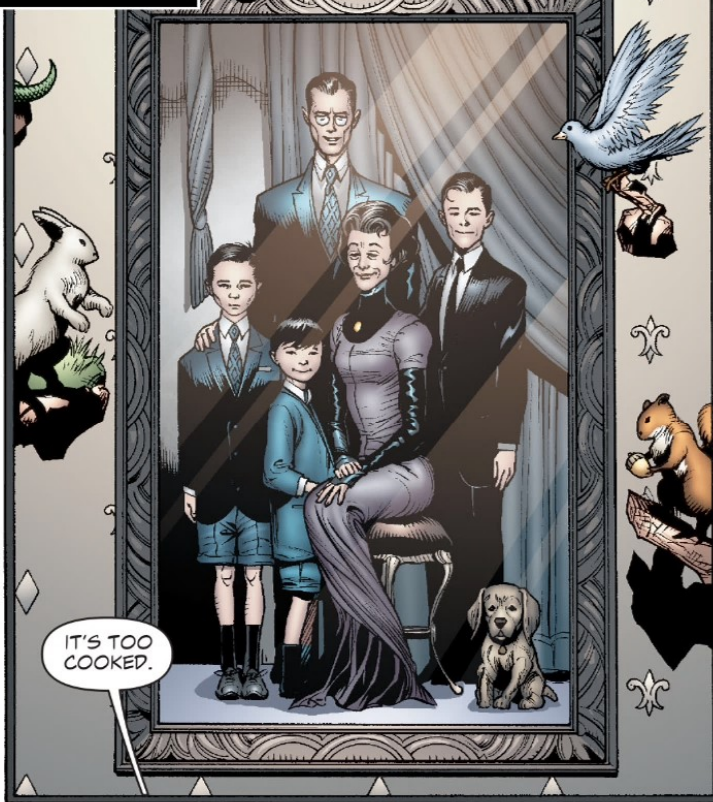
WILLIAM?!

PRETTY.

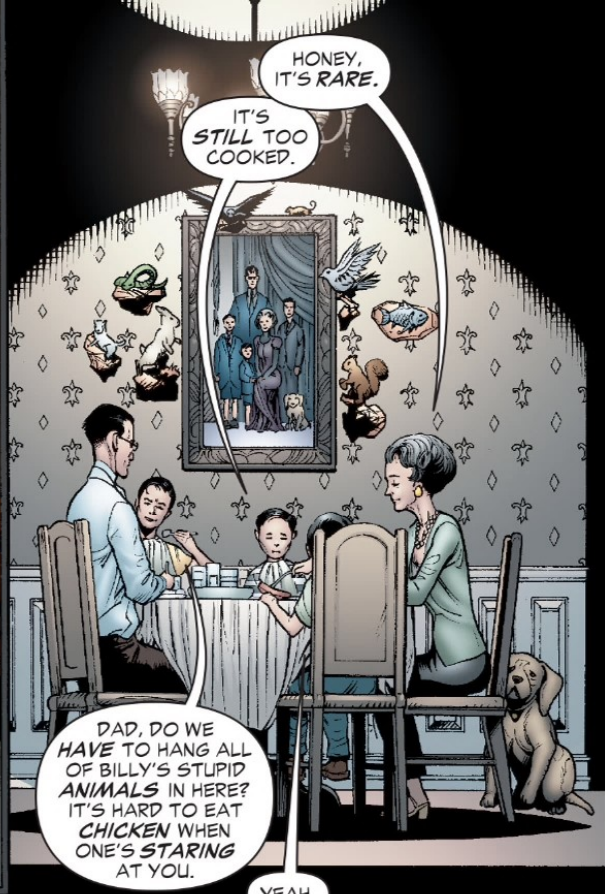
MY FATHER NEVER RELATED TO ME.



NO ONE IN MY FAMILY DID.



IT'S TOO COOKED.



HONEY, IT'S RARE.

IT'S STILL TOO COOKED.

DAD, DO WE HAVE TO HANG ALL OF BILLY'S STUPID ANIMALS IN HERE? IT'S HARD TO EAT CHICKEN WHEN ONE'S STARING AT YOU.

YEAH.

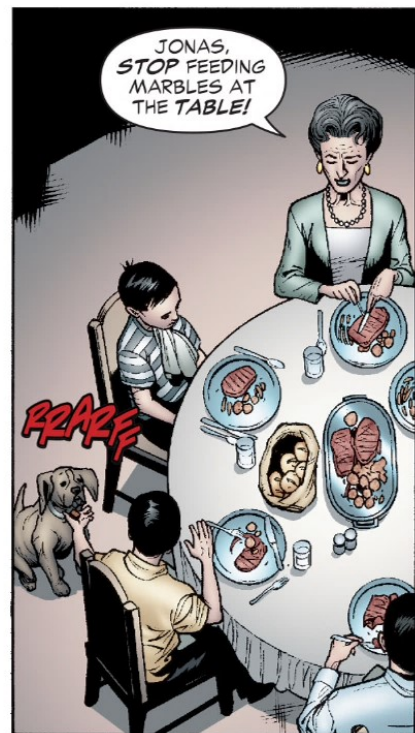


YOU NEED TO STOP PUTTING THOSE UP, WILLIAM. KEEP THEM IN YOUR BEDROOM, ALL RIGHT?

ALL RIGHT, FATHER.

WHERE DID YOU LEARN THAT HORRIBLE HOBBY ANYWAY?

FROM THE BOTH OF YOU.



JONAS, STOP FEEDING MARBLES AT THE TABLE!

RARE



RARE



RARE

MY BROTHERS WERE NEVER INTERESTED IN WHAT MY FATHER BUILT.

MARRRBLES!

WE LOOKED EVERYWHERE, MOM!

I'LL CALL THE NEIGHBORS. HE CAN'T HAVE GOTTEN FAR.

BUT I WAS WITH HIM EVERY DAY. I'D FOLLOW HIM, LEARNING EVERYTHING I COULD ABOUT THE FAMILY BUSINESS.

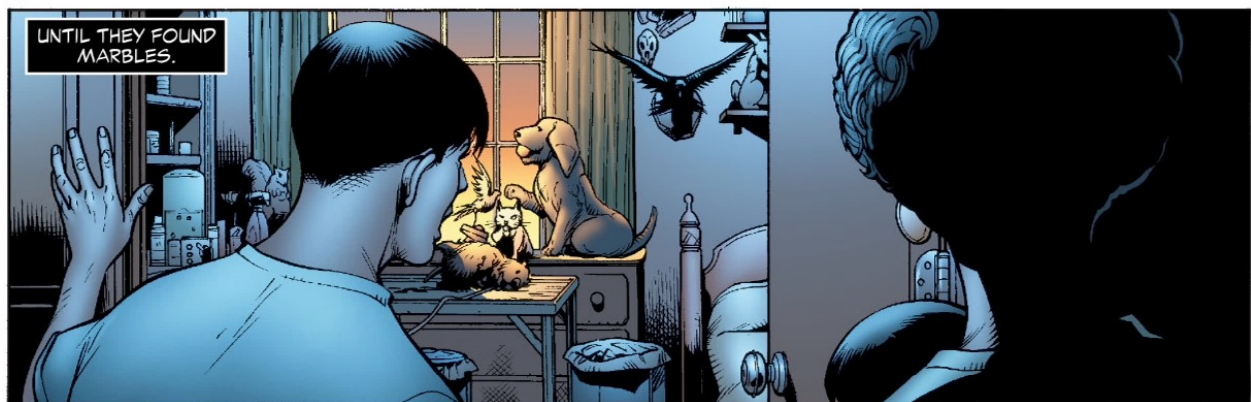
THE ECONOMY MAY RISE AND FALL, BUT PEOPLE WILL ALWAYS DIE.

AND THEY WILL ALWAYS PAY TO BE BURIED.

THAT ONE.

THAT ONE WHAT, SON?

THAT'S WHERE I WANT MY GRAVE.



UNTIL THEY FOUND MARBLES.

SO LET'S TALK ABOUT THAT, WILLIAM. YOU'RE NOT COMFORTABLE AROUND PEOPLE--


PEOPLE THAT MOVE.

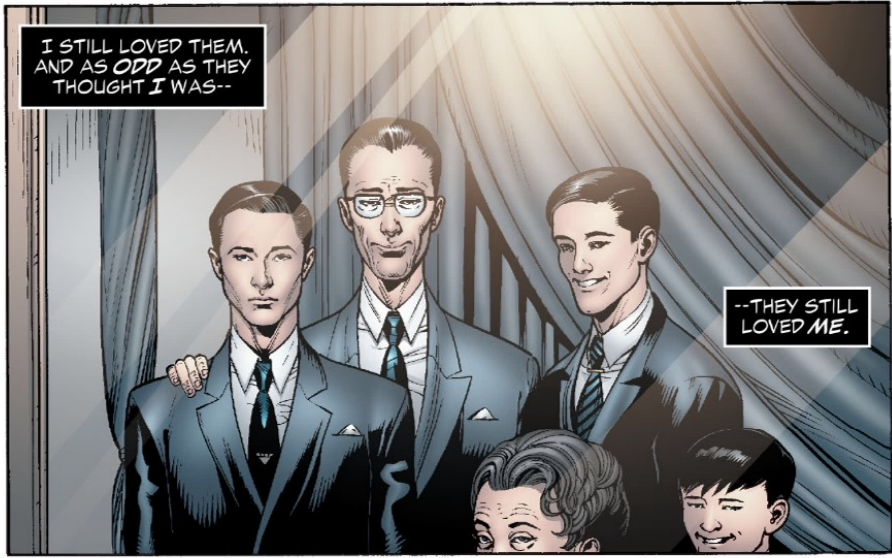
EXCUSE ME?

THEY SENT ME TO A HALF-DOZEN PSYCHOLOGISTS BEFORE I LEARNED TO SAY WHAT THEY WANTED TO HEAR INSTEAD OF WHAT I WANTED TO SAY.

I CREATED A FACADE. IT COULDN'T MASK EVERYTHING INSIDE ME, BUT IT WAS ENOUGH--



 --ENOUGH SO I WAS SIMPLY KNOWN AS THE BLACK SHEEP OF THE HAND FAMILY.



I STILL LOVED THEM, AND AS ODD AS THEY THOUGHT I WAS--

--THEY STILL LOVED ME.



THEN THE ALIEN CAME.



WILLIAM HAND.

YOUR INSIDES HOLD THE DOORWAY TO ABSOLUTE DARKNESS.

KRIK
KRIK
KRIK
KRIK

ATROCITUS!

IT WAS THE DAY I FIRST LAID EYES ON GREEN LANTERN.

YOU ARE UNDER ARREST.

GREEN LANTERNS.

YOU ARE AS GUILTY AS YOUR MASTERS.

FEEL MY RAGE.

AND THE COSMIC DIVINING ROD.
A DEVICE THAT DEMONIC ALIEN BUILT TO ABSORB POWER--INCLUDING THE LIGHT FROM THE GREEN LANTERNS' RINGS.
ATROCITUS CLAIMED IT WOULD HOLD THE DARKNESS LOCKED INSIDE ME AS WELL... THE EVIL THAT MY FAMILY BELIEVED HAD POSSESSED MY SOUL.
THAT'S WHEN I HEARD THE VOICE CALLING ME AGAIN.

HEY!

WILLIAM HAND.

HEY, KID! YOU ALL RIGHT?
RUN.
HEY--!
I FLED.



 TO SAFETY.

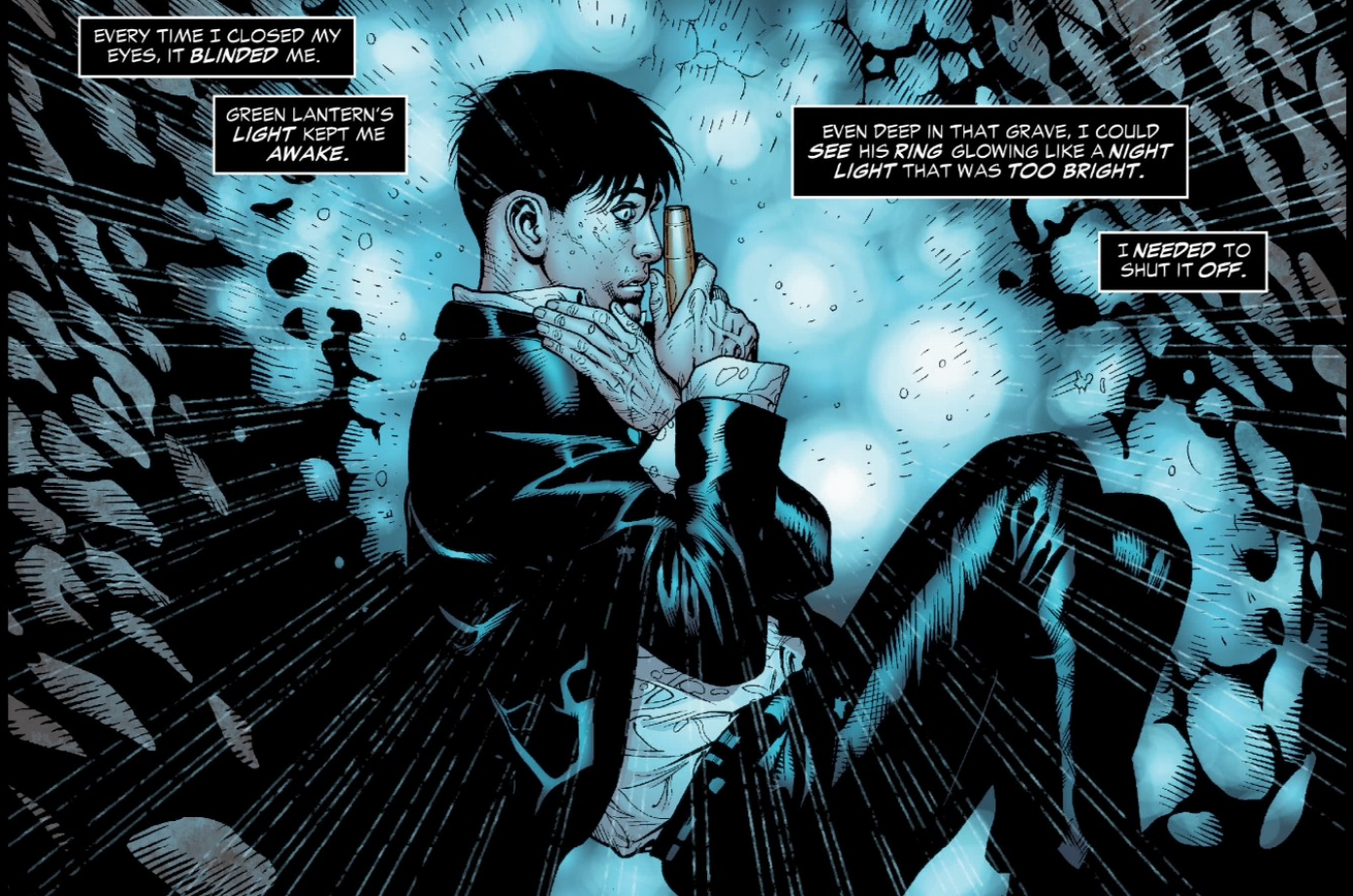


EVERY TIME I CLOSED MY EYES, IT **BLINDED** ME.

GREEN LANTERN'S LIGHT KEPT ME AWAKE.

EVEN DEEP IN THAT GRAVE, I COULD SEE HIS RING **GLOWING** LIKE A NIGHT LIGHT THAT WAS **TOO BRIGHT**.

I NEEDED TO SHUT IT OFF.

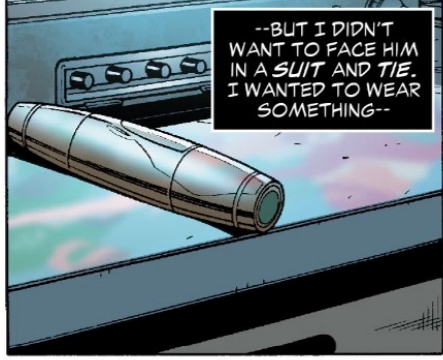


 I NEEDED TO PUT OUT THE LIGHT THAT KEPT ME AWAKE.

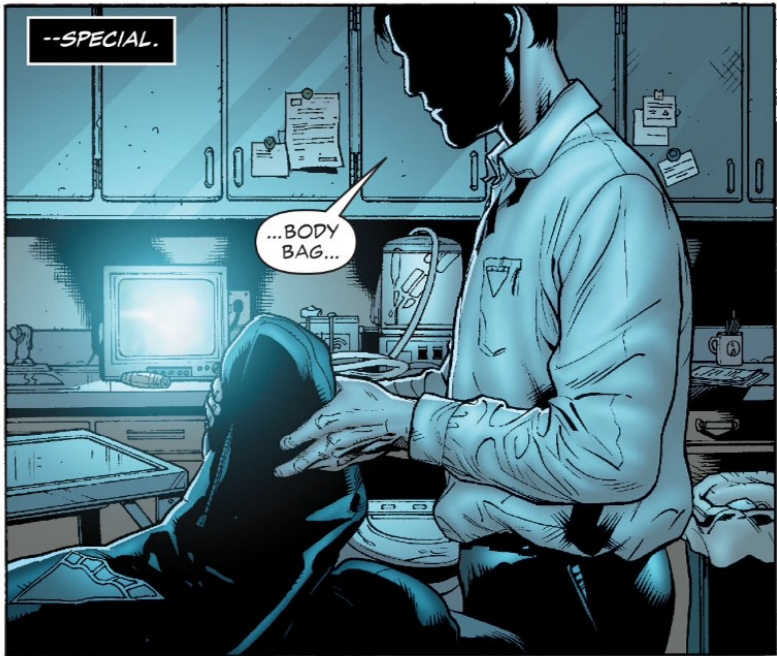


...LINSURE OF WHERE THIS WOMAN CAME FROM, BUT IT'S OBVIOUS NOW WE CANNOT COUNT HER AMONG THE PUBLIC SERVANTS LIKE THE GREEN LANTERN...

THE DIVINING ROD WOULD LEAD ME TO THE GREEN LANTERN--



--BUT I DIDN'T WANT TO FACE HIM IN A SUIT AND TIE. I WANTED TO WEAR SOMETHING--

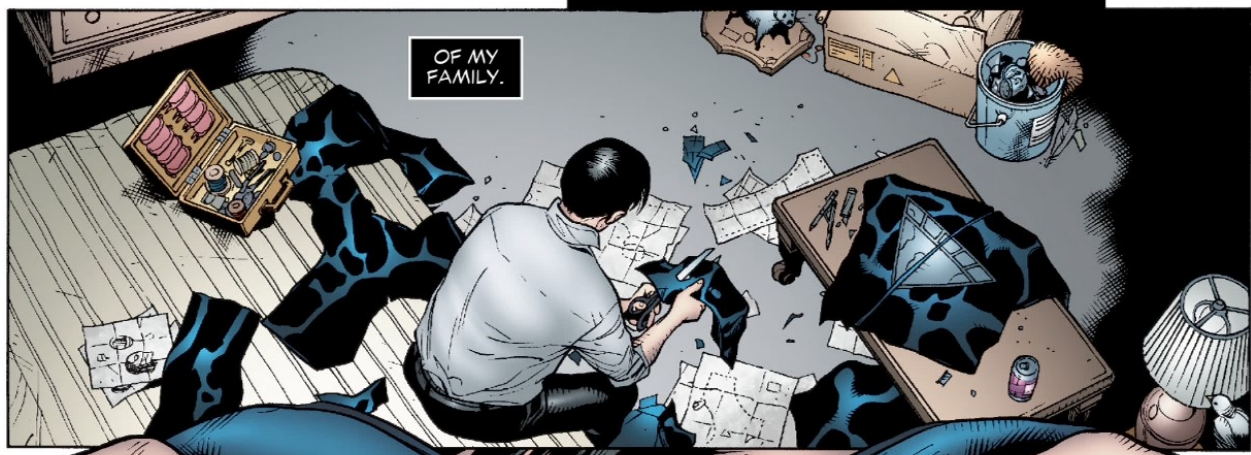


--SPECIAL.

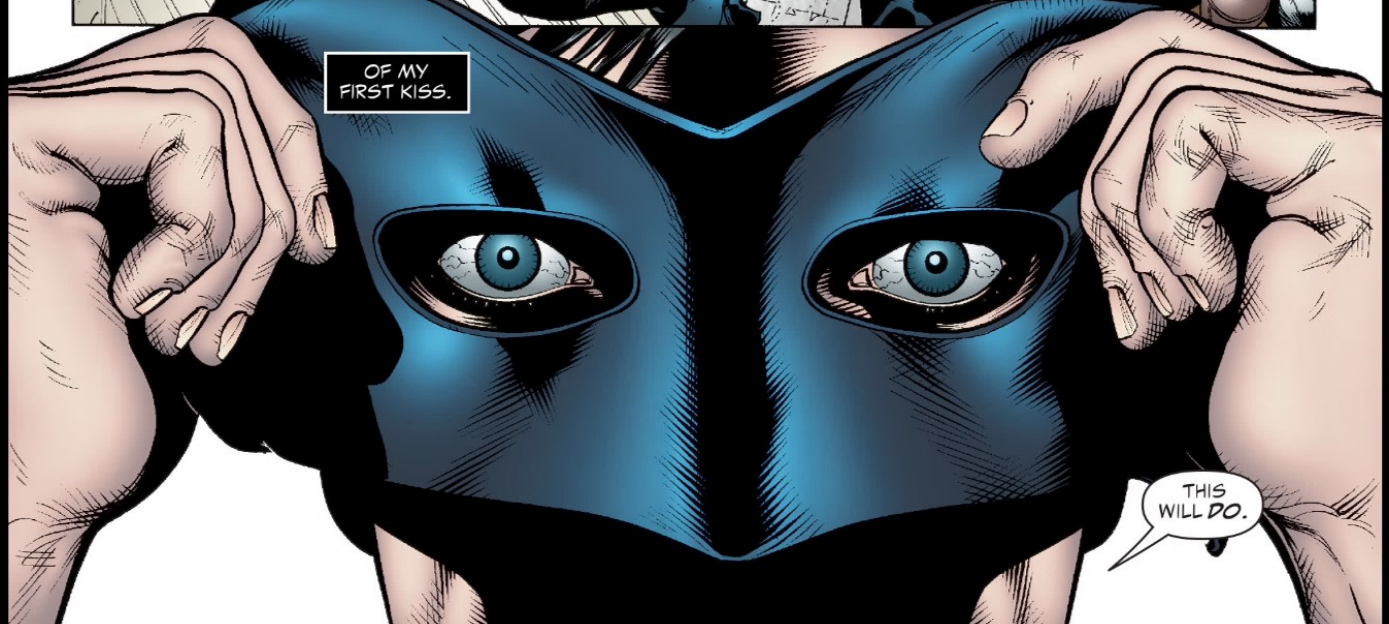
...BODY BAG...



SOMETHING THAT REMINDED ME OF HOME.



OF MY FAMILY.



OF MY FIRST KISS.

THIS WILL DO.

I FINALLY WORE CLOTHES I FELT COMFORTABLE IN.

WHO AM I?

I'M THE BLACK HAND.

I DIDN'T ASK. I DON'T CARE.

YOU'RE JUST ANOTHER MASKED NUTBAG LIKE SONAR AND DOCTOR POLARIS.

THE GREEN LANTERN DIDN'T RECOGNIZE MY WEAPON. HE WAS TOO BUSY CONGRATULATING HIMSELF.

EVERY TIME I FOUGHT HIM, I LOST.

BUT I SLEPT THE FOLLOWING NIGHTS.

I SLEPT IN TOTAL DARKNESS.

IN PEACE.

BUT IT WOULDN'T LAST.

BECAUSE THIS GREEN LANTERN WASN'T THE ONLY ONE.

MORE CAME TO EARTH, AND I COULD SENSE THEIR LIGHT TAUNTING ME.

FOR YEARS...

...UNTIL ONE DAY, THE LIGHT FINALLY WENT OUT.



BUT THERE WAS STILL A SPARK OUT THERE. A SPARK I NEEDED TO FIND.

JUDGMENT HAS BEEN PASSED.

YOU WILL LIVE UP TO YOUR NAME--

--BLACK HAND.

Nn--

I LOST MY HAND TRYING TO EXTINGUISH IT.



SOON AFTER, I HEARD DEATH CALLING MY NAME AGAIN.

TELLING ME TO RUN BEFORE I WOULD BE PURSUED BY YET ANOTHER GROUP OF ALIENS.

BUT THERE WAS NOWHERE TO HIDE ON THAT PLANE.



IT HAS TO BE IN THERE, MY GREMLINS... MY STARLINGS...

THEY FOUND NO POWER INSIDE ME.



BUT THEY DID RESTORE MY HAND--



--THEY BROUGHT IT BACK TO LIFE.



AND WITH IT, DEATH.

I COULD NOT ONLY HEAR AND TOUCH DEATH...



NOW I COULD SEE IT.

I COULD SEE IT ALL AROUND ME.



TULA.



AL PRATT.



SUE DIBNY.



RONNIE RAYMOND.



DIGGER HARKNESS.



TED KORD.



MAXWELL LORD.



RYAN KENPALL.



DEE TYLER.



ROY LINCOLN.



ROGER HAYDEN.



VIC SAGE.



BALPA DIBNY.



JEAN LORING.



ARTHUR LIGHT.



J'ONN J'ONZZ.



AND MANY MORE... SO MANY MORE...

BOSTON BRAND.

TARA MARKOV.

WESLEY POPPS.

JENNIE-LYNN PAYPEN.

ARTHUR CURRY.

JONATHAN KENT.

BRUCE WAYNE.

YES, I'M LISTENING. I'M HEEERREE.



YES, I SEE THEM ALL...
...AND I SEE THOSE THAT HAVE ESCAPED DEATH.
THOSE THAT HAVE DIED AND YET BEEN RESURRECTED.



CLARK KENT.



DIANA PRINCE.



OLIVER QUEEN.



YOU WANT THEM BACK. I WANT THEM ALL.



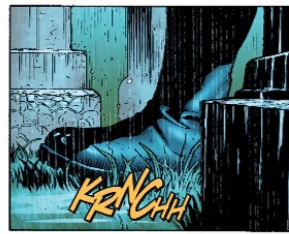
KILOWOG.



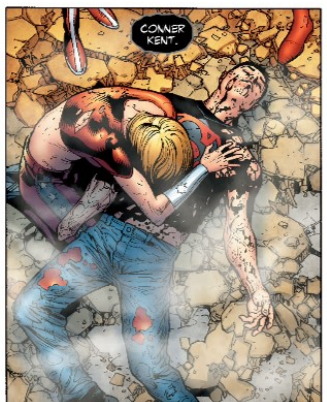
HAL JORDAN.



TORA OLAFSDOTTIR.



KRNGHH



CONNER KENT.



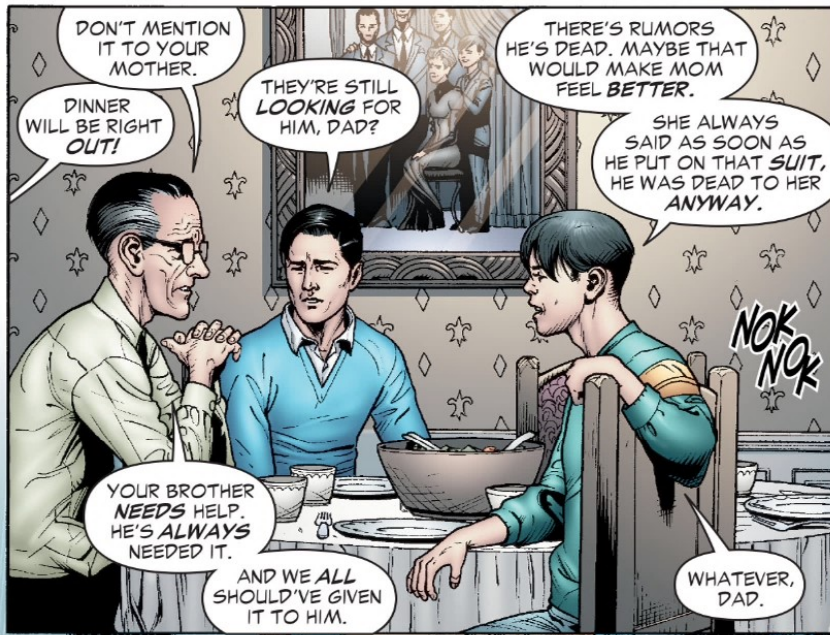
BART ALLEN.



BARRY ALLEN.



"THEY CALLED ABOUT BILLY AGAIN."

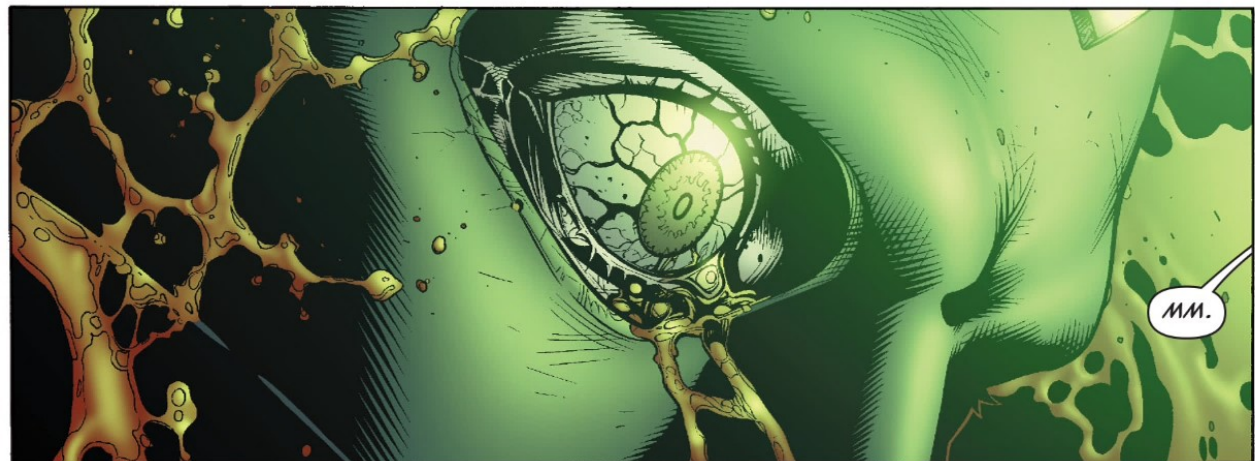
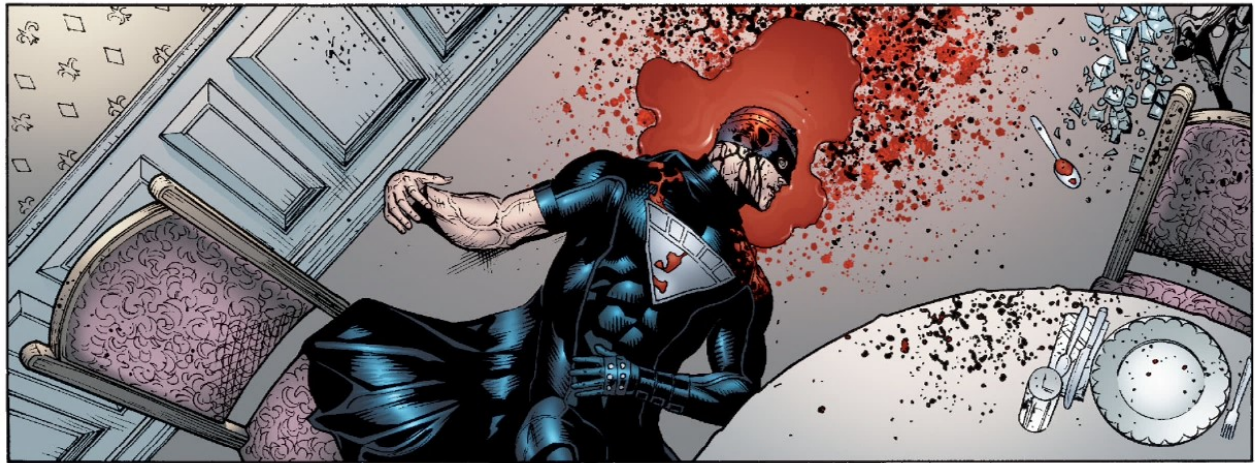
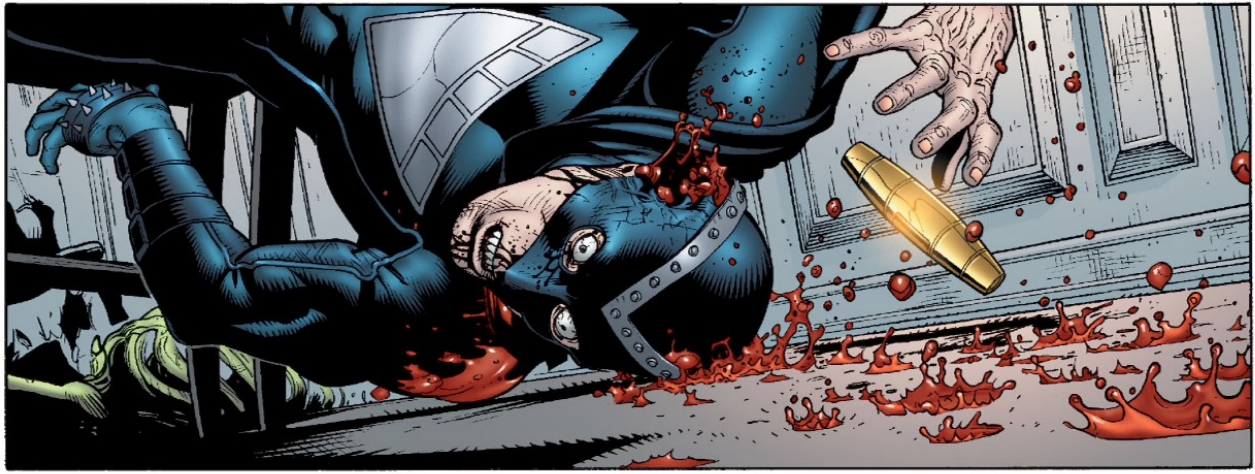




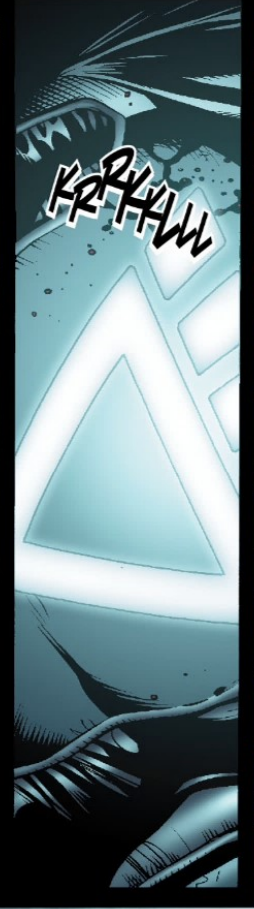
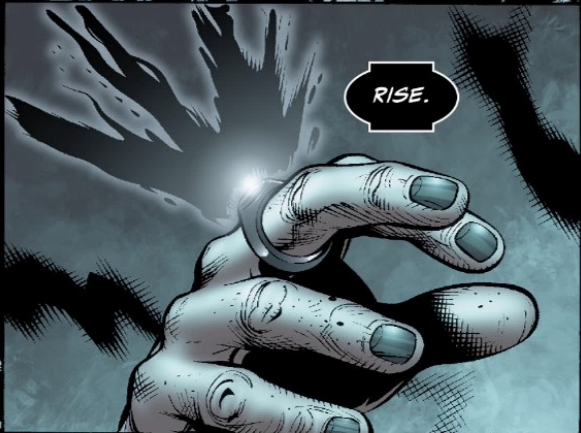
THEIR ENTIRE FAMILY.











YOU ARE THE EMBODIMENT OF OUR CORPS.

YOU ARE THE BLACK INCARNATE.

YOU ARE OUR LORD'S HERALD.

I... KNOW WHAT I AM.

I AM THE BLACK HAND.



AND WITH
THIS POWER,
I WILL FINALLY
EXTINGUISH
THE LIGHT.

NEXT: JONN JONZZ
of MARS **RISE!**