

HOLLY BEACH, LOUISIANA.

ANOTHER NIGHT, ANOTHER
BEDTIME STORY. THEY
SOUND LIKE FANTASIES HE
MADE UP, BUT EVERY ONE
OF THEM HAPPENED...

...TO HIM, OR TO
HIS ANCESTORS.

...AND
WITH ALL HIS MIGHT,
ATLAN **HURLED** THE
KRAKENSAUR BACK
INTO THE MAELSTROM
THAT HAD SPAWNED
IT...

ORM TELLS STORIES
FROM ANOTHER
WORLD WHERE HE
USED TO LIVE.

...AND SO
HIS PEOPLE WERE
SAVED, AND THEY
THANKED HIM.

BUT ATLAN
DIDN'T NEED THEIR THANKS,
BECAUSE IT IS A KING'S **DUTY**
TO PROTECT HIS KINGDOM
AND HE WAS **GLAD** TO
DO IT.

THE
END.

DID
THAT **REALLY**
HAPPEN?

TELL ME
ANOTHER!

HE TELLS THEM TO ENTERTAIN
TOMMY, BUT ALSO TO KEEP
THE MEMORIES OF HIS OLD
LIFE ALIVE.

HE IS SO **SUBMERGED** IN
THIS NEW WORLD, IT WOULD
BE TOO EASY TO FORGET.

Hah, NO,
YOUNG ONE.
IT IS TIME
FOR YOU TO
SLUMBER.

TOMORROW
I WILL TELL
YOU THE STORY
OF FLEETMASTER
ORLOK IN THE
REEF WARS.

SLEEP
WELL,
TOMMY.

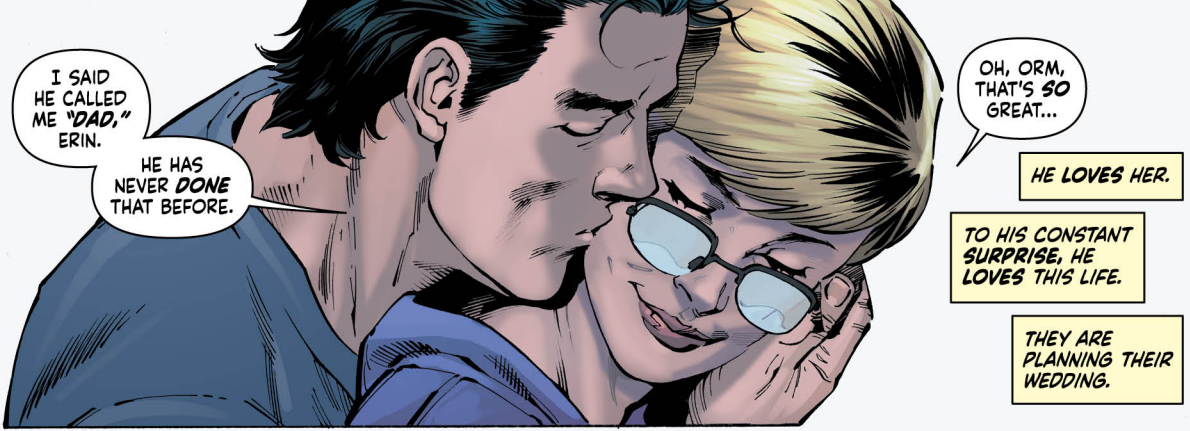
NIGHT...
DAD.

THE BIG MOMENTS
IN LIFE HAPPEN LIKE
THAT. TINY THINGS
THAT ALTER THE
WORLD FOREVER.

HE
CALLED ME...
"DAD."

WHAT'S
THAT,
HONEY?

--CALLING FOR
TIGHTER IMMIGRATION
CONTROL. AT A PRESS
CONFERENCE, THE
SENATOR SAID--



I SAID HE CALLED ME "DAD," ERIN.

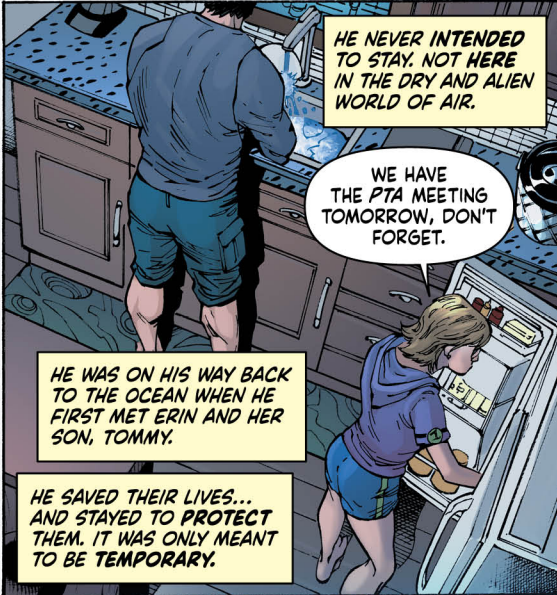
HE HAS NEVER *DONE* THAT BEFORE.

OH, ORM, THAT'S *SO* GREAT...

HE LOVES HER.

TO HIS CONSTANT SURPRISE, HE LOVES THIS LIFE.

THEY ARE PLANNING THEIR WEDDING.



HE NEVER INTENDED TO STAY. NOT HERE IN THE DRY AND ALIEN WORLD OF AIR.

WE HAVE THE PTA MEETING TOMORROW, DON'T FORGET.

HE WAS ON HIS WAY BACK TO THE OCEAN WHEN HE FIRST MET ERIN AND HER SON, TOMMY.

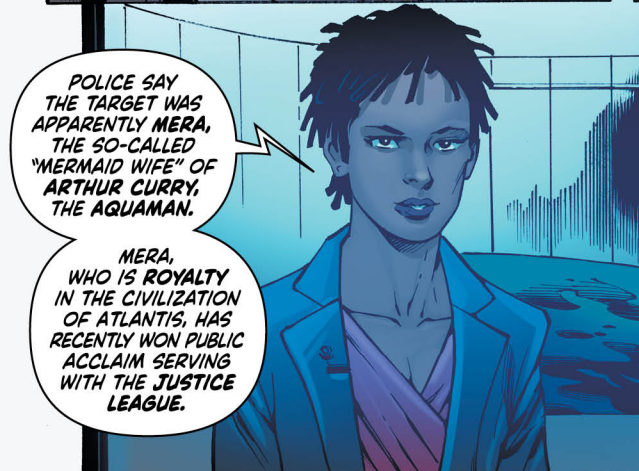
HE SAVED THEIR LIVES... AND STAYED TO PROTECT THEM. IT WAS ONLY MEANT TO BE TEMPORARY.



THE CALL OF THE SEA NEVER FADES, BUT IT'S NOT AS LOUD AS IT USED TO BE.

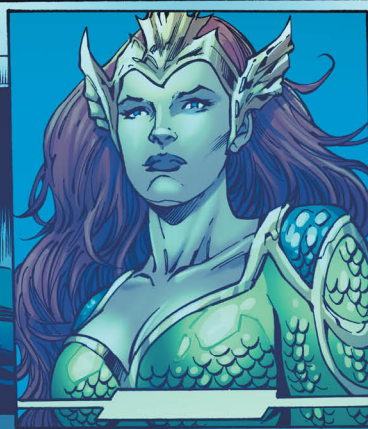
--VIOLENT ATTACK IN AMNESTY BAY, MAINE, EARLIER TODAY--

HONEY? PTA? HELLO?



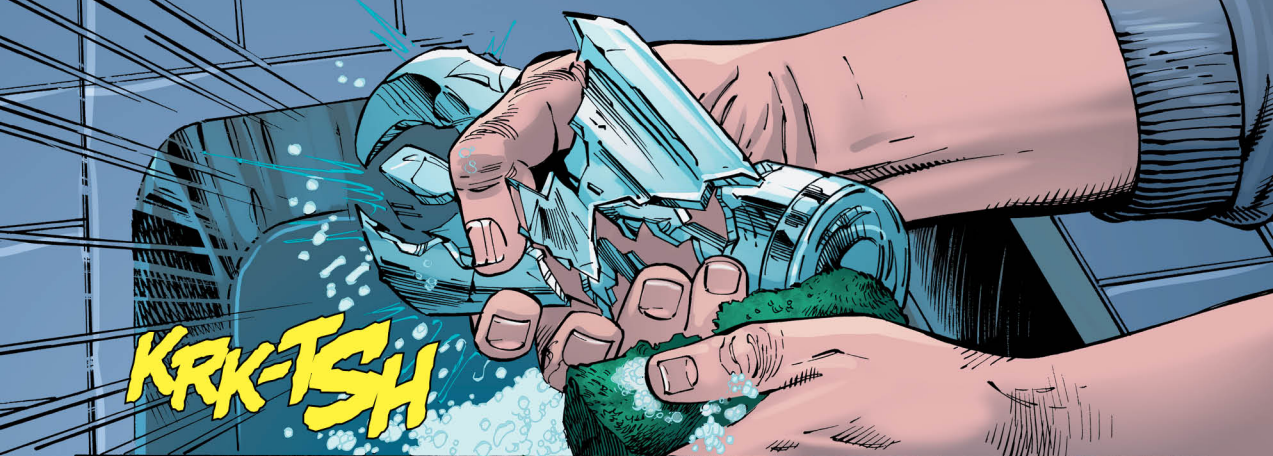
POLICE SAY THE TARGET WAS APPARENTLY MERA, THE SO-CALLED "MERMAID WIFE" OF ARTHUR CURRY, THE AQUAMAN.

MERA, WHO IS ROYALTY IN THE CIVILIZATION OF ATLANTIS, HAS RECENTLY WON PUBLIC ACCLAIM SERVING WITH THE JUSTICE LEAGUE.



RUMORS SUGGEST THERE IS POLITICAL UPHEAVAL--PERHAPS EVEN CIVIL WAR--UNDERWAY IN ATLANTIS, AND THERE ARE CONCERNS THOSE TROUBLES HAVE NOW SPREAD TO U.S. SOIL.

UNCONFIRMED REPORTS SUGGEST THAT AQUAMAN, THE KING OF ATLANTIS, MAY EVEN BE DEAD--



ORM?
ARE YOU
OKAY?

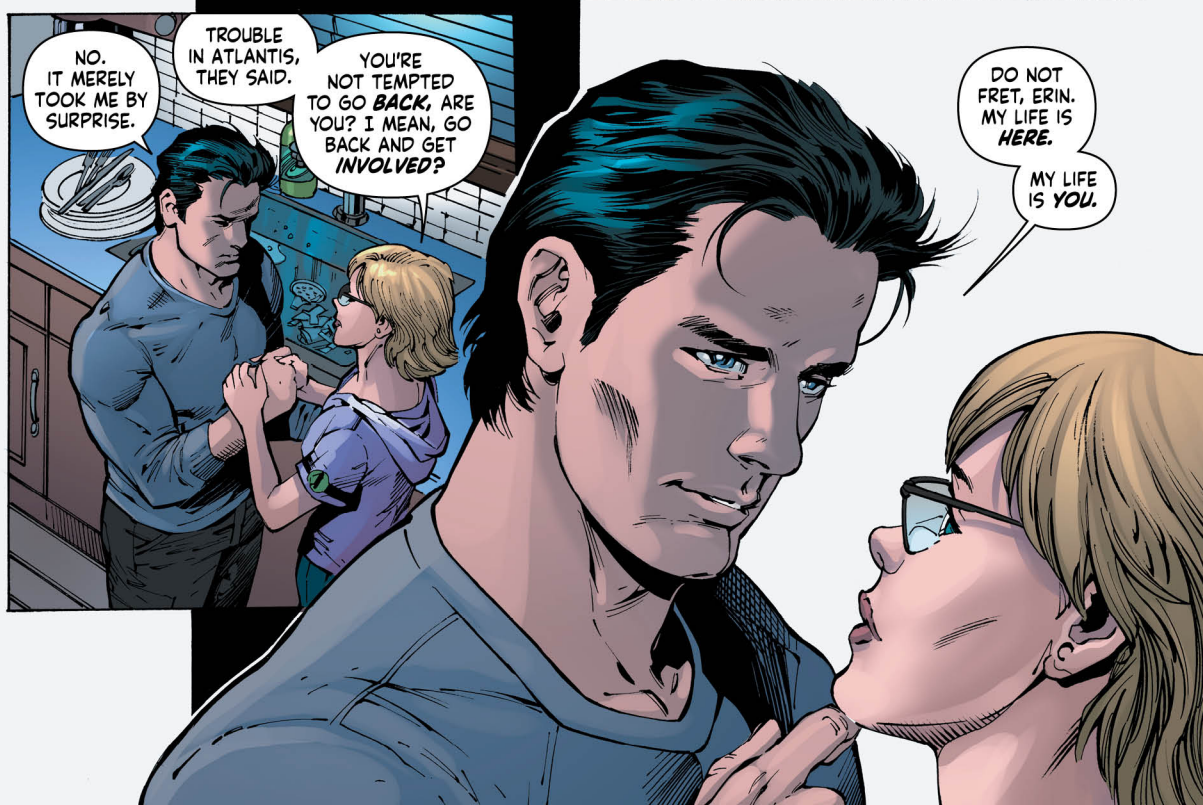
BABY,
DID YOU **CUT**
YOURSELF?



IT IS
NOTHING.

Huh!
NOT A **SCRATCH**. I
FORGET HOW **SUPER-
HUMAN** YOU ARE
SOMETIMES.

WAS IT...
WAS IT THE **TV**?
DID THE NEWS
UPSET YOU?



NO.
IT MERELY
TOOK ME BY
SURPRISE.

TROUBLE
IN ATLANTIS,
THEY SAID.

YOU'RE
NOT TEMPTED
TO GO **BACK**, ARE
YOU? I MEAN, GO
BACK AND GET
INVOLVED?

DO NOT
FRET, ERIN.
MY LIFE IS
HERE.

MY LIFE
IS **YOU**.

**AMNESTY BAY.
SIX HOURS EARLIER.**

THIS ISN'T THE
LIFE SHE WANTS.

STRANDED BY INJURY
ON DRY LAND, FAR
AWAY FROM THE MAN
SHE LOVES.

BUT THIS IS THE
LIFE THAT DESTINY
HAS OBLIGED
MERA TO LEAD.

AND NOW
SOMEONE WANTS
TO END IT.

THUNK

TPOW

FTOON

A QUEEN IN EXILE

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THE EEL.

A SURFACE-BORN CRIMINAL. ARTHUR'S MENTIONED HIM TO HER BEFORE.

LIKE MERA, THE EEL POSSESSES POWERS OF AQUAKINESIS. THOSE "BULLETS" ARE FORMED FROM HARD WATER.

THEY WILL KILL THE INNOCENT BYSTANDERS AS SURELY AS GUNFIRE.

SHE DRAWS HIS FIRE AND FORMS WATER INTO A SHIELD.

AT HER PEAK, SHE COULD HAVE FINISHED THIS FIGHT IN SECONDS--

UGHNN!

--BUT HER POWERS ARE WEAK. SHE IS STILL HEALING.*

*SEE AQUAMAN #30.

SHE'S TIRED
OF FATE MAKING
LIFE CHOICES
FOR HER.

THE EEL'S CONJURED
AN AQUAKINETIC
COATING OF WATER
MOLECULES.

HA!

HE'S SLIPPERY,
FRICTIONLESS,
IMPOSSIBLE
TO GRAB...

SLIP

...LIKE FATE.
LIKE DESTINY.

WHUNK

THAT'S
THE BEST
YOU GOT?

I HEARD
YOU WERE TOUGH.
LIKE, JUSTICE-
LEAGUE TOUGH.

NGHH!

SHE'S SUPPOSED
TO BE RESTING,
LYING LOW...

...FAR AWAY FROM
DANGERS AND
ENEMIES UNTIL SHE'S
STRONG AGAIN.

GHHKKK!

STRONG ENOUGH
TO FACE THEM ON
HER OWN TERMS.

I'LL
TELL YOU...

STRONG ENOUGH
TO DECIDE FOR
HERSELF WHAT
SHE'S GOING TO BE.

...EASIEST
MONEY I'VE
EVER MADE.

AAAH!

WIFE OR QUEEN.