

EL PASO, TEXAS.

IN THE AFTERMATH OF A BATTLE
FOR THE SOUL OF THE WORLD...

JAIME...
STOP!

ARION IS
FINISHED! LET
DOCTOR FATE
TAKE IT FROM
HERE!

JAIME?

JAIME
REYES IS GONE,
FOOL--

--AND ONLY
THE SCARAB
REMAINS!

I KNOW
YOU'RE STILL
IN THERE! DON'T
LET THE SCARAB
CONTROL YOU!
FIGHT IT,
JAIME!

THE BEGINNING
OF A NEW CHAPTER
IN THE LIFE OF

Blue Beetle...

...AND THE END OF THE

ARION SAGA!

AFTER THE DELUGE

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FIGHT IT!

WAIT. WHAT?

OKAY, IF YOU INSIST.

I WAS JUST YANKING YOUR CHAIN, TED. HAVING A LITTLE FUN.

"FUN"? YOU NEARLY GAVE ME ANOTHER HEART ATTACK!

I THOUGHT THE SCARAB HAD TAKEN CONTROL OF YOU!

NAH. I ADMIT THAT IT WAS A LITTLE OVERWHELMING LETTING IT BACK INSIDE ME AGAIN--

--BUT I'M THE SAME OLD LOVABLE ME I ALWAYS WAS!

IT DIDN'T LOOK THAT WAY TO ME. YOU WERE ABOUT TO RIP ARION APART.

JUST TRYING TO PUT THE FEAR OF GOD INTO HIM.

AFTER EVERYTHING THAT LUNATIC DID, DON'T YOU THINK HE DESERVES IT?

FIRST OF ALL: NOT FUNNY. SECOND OF ALL: I WANT TO GET YOU BACK TO THE LAB FOR A THOROUGH EXAMINATION.

JUST BECAUSE YOU THINK YOU'RE IN CONTROL OF THE SCARAB--

--DOESN'T MEAN THAT YOU ARE!

I HAVE BEEN ONE WITH THE SCARAB! AND I WILL BE ONE WITH IT AGAIN! AND THEN--

--ARION OF ATLANTIS WILL BRING THIS ENTIRE PLANET CRASHING DOWN AROUND YOU!

REALLY, ARION?

EVEN AFTER WE'VE DEALT YOU A HUMILIATING DEFEAT--

--YOU **STILL** BLATHER ON ABOUT YOUR PATHETIC PLANS FOR DESTROYING THE WORLD?

IT'S OVER. ACCEPT IT.

AND ACCEPT THE PUNISHMENT THAT WILL BE METED OUT--

--BY **DOCTOR FATE**.

YOUR OVERWEENING CONFIDENCE HAS ALWAYS BEEN YOUR FATAL FLAW, MAGICIAN!

"FATAL"? I AM STILL HERE. YOU, ON THE OTHER HAND--



--WILL SOON BE
CONSIGED TO TEN
THOUSAND YEARS IN
*THE ABSOLUTION
CRYSTAL*--

--WHERE
YOU WILL
EITHER TRANSCEND
YOUR SINS OR BE
CONSUMED BY
THEM.

YOU WILL BE
CONSUMED, FATE! MY
ARMY WILL RISE UP
AND--

"YOU
HAVE NO
ARMY."

"THE ENCHANTMENT WITH WHICH YOU TRANSFORMED THE
PEOPLE OF EL PASO INTO OBEIENT BEASTS WAS BROKEN THE
MOMENT JAIME TORE THE SCARAB FROM YOUR BREST."

"NO!
IT'S NOT
TRUE!"

"IT IS."

"CAST YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS ACROSS THE
CITY, TOUCH THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF
THE PEOPLE WHOSE SOULS YOU POISONED."

"DO YOU
SEE?"

"YOUR TOXIC SPELLS HAVE BEEN
UNDONE AND THE HUMANITY
YOU SOUGHT TO EXTINGUISH--"

"--HAS BEEN
RESTORED."

"BUT THE
SCARAB--!"

"YOU PUT TOO MUCH FAITH
IN IT, ATLANTIAN. AND IN
YOUR ABILITY TO CONTROL
IT. THE *HUMAN SPIRIT*--"

"...UH-I THINK
YOU CAN UNTIE
US NOW."

"YOU SURE YOU
GUYS ARE BACK
TO NORMAL?"

"YEP!
BACK TO
NORMAL!"

"UNTIE ME,
TINA, OR I'LL
BREAK BOTH
YOUR LEGS!"

"--HAS PROVEN
GREATER THAN
BOTH."

"EVEN NOW THEY
AWAKEN--DAZED,
BUT RESILIENT--"

"--FROM THE
NIGHTMARE
YOU FORCED
UPON THEM."

THE NIGHTMARES WILL RISE AGAIN-- I SWEAR!

AND ON THAT DAY, ARION WILL TAKE THIS WORLD IN THE PALM OF HIS HAND AND CR--

FRAAAAH

IT WAS GETTING OLD.

YOU WIELD THAT POWER WITH CASUAL ARROGANCE, JAIME REYES.

WHAT?

ARE YOU NOT AWARE OF THE DANGER YOU POSE SO LONG AS YOU AND THE SCARAB REMAIN MERGED?

AM I NOT AWARE?

I CAN FEEL IT INSIDE ME...PULSING IN MY CHEST. MOVING THROUGH MY MIND.

YOU THINK I'M CASUAL ABOUT THIS? MY LIFE'S NEVER GONNA BE THE SAME AGAIN! NEVER!

BUT I DID WHAT I HAD TO DO--FOR MY FAMILY! MY FRIENDS! MY CITY!

SO DON'T YOU DARE LECTURE ME, YOU POMPOUS, SELF-RIGHTEOUS--

JAIME! JAIME, DO NOT ANTAGONIZE HIM!

EXCELLENT ADVICE, KORD. IF IT WERE **NABU** IN CONTROL, INSTEAD OF **KENT NELSON**--

--YOUR LITTLE FRIEND MIGHT BE A PILE OF CINDERS RIGHT NOW.

BUT THAT STILL LEAVES THE PROBLEM OF WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE BOY--

--AND THE SCARAB.

HE DID. BUT AS LONG AS THAT ENTITY REMAINS WITHIN HIM, THERE IS THE POSSIBILITY THAT IT WILL USURP HIS WILL AND--

YOU TALK ABOUT HIM LIKE HE'S THE ENEMY--BUT HE SAVED US ALL!

HEY, THE KID'S ALREADY PROVEN THAT HE'S GOT A PRETTY FIERCE WILL OF HIS OWN!

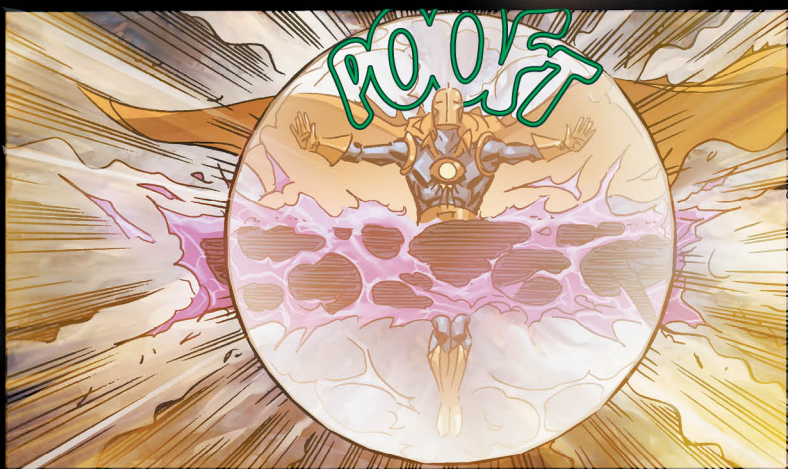
YOU'RE NOT LETTING ME...?

WELL, I... UH, DIDN'T EXACTLY MEAN--

YOU TREAD ON DANGEROUS GROUND, KORD. BUT YOUR BELIEF IN THE BOY IS ADMIRABLE. AND **BELIEF ITSELF** CAN BE A POWERFUL KIND OF MAGIC. SO FOR NOW--

--I WILL LEAVE HIS CARE TO YOU, WHILE I SEE TO ARION.

BUT REST ASSURED: DOCTOR FATE--



WILL

BE

WATCHING...

PING!

I'LL SAY THIS FOR NELSON: HE KNOWS HOW TO MAKE AN EXIT.