

THERE WERE MONSTERS. THAT MUCH HE REMEMBERED.

DREAM OR REALITY... THAT WAS UP FOR DEBATE, BUT THROUGH THE THROBBING PAIN IN HIS HEAD, RODERICK CLAY REMEMBERED MONSTERS.



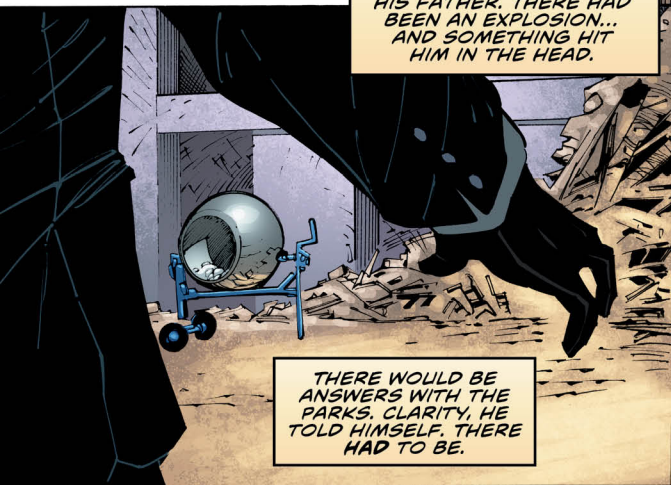
HIS LEGS MOVED AUTOMATICALLY TOWARD THE PARK FAMILY'S BUILDING. TOWARD HIS LIFE AS A BODYGUARD TO ONE OF THE WEALTHIEST FAMILIES IN NEW YORK.

HE COULDN'T PROCESS THE SIGHT FOR A SOLID MINUTE. HE JUST KEPT STARING, DEMANDING THAT REALITY MAKE SENSE OF ITSELF.



HOURS AGO, A BUILDING STOOD HERE. A BUILDING HE HAD WORKED IN EVERY DAY FOR THREE YEARS. A BUILDING THAT NOW WAS SIMPLY GONE...

HE HAD BEEN BRINGING THE BOY, CADEN, HOME TO HIS FATHER. THERE HAD BEEN AN EXPLOSION... AND SOMETHING HIT HIM IN THE HEAD.



THERE WOULD BE ANSWERS WITH THE PARKS. CLARITY, HE TOLD HIMSELF. THERE HAD TO BE.



...REPLACED BY A CONSTRUCTION SITE THAT LOOKED LIKE IT'D BEEN WORKING FOR MONTHS.

ONCE AGAIN, RODERICK CLAY HAD FOUND HIMSELF ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE LOOKING GLASS. IN A WORLD OF MONSTERS AND UNTOLD IMPOSSIBILITIES.

AND A QUESTION SHOUTED ACROSS HIS MIND, A FRIGHTENED IMPERATIVE--

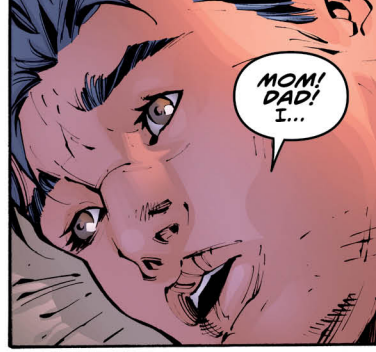




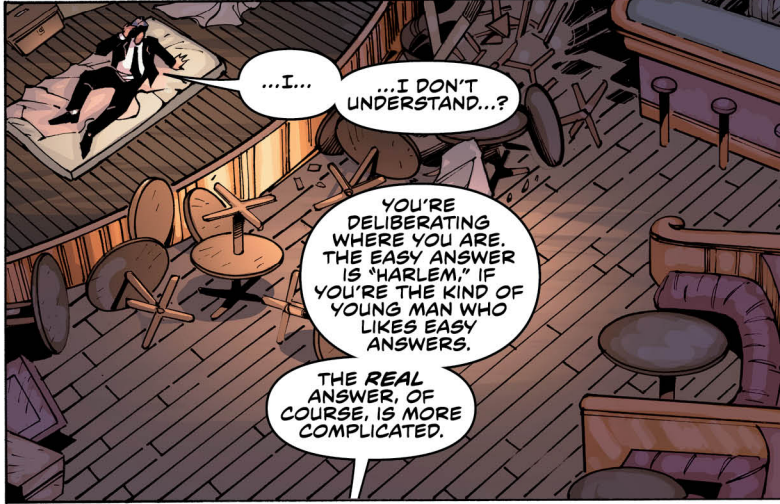
--"WHERE THE HELL IS CADEN PARK?"



LNNNH.



MOM!  
DAD!  
I...



...I...

...I DON'T UNDERSTAND...?

YOU'RE DELIBERATING WHERE YOU ARE. THE EASY ANSWER IS 'HARLEM,' IF YOU'RE THE KIND OF YOUNG MAN WHO LIKES EASY ANSWERS.

THE REAL ANSWER, OF COURSE, IS MORE COMPLICATED.



THEY CALLED THIS PLACE THE PIT DURING PROHIBITION.

IT WAS A WILD TIME. FIVE SPEAKEASIES ON A BLOCK. PEOPLE WOULD COME FROM EVERY CORNER OF THE CITY FOR GIN AND MUSIC. EVERYTHING WAS FINE, LONG AS YOU PAID OFF THE RIGHT PEOPLE.

THE LANDLORD DIDN'T. THE POLICE RAIDED. HE SEALED THE BASEMENT OFF. I MOVED IN A WEEK LATER.

BRICK WALLS NEVER DID MUCH TO STAND IN MY WAY.



LOOK, I REALLY DON'T WANT TROUBLE. I DON'T...I DON'T REALLY KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON...

...MY FAMILY HAS A LOT OF MONEY. LIKE, A STUPID AMOUNT OF MONEY. I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH I HAVE ON ME, BUT IF YOU CAN GET ME A CAB TO TRIBECA, I'LL GIVE YOU ANYTHING YOU WANT.

AND I WON'T TELL ANYONE YOU'RE SQUATTING HERE...



TCH... THE POOR CHILD IS STILL TRYING TO PROCESS YESTERDAY AS A DREAM.

ROWWWLL...  
...SHOULD KNOW HOW THE DREAM IS SUPPOSED TO GO...



NO...THIS ISN'T REAL...THIS IS ALL JUST SOME TRICK.



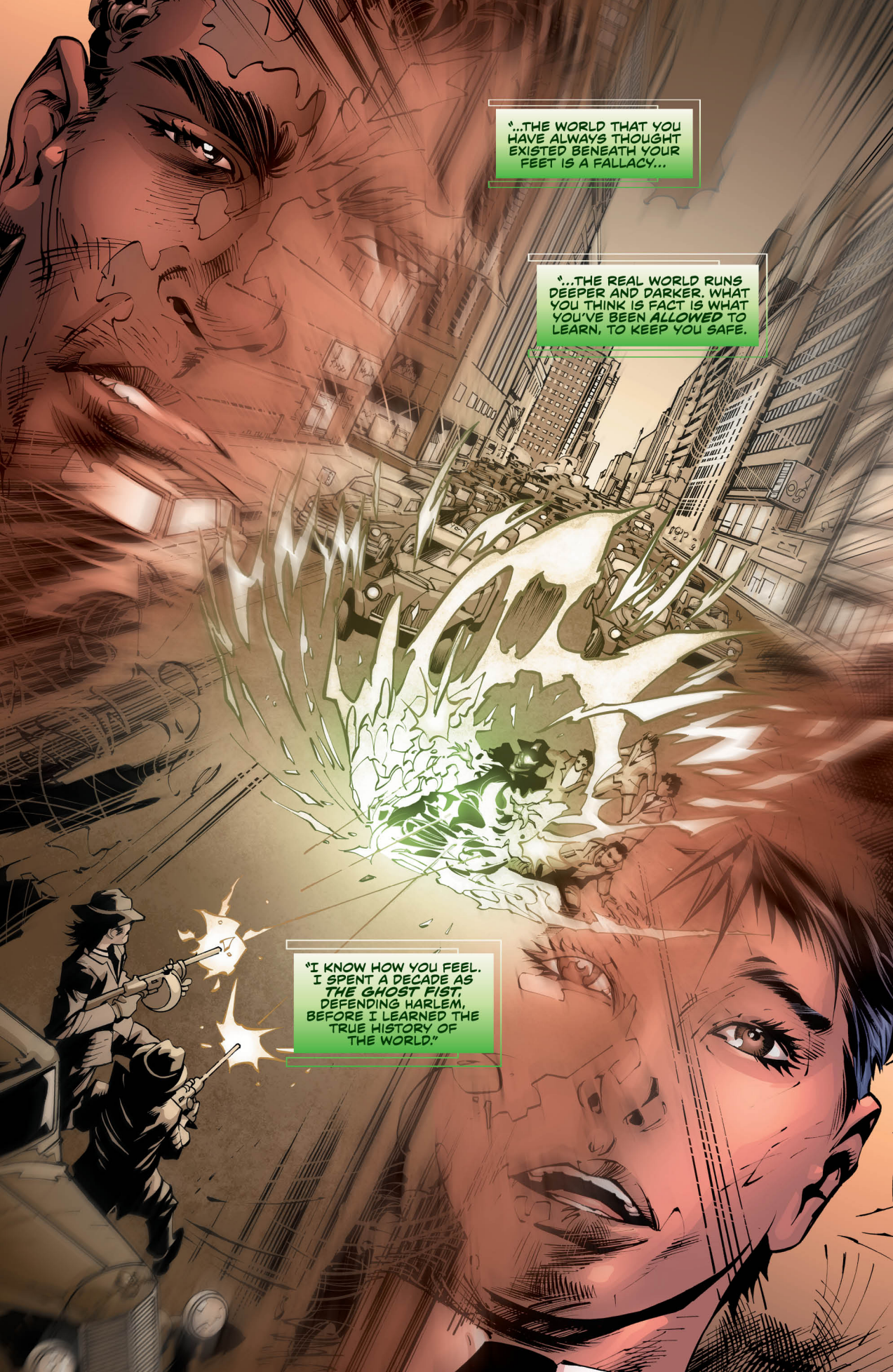
HE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND, CYRIL. YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO SHOW HIM.



TAKE MY HAND, CADEN.

WHAT?

YOUR ABILITY...YOUR MIND SWIPES... THEY'RE TRIGGERED BY SKIN-TO-SKIN CONTACT. TAKE MY HAND, I NEED YOU TO UNDERSTAND SOMETHING...



"...THE WORLD THAT YOU HAVE ALWAYS THOUGHT EXISTED BENEATH YOUR FEET IS A FALLACY..."

"...THE REAL WORLD RUNS DEEPER AND DARKER. WHAT YOU THINK IS FACT IS WHAT YOU'VE BEEN ALLOWED TO LEARN, TO KEEP YOU SAFE."

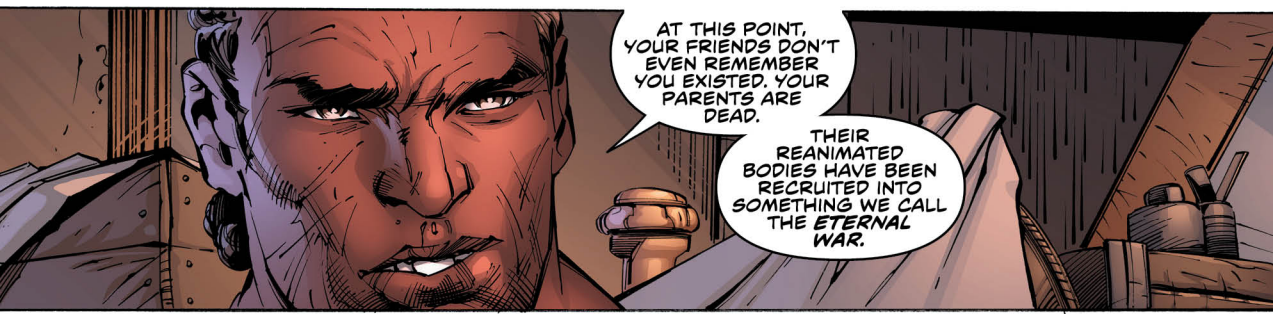
"I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL. I SPENT A DECADE AS THE GHOST FIST, DEFENDING HARLEM, BEFORE I LEARNED THE TRUE HISTORY OF THE WORLD."



OKAY. ANY SECOND NOW, I AM GOING TO WAKE UP ON A TRAIN AND BRANDON AND WELLS ARE GOING TO MAKE FUN OF ME FOR PASSING OUT AGAIN...

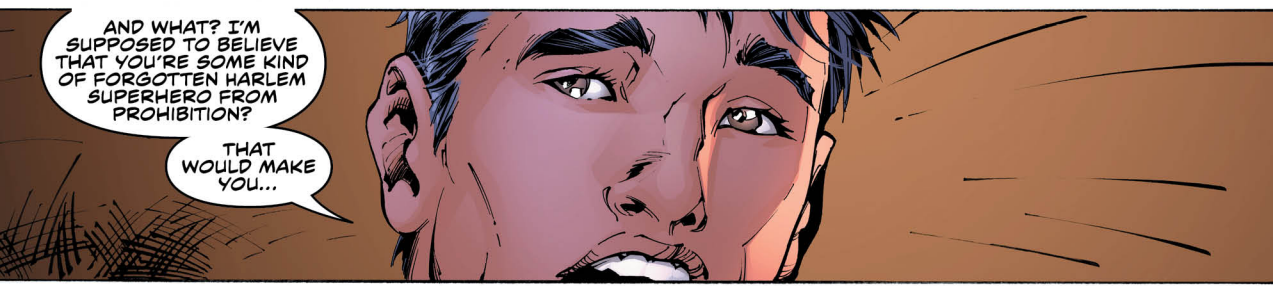


...I DON'T HAVE SUPERPOWERS. MY PARENTS ARE STILL ALIVE. NONE OF THIS IS REAL!



AT THIS POINT, YOUR FRIENDS DON'T EVEN REMEMBER YOU EXISTED. YOUR PARENTS ARE DEAD.

THEIR REANIMATED BODIES HAVE BEEN RECRUITED INTO SOMETHING WE CALL THE ETERNAL WAR.



AND WHAT? I'M SUPPOSED TO BELIEVE THAT YOU'RE SOME KIND OF FORGOTTEN HARLEM SUPERHERO FROM PROHIBITION?

THAT WOULD MAKE YOU...



ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SIX YEARS YOUNG.



OKAY. I OFFICIALLY WANT TO WAKE UP.

THAT IS PRECISELY WHAT YOU'RE HERE TO DO.

WHO...