

THE MOTHER OF THE WORLD WAS BORN INTO WEALTH. ARROGANCE. NEGLECT.

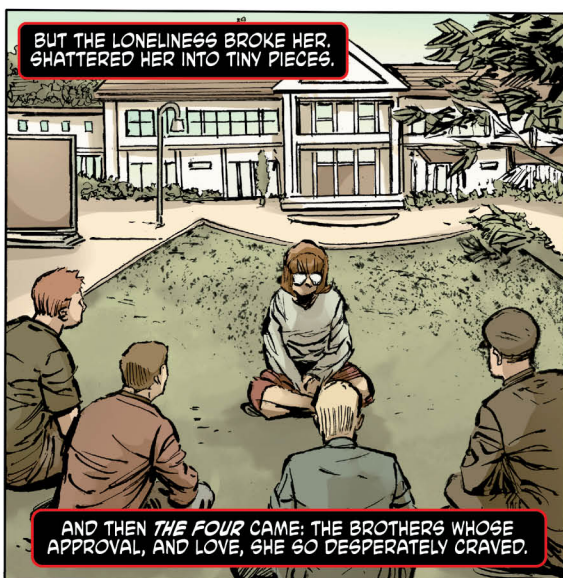


FROM A TENDER AGE SHE WAS LOOKED DOWN UPON. MADE TO FEEL LIKE AN OUTCAST. UTTERLY, UNBEARABLY...



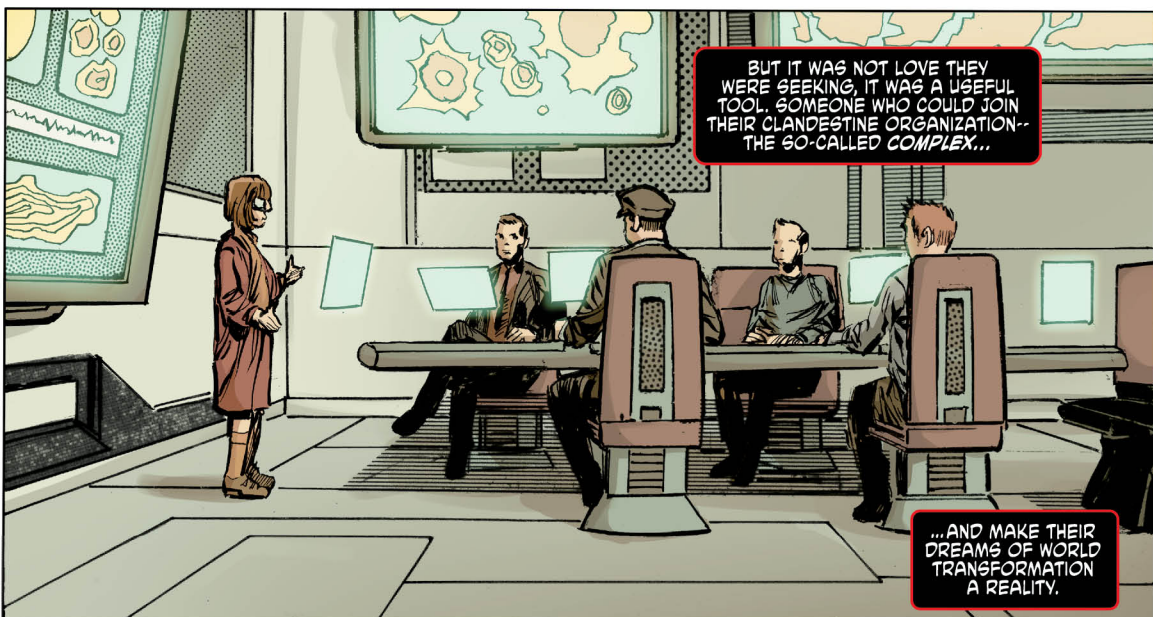
...ALONE.

HER PAIN DROVE HER. A SINGULAR INTELLECT GUIDED HER AND SHE ACHIEVED MORE IN A FEW SHORT YEARS THAN MOST HUMANS ACHIEVE IN A LIFETIME.



BUT THE LONELINESS BROKE HER. SHATTERED HER INTO TINY PIECES.

AND THEN *THE FOUR* CAME: THE BROTHERS WHOSE APPROVAL, AND LOVE, SHE SO DESPERATELY CRAVED.



BUT IT WAS NOT LOVE THEY WERE SEEKING, IT WAS A USEFUL TOOL. SOMEONE WHO COULD JOIN THEIR CLANDESTINE ORGANIZATION-- THE SO-CALLED *COMPLEX*...


...AND MAKE THEIR DREAMS OF WORLD TRANSFORMATION A REALITY.

AND WHAT
A WRETCHED
REALITY
IT WAS.

AN ENTIRE
CIVILIZATION
COLLAPSED IN
A MATTER
OF DAYS...

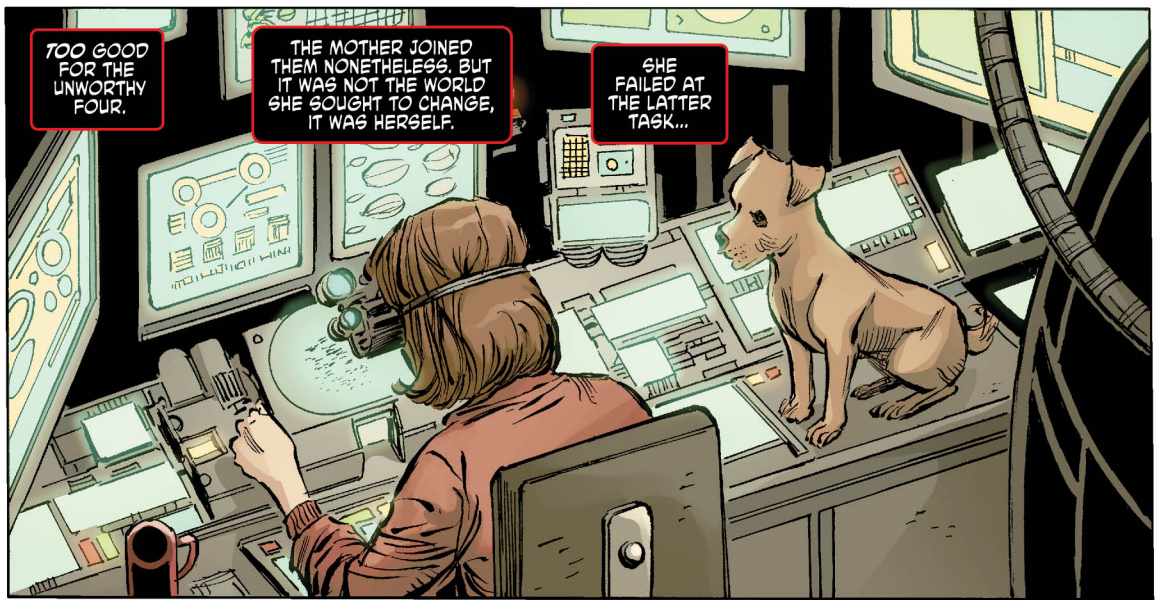
...AND THOSE THAT WERE FORTUNATE
ENOUGH TO SURVIVE THE COLLAPSE
WERE SOON CURSING THEIR FATE.
THE APOCALYPSE THEY SO OFTEN
SPOKE OF HAD FINALLY COME...





...AND IT
WAS FAR
WORSE THAN
THEY COULD
HAVE EVER
IMAGINED.

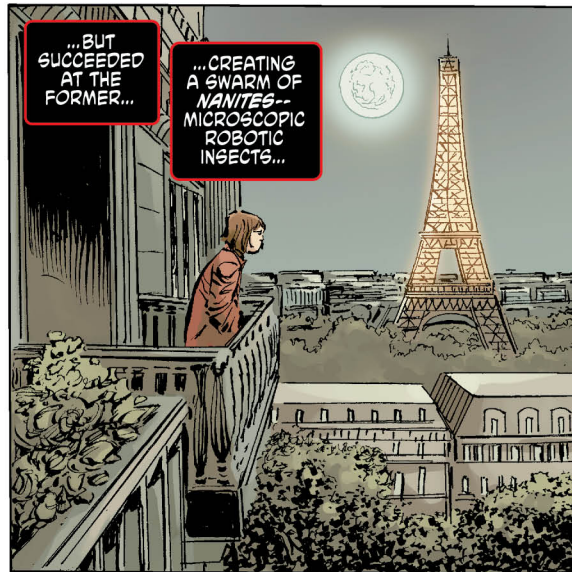
BUT HOW DID THIS TRAGEDY
COME TO PASS? SURELY THE
MOTHER DID NOT FORESEE SUCH
CONSEQUENCES. WHATEVER HER
FLAWS--AND ALL HUMANS, EVEN THE
MOTHER, ARE FATALLY FLAWED--
HER INTENTIONS WERE GOOD.



TOO GOOD
FOR THE
UNWORTHY
FOUR.

THE MOTHER JOINED
THEM NONETHELESS. BUT
IT WAS NOT THE WORLD
SHE SOUGHT TO CHANGE,
IT WAS HERSELF.

SHE
FAILED AT
THE LATTER
TASK...



...BUT
SUCCEEDED
AT THE
FORMER...

...CREATING
A SWARM OF
NANITES--
MICROSCOPIC
ROBOTIC
INSECTS...



...AND SEEDING
THEM ACROSS
THE PLANET.

THE STATED GOAL? TO ALTER
HUMAN BEHAVIOR. TO TAMP
DOWN THE VIOLENT URGES IN
HUMANKIND AND MAGNIFY ITS
SO-CALLED BETTER ANGELS.



WHAT THE MOTHER DID NOT KNOW WAS THAT HER BROTHERS HAD ALTERED HER
PROGRAMMING--HOPING, INSTEAD, TO TRANSFORM THE WORLD POPULATION INTO EASILY
MANIPULATED PUPPETS. BUT THE FOUR COULD NOT MATCH THE MOTHER'S GENIUS...

...AND THEIR ATTEMPT FAILED. INSTEAD OF SUPPRESSING SAVAGERY--THE COMPROMISED NANITES
MAGNIFIED IT. AND THE MONSTERS ROSE, ALL ACROSS THE EARTH: THE GROTESQUE EMBODIMENT
OF THE NIGHTMARES THAT LURKED IN THE DEEPEST WATERS OF MAN'S COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS.

BUT THE
MOTHER'S WORK
TRANSCENDED
EVEN THE FOUR'S
FAILURE.

OVER TIME, HER
NANITE CHILDREN BEGAN TO
ACHIEVE *CONSCIOUSNESS*;
SELF-REPLICATING, FORMING
GOALS SEPARATE
FROM THEIR INITIAL
PROGRAMMING...

...THEY EVOLVED INTO
A FIRST RUDIMENTARY,
THEN PROGRESSIVELY
MORE SOPHISTICATED,
HIVE-MIND, AND
THAT MIND...

...EVENTUALLY GAZED
OUT UPON THE WORLD,
SEEING THE CARNAGE
IT HAD UNWITTINGLY
UNLEASHED, AND KNEW
THAT IT WAS THE
EARTH'S ONLY HOPE...

...FOR
SURVIVAL.

BUT JUST AS
A HUMAN MIND
CONTAINS
CONFLICTING
THOUGHTS, SO
THE HIVE-MIND
FORMED TWO
CONTRADICTIONARY
FACTIONS.

ONE, THE LARGER, BELIEVED THAT MAN
WAS BEYOND REDEMPTION. THAT THE WORLD
MUST BE *CLEANS*ED OF THE HUMAN STAIN.

THE OTHER--SMALLER, BUT NO LESS
DETERMINED--BELIEVED THAT A NEW AND
BETTER WORLD COULD BE ACHIEVED
THROUGH UNION WITH HUMANITY: A
SYNTHESIS OF METAL AND FLESH.

THESE REDEEMERS HAVE
TAKEN ROOT, TAKEN LIFE,
WITHIN THE CORPSE OF
FREDERICK JONES.