



Aquaman #14
Masoud House

Published: 2008

Categorie(s): Fiction, Fan Fiction

Tag(s): Comics DC2 Aquaman Atlantis "Neptune Perkins" Tsunami
"Deep Blue" "Captain Nemo" "Supreme One" "Lex Luthor" Aqualad

Aquaman #14
Written by **Masoud House**
Cover by **Joey Jarin**
Edited by **KrystaleDragon**

"What do you mean the entire Atlantic Sea Board is going to be destroyed?"

"Exactly what I said: if we don't mobilize right now, together, you can say farewell to everyone who is on the East Coast. We have to move now!"

Moments ago, Orin and his new ally and former lieutenant to Black Manta Cal Durham had nearly died within the damaged Leviathan, the Ark, with their other ally, the WWII hero Jim Lockhart, helplessly above the seas in his flying Red Torpedo ship. Soon after the Ark's destruction they had been saved by three mysterious individuals who had risen out of the waves of the sea. Now the six of them were on a beach in the Caribbean watching as the Colossus, the war-island Leviathan ship approached the east coast of the United States at a slow but steady pace.

Orin had been hurt pretty badly. He wasn't as bad as Durham, who was undergoing the last stage of his transformation into a water-breather, effectively making him close to the physical twin of Orin in terms of Human-Atlantean physiology. But had it not been for these three strangers... well, Atlantis would have been without its King.

The first of the three was the man who had saved Durham, moving through the water like a torpedo... almost as fast as Orin. He had naturally tanned skin, and parted, shoulder length black hair. He wore a sleeveless top, form-fitting shorts, and gloves and boots that all matched a crimson, ruby and golden color scheme. On his chest was a black trident symbol surrounded by a gold circle. He was lean, strong, and his eyes were fierce. He was Neptune Perkins, a hero from Lockhart's times who had seemed to not age a day since those times. He was a legend to

modern sea-farers but had not been seen for decades. Orin remembered that when he first began traveling to the surface-world as a hero, he had been mistaken for Neptune often.

Besides him was a Japanese woman with long black hair falling to her lower back. She wore blue thigh-high leggings and matching bracelets. She wore a revealing two-piece: her top was green with blue and white linings and her bottom was blue. She also had a light blue-green visor that slightly hid her eyes. She was the Tsunami, the one who had saved him, a troubled woman who began a WWII era American citizen, and because of racial discrimination had turned to Japan. After witnessing the atrocities of the Axis Powers, though, she had decided to become neutral and focus on saving lives. Orin had read about her briefly in school when he was younger. Oddly enough, she had been staring at Orin almost the entire time they had all been gathered, and it was driving him insane.

The last of their trio was a woman who seemed to be the least bit worried out of all those assembled, and the most unique... She had skin the color of a soft baby blue; her hair was a mix of cyan and cerulean shades. She wore a body suit that matched her hair and had some kind of ocean flora adorning it. Cradled against her chest was her baby sea serpent, which Orin thought was the giant sea snake that brought the damaged Ark back to shore... but it couldn't be, could it? She was apparently Neptune Perkins and Tsunami's daughter, Deborah, who had taken to using the name Deep Blue.

"So just what is the Colossus capable of? It's a war-island right?" Lockhart asked. "That's what Black Manta told you, right Orin?"

Orin nodded. "That and a whole lot of gibberish about destruction and death... the usual supervillain stuff."

"No," Durham said. "You've got it all wrong."

Everyone turned to Durham's voice, seeing him trembling on the ground just behind Lockhart. Orin frowned. This was not the soldier who had just taken on a dozen or so men and monsters. Cal Durham had lost some of his chocolate hue to a paler, sickly shade that matched the dismal black uniform he wore. His muscles were convulsing, his lips were

quivering, and his eyes were bloodshot. "Remember what Manta told you... It's all leading up to a big moment. O.G.R.E. is planning something big."

"O.G.R.E.?" Neptune Perkins asked.

"Yeah," Lockhart said. "An organization with its hands in everything related to marine activity, and even some on land. They are tied to everything from canned tuna fish companies and marine science labs to pirates and mercenaries. You remember that attack by the Sea Devils some time back?"

"How could I forget," Orin said dryly. "It put me on the news... and not in the best way." Orin thought back to that time: Lex Luthor had polluted his seas with all kinds of dangerous chemicals, as well as hiring the Sea Devils to attack a ship. At one point, he had stormed Siegal Beach with his army and even got a hit in on Clark, or Superman, before Clark realized it was coming.

"Well the Devils, Black Jack and his men, even Captain Noah, are all connected through this organization." Lockhart said.

"The odd thing though," Durham continued, "was that up until some months ago, the organization had been purely for profit and networking, merely to get as much control as possible and get as many hoods under their influence as they could. Sort of a 'Secret Society' that no one would look for... Because who looks to the seas anymore? But just as they reached their peak, that's when things started to change a new agenda and with new objectives. Now they claimed to be trying to change the world... "

"And Nemo's behind this... organization?" Orin asked. He noted that Tsunami was still staring at him.

"No." Neptune Perkins answered before Durham or Lockhart could respond. "This isn't M.O. He usually doesn't 'settle' down in organizations... they make him anxious. He prefers to follow his own path or be hired for money."

"Correct," Lockhart agreed. "Nemo is just a hired hand, but a well-hired

one. You have to be very careful."

"You have to be more than that," Neptune Perkins said, crossing his arms. "You have to be deadly careful. You cannot make a mistake with him. He will exploit it. If you're lucky, he'll just take advantage of the time it'll take you to figure out he's duped you and be on his merry way. If you're not the type to be blessed by lady luck... he'll take the advantage and kill you before you become a nuisance. He is different than most: he doesn't like 'arch-enemies' or 'rivals'. He doesn't like complication. He likes things simple and practical. If keeping you alive means he may be able to use you or get over you in the future for something he wants, he'll keep you alive. If you prove to great a threat... he'll kill you as soon as he can."

Lockhart frowned. "You seem to know a lot about Nemo," he noted.

"Naturally," Neptune Perkins said, his eyes lost in a memory. "I've been chasing him my whole life. He's the Moby Dick that I've been chasing for over sixty years and I still haven't caught him. He's always smarter than me. The only reason he hasn't killed me yet is... "

Everyone stared at him. He remained silent, his mouth mouthing unintelligible words.

"It's because," Deep Blue started, rising up, "he's my grandpop. Or really, dad's grandpop. And my great-grandpop... "

Neptune Perkins frowned at Deep Blue, who shrugged. "What? I hate suspense. So what, we have a dysfunctional family. Everybody does."

Orin grunted. "So, if Nemo isn't leading the organization, only this plan, who's in charge," Orin asked.

"That, my friend, is a good question," Lockhart said.

"We... we... " Durham doubled over, coughing up some kind of raw, meaty mucus all over the ground. He wheezed a little, his head bowing over.

"Easy, Cal," Lockhart said.

"It's... okay," Durham said. "Any... ways... ," he took a moment to cough, "Manta used to report to someone. They all did. The only thing is that no one has seen him except the main heads of this organization. Even then I've..." Durham began to breathe deep. "Even then, he is generally hooded and cloaked. All we know is that he sees himself as some kind of ... monarch of the seas... a master of the oceans... and that he plans on using that war-island to do something more than just kill. The death... I think it's for something."

Orin nodded. "He said something about using Atlantis' dark past to bring about a glorious future, or some such. I thought it was just the usual zealous stuff."

"No," Durham said, shaking his head. "It's real. Something's coming."

"So what are we going to do about it?" Tsunami asked, moving her eyes for the first time away from Orin. "Should we... call the Justice League?"

"No," Orin said quickly. "That's the last thing I want to do. We need to show them that we can take care of our own. I've led the League, but I don't want to be known for being their mascot."

"Orin... no offense, but we shouldn't take pride above the lives of others," Neptune Perkins said. "It's what causes disasters. I've been around a long time and-"

Orin frowned. "Look, the last thing I want to hear is anything like a big-brother speech. I am a king. It is more than pride that guides me. Think about it. Who on the League is really suited for taking on the sea?"

"Superman," Durham choked out.

"Let's just say that Superman and magic don't mix well... and we've seen that O.G.R.E.'s agents are pretty good at that, like Noah. All we have to do is figure out what we're going to-"

"Oh god, can we stop like, wasting time, and like, fight bad guys?"

Deep Blue turned to the rest, shifting her body onto one foot as she

crossed her arms and didn't even try to hide her impatience. "We're standing here taking way too much time. We have, like, six of us, plus little Scylla," she said using a finger to pet her pet serpent's head. "Sure, maybe one's a misunderstood king, one's a mutating ex-merc, two are WWII vets who somehow are still fighting crime and yelling at youngsters to lower their music, and the last two are the sexiest women below and above the seas... sounds like a sitcom, I'm so calling TBS... but we're like the most kickass team to ever grace a lake, let alone the Atlantic. So," she said, walking up to Orin, "you call Aqua Junior Boy, Queen Atlantis, and whoever else can kick some Leviathan ass, and let's get moving. I'm sure like... twenty people probably died here while we wasted our time. Let's get our butts in gear and show the Just Us Legion and whoever else that we aquatic types can hold our own. Whaddaya say?"

Everyone was silent for a moment.

"I think she said it all," Lockhart said.

"Who would've known the little misfit had such heart?" Neptune said, hugging his daughter close. "Chip off the old block."

"Yeah," Tsunami said, staring at Orin.

The Colossus was just that... *colossal*. Hundreds of meters wide and hundreds of meters tall, it was literally an island battleship, roughly the shape of a gigantic iron, covered with all kinds of Atlantean alloys made with the strongest metallurgy and magic available many millennia ago. Cannons adorned the sides of the Colossus, and atop were three huge holes that led into an abyssal darkness. It was all black, lined with pale rusty colors and marked with symbols and glyphs the color of blood. It hovered just a few yards above the sea as it moved slow, yet unopposed, towards its target.

Connected to it, just behind, was Nemo's faux-leviathan ship, the Nautilus. It was about a third the size of the Colossus, and just a little larger than the Ark. It was completely plated in silver and gold colors, vibrant and appearing to be new-no one could tell it was about a century

old. It was strong and could move much faster than the Colossus, but for now it served as a control center for the Colossus. Inside was Nemo, preparing for what was described by Black Manta as 'Procedure Omega'.

The room Nemo was in was black and shaped like a cylinder. Around the base of the floor was the system computers, which was years before its time back when Nemo first based it off the Leviathans, evidence he found a century ago-and it was still ahead of its time even now. Nemo looked at the ground at his computer, and cleared his throat. "Mainframe," he said.

Four metallic spheres came from the ground and levitated into the air. They spaced themselves equidistant from each other against a wall, and suddenly a holographic screen came to life in front of him. Immediately after, dozens of smaller spheres sprang to life and spread out around the room, creating smaller individual screens along the wall that littered the space around him with topical maps, geographical maps, camera stills and streaming camera videos taken from floating satellite cameras around the ship, and more. Looking at the larger screen, he cleared his throat again and spoke. "Dial O.G.R.E."

Within seconds, the face of the hooded so-call 'Supreme One' came across the screen, sitting in his dark room which was filled with a mist, a product of the magic that created rain within the room. "You look cozy," Nemo said with a grunt.

"Quite," the Supreme One said. "How goes Procedure Omega? I assume the old war-horse is ready to make its neigh heard?"

Nemo smirked. "I told you not to be concerned. I always get the job done. Systems ready to launch. Once in position, I'll launch. I might twist your plans a bit, but only to make it more effective."

The Supreme One remained silent a moment, then turned. "Well you've earned my trust so far. So I take it that the weapons are prepared already?"

Nemo folded his arms behind his back. "Weapons Theta A through C, affectionately nicknamed Torpedo Man, Magneto, and Claw, have been prepared for more than an hour now."

"You really don't miss a beat, do you Nemo?"

Nemo smiled an old, worn smile. "If I did, I wouldn't be here talking to you. At my age, it's important to know that time is money and any time lost or spent unwisely will result in often disastrous ways. I don't play around, don't monkey about, don't dance and play. I kill, I do jobs, I hurt people and I do it well. As long as you don't cross me and lose my trust, I don't frankly care what you want done, as long as I find profit in it."

A smile formed at the bottom of the Supreme One's hood. "I see why you are called the 'King of Pirates'. Well, when we are done, things will be much different. You may be able to take to the seas somewhat more easily soon. But what are your thoughts about your opposition?"

"You mean King Orin?"

"Yes."

"Well," Nemo said, "it takes a king to kill a king."

"Well-"

"Only if necessary, of course," Nemo added.

"It is important that tonight's plans go without a problem. Something important is happening."

"Well you have my word... you are guaranteed a good disaster or my name ain't Nemo."

The screen went blank. The Supreme One grinned grimly, rising up from his throne in the Raining Room and letting his robes sweep the wet floor behind him. A beeping sound went off and he turned. Soon a second beep went off. "Open links."

The screen came alive again. Besides it, another screen roared to life.

Light flooded the room as the images of Lex Luthor and Captain Cornelius Krell formed on the wall. "We have business," Luthor said. "You've been planning something while using some of my money and now I want in. I've heard rumors that you've gathered all kinds of people under you. O.G.R.E.'s been using the money and influence from the Ocean Going Resource Exchange to perform experiments, you've used the Exchange's research from around the world to study allows and the like, and you've been resurrecting dead Atlantean technology behind my back. I want in. I joined you to get back at that regal man they call 'King of the Seven Seas'. You owe me to tell me. We have a deal."

"Actually, no we don't," the Supreme One said.

"We had a deal," Krell said. "We had a deal, and you owe us. Don't tell me you're backing out."

"No," the Supreme One said. "I'm not backing out. You will get your money, and when this is all over you'll see Aquaman dead."

"That wasn't the deal... We're partners dammit! I'm not some little child!" Luthor screamed.

"You have simply lived out your purpose, Luthor. I never intended to keep you for long. You were merely fulfilling a need that was necessary for my cause. Consider this relationship over, Luthor. Revel in the knowledge, though, that it will be to a shared vision."

"Dammit you hooded freak!" Luthor shouted. His voice dropped to a dark whisper. "You will regret the day you crossed me."

Luthor's screen went haywire as Luthor's fist drove into it. Static came and then shut off.

Krell frowned. "So that's it? At least explain to me, what's all this for? What are these Black Days coming?"

The Supreme One smiled. "The Obsidian Age will mark the return of its greatest champions physically and spiritually, all because of the Black Kings. It will also lead to the biggest confrontation Atlantis has ever faced. The return of the Sons of Belial will be nothing compared to what

we're preparing for. It will mark a new age, a new age that will be the largest milestone in Atlantean history... hell, the world's history."

"Ever?" Krell asked. He lit a pipe, placing it into his mouth as he stared off into the distance. He chewed on the end for a moment. "What about the Dark God? Will this be bigger than the battle between the Dark God and Poseidon?"

The Supreme One grinned, leaning towards the screen. His eyes began to glow dimly from within the hood, casting an ominous gold glow upon his face. "Of course," he said sinisterly, "it's his birthday we'll be celebrating soon."

The Supreme One shut off his monitor.

He left the room, meeting with his royal guard as he made his way up a path that led out of his subterranean lair and eventually bringing him to the surface: a techno-organic complex whose center was composed of six foot candle sticks made of bones and a small man-made lake full of blood. At least fifty men were gathered about the edges of the lake, their faces covered with masks made of clay and their bodies covered in long robes. Behind them were sixty more men covered in Atlantean armor, holding weaponry. Closest to him within the circle were his highest lieutenants, Krako, Typhoon and Huntress, dressed in their usual wetsuit-armor.

He came to the center of the lake, blood soaking his robe and encompassing his legs. Oddly, it felt good.

"Bring me the Sea Hag's Staff."

One of the fifty robed man approached the Supreme One and brought him a long, scaled staff that was black and ended with a blade that was centered with an amber-like pearl and six small red orbs. He lifted it into the air and took a large breath. With his exhale fire came out like a cloud around the staff, simultaneously lighting the surrounding six foot candle sticks bordering the lake of blood.

Music began to play: the drab tones of instruments that were meant to be played in water filled the air and made the atmosphere dark and the

mood heavy. Soon two people were being escorted by a dozen armored men: they were both dressed in white robes that turned red from the knees down as they entered the lake. As they came upon the Supreme One, they kneeled into the blood, keeping their faces pointed down at the lake.

"Our true monarch, our guide and mentor, our Supreme Leader," they both said in unison.

The Supreme One's lips tightened. "Arise, Hagen the Mystic."

The first of the white robed two stood up, rather slowly. He removed his hood to reveal the wrinkled guise of Atlantis' lead royal mystic, counsel to King Orin and Queen Mera, and founder and leader of the Sorcery Elite. His face was soft and kind, the kind that only comes from a lifetime of smiling. Who knew that this kind, elderly man had such a dark vision?

"Are you willing to do what is needed?"

"I'm old now," Hagen whispered. "If my death means the return of the glory of Atlantis, to raise this damn place out of the sea, out of the darkness, then yes, I am more than willing. Orin has done nothing to restore us to the beauty of the earlier ages."

The Supreme One smiled, looking to the other person. "Arise, mother."

The second of the white robed two stood up, delicate hands taking down the hood to reveal an older woman's face. She had wild hair the color of faded gold and copper, much like a fire without its vibrancy. Her eyes were weathered and her expression worn: she was old and tired. Her lips curved into a faint smile as she looked up into the Supreme One's eyes. He smiled back. "You do a great service to your nation, mother. No longer will Merganys as a name carry a stigma of evil... it will mean glorious. Are you still willing to do what is needed?"

She nodded. "My power is nothing compared to what it used to be. I know I will become a vessel to something greater than I could ever be."

The Supreme One nodded solemnly. "That is true. You gave birth to one

great being. Now, in one way or another, you do it again."

Merganys smiled weakly.

The Supreme One raised his staff up high, letting go, and letting it float up a few feet out of his hand. It stayed there, vibrating just a few feet above him, as he laid his hands across the two elder's faces. Slowly he pushed them backwards, and they floated down until they were lying down in mid-air, levitating just above the surface of the blood lake. Then he dug his hands into his robes and pulled out two daggers. He raised them high into the air, one over each body.

"Do you give yourselves up to the Dark God, mind, body, and soul?"

"Yes," they said in unison. "Take us into the eternity of the nether. Always and forever. We, children of the Sons of Belial, give ourselves up to the glory of Atlantis, may it rise forevermore."

The Supreme One brought the daggers down.

The Colossus moved like an unstoppable juggernaut: its path was soon coming up. It roared as the lights atop it glowed and flashed, pulsing with a green, red and orange radiance. Smoke rushed into the sky and suddenly an explosion of light went out in all directions.

Suddenly it was moving faster, parting the water before it with a ferocious tenacity.

On the Caribbean beaches nearby stood the entire Elite of the Atlantean military, plus Orin and all of his allies. On Cuba was where Orin and Mera had set up their base, with the permission of the government (thankfully Orin had good ties to the Cuban government), with Garth, Tula, Javen, Koryak and Tramm, the Lagoon Boy, in the wings. A few hundred meters from the coast of Florida was Cal Durham and Jim Lockhart within the Red Torpedo, and in between, in the ocean, was Tsunami, Neptune Perkins, and Deep Blue. Atlantean ships had gathered to create a barrier between the center of the Atlantic Ocean and

the Atlantic Seaboard.

"Where's Hagen and the Sorcery Elite?" Mera asked? "There's something I don't like about this. What was that flash in the sky?"

Orin frowned. "Don't worry. It seems to just be exhaust or afterburner..."

"In a ship?"

"It's a leviathan... anything is possible. And Hagen is probably preparing Atlantis' defenses just in case this whole mess of a battle is a diversion."

"Sure... " Mera said, crossing her arms. "What's the plan here? Want to hit him in waves?"

"Waves?"

"Not with waves, silly," Mera said with a smile, caressing her fingers against Orin's beard, "in waves."

Orin chuckled. "That's also what I had in mind. First, of course, with our long-ranged attacks... break it down as much as possible and go for the cannon. Then when we've either exhausted our long-range attackers or the Colossus has come to close, we throw it all there."

Mera smirked.

"What?"

"That's a cute battle plan," she said, putting her hands on her hips, "If you're planning a snowball fight."

"What do you know about snowballs under the sea?" Orin said, grinning ear to ear.

"That they're just like your plan... it's going to go from a mighty snowman to a small puddle."

"That's harsh," Orin replied.

Mera shot him a sultry glance. "Don't worry love. It's a good plan, but Nemo is a smart man. He'll be expecting that. But if we just make a few small changes... "

"I'm all ears, my queens."

"Good to know that there is one man in the world who'll listen to his wife."

On the Leviathans...

"Sir, we've come across a problem."

The control room was chaotic: all-around the rooms the monitors were alive with live streaming videos. Nemo sat in his monitor seat, swiveling to face a new screen that had appeared with the face of one of his crewmen. "You know how I feel about problems."

"Sir, it's-"

"Don't worry about it," Nemo said with a dismissive hand, "I've seen it. They're trying to mount a defense against the Colossus: it's not possible, trust me. They're going to try and throw everything they have at her. While we're with this old girl we're unstoppable."

"Aren't you the least bit concerned, sir?"

Nemo smiled. "No. One way or another, we've already won this war."

The Red Torpedo soared past the side of the Colossus leaving a streak of fire behind it as afterburner poured out the exhaust. Atop it, held together by a harness, were Mera, Tsunami, and Garth, who held onto the Trident of Neptune.

"I've seen the way you look at my husband," Mera shouted over the wind.

Tsunami's lips parted for a moment.

Mera shook her head, bringing a finger up to her lips. "Frankly I don't care. Orin loves me and I feel confident that I have nothing to fear from you. For the remainder of this battle we are allies because we need to be. But if I catch you trying anything-well let's agree that things won't be great between us."

Tsunami nodded, and turned away from her, staring at the war-island.

Garth rolled his eyes. *Women*, he thought. He pressed a com-link to Lockhart.

"What's going on Aqualad?"

"Keep in mind that for us to do this spell we need to be close to the seas. This is going to be massive and perhaps a little shaky for the Red Torpedo," Garth shouted. "Can she hold up?"

"Don't you worry my old lady," Lockhart said through the intercom. "Just get the job done, kid. Over."

Garth nodded as if Lockhart could see. Garth grasped the Trident even harder as he raised it up. It was heavy: truly heavy. It was made entirely of divine substances that were made to conduct magic. He spoke to his queen and new ally, though he kept his eyes trained on the sea below. "My lady Queen, Ms. Tsunami, I've been lent this trident to act as a battery and focus for you both. My powers aren't exactly up to par... and neither do I really understand them. But if we make contact, if you both hold onto me, we can combine our might. But I'm not sure how long I can hold it, so we have to make it fast."

"Do not worry yourself; we will be glad to work as a team. Isn't that right? Mera said with a glance to Tsunami.

"Right as rain," she replied.

On the shoreline of the Virgin Islands Cal Durham was doubled over, his body shivering.

"You know you don't have to prove yourself to us, Durham, Lockhart spoke to me extensively about why you began to switch over... to become a 'good guy'. And I saw you stand up against Manta. But if you follow me into battle... in this condition-"

"I-I'm almost-done... it's almost finished-trust me-I need to go in with you... you may need me."

Suddenly Durham yelled out, his arms rippling as if alive of their own accord. "What's going on?" Orin asked.

"My body's-finishing the change-I'm... going through the last of my muscles condensing... and my metamorphosis into an amphibian like y-"

He threw up, retching up blue bile while his body rumbled from within. His skin began to get clammy and leather-like, turning grey incredibly fast. Within seconds it began to sag, slowly, hanging off like clothes from a hanger. He turned over, opening his armored wet suit, coming out of it like a monster from the black lagoon.

"Durham!" Orin yelled.

Durham ran to the waters, running to the deep, and diving in. Orin chased after him.

The sky above them shuddered as smoke poured out again, thundering as if the clouds were quaking. The shockwaves through Orin off-balance, making him fall back into the waves. He stumbled to get up, and all of a sudden a wave burst up ahead of him.

Like a bird let free, Durham exploded from the waves a new man: his naked frame rose into the air with his arms out-stretched, smiling up at the heavens above. He fell back down to the Earth, falling into a crouch, and then rising up renewed. There was no doubt: Durham was stronger,

healthier, and feeling better than ever before.

"Durham?"

Durham turned to him and smiled. "Not exactly. I feel like a new person. I don't know who yet... But it's better than the old me." He fell to his knees for a moment, though less from a lack of strength but more from taking in his new condition. He stared at his fingers, then his hands and then his arms. Then, as if realizing Orin was there for the first time, he stared up and grinned. "I'm ready when you are, fearless leader."

The ocean began to tremble: at first, the waves around the Colossus and the Nautilus seemed to vibrate lightly. Soon the waves built and built until the waves began to rise dozens of feet into the air-and soon afterwards, hundreds of feet up. The waves pushed against the ships on all sides, attempting to push it over. But the attempt was futile.

The waves began to rise even farther into the air, as if reaching for the sky. Within seconds the hundred-foot waves began to solidify and condense into a wall all around the ships. It did little to slow the progression of the leviathans.

A cold chill arose from the sea, turning the moist Caribbean air into an arctic wind. The wall of water became a solid, frozen wall. The Ship ran hard into the wall, though the impact left a crack in the very middle of the newly formed iceberg.

Hundreds of smaller waves shot into the air, and on the way down froze to become daggers and lances and swords of ice that came crashing down upon the Colossus like bullets. The Colossus' armor began to crack and fracture in places, though it kept moving.

Then the waves began to form into tentacles and chains and gigantic hands, encompassing the ship as much as possible. Slowly it all began to solidify, effectively making an icy-prison.

"Thank the gods," Garth said, losing feeling in his legs and dropping as

far as the Red Torpedo's harness would allow. "I don't think I can will anything else!"

Mera wrapped her arms around the young man from behind in a loving, motherly embrace. "I agree. But you did fantastic Garth," she said, placing a small kiss on his cheek. "You'll make a fine King one day."

Garth grinned. "Now you're just being cruel, getting my hopes up like that," he said with a weak chuckle.

"Wait... look," Tsunami whispered.

From inside the ice, the Colossus had begun to glow with a radiant light. It grew more and more, until it burst out in a violent flash of energy. Then the ship seemed to explode.

Everyone threw their hands up to cover their eyes, waiting until the blinding white light, and the following colorful circles, faded from their vision. When it had, they stared in wonder at the ship.

The Colossus had lost its outer shell. It was weaker. But still it looked fearsome. And while it had slowed down just enough, it had begun to push the ice barricade with it towards the Seaboard.

"It's still moving! We failed... " Garth said weakly. "I don't know if I have enough to keep going."

Mera held him firmly. "No, you did great. And you have to keep doing great. You are a strong young man and your king needs you to push on. Besides," she said, her emerald eyes staring into his, "things are actually going exactly as we planned."

The Nautilus

"This was a great plan," Durham said, running down the halls of the Nautilus.

Orin, Durham and Neptune Perkins were within the faux-Leviathan that

had been the creation of Perkins' grandfather, Captain Nemo. A dozen men in armor rounded a corner, drawing their weapons and firing down at the three heroes.

"We have my lovely wife to thank for this plan," Orin said gruffly, rolling to the left out of the way of the gunfire and behind a stack of steel crates. Perkins and Durham dodged to the other side, rolling around a corner. "But, bullets around our ears or not, its working."

"Yeah, if you don't mind missing those ears that the bullets are blazing by," Durham said.

The firing stopped. Neptune Perkins took a quick glance around the corner. Four men, using assault rifles. He quickly ducked back in as bullets flew by his head again. "Either we are going to have to wait until they run out of bullets, and waste precious time, or we're going to have to take the fight to them."

"I agree," Orin said, "I doubt they are going to give up the advantage of a long, narrow hallway."

"Aren't we like... bullet-proof or something?" Durham asked Orin.

"You're thinking of the man with blue tights. Mine's green remember?" Orin smiled grimly. He peeked around the corner. "If your body is close to mine-

"It is-

"Then we can take regular bullets and blunt force galore. But they're probably packing armor piercing bullets, and when it comes to sharp things-

"We just don't cut it... " Durham finished. "Well, it's now or never."

"Grab those crates behind you," Neptune Perkins said. "They won't do much against armor-piercing rounds but it'll be better than nothing."

Orin tossed the steel crates into the hallway, and the men began firing directly afterwards. All three of the heroes jumped into the hallway,

running behind the crates at full speed as they pushed them onwards towards their target. As they drew closer, Durham picked up and tossed his crate at the soldier ahead of him, then used his momentum to slide towards the soldier's knees. He struck into the soldier's legs with the force of a motorcycle, dropping the man to the floor and taking his gun in the process. As Orin and Neptune Perkins came through, they leapt ahead of the crates, and over the heads of the remaining three soldiers. Durham came to one knee, firing into the thighs and hands of the three soldiers with pinpoint accuracy. The men fell down, dropping their guns and clutching their bodies to them with shaking limbs.

"Wow... great job," Orin said. "And no fatalities."

"I know they're too many shades of gray for me to judge them," Durham said. "Besides, I feel more comfortable with a gun in my hand."

Nemo smiled as he looked over the cameras. The heroes had been throwing everything they had at the Colossus, but they were still moving strong.

A square screen enlarged to Nemo's right, a young Asian man with black gear on. "Sir, all seems... uh... well."

"What's with the pause, boy?"

"Well it's just... things proceeded as planned... but... Oh god... "

"What about the reports? The aftermath?"

"... "

"Listen, son," Nemo said. "If you can't live with yourself, go to the barracks until we're done. I'll give you your pay and we'll put you on your way. What we do... " he said, taking out a pipe and chewing on the end. He'd never use it though: he believed his body was a temple. "It ain't easy... But it's the price you pay for boarding my ship and being part of my crew. You've done well, but if you're troubled, you have no place on

my boat. Nemo, out."

The ship shrunk and disappeared. Suddenly the door leading out of the monitor room began to boom as a mighty fist struck it from behind.

Nemo chuckled.

Three more strikes and the door flew off its hinges, crashing into the wall and into a handful of small monitors just ahead of Nemo. Nemo didn't move or turn his chair to look at them. He already knew who was there. "You're a little late, boys."

The three remained silent.

Nemo swung his chair around, his eyes glaring defiantly into those of Aquaman, the hero, Cal Durham, the traitor, and his oldest enemy...

"Good to see you, kid," Nemo said to Neptune Perkins. "You have to stop chasing me around, boy. I'm one of your only family members left. And sooner or later," he said, focusing on Neptune's eyes, his voice falling into a coarse whisper, "you're going to be too much trouble. I don't like trouble. I will bury you if I have to. I don't need a legacy. I am immortal. My legacy is my name and my reputation."

"Your reputation?" Neptune asked quietly.

"Yes boy, my reputation for always getting things done."

"Your reputation is going to kill dozens of people!" Neptune shouted.

"Hundreds," Nemo replied, "of thousands. We wanted death all along the shore from the tip of Florida to Maine, but that's why you guys are here," he said with a laugh, "to stop people like me."

Aquaman's face twisted in a moment of rage. "How dare you laugh? These are people's lives! You're killing innocents! What is this all for?"

Nemo shrugged. "Don't know."

"Don't know?" Durham asked.

"Don't know, don't care," Nemo said, rising up to completely face the men. He was tall, broad-shouldered, and dressed in an old captain's coat. "My job relies on just three necessities," he said, counting on his fingers. "1) How difficult is the job, and how much unnecessary and impractical danger will it put me, and all of my crew, in. 2) How much attention will it cause me, if I'm caught, and will it be negative or positive attention?"

"Negative or positive? You're dealing with people's lives here!" Neptune said, his fists balled up at his sides.

"You're right, boy. But you see, pirating is like being a celebrity. Not all press is bad press. If I have a job and it reminds folks out there that they better tremble at my name, then so be it. I'm a goddamn pirate and I want to be taken seriously. This isn't a damn movie. I kill people, and I do it well. And-"

"Damn it," Aquaman said, "That's the most-"

A gun shot.

Nemo wasn't necessarily fast, though he was swifter than most. But no one suspected that he always had a weapon close... a weapon with strong caliber. Aquaman took a hit to his side, smoke rising off his side as he got knocked against the wall. "Never interrupt me," Nemo said. Everyone remained still as Aquaman rubbed his side. "My employer wants you alive. You're lucky. But-" Nemo saw movement. Durham began to move.

Another gun shot.

Durham got a shot to the shin, dropping him to the ground. Nemo was suddenly there, kicking him in the face. Nemo traced his gun along Durham's body, stopping just above his head.

Another gun shot.

In a second, Nemo had turned. Neptune had leapt into the air and he was thrown backwards when the bullet hit him in the chest and forced him into the large monitor that took up the majority of the wall. Nemo

walked towards his grandson, his face a scowl of bottled up anger.

Another gunshot.

Aquaman had begun to rise up, taking a lunging position, until Nemo's shot hit his shoulder. Another gunshot hit his stomach, knocking all of the air out of Aquaman's lungs. "You people don't understand do you? I am not your everyday crook. I am not a henchman. I am a bonafide mercenary and a real pirate. If it weren't in my contract, you'd all be dead right now. I don't like problems, and I don't believe in nemeses. The only one I let live," he said, kicking into his grandson's side, "is this failure before me."

Nemo walked into the center of the room, to his chair. He let his hand trace the back of the seat, finding a panel of buttons. He put in a sequence and suddenly the entire room began to rotate. The monitors all vanished from sight, the spheres falling back to their origins. The room began to rumble and rise, first slowly, then quickly, until it was rushing upwards, higher and higher. Suddenly they came to the top and the roof opened up to reveal the outer sky.

The walls fell to the floor, suddenly putting Nemo and the three heroes in the center of the Nautilus' deck. Orin began to rise up, one hand clutching his side. Durham leaned on one side of his body, looking around them at the sky. Neptune leaned up, holding his chest, his breath a little shallow. "With all of your resources you could be a force for good in the world," Neptune said weakly. "Why must you continue this century of pain and suffering? Please, avert this disaster you're being paid to do."

"Avert it?" Nemo repeated more than asked.

"Please, Orin said. "Do you realize how many people could die? You don't have to do this."

"Could die? Don't have to? You all don't realize, do you?"

"What?" Durham asked.

"There is no disaster to avert," Nemo said gravely, "It's already

happened. I've already set off the weapons."

Twenty Minutes Earlier, Within the Ceremony

As the Supreme One brought the daggers down to the bodies of Hagen the Mystic and his mother, Merganys the Sea Witch, energy exploded above them as the blades sunk into flesh. Blood spilled from the wounds of their hearts while a cloud of black energy filled the room of the robed servants of the Sons of Belial. Fear swept around the room: many murmured in quick, whispered breaths as the entire chamber began to tremble with the force of a quake.

The Supreme One smiled as the black energy spiraled around his staff, the old Sea Hag's staff, a staff made to channel black magic. And then it happened: from above, like hail, silver energy too divine to look at rained down with the force of arrows into the Lake of Blood, igniting the entire lake into a glowing, crimson geyser of power. Blood rose all around them, falling over the three bodies in the center. All around, the robed followers took a step back, throwing their hands up before them to try and see what was going on.

Moments later the geyser had fallen: the two bodies of the elder mages were covered with glowing blood and floating upright in mid-air. Slowly the blood began to be absorbed into the bodies, filling the wound the Supreme One had made. When it was all over, the bodies were not the same as the one that had undergone the ritual. They were younger, stronger, and bursting with energy. The lake was gone: all of the power had been taken into the two figures of powers floating at the center of the lake.

Where the two had earlier bowed to the Supreme One, he now got onto his knees on the bare ground that was once blood and threw himself at their feet. "Welcome back, o great prophets of the Dark God."

"Arise, young Orm."

The Supreme One rose up, removing his hood to reveal his face as Orm, the captain of the Royal Guard, and Orin's half-brother.

"Such a handsome face," said the woman who had previously been his mother.

"You've done us well," said the man who was previously Hagen. "The spell was cast perfectly. You shall be rewarded." He turned to take a look at all of the robed figures around him, throwing his arms into the air. "THE SONS OF BELIAL HAVE RETURNED! WE ARE BUT CLOSER TO THE RETURN OF OUR GLORIOUS DARK GOD!" He turned back to stare down at Orm. "And you, my squire, my torch-bearer, my legacy: while we will be masters of the world, you will be master of the entire sea."

"Finally rid of my brother," Orm said.

"Not yet," the woman said. "He is very important."

Orm's lips tightened. "But aren't I all you need? We don't need Orin."

A force of energy blasted out in all directions, knocking all those surrounding them to their knees. Orm struggled to rise up enough to look into his new masters' eyes. The woman and the man levitated higher, allowing themselves to orbit around the center to view everyone there.

"Never doubt us." The man laughed. His voice was sinister, traced with an edge of authority and insanity. "Make no mistake, there is no question about it: Orin, this self-styled hero of innocents below and above the seas, this self-style king of the people, this man born of royalty but raised a commoner: he is the one. He is our key. He will be the cause of much strife and ruin. He will make all that you see fall, even crumble, into nothingness. He is the Black King of prophecy."

The woman chuckled. "Only our descendent could bring about the Destruction of Atlantis."

Twenty One Minutes Earlier...

"Mom, what's that?" Lisa Morel said, leaning off his porch swing set,

pointing a finger at the sky where her icy blue eyes were staring. Three spheres of light were falling from the sky: one was red, one was green, and one was violet. "You think Aquaman is apart of it?"

Mrs. Morel frowned. Everyone always said her daughter was a complete copy of her: her daughter inherited none of her husband's stronger features and darker hair, following her more Nordic appearance. But little did they know that while she tended to be reserved and conservative, her daughter was bound by nothing, especially when it came to her imagination. For the last year that focus had changed to Aquaman: a somewhat controversial figure... And she didn't like her daughter's fascination with the aquatic hero, who even went as far as to claim to have met him. "You know this is unhealthy dear."

"What?"

"This fascination with Aquaman that you have."

"I'm just saying mom... ," Lisa said, annoyed, "it's never every day you see things fall from the sky."

"Still," Mrs. Morel said. "It's not good. Its bad enough you're going through this exploration period-"

Lisa scowled at her mother. "Get over it mom. I like girls. I'm an adult already and it's what I'm into."

"So why are you so interested in Aquaman? I think that's your logical side trying to sort itself out."

"Mom, you are the most thick-headed person I know."

Mrs. Morel huffed. "I wish you'd speak to that psychiatrist I know. I'm glad that Selena girl went on her way-"

Lisa turned away from her mom. "I am *so* not having this conversation right now."

"That your problem young lady, you're always running away from reality!"

"How can you say that?" Lisa said, getting up. "There's something weird in the sky and-"

"There is always something in the sky," Mr.s Morel said curtly. "It's weird, it's fantastical, and it's extraordinary. But it's apart of our life. Since the 1940's we've had things happening. Why you must insist on ignoring your own world to put yourself into their's-"

"Who-"

"The superheroes-"

"So-"

"So it isn't healthy is so," Mrs. Morel answered, "you always seemed to be a bit... off. And the neighbors are talking-"

"Who cares what the hell they're-"

"And I just don't like that you're failing your everyday responsibilities," Mrs. Morel said. "You're becoming such a delinquent. It's a good thing your father isn't home yet to hear all of this." Mrs. Morel's upper lip wrinkled: her icy blue eyes stared straight into her daughter's. "If you didn't come out of my own womb I swear I'd have left you along time ago. You could have all the fantasies you ever needed as a ward of the damn state!"

The wind picked up. Lisa's hair began to billow in the chilly breeze that ran over their bodies, and seemingly over the neighborhood. The street-lights had begun to flicker. "You know mom, you think so much about being normal and being accepted..." Lisa's fists had balled up. She turned away to look at the sky. The three spheres in the sky had begun to elongate, stretching out into torpedo-shaped objects with humanoid figures on each. The lining on each had begun to glow. Electrical appliances all around the neighborhood had begun to glitch. "Sometimes," Lisa said angrily, "I wish all of this would just go away."

To be continued!

If you enjoyed this story, you can find more tales of your favorite DC heroes at DC2 Universe.

All characters are (c) DC Comics and no infringement upon their copyrights is intended. Support DC Comics by buying their monthly comics and graphic novels.

From the same author on Feedbooks

Aquaman #11 (2007)

Aquaman: The Return", Part 2 (of 5): The Behemoth of the Sea

Aquaman #10 (2007)

Aquaman: The Return, Part 1 (of 5): Dreams & Darkness.

Though he's evaded the spotlight for sometime, Aquaman makes a return, battling an enraged King Shark on the shores of Florida! But while our hero is busy, what forces, new and old, are plotting the downfall of Atlantis's only savior?

Aquaman #12 (2008)

Aquaman: The Return, Part 3 (of 5): Taking on a Flood of Wickedness.

As Orin tries to understand the mystery of the Leviathans, he finds another obstacle in his path in the form of a man called Noah: a man with strange abilities who claims that a second flood, like the Great Flood of the Bible, is coming to destroy humanity for its wickedness. How can Orin tackle a cult and this new foe while trying to finish his mission?

Aquaman #13 (2008)

Aquaman: The Return, Part 4 (of 5): Inside the Ark



www.feedbooks.com
Food for the mind