



All-Star Comics #9
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All Star Comics
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God's Lonely Man Part 2 (of 2)
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The two mysterious figures ventured through the empty graveyard. Fog wisped through the night with a bright moonlight reflecting off of it.

"I don't get it, what do Gods want with a regular guy like me?" Boston questioned.

"They are not quite at the level of God, rather, they are two groups of supremely powerful beings in a constant rivalry with each other. The Lords of Chaos and Order, both are needed for a balance in the world. But the side of Chaos lusts for complete disarray in the world. They have been known to corrupt the lives of humans, attempting to forge agents of Chaos to fight their war for them." The Phantom Stranger responded.

"And you do... what exactly?"

"I am merely here to persuade you to do otherwise."

"So the guys you work for can cure me?" He said eagerly.

"... I cannot promise anything. Unfortunately, we will need to track down the man who did this to you."

Can I trust this guy? I guess I don't have much of a choice. But I don't know anything about him.

"Do not worry Boston, you can trust me." The Stranger replied to a shocked Boston.

"What, so I can't even have an inner monologue now?"

"Boston, you *are* an inner monologue. Just your soul is left, no body."

"... Alright, let's go."

The two of them returned to Hill's circus to see Detective Jackson along with another officer. Jackson scratched his chin and concentrated on scooping out the area.

"You hear about Noble? He brought in some assassin earlier." The younger officer said.

"Assassin? They just told me he was the one that killed the acrobat." Jackson said, confused.

"Apparently this guy was wanted by the FBI or something. That's not even the weird part though. After Reggie brought him into the station and got the statement, he started acting real funny."

"Funny? How so?"

"Like he didn't remember anything that happened after he was there at the crime scene."

Jackson began scratching his chin again.

The Stranger looked at Boston and cocked one of his eyebrows.

"Don't give me that look, I did what I needed to do to catch my killer." Boston said accusingly as he pointed his finger at The Stranger.

"Boston—"

"And whose idea was it to give me these powers? No one gave me a

manual for them, I had to figure them out on the fly.”

“I understand, but Boston—”

“And what happens if I die in someone else's body? Do they die? Do I die? I didn't want to get someone killed, but under the circumstances, I think I handled things pretty well.”

“Boston, I do not care about that. Just stop and think, why are these officers still here?”

“I dunno, follow up work?”

“But they aren't in the big top. And look over there.” He pointed towards Boston's trailer. “They moved the yellow tape.”

“This looks like a job for The Deadman!”

Boston entered the young officer's body.

“How's it going Jackson? Long time no see.”

“What the hell are you talking about Simmons?”

“Don't worry about it. So what do we have here?”

“We're trying to find a connection between the murder and kidnapping so we can hopefully find the brother and owner of the circus.”

“... Kidnapping?” Boston's hands began to tremble.

“Yeah, it happened right after that hook guy was brought in.”

Boston exited the body and made his way to his old trailer. Amidst shattered glass under a broken mirror was a blank piece of paper. Upon touching it, a magical image of a note appeared hovering in the air:

'We tried leaving the decision up to you, but now you have given us no choice. The side of chaos must be chosen or your loved ones will be sacrificed. Come alone.'

The words dissipated in a puff of smoke and were replaced with a map of the city with a mark on it.

"Damn it!" Boston yelled, clawing through the ghostly text.

"Slow down Boston. This won't be as simple as bringing in Hook. This agent of Chaos is of much higher rank and most likely deals with dark magic, judging by this note."

"He has Cleveland and Lorna, 'PS'. I have to go."

"I cannot force your decision, but know that you will be defenseless to his magic."

"I'm dead. What do I have to lose?" Boston replied with a smirk.

Once they arrived within a mile of the location, the Stranger stopped.

"He has set up a magical barrier. If you can break his concentration, I can come to your aid and strip him of his powers. Until then, you are on your own." Phantom Stranger reached behind his neck and unhooked the chain he wore.

"A necklace? I like you too, but, jeez buy me dinner or something first." Boston joked.

"Take this amulet. If you can manage distracting him enough so that he lets down the barrier, place your hand over it and it will send me a signal."

"Here goes nothing." Boston received the amulet and began to walk away. "Oh and, uh, if things don't go right, thanks for the help. I don't know why this is happening to me, but it's been nice to have a friend through all of this. I actually enjoyed the whole dead-etective, buddy cop, partnership, whatever you wanna call it."

"It has been an honor on my part as well."

"I'd shake your hand but, y'know, mine are as cold as death."

Minutes later, Boston spotted a large glowing tent. Near it was a sign that read '*Come see the amazing Deadman! One time only!*'

Boston slowly entered the big top. Inside, he was unable to see through the darkness. Then, with a boom, two giant searchlights turned on pointed towards the center. Standing there was the man dressed in a purple robe with multiple gold rings on his fingers. Alongside him was Lorna Hill and Cleveland Brand, both with blank looks on their faces.

"I can see you Boston." The man yelled out.

"You're the one who talked to me before my show."

"Yes. My name is—"

"I don't care who you are. I want you to let Lorna and Cleveland go, and I want you to tell just what the hell is going on!" Boston interrupted.

"There's really nothing you can do to me, so you'll have to consider my offer. We gave you those powers so that you could join us."

"Screw your offer! You should have been prepared for me to use my powers on you!" Boston violently flew towards the man. Once he came within a few inches of him, the man waved his hand and Boston fell to the ground. Boston began feeling the ground, and then his face. His eyes widened as he realized what he felt. "How—?"

"Aaanad you're done." The man waved his hand once more and Boston's hand went through the ground.

"No! Change me back!"

"I think you're ready to listen now. I am an agent of the Lords of Chaos, I'm sure the Phantom Stranger already informed you on that. What he didn't tell you is that both sides, Chaos and Order, are responsible for

your transformation.”

“You mean... this isn't a good versus evil thing? All of you are just evil? I trusted the Stranger!” Boston said with a shocked expression on his face.

“It isn't about good and evil, it's about two sides of the spectrum. What I'm offering you no different from what they are offering, only—”

“Only you're holding two of my loved ones hostage.”

“Well when you put it that way you make it sound like I'm forcing you into this position. I won't kill them if you don't try anything, but know that I have the power to give you life at any time. All you had to do was say that you would join the side of chaos.”

“Had to?” Boston replied.

“When I said that you had a choice in this, I was just being friendly. But you tried my patience for too long..” The man waved his hand like a puppet master towards Lorna, who then pulled a gun out of her waist and pointed it at Cleveland. “Now, does this make the decision a little easier?”

“No!”

“No? Well that answer isn't going to work. I guess you should say good-bye to your brother.”

“I meant, wait! Just, let me think for a second.” Boston stood there for a moment, and then jumped into Cleveland's body. “Lorna, please, put the gun down.”

“If he dies with you controlling him, both of you die Boston.”

“I know there's a little bit of that strong woman that I fell in love with in there.”

“There's only so long that I will wait until I make her shoot you. Join our side!”

"You said that if I got killed, you would bring me back to life to kill me yourself. If you're gonna do it, I need the real Lorna Hill out here."

"Boston?" Lorna murmured.

"No!" The man began to lift his hand to take control of her again.

"Shoot him!" Boston yelled out pointing his finger at the man in the robe. Lorna quickly turned and shot him in the arm. She looked back at Boston and fainted. Boston walked over to her, checked her pulse, and then picked up the gun. He walked over to the man and pointed the gun down at him.

"She's alive, so today's your lucky day."

"You are foolish, I could destroy you with one sentence, and then do the same to your loved ones. Any last words?"

"Yeah, how's that magic barrier doing you rube?"

Just as the man opened his mouth, the Phantom Stranger appeared and waved his hand over the man on the ground, putting him to sleep.

"Did you get any answers?" The Stranger replied.

"Not really. But he said that the Lords of Order were just as responsible for this as Chaos was. Is this true?"

"Let's bring this man to the Lords of Order, then, they have some questions to answer."

The three transported to a dark place surrounded in fog. A booming voice came from somewhere within the mist.

"You have brought the acrobat. Good work Stranger."

"This man says that you were involved in the murder of Boston Brand." The Stranger asked.

"Of course. Chaos and Order are always looking for agents, and when we found this specimen, I became involved in competition with a Lord of Chaos."

"He isn't a specimen, he's a human life!" The Stranger yelled out.
"You took my life away... for a game? No. I won't accept that." Boston said angrily.

"You are amusing. We gave you eternal life and you talk back to us." The voice replied.

"You took me away from my loved ones! I'm not joining either side, so just change me back."

"We cannot do that. Either we will control you as a pawn, or you will stay in this condition forever."

"Oh, well when you put it that way." Boston looked at the Stranger and smiled, then extended his middle finger to the sky. "That's my answer, and if he's got any sense, the Stranger's answer too. There's only one person in my life who can control me, and unless you're a redheaded woman, then you'd might as well not even try."

"Foolish. And what is your answer Stranger?" The voice questioned.

"I think you know. First I am going to report you to the other Lords of Order, and then I am done with being your pawn." The Stranger said before opening a portal and walking into it along with Boston.

A week later, in the graveyard, a gentle breeze passed through and the sun was shining bright.

I can't believe I'm at my own funeral. It's just a bizarre end to this chapter in my journey. I can't even bear to see all the people who I care about here. I hate seeing them feel so bad for me. I guess this is where I can do what I do best and lighten the mood.

Cleveland walked up to the podium in front of the grave.

“Boston Brand... was a joke.” He said to a shocked audience. “He really was, and I love him for that. He was always the guy to put a smile on your face, no matter how you felt. Like this one time, after our parents left us. Cleve... I was always a little more straight laced since I had to look after us, and I was forcing Boston to work at a bakery with me. One day, the boss told me... he told Boston to bring out a lemon cream pie for a customer. When the guy saw this kid carrying it, he figured that Boston made it and stormed out. Not knowing what to do with it, he turned to me and said, 'Well, can't let it go to waste', and threw it in my face.”

The crowd began to burst out in laughter.

As he looked around he spotted the Phantom Stranger and the two exchanged head nods before he continued.

“He always loved clowns, cartoons, and old Three Stooges cartoons. And as much as I hated them, I couldn't help but laugh when he did things like this. I thought the boss was going to kill us when he came in and saw us, but Boston didn't care, he just kept that grin on his face. If Boston were here and knew that everyone was crying over him, he wouldn't accept it. He would want all of you to celebrate life and embrace the good times that you have left. Throw a pie every once and a while, or tell a joke in an uncomfortable situation. That is how we should honor his memory.” Cleveland looked at the grave. “I'll miss you bro.” As he walked back to stand by Lorna, everyone at the funeral had smiles on their faces. “Take care of Cleveland like he took care of me Lorna.” Lorna froze as if she saw a ghost. “I love you.”

“What did you just say Cleveland?” Lorna asked.

“I didn't say anything.” Cleveland replied with a confused look on his face. “I need to give my eulogy.” Lorna smiled and looked towards the grave.

“I think someone else took care of that.”

Boston flew away from Cleveland with a grin on his face and made his way inside of his casket.

One last look. I stare at my lifeless body, and I see my father again. I see him mocking me, because he's dead, and I'm not. As I exited the body of my brother, I realized that I'm doomed to straddle the fence between life and death forever. Just like that dream, right? Only now I've realized that it wasn't a nightmare at all. Death can laugh all it wants because I'm laughing right back at it.

Boston flew high above of the ground until everything was out of sight and then looked down.

Y'know, it's funny, the end of my life may have been one of the greatest things that's happened to me, second only to Lorna Hill. Dying actually breathed new life into me. As long as I can remember, I've been swinging around on a trapeze, performing daredevil stunts, unafraid of death because I never found a place in the world that made sense to me.

My parents abandoned me, Cleveland and Lorna have their own lives to live, and now I'm alone in the world. Ultimately, I'm in the same place I was when I was alive. But now... now I can actually make a difference in the grand scheme of things. The Stranger told me to live my life, and that's exactly what I'm going to start doing. I don't care that my dad is laughing at me. I don't care that death is mocking me. I'm going to embrace my position and make something truly great come from it. Heaven and Hell can't stop me. Life and death can't stop me.

I'm God's lonely man.

I'm The Deadman.

Never The End Rubes!

Epilogue

"Why did you even return without the Deadman?" A voice yelled out from the shadows in the depths of Hell.

“The Lord of Order returned me here after I was caught by the Phantom Stranger.” The man in the robe replied in a whimper. “I am sorry, please don't punish me.”

“The Stranger was involved?” The voice replied.

“Yes. But then when he found out that the Lord of Order was involved in Boston Brand's murder, he quit his position. The Stranger and Brand are not Agents of Order.”

“Hmm, we have gained more than I had hoped then. If the strongest agent of Order is no longer affiliated, they have lost most of their strength. Soon we can make our power play and destroy Order once and for all. It seems that your impotence has bore fruits after all.”

“Thank you for sparing me... Tala.” The man bowed to Tala as she stepped out of the shadows.

“I never said that I would spare you.” She spoke as bolts of electricity shot out of her fingertips and turned the man into dust. “Those fools think their defiance was for a worthy cause. It will make it that much sweeter when we turn this Earth into Hell!”

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All-Star Comics #7 (2006)

All-Star Comics: Animal Man.

With newfound animal abilities, Buddy Baker is experiencing a new connection to animal life – physically and emotionally. When no one else is willing to investigate the theft of snakes from local research laboratories, Buddy puts these powers to the test under the guise of The Animal Man!

All-Star Comics #8 (2007)

All-Star Comics: Deadman: God's Lonely Man, Part 1 (of 2).

Hill's Circus is about to experience its biggest night ever, but little do the audience and performers know, star acrobat Boston Brand's performance will land the circus on the front page of the Daily Planet!

Black Lightning and Static #1 (2007)

Black Lightning and Static: Blackout.

Black Lightning and Static #2 (2007)

Black Lightning and Static: 50 Shots.

Black Lightning and Static #3 (2007)

Black Lightning and Static: Out of the Frying Pan.

Black Lightning and Static #4 (2007)

Black Lightning and Static: Crossing the Line.

Black Lightning and Static #5 (2007)

Black Lightning and Static: How the Mighty Have Fallen.

This is it! In this action packed finale, Static is caught in the middle of a second gang war between the two Bang Baby gangs - The Heat and The Bangers - while Black Lightning and Robert Hawkins must fight off Polaris and Edwin Alva from exacting their plan to perform a science experiment on Star City using the gas that caused the Big Bang! Robert's secret will be revealed, Black Lightning and Static will take the next steps in their lives, and by the end of this issue the mayor of Star City will be revealed...in one way or another...

THIS IS THE FINAL ISSUE OF BLACK LIGHTNING AND
STATIC.



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