



All-Star Comics Annual #1

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Published: 2007

Categorie(s): Fiction, Fan Fiction

Tag(s): Comics DC2 JSA "Justice Society" "Justice Society of America"

All-Star Comics
Featuring the Justice Society of America
Annual #1: "The Time of Their Lives..."
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Washington, D.C., 1947...

Professor Zee wiped the sweat from his brow with the sleeve of his white lab-coat, glancing back and forth from the schematics to the open control panel on the outside of the Machine. He seemed to have everything connected correctly— at least it matched up with the schematics! So why wasn't it working?

The lab was dark, but for a small circle of light around him and his Machine. If he had stopped to glance at a clock, he might have decided to call it a night. But he was so close, he felt, to getting it working again.

It was a large, transparent sphere, with a platform inside for perhaps five or six occupants, and a control panel. This was the culmination of a lifetime's work, and not only his own; he wished Everson, Shanley and the rest of the Time Trust had survived to see this day! With a sigh, Zee closed the outside panel, watching as it faded and melded into transparency like the rest of the Time Machine.

He glanced again at the schematics, looking to see where he had gone wrong.

Behind him, the door to the lab opened slowly, and absorbed in his study, Zee did not turn.

"Come away, now, Professor. It's too late." Said a familiar, though grating, voice.

Annoyed, Zee did not even turn around, gesturing dismissively with one hand.

“I thought I fired you this morning.” He grumbled, distracted. “Go away. And leave the key behind.”

Slow measured footsteps towards him caused the Professor to let out an exasperated sigh and finally turn to face his troublesome assistant. He was arrested by the sight.

The man coming up behind him *was* undoubtedly his assistant... *but he looked like he had aged ten years!* Nor was that the only change. The unkempt, greasy red-hair was slicked back, his shoulders were straight and unslouched, and the weasel-like, calculating look in his eye was replaced by one of confidence and sinister intent! Gone, as well, were the untucked flannel shirt and denim jeans— this man was clad in black leather, with a button up vest, trimmed in red, and on his breast was blazoned in crimson the letter “D”.

In his hand, he held a Nazi Army-issue Luger, pointed at the Professor.

“Degaton...!” Professor Zee gasped in confusion.

Per Degaton inclined his head, his lips curled into a smirk.

“Malachi.” He greeted his former employer. “It’s been too long.”

Professor Zee rose unsteadily from his stool, shaking his head.

“But I don’t understand. I just saw you this morning... What’s going on here?”

“Much that you don’t understand.” Degaton conceded. “For instance, the reason the Time Bubble is not working is because I ‘borrowed’ it twelve years ago— or, just this afternoon, depending on your perspective!— and removed it’s reserve of Chronomium.” He held up a small vial of liquid, which scintillated with more colors than the human eye could see. “A relatively rare substance, even in the 853rd Century.”

Professor Zee gaped at the small vial in his former assistant’s hand.

There was much about the Machine he still didn't understand... How could Degaton...?

He shook his head as if to clear it, and Degaton went on.

"Of course, I returned it moments later— or twelve years later, again, depending on your perspective!— taking care to keep the power source with me, while I went about this time period..." He paused, searching for the right phrase. "Settling accounts, shall we say?"

"Impossible!" Spat Professor Zee. "You are a drooling imbecile, Degaton. There is no way you could have figured out how to use the Machine—."

The first shot caught Professor Zee in the shoulder, spinning him around. He fell to the floor with a cry, and Degaton stepped forward with a manic gleam in his eye.

"You always did underestimate me, Professor." He sneered, aiming the gun as his victim tried frantically to crawl away. The gun barked three more times, then Degaton lowered the smoking barrel. "Malachi Zee. December 12, 1885 to April 3, 1947."

Holstering his weapon and stepping carefully over the body, Per Degaton climbed into the Time Bubble, his rage boiling, unabated, inside him. He inserted the vial of Chronomium into its cradle, and powered-up— setting the controls for the 21st Century.

"And now," He snarled. "For those damned mystery men and their whelps...!"

THE DC2 PROUDLY PRESENTS...

**THE TRIUMPHANT RETURN OF THE IMMORTAL HEROES
OF THE GOLDEN AGE,**

THE JUSTICE SOCIETY OF AMERICA!

Gotham City, the Present Day...

Robinson Park was not the safest place to be at dusk. The old-fashioned lamp-posts came on automatically, but those who knew better put their heads down, made eye contact with no one, and headed for home.

And that was just fine by Ted Grant. He had jogged this route at least twice a week for forty years, his towel around his neck, waving to the winos asleep on the park benches, and breaking up the occasional mugging. Usually, it didn't take much more than a look. While he was well into his eighties, Ted Grant still possessed the physique of a very much younger man, thanks to an incident back in 1951 involving Per Degaton and something he had called a "chronobomb"— Dr. Fate had tried to explain the details once, but it had only given Ted a headache and sent him to the fridge for a beer. As it was, Ted's thick dark hair was silver at the temples, but he kept it short anyway, and his face was a bit more grizzled than he preferred when he looked in the mirror, but otherwise his muscles were toned and rock-hard, and his reflexes never sharper—which more than one would-be mugger had learned to their dismay.

It was not for nothing that folks still referred to him as 'the Champ.' Of course, it had a different connotation when his lady-friends said it...

Used to be that Ted hardly broke a sweat on his run, but his ratty, old *Milligan's Gym* t-shirt was damp by the time he came to his favorite spot, the water fountain by the statue of Gotham's first mystery man, the Crimson Avenger.

"Evenin', Lee." He nodded— as he did *every* time at this point in his run— up at the weather-worn figure of a well-dressed man in a domino mask, fedora and cape, then paused for a quick sip at the fountain.

"Evening, Ted."

Water spurted from his mouth as Ted started, whipping around. The statue hadn't come to life— but there was a man hovering in the air next to it, his body limned in a green aura, arms crossed over his chest.

"Jeez, Alan, next time give a guy some warning." Ted wiped his chin, glowering up at his old friend.

Green Lantern, the first bearer of that name, looked even younger than

Ted— exposed to Degaton’s ‘chronobomb’ as well, Alan Scott also had the cosmic powers of the Starheart keeping him young, and Ted Grant looked upon his old friend’s unlined face with a minor and passing pang of jealousy.

“Sorry, Champ. I didn’t mean to startle. I knew I could find you here, though.” Alan smiled apologetically.

Ted grunted and resumed his run, Alan keeping pace with him, hovering in front and just above him.

“What’s with the work clothes, Alan? You’re as retired as the rest of us. A respectable U.S. Senator, now. Voted for you myself.” Ted swatted at Alan as if he were a fly, and Alan moved a respectful distance away, but still kept up with him.

“Of course, of course.” Alan Scott said quickly. “I’m keeping busy, and the Justice League is doing a fine job out there, but... This is JSA business.”

Ted shook his head, and put on some speed, though he knew he could not hope to outrun Green Lantern.

“No can do, Alan. I have a hot date tonight. Spunky little rookie from Gotham Central I’m teachin’ ta box. Besides, my Wildcat days are long gone—.”

“Ted, it’s Wesley.” Alan said quickly. “He’s come back.”

That brought Ted up short. He slowed to halt, glancing up at Alan as if he had heard wrong.

“Wesley Dodds, the Sandman? He’s alive?”

Alan nodded.

Some years ago, after Wesley Dodds lost his long-time love Dian Belmont to a debilitating illness, he had disappeared, leaving behind a Fortune 500 company in the hands of Dian’s nephew, Sanderson Hawkins, to wander the world. He had left no clues to where he had gone, only

that no one should expect his return: he had no home where his beloved Dian was not. That was more than twenty years ago, and while Wesley Dodds had been exposed to the same choral-radiation as the rest of them, and he could more than take care of himself, in his grief, they had expected him to soon follow his beloved Dian.

“Well, that’s *good* news, right?” Ted eyed Alan suspiciously, not liking the pensive look on his friend’s face.

“Yes, of course, it’s just that... He’s brought something with him.”

“*Something.*” Ted repeated. He didn’t like this. Alan Scott was not usually this evasive. He was troubled, that was sure.

It was the next words out of his mouth that surprised Ted Grant the most.

“It’s the Spear of Destiny.”

Ted swore out loud. The Spear. The potent magical artifact, once wielded by Adolf Hitler himself, that had kept the JSA from directly attacking Nazi Germany and bringing a swift end to World War Two.

“I *hate* that thing!” He grumbled, but pulled his cell phone from the pocket of his sweatpants. “Renee, sweetheart, I’m gonna have to take a rain check, alright. Yeah, maybe next week. I’ll call ya.”

He flipped the phone shut, then glared at Alan.

“I’m gonna hafta get the old costume outta mothballs. Gimme a lift back to the gym...?”

Calvin City, Ten Years Ago...

The backyard barbeque was well underway at the Pratt house, and it seemed like the whole neighborhood was there. Al had stationed himself at the grill, and was happily flipping burgers and brats, Mary at his side helping to distribute the food. Pratt children and grandchildren scurried about, playing with their water guns as the adults gossiped and caught

up with each other.

Everyone seemed to be having a great time— except Jo. Alone in the house, Josephine Morgan Pratt stood in front of the mirror in the upstairs bathroom, staring at her reflection as if it were unfamiliar. She was eleven years old, the youngest of her parent's ten children, and she had her father's coloring: auburn hair and freckles. She had never doubted her parents' love for her, but she had always thought herself unremarkable, just one of the innumerable Pratt brood: she had eight nieces and nephews, some older than she was, and a *grand* nephew almost the same age. This had never bothered her. She was a content, happy little girl.

Until today. Today she found out she was *different*.

She raised her right arm, fingers splayed out, and turned her hand over, examining it. Seemed normal. But earlier, when the neighbor boy had pushed her down, and ran away laughing, something had happened. She watched him run off, and her right hand clenched into a fist— and it began to tingle. She pounded it against the sidewalk, and watched in amazement as it cracked, her hand unscathed. When she calmed down, she tried to tell her Dad, but her oldest brother, James, had interrupted her with news of their latest impending addition to the family— another grandchild.

So Jo had come upstairs to try to figure this out.

She balled her hand into a fist, and concentrated hard, but nothing happened. She had grown up on stories, told by her father's friends, of her father's exploits during 'the War', and she tried hard now to remember what they had said about his so-called 'Atomic Punch.' Had she somehow inherited this power...?

"Understanding comes slowly."

Suddenly, the mirror filled with an unfamiliar figure. Behind her materialized a red-haired man in black leather, a predatory grim on his face. Before Jo could react at all, he covered her mouth with a handkerchief that smelled funny, smothering her outcry.

"Don't struggle, my dear. I'm doing you a favor." He said quietly. "I'm

going to take you away from all this, take you where you will be appreciated. Who's going to miss one little girl in *this* house, anyway? Shhh! A bold destiny awaits you..."

Blind panic filled Jo, and she felt herself losing consciousness. The last thing she felt was pure, unbridled power gathering in her right fist... Then she lost it, her limbs going limp as she slumped into the arms of Per Degaton.

Salem, Massachusetts, the Present Day...

"It's been a long time since I've seen the inside of *this* place," Rex Tyler announced, making his entrance into the elegantly appointed library of Dr. Fate's Tower, where the others were gathered, sipping drinks and catching up.

"Well, if it isn't the Man of the Hour, himself." Dinah Lance sauntered up to him and kissed him on the cheek after a brief hug. "We missed you at Christmas." She swatted at him playfully.

His broad, bluff face wore an embarrassed expression. Happily married for fifty years, he was, nonetheless, still susceptible to Dinah's flirting.

"I know, I'm sorry; after the merger with Bannermain last year, we took Tyler Chemical public, and I was needed in New York for the transition. Next year, I promise."

"How're you feeling, Tick-Tock?" Asked Dr. Charles McNider, not getting up from his plush chair by the fire. Like the rest of them, McNider looked not a day over fifty, his hair still blonde, his tanned, handsome features wrinkleless. He wore his special dark glasses, kept his ivory-tipped cane at his side, and sipped from a steaming cup. His visual infirmity had never hindered Charles McNider—in fact, it made him the hero he had become. But the limp in his leg would keep him from ever again putting on the costume of Dr. Midnight.

"Never better, Doc." Rex affirmed, going over to clasp hands with his physician. "It's been years since I've popped a Miraclo, but if I ever have to again, I've developed a new version that is absolutely harmless."

McNider had a dubious look on his face, but refrained from comment.

By then, the others had gathered around to greet him, as well: Alan smiled broadly, Ted Grant thumped him on the back, Al gave him an emotional, unabashed hug, and with Ted Knight, his college roommate and oldest friend, he shared a handshake and a knowing look.

“Wendi sends her love.” He said simply. “How’re David and Jack?”

Theodore Henry Knight was a soft-spoken, introspective man, and— Rex Tyler had reason to know— a man with an expert poker face.

“They’re well. David graduated *magna cum laude* from Ivy Town U last year, and has a job working at the S.T.A.R. Labs research facility there. Jack,” He hesitated a moment, adjusting the glasses on his nose. “Well, he’s taking a year off of school to see the world.”

“He’s a good kid.” Rex affirmed, gripping his old friend’s arm as he shook it. “Has a lot of his mother in him, rest her soul.”

Ted Knight had married late in life, and thus his wife, Doris, had not been present when most of them had been exposed to the time-defying effects of Degaton’s chrono-bombing. She had died years before of natural causes, her husband and sons at her bedside.

“So where is he?” Rex glanced around, using his normal speaking voice, which was close to a bellow. “Where’s Wes?”

“Locked up with Kent and Inza.” Al Pratt told him, levering his girth into a padded chair. “Working some hocus-pocus with the Spear.”

Of all of them, Al had most enjoyed his retirement; married to his long-time sweetheart, Mary James, he taught Physics at Calvin College and presided over a family that expanded in direct proportion to his waistline and receding hairline. It was very unlikely that Al Pratt could ever again *fit* into the costume of the Mighty Atom...!

Not that Al Pratt’s life had been without sorrow. His youngest daughter had, inexplicably, run away from home ten years ago, and despite their

best efforts, had never been found. The pain of that loss was still visible in his eyes.

"I still can't believe he's back. After all these years..." Rex shook his head, gratefully accepting a hot mug from Dinah.

"It's a miracle." Alan agreed. He was the only one of them in costume, as always, prepared to leap into the fray. "We've lost too many good friends and comrades-in arms over the years."

All of them nodded in solemn unison, and a contemplative moment of silence followed.

Dinah Drake broke the silence, raising her wine glass respectfully.

"To Jay."

They all followed suit, raising their cups and glasses.

"To Carter and Shiera." Alan intoned.

"To Polly." Ted Grant smiled in fond memory.

"To C.C." Said Charles.

To my poor little Jo, Al Pratt thought sadly.

As they lifted their drinks to their lips, the wooden door to Dr. Fate's inner sanctum opened, and Wesley Dodds, a man none of them had seen for twenty years, strode into the room, followed closely by Kent and Inza Nelson. In his hands was clutched the Spear of Destiny.

"And what about Terry Sloane?" He declared with uncharacteristic intensity. "Or Johnny Thunder?"

The former members of the Justice Society of America stared at their old friend in surprise.

"Wait," Ted Grant held up one hand, a look of confusion on his face. "Terry and Johnny *who*?"

Wolfsschanze, the Prussian Hinterland, 1939...

Deep inside Fortress Europe, Der Fuhrer brooded in his heavily-guarded forest retreat, the Wolf's Lair, brooding over the progress of the war.

He stalked the thick animal-skin carpets of the hunting lodge, glancing occasionally up at the artifact hanging over the mantle-piece: the Spear of Destiny glinted in the soft light of the fireplace, giving off its own internal glow. He longed to take it down, to hold it in his hands and share in its potency... It always made him feel better when he held it.

He was reaching for it when the knock came at his door. The SS guard entered and saluted smartly.

"Heil Hitler!" He clacked his heels together, slashing the air with his outstretched arm.

"What is it?" Hitler snapped, annoyed at the interruption.

"Mein Fuhrer, Herr Degaton has returned."

The Fuhrer had left orders to be alerted whenever the red-haired American returned to the complex; Degaton was working on a very special project for the Reich...

Shoving past the SS guard, Hitler stomped out of the lodge and across the yard, his breath frosty in the cold Prussian winter air. He headed for the campus of buildings where Degaton had his little 'academy.'

"Ah, mein Fuhrer." Degaton greeted him with a broad smile and a salute at the door to the dormitory. He was ushering a frightened teenaged boy through the doorway, leaving him to the care of a severe looking woman with iron-grey hair.

"I see you have brought back from the future another one of their whelps." Hitler stared intently at the round-faced child as he was led away.

“Yes. That one’s name is Ray Terrill, and he will grow to develop fantastic powers. I snatched him from 1981, right from under his parent’s very noses. They thought he had drowned, pulled into the undertow on a Caribbean vacation...” He spoke the words as if he savored each and every syllable.

“Spare me the details, just assure me that our plan will work.” Hitler glared at him. “That these super-powered brats you are bringing back here from the future will be the key to destroying the Justice Society of America, and changing history so that my glorious Thousand Year Reich will reign triumphant!”

Degaton nodded his head respectfully. Ever since he had told Hitler of a future wherein the Third Reich had lost the war, the Fuhrer had become a haunted, desperate man. He had been more than willing to go along with whatever plans his trusted ally Per Degaton advised.

“Never doubt it, mein Fuhrer.” Degaton said smoothly, escorting Hitler into the dormitory. “Baroness Von Gunther has the indoctrination regimen well underway.”

Before them, six children sat in six chairs in front of a projection screen, watching a grainy black and white newsreel, their foreheads strapped securely so they could not look away. The newsreel footage was of the American mystery men known as the Justice Society, acting, in turns, buffoonish and decadent— and then suddenly sinister and horrific, performing acts of violence and cruelty that no child should have been forced to watch.

Hitler had had his best propagandists shoot the film, to Degaton’s exact specifications, though the actors bore little resemblance to the real people: Wonder Woman was no buxom Teutonic blonde, nor was the Atom a dwarf...!

But it mattered little. All that mattered was what they represented.

“I have taken great care in who I’ve selected for our project.” Degaton told the Fuhrer, who stood with his hands clenched tightly behind his back, surveying the scene with some satisfaction. “In addition to Ray Terrill, the son of the Ray, and inheritor of his father’s powers, I have

also recently acquired Jesse Chambers— the one with the blonde pigtails. She is a speedster, and possesses a modicum of enhanced strength, as well. Her parents are the ones called Johnny Quick and Liberty Belle, of the JSA Reserves Battalion. Josephine Pratt, who we brought in last year, is the daughter of the Atom, and has inherited his 'atomic punch' power. You already know Deanna Barr, the daughter of Bulletman. She absorbed a toxic amount of Thanagarian Nth Metal radiation when she was a child, and, in addition to flight, can transform her flesh at will into a kind of living— and impenetrable!— metal. And, of course, our prize pupils." Degaton swelled just at the thought of it, his greatest, and longest-term project: he had himself sent the mentally unbalanced Rose Canton to Alan Scott's bed that one night, many years in the future. "Jennie-Lynn Hayden and Todd Rice, twin offspring of Green Lantern, one with the power of light, the other with the power of darkness."

Hitler nodded impatiently. He knew most of this— some of these brats had been here years already.

"And you are sure these— what do you call them? *Infinitors*?— will destroy the Justice Society...?"

Degaton forced himself to restrain his frustration with the Fuhrer.

"They *have* the power, and we are giving them the training and the motivation..." Degaton shrugged. "The JSA will never see them coming. And if they do, how could they fight their own children?"

The Fuhrer's lip quirked. He relished the irony almost as much as Degaton did.

You can smile now, my desperate friend, Degaton thought to himself. I will have my revenge against the JSA, and I will use your precious Third Reich to train my Infintors— but you will never live to see the fruits of our labor! With the JSA destroyed, Per Degaton will rule alone!

JSA Headquarters, Site of the 1939 Worlds Fair, NY, 1942...

Hawkman rapped the gavel on the table, the sound echoing in the Perisphere over the drone of many voices, and called the meeting back to

order.

He had called a General Assembly, and the hall was filled not just with the regular members of the team, but with all of the Reserves, as well. Dozens of mystery men were gathered— for the first time all in one place!— on the eve of America’s entry into the war; even the back benches of the rotunda were filled with folks in the Perisphere for the first time, like Black Condor, Mr. America, Phantom Lady, the Red Bee, Tarantula, Spy Smasher, and Robotman

“I want to thank you all for coming on such short notice. Unfortunately, Captain Marvel could not be with us, today, nor could Dr. Fate or the Spectre be reached, but rest assured we are united in spirit today. I know we are all anxious and eager to contribute to the war effort,” The Chairman said in a loud deep voice as the rest gave him their attention. “But first, we need to hear a report from Green Lantern, Starman and Sandman, all recently returned from a secret mission behind enemy lines.”

At that, the three named heroes approached the podium and Hawkman resumed a seat at the table.

Green Lantern spoke first.

“After Congress declared war against the Axis Powers last month, the JSA received a message from the White House. President Roosevelt had a special mission for us: to reconnoiter Fortress Europe and the Japanese Home Islands, in preparation of a superhuman assault on the enemy.”

A low, excited murmur rose up in the hall, which Green Lantern quieted with a raised hand.

“As this was essentially a mission of espionage, it was decided that the fewer involved, the better. I volunteered to scout out the Pacific, while Starman and Sandman took a two-pronged approach to Europe...” He hesitated a moment, glancing around at the hopeful faces of his friends and comrades, then squared his jaw, and told them the rest. “I encountered little resistance at first... A few zeros, anti-aircraft fire from patrolling fleets; mostly I stayed out sight. But the deeper I flew into enemy territory, the stranger I felt. My ring had detected what I can only describe as a mystical ‘Sphere of Influence’, expanding outward from

Japan. Suddenly, my mind was filled with the urge to turn around and attack U.S. positions in the Pacific, and to do give battle to foes of the Emperor!”

In the audience, Liberty Belle gasped.

“In fact... before I realized what I was doing, I was halfway back to Pearl Harbor, hunting for American destroyers. I— I came to my senses before I could do any damage, but I had come extremely close to taking out what was left of the Seventh Fleet off the coast of the Philippines. It had taken every last ounce of willpower I had... I could almost hear Tojo laughing at me.”

Without another word, he took his seat and Starman stepped up to speak.

“I had a similar experience over Europe.” He said quietly. “Only with more disastrous results... Over Occupied France, I met with the same magical ‘Sphere of Influence’, and before I knew it, I was landing in Berlin and offering my services to the Fuhrer himself!” He lowered his head for a moment, in shame, but went on. “I can still see him standing in front of that giant Nazi flag, with that feverish look in his eye... I can remember crying out in my head, but it was like someone else’s will was at work, making me do things...” He took a breath, steadying himself. “He sent me on a raid against England, with orders to use my Cosmic Rod to destroy Number 10 Downing Street. And I would have succeeded, too, if not for the Shining Knight.”

In the audience, Sir Justin nodded grimly, but said nothing.

“Luckily, Wonder Woman was on-hand in London, waiting to meet me. She restrained me with her Golden Lasso, and the moment she did, I felt my mind clear...” He looked up gratefully to Wonder Woman, who gave him a smile like a gift. “I’m ashamed for how I was used, and of what I almost did. I— I wouldn’t want to be responsible for the destruction I’m capable of in the hands of the Fuhrer.”

He sat and the Sandman stepped forward.

{I entered Nazi Germany by more conventional means, He began, his voice

weird and distant behind his mask. *{Suffice it to say, I had the help of the Blackhawks. Once in Berlin, I infiltrated the Reich Chancellery; I had to see for myself what was behind Starman's strange behavior. What I saw that night chilled my blood and haunts my dreams still.*

The assembled heroes hung on the mystery man's every word, but the Sandman hesitated.

"Tell them." Starman nodded bravely to his friend.

{I saw Starman on his knees before the Fuhrer. Hitler brandished a spear over him, and commanded him to assassinate Winston Churchill, then Starman rose, saluted the swastika, and marched away, a glassy look in his eye. I was too far away to intervene, and I was almost discovered soon after. I barely made it out of Berlin alive.

"Why weren't you affected by that supernatural 'Sphere of Influence'?" Spoke up Commander Steel from a bench against the rotunda wall.

{I can only speculate. The Sandman replied. {I am but a man, with no magical or cosmic weapon, as had Green Lantern and Starman. Nor was I detected at any time, for a weapon to be leveled against me.

Saying no more, the Sandman resumed his seat at the table, and Hawkman stood again.

"Thank you gentleman. I know that couldn't have been easy." He smiled at the still rattled trio of heroes. "From the Sandman's description, it seems obvious to me that the weapon Hitler wields is the Spear of Destiny, an extremely powerful mystical artifact that we have encountered before, when the JSA first came together a few years ago. Back then, Vandal Savage had it, but we had presumed it lost after that adventure. If this is indeed what is protecting the Third Reich and its allies, then we need to proceed very cautiously: a full-on assault against them could only end up delivering a superhero army into the hands of our enemies, and I for one have no desire to go down fighting for the Axis!" He glanced around the crowd of faces. "Sargon, Tor, Dr. Occult, Ibis and Zatara: we'll need you to come up with a plan of attack against this so-called 'Sphere of Influence.' Find some way to make us immune to its effects, or to counter it altogether. In the meantime, we'll stand adjourned

and meet back at the Perisphere in one week's time."

The gavel came down again, and the heroes rose to return to their loved ones, or their private preparations for the war. Only the core, original members of the JSA remained behind. After everyone had left, the Flash sighed and said: "We really could use Dr. Fate about now..."

<Look no further, my friend, I am here!>

From out of a sudden burst of grey smoke emerged the familiar blue and gold figure.

"He loves those dramatic entrances." The Atom whispered to Wildcat, a recent addition to their ranks, who was looking taken aback.

With a swirl of his cape, the sorcerer stepped forward, and seemed to be studying the gathered faces carefully.

"Where have you been, Fate?" Hawkman eyed him suspiciously. "You missed an important meeting. We think we may be up against—."

<The Spear of Destiny, yes.> The magician made a placating gesture. **<It is indeed in Hitler's hands, and there is nothing we can do about that now.>** He stepped slowly around the table, regarding them as if he were picking out lobsters to cook. The puzzled JSAers could only stare back at him. **<As for my whereabouts, Chairman: at times, I travel roads far removed from these mortal planes of existence; only trust that I am ever where I need to be, when I need to be there.>**

"We don't doubt it." Green Lantern piped up, noticing how Hawkman had bristled. "But we sure can use your help now, Doc."

Dr. Fate nodded, his eyes inscrutable behind the slits of his golden helm. He seemed different to them— not in any sinister way!— but older, more wary. And he wore a new variation on his helmet, one that left the bottom portion of his face exposed. He drew himself up and spoke.

<We face a more immediate threat now. Per Degaton is about ready to make his final move, and we are in check. He has played his game masterfully, but he has hunted us long enough!>

“Wait,” Wildcat held up one hand, a look of confusion on his face. “I’m still new to all this... Per Dega-*who?*”

But only blank looks and shrugs met him around the table.

<He is our once and future nemesis.> Dr. Fate explained. **<And he has long laid his plans against us. So we must do what he does not suspect. We have but one gambit left to play, a few pieces left to place on the board— and Per Degaton isn’t the only one who can castle across time!>**

Salem, Massachusetts, the Present Day...

“So let me get this straight,” Charles McNider steepled his finger-tips and leaned towards Wesley Dodds, who stood by the mantelpiece and the softly glowing fire. “You’re saying that these two people, whom none of us can remember, fought alongside us in the JSA all those years ago as the heroes Mr. Terrific and Johnny Thunder...?”

“No,” Wes said wearily, gazing into the fire. “I’m saying they *once* did, but not anymore. They no longer exist now. They were wiped from existence by Per Degaton, murdered in his eternal vendetta against us...”

The others exchanged alarmed glances. They had not heard from Degaton since 1951, but he had always proved a dangerous foe.

“I don’t understand.” Dinah admitted with some frustration. “If they never existed, than how—.”

“Degaton has mastered the Chronocalculus,” Kent Nelson interrupted, stepping away from the wall where he had patiently waited with Inza as Wesley had tried to explain to their friends what was going on. “It is a discipline he could only have learned in a far-flung future, and seems to allow him not only a great mobility in the Timestream, but a certain sensitivity to points of weakness. You see, the universe abhors a vacuum, and has a tendency to course correct. If he wants to wipe out the JSA, he simply can’t go back to, say, the nursery of Alan Scott and smother the child in his crib: someone else would then find the Starheart and become

Green Lantern. But there are certain points that are weaker than others, people, places and events that are cosmically expendable, and act as dominoes— knock them down, and the others fall more easily. This is Degaton’s plan: to seek out those spots, and chip away at us, unraveling and splintering the JSA at our most vulnerable points!”

Dinah could not refrain from a gasp, one trembling hand going to her mouth.

In the horrified silence that followed, they tried to take it all in.

“And so this Mr. Terrific and Johnny Thunder— they were— how did you say it?— *cosmically expendable*?” Rex frowned, going over to where Dinah sat, and laying a comforting hand on her shoulder.

“Yes.” Said Kent Nelson.

“But then how did Wes know about them?”

At that, Wesley Dodds turned from his contemplation of the fire’s dying embers, and answered Rex.

“I— I’ve been dreaming about them for years.” He muttered, pushing his wire-rimmed glasses further up his nose. “As you all know, my dreams and nightmares tap into a realm of, what Dr. Fate calls, expanded consciousness. At first, I thought I was dreaming a fantasy, but it all seemed so real— as real as memory! Johnny Thunder was just a kid, really. Not too bright, but his heart was big. He was able to call upon a djinni with wondrous powers, and he always did the right thing. Mr. Terrific was a genius, and a man who wanted to make his life mean something. He was devoted to the concept of ‘fair play’; he doesn’t deserve this... this *obliteration*. Neither of them do.”

“Makes you wonder what other damage he’s done.” Green Lantern rubbed his chin, scowling. “The HUAC Hearings that forced us into retirement...?”

Kent Nelson nodded. “Yes. Engineered by Degaton. That... and much else.” He stared at Alan Scott meaningfully.

Before that enigmatic statement could be explained, Ted Grant shot from his chair in frustration and confusion, running his calloused hands through his stubbly hair.

“Alright, we get it: Degaton is a menace! But will someone please tell me what the Spear of Destiny has to do with all this? Just looking at that thing makes my skin crawl.”

Ted Knight, who’d been examining the artifact in question, looked up as everyone glanced his way, and gingerly leaned it against the stone wall.

“Looks like the real thing to me.” He pronounced taciturnly. “How—and where!— did you find it, Wes?”

The look in Wesley Dodds eyes became pained, and almost embarrassed. He turned away from them again to stare back at the fire.

“After Dian’s death, I was desolate. I— I felt that there wasn’t anything left for me to live for, but I had all this youth and vigor... I wandered the globe, looking for a reason to...” He cleared his throat, shoving down the emotion, and went on. “One night, I dreamt of the Spear, and I remembered what hideous power it was capable of; it felt like a loose end, a problem the JSA had never solved. I feared for what would happen if it ever fell into the wrong hands again, so I embarked upon a quest to find it— and destroy it!” He shook his head, as if ashamed of his naiveté. “I spent years looking for it. I looked into many dark places, and saw much that was good and much more that was very, very bad. And always, I dreamed of the Spear, leading me onward, as if I were on a Grailquest. There were rumors and whispers of it everywhere from Rennes-le-Chateau to Katmandu, but just when I thought I was getting close, it seemed the furthest out of reach. Last year, I found myself in a place called Nanda Parbat, high up in the Himalayas— and for the first time since I lost Dian, I felt at peace. I’ve always been a student of Eastern disciplines, so I decided to rest there. I trained for a long time with the lamas, returning my body to a point of not only optimal physical health, but mental and emotional as well. In Nanda Parbat, I regained a balance I thought I lost twenty years ago... and just when I had stopped looking, that which I had sought, found *me*.”

“The Spear.” Ted Knight nodded.

“Yes.” Said Wesley. “I received a... visitation. I woke up one night to find the Spectre in my cell. He would not respond to me at all, but led me out of the ashram, and into the snow. I followed him into a valley, and to a cave I had not seen before. It was the tomb of a medieval knight, of the Secret Order of St Dumas. I asked the Spectre why he had brought me here, but he only pointed inside, then vanished. The tomb was ancient, but still lit by torches along the walls. The Spear was there, atop the catafalque, and clutched in the stone hands of the effigy. It released easily into my hands, and the moment I touched it, I realized *something was not right!*”

“The Spear is attuned to the rightful course of human history,” Inza Nelson spoke up for the first time, her many bracelets tinkling as she moved up to stand by her husband. She was still possessed of an otherworldly youth and beauty, but, like Kent, had never seemed more distant. “Everything has a destiny— you, me, even the rocks and stones of this very Tower. When that is tampered with, the Spear calls to be found. It will seek out an agent by which things can be set right.”

“A moment, please.” Charles McNider held up a hand. “If that is true, than you’re saying that Hitler was the rightful wielder of the Spear all those years ago, and that we were never *meant* to stop him...?”

“Who can say where the true path of destiny lies?” Inza shrugged. “Perhaps the world *needed* to deal with Hitler, that the fires of the war forged not only a world capable of dealing with true evil, but men and women willing to fight to save it? Or perhaps destiny is more perverse, and that chaos and misrule are the natural order. Who can say? Destiny is inscrutable. What we do know for sure, is that Wesley Dodds found the Spear, and that it has given him insight to a great danger facing us.”

“Let’s get to it, already!” Ted Grant muttered in exasperation.

Wes blew out a breath, and picked up his narrative. “There’s not much left for me to tell. As I said, the minute I picked up the Spear, I was bombarded with images and feelings that something was wrong. The dreams of Terry and Johnny returned, and I started getting glimpses of Degaton, skipping like a stone across the river of time, but always hunting the JSA. I caught bits and pieces of his masterplan, but despite all my meditation,

neither I nor the lamas of Nanda Parbat could piece it all together. That's when I decided to come to the only people I knew that could help me figure this out. So I came to Salem, and Kent called the rest of you here as well..." He looked to Kent to finish telling them the rest.

Kent Nelson stared at them, his eyes intense. "As Wesley has already explained, Degaton is using his command of the Chronocalculus to control and manipulate history, warping it to his own nefarious ends. This, of course, is naturally abhorrent to the will of the Spear, and as Degaton's meddling threatens us, the Spear has come into our hands so that we may put an end to his threat. But there is no limit to Degaton's perfidy—he has used every weapon available to him, every stratagem, and balks at nothing: murder, deception, kidnapping... Anything to give him the upper hand over the JSA. He will ensure our destruction at all costs!"

"But why?" Dinah asked, clutching the hand of Rex Tyler laid comfortingly on her shoulder. "Why does he hate us so much?"

"Because, Dinah, we have stood in his way at every turn." Green Lantern answered with steel in his voice. "Degaton is a megalomaniac, and the JSA has been there to block his every attempt at domination."

"You speak the truth, Alan. Our destinies are entwined." Kent said thoughtfully. "If Per Degaton is ever to succeed he must deal with us first. For him, we are the pebble in the timestream, diverting the course of a mighty river. For Per Degaton to reign supreme, he must kill the Justice Society of America!"

"Hmmp." Ted Grant cracked his knuckles, itching for a fight. "What makes him think he'll be more successful this time? We put him down before, we'll put him down again."

"*My friends, listen to me!*" Kent Nelson implored then with a sudden urgency. "Nothing about Degaton's coming assault is arbitrary! He has had years—decades!— to plan his final move. He has watched us from the future, he has manipulated our past; and if he has chosen now as the time to strike, it is because the Chronocalculus has advised him that we are at the weakest point of our history! Despite our extended vitality, some of us have begun to feel the effects of age and infirmity, the memory of our exploits are fading from the minds of the people— and

we have lost many members. If Degaton strikes now, it is precisely *because* we can be destroyed— *this is his chance!* If he destroys the JSA now, he will proceed to wipe us from existence!”

Into the ominous silence, Dinah Lance gasped.

Kent Nelson went on. “If he destroys *us*, this current generation of heroes—the Justice League, the Titans, the Outsiders— will never have had our example to look to, and might never have arisen... Might never have banded together to save the world from the recent Crisis. If we fall, then so falls the world!”

Berlin, April, 1945...

Per Degaton slowly stalked the cold stone floor in the bunker below the Reichchancellery, ignoring the light dusting of falling plaster, and the distant sound of bombs exploding. He was intent only on reviewing his stormtroopers, the agents of his revenge— his Infitors.

They stood ramrod-straight before him, all of them wearing the same look of steely determination. He had carefully guided and molded them for years. Their bodies were weapons of war, their powers carefully honed and perfected. And he had shaped their every thought to one end: the destruction of the villainous Justice Society of America!

He ceased his pacing and faced them, growling directly into the face of the tall, busty red-head: “What is your mission?”

Josephine Morgan Pratt, daughter of the Atom— Codenamed: Atomika— answered in a strident voice: “Kill the Justice Society of America!”

Well-pleased by the answer, Degaton moved to the next in line. “Why do we do this?”

Todd Rice, cloaked in shadows, son of Green Lantern— Codenamed: Obsidian— responded: “Because they are godless, corrupt and decadent. They are all that stands between us and a world of peace and order!”

Nodding, Degaton went to the next Infitator, the green-skinned girl with

the page-boy haircut, and the star-burst emblem on her chest. “They will try to sway you with lies and tricks. How will you respond?”

Jennie-Lynn Hayden, daughter of Green Lantern and heir to the power of the Starheart— Codenamed: Jade— cried out: “With hardened hearts and overwhelming force!”

A smile began to spread across the would-be tyrant’s face. He narrowed his eyes at the brightness coming from the next Infinitor. “For whom will you work this miracle? Who is your *true* father?”

Ray Terrill, son of the Ray— Codenamed: The Ray— pulsed like an angry solar flare. “Per Degaton!” He barked.

Onto the next Infinitor, and Degaton was showing his teeth. He looked the gleaming, molten metallic figure up and down and asked: “Who has made you the perfect instruments of justice that you are today?”

Deanna Barr, daughter of Bulletman and Bulletgirl, her conical helm glinting in the light of the Ray— Codenamed: Bulleteer— responded without hesitation: “Per Degaton!”

At the end of the line, Degaton was practically thrumming in anticipation as he faced the last Infinitor. “And who shall reign over all in an Everlasting Reich?”

Jesse Chambers, daughter of Johnny Quick and Liberty Belle— Codenamed: Cyclone— her every molecule vibrating with barely contained speed and fury, yelled back at him: “Per Degaton!”

Degaton sucked in a breath, turning on his heel and stalking back, to face them all at once. He surveyed them one last time: Atomika, Obsidian, Jade, the Ray, Bulleteer, and Cyclone— the instruments of his revenge. The irony of it was like a fine single-malt, dancing on his tongue: from the loins of his greatest enemies came the means of their downfall.

He swept his arms up in a magnificent gesture, the Time-bubble waiting behind them, and growled: “To the 21st century, then, my Infinitors, and to the JSA! *Let’s show them the time of their lives!*”

Salem, Massachusetts, the Present Day...

"The attack, when it comes, will be swift, brutal and relentless," Kent Nelson fastened on his yellow cape, and accepted a gleaming golden helm from his wife. "Remember, the coming battle is the culmination of Degaton's masterplan against us: expect the unexpected! Be prepared for whatever he throws at you!"

Alan Scott frowned as Kent donned the Helm, noting that it was not the Helmet of Nabu, but a half-helm version that left his lower face exposed.

"You talk as if you're going somewhere..."

<I am.> Said Dr. Fate, taking up the Spear of Destiny in both hands, his cape fluttering about him. **<As I told you before, Degaton will have chosen his time to strike most wisely, when we are fewest, weakest, most liable to fall...>**

"So *this* is the time you choose to run some mystical errand?" Ted Grant paused as he taped-up his knuckles to stare at Dr. Fate incredulously.

The others couldn't help but share his astonishment.

But the Master of Magic merely stared back at them, the mists already swirling around his feet.

<Remember Wildcat: trust that Dr. Fate is *ever where he needs to be, when he needs to be there.*>

His voice faded and he was soon gone from sight, leaving his friends and comrades stunned and alone.

"Now, why did *that* sound familiar...?" Ted Grant mumbled, scratched his chin, and went back to wrapping his fists.

"Out of the question!" Green Lantern declared passionately, striding down the stone foyer of Fate's Tower. Ahead of him, waiting with Inza

Nelson, were Dinah, Al and Charles, out of costume, but looking determined to join them; at Alan's side were Wildcat, Hourman, Starman and Sandman, all clad in uniforms long-unused, but ready for action.

"Alan, please," Dinah began quickly. "We may not be able to fight, but we can at least lend our support—."

"Speak for yourself, Canary." Al Pratt huffed, punching his right fist into his open left palm, the very air around his knuckles crackling with barely-contained power. "Some of us can still pack a wallop!"

This actually caused Wildcat to guffaw.

"C'mon, Al! I'm not gonna go into the fight of my life worrying about your tubby behind dropping dead from a heart attack."

Al Pratt glared at his friend, but snapped back a retort.

"Surely, Alan, we can be of *some* assistance?" Dr. Charles McNider asked reasonably, his weak leg forcing him to lean heavily on his cane. "Remember what Fate said: Degaton has chosen now because we are at our weakest. Just the five of you can't hope to withstand the assault he—."

"We'll *have* to be enough." Alan Scott said in a tone that would brook no argument. "The three of you would be sitting ducks out there, Doc, and you know it. I won't use *any* of you as cannon-fodder."

"Besides," Hourman said in a gruff tone that belied the emotion of the moment. "It would be more dangerous explaining to little Dinah why we let her aged-mother go into battle."

Tears welled in Dinah Lance's eyes, and she swatted at Rex Tyler.

"Who're you calling 'aged', you big lummo..." She choked down tears and embraced her old friend fiercely. Then she hugged Alan next, and the team took a moment to say their goodbyes.

With a wave of her hand, Inza opened a portal to the outside; Starman lifted his cosmic rod and took to the air, followed by Green Lantern, his

ring creating a cozy green bubble for Hourman, Wildcat and Sandman to ride in behind them.

“Where to?” Ted Knight asked as they rode the thermals high over sleepy Salem.

{Degaton will strike where he can do the most damage to us, and to our legacy. Spoke the Sandman.

Alan Scott nodded. “Right. To New York, then.” He said grimly. “The JSA Museum.”

The JSA Museum, New York City, the Present Day...

It was on the edge of Central Park, a Greco-Roman-style building with a series of broad stone steps that ran up to an ornate colonnade. The heroes landed on the steps, just as a grey-haired man in a smartly tailored suit came quickly up the steps to meet them.

“Sanderson!” Green Lantern rushed to meet Sanderson Hawkins, the executor of the JSA Trust which administered the museum— and the nephew of Wesley Dodds’ late wife, Dian. “What’s going on?”

A police cordon had been set up around the museum, and the swirling red and blue lights lit up the night. A large crowd had gathered, but a hush had fallen over them with the arrival of the heroes. A news-crew was busy setting up their cameras.

“It’s Degaton.” Sandy replied succinctly. “And he’s not alone. He has a team of super-powered thugs with him. They showed up a few minutes ago, and started trashing the place, calling for you and the others—.”

“Was anyone hurt?” Starman asked in his quiet voice.

Sandy shook his head, but there was a pained look in his eye. “The museum was closed, but the curator was still inside...”

“Ma Hunkel!” Wildcat growled and swore under his breath.

Sandy nodded.

Green Lantern's ring sputtered a momentary flash of anger, and he gave Sandy a reassuring look.

"We'll bring her back safe." He said with grim confidence. "Now get to safety yourself, behind the police lines."

Sandy glanced over Green Lantern's shoulder at the Sandman.

"Is... Is that you, Wes?"

{We'll talk later, old friend. When this is done.}

With a curt nod, Sanderson Hawkins turned and went down the steps.

The five heroes started up the steps, towards the blasted opening of the double doors. Behind them, the voices of the crowd rose up in a spontaneous cheer. Surprised, they paused a moment, glancing back.

"J! S! A!" They people on the street chanted, the voices of the police and news-crews joining them. "J! S! A!"

"Well, I'll be damned." Hourman noted with a lop-sided grin as he popped a Miraclo into his mouth. "They remember our name..."

Inside the museum, the emergency generator had kicked in, but the track lighting on the ceiling was not enough to dispel much of the darkness. The Grand Foyer was a cavernous room, with a balcony that ran the length of the second storey, accessible only by a winding marble staircase.

Starman held his cosmic rod up like a torch, the glow bathing them in argent radiance.

"Degaton!" Green Lantern called out in challenge, his voice amplified by his ring and ringing with outrage. It carried through the further halls and exhibit rooms, and its echo seemed the only response forthcoming.

They moved in cautiously, spreading out across the darkened room. Glass cases of mementoes and memorabilia were broken open and some lay shattered on the marble floor, the precious contents spilled out. Wildcat bent to pick up a broken violin, the strings snapped. It had belonged to the Fiddler, one of Jay's earliest foes. He set it back on a broken pedestal, squinting into the darkness.

{This darkness is not natural. Sandman warned them, unholstering his gas gun, and stepping around a fallen statue of Captain Marvel.

Green Lantern and Starman shared a quick look. Starman raised his cosmic rod, its light flaring even brighter, and Green Lantern poured his will into his ring, giving the entire room an emerald cast. But still the darkness pressed around them, the shadows rushing in to crowd out the light.

Alan Scott held his clenched fist before him, his normally smooth brow furrowed. He was almost entirely limned in green, directing all of his energy into the rapidly shrinking aura of power emanating from his fist.

"And I shall shed my light over dark evil," He whispered intently the words he had taken as a mantra so many years ago. He used them now to focus his concentration, to keep at bay the encroaching darkness. *"For the dark things cannot stand the light... I shall shed my light over dark evil..."*

In front of Alan, projecting from the marble statue of the Mystery Man known as Tarantula— *a shadow shifted and moved!* It sprang from the plane of the floor, becoming three-dimensional, coalescing into the figure of a man. Cold white eyes stared back at Alan, and teeth appeared.

"Hey, Dad." Said the ebony figure, much to Green Lantern's surprise. Then the figure reared back and punched Green Lantern square in the jaw.

The hero staggered back, caught off guard as much by the words as the action of his attacker. Alan righted himself, but not before Hourman, who was closest to him, could leap forward to his defense. The Man of the Hour lunged to grab GL's attacker in a bear hug, but fell upon insubstantial shadow, his momentum carrying him clumsily forward,

mocking laughter ringing in his ears. Hourman crashed into the statue of Tarantula, his Miraclo-enhanced strength and mass causing it *and* him to topple over, smashing the statue into pieces and powder on the marble floor.

A flash of light filled the room as Starman leaped into the air, hovering over the scene with his cosmic rod blazing at full force.

“Ted, look out!”

The cry came from Hourman. From his vantage on the floor, he had seen the streak of light careening towards them from the second storey balcony. Like a comet, it shot across the across the vast Hall, straight towards Starman!

The impact was blinding. Ted Knight had managed to throw up a shield of energy just in time, but it shattered as the man-shaped streak of dark-limned light collided with him. Those below were forced to cover their eyes, Starman’s anguished cry heard over the concussion. The hero fell out of the air, hitting a wall and sliding down, senseless.

“My god,” Wildcat gasped, blinking to clear his vision. “Was that the *Ray*?”

“Not the *Ray you* know, old man!”

Wildcat was hit faster and harder than he ever had been before. It spun him around in place, but he refused to fall, throwing his hands out to steady himself. He didn’t recognize the female voice, nor had he seen much more than a blur. Before he could recover, there was a rush of wind and suddenly he was caught up under the solar plexus by someone running faster than humanly possible, propelling him with her. He barely had time to glimpse a shapely rear-end before the forward motion was arrested, the momentum carrying him forward to slam into a glass display case. He was cut in a dozen places, and lay dazed amidst an assortment of Hawkman’s old masks, but managed to raise his head to his attacker. She had a Veronica Lake hair cut, yellow goggles, and wore a red and yellow costume that reminded him of his old friend Johnny Quick’s. In fact, she looked a lot like Johnny’s wife, Libby— Liberty Belle...

“What the hell, lady—?”

She reached down and grabbed him up by the front of his costume.

“Call me Cyclone, Gramps.” She sneered at him, her face close to his. “And not only am I a lot stronger than you, but thanks to the Speed Formula I can also run circles around you. I can hit you a hundred times before you feel the first blow!”

Groggy but unruffled, Wildcat chuckled softly.

“Kid, are you flirtin’ with me...?”

Green Lantern pulled Hourman off the floor, both of them coughing in the dust of shattered stone.

“Behind you!” Rex hissed.

Instinctively, Alan willed an emerald wall into existence all around them, and it shook dangerously, buffeted by a tremendous force. The two heroes shielded their eyes, peering through the cyan construct. On the other side of it was a young woman, her skin a light shade of green, her otherwise pretty face screwed into a fierce expression of rage— from her outstretched hands came blasts of pure Starheart energy!

“Oh no you don’t, young lady.” Green Lantern jabbed out his fist and expanded the emerald wall into a battering ram, pushing it— and her with it— further and further backward. The jade-skinned girl rallied and pushed back, and for a moment, it was a fearsome struggle between the two of them, neither gaining the advantage, both of them locked in a battle of willpower.

Then a new player joined the fray. She flew at GL, out of nowhere, like a cannonball, balled up fists over her head.

Again, it was Rex who saw the threat first— and he saw that Alan was going to be taken unawares. The vitality of the Miraclo pumping

through his veins, he took a running leap and interposed himself between Green Lantern and the incoming human missile!

Her outstretched fists struck Hourman dead center, as he intended, and he cried out in pain, but he caught her up and brought her down with him. She was a thing of living, molten metal, her conical helmet making her seem familiar. But Rex had no time to ponder that. The blow had hurt him, but the Miraclo was still feeding him strength and adrenalin. They rolled on the ground, each vying for the upper hand. She was strong, but he was stronger, pinning her to the ground in a wrestling hold.

Her shining, pretty face was twisted into a snarl, and she struggled beneath him.

"Give it up, old man! This is an Nth Metal-alloy shell, there's no way you can hurt me."

"I'm not trying to hurt you," Rex grunted, her fists waving wildly in his grasp. "I just want to restrain you...!"

"Restrain this!"

The voice came from behind him. Hourman felt himself yanked by his cape off of Bulleteer, and was held dangling in mid-air, one handed. She was almost seven feet tall, red-haired, and on her expansive chest was a stylized bio-hazard symbol. She was glaring at Rex as if her were a bug to be squashed.

Her fist cocked back, and the very air around it seemed to crackle with supercharged particles.

"Who *are* you?" Green Lantern pressed forward against his younger opponent, sweat pouring off his brow. But his experience and long command of the Starheart energies seemed to give him the advantage over her, and she stumbled away, giving ground.

"We are who *you* should have been!" The green-skinned girl spat back.

“The JSA is weak and corrupt, and utterly misguided. You could have led the world into a shining new age, but instead you allowed it to fall into squalor. We are the Infinitors, and we are here to redeem the sins of the fathers!”

With that, she summoned a well of power deep within the core of her very being and broke through Alan’s own green wall, hurling him backward!

Obsidian watched as his sister overwhelmed their father, a satisfied smile spreading across his ebony face. Alan Scott may have been the wielder of the Starheart, but the Starheart was Jade’s *birthright*. It was as much a part of her as the blood in her veins.

He glided over the battlefield, an intangible wraith. This fight was almost over. Cyclone was toying with Wildcat, Atomika was about to put out Hourman, the Ray had taken down Starman, and Jade was showing their father why he was yesterday’s news. He looked for the opportune moment to strike a blow— which of these obsolete reprobates could *he* throw at the feet of Degaton?

A nearby groan caught his attention. A groggy Starman was rising from a pile of debris, still clutching his cosmic rod. Seeing his chance, Obsidian ghosted over to him, summoning his power about him and wrapping the hero in a cocoon of shadows.

“You can’t summon the light of the stars,” Hissed Obsidian to his frantically flailing foe. “If you are covered in a shroud of night!”

He resumed his corporeal form and clenched his fists, preparing to deal the knockout blow... when he smelled something strange. A noxious green mist wafted across his line of sight, causing him to cough and choke.

{And the evil that a man does in darkness, shall be visited upon him a hundred-fold in his nightmares.} The Sandman stepped from shadows of Obsidian’s own making, his gas gun still streaming his knockout gas. *{Sleep...}*

Obsidian fell, and the cocoon of shadow around Starman evaporated. Wesley Dodds helped his old friend to his feet, supporting him.

“Wes, that was the Ray that hit me up there,” Ted Knight’s face was a mask of growing horror. “Or at least whoever it was had Happy Terrill’s powers...”

The Sandman nodded, glancing down at the senseless Obsidian.

{The girl fighting Alan seems to wield Starheart energies, the tall red-head over there seems to have Al’s Atomic Punch... There is a disturbing pattern here, my friend...}

“One you’ll never live to figure out.”

The Ray landed a few feet away, blazing with power.

Above the din of a battle that was all but over, came the laughter of Per Degaton. Wildcat dangled limply from Cyclone’s grasp, Hourman lifted his head from the wreckage of a display case Atomika had knocked him into, and Green Lantern was on his knees before the green-skinned girl. Only Starman and Sandman were still on their feet, facing the Ray.

But with the arrival of Degaton, the Infinitors turned as one towards the second storey balcony from which he had emerged, and saluted him with arms outstretched, and their voices arose in a mighty cry: “Hail, Degaton!”

The battered and bruised members of the JSA stared up at their old enemy. He glared malevolently down upon them, triumph in his eyes. Before him, he held a squirming, frightened old woman: the curator of the JSA Museum, and their old friend, Abigail Matilda “Ma” Hunkel.

“At last we come to it.” Degaton called down to them, his harsh voice the only sound in the hall. “The final fate of the JSA!”

“You’ll never win, Degaton.” Green Lantern spat back at him. “You could kill every single one of us, but someone will always rise up to stop

you.”

Degaton’s mocking laughter came back at him.

“Kill you? I’m not merely going to kill you, Green Lantern, I’m going to *annihilate* you, and all you stand for!” The madman held up one clenched fist, the leather of his glove squeaking in protest. “This is the nexus, the weak-point! From here, I will enter the time-stream and wipe you all from existence— every one of you masked mystery men and women, but especially the JSA. You will have never existed! And without your exploits to inspire others, no other heroes will arise to stand in my way!”

For a moment, Degaton basked in that statement and his Infinitors looked smug. But Starman, his analytical mind racing, and remembering what Sandman had said, was putting certain facts together.

“Wait!” He stepped forward a pace, but lowered his cosmic rod as to not appear threatening. “Before you kill us,” He pointed to Cyclone, still holding Wildcat by the front of his costume. “Is she the daughter of Johnny Quick and Liberty Belle?”

The look on Degaton’s face grew even more triumphant, and he nodded.

“Look upon my Infinitors and despair, heroes. Let your last thoughts be that your legacies belong to Degaton! She is Cyclone, daughter to Johnny Quick and Liberty Belle. There is Bulleteer, the daughter of Bulletman and Bulletgirl. The Ray inherited his father’s powers, as did my dear Atomika— the Atom’s daughter. As for Obsidian and Jade, well, say hello to your own son and daughter, Green Lantern!”

The news hit Alan Scott like a physical blow. With a stricken expression, he stared up at Jade, wondering how this could be true.

But Ted Knight had already guessed much of this. And this time he spoke directly to the Infinitors, not even bothering to look up at Degaton.

“Don’t you see what that means?” He implored them. “If he wins here today, if he does what he is threatening to do— wipe us all out of existence!— *then you will all cease to exist, too!*” His words echoed in the hall, and Degaton’s expression had gone stone-cold. Starman continued. “You

are the children of the heroes of yesterday. If we never existed, then neither will you!”

As one, the Infinitor’s frowned, and turned towards Degaton, confusion writ on their faces. Cyclone absently released Wildcat, who staggered backward, rubbing his neck.

“Is... Is this true, Father?” Atomika spoke for them all, doubt in her voice.

Degaton’s lips curled in a vicious sneer.

“What did I tell you?” His voice was pitched low and dripping with disdain. “Did I not tell you they would try to trick you? That they would use lies and deceit to win you away from me...?”

Atomika flinched and lowered her head in shame.

“Of course it is not true!” Degaton growled. “I am the master of the Chronocalculus! I will always protect you, my Infinitors! You are the stormtroopers of my Everlasting Reich!”

And that seemed to be enough for the Infinitors. Their faces took on the look of firm resolve, and Atomika appeared not only chastened, but furious.

“Now, my children, kill them! Kill the JSA!” Degaton cried, spittle flying from his mouth.

As one, the Infinitors turned back to their foes, ready to deliver the final blows.

<Not today, villain, and certainly not by your hand!>

Light flared in the hall again as an ankh-shaped portal opened up in the middle of the room. From it leaped the Flash, Hawkman, Wonder Woman and Dr. Fate!

“No—!” Degaton gasped and staggered back a step, Ma Hunkel stumbling away from him and running, unnoticed, away from him. “It can’t be... You— You’re all—.”

Before he could finish that sentence, Jay Garrick shot forward, streaking across the hall, up the stairs and across the balcony, his fist connecting with Degaton’s face! The would-be tyrant fell back, but Jay snatched at the front of his leather vest flap, holding him up.

“We’re what?” He pushed his face close to Degaton’s. “We’re famous? Living happily ever after? I’ll settle for just being the cavalry, thank you!”

The battle erupted anew! But this time, it was less one-sided. The sheer power of the Infinitors were equaled out by Dr. Fate’s reinforcements.

Cyclone forgot about Wildcat, and went to Degaton’s rescue. Bypassing the stairs, she ran at superpeed directly up the side of the wall and over the ledge of the balcony, smashing into Jay from behind. He was forced to drop Degaton, and face her.

Bulleter launched herself at Hawkman, who spread his wings and took to the air, swinging a wicked-looking flail. The two clashed as metal met Nth Metal, sparks showering the floor below.

Atomika charged Hourman, who braced himself for that Atomic Punch— but a star-spangled sight-for-sore-eyes in a silver eagle breastplate placed herself in the ravening red-head’s path, and grappled with her, straining against her nuclear fury!

“Polly!” Rex rubbed his aching jaw, hardly able to believe his eyes.

Wonder Woman spared a quick glance behind her and winked at her old friend. There was no mistaking that eternal beauty. This was indeed Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons!

In her confusion and panic at the new arrivals, Jade renewed her assault on Green Lantern with a vengeance. She battered at him with the full power of the Starheart, calling upon reserves even he didn’t know

existed. Yet the hero struggled to his feet, his fist extended, his other arm bracing his wrist.

“Jade, listen to me!” He shouted over the torrent of her power. “It doesn’t have to be like this. Degaton’s lied to you, to all of you! He’s manipulated you somehow. Deep down you know it to be true! If you really are my daughter, you will know the right thing to do...!”

Panic and confusion warring in her brain, Jade did what she had been trained to do: she pressed her attack.

The Ray blasted full-force at Starman and Sandman, but this time Ted was ready for him. Two-handed, Starman aimed his cosmic rod at the son of his old friend and unleashed the full fury of the stars! The two opposing beams of light met and crackled at an equal distance between them, at first neither giving way.

“Like *hell*.” The normally unassuming Ted Knight growled, then sprang into the air unexpectedly. The Ray’s attack slammed into the wall where Ted had been, but before he could readjust, Starman was coming at him from above. The rays of the cosmic rod enveloped him, and he cried out, falling to his knees.

Disoriented, the Ray saw two booted feet approach him, a dark coat swirling around the ankles.

{*Sleep*... Came a hollow, eerie voice and a green mist— and Ray Terrill did just as the voice commanded.

“You’re fast, old timer!” Cyclone sped through the halls of the museum, up and down flights of stairs, across exhibit rooms, and centrifugally over walls and ceilings— only she was running backwards, facing her pursuer. “But I’m *much* faster!”

Jay Garrick smiled good-naturedly at her, shaking his head, as he matched her every move. “I don’t think so. I’m just being gentlemanly,

and letting the lady go first. But what's with this 'oldtimer' stuff? I'm not that much older than you..."

The world passed by them at a hyperspeed blur. A cruel smile spread across Cyclone's face. "Do you even know where you are, you relic? Or what's going on?"

The Flash shrugged. "Dr. Fate said he needed a specific few of us for a special mission against this Degaton character, sometime in the future. Can't be *too* far ahead from 1942— Alan, Rex and the others still look pretty young..."

Mocking laughter came from the beautiful blonde speedster. "Fool! This is the 21st Century, and the reason Fate could only bring a certain few is because you are dead already! Dead! As the rest of them soon will be!"

The words had the desired effect on Jay. He skidded to a halt, leaving a blazing trail behind him, forced instantly to come to terms with his own mortality. By a freak coincidence, he had stopped in the room dedicated to his memory and adventures. And there before him, in a glass display case, was his silver Mercury's helmet— twin to the one now on his head.

Cyclone doubled back, racing circles around him as he merely stared at the display case.

"What's the matter, old-timer?" She gloated. "Are you thinking that if I kill you here you won't get to die in the future?"

"No," He admitted to her, lowering his head, one hand going to the rim of his helmet. "I was just thinking it was lucky to find this other helmet here in case I damage this one doing *this!*"

He whipped the silver helmet off his head, and hurled it at her, timing his throw perfectly. Cyclone was caught completely unawares, the helmet sailing through her feet and tripping her up. She stumbled, and went down, crashing into the wall, and bringing rows of shelves down atop her. She groaned once, then was silent.

Jay bent to retrieve his helm, brushing it off and noticing a small chip on the edge. He looked back at the one in the display case and saw that the

same chip was on that one, too. He snorted, smiled, and put the helmet back on his head.

Hawkman's flail rang off of the gleaming metallic hide of Bulleteer as they passed each other like two quasi-medieval jousters. She ricocheted between the walls of the Great Hall, trying in vain to find an opening. But wherever she turned, the Winged Avenger was there, lashing out with the formidable spiked ball-and-chain.

Unlike Hawkman, who could remain airborne, Bulleteer had to be in constant motion to remain in flight. She perched atop a large-scale replica of the Perisphere—the JSA's wartime HQ—that sat in the middle of the hall, crouched and taunted him.

"Give it up, Hawkman," She spat at him. "This isn't even your fight—you've been dead for years!"

"Dead, huh?" Hawkman idly swung the spiked ball on its chain. "Not exactly a new experience for me, you know. I've died more times than just about anybody. And I certainly won't let it keep me from helping my friends!" He dove for her with a fierce roar, and she rose to meet him.

They met in midair, and at the last moment, Hawkman adjusted his position, dropping his weapon and executing a roll, until he was on top of her, holding her in a full-nelson.

"What are you doing?" There was a panic in her voice as she struggled to pull away from him, flying in reckless zig-zags across the room.

"Unless I'm much mistaken, there are traces of Nth Metal in this shell," Hawkman grunted, his mouth close to her ear. She wobbled, trying to shake him off, but to no avail. "I guess nobody ever told you I have a special relationship with Nth Metal...!"

As he spoke, Bulleteer felt the metallic shell that was her living flesh tingle and shiver—and then, against her will, it was gone. And with it, her power of flight.

Their momentum carried them into the replica of the Perisphere, shattering the hollow globe. After a moment, Hawkman emerged, brushing off splinters, and pulling the unconscious— and fully flesh and blood— Bulleteer with him.

“Jade, you don’t have to be Degaton’s tool!” Green Lantern yelled to his daughter, his green shield buffeted by her almost non-stop assault. “He doesn’t care about you or your brother— he just wants to kill us!”

“You’re wrong.” Jade said, dropping her arms wearily. Green flame still sizzled up the length of her arms, but she looked worn out. She’d been throwing everything she had against her father— had hurt him, and had nearly overwhelmed him *more* than once!— but still he would not fall. “Degaton raised us. Cared for us. Taught us the evils of the JSA, and this decadent world you serve... His Everlasting Reich would be a world of peace and order. He would lead us wisely, like a true father... ”

Alan took a chance, and lowered his guard.

“The world does not need to be led. It deserves the opportunity to choose its own destiny, Jade. As do you. And that’s what the JSA always fought so hard to preserve. Freedom from tyrants.”

“Freedom.” The green-skinned girl sneered. “What does freedom bring? Moral decadence, disease, crime, war—.”

“Yes— but joy and beauty, as well!” Alan pressed, stepping closer to her. “Science and evolution. Self-expression and love. Courage and community. Without freedom, we are little better than slaves. Is that what you are fighting for? To enslave the world? Because that is exactly what Degaton desires...”

The tears were coming freely now, and Jade pressed her palms to her ears, as if to shut out the truth of her father’s words.

“But— He *told* us you would say that— That you would try to trick us— That we should be strong, and stay true to our mission...”

A paroxysm of pain and sympathy passed across Alan's face. He pulled off his domino mask, then reached out for her, gently taking her chin, making her look him in the eyes.

"Degaton will say whatever he needs to say to achieve his own ends." He told her softly. "No doubt your life has been one ruled by fear, intimidation and guilt. You've all been pushed to this. But think for yourself now. Only ask yourself: is it better to live under the thumb of a tyrant, or to walk free in the world?"

Jade met his eyes, her emerald orbs searching his clear blue ones. It only took a moment for her to break down, her knees buckling. Her shoulders were wracked with bitter sobs, the revelation that her entire life was built on a lie devastating her.

Alan picked her up and took her in his arms.

Atomika reared back, her fist crackling, then swung with all her might. The punch exploded on impact against Wonder Woman's bracelets, sending the Amazing Amazon sailing through the air, and skidding across the room.

Grappling with her had nearly done for Jo. She bent over, hands on her knees, her chest heaving to catch her breath. Wonder Woman was already climbing to her feet.

A noise behind her made her whirl around. There, arrayed against her, were Hourman, Starman, Wildcat and Hawkman.

The Ray was down, and so were Bulleteer and Obsidian. And while Cyclone was nowhere in sight, she could see that Green Lantern had managed to turn Jade... She seemed to be the only one left. But she was *strong!* Within her was the power to level *cities*. She was special, Degaton had always told her. Unique. His own super-soldier. In her hands, was the power of the atom... She could fight to the end if she had to...

From the corner of her eye, she saw him. Ducking out from the

wreckage, Degaton dashed for the door, abandoning her...

"Father, no, wait!"

She took off after him, leaping over rubble and debris, dodging the grasp of the JSAers. He disappeared out the door, and Atomika followed.

Outside, she was met by a scene that dashed her hopes of escape. The museum was ringed by a crowd of people, most of who were behind barricades. Policemen stood by their cars, guns pointed up the steps at her and Degaton, who had stopped about halfway down. But that wasn't the worst part. There at the bottom of the marble steps was that cursed Dr. Fate again—and he had brought more reinforcements.

Behind the sorcerer were two men and a woman. One of the men was dressed handsomely in white, wore dark glasses and leaned on an ornate cane. The woman was very beautiful for her age, and seemed poised to leap forward into action. The other man was unremarkable in almost every way: he had a plain face lightly freckled (like hers), his red hair (the color of her own) was receding, and his paunch was expanding—and in his hands, he clutched an antique-looking spear.

And he was gaping at her, stunned.

Degaton, too, was gaping, at the weapon in Al Pratt's hands.

"The Spear," He muttered, taken aback, his eyes wide.

But Josephine Morgan Pratt heard neither him, nor the members of the JSA emerge from the shattered museum doors behind her. She could not take her eyes off the man holding the Spear. She started down the steps very slowly, as if entranced. His eyes were soft and familiar, and comforting in a way Degaton's never were.

"Jo...?" He said her name, his voice trembling. "Is that *you*, baby? *Oh dear lord, is that really you...?!?*"

"Daddy...?" The word was out of her mouth before she realized what

she was saying.

A soothing, serene music seemed to be in the air, easing her fevered mind, wiping it clean of years' worth of hatred, resentment and fear. A part of her realized the music was coming from the Spear in her father's hands— that it was washing away all the lies and propaganda and abuse force-fed to her— but consciously all she could think about was *how much she missed her family*.

Tears streaming from her face, she ran the rest of the way down the steps and fell into her father's arms. She towered over the former Mighty Mite, but the minute he embraced her, she felt like a little girl again.

"I can't believe this, I just can't believe this..." Al Pratt repeated over and over, unable to suppress an unmitigated and unlooked-for joy, snatched from uncertainty and desperation. Tears were flowing freely down his own cheeks, and all he could think about was bringing his lost little girl home.

"Atomika!"

The grating sound of Degaton's voice shredded the interlude of bliss. Jo Pratt turned to face the man who had terrorized her into loving him, her eyes red from crying, but hardened against further deception.

The would-be Master of Worlds and Time stood on a middle-step, and in his extended hand was a German Army-issue Luger sidearm. Pointed directly at her.

"Bring me the Spear, Atomika." He rasped, both his arm and his voice steady and unwavering.

He glanced quickly backward at the heroes of the JSA at the top of the museum steps, and snapped: "If anyone even twitches, I'll kill her right here! I won't miss at this range."

The tension in the air was thick. Degaton turned back to his former pupil, the gun still trained on her, and held out his other hand.

"Bring me the Spear of Destiny, my Infinitor. And I will forgive your

transgression. With it, we can still win the day. Our Everlasting Reich can be a reality.”

Jo Pratt felt a residual, momentary compulsion to obey. She looked over Degaton’s shoulder at the heroes at the top of the steps. Assembled there were not only the surviving members of the JSA, but the members Dr. Fate brought from the past to turn the tide— and her own comrades, the Infinitors. Jade clung to her father Green Lantern, Obsidian and the Ray leaned on each other, and Wonder Woman was arm-in-arm with a Bulleteer who appeared completely human now. And behind them, the Flash and Cyclone were emerging together from the museum, tensing instantly for action. In every case, she saw the same clarity in her comrades’ eyes— the Spear had freed their minds as it had hers.

She looked back at Degaton and said distinctly for all of them, with a disdainful curl of her lip: “Never.”

Degaton never hesitated. He pulled the trigger— but Al Pratt was not about to lose his daughter again. He was already shoving her out of the line of fire, shielding her body with his own, and bracing himself to take the bullet.

“Oh, *c’mon!*” Said the Flash, appearing instantaneously in front of the reunited father and daughter; in his hand was the bullet he had plucked from the air. “Did anyone *really* think that was gonna work?”

Degaton’s gun barked three more times in quick succession, and soon Jay Garrick was juggling four bullets, displaying a maddening grin.

Sudden realization crashed in on Degaton. He had failed. Again. And for all time. He knew he would never be able to destroy the JSA. His life’s work was for naught. He was what Professor Zee had always called him: a failure. Flooded with abject despair, he turned the Luger on himself, pressing the barrel firmly against his temple and fired.

This time it was Cyclone who intervened. She saw immediately what he had intended to do, and was already in motion. She had plenty of time to make a quick detour around the Flash and whisper “*I got this one, old-timer.*” ribbing him mildly before knocking Degaton’s arm aside, the bullet arcing harmlessly into the air.

Degaton blinked in surprise, unable to wrest his wrist from his former protégé.

“You don’t get off that easy, Degaton.” Jesse Chambers told him. “You don't escape justice today!”

On the stairs above, and on the street below, the one-time— *and future*—members of the Justice Society of America beamed with undisguised pride.

EPILOGUE

In the ruins of the Grand Foyer of the JSA Museum they assembled, moments after the police had cuffed and driven away Degaton.

Ma Hunkel had already gone to work, directing teams of clean-up crews and fussing over the loss of priceless objects. Sanderson Hawkins and Wesley Dodds were talking quietly in a corner by themselves, neither willing to relinquish their handshake. The others were gathered around the remains of an old wooden table, the JSA emblem carved on the top. It was split down the middle, and mostly kindling.

“I think this was my fault.” Jo admitted, sheepishly.

Wonder Woman laughed, and rubbed her shoulder as if to work out a bruise. “Well, you did pick it up and throw it at me!”

There was general, gentle laughter, and Al hugged his embarrassed daughter for the hundredth time.

“It’s alright, kiddo,” Wildcat grumbled. “I think we’re going to need a bigger one, anyway.”

Nothing had been decided yet, but it was fairly obvious to all that the In-finitors were going to need more training and better mentors— though the Spear had done much to wipe away most of Degaton’s brainwashing. They were not going to be cut adrift in the 21st Century. They had families who were going to welcome them with open arms— and they had

one big family ready to teach them to be heroes.

But as much as this felt like a new beginning, it was a time for goodbyes, as well. Dr. Fate announced that he had to return Hawkman, Wonder Woman and the Flash to their proper era, or risk permanent damage to the time-stream.

There were swallowed tears and tight embraces, and Wonder Woman surprised Wildcat with a lingering, passionate kiss. There was a catch in the Champ's voice when he said goodbye, and he turned away, angrily kicking the ruins of a display case.

Jesse Chambers caught Jay Garrick up in a fierce hug, resting her cheek on his shoulder. "I'm sorry about what I said before." She whispered to him. "I didn't mean—."

He cut her off with a "Shhh! There's no need. Just make me proud."

He held her at arms length, wiped the tears from her cheeks, and chucked her chin. Then he turned to go. In her heart, Jesse Chambers made a promise she would keep for all of her life.

Dr. Fate had opened a swirling portal of light, and beckoned the trio of heroes to pass through it.

<This is not farewell, my friends, for you will live in our hearts and minds forever.> The sorcerer intoned. **<Though you will not recall this adventure when you return to those dark days of 1942, the memory of this victory will resound for all eternity.>**

Hawkman nodded, and looked back before stepping through. "Keeping fighting the good fight, my friends."

"Always." Alan Scott spoke for all of them— then, with a final salute, the Winged Avenger was gone through the portal.

Hippolyta gave them a smile that opened any windows of joy still locked away in their hearts, blew them all a kiss, and followed Hawkman.

Only the Flash remained— and for a moment, the sight of him wavered,

as if he were already fading from the present time. But that was only for a second, and most of them chalked it up to the bad lighting, or the tears clouding their vision. The honest, handsome face of Jay Garrick smiled and he waved one last time— then he was gone, too, and Dr.Fate’s portal closed behind him.

For a moment no one spoke; the room was thick with emotion. Al and Jo clung together, and Jade held her father’s hand. Obsidian stood nearby, not yet comfortable enough to approach Green Lantern, but basking in the older man’s warm smile of pride. Starman clapped Ray Terrill on the back. Dinah had taken Cyclone and Bulleteer under her wing, and had one arm around each. Dr. Fate, Hourman, Sandman, Wildcat and Charles McNider stood together in a companionable silence, as if recalling old times— or looking forward to better ones.

“Well,” It was Alan who finally broke the silence, unashamedly wiping his moist cheeks. “There’s quite a mess here. What do you all say about giving Ma and her crew a hand for a while? After all, this *is* our museum, and we *are* going to need a new HQ...”

CODA

Hundreds of miles away, in Keystone City, Joan Williams Garrick slept peacefully in the bed she had shared with her husband for all but one of the last fifty five years. She never saw the flash of red and blue and silver as it flared through the old house, up the stairs and into her bedroom— and then out again. She never felt the whiff of wind that stirred the curtains and fluffed the sheets. But she *did* feel the soft, almost spectral kiss on her cheek, and she stirred, glancing sleepily around the darkened room. Her eyes fell on the old photograph on the bedside table, of her and Jay, grown old together, faces pressed cheek to cheek. It was slightly out of place— as if someone had picked it up to look at it— and she adjusted it before falling back into a peaceful doze, dreaming of her Jay and a bygone golden age...

NOT THE END... !

Atomika

Secret Identity: Josephine Morgan Pratt

All-Star Lineage: Daughter of Al Pratt, the Atom!

HT: 6' 9"

WT: 170 lbs

Eyes: Brown

Hair: Red

Powers and Abilities: Atomic Punch and limited nuclear accelerated strength and invulnerability

Bulleter

Secret Identity: Deanna Barr

All-Star Lineage: Daughter of Jim Barr (Bulletman) and Susan Kent-Barr (Bulletgirl) of Fawcett City

HT: 5' 8" (as Bulleter: 6')

WT: 135 lbs (as Bulleter: 185 lbs)

Eyes: Blue (as Bulleter: silver)

Hair: Brown (as Bulleter: silver)

Powers and Abilities: Can transform at will into a being of living metal. Thanks to the Nth Metal in the alloy, she can also fly, but cannot hover (she must have momentum)

Cyclone

Secret Identity: Jesse Chambers

All-Star Lineage: Daughter of Johnny Chambers (Johnny Quick) and Libby Lawrence-Chambers (Liberty Belle)

HT: 5' 9"

WT: 130

Eyes: Blue

Hair: Blonde

Powers and Abilities: Speaking the formula 3X2(9YZ)4A grants Jesse not only access to the Speed Force, but gives her enhanced strength and limited invulnerability, as well!

Jade

Secret Identity: Jennie-Lynn Hayden

All-Star Lineage: Daughter of Green Lantern and Rose Canton (the villainess Thorn)

HT: 5' 6"

WT: 130 lbs

Eyes: Green

Hair: Black

Skin: Green

Powers and Abilities: The power of the Starheart flows in her veins!

Obsidian

Secret Identity: Todd Rice

All-Star Lineage: Son of Green Lantern and Rose Canton (the villainess Thorn)

HT: 5' 10"

WT: 170

Eyes: Brown

Hair: Black

Powers and Abilities: Shadowcasting and intangibility.

The Ray

Secret Identity: Ray Terrill

All-Star Lineage: Son of Langford "Happy" Terrill

HT: 6' 1"

WT: 180

Eyes: Green

Hair: Brown

Powers and Abilities: In addition to transforming his physical being into pure light, the Ray can channel solar radiation into focused blasts.

THE JUSTICE SOCIETY WILL RETURN!

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Strange Visitors!

A strange visitor from another planet comes to Metropolis--- and Superman is all that stands in his way! It's a battle royale in the skies and streets of the City of Tomorrow as a mistake from Jor-El's past comes back to haunt his son. And intrepid reporter Lois Lane is onto the story of her career, but can the Man of Steel save her when she goes too far?

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Zod, the Destroyer of Krypton, has come to Earth, and with his Tigris and Hound, the bastard son of Jor-El, at his side, can even Superman stand against him? Meanwhile, Lois plays a deadly game to get to the bottom of the sinister machinations of Lex Luthor!

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Meet the Amazing Amazon as she hosts a summit of world leaders at Themyscira House--- but danger stalks the hallowed halls as a familiar foe lurks, thirsty for the blood of her enemy Wonder Woman! Meanwhile, on Paradise Island, former USAAF Colonel Steve Trevor becomes embroiled in the deadly affairs of gods and men--- and learns that sometimes they are one and the same!

Detective Comics #0 (2005)

Detective Comics: Lustmord, Prelude.

A wicked new serial killer with a bloody history stalks the night-time streets of Gotham, and no one is safe! Reeling from personal crises, the Dark Knight must confront hidden dangers from his own past and new enemies laying in wait for him... From Crime Alley to Arkham Asylum, Batman is tested by a diabolical mastermind!

Detective Comics #1 (2005)

Detective Comics: Lustmord: Shadows and Fog.

The mystery of the Gotham Ripper deepens as his murderous rampage continues. Batman haunts the streets and shadows, determined to bring the lunatic to justice, but in Arkham Asylum, plots are laid for the Dark Knight's demise!

Detective Comics #2 (2005)

Detective Comics: Lustmord: An Uncommon Fondness for Blood.

With Vicki Vale in the clutches of the Gotham Ripper, Batman must contend with a foe who has studied him for years--- and discovered his secret identity! This is the gruesome conclusion to the Lustmord storyline!

The Immortal Legend of Hawkman #0 (2005)

The Immortal Legend of Hawkman: Under Ancient Stars.

In the days of the pharaohs, in the land of the pyramids, is born a hero for all time! Defying the will of men and gods, Prince Khufu and his beloved Chay-Ara embark upon a destiny filled with triumph and tragedy, sacrifice and murder. With the wizard Nabu and the champion of Shazam who will one day be known as Black Adam at their side, they must use the power of the otherworldly Thanagarian Nth Metal and the gifts of the hawk-god Horus to defeat the villainous immortal tyrant known as Vandal Savage! Born in the fires of war, undying passion and treacherous betrayal, this is a definitive retelling of the ancient origin of the hero who will be known as--- Hawkman!

The Immortal Legend of Hawkman #2 (2005)

The Immortal Legend of Hawkman: Wings of Destiny, Part 2.

The two part origin arc of the Golden Age Hawkman concludes as Carter Hall takes up the mantle of the immortal hero and races against time to save Shiera Saunders from the clutches of the

villainous Dr. Anton Hastor! But first he must survive the attack of the undead Sons of Anubis, and defeat the man who is destined to slay him!

The Immortal Legend of Hawkman #1 (2005)

The Immortal Legend of Hawkman: Wings of Destiny, Part 1.
"Wings of Destiny, Pt. 1" First in a two part origin arc! It is 1938, and the world hovers on the brink of war... Troubled by dreams of past lives, museum curator and archaeologist Carter Hall receives a mysterious package from a lost colleague that sends him across the globe to Egypt, where he will be reunited with an immortal love and encounter an enemy that stalks him through the ages! A hero discovers his destiny as the Golden Age Hawkman is born!

Wonder Woman #1 (2005)

Wonder Woman: The Swords of the Amazons!
As Wonder Woman hunts the Cheetah, Doom's Doorway opens and Themyscira is besieged by the horrors of the underworld! Diana must contend with a deadly and secret mastermind determined to destroy her and all she holds dear!

Teen Titans #0 (2005)

Teen Titans: Friends and Heroes.
Reeling from recent harrowing events in Gotham, Dick Grayson struggles with the decision to hang up his cape and mask forever as he goes off to college in New York City. Joined by Roy Harper and Wally West, the trio have a fateful meeting with the girls who will forever change their lives! Guest starring Wonder Woman!

Wonder Woman #2 (2005)

Wonder Woman: The Rage of Angels.
As the Minotaur leads the Sons of Uranus against the walls of Themyscira and Wonder Woman does battle with Typhon, the Father of Monsters, a more devastating threat comes to Olympus... Nothing will be the same after this issue!

Teen Titans #1 (2005)

Teen Titans: Serpent's Tooth, Part 1 (of 2).
As the team comes together, Wally West is seduced by a mysterious girl with a dangerous secret. The Titans must infiltrate the

church of a fanatical ancient cult to rescue one of their own, but a fierce enemy awaits them: Enter Brother Blood!

Teen Titans #2 (2005)

Teen Titans: Serpent's Tooth, Part 2 (of 2).

The Titans have fallen to Mother Mayhem and a dark messiah is on the brink of awakening! Only Dick Grayson and his new ally, the mysterious and dangerous girl known as Raven, stand in the way of the resurrection of the dreaded... Brother Blood!

New Outsiders #0 (2005)

New Outsiders: What Happens in Vegas...

PLEASE NOTE: THIS IS A MATURE READERS TITLE.

A gritty and realistic look at vice, corruption and superheroing in Sin City! Meet the New Outsiders---Green Arrow, Black Canary, Huntress, Batgirl, Zatanna, and a driven District Attorney named Adrian Chase, the Vigilante!--- an unorthodox team of heroes banded together to stand against a sinister conspiracy and depraved foes!

New Outsiders #1 (2005)

New Outsiders: House Rules: Luck be a Lady.

PLEASE NOTE: THIS IS A MATURE READERS TITLE.

Things heat up in Vegas as the Vigilante and Huntress face off against each other, and Green Arrow and Black Canary enlist the aid of young college prodigy Barbara Gordon to break into L'Inferno and rescue an old friend from the clutches of the criminal organization, the House, and its cruel mistress, Roulette--- and only Zatanna stands in their way!

New Outsiders #2 (2005)

New Outsiders: House Rules: The Most Dangerous Game.

PLEASE NOTE: THIS IS A MATURE READERS TITLE.

With Black Lightning's life at stake and Green Arrow and Black Canary in the clutches of the House, Batgirl looks for some unlikely allies as she plays a dangerous game with Roulette in the conclusion of the New Outsiders origin arc!

JSA: Legends of the Golden Age #0 (2005)

Justice Society of America: Legends of the Golden Age: The Society, Prelude.

In the dark days before WWII, A Secret Society of Super Villains unleash a masterplan to seize the world in its iron grip of tyranny! But, in the gathering shadows of war, there is a glimmer of hope! The emerging mystery men of America--- Hawkman! the Flash! Hourman! the Atom! Starman! Dr. Fate! the Sandman! and the Amazing Amazon, Wonder Woman!--- rise up in a Justice Society to oppose the evil oppressors! But can even they withstand--- the Spear of Destiny!?!

All-Star Comics #1 (2006)

All-Star Comics: Captain Marvel, Part 1 (of 2).

At last! The history of the World's Mightiest Mortal in the DC2 is finally revealed! The ancient wizard Shazam recalls the career of his champion, even as foes from the past regroup to threaten the world once more. But will there be a Captain Marvel to stand against them?

Action Comics #7 (2006)

Action Comics: Hostile Takeover.

What is Genesis Corporation? Clark and Lois want to know--- and so does Lex Luthor! The Countdown to the Crisis heats up as some major players are revealed and a three-way brawl erupts in the skies over Metropolis!

Action Comics #8 (2006)

Action Comics: For All Mankind...

Crisis: The Apokolips Imperative, Part 9!

Darkseid has assembled nearly all of the components to complete the Anti-Life Equation. Now, Wonder Woman leads a daring mission to the very gates of Darkseid's palace to rescue the Man of Steel and bring hope to the war-torn planet Earth! Don't dare miss this pivotal chapter, as one man shows just what it means to be a hero! You won't believe the shocking ending!

Action Comics #9 (2006)

Action Comics: Return to Smallville, Part 1 (of 4).

In the wake of the crisis, the greatest tragedy of his life brings Clark Kent home to Smallville. But can you go home again? A new

era in the life of the Man of Steel begins here! New dangers await, an old romance is rekindled--- and you won't believe the shocking ending!

Action Comics #11 (2006)

Action Comics: Return to Smallville, Part 3 (of 4).

The mystery villain stands revealed and the truth about Connor finally comes out! Superman stands alone against friend and foe alike and the surprises keeps coming in this penultimate chapter of the new adventures of the Man of Steel!

Action Comics #10 (2006)

Action Comics: Return to Smallville, Part 2 (of 4).

Reeling from Lana Lang's recent revelation, Clark is forced to re-evaluate his future--- unaware that a secret enemy is lurking and waiting to destroy him! Meanwhile, Lois Lane shows up in Smallville on the trail of the biggest story of her career: the secret identity of Superman!

All-Star Comics #2 (2006)

All-Star Comics: Captain Marvel, Part 2 (of 2).

Billy Batson has no time to adjust to his new role as Captain Marvel as the Monster Society of Evil unleashes their attack upon Fawcett City! And not even the wizard Shazam is safe when the villains storm the Rock of Eternity and a new, deadly fiend is born!

Wonder Woman #8 (2006)

Wonder Woman: Hell Hath No Fury...

All-Star Comics #5 (2006)

All-Star Comics: Martian Manhunter.

Snatched across time and space by the machine of Dr. Erdel, J'onnn J'onzz is the Last Son of Mars, a dead planet wasted by a telepathic plague created by his own brother. On Earth, he is the Martian Manhunter, a crusader for justice in the years after the JSA retired and before the advent of Superman. Now, hoping to at last find his place on his adopted homeworld, he is John Jones, Private Investigator--- but his quiet retirement is at an end when a

beautiful dame walks into his office with legs to kill for and a fiery disposition...

Rogues Gallery #1 (2006)

Rogues Gallery: Catwoman: Hot Tin Roof.

A wave of cat burglaries sweeps through Gotham's elite society! But as the Crown Jewels of Bahdnesia come to the city, can the beautiful socialite Selina Kyle resist the lure? Sparks fly when Batman comes face to face for the first time with the deadly feline fatale, Catwoman!

DC2 Special #1: An Arkham Christmas Carol (2006)

DC2 Special: An Arkham Christmas Carol.

Wonder Woman #4 (2006)

Wonder Woman: The Eye of the Storm.

The true enemy is at last revealed, and the gods of Olympus discover there is a traitor among them! Meanwhile, the war on Paradise Island comes to a turning point as mysterious new arrivals appear--- but are they friends or foes? And in the end, Diana must set out upon a new quest to save everything she holds dear...

Wonder Woman #5 (2006)

Wonder Woman: The Quest for the Syrinx.

Nemesis is awake, and destined to bring about the end of the cosmos! Only the Syrinx, the Pipes of Pan, can stave off the inevitable fate of the universe, and now Diana, Hippolytus and Steve Trevor set off on a quest to the isle of the witch to find the legendary artifact. But will Circle prove Wonder Woman's most implacable foe yet?

As the traitor to Olympus makes his next move, the gods brace themselves for the final assault of the Furies!

Wonder Woman #3 (2006)

Wonder Woman: Horns of Doom.

Both Olympus and Paradise Island are reeling from the cataclysmic events of last issue, and the true enemy is at last revealed! Be here when Wonder Woman and the Minotaur face off at last under the walls of Themyscira!

Wonder Woman #6 (2006)

Wonder Woman: The Isle of the Witch.

The Quest for the Syrinx continues! As Wonder Woman confronts her old enemy, the witch Circe, the plots and machinations of all the players start to become known: friends are not who they seem and the true plans of the Olympian traitor are revealed as the Game of Gods and Mortals hurtles towards it's epic conclusion next issue!

Wonder Woman #7 (2006)

Wonder Woman: Down the Widening Gyre.

Wonder Woman must journey into the Underworld to retrieve the Mask of Hecate for Circe, as time is running out! Even the Gods of Olympus prepare to meet their end as Nemesis, She Whom None Can Escape finally rises to work her terrible will, and the final moves of the Game of Gods and Mortals are played out! The Olympian traitor is revealed--- and his masterplan at last is clear!--- in this penultimate chapter of the epic storyline that began in Issue 0!

Wonder Woman #9 (2006)

Wonder Woman: Armageddon Aria.

The war is over and Wonder Woman is faced with a host of new problems: what to do about the war-like Lost Amazons, who will rule Paradise Island--- and who wants her to get... married?!? And Godfrey's Glorious Crusades reaches fever pitch as a deadly new foe is unleashed upon Diana--- and leads directly into next month's crisis!

Wonder Woman #10 (2006)

Wonder Woman: Darkseid Is.

Crisis: The Apokolips Imperative, Part 13!

At long last, the Anti-Life Equation is within the grasp of the Lord of Apokolips! The world's greatest heroes come together for the first time--- to destroy each other! Don't miss the epic battle as Wonder Woman stands alone against a world turned against her!

JSA: Legends of the Golden Age #1 (2006)

JSA: Legends of the Golden Age: Attack of the Giant Nazi Robots!

It's mayhem at the 1939 Worlds Fair in New York, as Baron Blitzkrieg attacks the greatest gathering of scientific minds in the world, and the Secret Society of Super Villains continue their quest for the Three Holy Artifacts!
This is it! The birth of the JSA!

Teen Titans #10 (2006)

Teen Titans: Forever and Never, Amen!

Crisis: The Apokolips Imperative, Part 7!

The city of Metropolis teeters on the edge of an uneasy peace as the truce between Lex Luthor and Darkseid begins to break down. Who are the Forever People and what happens when they turn the city of refugees against the Titans? Bedlam ensues!

Justice League #0 (2006)

Justice League: Justice Falls.

Crisis: The Apokolips Imperative, concludes!

This is it! The final battle between Earth and Apokolips as the World's Greatest Heroes take the fight to Darkseid! Don't dare miss this issue--- one year in the making!--- and the senses-shattering conclusion to this epic storyline!

Justice League #1 (2006)

Justice League: A League of His Own, Part 1.

It's finally here! The World's Greatest Heroes have come together as one! But not everyone is happy about that... It's the grand opening of the Hall of Justice, and all of Metropolis has turned out to honor their saviors. But hatred and jealousy lurk in the heart of one man as he schemes to destroy the newly-formed League! And this time, the League has met its match!

Justice League #2 (2006)

Justice League: A League of His Own, Conclusion.

The most powerful members of the Justice League have fallen to Amazo. Now, only Batman stands against the villainous Professor Ivo and his killer android, with all the powers of the World's Greatest Heroes at his disposal...

World's Finest #1: Batman (2007)

Join us on Earth-X for the re-imagined Batman and his new adventures.

World's Finest #1: Superman (2007)

Join us on Earth-X for the re-imagined Superman and his new adventures.

World's Finest #1: Wonder Woman (2007)

Join us on Earth-X for the re-imagined Wonder Woman and her new adventures.

All-Star Comics #10 (2007)

All-Star Comics: Hawkman: Sins of the Father, Part 1 (of 4)

All-Star Comics #11 (2007)

All-Star Comics: Hawkman: Sins of the Father, Part 2 (of 4)

All-Star Comics #12 (2007)

All-Star Comics: Hawkman: Sins of the Father, Part 3 (of 4).

All-Star Comics #13 (2007)

All-Star Comics: Hawkman: Sins of the Father, Part 4 (of 4).

The Flash #23 (2008)

The Flash: Flash of Infinite Worlds!

When Barry Allen agreed to help his good friend Ray Palmer with an experiment, he never thought he'd find himself in another reality! The Cosmic Treadmill takes the Scarlet Speedster to a parallel Earth, and just may give him a glimpse at his own tragic destiny! Can even the Flash fight the future? Find out in this first ever DC2/DC3 crossover issue as we enter the Multiverse!

Adventure Comics #11 (2010)

Adventure Comics: Stranger New Visitor.

The long-awaited return of the DC2's original Superman book, by its original creative team! Springing from the pages of last month's "Action and Adventure" Annuals, the new era for the Man of Steel continues here, as Lois investigates the sinister Evil Factory, a strange figure in a familiar costume arrives and a threat from

beyond the stars strikes in the heart of Metropolis... A huge storyline for the Man of Tomorrow begins here!



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