



Titans #3

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The Titans

Issue #3: "Everything Old..."

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Roll Call

Nightwing: Richard Grayson, former first sidekick of Batman, grown up to be the born leader

Cyborg: Victor Stone, half man, half machine with a heart of gold

Flamebird: Elisabeth "Bette" Logan, detective, athlete, motherfigure

Beast: Garfield "Gar" Logan, animal shapeshifter

Argent: Antonia Monetti-Crockett, can create any weapon she wants with her silver plasma energy.

Jericho: Joseph Wilson, can possess a person after making eye contact with them.

Ravager: Rose Wilson has the precognitive ability to see a few seconds into the future, combined with her martial artistic abilities she's a fighter who searches the likes of her

Former members

Hotspot: Isaiah Crockett, controls heat thanks to being half an alien.

The very first thing that Bruce had ever drilled into his head was to stay

focused at all times. Never let your personal life rise to the top during assignments. That's what he would call them when they were partners – assignments. Now, here he was in a room full of clones of past friends, associates, even teammates, and it was the first one he saw that threw him for a loop.

Nightwing walked over to the tube that housed the red-haired girl. He placed his gloved hand on the outside of the giant container, gazing into her face. "No," he whispered the pain evident to his friends as they stood there in silence. Nightwing tried to focus, but his mind hurtled back through time.

"Face it Dick, this isn't working. It hasn't been right between us for months now." The red-haired woman had said, her voice bordering between frustration and anger. "You and I should have never come together, you never should have married me. You never loved me, not like—"

"Don't you dare say it!" He had barked back at her. "I did love you... do love you... at least, a part of me still does," His voice softened and trailed away.

"I know, Richard, I know. I can feel it. But you and I also know that I'm not the redhead you should have married. I'm just one who had your heart; she had your soul."

He couldn't hide it, not from her. He had tried for years, but he just couldn't do it anymore. "I'm sorry, Lilith. I'm so sorry."

She had smiled at him, placed her hand on his cheek, the tears flowing freely down her face. "I know you are, Dick. I feel it. But it's time to move on... separately."

He had nodded. He couldn't say it, not out loud. To do so would be to admit failure, and that was something just couldn't do. Perhaps that had been because of his training as well. Instead, he had kept his head down while his wife walked out the door, and out of his life.

Now there she was, or her clone, floating in some kind of light blue liquid, looking as she did when he had first met her, so many years ago.

The others turned away, giving their leader his moment alone. But when Argent turned, she saw him; and like Dick, her memories came flooding back.

She had been horrible to him from the beginning. Isiah had been shy, unassuming, and nothing that she was interested in. In fact, when she had acknowledged him, it was to tease him. No, strike that, to harass him mercilessly. To her, he had nothing to offer. He didn't want to party, had no money to buy her presents, kept to himself, read books and stuff like that. And most importantly, he never seemed to give her a second glance, even when she wore the skimpiest of outfits.

It wasn't until later, after she had fallen in love with him that she realized just how horrible she had been. He had died saving their former benefactor, Mr. Jupiter, from the flames when they fought his son. Two weeks before that, he had told her that he liked her, and she had laughed at him. But then he was gone, and she realized how much she missed him. It was then that she realized that the reason she had disliked him so much to begin with was because he had been everything she hadn't - smart, goodhearted and respectful. Somebody you should look up to, and she had been envious.

After his return from the dead, she used this second chance and proposed to him. Their wedding had been both simple and elegant. Gar and Bette had stood up for them, and friends and family alike were on hand. They had written their own wedding vows, pledging their love for each other through all of time. The reception, the honeymoon, it had all seemed like a fairytale come true.

Then the fighting, the mood swings, the cracks in their marriage that soon felt like crevices, growing exponentially through time. Her need to be wanted, to be desired; her betrayal.

Now there she was, looking into the eyes of the man whose life she had utterly destroyed. Only he was younger, innocent...

"Oh my God – Gar! Look at this." Bette whispered in shock as she walked over to another gestating tube. She reached out and touched the glass as her husband walked over to see who was inside. The teenage girl floated, oblivious to her surroundings.

Her green-skinned husband let out a low whistle. "Donna..."

Another memory, another time: Gar and Bette's own wedding. The pictures of that day still fresh in their minds. Victor and Donna on either side of them, all of them smiling. Bette had insisted that Donna and Terry's little boy, Bobby, be in the picture as well. She had fallen in love with the child as if he were her own. In fact, it was in many ways because of Robert that Bette and Gar had decided to try for kids so early in their marriage.

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Logan," the doctor had said to the couple, as they clasped each others hands in anxiety. "We've run every test we could, but it looks like there's no way you will ever be able to carry a child to full term. To do so would be fatal to any fetus and dangerous to your own well being."

They had driven back to the old tower in silence. No tears, not yet. Those would come later, as would Bette's self-hate and loathing. But at that moment another tragedy had befallen one of their closest friends— Donna's husband, Terry, had died suddenly in a car accident. For the next few months, while the team had done their best to support Donna in her grief, Gar and Bette had taken care of "Little Robert", as Gar began calling him. For a while, it had helped the both of them to cope with the fact that they would never have a child of their own. But in the end, when Donna was ready to move on with Bobby, reality once again sat in for the two of them. It was a bittersweet time in their life, and one that they wouldn't have survived without Donna and Robert.

Gar put his hand on his wife's shoulder as the memories came flooding back to them, but then he noticed the next two tubes. They were younger versions of both Diana and Lyta. "Looks like they had a thing for Wonder Woman."

"Why would they do this?" Flamebird asked.

Cyborg had made his way to what appeared to be the main control console. He stood examining the system, the human half of his face drawn tight as his eye seemed to be darting everywhere at once.

"What do you make of it, Vic?" Nightwing asked as he approached.

“I’ve seen this before, just can’t put my finger on it.”

“Seen what?”

“All of this,” Vic said, gesturing to the board in front of him. “This is the work of someone we’ve dealt with in the past, but I can’t remember who. I don’t understand why.”

Dick noted the unusual anxiety in his friend’s voice. “Is there a way you can plug into the mainframe?”

Cyborg nodded, “Yeah, I was just about to do that.” The whirring of his mechanical arm raised above the quiet humming sounds of the gestation tubes. He plugged himself into an outlet and began to investigate.

There was a tap on Argent’s shoulder and she turned to see Jericho standing there, a somber look on his face. She wasn’t sure if he was sympathizing with her for what she had found, or something else. Then he motioned for her to follow him.

She drew in a fast breath at the sight as they reached another tube. It was the greatest of all of them, as a young man, still growing— the original Superman!

“Dear God,” She said, turning to Joseph. “Can they even... is it even possible?”

Jericho shrugged for a moment, looked back at the body floating there, then nodded sadly. It seemed as though they could.

“This whole thing is an atrocity against nature!”

The mute boy placed his hand on Argent’s shoulder, giving it a gentle squeeze for comfort. Ravager approached them, her own face holding a rarely-seen look of both horror and disgust.

“This entire place is filled with clones. Clones of every hero that’s come

down through the ages. Or at least the last fifty years. Both Supermen, all three Wonder Women, Batman, Aquaman, even Plastic Man. You name them, they're here. It looks like all of them are in their teens, though. Like they're still aging."

"Dick, you better take a look at this." Vic called out to Nightwing, who was busy examining his own clone. He couldn't help wondering what it would feel like to be that young again.

He crossed to his teammate and looked down at the computer screen. His jaw dropped to the floor at what he saw.

Cyborg said. "Everyone, Dick. It's a list of every hero, their real names, all their powers. They've got it all. I found it in a coded file called *Project_Supermen*. What is H.I.V.E. doing with all this information?"

Nightwing ran his fingers through his hair, realizing for the first time that his costume was still in tatters. "I'm not sure. Could you destroy it, if you downloaded it all?"

"Already working on it. After all these years, you don't think I know what your orders are gonna be?"

The Titans leader felt a tap on his shoulder and turned to see a concerned Jericho, who began to sign to him.

"You're right, Joey, and I'm sure they have other copies, and we're going to do whatever we can to find them as well. But I'm not leaving here with this copy intact."

As Joseph began to respond, the two of them both heard and felt the sudden explosion from the main board. Cyborg let out a scream and was thrown backwards from the burning panel, his cybernetic arm now a melted stub of steel.

"Vic!" Gar screamed as he and his wife ran to their friend. "Vic, are you okay?"

"Is it time for dinner, Ma?" Vic asked groggily, looking up into Bette's face.

"Well that's not a good sign," Rose said.

"Hello Titans." The voice came from behind them, and they all whirled to see a shadowy figure, an obvious hologram, standing there. It was the same figure they had seen once before, voice obviously disguised. "I knew it was only a matter of time before you discovered this little secret. No matter, we were prepared for this. It is unfortunate, after all the time Mr. Dahrk and his H.I.V.E. put in helping us with this little project, that we're going to have to disband this division. But, as the saying goes, *C'est la Vie.*"

"Look!" Argent said as she pointed to the image of Damien Dahrk behind the figure. In his hand was some kind of trigger mechanism. Toni's stomach knotted up at the sight of the man who she had allowed in her bed—the man who was at least partially responsible for destroying her marriage.

"Oh no," Flamebird muttered, already sensing what was about to happen. Damien pushed the button, and suddenly the entire place around them went up in small explosion after small explosion.

"Argent, we need some cover!" Nightwing yelled, while Argent was already creating a force-shield around them.

"He's destroying the clones!" Ravager yelled.

"Dick, let me go!" Beast screamed over the noise. "If we can even save a few of them..."

Having been trained by the best, and with years of leadership under his belt, it took Nightwing only a second to decide. "Go," He said sharply and watched as Gar not only changed into a gorilla, but split himself into several of them. As his friend took off to gather the dying clones, Dick knelt down to check on Cyborg. "Vic, we're going to need you."

"How can I have any pudding if I don't eat my meat?" Vic replied, looking around in a daze.

The building itself began to crumble in spots as the small army of green gorillas brought back several clone bodies. Ravager looked at Cyborg in exasperation. "Great time to decide to short circuit, wire brain."

"We don't have time for this," Nightwing said as several larger explosions took out the far walls, causing the ceiling to cave in. Dick watched as the cloned body of Hawgirl was crushed under rubble. He turned to Jericho. "Joey, do it."

Joseph nodded as his head swung around, and his eyes found Cyborg's. *CONTACT!*

"I'm not going to be able to hold this much longer," Argent called through gritted teeth.

Cyborg stood up as if nothing had happened. "One Boom Tube, coming up." It was the voice of Victor Stone, but the words were all Joseph Wilson. Then suddenly, he froze, his one eye widening. "Umm, Dick, we've got a problem."

"We've got several going on at the moment, big brother, you want to narrow it down for us?" Rose yelled as she grabbed Argent, who was beginning to sway.

"Victor's access to the Boom Tube is operated through his arm, and that was blown up."

"No, just blown off," Gar said, pointing to the other half of the mechanical arm that lay outside of the shield, in the middle of the smoke and falling debris. "I'll get it," He said as he took back off, outside of the shield.

Nightwing's cry to stop fell on deaf ears as Beast morphed into a Chihuahua to dodge the debris that fell around him.

"Dick!" Argent urged as she nearly collapsed, more brick and metal bouncing off the shield.

Gar grabbed the arm, but was struck by a falling beam. He let out a small yelp as he collapsed, morphing back into his human form as he went

unconscious.

“Gar!” Flamebird screamed.

“Idiot,” Ravager spat as she headed towards him, but Nightwing stopped her.

“No, I’ve got this,” He said, taking off outside of the shield.

They all watched in amazement when Dick did what he did best: leaping around debris, using fallen beams as leverage to hurl him across the room, at one point going into a mid-air summersault as large chunks of concrete just missed him.

He reached Beast, grabbed the arm and turned back to his teammates. “Ravager!” He yelled, pulling his arm back as if he were a quarterback, then hurling the object straight at them.

Ravager was right there, throwing herself outside of the shield as she leapt into the air to catch it. “Argent, drop the shield!” She shouted.

Another explosion rocked the building, this one even closer, and with the shield down the Titans could feel the heat and smell the smoke. Rose tossed the arm to Jericho/Cyborg, who deftly caught it. The knowledge of how it operated was clear in Cyborg’s head, and with the flip of an internal switch, the familiar sound of the Boom Tube rang out their escape.

“Everyone grab a clone!” Nightwing commanded as he went running back, with Logan over his shoulder.

He threw the unconscious man over Cyborg’s back, while Joey maintained the escape route. Nightwing then picked up two more of the bodies that Gar was able to retrieve. Making sure that everyone else had gone through, Dick and Jericho/Cyborg disappeared, just as the building let out one last explosion, destroying everything.

Victor Stone woke up to find himself in one of the medi-lab beds on the lower level of the Ark. He looked to his right and saw that Gar Logan

was lying in the bed next to him, his head bandaged. Gar was awake, lying on his side facing Victor, and his arm propping up his head.

“Just like old times, huh?” Gar asked with a grin.

“What the hell happened?”

The door to the medical lab opened up and Bette and Dick walked in. They both broke into a smile when they saw that Vic was finally awake.

“About time,” Bette said.

“Give me a break, I obviously needed the sleep,” Vic retorted, then looked down to his side. “Aww damn, I lost another arm?”

Dick chuckled. “Wasn’t the first time, and probably won’t be the last. Other than the loss of a limb, how are you feeling?”

“Like I just got tangling with a nuke, and I lost. My systems are all messed up. What happened?”

Nightwing sat down next to him and filled him in on what had happened after he had been knocked around.

“... then we made it back to the Ark to put the clones back into stasis, but most of them had been hurt pretty bad, so we ended up taking them to S.T.A.R. Labs in Phoenix.. Sarah told me to tell you hello, by the way.”

Vic nodded. “So how are they doing?”

“Out of the nine that Gar was able to get, six survived.”

There was a moment of silence between the four of them before Vic spoke again. “So now what? What do we do with them?”

Nightwing shifted in his chair. “Well, I contacted the Justice League and spoke with Superman and Resurrection Man. They said they’d keep their ears open if they heard anything on H.I.V.E., Darhk, or Tartarus. They’re not happy with the clone situation, but we all agree that we can’t destroy them. It would be monstrous. So the League has put them in our care, for

the time being.

“Babysitting. Nice to see no matter how old we get, some things never change.” Vic muttered.

Bette cleared her throat. “About that...”

They turned to her as she gave Gar a knowing glance. “Gar and I want to volunteer to keep an eye on them. Once my impetuous husband is able to get out of this bed, we’re going to go down to S.T.A.R. and help out in any way we can. We really have no idea what they are going to be like when they finally come to, but someone should be there for support.”

Dick gave her a warm, understanding smile. “I think that’s a great idea. Thank you.” He turned to Vic. “Now, why don’t you get some more sleep and then we’ll get you back up and running in no time.” He got up to leave, then stopped and turned back around. “What about the file, Vic? Were you able to get it downloaded before the explosion?”

“I won’t know for sure until I can get myself up and running to full capacity, but to be honest, I don’t think so. It was a pretty big file.”

The leader of the Titans nodded gravely and walked out of the room.

“What does that mean?” Bette asked the other two.

“That means,” Gar said, looking at his wife. “That there’s an organization out there that knows everything there is to know about us. Which means that nobody is safe.”

Vic propped himself up on his good arm and looked at his best friend. “Just for a little while, buddy. This Tartarus group... we’ll get them. We’re the Titans, we always get the bad guy.”

“Word.” Gar replied with a smile. “Titans together,” He added sleepily and reached out to hold his wife’s hand.

The End

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