

On Blackest Day, In Brightest Night

by

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Based on:

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WGAw Reg # 1910620

EXT. BAZ FAMILY'S MOSQUE - DEARBORN, MICHIGAN - UNITED STATES  
- EARLY EVENING.

FLASHBACK.

It's the Fourth of July, and Simon (age 11) and his father (age 50) are leaving a Thursday afternoon Quran study group. As they make their way through the parking lot, Simon sees something written in spray paint on the wall of the Mosque. When they get closer they see the words: "TERRIST!"(sic), "9/11 MURDERS," and "GET OUT!" written in several colors of paint.

After staring at the wall in silence for a few moments, Hasan lets out a STIFLED SIGH of frustration. He looks down at his son who's still staring at the words, and it takes him another moment to realize his sons hands are shaking slightly.

Simon jumps with a start when his father lets out a SHARP BARK OF LAUGHTER.

HASAN

You know... we have been looking  
for an excuse to repaint the  
building. Maybe now the Committee  
will finally agree to pay for it.

Hasan turns to his son and gives him a wink.

HASAN (CONT'D)

Come! Let us find something to help  
clean this off. (Beat.) Then we can  
re-paint it a beautiful shade of  
pink!

Simon LAUGHS and looks up at his father as they walk back towards the entrance of the mosque, a note of concern in his voice.

SIMON

But... dad. Why- why would someone  
do that? (Beat.) It isn't true, is  
it? We didn't do 9/11, right?

HASAN

No son, we did not.

SIMON

Then why would they do that?

Hasan lets out another SIGH.

HASAN

I imagine they did it out of anger.

SIMON

Are- are they mad at us? (Beat.)

Are- are they mad at... me?

Hasan stops and looks at his son, a note of sadness in his voice.

HASAN

No, Simon. In fact I don't think they're mad at anyone who worships here, not really. But after what happened in New York last year, people are afraid; and fear is a powerful emotion. As your grandfather used to say: "Fear is the destroyer of men, and the downfall of all great civilizations. (Beat.) Fear of the unknown, fear of the 'other' - even the fear of one's self; can drive the most well-intentioned to take drastic and irrational actions."

SIMON

But why do they think we did it, dad?

HASAN

They don't.

SIMON

Then-

HASAN

As I said, Simon: fear. Fear and anger, and no place to put it. No place to understand it, or let it go...

Hasan begins to walk again and Simon follows; his eyes falling upon his feet as he stutter-steps to get in step with his father. After thinking for a moment, he looks back up at him:

SIMON

How do you know all this stuff, dad?

HASAN

... Because before you and your sister were born, you mother and I

HASAN (CONT'D)  
lived in a place where these kinds  
of sentiments surrounded us almost  
every day. (Beat.) We moved here so  
that we could have a better life -  
and we do.

SIMON  
But- but, can that change?

HASAN  
Can what change?

SIMON  
Our better life? I mean, can- can  
they make us leave?

Hasan forces out another BARK OF LAUGHTER - though his eyes  
betray the heartbreak invoked by his son's innocent and  
genuine concern.

HASAN  
(Softly)  
No, son.

SIMON  
But how do you know that, Dad? What  
if they do? What if they want us to  
leave our house?

HASAN  
That's not going to happen, Simon.  
They can't make us leave, we are  
American citizens. (Beat.) Don't  
worry, this will pass, it always  
does... It takes time to heal from  
a wound this deep, but we will come  
together once again, I promise.  
It's what makes this country one of  
the best in the world, and it's why  
we call it our home. (Beat.) Now,  
let's get this wall cleaned, and  
then grab some pizza before the  
fireworks. And please don't tell  
your mother about either.

Hasan gives his son a knowing wink, and opens the Mosque  
door.

As they both re-enter the building, the evening's  
celebrations begin, and the first fireworks launch into  
colorful explosions against the roseate sky.

FADE TO:

EXT. DEEP SPACE - THE OUTER COSMOS.

SUPERIMPOSE: SECTOR 1111 - GALAXY Z8\_GND\_5296.

SUPERIMPOSE: THE LUCINDA NEBULA.

SUPERIMPOSE: PRESENT DAY.

The vast infinity of space stretches beyond the event horizon, and the DEAFENING SILENCE of its depths seems to only enhance its unending beauty. The purple, blue, orange, and yellow lights blink in a universal mathematical rhythm that only the oldest of beings could hope to decipher.

One of the yellow lights flickers on the far left and begins to move with purpose. The YELLOW RING is engulfed in a saffron aura of pulsating power; the pattern of a circular lantern etched into its signet, and a smooth gilded band completes the circle in a rather symmetrical fashion.

As the Yellow Ring streams through the nebula, a green orb flickers into existence ahead of it; a bright green trail emerging as it hurls itself towards the Yellow Ring.

The GREEN RING is bathed in a crackling emerald energy; the pattern of a squared lantern carved into its oval signet, which sits upon a wide jade band.

The Rings are on an unstoppable collision course, as they fly towards each other at incalculable speeds. When they finally meet, a small 'TINK' can be heard.

BWAAAAAMMMMP.

A massive wave of energy cascades from the contact, yet the Rings phase through one another as if not quite in the same dimension - the slightest hint of the others' color being absorbed into the center of each Ring's lantern.

Continuing to fly as if they hadn't registered the encounter, they both speed along on their journeys unhindered.

FADE TO:

EXT. BARREN PLANET - ANTI-MATTER UNIVERSE.

SUPERIMPOSE: PLANET QWARD - YELLOW LANTERN CITADEL

The golden trail breaks through the barren yellow planet's atmosphere, causing a series of small contrails to follow the Yellow Ring on its descent toward the surface.

The Ring flies through the Citadel as though it were one of its designers, anticipating every turn with the slightest of adjustments. A military-style bunker is seen in the distance, and it soon becomes clear that this is the Ring's destination.

CUT TO:

INT. SINESTRO CORPS LISTENING POST - PLANET QWARD - ANTI-MATTER UNIVERSE (CONTINUOUS).

The large command center is bathed in a deep red hue, allowing the occupants to focus on their screens while still being able to see the room around them. They all glow with a faint yellow silhouette, and there is a soft murmur of FOCUSED CONVERSATIONS around the room as information is gathered, analyzed, and disseminated to the Sinestro Corps members at-large.

The doors to the room burst open, and the Yellow Ring begins to slow its speed as it enters. A shadowed colossal being sits upon the center command chair, and the Ring makes its way toward it. It stops and hovers in front of the large entity for a few moments before an enormous gray-scaled fist, also bearing a Yellow Ring, rises from the dark and opens.

The Ring drops into it and glows dimly.

YELLOW RING

*Thaal Sinestro of Korugar, Sector  
1417, is dead.*

The hand dips slightly in disbelief, then closes around it swiftly. The small, matter-of-fact voice of the Ring has silenced the murmurs of the other occupants in the room, and all eyes become fixated upon the command chair. Some flinch as the giant being rises from the seat. This is ARKILLO. His thunderous voice BOOMS coolly through the room's stale air.

ARKILLO

Is the Pinnacle Protocol still in  
place? Is the Battery still  
functioning?

A frantic five seconds pass before a VOICE (TECHNICIAN, ALIEN) CALLS OUT:

TECHNICIAN

Yes, Arkillo.

ARKILLO

And the Anti-Monitor?

TECHNICIAN

Still in hibernation at... 66  
percent power restoration.

ARKILLO

Good. Then Sinestro will have his  
revenge on Hal Jordan, regardless  
of his final outcome. And I now  
have the Corps under my command.  
(Beat.) We proceed as planned. Send  
the next wave of Corpsmen to Earth.

WHIP TO:

INT. BLACK OPS SITE - EARTH - NIGHT.

SUPERIMPOSE: CUBA, EARTH - SECTOR 2814

SUPERIMPOSE: RENDITION CENTER - TANGO 77-BRAVO

SUPER IMPOSE: PRESENT DAY

The black bag is whipped off of Simon's head and he closes  
his eyes to the overly bright lights blaring down upon him.  
Squinting against the harsh light, he's finally able to see  
the room he's in.

It's cold, metallic, and unnervingly sterile.

Now dressed in a short-sleeved orange jump suit, he sits at a  
metal table; a sinister looking handcuff restraint rests on  
the aseptic surface in front of him.

Two silhouettes block the light from his eyes, but also cast  
shadows around the faces of the TWO MEN (AGENTS' SMITH,  
black, 51 and JONES, 33, Latino) addressing him.

AGENT SMITH

...so then why even go over there?

SIMON

I took a trip with my family to  
visit relatives in Lebanon and  
Egypt. And I went to Saudi Arabia  
for the Hajj; so yeah, of course I  
went to a few mosques. Why are you  
bringing-

AGENT JONES

The Hajj, huh? Would you call  
yourself a very religious man, Mr.  
Baz?

SIMON  
Not especial-

AGENT SMITH  
That tattoo on your arm, when did you get it? I don't seem to have that in my records.

AGENT JONES  
Aren't tattoos 'Haram,' Mr. Baz?

AGENT SMITH  
And the word 'Courage?' What do you need courage for, Mr. Baz? Are you planning something that's gonna need a little more than usual?

AGENT JONES  
I'm not so sure the Prophet would appreciate the sin you've committed against your 'sacred vessel' there, Mr. Baz. Might've messed up your chances with those 72 virgins.

Simon stares at them incredulously, his disbelief turns into a sarcastic defiance.

SIMON  
"And all that have not fins and scales in the seas, and in the rivers, of all that move in the waters, and of any living thing which is in the waters, they shall be an abomination unto you: ye shall not eat of their flesh, but ye shall have their carcasses in abomination." (Beat.) Been to a Red Lobster lately, asshole? I've had three days of this shit, and I'm over it.

AGENT JONES  
My religion isn't on trial here, Mr. Baz.

SIMON  
And mine is? Who the hell do y-

AGENT SMITH  
No. (Beat.) Your religion is not on trial here, Mr. Baz. Agent Jones is mistaken in his implication.  
(MORE)



AGENT SMITH (CONT'D)

I think we've gotten off to a rough start here, why don't we just back up a bit?

SIMON

Sure. I want a lawyer.

The two agents look at each other for a moment, then back at Simon.

AGENT SMITH

That's... that's not feasible at the moment.

SIMON

(Sarcastically)

Why? Are we in Cuba, or something?

Both agents stare silently at him for a few seconds.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Are you serious? Tell- tell me we're not in GTMO?

AGENT JONES

Well that is where terrorists go, Mr. Baz.

Agent Jones and Simon stare at each other intensely, after a moment, Smith CUTS in:

AGENT SMITH

Hey Mike, why don't you get us some coffee? Looks like this punk's gonna keep us here all night.

AGENT JONES

Sure.

Jones gets up from his seat with a SNORT, and shoves his chair into the table. Both Simon and Smith wince with the CRACK. After Jones walks out of the door, Smith gets up and locks it behind him. He begins to roll his sleeves up as he turns back towards Simon.

SIMON

Holy shit. (Beat.) Are you- Are you going to torture me? Look dude, I'm telling you the truth! Hook me up to a lie detector, man... give me truth serum, throw me in jail! But come on, I'm not a terrorist, I'm an American!

Smith takes his seat again, places his forearms on the edge of the table, and leans forward.

AGENT SMITH  
Is your name really Simon Baz?

SIMON  
(Defeated)  
Yes! I don't know how many more times I can tell you... (Beat.) I mean come on, man, is your name really Agent Smith?

Smith gives him a sheepish grin, and now in an ENGLISH ACCENT, responds:

AGENT SMITH  
Actually, my name is Fed. Agent Franklin Fed of her Majesty's Ministry of Information.

SIMON  
You're British?!

Agent Fed dismisses Simon's question and looks down at the blue folder again, continuing in his NATIVE ACCENT.

AGENT FED  
The truth is a funny thing, that's why we're still having this conversation. (Beat.) What's with the scripture? You memorize a lot of religious text in your spare time? Kinda suspicious, don't you think?

SIMON  
People quote scripture all the time, why is it only suspicious when people like me do it?

AGENT FED  
You tell me.

SIMON  
I don't know, maybe it's because you're only a fanatic in this country if you're brown? (Beat.) Look, when I was in college it was between theology or philosophy; and I didn't really want to hear a bunch of stoners having a quarter-life crisis while quoting Ayn Rand.

Fed lets out a CHUCKLE and gives Simon a tight smile.

AGENT FED

I suppose you've also found it useful for... situations like these? (Beat.) Simon, I want to believe you, in fact I almost do. I just need you to tell me the absolute truth about what happened that night. And you need to do it before the walking Patriot Act comes back from the gedunk garden.

Simon lets out a LONG SIGH.

SIMON

Like I've been trying to tell you the whole time... Some people I know offered me three grand to steal a (Product) minivan. And as you've so kindly pointed out, Nazir's hospital bills are piling up, and it was some fast cash. (Beat.) So I found one under the bridge on Oak, got in, cranked it, and was on my way. I rolled a stop sign and caught the attention of some cops. For some reason, I thought I could get all fast and furious and lose them in a minivan... Anyway, I look behind me after seeing something blinking on the back seat and there's a bomb- I still can't believe that happened... I didn't know what to do, there were people everywhere - it was about to explode! So I took it to the plant because I knew it'd be empty, and the walls could take a blast. I ditched out, it exploded, I got electrocuted, and now I'm here. That's it, man. That's the whole story, I swear it to every God there is, sir.

Fed gives Simon a long hard look.

AGENT FED

I believe you.

SIMON

You do?

AGENT FED

I do.

Simon leans back in his chair and looks at Fed relieved. He smiles a bit, then his face turns concerned once again.

SIMON

But we have to find out who actually did it.

AGENT FED

Did what?

SIMON

Put the bomb in that van! I stole that thing less than three blocks from my parent's house, man. If I didn't steal it... My parents could have-

The door THUDS against it's frame from being locked, as Jones tries to re-enter the room. There's a cop-knock RAP RAP RAP from his knuckles, his MUFFLED VOICE can be heard through the door:

AGENT JONES

All right Fed, times up. They want him upstairs.

Simon looks at the door, and then back at Fed.

SIMON

That doesn't sound good... Come on man, I've told you guys the truth!

The JINGLE of keys can be heard, and a second later the lock CLICKS open. As Jones enters the room with two ARMED GUARDS, Fed stands to meet them.

AGENT FED

Easy fellas, the kid's given us everything he knows. I think we can transport him back state-si-

AGENT JONES

Afraid not, Fed. Orders are to take him upstairs to meet the contractors.

AGENT FED

I don't really see that being necessary here, Valdez. He's been honest, I think we can-

AGENT JONES/VALDEZ

Yeah, I don't really care. Bag'em.

One of the armed guards pulls out a draw-string black bag, as they both approach Simon. Simon yells: "NO, WAIT!" as the bag is forced over his head, the strings drawn tight. Simon struggles.

SIMON

Stop! Wait! Listen to me! I've told you the truth! We have to find out who really did this! What if they do it again! What if they hurt my fam-

Simon tries to stand up straight to plead his case, but one of the guards forces his face down on the table with a THUD.

AGENT FED

Simon! Stop. You're going to make things worse for yourself, mate. Just chill out for a minute, and I'll go talk to the boss. It'll be al-

The guard who slammed Simon onto the table puts him into a headlock to regain control over him; but being slightly shorter than Simon, the guard trips while they stand. The black bag over Simon's face is ripped off as he slides out of the guards grip and on to the floor. Simon tries to push himself to his feet, when the cold barrel of Valdez's .45 caliber Smith & Wesson presses against his forehead.

AGENT VALDEZ

Please. For the love of God. Give me the excuse, *Haji*.

Simon stops and raises his hands, scowling at Valdez.

SIMON

I am an American, mutha fu-

CLANG!

The wall on the left of Simon shakes and CREAKS from the force of whatever is trying to push through.

The steel wall slowly begins to stretch towards them, the SCREECHING sounds of the metal being stretched to its BREAKING point fills the room, causing everyone to cover their ears.

The screeching rises in OCTAVES as the metal thins.

THUNK.

The Green Ring bursts through the wall - it's momentum carries it into flying circles around the room, its green contrail leaving a slight afterglow as it finalizes the search for its new host.

It comes to a sudden stop in front of Simon.

GREEN RING

*Simon Baz of Earth, Sector 2814.  
You have the ability to overcome  
great fear. You have been chosen.*

The BODILESS FEMALE VOICE that surrounds him, causes Simon to jump. He swings his head around to look for the source, and finding no one, looks at the Ring both bewildered and petrified.

SIMON

Ch-chosen? Chosen for wh-?

His arms still in the air from the threat of Valdez's gun, the Ring flies towards Simon's right hand and onto his middle finger.

BUH-DOOOOMMMM!

A burst of green light engulfs the room, and Simon lets out a SCREAM.

The ceiling explodes and the emerald light shoots through the now open roof, everyone in the room are thrown against the walls.

The light fades, the room is in shambles, and Simon Baz is nowhere to be seen.

AGENT VALDEZ

What the Fu-? What- what was that?

Agent Fed helps the guards to their feet, and looks sternly at Valdez.

AGENT FED

Get Waller on the phone.

AGENT VALDEZ

Look buddy, you don't have the juris-

AGENT FED

Waller. Now. (Beat.) Do you even know what just happened?

Valdez looks at Fed, not really knowing how to respond.

AGENT VALDEZ

No...

AGENT FED

A Green Lantern Ring just broke  
Simon Baz out of GTMO. And since  
that's kind of a big deal, she  
needs to know - ASAP. (Beat.) Now,  
get me Waller, before we lose him  
on radar, jackass.