

Back then, I thought just the way everyone else did. I thought that some people drew the Wild Card and got lucky. Aces.

Some didn't. Jokers. Most just died. The Black Queen. I know more now. I know better.

I look back, and I try to remember who I was then. Back before the outbreak. Before Kira turned. Before Simon. Before Jack. Before I'd even heard of the Sleeper.



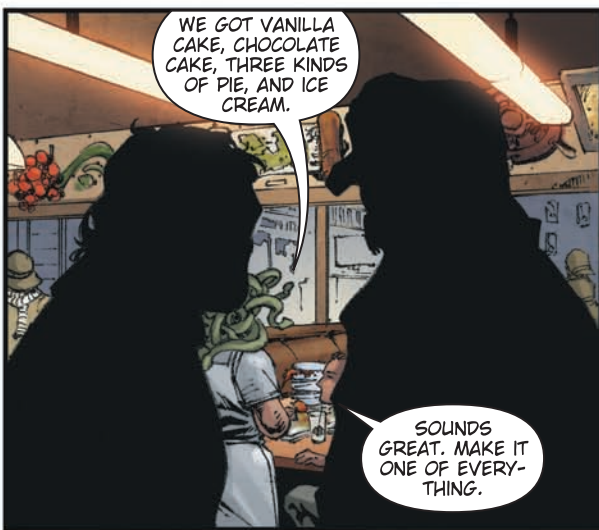
When I think about him - specifically him - I always start with what it must have been like, just before I got there.

Jokertown - the weirdest, hardest, saddest neighborhood in Manhattan. And him in the middle of it because he belonged there.



HERE YOU GO, SWEETIE. I'VE GOT THE POT PIE, AND THE LASAGNA, AND THE STEAK AND EGGS'LL BE OUT IN A FEW MINUTES.

YOU'RE GREAT. WHAT HAVE YOU GOT FOR DESERT?



WE GOT VANILLA CAKE, CHOCOLATE CAKE, THREE KINDS OF PIE, AND ICE CREAM.

SOUNDS GREAT. MAKE IT ONE OF EVERYTHING.



"YOU GO ON OUT BACK,  
WE'LL KEEP THE STEAK  
WARM FOR YOU."

IS THAT  
ALL YOU'VE  
GOT?

IF YOU'RE  
HOLDING OUT ON  
US, FREAK...

PLEASE...  
I DON'T...

YOU THINK YOU CAN  
JUST WALK OUT ON THE  
STREETS LIKE YOU'RE A  
REAL PERSON? YOU THINK  
YOU DON'T GOT TO PAY  
FOR BEING A WALKING  
**INFECTION**? YOU'RE A  
PIECE OF GARBAGE!

GAHK!

UNHK!

IF YOU'VE GOT  
A PROBLEM WITH WILD  
CARDS, SON, JOKERTOWN  
ISN'T THE PLACE YOU WANT  
TO BE. WHY DON'T YOU AND  
YOUR LITTLE PLAYMATES  
GO BACK HOME.

YOU  
KNOW... BEFORE  
SOMETHING **BAD**  
HAPPENS.