



# **The Batman Who Laughs, Part 7**



HAVE YOU EVER HAD A  
MOMENT WHEN SOMETHING  
THAT SEEMED SO  
COMPLICATED SUDDENLY  
JUST...MADE SENSESSE?

WHEN YOU JUST  
GOT IT!!

BECAUSE I  
SEE NOW...HA!

HAPPINESSSSSSSS!

TRUE HAPPINESS IS  
WHEN YOU BECOME  
THE PERSON YOU  
WERE ALWAYS  
MEANT TO BE.

WHEN YOU STOP  
FIGHTING AND  
JUST...ACCEPT IT.

WHEN YOU  
THROW OFF THE  
ILLUSIONS, THE  
MASKS...AND  
JUST...BE  
YOURSELF.

AND FOR ME THAT  
MOMENT, IS RIGHT...

...NOW.





DOESN'T  
IT?

CHK-  
CHK

HEH. IT DOES.  
BECAUSE THERE  
CAN ONLY EVER  
BE ONE...

...WINNER.

HAHA! THAT'S  
RIGHT, MY FRIEND.  
I'M AFRAID WHEN THAT  
LIGHT GOES RED...

...IT'S  
GOOD-BYE.

"THERE'S NO  
HAPPY ENDING  
COMING..."

**BENEATH THE BATCAVE...**

...NO  
LAST-MINUTE  
ESCAPE THIS  
TIME, JIM.

NO! FOR  
YEARS YOU KEPT  
HIM DOWN WITH YOUR  
FALSE MORALS,  
YOUR RULES...

=KOFF=  
JAMES! I'M  
BEGGING  
YOU TO--  
=ACK=

...BUT NO MORE! YOUR KNEE IS OFF HIS  
THROAT, OFF MY THROAT, OFF THE THROAT  
OF THIS WHOLE DAMN CITY--

WAIT, THIS  
KNEE?

=UNH=

=KOFF  
KOFF=

THE KNIFE,  
JAMES!

HE'S  
GOING FOR  
THE KNIFE!

GET IT  
FOR ME!

"I'M SO PROUD  
OF YOU."





**BLAM**

NOW, I  
DON'T KNOW WHY  
YOU'RE NOT  
CHANGING ALL THE WAY,  
BUT I DON'T CARE  
ANYMORE.

SEE, I  
WAS THE BEST  
FRIEND YOU'VE  
EVER HAD,  
BRUCE. BUT  
NOW...

"...NOW I'M JUST  
GOING TO #@!\$%^&  
KILL YOU."

YOU WANT  
ME TO...

HA. NO,  
I HAVE A  
BETTER  
IDEA...

**BEER.**

YOU  
ALMOST HAD ME,  
BRUCE. LET ME  
GUESS. YOU KNEW  
ANY SYRINGE I  
BROUGHT WITH ME  
WOULD BE WAYNE  
TECH.

SO YOU  
RIGGED A CHARGE  
IN YOUR SUIT TO  
TURN THE LIGHT  
RED, WHEN IN  
REALITY...

...IT'D STILL  
BE GREEN.  
HAHA!

**TIK**

...LET'S  
MAKE HIM  
THE FIRST  
ONE.

"SEE, JIM, RIGHT NOW THE DRONES ARE ON THEIR WAY HERE TO ACQUIRE WHAT THEY THINK IS AN ANTITOXIN FROM THE RESERVOIR TO SPRAY ACROSS THE CITY..."

"...BUT THAT ANTITOXIN IS OUR SERUM."

"ALL ANYONE HAS TO DO IS INGEST IT...DRINK IT IN, AND THEY WILL BECOME THEIR BEST, DARKEST SELVES."

HERE, JIM,  
HAVE A SIP!

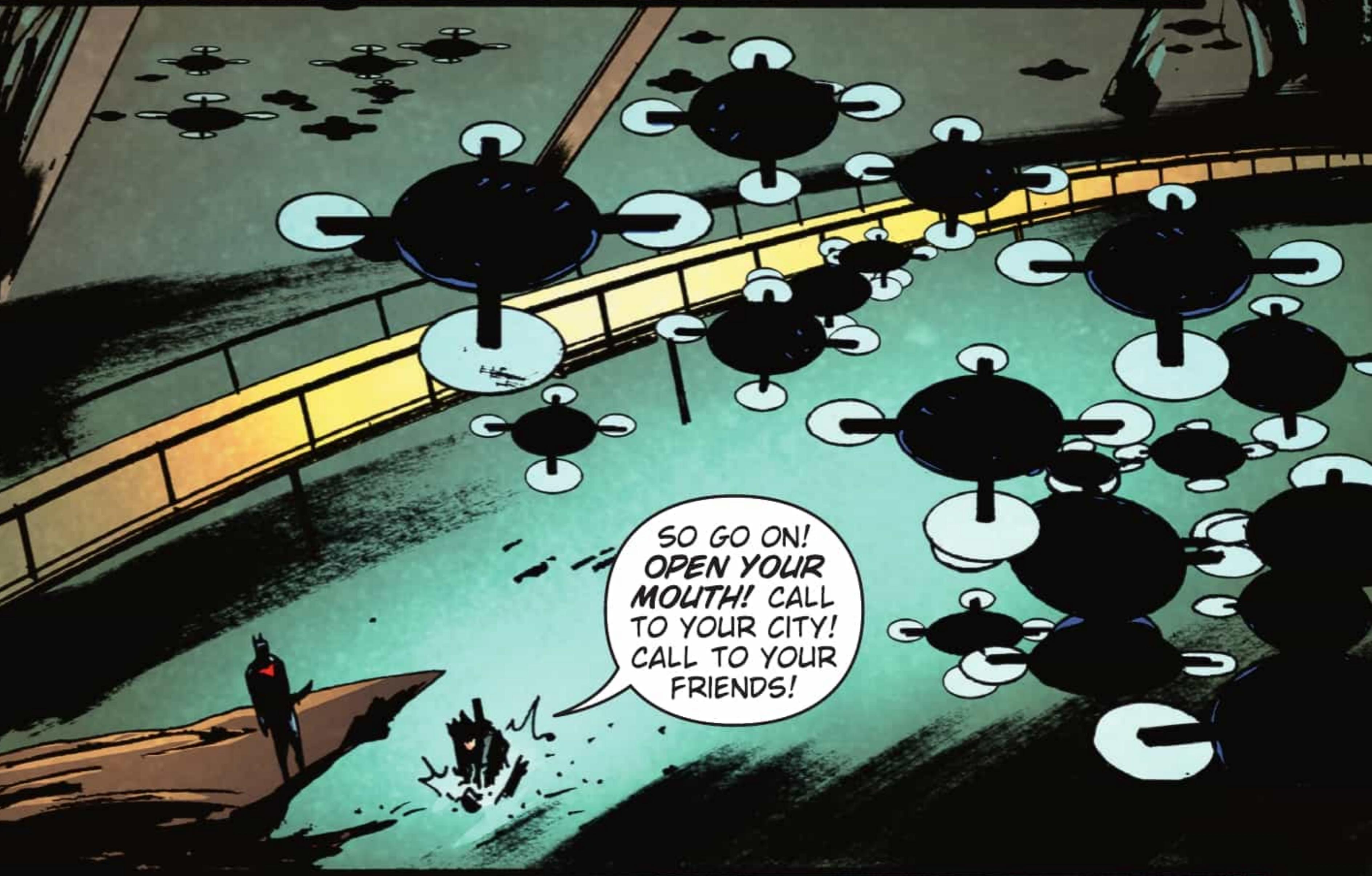
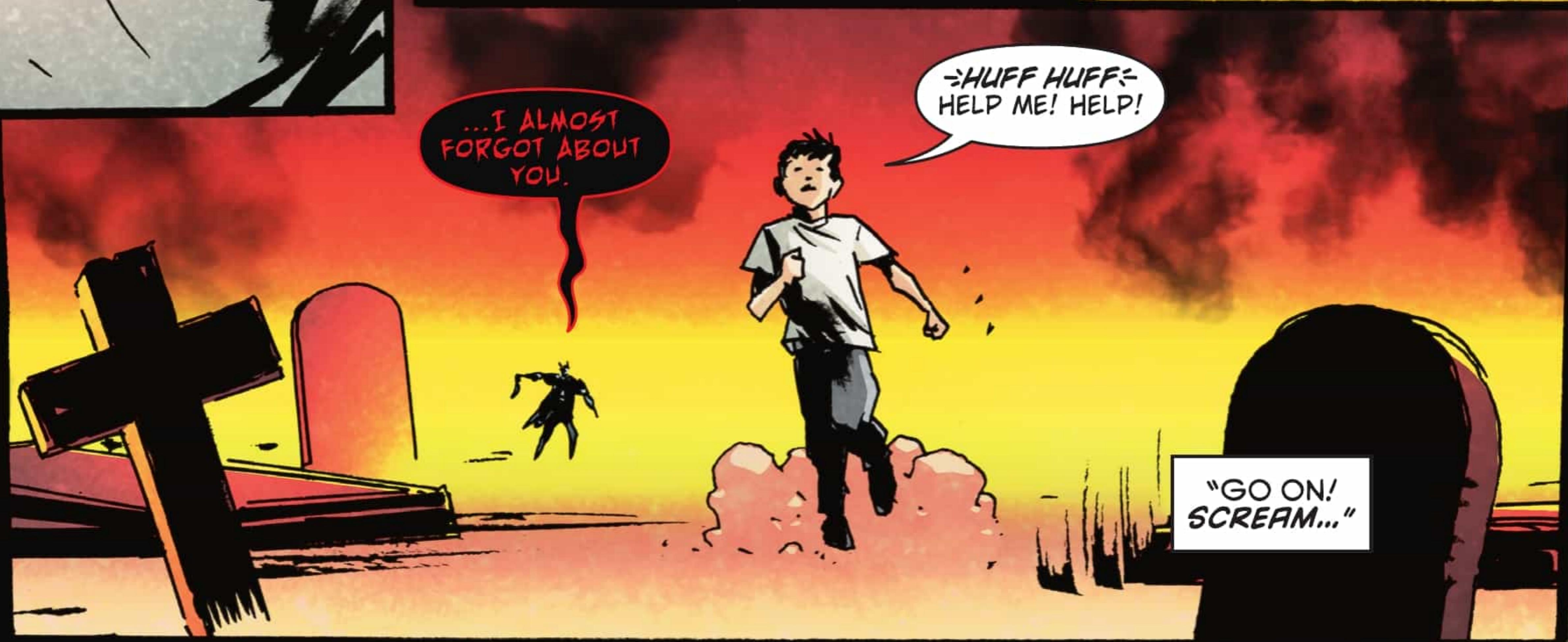
SORRY, BRUCE,  
BUT YOU LOSE  
AGAIN! HAHA!

-GURGGGLE-

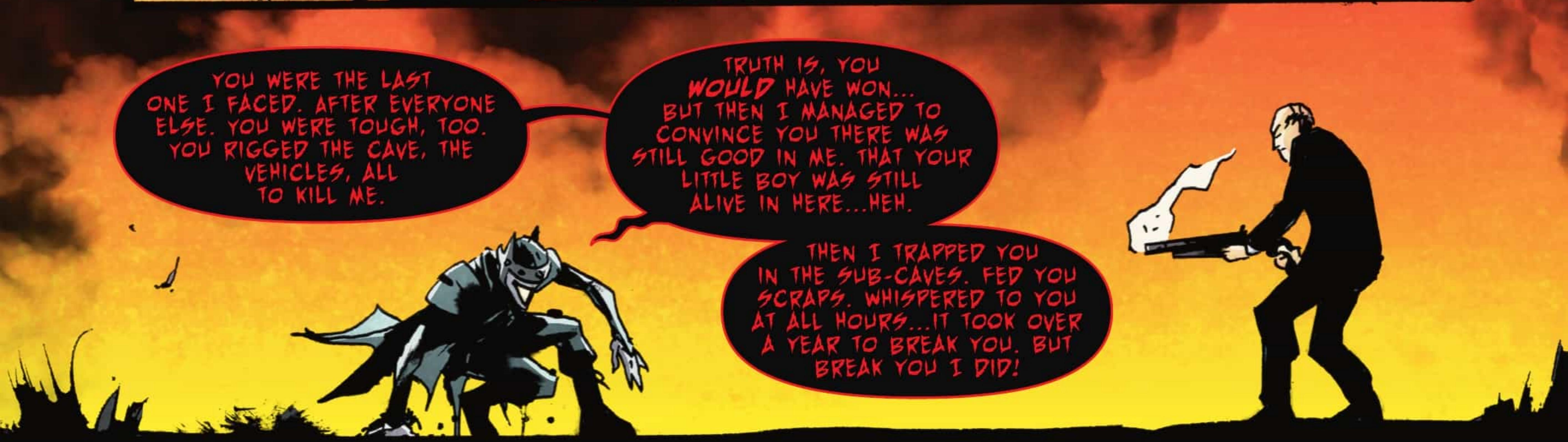
BLAM  
AGH!

SEE, I WILL  
CHANGE THIS WHOLE  
CITY. KNOW THAT AS  
YOU DIE. BECAUSE IF  
YOU WON'T GIVE ME  
WHAT I NEED TO  
COMPLETE THE SERUM,  
I'LL JUST BRING  
ANOTHER BRUCE  
WAYNE HERE, AND--

NO!







"HA! WE'LL SEE  
SOON ENOUGH,  
WON'T WE?"

APPROACHING  
TARGETS.

"NOW GIVE ME  
THE BOY."

NEVER! YOU STAY BACK,  
YOU...ABOMINATION!

YOU THINK  
YOU CAN SAVE  
HIM? YOU'VE  
NEVER SAVED ANY  
BRUCE W--

--AGH!

I'LL BE...  
WHY THE HELL  
AREN'T YOU  
CHANGED?!

JUST LUCKY I  
GUESSSSSS...

AH. WELL PLEASE  
TELL ME THIS WAS IT,  
YOUR BIG CONTINGENCY  
AFTER THE SYRINGE...

...LURING ME  
HERE SO ALFRED  
COULD SHOOT  
ME?

THIS WAS  
YOUR GREAT  
PLAN?!

NO.  
THIS  
WAS.

AFTER OUR FIRST ENCOUNTER, I SET TRAPS FOR YOU IN PLACES ONLY BRUCE WAYNE WOULD KNOW... CRIME ALLEY, THE CAVE, THE MANOR... HERE.

BECAUSE I KNEW YOU'D MAKE ANY FIGHT PERSONAL. FOR THE SOUL OF BATMAN.

WHIRR



HEH, YOU THINK A FEW TASERS WILL--

THUNK

THUNK

THUNK

AAAGH!

DEPLETED URANIUM SHELL HARPOONS, ACTUALLY. MEANT FOR INCAPACITATING TANKS.

AND EVIL BATMEN.

STILL, FOR ALL YOUR ATTACKS, ALL YOUR PLANS..."

DRONES EQUIPPED. PROCEEDING TO VACCINATION SITES.

...THE TRUTH IS, I PREPARED THE HARDEST TO DEFEND MYSELF AGAINST YOUR ARGUMENT. OF ALL THE BATMEN IN EXISTENCE, I'M THE LEAST HAPPY, LEAST EFFECTIVE... THE WORST.

BUT I JUST LOOKED INTO THE DARK MYSELF AND SAW HUNDREDS OF VERSIONS OF ME. AND THE THING I REALIZED...

...IS THAT BY THOSE STANDARDS, YOU'RE RIGHT. I AM THE WORST BATMAN OF ALL.





AW...WHY  
AREN'T YOU  
LAUGHING?



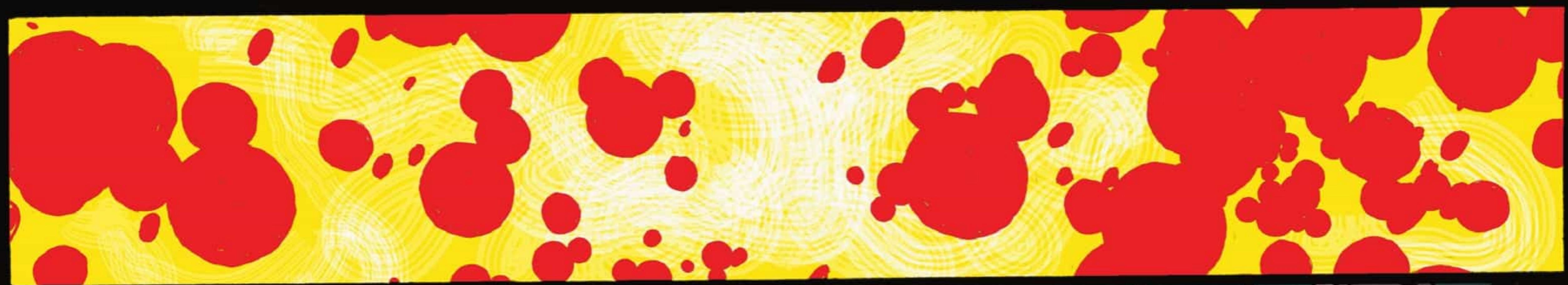




...you're  
welcome.

ERROR. CIRCUIT  
BROKEN.

SYSTEM  
SHUT DOWN.

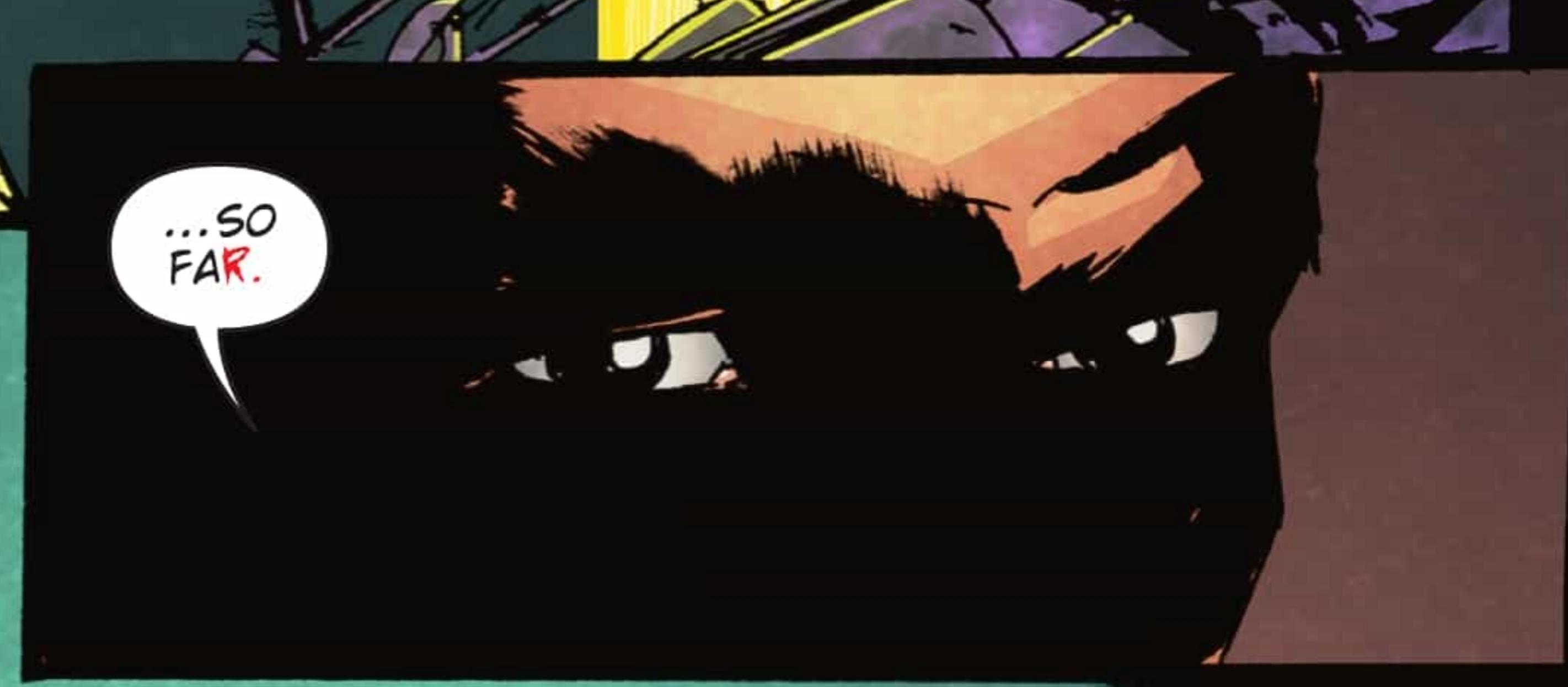


YOU'RE MELTING IT DOWN? GOOD. NO MORE PORTALS, NO MORE WINDOWS INTO... THAT PLACE. I'LL BE GLAD WHEN THE CITY IS STRIPPED OF ALL ITS DARK METAL.



AND YOU, SIR?  
THE TRANSFUSION?  
IT'S STILL HOLDING  
AFTER TWO  
WEEKS?

...SO FAR.



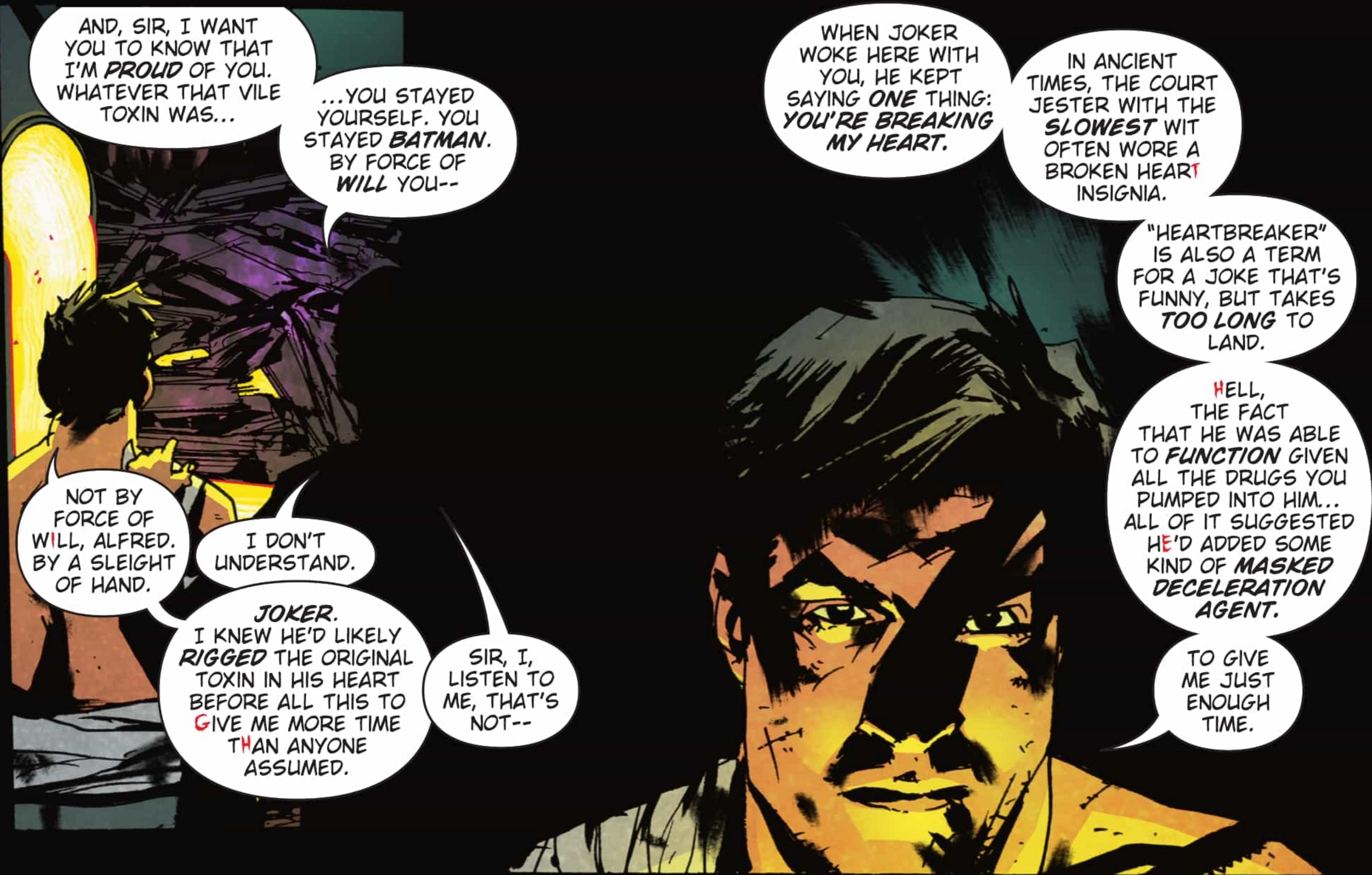
I'VE NEVER  
SEEN ANYTHING LIKE  
IT. THE BOY'S  
BLOOD...

...IT WAS LIKE  
CORD PLASMA OR  
SOME KIND OF  
EMBRYONIC STEM  
CELL, BUT MADE  
FROM...YOU.

THE DARK  
MULTIVERSE IS A  
REACTIVE REALM.  
EVERY WORLD THERE  
IS CREATED FROM THE  
HOPES OR FEARS OF  
SOMEONE HERE.

IT'S LIKE A  
WOMB IN THAT  
WAY. BROUGHT HERE,  
WITHOUT ANY METAL  
GROUNDING, ITS BEINGS  
DIE. BUT...THE  
BOY? HE...?





"YOU CAN'T BE SAYING..."

"I'M SAYING HE'S NOT **WRONG** ABOUT US, ALFRED. THAT MONSTER, LOCKED AWAY IN THE DUNGEON OF THE **HALL OF JUSTICE**...HE'S **RIGHT**."

"HE'S A NIGHTMARE, NOTHING MORE."

"A NIGHTMARE IS BUILT ON **TRUTH**."

"THAT'S **JOKER** TALKING. HE IS YOUR FEAR THAT THE JOKER IS RIGHT ABOUT THE WORLD, THAT'S ALL."

"NO, JOKER SAYS THAT TO **ACCEPT** THAT THERE'S NO MEANING IN YOUR ACTIONS IS TO WIN. I SAY, TO **BELIEVE** THERE IS MEANING IN **ALL** YOUR ACTIONS IS TO WIN."

"THAT DEMON, WHAT HE SAYS IS THAT THERE IS **NO MEANING** IN YOUR ACTIONS, THEREFORE THE ONLY MEANINGFUL ACT IS TO WIN. HE IS THE FEAR THAT WE'RE **BOTH** RIGHT, JOKER AND I."

"THE FEAR THAT WITHOUT ANY GRANDER MEANING, AT HEART WE ARE COLD, ANIMALISTIC, SELFISH THINGS."

"THEN IF HE'S RIGHT WHERE IS THE BLOODY HOPE IN ANY OF THIS?"

"WHERE IS THE LIGHT?"

"SIR?"

...  
JAMES.

I'M COMING, DAD. I JUST NEED TO CHANGE INTO MY ORANGES. THEY BROUGHT ME TOO BIG A SIZE, BUT I CAN--

JUST, LISTEN. THEY'RE... THEY'RE NOT TAKING YOU BACK.  
I CALLED IN AND THE TRUTH IS... I WANT THIS TO CONTINUE. I WANT YOU TO KEEP GOING. WHERE YOU ARE ALREADY, IT'S... A GOOD THING.

DAD... SO YOU KNOW, I'M NOT WHERE I WANTED YOU TO THINK I WAS, NOT YET.

IT WAS PARTLY A MASK.

I MEAN, I'M... I'M NOT THERE YET.

HEH. SO YOU KNOW, SON, NEITHER AM I.

BUT YOU'RE TRYING. AND SO AM I. AND SO IS EVERYONE.



"WHERE IS THE  
LIGHT, ALFRED?

"I DON'T KNOW, I'VE  
BEEN WRESTLING WITH  
THAT A LOT LATELY..."

"BUT THE BATMAN WHO  
LAUGHS SPOKE ABOUT  
LEARNING FROM A BAT."

"HE SAID THAT A BAT,  
BEING THE ONLY  
MAMMAL THAT CAN FLY,  
IS AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT  
WE CAN ACHIEVE IF WE  
EMBRACE OUR PRIMAL  
NATURE."

"BUT MAYBE IT'S THE  
OPPOSITE. I MEAN, LOOK  
AT A DAMN BAT."

"A BAT ISN'T DESIGNED  
FOR FLIGHT THE WAY A  
BIRD IS, WITH HOLLOW  
BONES AND FEATHERED  
WINGS."

"FOR WINGS IT  
USES ITS OWN FLESH,  
STRETCHED BETWEEN  
FINGERS THAT REACH  
TOO FAR."

"A BAT'S FLIGHT  
IS ABOUT  
DEFYING WHAT  
COMES  
NATURALLY,  
ACHIEVING  
WHAT'S HARD..."

"...WHAT'S PAINFUL,  
BUT SUBLIME."



"AND FOR BETTER OR WORSE, THAT'S BATMAN. ISN'T IT? HE SAYS DEFY YOUR NATURE--DEFY **EVERYTHING**-- TO BE BETTER THAN YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE. DAY AFTER DAY, NIGHT AFTER NIGHT."

"I THINK I'VE **ALWAYS** KNOWN THAT. AT LEAST I KNEW IT WHEN I WAS THAT BOY, RUNNING IN THE YARD."

"HAPPY IN THE ARMS OF PEOPLE I WANTED TO BE LIKE WHEN I GREW UP. SO **THANK YOU, ALFRED.**

"BECAUSE THE TRUTH IS BATMAN ISN'T ABOUT KNOWING **WHO** YOU ARE, BUT WHO YOU **WANT** TO BE, AND IN YOUR WAY, YOU'VE **ALWAYS** BEEN THERE TELLING ME SO."

"I'M BLUSHING, SIR...BUT I WANT YOU TO KNOW SOMETHING. WHAT I WAS TRYING TO SAY EARLIER...I **TESTED** THE TOXIN THAT CHANGED YOU AND FOUND **NO** DECELERATING AGENT IN IT."

"**THAT'S...**  
**IMPOSSIBLE.**"

"IS IT? MAYBE YOU DIDN'T CHANGE BECAUSE...WELL, BECAUSE YOU'RE **BATMAN.**"

"**ALFRED...**"

"NO ONE HATES THAT CLOWN MORE THAN I DO. BUT...BUT WHAT BETTER **JOKE** TO PLAY, IN THE END, THAN TO TAKE **CREDIT** FOR SOMETHING BATMAN ACHIEVED **HIMSELF?**"

HEH.



THE HORROR CONTINUES IN  
**BATMAN/SUPERMAN**