



GRANT  
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701

SEP '10

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# BATMAN



R.I.P. THE MISSING CHAPTER



*Days to Omega: 30*

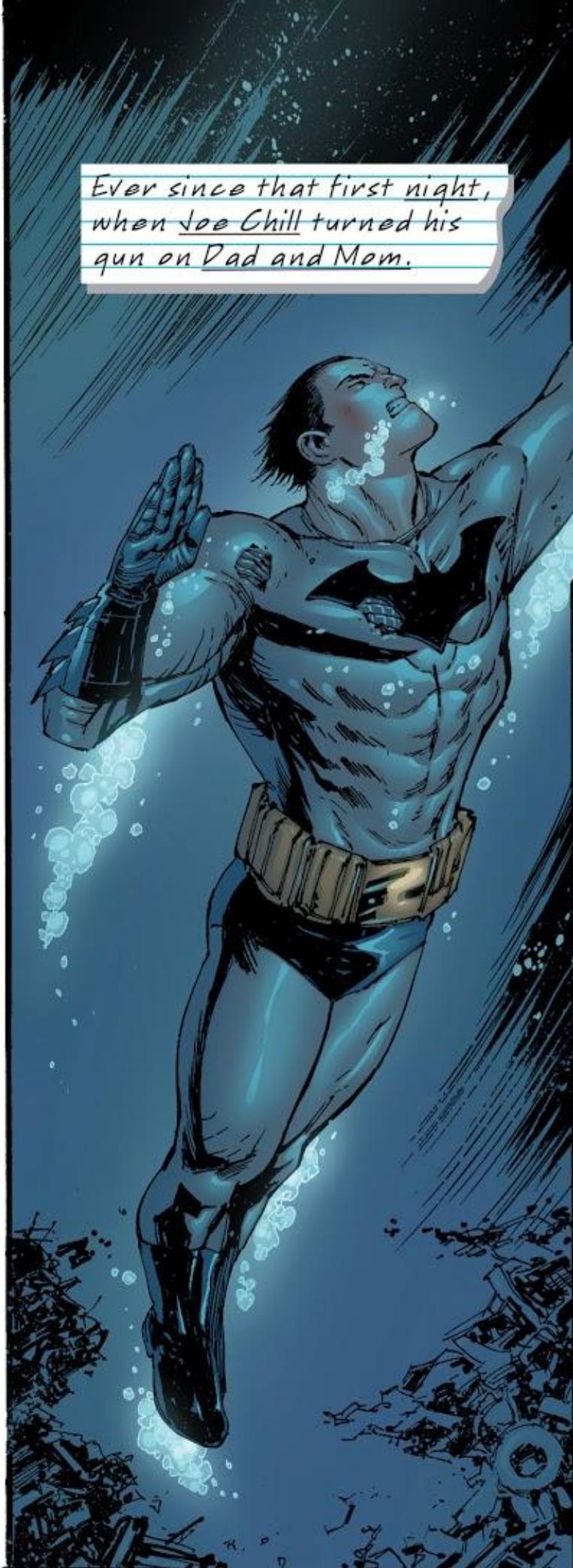


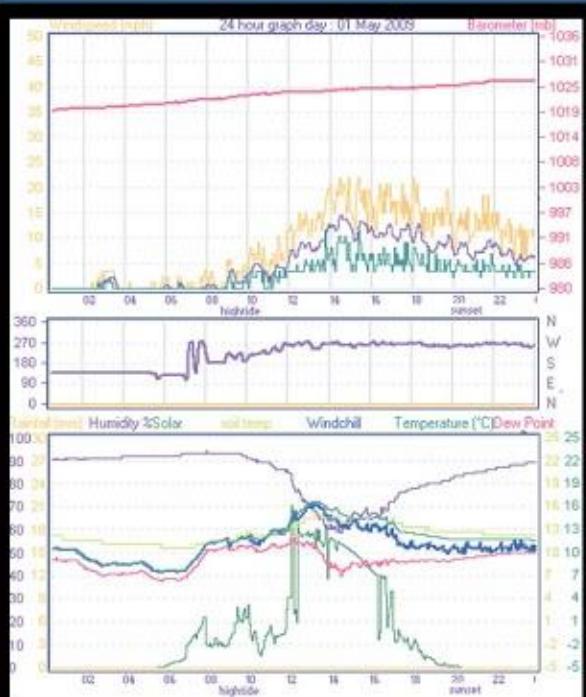
*Surviving is easy.*

*Surviving is what I do.*

*Ever since that first night,  
when Joe Chill turned his  
gun on Dad and Mom.*

*I've been surviving.*





I slowed my breathing  
to trigger dive reflex  
while the world and the  
stars kept turning  
overhead.

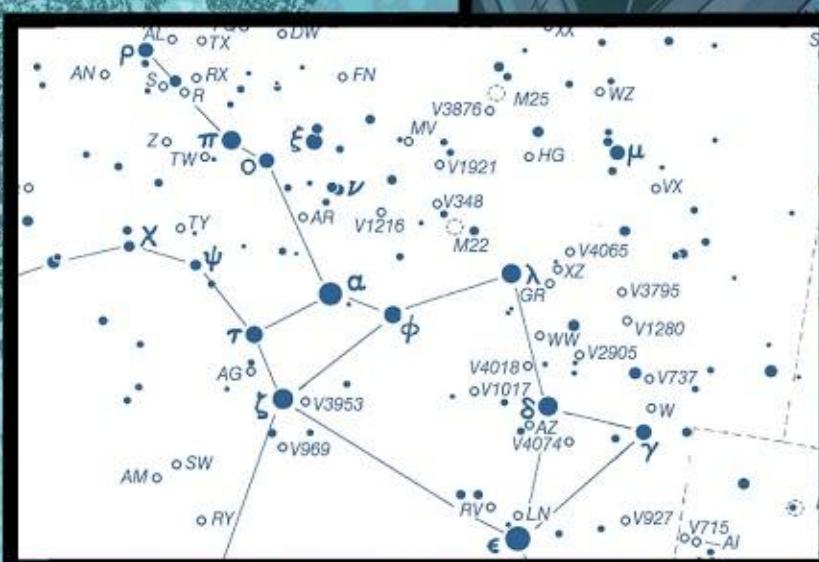


I tried not to think  
about the last five  
days--wandering the streets  
of Gotham, deranged,  
poisoned, deceived.



I tried to forget that I'd punched my way out of a shallow grave and lived through a chopper crash.

All I had to do was survive  
a few minutes more.



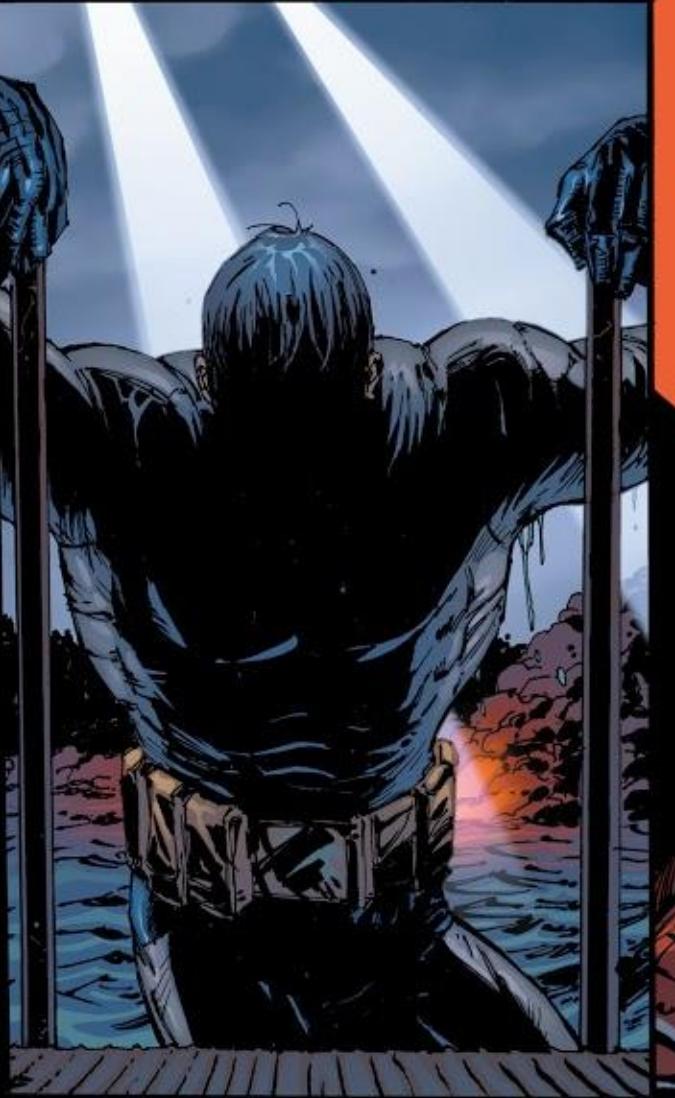
And remember one thing: if it was this hard for me, it would be impossible for him.

For Hurt.

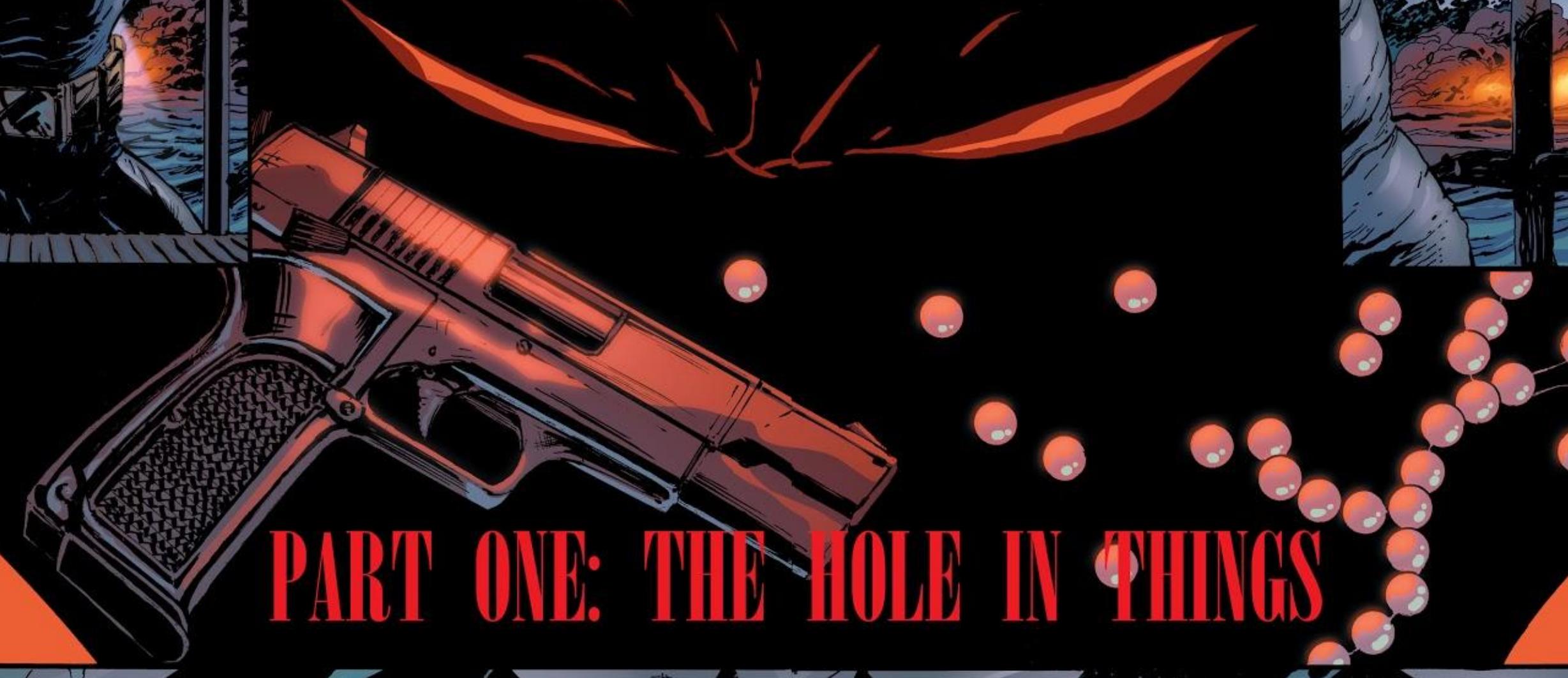




***Days to Omega: 30***



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# R.I.P. THE MISSING CHAPTER

## PART ONE: THE HOLE IN THINGS



*I'd been there five minutes  
before I realized my cape  
and cowl were missing.*

*And I remembered  
his words.*

*Doctor Hurt.*

*I waited...but no one else  
surfaced from the oily  
black breakers.*

*"THE NEXT TIME YOU WEAR  
IT WILL BE THE LAST."*

BATMAN?

UH, BATMAN?

HEY.

YOU  
REMEMBER  
ME, RIGHT?

ELLIE.

SURE  
I DO.

YOU DITCHED  
DESHAWN AND  
GOT THAT JOB AT  
WAYNETECH?

RECEPTIONIST.

MY LIFE  
WAS A REAL BAD  
MESS, BATMAN,  
BUT YOU...

...YOU  
REMEMBERED  
MY NAME THAT  
NIGHT.

WHY  
WOULDN'T  
I?

SO WHAT  
BRINGS  
YOU DOWN  
HERE?

THAT'S  
MY GUY,  
ERROL.

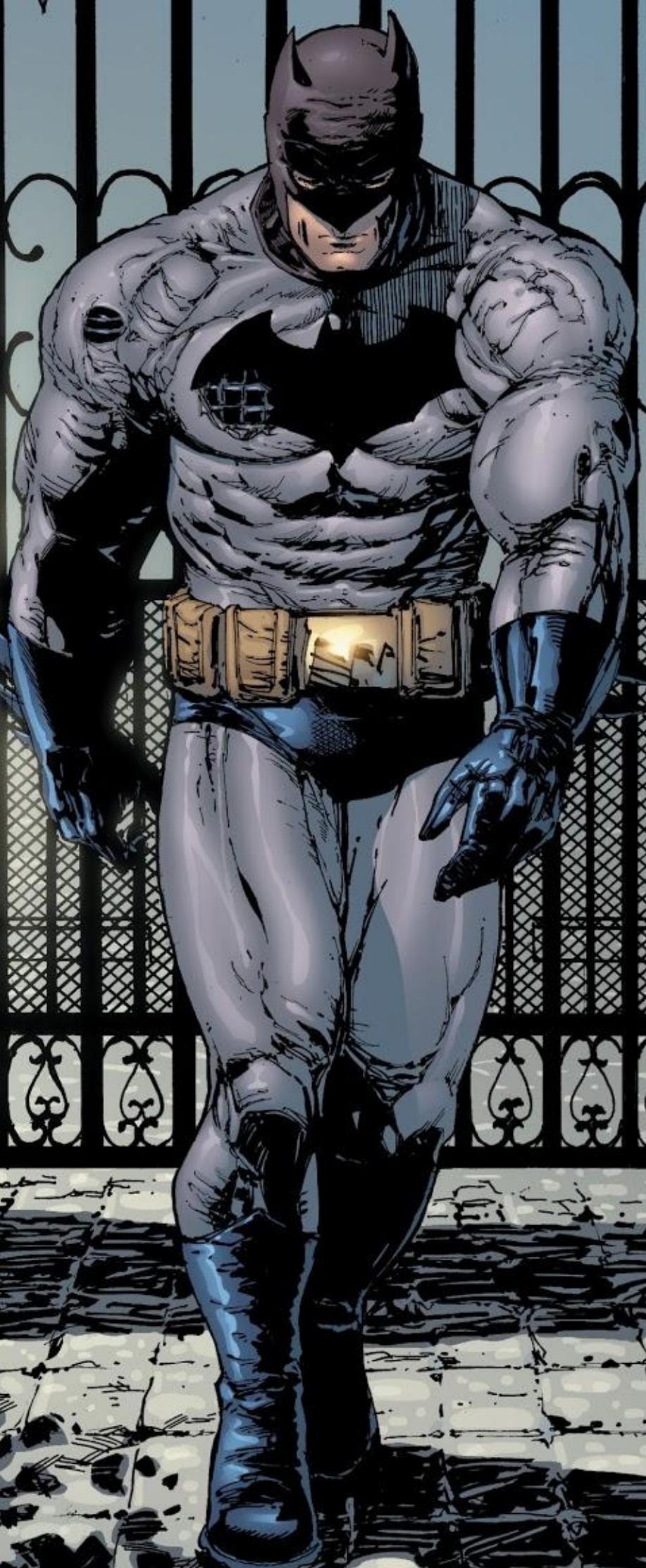
HE PLAYS  
BASS.

WE THOUGHT  
IT WAS YOU, AND I  
JUST CAME OVER TO  
SAY "HI," AND...WELL,  
JUST TO SEE IF YOU  
WERE OKAY...

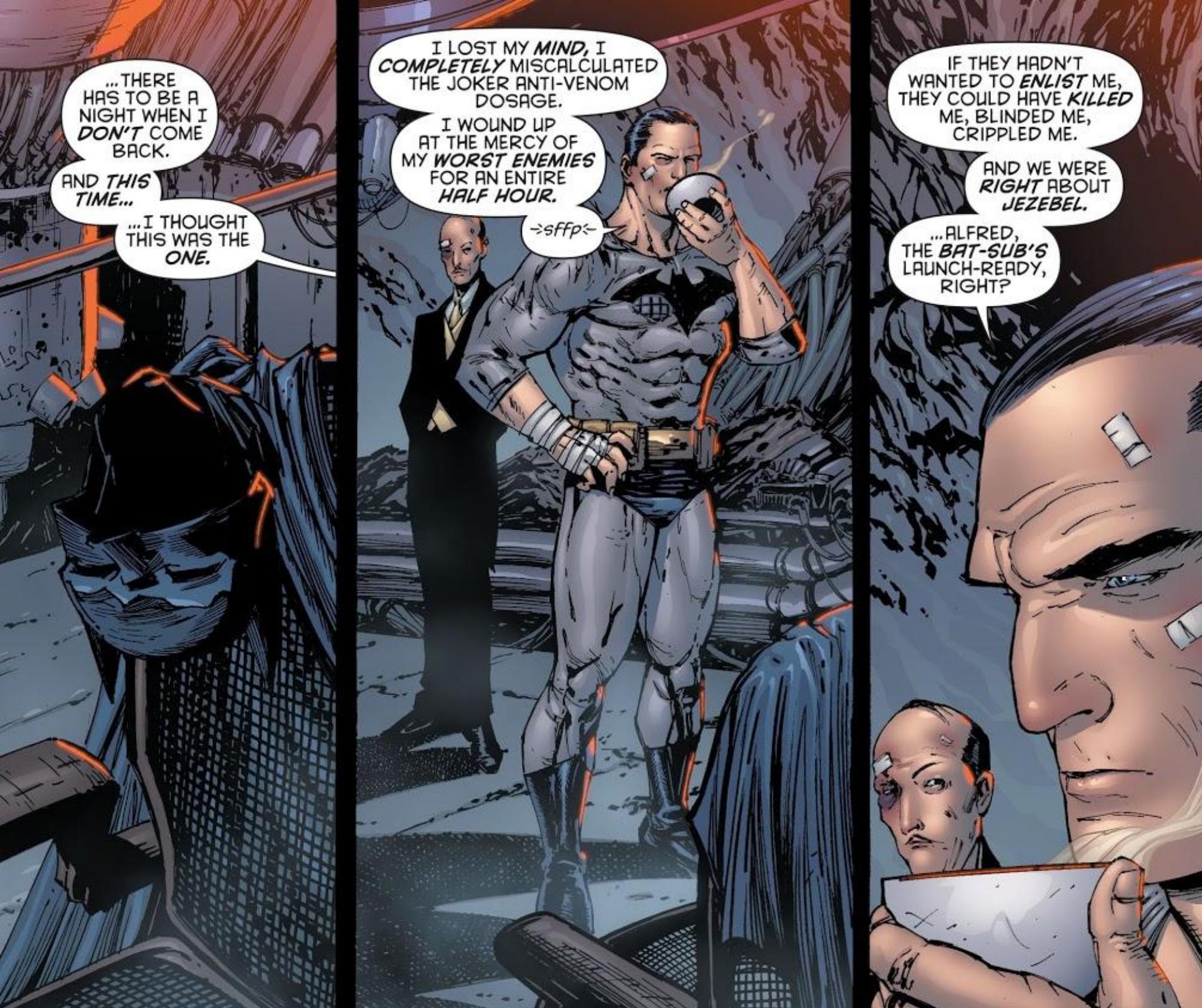
ME?  
DON'T  
WORRY  
ABOUT  
ME.

BE  
GOOD,  
ELLIE.

*Days to Omega: 30*







"I AM THE HOLE  
IN THINGS," he  
said. "THE PIECE  
THAT CAN  
NEVER FIT."

Hiding where he  
couldn't be found,  
in the gaps.

An empty space.

If I couldn't  
find a body, Hurt  
stayed a ghost.

The holes.



The absences.

NOTHING.

NO SIGN  
OF HURT, NO  
TRACE OF LANE,  
HIS PILOT.

WHAT DO  
YOU THINK,  
ALFRED?



But I was still shaking off the aftereffects of the drugs I'd been dosed with.

Awareness and oblivion churned together uneasily.

It was as if I had died and these twilight hours were playing out in some postmortem Limbo of black and red funeral flowers.

The sensation of hallucination persisted like a scent of mortuary roses.

I could still taste graveyard soil.

And I felt disembodied, haunting the halls and stairways of my own home.

No less bizarre or dreamlike was the discovery that Hurt had somehow found the Manor's Hidden Room.

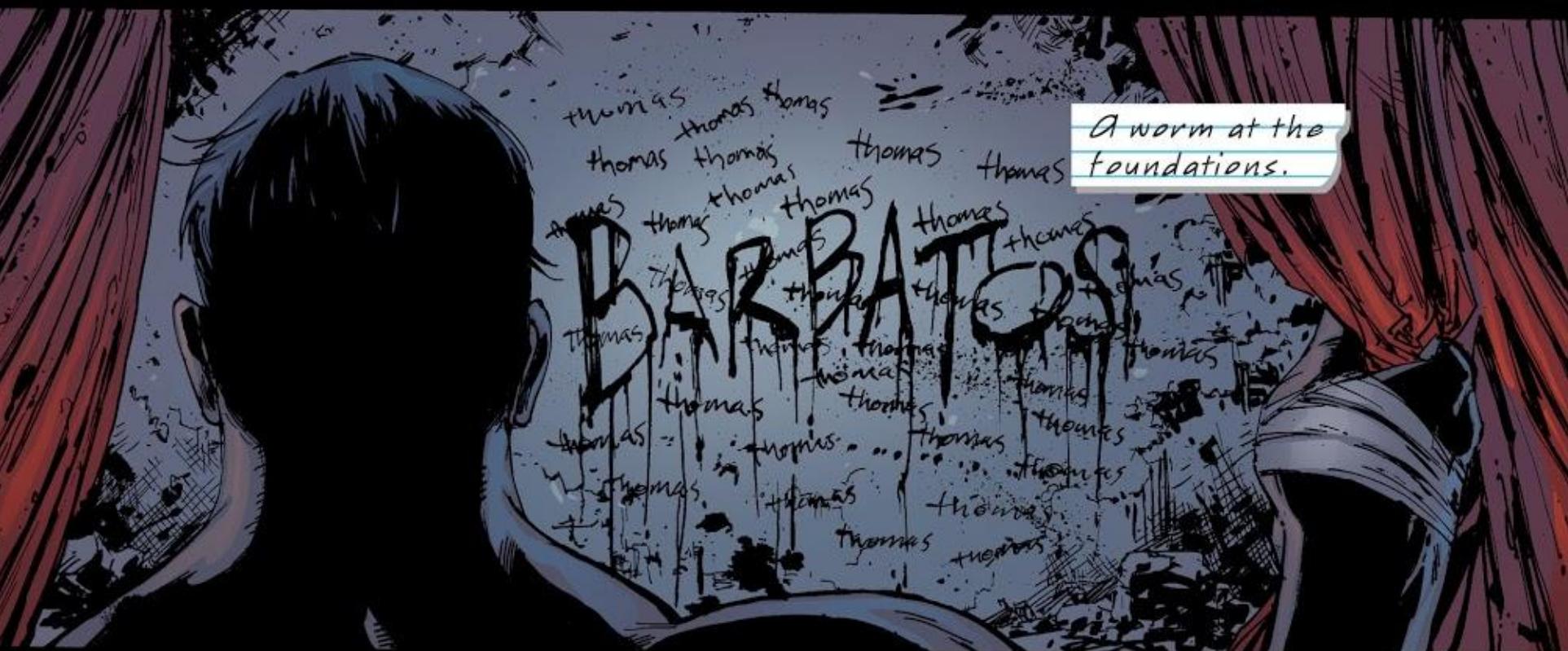
FORGIVE ME.

How could he have known it even existed?

Why had my parents made me solemnly vow never to enter the Hidden Room?

What if there was something else?

Some kind of sickness at the root of the family tree.



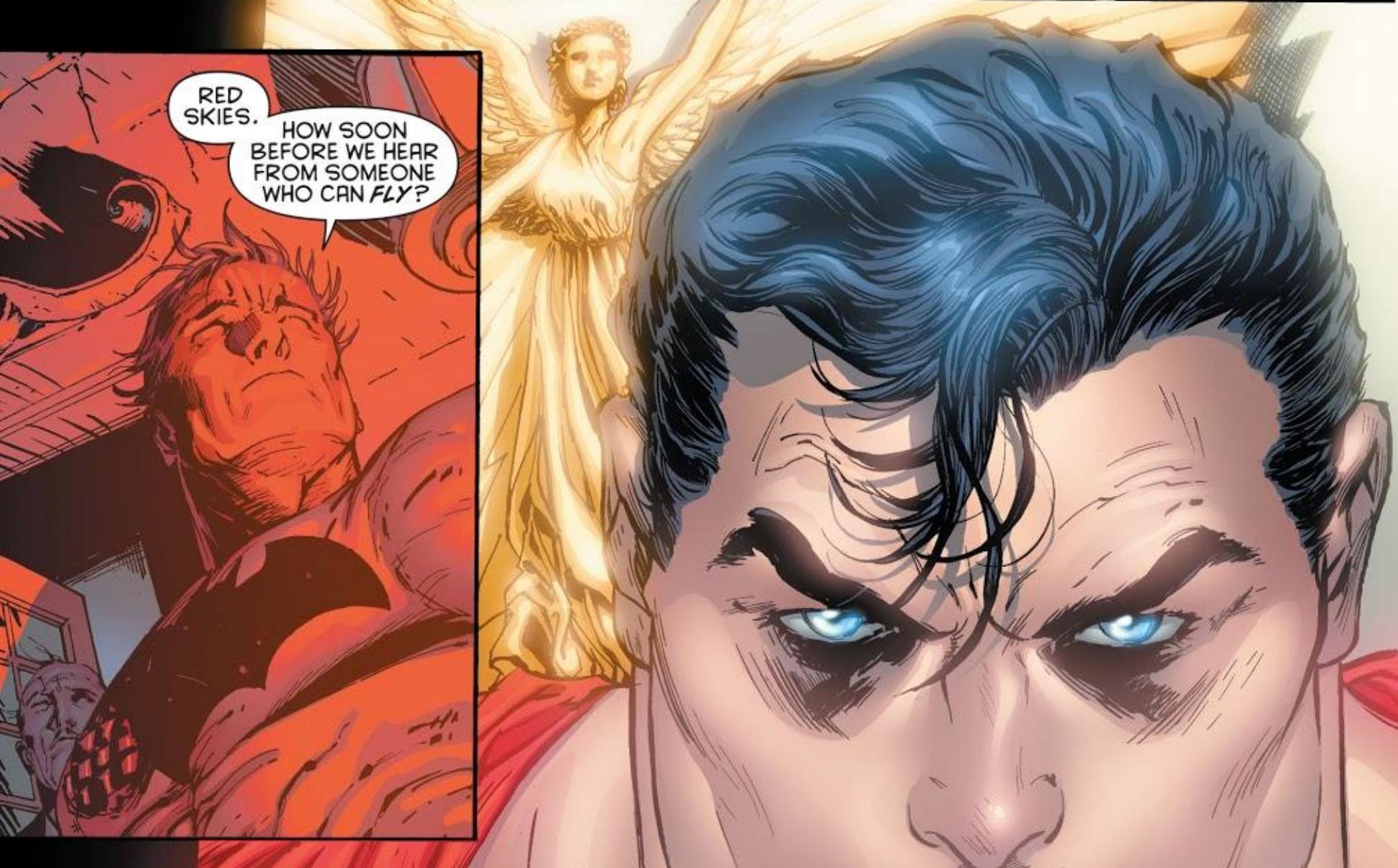
Hurt claimed he was my father, somehow alive.

He also claimed he would destroy my parents' reputations.

Who would go to such lengths, on this scale?



**Days to Omega: 27**



AS OF  
NOW THIS IS  
A PLANETARY-  
LEVEL MURDER  
INQUIRY.

I DIDN'T  
THINK YOU'D  
WANT TO LEAVE  
THE GREEN  
LANTERNS IN  
CHARGE.

I should have told him  
my cape and cowl was  
a death trap, cursed  
by a man who may or  
may not have been  
some manifestation  
of the Devil, or my  
dead father.

NONE  
OF IT'S TRUE,  
SIR.

WE CAN  
PROVE  
THAT.  
THE  
FELLOW IN  
THE CLOSE-  
UPS LOOKS  
NOTHING LIKE  
ME AT THAT AGE.

Instead I promised I'd  
be there right away.

HE  
DRUGGED  
ME, BURIED  
ME ALIVE.

...BUT YOU  
KNOW WHAT'S  
WORSE?

THE BAT-COSTUME  
MY FATHER WORE  
TO THE MASQUERADE  
WENT WITH DOCTOR  
HURT TO THE BOTTOM  
OF GOTHAM  
RIVER.

AND  
THESE LIES,  
THESE SICK  
LIES.

HE SAID  
MY NEXT CASE  
WOULD BE MY  
*LAST* UNLESS I  
GAVE UP AND  
JOINED HIM.

AND  
YOUR REPLY,  
MASTER  
BRUCE?

BURN  
IN HELL.

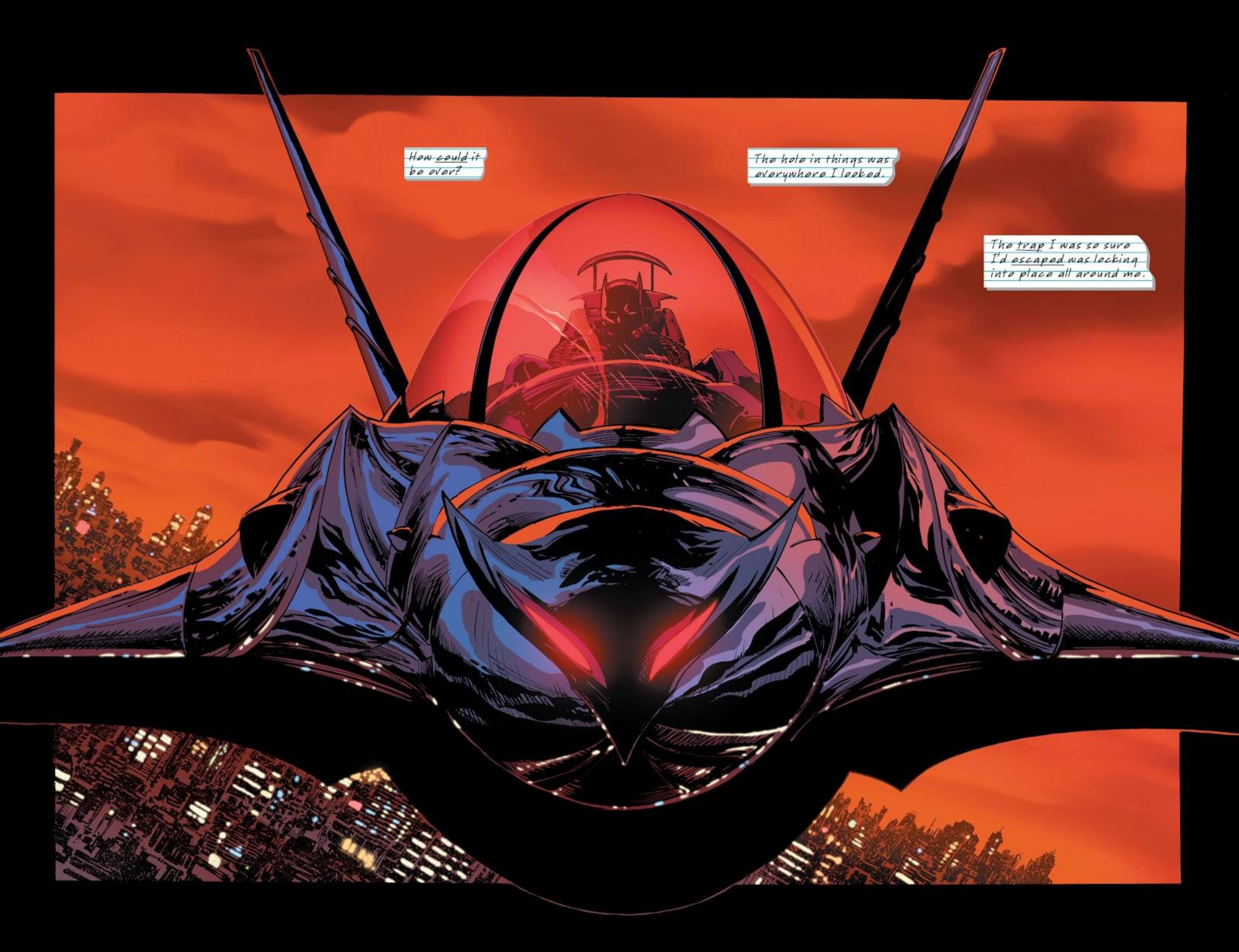
I  
JUST GOT  
A CALL FROM  
THE JUSTICE  
LEAGUE...

WHEN I GET  
BACK WE'LL FIX  
EVERYTHING.

SIR.

WILL  
THAT BE ALL,  
SIR?

"The next time  
you wear it will  
be the last."



How could it  
be over?

The hole in things was  
everywhere I looked.

The trap I was so sure  
I'd escaped was locking  
into place all around me.

*Days to Omega: 27*



To be concluded NEXT ISSUE in: BATMAN'S LAST CASE!



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