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33

SNYDER
CAPULLO
MIKI
PLASCENCIA

ZERO YEAR
FINALE

BATMAN

THE NEW 52!



CAPULLO
+ CO.



RATED T TEEN

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SAVAGE CITY

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... SO LET'S START THE FINAL GAME, SHALL WE?!



STOP THIS, NYGMA! YOU'VE PROVEN YOUR POINT TO THE CITY! YOU HAVE A CHANCE RIGHT NOW, ONE CHANCE, TO SAVE GOTHAM. THE JETS SET OFF THOSE BOMBS, AND--

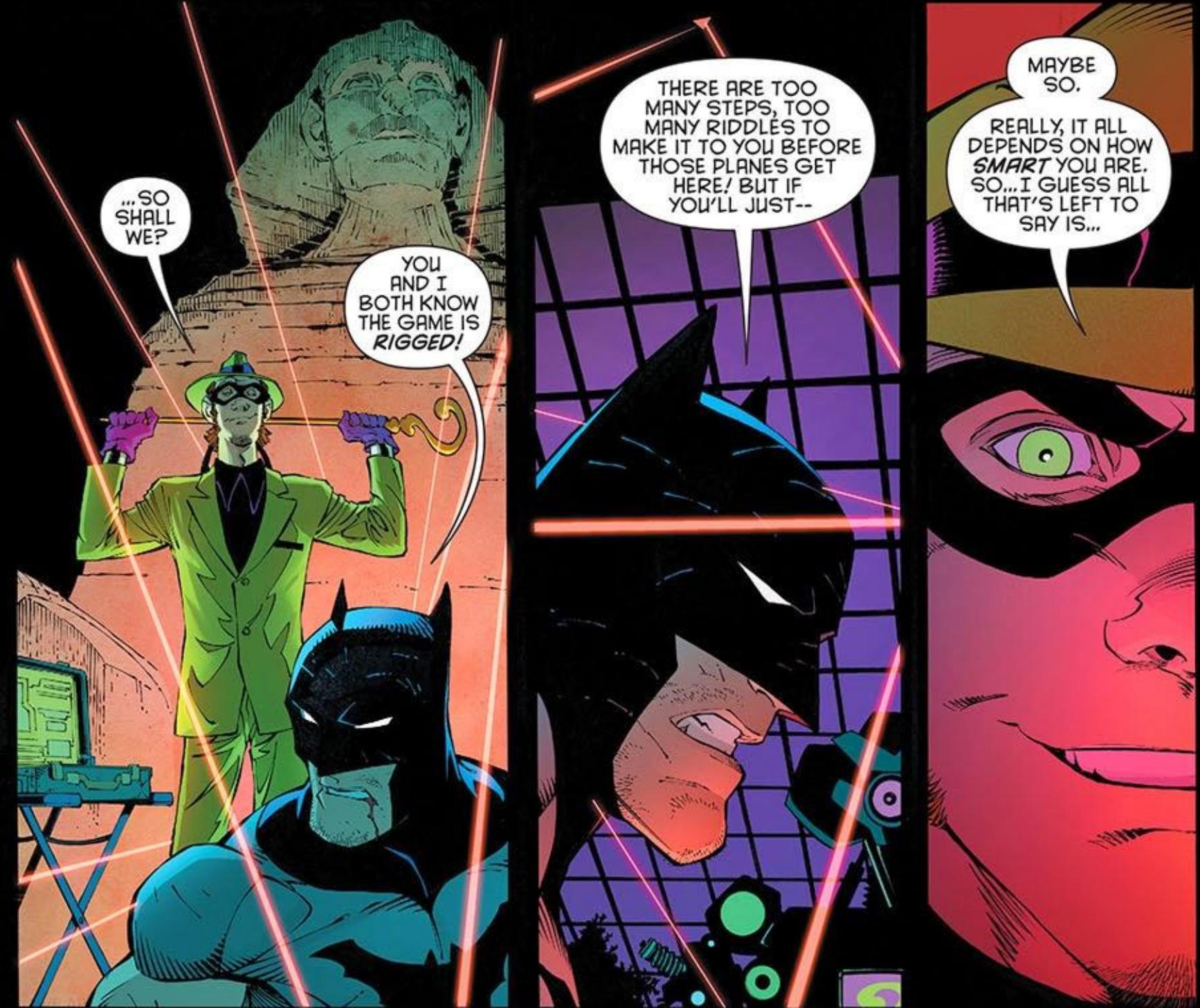
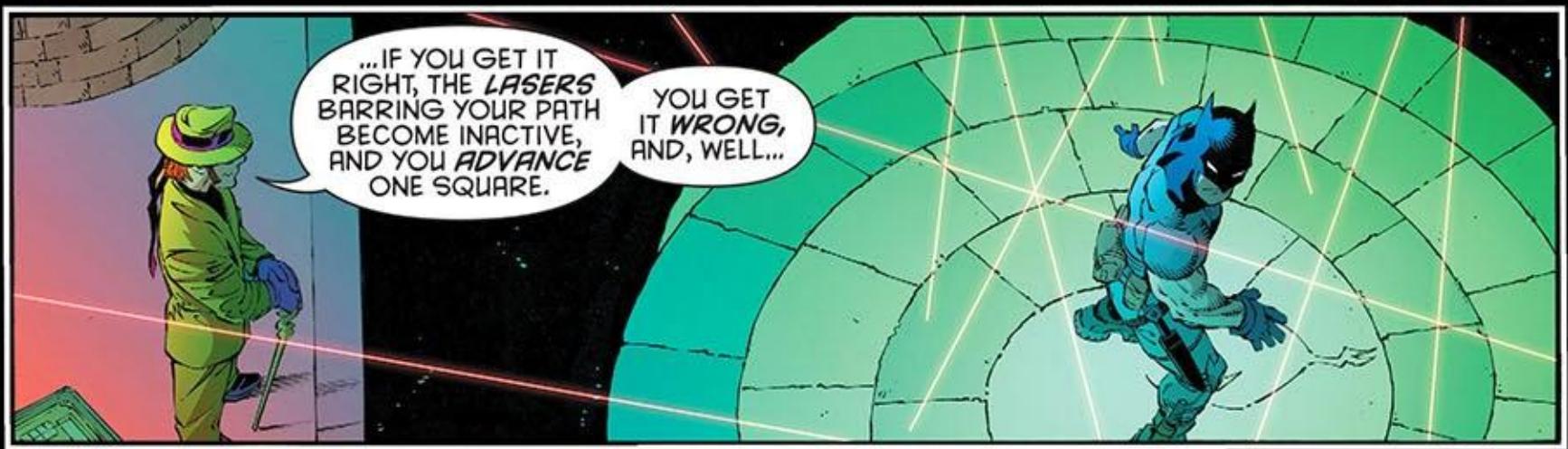


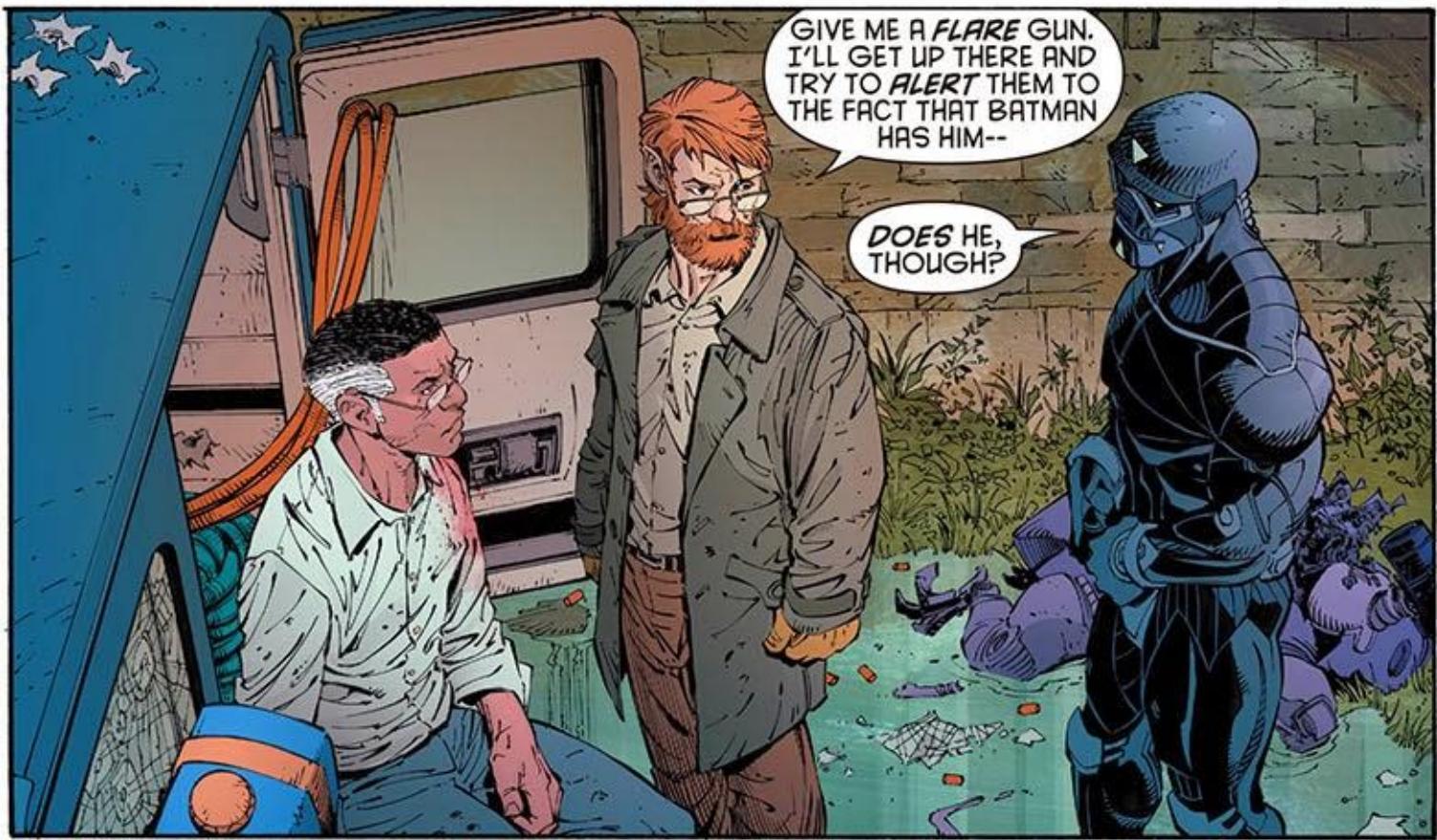
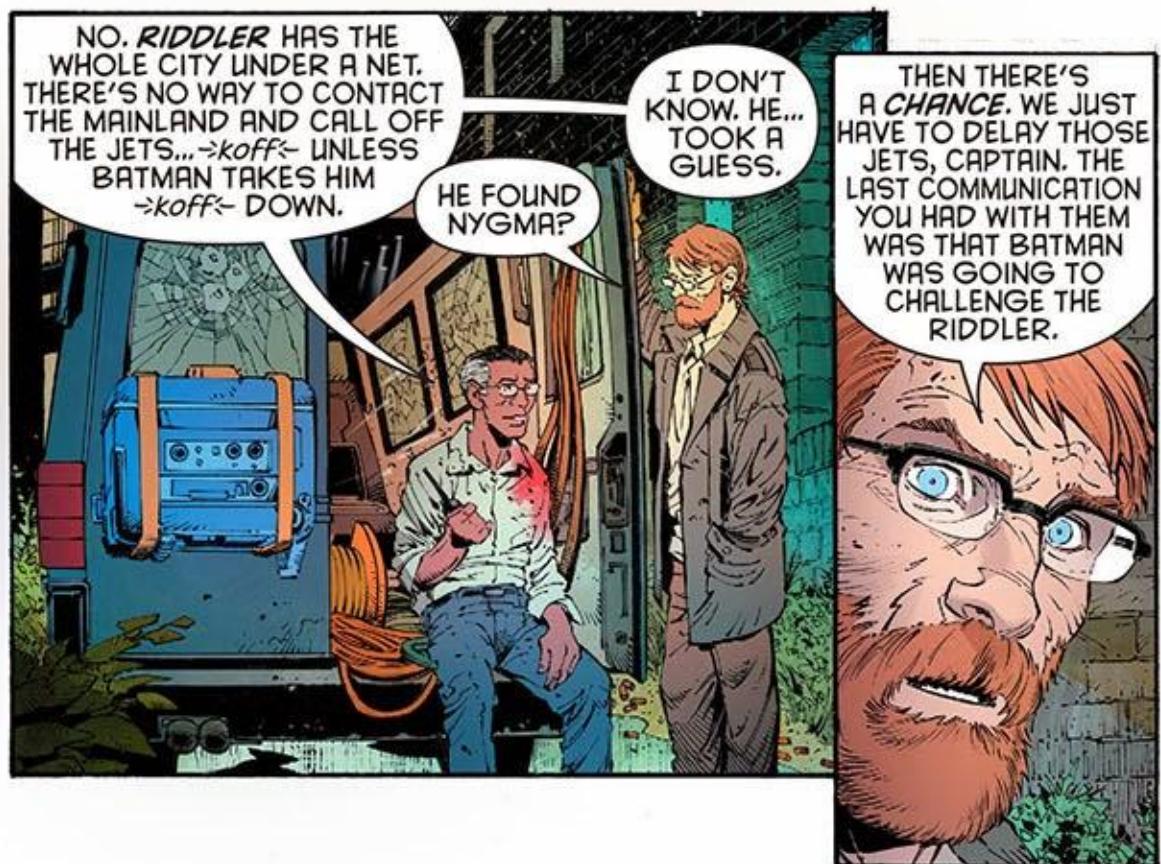
HA! ONE CHANCE, EH? I'LL DO YOU ONE BETTER, BATMAN. I'LL GIVE YOU TWELVE CHANCES. TWELVE STEPS. TWELVE MONTHS IN THE YEAR.

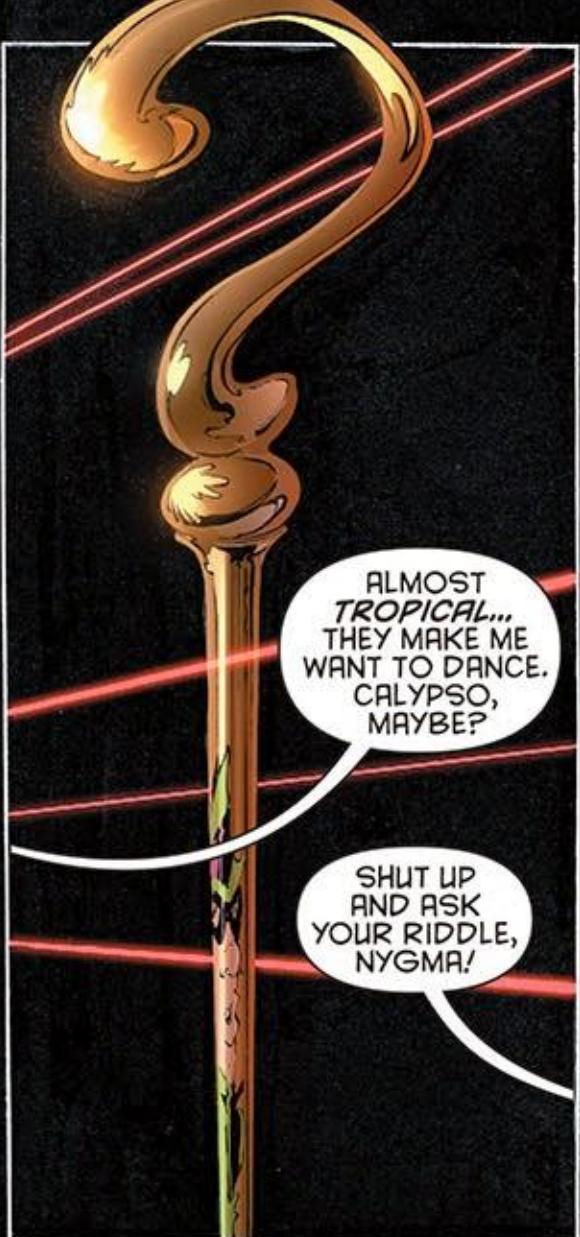
TWELVE RIDDLES TO SAVE THE CITY. GO FAST THOUGH, BECAUSE RIGHT NOW, AS WE SPEAK, I CAN ALMOST HEAR THE JETS ROARING TOWARDS OUR FAIR HOME!



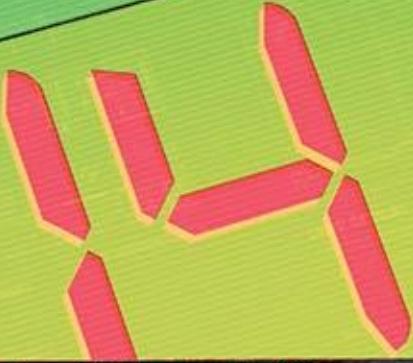
SEE, THE RULES ARE SIMPLE. I ASK YOU A RIDDLE...







--MAKE THAT
FOURTEEN MINUTES
LEFT.



SO...
"I AM...?"

...I AM...

"A LOUSE."

THE "HEAD OF HEAD," SUGGESTS THE FIRST LETTER OF THE WORD, MEANING: "H." AND "LIES WITHOUT ITS EYES..." LIES WITHOUT EYES LEAVES YOU WITH "L." "L" AND "OUSE" EQUAL "LOUSE." "KNITTED" IS A HOMONYM FOR "NITTED." "NITS" BEING LOUSE EGGS.

AND CALYPSO WAS A NYMPH. LICE EMERGE FROM EGGS AS NYMPHS, FULLY FORMED.

WELL THEN... YOU SOUND PRETTY SURE! LET'S PLUG IT IN AND SEE!

GO ON,
BATMAN!
TAKE THE LEAP!

THERE.

WELL
DONE!
BUT I HAVE
TO WARN
YOU...

"...THE REAL CONUNDRUMS ARE AHEAD!"

KRASH

COME ON...

SCREEEEE

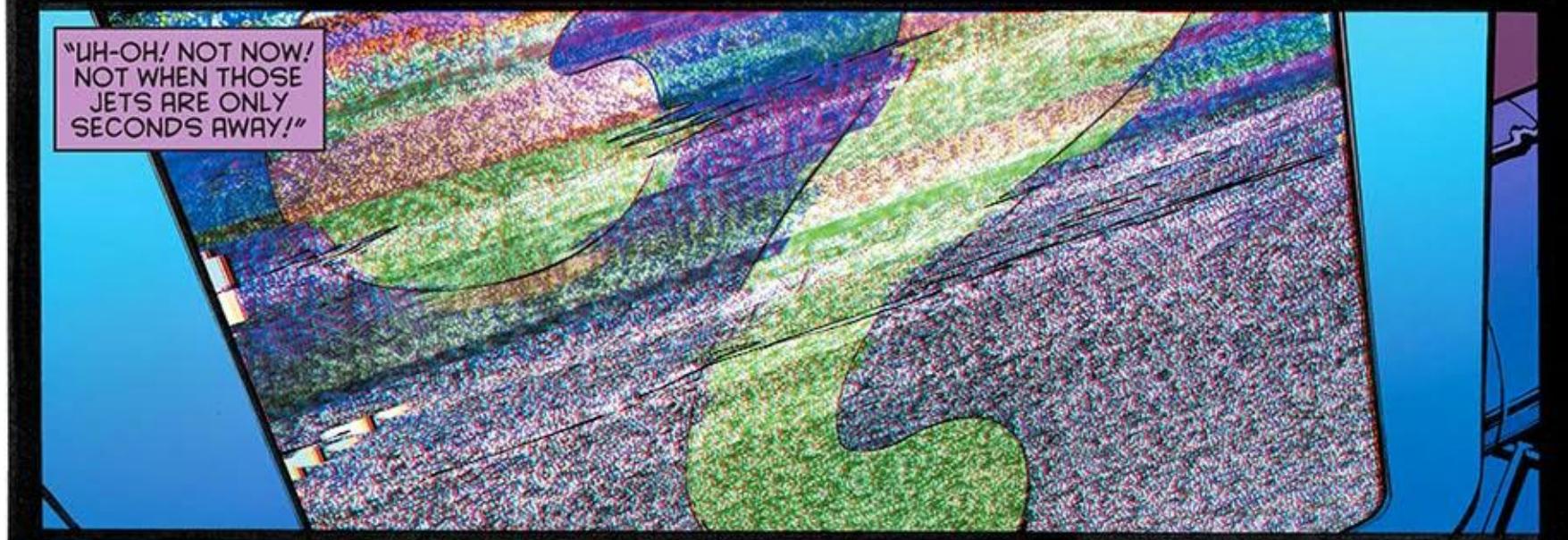
AAGH!

"DON'T STOP!"











...WRONG!

IF ONLY YOU'D SEEN THE THEME, BATMAN! THE DESIGN!

THE ANSWERS TO THESE RIDDLES, EACH ONE WAS THE ANSWER TO A FAMOUS UNSOLVABLE RIDDLE FROM HISTORY.

"LICE" WAS THE ANSWER TO THE RIDDLE THAT KILLED HOMER. AND "BEEs" WAS PART OF THE ANSWER TO SAMSON'S IMPOSSIBLE RIDDLE. THE ANSWER TO THIS ONE WAS "KNOT," AS IN THE GREAT GORDIAN KNOT.

A KNOT UNSOLVABLE TO EVERYONE, EVEN ALEXANDER THE GREAT. YOU GUessed A BLADE AND YOU WERE WRONG, WRONG, WRONG!

WAS I, NOW?

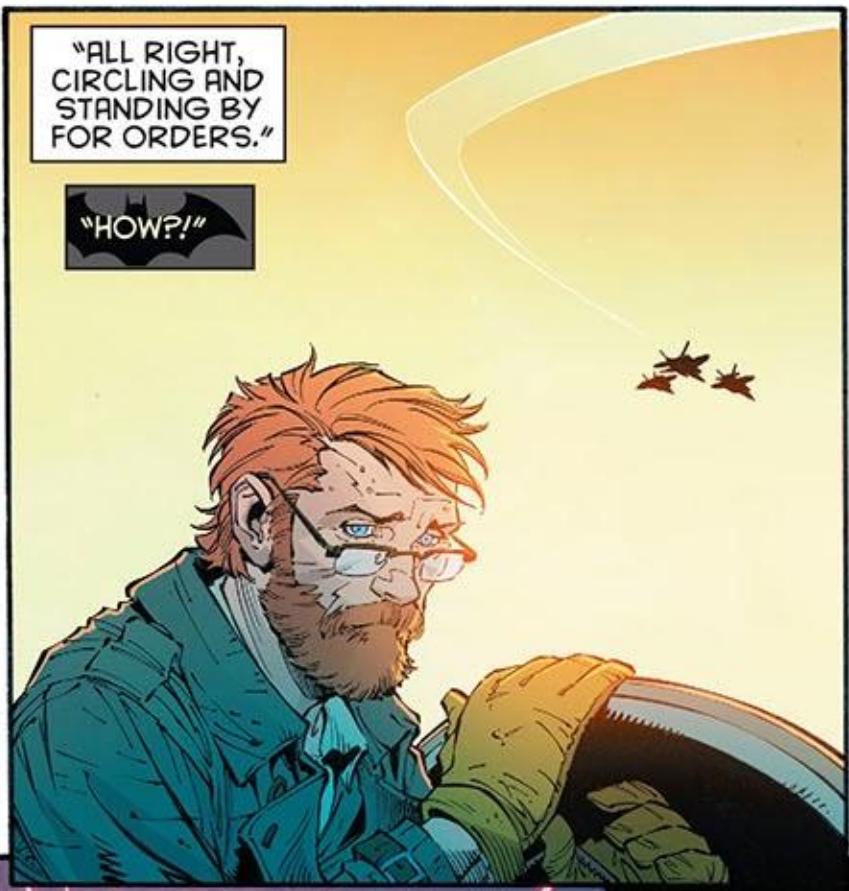


"YOU DESTROY THE CONDUCTOR TO OUR BLOCKER. THANKFULLY, WE FOUND ANOTHER LYING AROUND."



BLADE





...THIS.

HEH. IT'S THE FIRST AND LAST QUESTION, BATMAN. SEE, IT'S AN ELECTRODE.

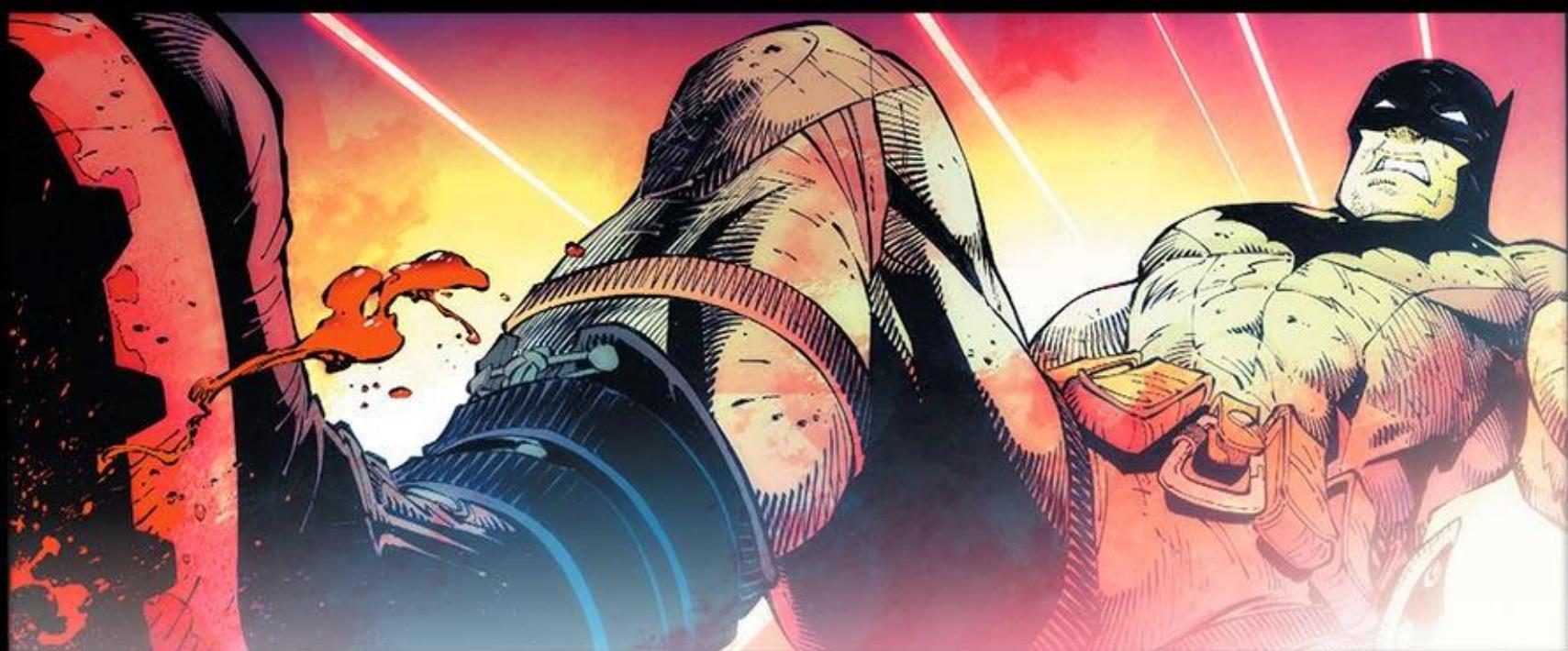
IT FEEDS MODULATED POWER TO ALL THE SERVERS IN THE OTHER ROOM. IT'S LIKE A BATTERY SET TO A HEARTBEAT...

...MY HEARTBEAT.

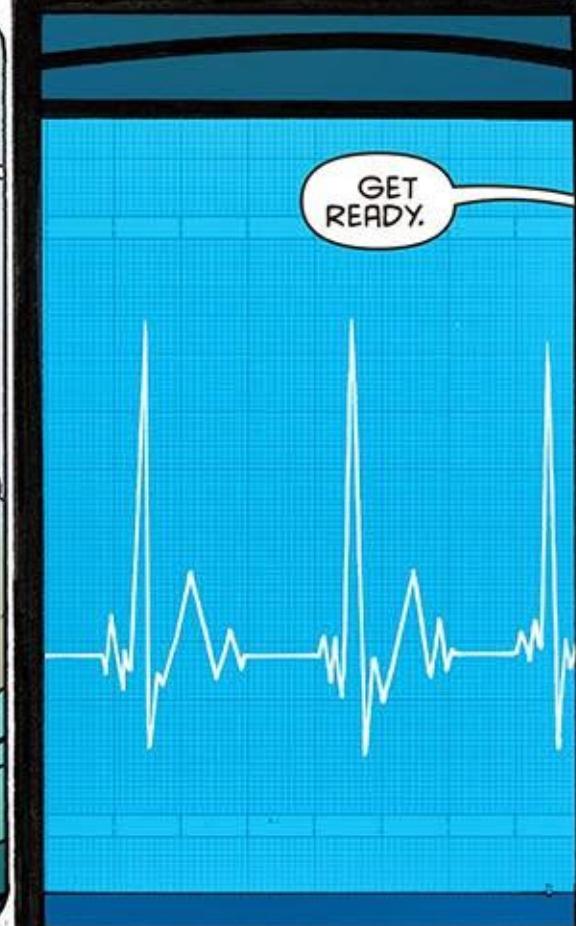
TAKE THE ELECTRODE OFF ME, AND, WELL, THE WHOLE SYSTEM DIES. EVERYTHING EXCEPT THE COMMUNICATION NET, OF COURSE. THE CITY GOES TRUE BLACK. AN EXQUISITE CORPSE AWAITING THE PYRE.

AS FOR STARTING IT BACK UP...WELL, IT'D NEED TO BE ENTIRELY REBOOTED. BORN AGAIN! THE CITY BONDED TO A NEW HEART! AND FOR THAT, WELL, IT'D NEED A CHARGE OF AT LEAST...I DON'T KNOW...

A THOUSAND VOLTS? I MEAN, GO ON...GIVE IT A WHIRL. THERE HAS TO BE AT LEAST A ONE IN A THOUSAND CHANCE YOU'LL SURVIVE THE SHOCK AND SAVE THE DAY. HEH.









"NO.

"NO, WAIT!

"THIS ISN'T
RIGHT!"

"UNSTRAP ME!

"LET ME
UP!"

"LET ME
UP!"



-koff-
BUT...BUT
HOW...

BECAUSE
YOU'RE BATMAN.
THAT'S HOW.

NO, heh. I KNOW
THAT. BUT YOU... HOW DID
YOU FIND ME...

I WAS ALREADY
HERE. I SAW THE
JETS CIRCLING THE TOWER
AND ARRIVED JUST AS
MR. FOX WAS LEAVING. I
FOLLOWED HIM HERE.

YOU
WERE HERE,
IN THE CITY?
BUT...

AS I TOLD YOU.
I MIGHT NOT AGREE
WITH YOU, EVER...

...BUT I'LL
ALWAYS BE
THERE TO
PATCH YOU
UP.

ONE MONTH LATER

"Nothingness.

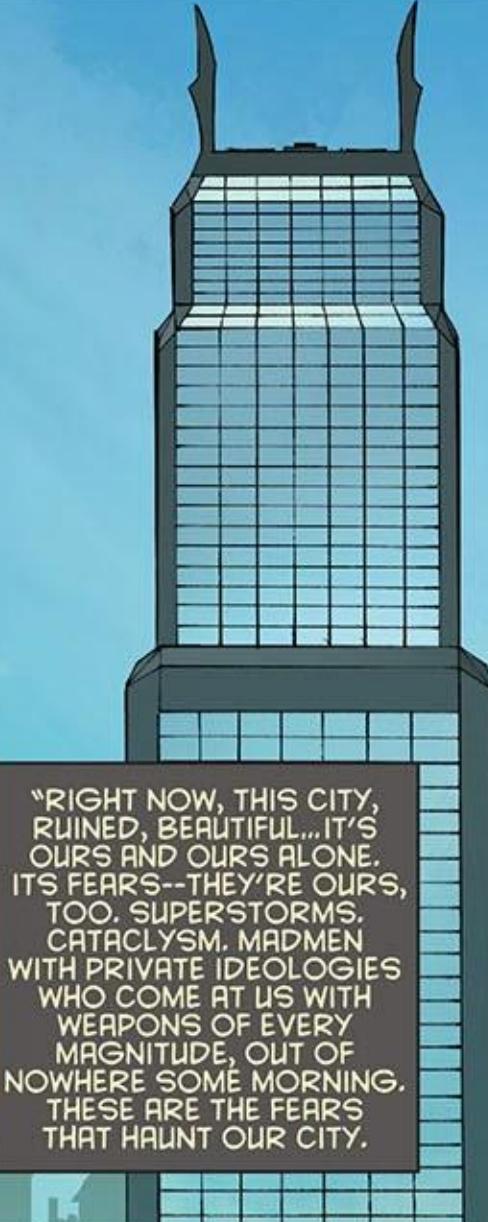

"A void.

"No meaning
or value.

"Just an end.
A death. That's
zero, isn't it?"

"IT WAS TO NYGMA. IT'S WHAT HE WANTED US TO BELIEVE ABOUT GOTHAM. THAT IT'S ENDING. THAT THESE ARE END-TIMES. BUT LOOK AT IT, THE CITY. IT ISN'T WHAT IT WAS TWENTY YEARS AGO, EVEN TEN YEARS AGO. NOT AT ALL.

"THAT'S THE WONDERFUL AND TERRIBLE THING ABOUT IT, ISN'T IT? IT'S ALWAYS CHANGING. GOTHAM AS WE KNOW IT, YOU AND I, IT EXISTS FOR A MOMENT IN TIME, ITS PEOPLE, ITS NEIGHBORHOODS, THE HOPES AND FEARS THAT POWER IT, AND THEN... POOF! IT'S GONE. AND A NEW CITY STANDS IN ITS PLACE.



"RIGHT NOW, THIS CITY, RUINED, BEAUTIFUL...IT'S OURS AND OURS ALONE. IT'S FEARS--THEY'RE OURS, TOO. SUPERSTORMS. CATASTROPHES. MADMEN WITH PRIVATE IDEOLOGIES WHO COME AT US WITH WEAPONS OF EVERY MAGNITUDE, OUT OF NOWHERE SOME MORNING. THESE ARE THE FEARS THAT HAUNT OUR CITY.

"BUT BELIEVE ME WHEN I SAY THAT WE WILL FACE THEM TOGETHER. BECAUSE RIGHT NOW, THIS IS OUR GOTHAM. NOT OUR FATHERS', AND NOT OUR SONS'. OURS. THIS GENERATION'S. AND OUR FEARS ARE GREAT, BUT SO ARE OUR HOPES. OUR AMBITIONS. OUR RESILIENCE. WE'RE FIGHTERS."



"I HAVE. IT WASN'T SAFE TO
KEEP HIM AT BLACKGATE, SO
THEY'RE ACTUALLY HOLDING
HIM AT ARKHAM."

"IT'S SAFE
THERE?"

"THEY'RE NOT USED TO THE TASK,
BUT THEY'RE WORKING ON IT. THE
MONEY YOU GAVE CERTAINLY HELPS.
HOPEFULLY KEEPING A CRIMINAL
MADMAN THERE WILL BE A ONE-TIME
THING. JUST UNTIL THE TRIAL, TOO."

"FEDERAL?"

"WE'LL SEE. THE PEOPLE OF
GOTHAM WANT HIM HERE, TO FACE
THEM. THEY'RE TOUGH BASTARDS,
GOTHAMITES. GO FIGURE."

GO FIGURE. WELL, IT'S
GOOD TO SEE YOU,
COMMISSIONER.

MR. WAYNE,
JUST ONE MORE
THING...

I WENT
OUTSIDE TO
SMOKE AND FOUND
MY CIGARETTES
WERE GONE.

IT'S
A BAD
HABIT.

YES, IT
IS...



BUT SEE, THEY
WERE GONE BECAUSE MY
COAT WAS GONE. WHEN I
WENT TO THE COAT CHECK,
THEY GAVE ME THIS ONE.
IT'S THE EXACT SAME
BRAND, SAME COAT,
JUST...NEW.
MR. WAYNE.
BRUCE... DID BATMAN
MENTION...



I'M SORRY.
I DON'T KNOW
ANYTHING ABOUT IT,
COMMISSIONER.
ALL I CAN SAY
IS, MAYBE IT WAS
TIME FOR A NEW
ONE.

SIR?



ALFRED. I
IMAGINE YOU'RE
DISAPPOINTED WE'RE
NOT DOING BLACK
TIE, BUT IT
FELT--

OH, IT'S NICE TO
HAVE A DAY AWAY
FROM SUITS AND
GLOVES, MASTER
BRUCE...



"SHE ASKED TO BE INTRODUCED, SIR. YOU KNEW HER AS A BOY. JULIE MADISON. YOU WENT TO SCHOOL TOGETHER. SHE SAYS YOU DATED BRIEFLY."

"...JULIE."

THERE'S NO HARM IN RECONNECTING, SIR. WE ARE RELAXING TODAY. YOU SAID SO YOURSELF.

SURE. BRING HER OVER. BUT ALFRED...

I...

...YOU HAVE TO KNOW...



"NO. MORE THAN A HARD TIME. EVERYWHERE I LOOKED, I SAW THEM. MY PARENTS. IN EVERY FACE. I COULDN'T LIVE. COULDN'T FUNCTION. THE WORLD WAS LIKE SOME NIGHTMARE HALL OF MIRRORS."

"SO, I PAID SOMEONE TO PRETEND TO BE YOU, ALFRED. I GOT PAPERS. I PAID THE DOCTORS AT ARKHAM..."

"SIR, IF YOU NEEDED TREATMENT..."

"I DIDN'T WANT TREATMENT, ALFRED. I WANTED TO STOP BEING ME."

"I WANTED TO BE REBOOTED. STARTED OVER. I WANTED THEM TO SHOCK ME UNTIL I WASN'T MYSELF ANYMORE. UNTIL I WAS SOMEONE ELSE."

"SIR, I..."

"I CAME SO CLOSE, ALFRED. I WAS SECONDS AWAY. BUT I KNEW..."

WAIT! STOP!

"...I KNEW I HAD TO FIND SOME WAY OF FIGHTING THROUGH IT.

I HAD TO FIND THE CRAZY THING THAT WOULD KEEP ME FROM GOING CRAZY, IF THAT MAKES ANY SENSE.

BRUCE...

IN THE CITY TODAY, ALFRED, NOW MORE THAN EVER, EVIL MEN, SICK MEN, THEY STEP FROM THE SHADOWS TO KILL AND TERRORIZE, AND BATMAN WILL DRAW THEIR FIRE. HE WILL BE THE LIGHTNING ROD.

HE WILL SHOW THE PEOPLE OF GOTHAM NOT TO BE AFRAID. IT'S THE THING, ALFRED. IT'S WHAT MAKES ME HAPPY. IT'S ALL THAT MAKES ME HAPPY.

YOU SAY THAT BECAUSE YOU DON'T KNOW, MASTER BRUCE.

YOU DON'T. THERE ARE JOYS YOU HAVEN'T EXPERIENCED.

DEEPER TYPES OF HAPPINESS.

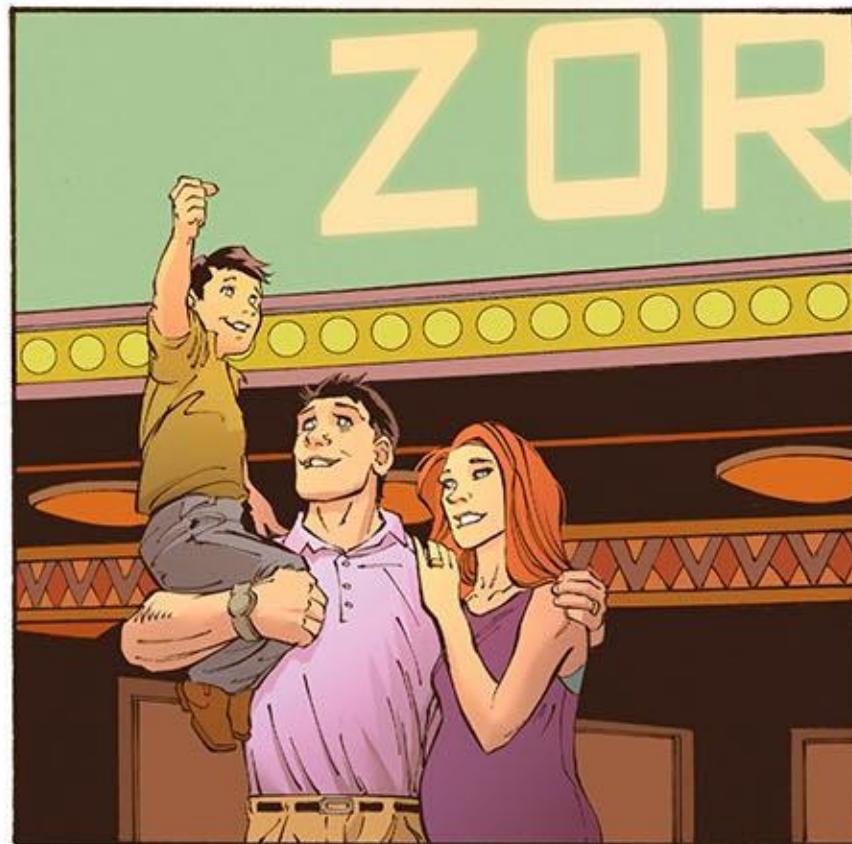
NOT FOR ME.

SIR, JUST ONE DRINK.

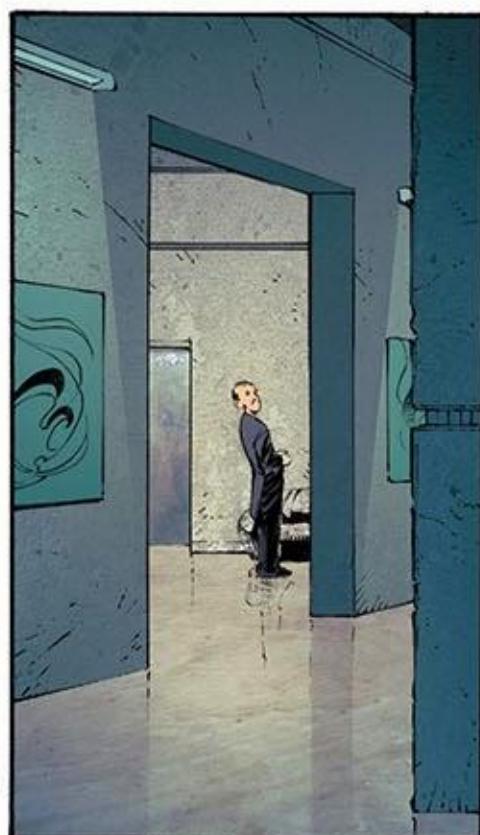
A DRINK, SIR.

I'LL LEAVE IT UP TO YOU.





"ALFRED?"



"...HE'S
SPOKEN FOR."

