CITY OF BANE

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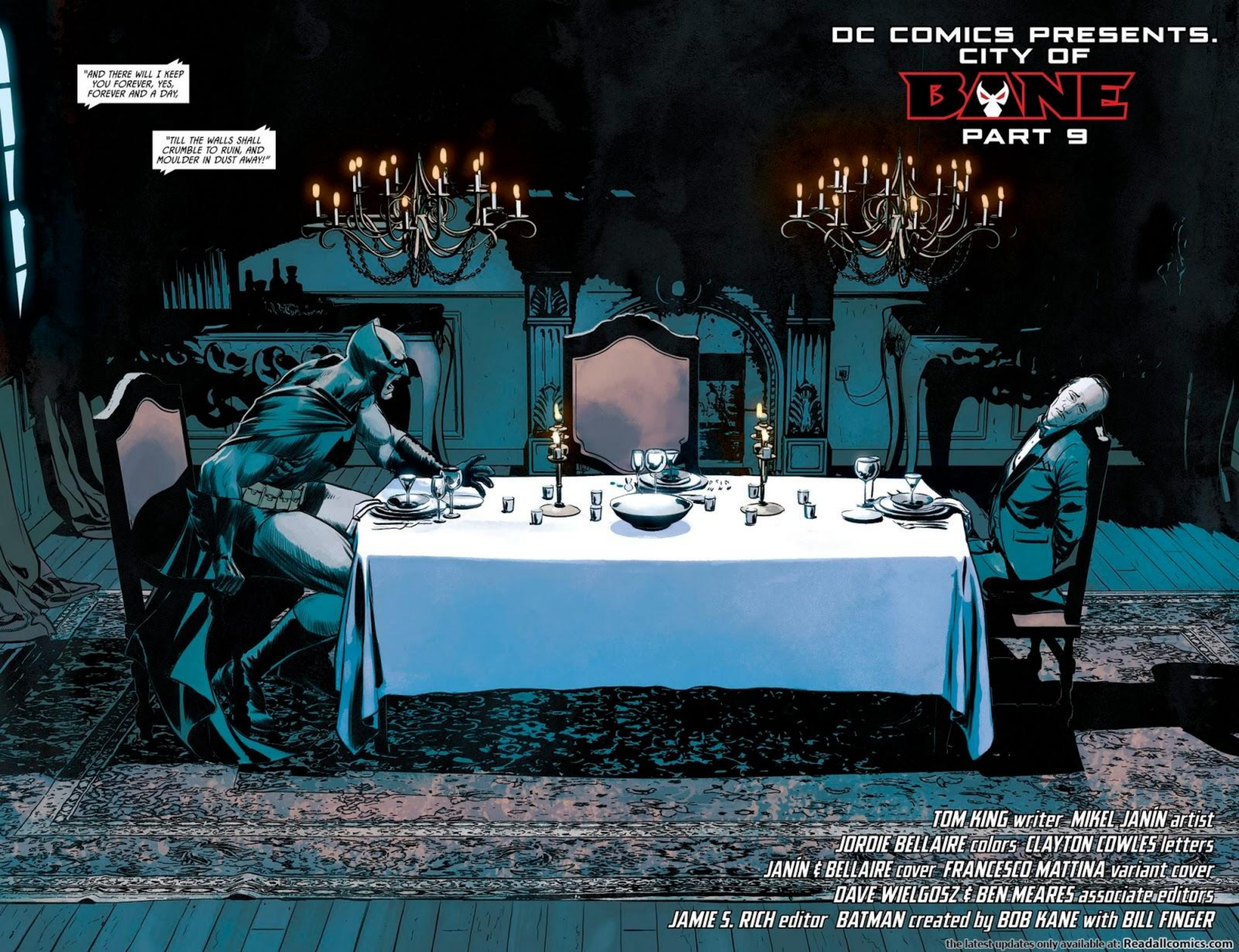

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MY, THE GAMES WE PLAYED.

COPS AND ROBBERS WAS YOUR FAVORITE.

AND, SURPRISINGLY IN RETROSPECT, YOU PREFERRED TO TAKE ON THE ROLE OF ROBBER.

ONE MOMENT, I MIGHT BE CASUALLY DUSTING IN THE FOYER, AND THE NEXT, I'D HAVE A SHARP STICK SHOVED IN MY BACK.

A SMALL VOICE TELLING ME TO PUT MY HANDS ABOVE MY HEAD. IT WAS ALL OVER...

...IF I DID NOT IMMEDIATELY SURRENDER.

NOW, I HAVE NEVER BEEN ONE FOR SURRENDER, AS YOU WELL KNOW.

AND SO, CALLING ON TRAINING FROM MY TIME IN HER MAJESTY'S SERVICE, I WOULD TURN AND DISARM YOU.

BUT YOU WERE A SLIPPERY CHAP. I NEVER COULD QUITE CATCH YOU.

AND OFF YOU'D GO, AS FAST AS CAN BE.

OH, WE WOULD RUN AND CHASE THROUGH EVERY ROOM IN THE MANSION.

SHOUTING AT ONE ANOTHER.

"STOP!" "I WILL NEVER STOP!" "NEITHER WILL I!"

SCREAMING AND LAUGHING, GOING ON FOR HOURS.

WE WERE NOT READY FOR THE END.

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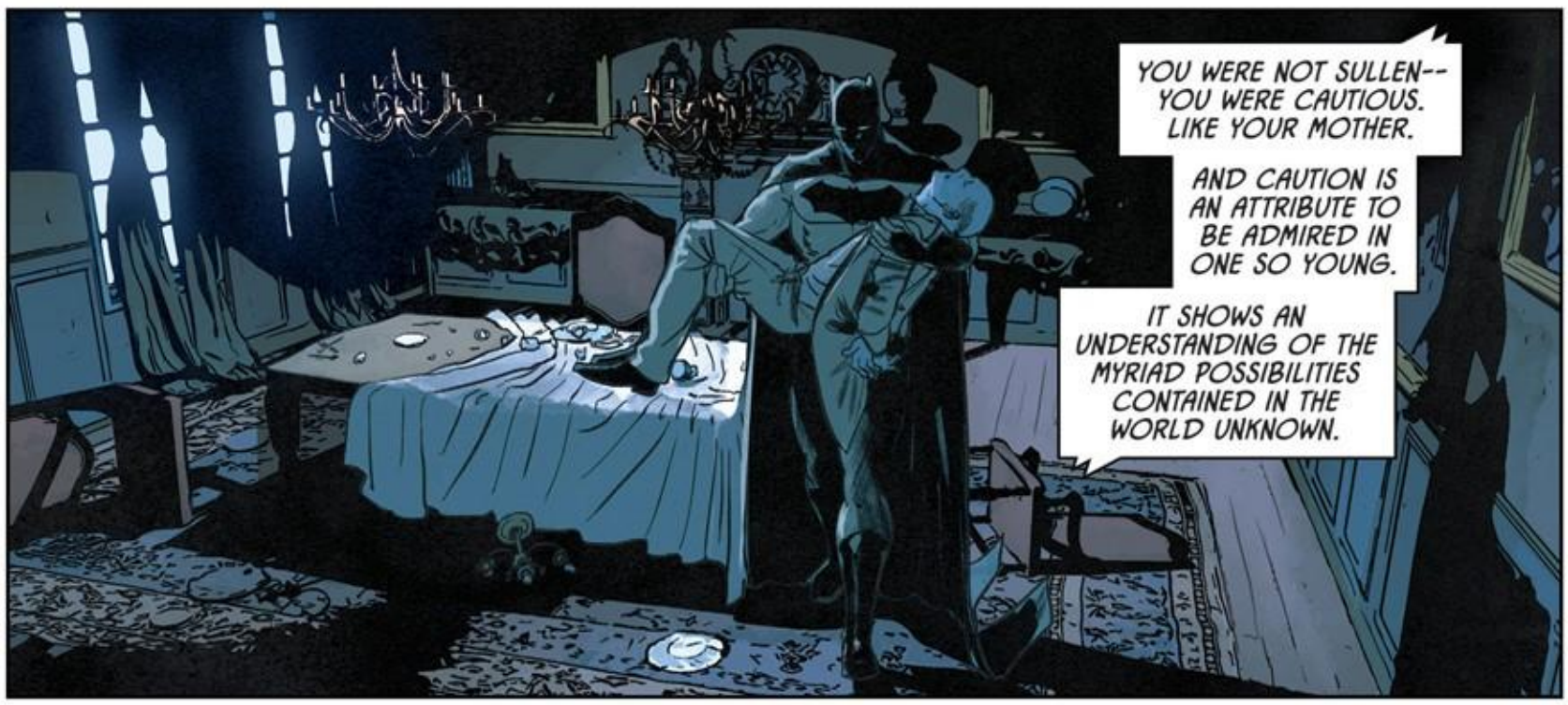

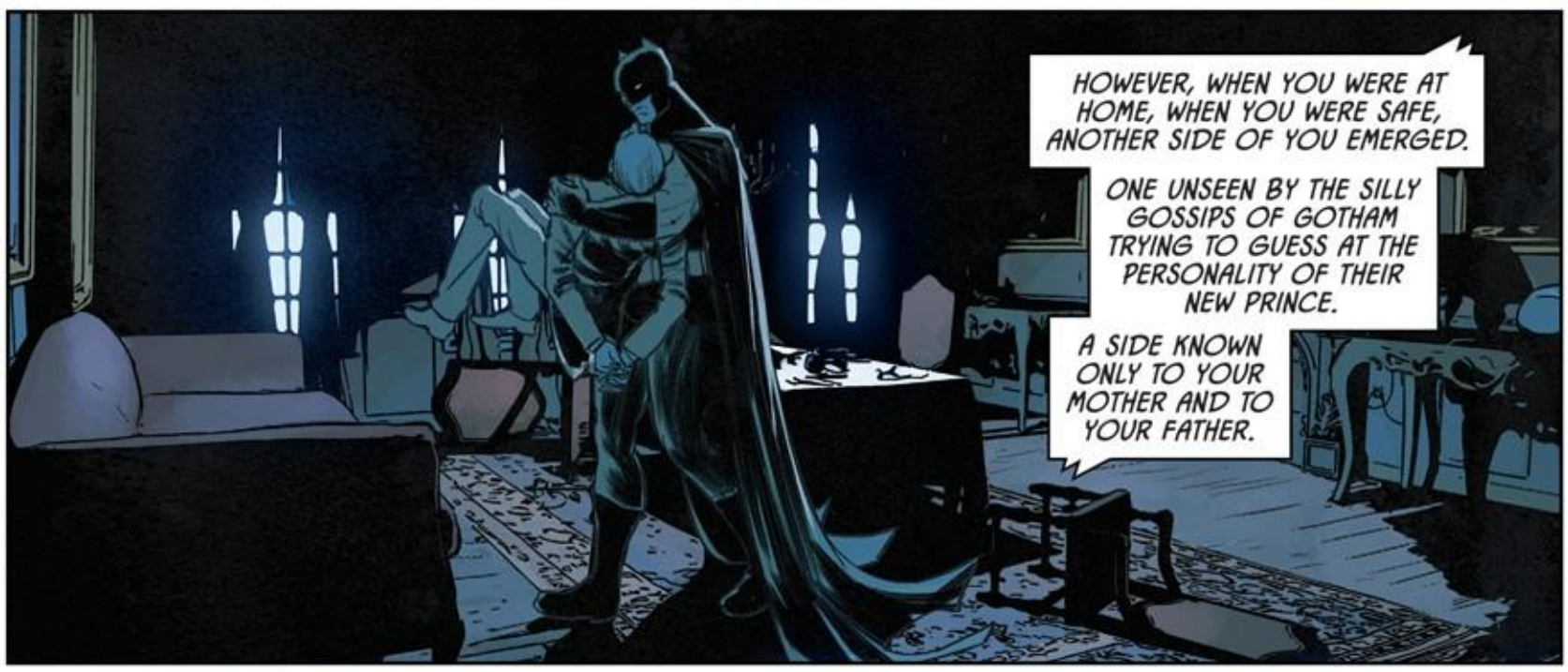

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WHEN YOUR PARENTS PASSED, I FEARED YOU HAD LOST THAT JOY FOREVER.

THEIR LOVE WAS SO INCREDIBLY VITAL. TO HAVE IT RIPPED FROM YOU...

I DO NOT HESITATE TO SAY, I FEARED FOR YOU, MASTER BRUCE.

I FEARED INDEED, THAT THOUGH YOU WERE YOUNG, YOU MIGHT TAKE YOUR OWN LIFE.

I HAVE NEVER TOLD YOU THIS BEFORE.

BUT IN THOSE DAYS AFTER THE TRAGEDY, I KEPT A CLOSE WATCH ON YOU.

WHATEVER YOUR DEMONS, I WOULD NOT ALLOW HARM TO COME TO YOU.

EVER.

YOU ARE NOT BATMAN

AND SO I WAS THERE, OBSERVING FROM THE SHADOWS, AS YOU TOOK A CANDLE FROM YOUR ROOM.

AS YOU BROUGHT IT TO THOMAS AND MARTHA'S BED.

AS YOU CAME TO YOUR KNEES AND MADE YOUR VOW.

"AND I SWEAR BY THE SPIRITS OF MY PARENTS TO AVENGE THEIR DEATHS BY SPENDING THE REST OF MY LIFE WARRING ON CRIMINALS."

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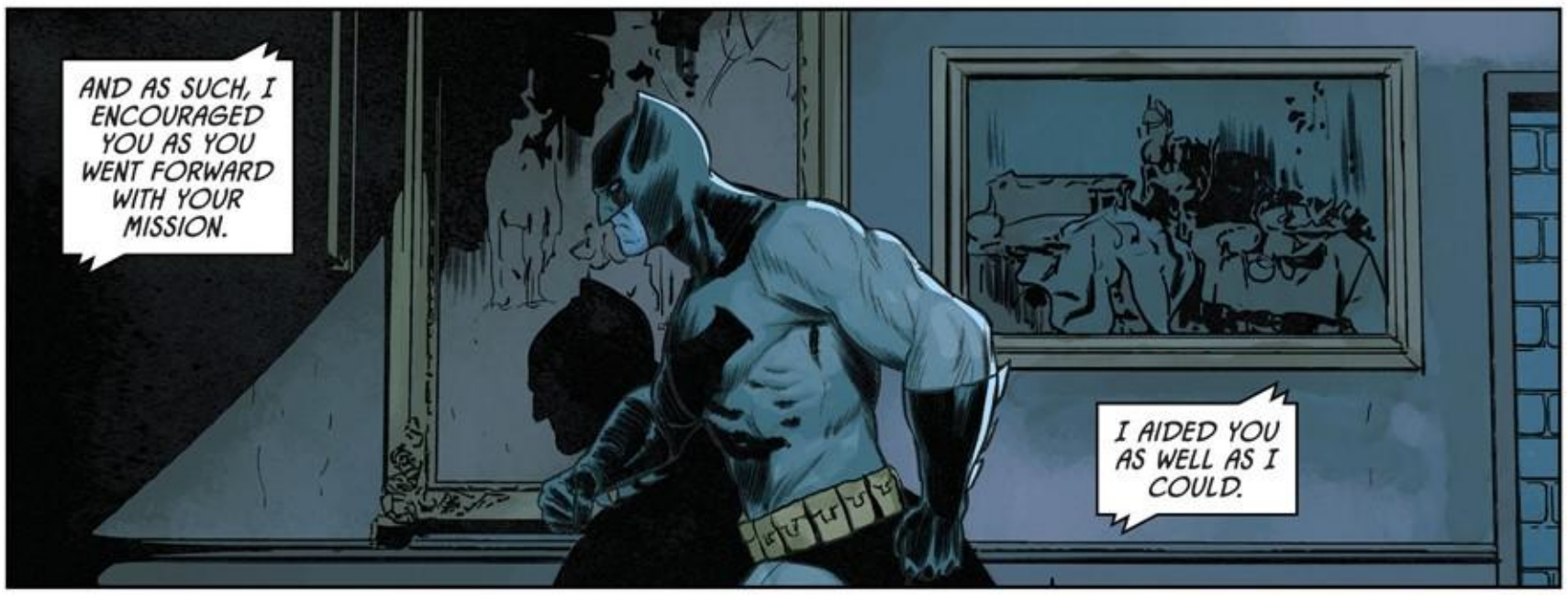

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AND THROUGHOUT IT ALL, I SOUGHT ONE THING.

THROUGHOUT YOUR TRAVAILS AND TRIUMPHS.

AS I SEWED YOUR WOUNDS, AND ENDURED THE WORRY OF YOUR CHOSEN PROFESSION.

AS I STOOD BY YOU AND WITH YOU.

AS I NEVER WAVERED IN MY SUPPORT.

I SOUGHT MERELY TO SEE YOUR SMILE AGAIN.

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AND AFTER ALL THAT TIME, I SAW IT AGAIN.

YOU SMILED.

CRASSSH

THAT DAY, ON THE ROOF, AS WE WAITED FOR HER.

THERE YOU WERE, IN YOUR SUIT AND TIE.

AND FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THAT ROOM, SINCE THAT CANDLE...

CRAKKKK

...I WAS NOT LOOKING AT THE BATMAN.

I WAS NOT EVEN LOOKING AT THE CHILD I ONCE KNEW.

BRAKKK

YOU WERE SO HANDSOME.

CRNCHKKK

YOU WERE THE MAN I ALWAYS KNEW YOU'D BECOME.

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WHICH BRINGS US TO TODAY.

TO THOMAS HOLDING OUR CITY. YOU WITH THE BRILLIANT PLAN TO TAKE IT BACK.

THE ONLY OBSTACLE BETWEEN YOURSELF AND VICTORY AND PEACE...

BEING ME.

I'VE JUST SIGNALED TO YOU THAT I HAVE RUN.

THAT I AM SAFE, THAT YOU MIGHT EXECUTE YOUR PLAN.

YOU BELIEVED ME. I AM, IF NOT MUCH ELSE, A TALENTED ACTOR.

AND SOON YOU WILL COME.

BUT I AM NOT SAFE. I, UNFORTUNATELY, COULD NOT FIND A WAY TO RUN.

I EXPECT NOW THAT THOMAS WILL KILL ME.

AND SO YOU MUST ASK, WHY THE LIE?

THE ANSWER IS AS YOU MIGHT SUSPECT.

I AM AGAIN PUTTING MY IDEAL ABOVE MY CURRENT NEED.

YOU ARE NOT BATMAN

I CHOOSE NOT TO BE AN INSTRUMENT OF YOUR DOWNFALL BUT TO BE A CAUSE OF YOUR SALVATION.

I WILL DIE HERE. I CHOOSE TO DIE HERE.

THERE IS SUCH JOY IN YOU, MASTER BRUCE.

I KNOW WHO YOU CAN BECOME. I HAVE SEEN IT.

AND, NO MATTER THE CONSEQUENCES, I WILL NOT ALLOW ANYONE TO BREAK YOU.

I WILL NOT BE THERE, BUT THERE IS A DAY COMING, WHEN YOU SHALL SMILE AGAIN.

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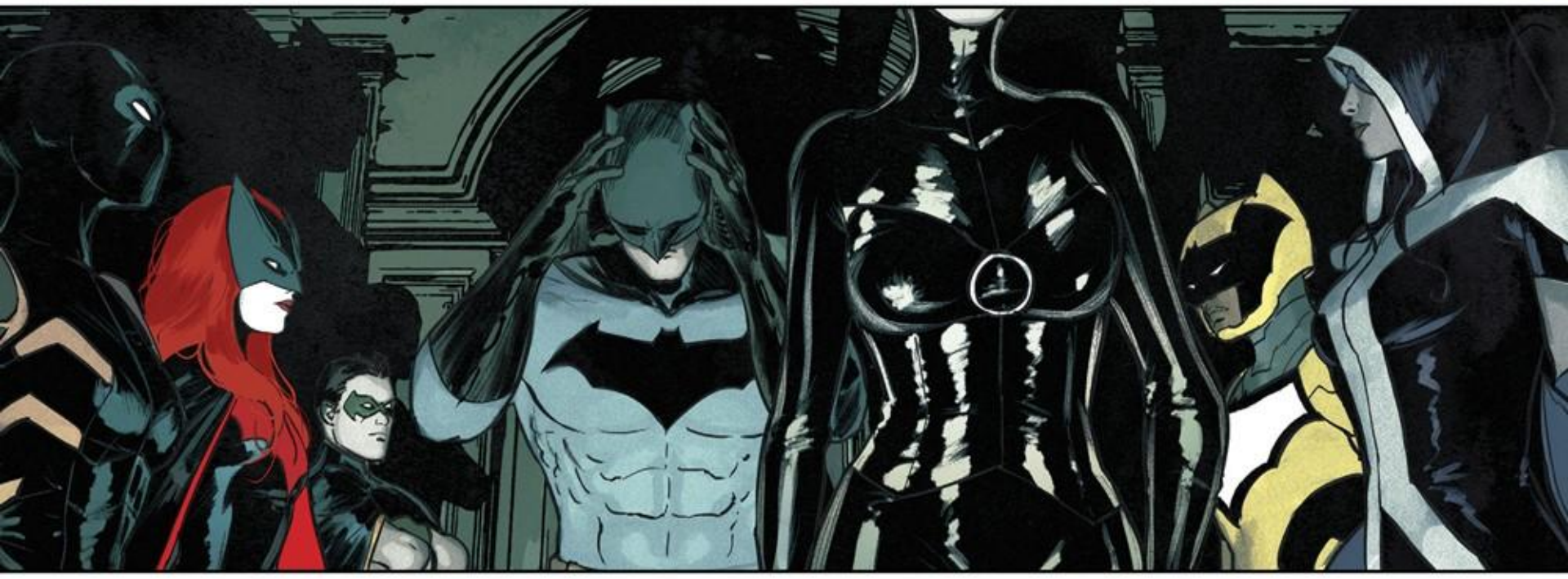

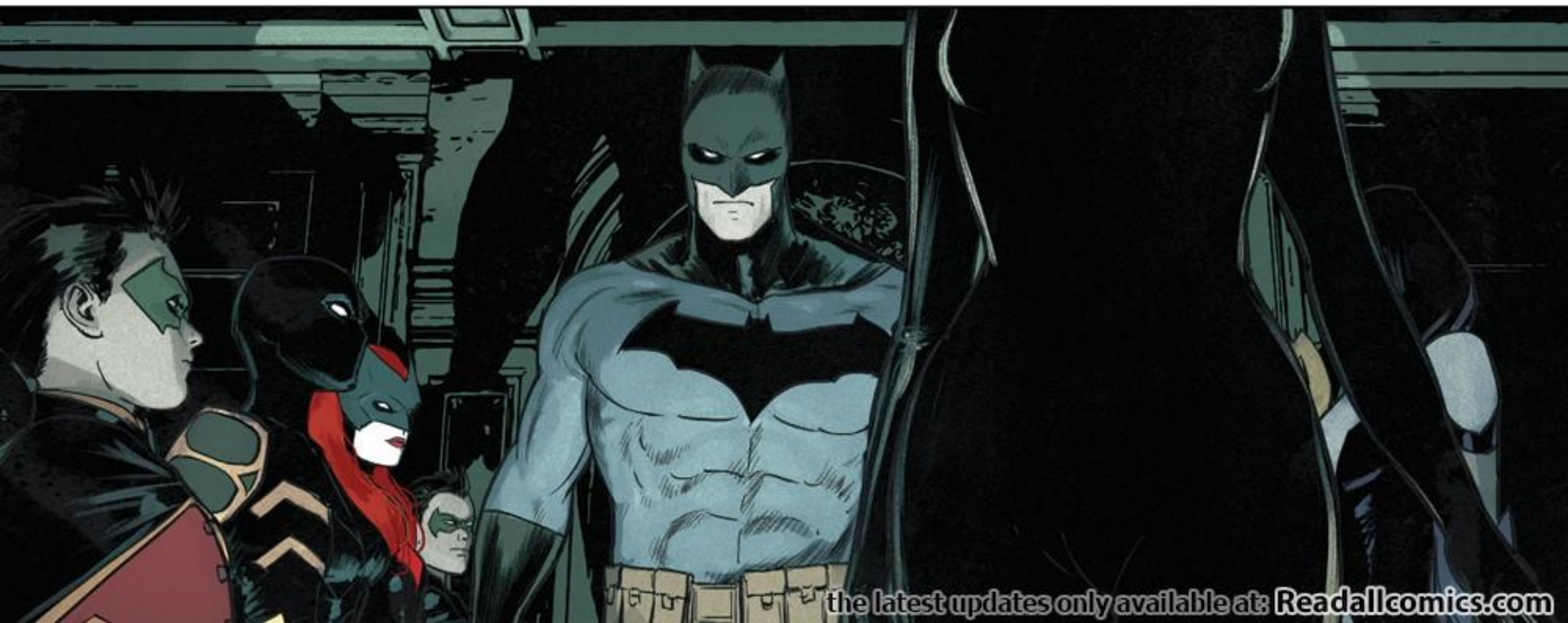

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YOU HEARD.
YOU KILLED HIM.
IS THAT ENOUGH?
ARE YOU FINALLY FINISHED WITH THIS BATMAN OBSESSION?

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