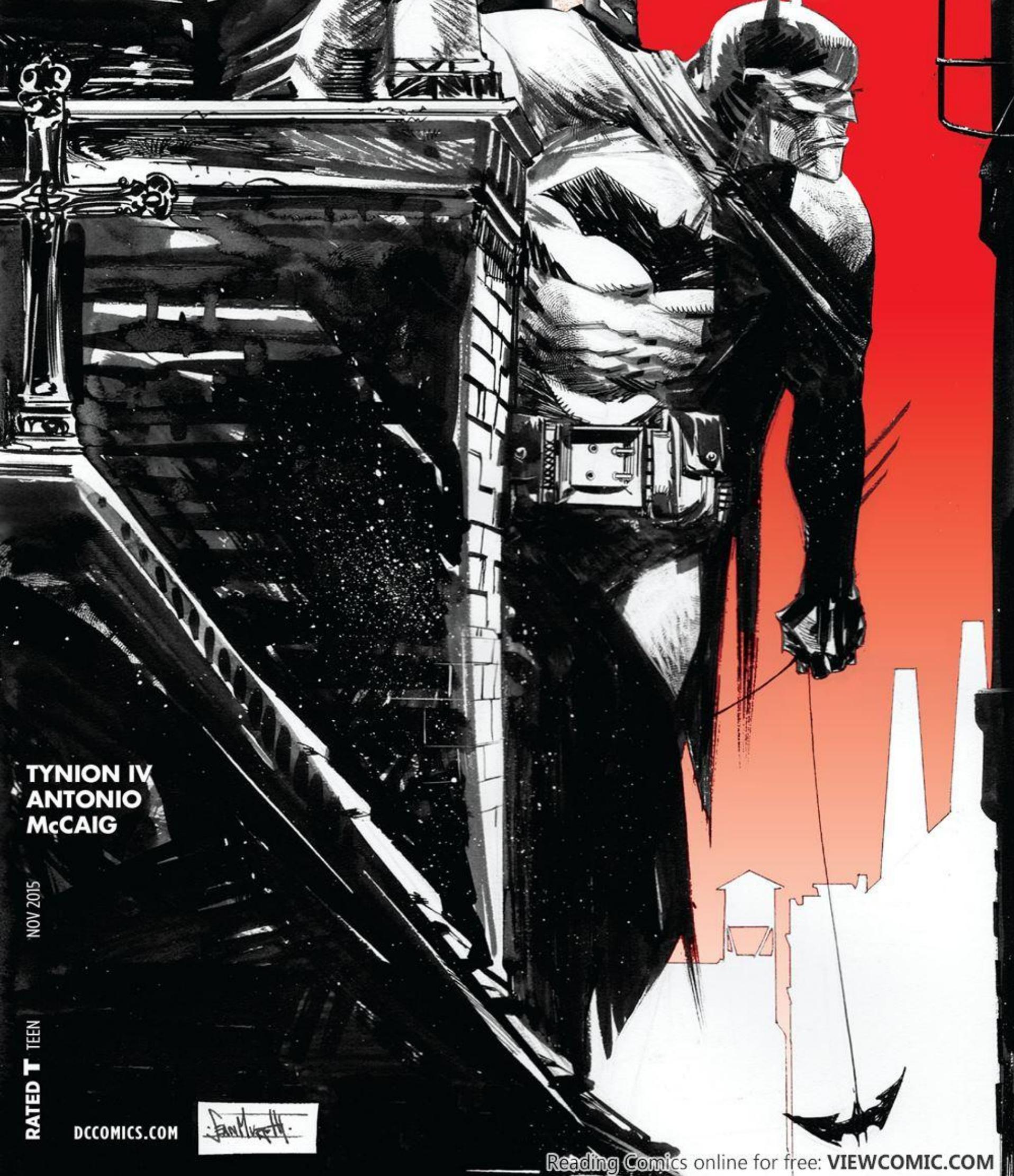


A N N U A L



4

BATMAN



TYNION IV
ANTONIO
McCAIG

NOV 2015

RATED T TEEN

DCCOMICS.COM

A small rectangular box containing a handwritten signature, likely belonging to the artist Sam Kieth.

Reading Comics online for free: VIEWCOMIC.COM

"THIS IS WHERE YOU
BELONG, BRUCE."



"THIS IS YOUR
HOME."

KRAKOOOM









NO.

NOTHING
AT ALL.

MADHOUSE

James Tynion IV Writer

Roge Antonio Art

Dave McCaig Colors

Steve Wands Letters

Sean Gordon Murphy Cover

Rebecca Taylor Associate Editor

Mark Doyle Editor

Batman created by Bob Kane

I SEE YOU'VE
ALREADY MADE
YOURSELF AT
HOME.

WHICH
IS PRETTY
APPROPRIATE,
ALL THINGS
CONSIDERED.

MISS
POWERS.

GERI, PLEASE.
WE'VE MET, ACTUALLY.
SEVERAL TIMES. I WAS
ALWAYS DEEPLY IMPRESSED
THAT YOU MANAGED TO
KEEP SO WELL IN SHAPE
FOR A CEO. I'VE GONE A
BIT WOBBLY IN THE
SHOULDERS SINCE MY
MARINE DAYS.

I'M SORRY, I
DON'T--

I'VE HEARD.
I'M SORRY ABOUT
THE ACCIDENT. IT'S
PART OF WHY I
WANTED TO DO
THIS FOR YOU.

ARKHAM ASYLUM. CHRIST, IF THAT NAME DOESN'T
GIVE ME GOOSEBUMPS, I DON'T KNOW WHAT
DOES. I CAN'T IMAGINE WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE
TO HAVE THESE MANIACS SET UP SHOP IN
YOUR CHILDHOOD BEDROOM.

FRANKLY,
NEITHER
CAN I.

OF COURSE.
I'M SORRY.

IT'S
OKAY,
GERI.

IT WAS A CHEAP
PLOY BY MAYOR HADY TO
SIGN YOUR HOUSE OVER
AFTER THE **BANKRUPTCY**,
WHILE ALL YOUR ASSETS
WERE IN LIMBO.

BEFORE YOU
BOUGHT THOSE
ASSETS.

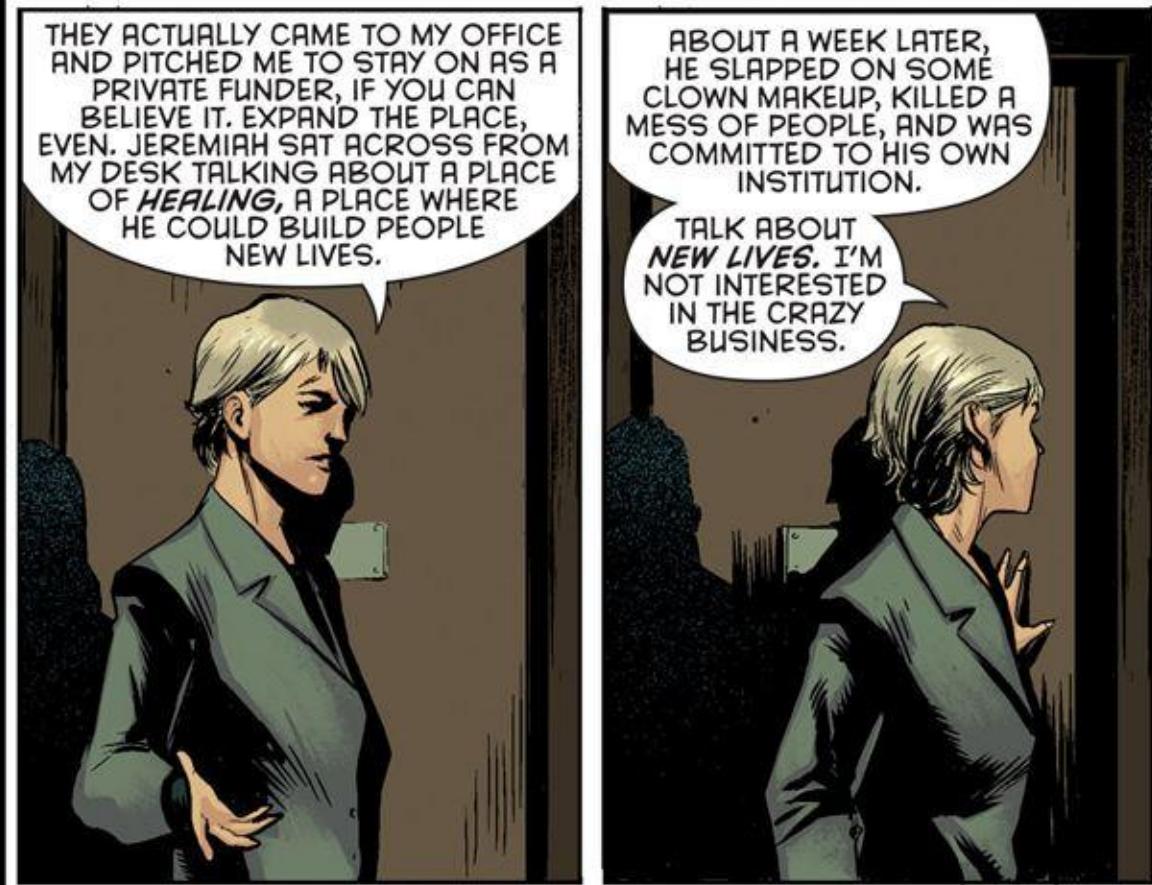


EXACTLY. AND THEY'RE PAYING OFF NICELY... PARTICULARLY THE BRANDING RIGHTS FOR MY FRIEND WITH THE *POINTY EARS*. BUT WHAT ON EARTH WAS I GOING TO DO PLAYING LANDLORD TO GOTHAM'S CRAZIES?

THEY ACTUALLY CAME TO MY OFFICE AND PITCHED ME TO STAY ON AS A PRIVATE FUNDER, IF YOU CAN BELIEVE IT. EXPAND THE PLACE, EVEN. JEREMIAH SAT ACROSS FROM MY DESK TALKING ABOUT A PLACE OF *HEALING*, A PLACE WHERE HE COULD BUILD PEOPLE NEW LIVES.

ABOUT A WEEK LATER, HE SLAPPED ON SOME CLOWN MAKEUP, KILLED A MESS OF PEOPLE, AND WAS COMMITTED TO HIS OWN INSTITUTION.

TALK ABOUT *NEW LIVES*. I'M NOT INTERESTED IN THE CRAZY BUSINESS.



HERE, I LEFT THE PAPERWORK JUST DOWN THE HALL.

J. ARKHAM



WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO ARKHAM?

THEY'RE FIGURING OUT LONG-TERM PLANS. HOPEFULLY, THEY'RE SMART ENOUGH TO JUST SCRUB THE NAME ARKHAM FROM THE MEMORY OF THIS CITY.

FOR NOW, THE MORE TYPICAL PATIENTS WERE MOVED TO STATE HOSPITALS, AND BLACKGATE'S CLEARED A WING FOR THE COLORFUL TYPES.

LAST SHIP OUT WENT THIS MORNING.

NO DIFFICULTIES?

"I HAD SOME BACKUP.

"MOST WENT EASILY ENOUGH... THERE WERE ONLY THREE HIGH-SECURITY INMATES LEFT BY THE FINAL TRANSFER TODAY..."



"BASIL KARLO,
CLAYFACE...WE'D MANAGED
TO KEEP HIS MOLECULAR
STRUCTURE DORMANT
WITH A FEW SHOCKS...A
CLAY STATUE IS A BIT
MORE PLIABLE TO MOVE
AROUND THAN A GIANT
SHAPE-SHIFTING
MONSTER."



"VICTOR FRIES, MR. FREEZE...
HE WAS EASY ENOUGH...A
SEDATIVE KNOCKED HIM OUT
STRAIGHTAWAY, MANAGED TO
BORROW A FREEZER TRUCK
FROM AN ICE CREAM VENDOR
OF ALL PLACES. NOT THE MOST
DIGNIFIED MOVE, BUT NOT
THE MOST DIFFICULT."



"AND EDWARD NIGMA...
DO YOU KNOW THAT WHEN
THE RIDDLER WAS FIRST
TRANSFERRED TO ARKHAM,
THEY HAD TO KEEP MOVING HIM
FROM CELL TO CELL TO KEEP
HIM FROM BEING ABLE TO
FORMULATE AN ESCAPE?"

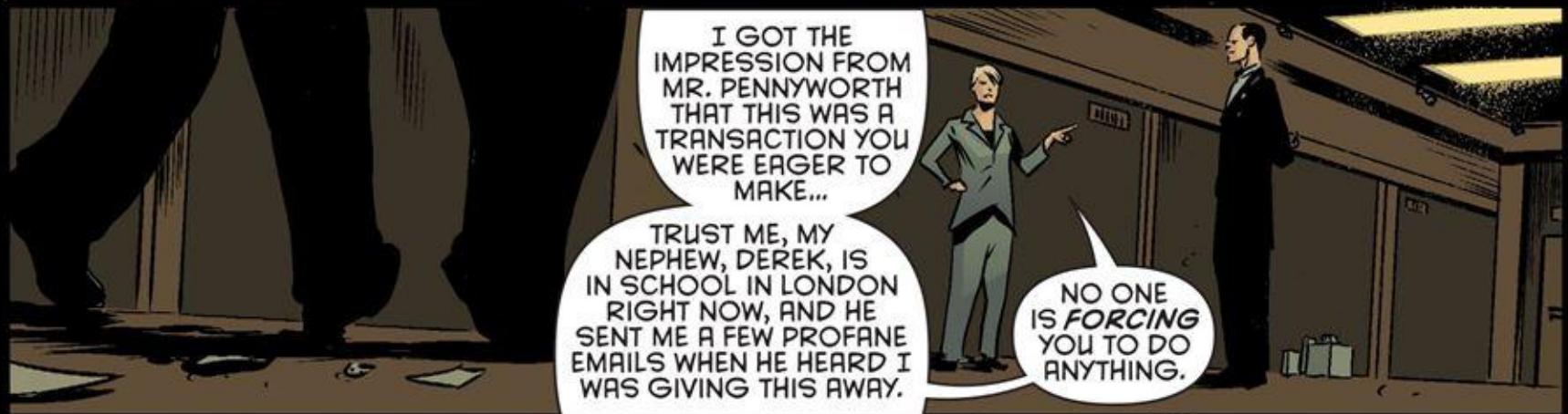
"HIS DOCTORS SAID HE'D
BEEN EXHIBITING MANIA
WHEN HE HEARD THE MANOR
WAS BEING RELINQUISHED
BACK TO YOU. WE FELT THAT
THE TRANSFER WAS TOO
EASY A CHANCE FOR HIM
TO SLIP THROUGH OUR
FINGERS. WE DECIDED
NOT TO RISK IT."

"SO WE HAD HIS WHOLE CELL
REMOVED AND TRANSFERRED
WITHOUT EVER UNLOCKING
THE DOOR."

"THERE'S AN OUTER WALL
MISSING IN THE NORTH
WING, BY THE WAY. I HAVE
MY CONTRACTORS COMING
IN ON FRIDAY TO PATCH IT
UP GOOD AS NEW. I HOPE
YOU UNDERSTAND."



"OF COURSE."





STOP

BRUCE! WHAT'S--

JULIE!

STAY CALM,
BRUCE...I'M
CALLING FOR
HELP.



KLIK

TUT-TUT,
GERI.

DID YOU REALLY
THINK I WOULDN'T
CREATE A BLACKOUT
ZONE AROUND THE
HOUSE THE SECOND
WE TOOK
CONTROL?

YOUR BRIGHT,
SHINY NEW
BATBOT ISN'T
COMING OUT
TO PLAY.







IT TOOK A FEW DAYS TO WORK OUT THE KINKS.

GETTING CLAYFACE TO CREATE DOUBLES OF US THAT CAPTURED OUR ESSENCE WHILE HE HID US RIGHT IN PLAIN SIGHT.

A PAIN, SURE. BUT WE DID IT FOR YOU.

I HAVE NO IDEA WHO YOU ARE.

SO THE RUMORS WERE TRUE...

MISTER WAYNE HAS LOST HIS MIND!

NOT IN THE COLLOQUIAL SENSE, OF COURSE. IT'S FAR MORE LITERAL. IT'S JUST NOT THERE ANYMORE.

THIS MUST BE SO VERY INTRIGUING FOR YOU, EVERY FACE ON THE STREET THAT GIVES YOU THAT SECOND LOOK...

YOU HAVE NO IDEA IF IT'S SOMEONE WHO RECOGNIZES YOU FROM A MAGAZINE, OR A FRIEND YOU'VE HAD FOR YEARS AND YEARS.

THAT MUST BE SO FRUSTRATING. I CAN HARDLY IMAGINE.

WELL, DON'T YOU WORRY, BRUCE. MY FRIENDS AND I ARE HERE TO HELP YOU STRAIGHTEN THINGS OUT.

SO, YOU
DON'T KNOW
WHO I AM?
THAT'S JUST
FINE.

I'M NOT VAIN.
I MEAN, I HAVE A
WIKIPEDIA ARTICLE
LONGER THAN MOST MASS-
MARKET PAPERBACKS,
BUT PEOPLE DO LIKE
THEIR COSTUMED
VILLAINS.

HERE, I'LL LAY
OUT THE GROUNDWORK...
I LIKE QUESTIONS, BIG
QUESTIONS, TOUGH
QUESTIONS...

AND SO I
HAVE ONE FOR
YOU RIGHT NOW, THE
EASIEST, HARDEST
QUESTION ANYONE
HAS EVER ASKED
YOU.

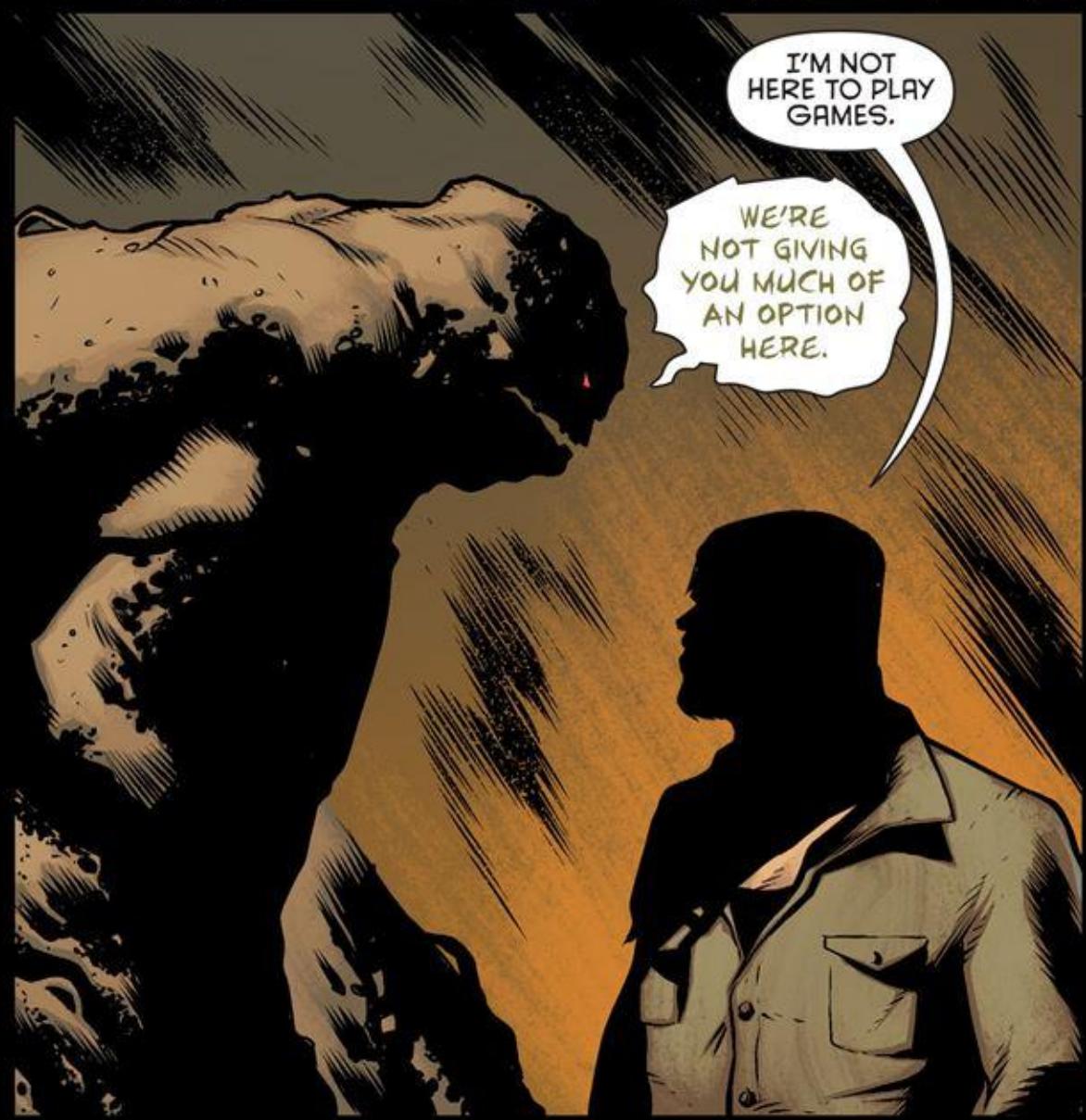


I'M NOT
HERE TO PLAY
GAMES.

WE'RE
NOT GIVING
YOU MUCH OF
AN OPTION
HERE.

IT'S OKAY, BRUCE, I'M
NOT GOING TO GO
HARD ON YOU. THERE
WILL BE PLENTY
OF CLUES.

FIRST WILL BE
REALIZING THAT
YOU WALKED ONTO
THE GAME BOARD
THE SECOND YOU
ENTERED THIS
MANOR.









THIS IS WHERE IT ALL STARTED.
THIS IS WHAT LIES
BENEATH THE RIDDLE
OF BRUCE WAYNE.

TWO
BODIES,
LAYING IN AN
ALLEY.

SOMEBODY
HAS TO HAVE
TOLD YOU THE
STORY BY
NOW.

YOU HAVE TO
IMAGINE WHAT THAT
WOULD HAVE DONE
TO THE LITTLE BOY
WHO SAW IT...

BANG!
BANG!

AND IN THOSE
MOMENTS, YOUR
ENTIRE LIFE IS RIPPED
AWAY, EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW IS
TURNED ON
ITS SIDE.

THIS
ISN'T MY
STORY.

YES,
BRUCE.
IT IS.

YOU JUST
DON'T KNOW
IT AS WELL AS
THE REST
OF US.





HERE, THIS IS MY FAVORITE ROOM. WE LEFT IT JUST AS THE ARKHAM DOCTORS HAD IT.

THIS IS WHERE THEY ADMINISTER ELECTRO-SHOCK THERAPY, BRUCE.

THIS IS WHERE I DISCOVERED MY FAVORITE CLUE. SOMETHING I'M SURE DIDN'T MAKE IT INTO THE OFFICIAL NARRATIVE WHEN YOU CAME BACK.

YOU WANTED SHOCK THERAPY. MORE THAN THAT, YOU NEEDED IT. YOU WERE DEMANDING IT.

YOU WENT TO ARKHAM, BRUCE. I READ THE FILES EARLIER TODAY...YOU CAN CHECK THEM YOURSELVES.

UNTIL YOU CHICKENED OUT AT THE LAST MOMENT. AND SO YOU RAN.

AND YOU
DISAPPEARED
FOR YEARS.

EIGHT YEARS,
BRUCE! CAN YOU
EVEN IMAGINE?!

NOT ONE
SIGN OF WHERE YOU
HAD GONE, THE WHOLE
WORLD THOUGHT YOU
WERE DEAD. THERE
WAS A NIGHTLY VIGIL
FOR MONTHS AT OLD
WAYNE TOWER.

HUNDREDS
OF PEOPLE, BRUCE...
YOU WOULD HAVE TO
CROSS THE STREET
NOT TO STEP ON THE
FLOWERS.



I MEAN, WHAT
KIND OF PERSON
DOES THAT? CUTS
EVERYONE OUT OF HIS
LIFE AND FLEES, LIVES
OFF THE GRID FOR THE
BETTER PART OF
A DECADE...

AND THERE
WASN'T A
SIGN.

IT'D HAVE BEEN
ONE THING IF YOU WERE
OFF PARTYING YOUR WAY
ACROSS EUROPE AND ASIA,
BUT THEY HAD YOUR FACE
PLASTERED ACROSS
THE GLOBE.



HAVE YOU
GUESSED IT
YET?

MARK
THE ANSWER
DOWN ON
YOUR SHEET?



YOU HAVE
TO HAVE A
LITTLE BIT
OF AN--
I'M NOT
PLAYING.



NO?
WELL, HOW
ABOUT SOME
INCENTIVE?







THIS IS YOUR GREATEST LEGACY. THE LEGACY OF YOUR MADNESS





SEE THE SCARS? YOU PAID FOR EACH AND EVERY SINGLE ONE OF THEM, TO LIVE OUT SOME SICK FANTASY.

AND THEN YOU HAND OVER YOUR HOUSE TO THE CITY... THEY SAY IT WAS BANKRUPTCY, BUT I DON'T BUY IT FOR A SECOND.

YOU PUT ALL THE PEOPLE YOU BROKE IN YOUR CHILDHOOD HOUSE, SO THEY WOULD SEE YOUR NAME OVER AND OVER AND OVER AGAIN.

SO THEY WOULD KNOW WHOSE FAULT IT WAS.
SO THEY WOULD REMEMBER YOUR NAME.

THEY TALK ABOUT THE INSANITY OF THE ARKHAMAS, BUT IT PALES IN COMPARISON TO THE INSANITY OF BRUCE WAYNE.

I'M NOT THAT PERSON ANYMORE...

THAT'S THE WHOLE DAMN POINT!

THAT IS WHAT WE CANNOT ABIDE, MISTER WAYNE.

YOU DO ALL OF THAT TO US, AND YOU THINK WE'RE GOING TO GIVE YOU A HAPPY ENDING?

YOU DON'T GET THE PRETTY GIRL AND THE BUTLER AND THE PRETTY HOUSE WITH THE WHITE PICKET FENCE.

YOU SHOULD STAY AS BROKEN AS YOU EVER WERE, LOCKED AWAY IN THE ASYLUM YOU BUILT WITH YOUR OWN TWO HANDS.

YOU GET YOUR LITTLE MINUTE IN THE ALLEY KNOCKED OUT OF YOUR HEAD, AND YOU GET TO LEAVE IT ALL BEHIND.

BUT WE GET THE SCARS. WE KEEP THE TRAUMA.

WITHOUT YOU, EVEN WITH MY ACCIDENT...ONCE I GOT OVER THE SHOCK OF IT, I COULD HAVE HAD AN INCREDIBLE LIFE. I WAS AN ACTOR. AND WITH THESE POWERS...I COULD HAVE PLAYED ANY ROLE IN THE WORLD.

I COULD BE LIVING WITH MY DEAR NORA, SAVING THOUSANDS OF LIVES A YEAR WITH THE CRYOTECHNOLOGY I WAS DEVELOPING AT YOUR COMPANY.

AND I'D HAVE BOUGHT SOME ISLAND IN THE MIDDLE OF THE PACIFIC WITH THE RANSOM MONEY THEY WERE PLANNING ON GIVING ME BACK IN THE ZERO YEAR.

SO HERE WE ARE
AT THE END OF THE GAME,
SCARRED AND BEATEN BY A
LITTLE BOY WHO WENT NUTS
A LONG TIME AGO IN AN
ALLEYWAY NOT SO
FAR AWAY.

AND WE HEAR
THAT WE'RE BEING CARTED
AWAY TO BE FORGOTTEN, WHILE
SOMEONE SO MUCH CRAZIER, SO
MUCH MORE DANGEROUS THAN
US, IS GETTING BACK HIS
FAIRY TALE LIFE?

NO. WE
COULDN'T
STAND FOR
THAT.

THE PUZZLE HAD BEEN
SOLVED, THE LEDGER
BALANCED, AND THEN YOU
HAD TO GO AND UNBALANCE
IT. WROTE IN YOUR PART IN
PENCIL AND ERASED IT ALL
WHEN IT DIDN'T GO THE
WAY YOU LIKED.

AND THAT JUST
WASN'T FAIR. THAT
ISN'T THE WAY THESE
GAMES ARE PLAYED. WE
DIDN'T GET OUR FAIRY
TALE ENDINGS, AND YOU
CERTAINLY DON'T
GET YOURS.

YOU KNOW, IT
TOOK SOME WORK
TO DIG UP THE EXACT
MODEL OF GUN THAT
WAS USED TO
SHOOT YOUR
PARENTS.

A BIT MORE WORK
THAN THAT TO BLACKMAIL
A GUARD TO SNEAK IT INTO
THE BUILDING. BUT I REALLY
FEEL LIKE THE DETAILS
MATTER, DON'T YOU?

AND NOW I'M
GOING TO SHOOT
YOUR PERFECT LITTLE LIFE
RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOUR
EYES, JUST SO YOU CAN
FEEL IT RUSHING AWAY
FROM YOU AGAIN.

IT'LL BE
DIFFERENT. A
NEW TRAUMA,
SURE.

BUT I'LL BE VERY
INTERESTED TO SEE
WHAT KIND OF CRAZY
BRUCE WAYNE WILL
BE NEXT.

WHADDAYA
THINK YOU'RE
DOING...



BANG

AND A
MISS, I'M
AFRAID...

VICTOR, GET
HIM READY. WE
SHOULD BE OFF
SOON.

GLADLY.

ANY LAST
WORDS, MISTER
WAYNE... ANYTHING YOU
WANT TO SAY TO YOUR
FRIENDS?

NO. JUST
SOMETHING
TO YOU.
I WASN'T
RIMING FOR YOU.
I WAS RIMING FOR
THE SIGNAL BLOCKER
ON THE TOP SHELF.

GERI, CALL
BATMAN.

NO...

AND
ONE LAST
THING...

CONASTA.





YOU WANT TO
KNOW WHAT CRAZY
IS? CRAZY IS SETTING
UP A FUN HOUSE BECAUSE
SOMEBODY HURT YOUR
FEELINGS RATHER THAN
ESCAPING WHEN
YOU HAD THE
CHANCE.

CRAZY IS
HOLDING A
GRUDGE SO HARD
YOU WANT TO
DESTROY A PERSON'S
LIFE RATHER THAN
FIX YOUR
OWN.



I KNOW... I WAS
A DIFFICULT MAN. I
DID THINGS THAT SEEM
OUTRIGHT INSANE NOW
THAT I LOOK BACK
AT THEM.

BUT I KNOW,
MORE THAN ANYTHING,
THAT THAT BRUCE DID
THEM BECAUSE HE KNEW
THEY WERE THE *RIGHT*
THINGS TO DO.



AND I
HOPE I CAN
LIVE UP TO HIS
LEGACY.

HERE, LET'S
SEE IF THIS
SCARS.



SO...I'M GUESSING AFTER
ALL THE EXCITEMENT, YOU
MIGHT HAVE SOURED ON
THIS PLACE?



I DON'T
KNOW...

ALFRED
WAS RIGHT...THIS
GARDEN WOULD
BE AN AWFULLY
NICE PLACE FOR
A WEDDING.

WHAT
DO YOU
THINK, JULIE?

BRUCE...
IF YOU
THINK I'M
STEPPING
FOOT IN
THAT PLACE
UNTIL EVERY
INCH OF IT
HAS BEEN
CHECKED
FOR
MONSTERS
AND
LUNATICS...

...YOU REALLY
ARE CRAZY."