



94

BATMAN

THEIR
RELATIONSHIP
SHATTERED...



TYNION IV
MARCH
ALBUQUERQUE
BARON

AGES 13+
DCCOMICS.COM

TONY
March
2020

...IS THE
DARK KNIGHT
PREPARED FOR WAR?

YEARS AGO.

ALFRED CALLED
THEM MY LITTLE
GOTHAMS.

HE WANTED TO BELIEVE THEY
WERE SOME KIND OF DREAM,
SOME BOLD DESIGN FOR A
PERFECT GOTHAM THAT
EXCEEDED MY GRASP.

AND I LET HIM
THINK THAT. FOR
HIS OWN GOOD.



I DIDN'T WANT HIM
TO SEE THEM FOR
WHAT THEY WERE...

AFTERIMAGES OF A
NIGHTMARE CITY A YOUNG MAN
RETURNED TO, EACH NIGHT IN
HIS DREAMS FOR YEARS.

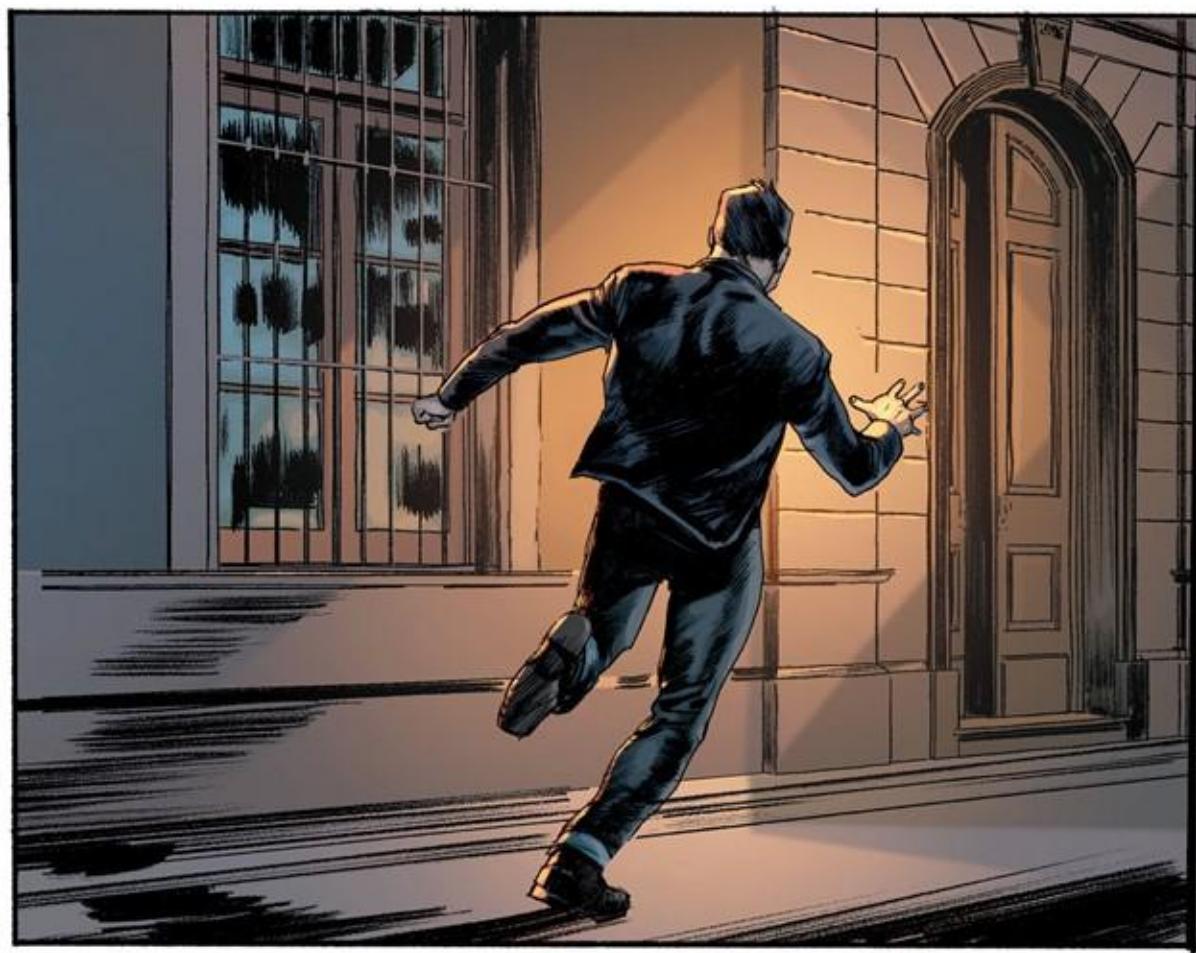
HUNDREDS OF NIGHTS, WITH
DOZENS OF TEACHERS SHAPING
ME INTO A KIND OF PERFECT
WEAPON OF MY OWN DEVISING.

EVERY NIGHT THE TOWERS
GREW TALLER AND MORE
FRIGHTENING, AND MY
JOURNEY HOME GREW
LONGER, AS I NEEDED TO
BECOME A MONSTER
CAPABLE OF FIGHTING ALL
THAT NIGHTMARE CITY WAS.

THEY WERE NEVER A
DESIGN FOR THE CITY.

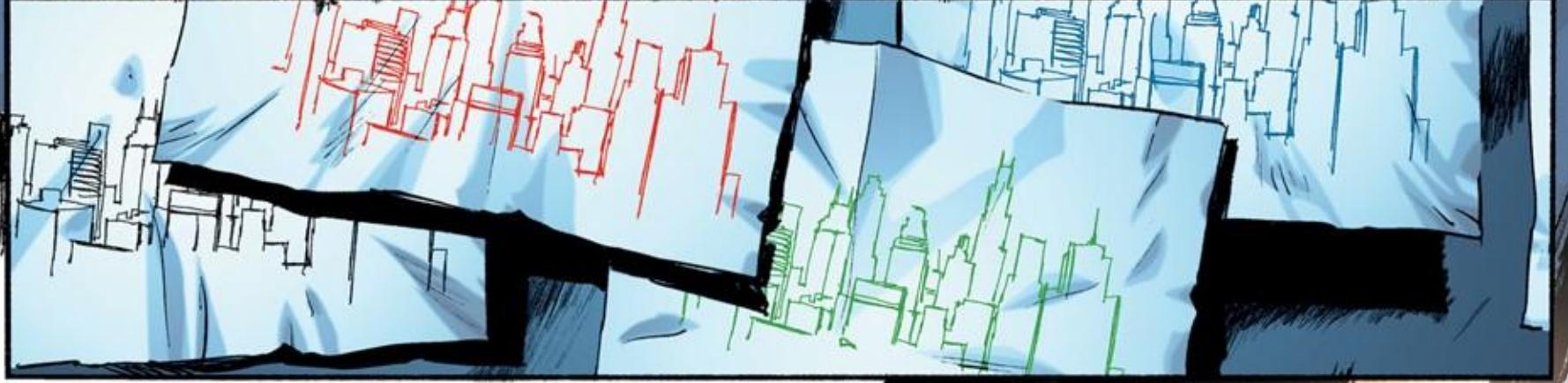
THE DARK DESIGNS
WERE ALWAYS FOR ME.











I REMEMBER THAT FIRST NIGHT OUT ON THE STREETS OF GOTHAM... BEFORE THE BAT. I REMEMBER EACH HIT. THE FEEL OF A RIB BRUISED, MAYBE BROKEN IN MY CHEST.

I REMEMBER SITTING IN A ROOM, JUST LIKE THIS. MY BODY WRITHING IN PAIN. I REMEMBER FEELING LIKE I WAS GOING TO DIE.

I KNEW I COULD RING THE BELL AND CALL FOR YOU, ALFRED, BUT I DIDN'T KNOW IF I SHOULD.

I ASSUMED THE NIGHTMARE CITY I HAD BEEN SKETCHING FOR YEARS WAS A DISTORTION, SOMETHING TWISTED AND WRONG.

BUT I HAD FINALLY SEEN ITS TRUE SHAPE, AND IT BROUGHT ME TO MY KNEES.

I WAS NOT ENOUGH TO FACE IT... I WAS ALREADY BAKER, WITH HIS SUNKEN EYES, AND CRUEL VOICE. I WAS ONLY A CHILD BUT I HAD LOST.

HOW COULD I MOVE A STEP BEYOND, AND WOULD THAT BE ENOUGH? WOULDN'T THEY JUST RESPOND IN KIND?

NO. I WOULD HAVE TO MAKE A LEAP FORWARD. AN EXPONENTIAL LEAP IN THE DESIGN.



BRUCE...



LUCIUS...?



THIS IS A
COMPRESSION
BAND. IT'LL STOP
THE BLEEDING, BUT
YOU'RE GOING TO
LOSE FEELING IN
YOUR LEG.

NEED
TO GET OUT
THERE.



NO. I'M
NOT A SURGEON,
BUT THIS AMOUNT OF
BLOOD...WE HAVE TO
GET YOU TO A
HOSPITAL.

DON'T
STAND ON IT,
BRUCE!



JOKER...
HAS... THE
FORTUNE.

I
KNOW.

LAWYERS
JUST SEIZED
YOUR HOUSE.
IT'S ALREADY
ON THE
NEWS.

WANTED



Bruce Wayne
IS WANTED FOR
EMBEZZLING MILLIONS.
THEY HAD THE NEWS STORIES
READY TO GO, ALREADY
BOUGHT, JUST WAITING
FOR THE FUNDS TO BE
TRANSFERRED TO
PAY FOR THEM.

THEY'RE GOING TO TAKE THE COMPANY
NEXT. I NEED TO BE HERE, AS CEO, TO
FIGHT THEM OFF. I CAN'T BE *THIS*
TO YOU.

LUCIUS...

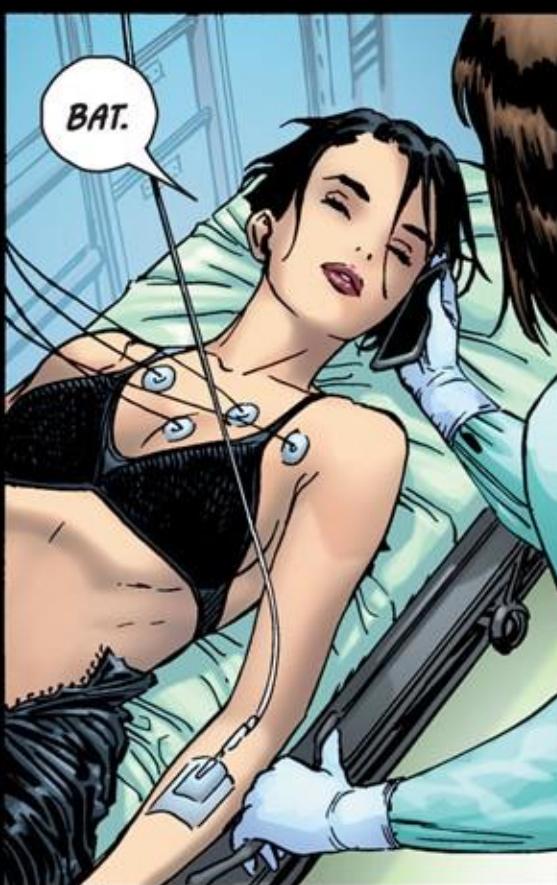
IF YOU
WANT ME TO SAVE YOU,
YOU NEED ME TO DO THE
JOB YOU HIRED ME TO DO.

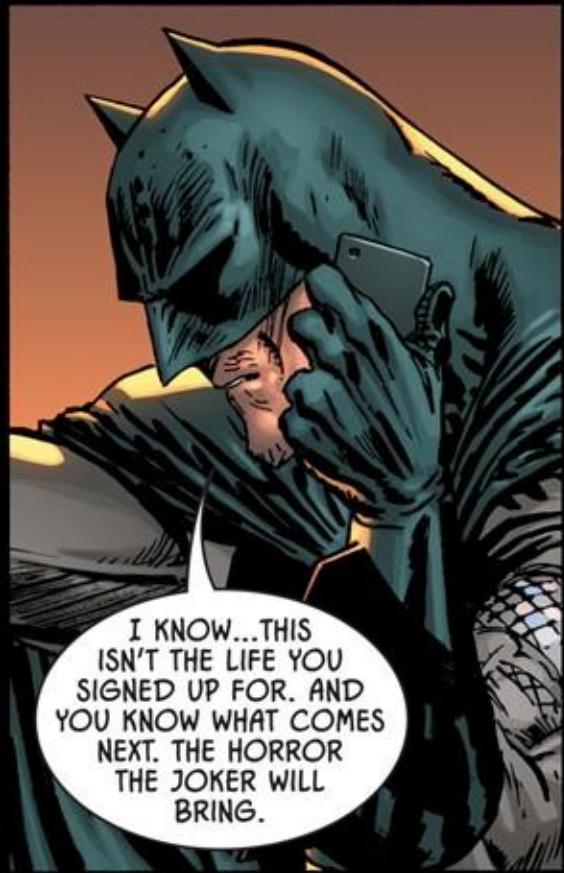
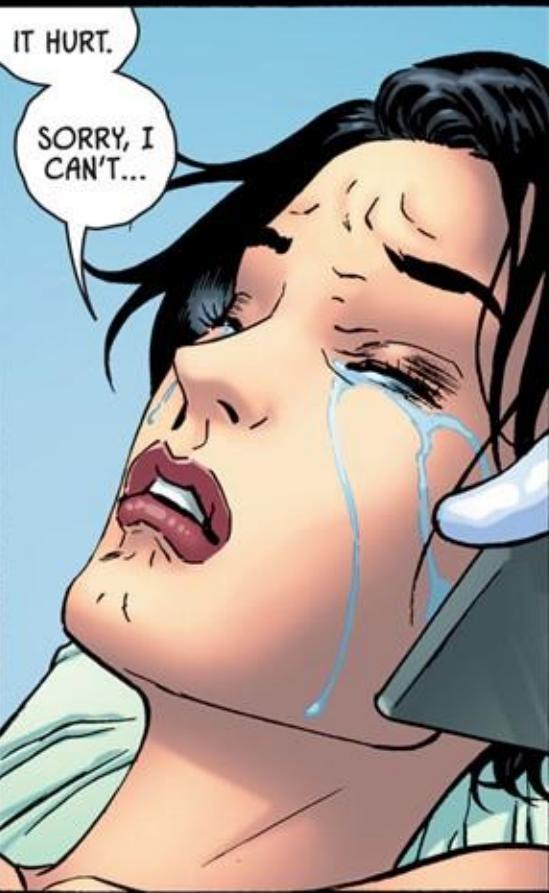
I'M SORRY,
BRUCE. I
KNOW YOU
NEEDED ME
TO BE YOUR
ALLY, LIKE
ALFRED
WAS...

BUT THE
SKILLS AND
SINGULAR FOCUS
OF THAT MAN...I
CAN'T DO IT
ANYMORE.

IF I HAD
BEEN FOCUSED, I
WOULD HAVE SEEN THE
SIGNS FOR ALL
OF THIS.







RAH!

BRUCE!
ARE YOU
CRAZY?!

CALL OFF THE MEDICS. CALL LESLIE THOMPKINS AND TELL HER TO PREPARE THE PRIVATE SUITE AT THE FREE CLINIC. I'M GOING TO MERCY HOSPITAL TO GET SELINA.

I NEED TO GET TO SELINA BEFORE HE DOES.

IF YOU'RE NOT IN THIS, YOU SHOULD GET OUT OF THE CITY.

BRUCE. WHAT ARE YOU DOING? YOU CAN'T FEEL YOUR LEG. YOU'RE ALMOST CERTAINLY BLEEDING INTERNALLY.

YOU'VE NEVER BEEN IN THE HEART OF A JOKER ATTACK, LUCIUS. NOT LIKE THIS. NONE OF US CAN BE OUT IN THE OPEN.

I'LL NEVER FORGET
BAKER'S LESSON.

WHAT HE OFFERED IN REJECTING ME. I
SAW A MAN WITH HIS FACULTIES INTACT
WHO THE WORLD HAD BROKEN, WHO
COULD NOT SURVIVE THE LEAP THE
WORLD DEMANDED OF HIM.

I REMEMBER THE ANGER I
FELT AT HIS REJECTION. THE
SHAME. I CARRIED IT TO
GOTHAM. I CARRIED IT
UNTIL THE BAT CRASHED
THROUGH THE WINDOW AND
I SAW A WAY FORWARD
THAT BAKER NEVER DID.

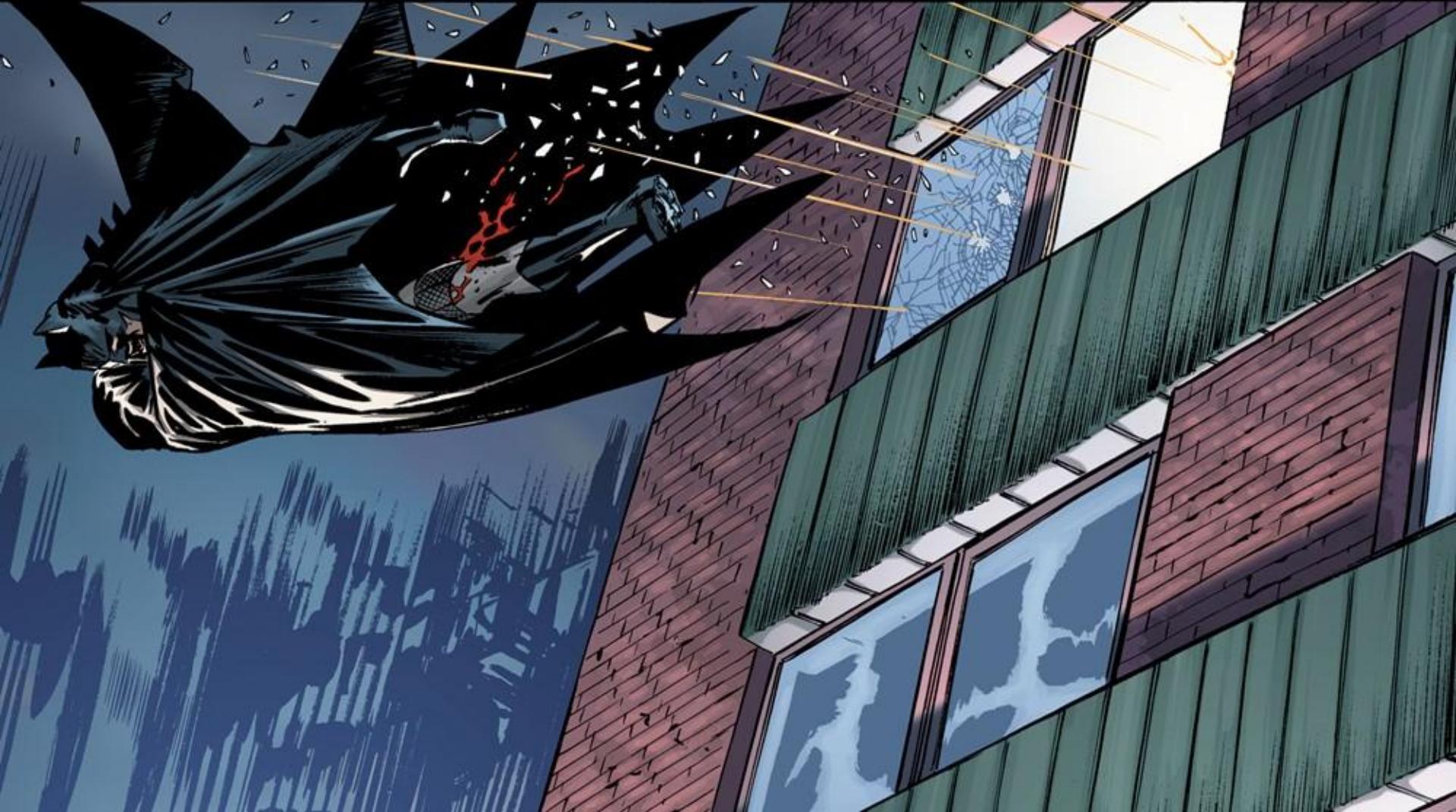
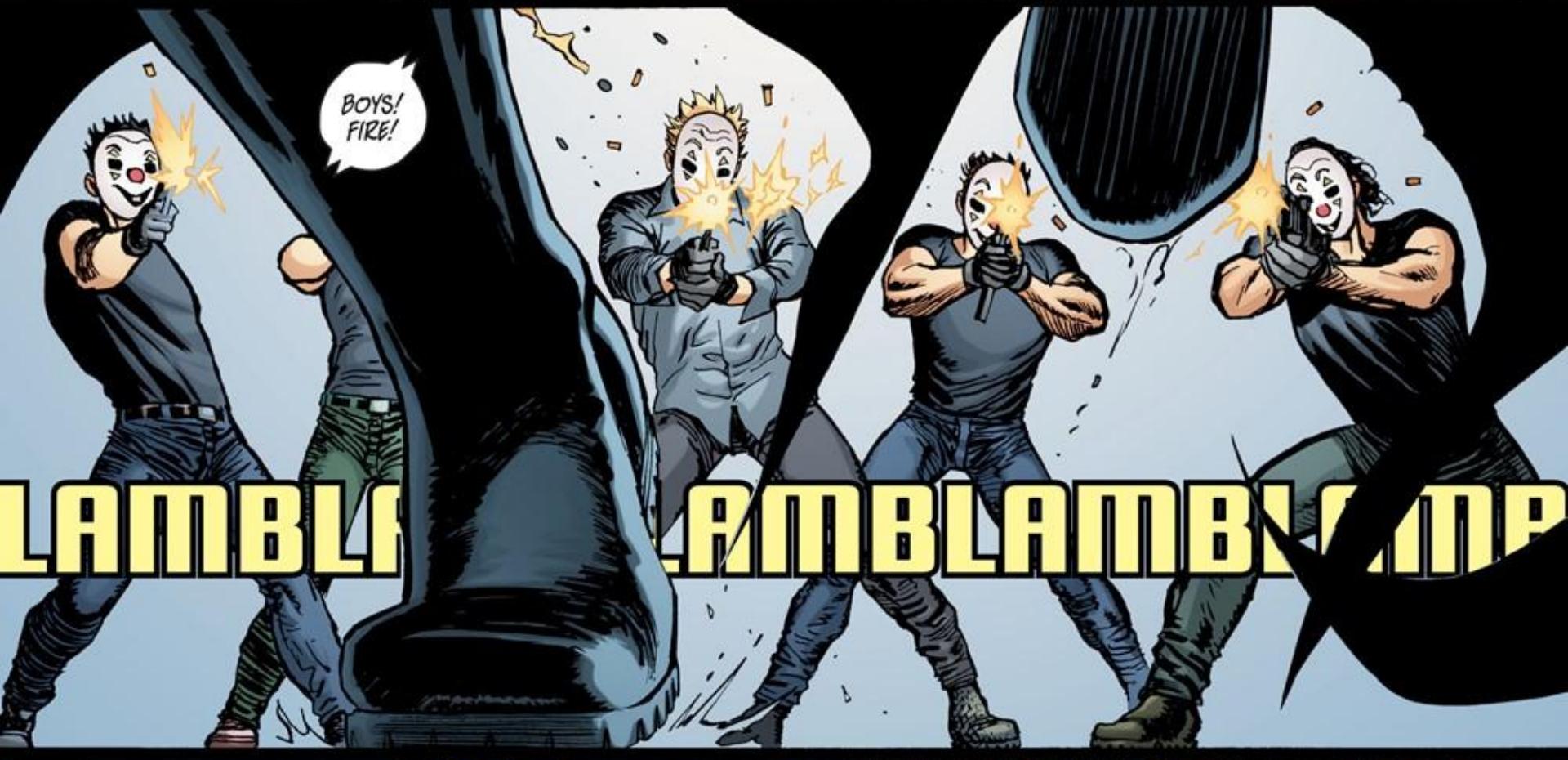
BAKER HAD WANTED ME TO FAIL, TO JUSTIFY
HIS OWN FAILURE. HE HAD SEEN MY NIGHTMARE
CITY, AND TOLD ME I WOULD FALL BEFORE IT.
BUT I WOULDN'T FALL.

I'D
LEAP.









BAT...

BATMAN!

WAUGH...
WRONG WINGED
CREATURE, I'M
AFRAID.

JOKER'S MEN
WERE SWEEPING
THE FLOORS OF THE
HOSPITAL. IT SEEMED
LIKE THE RIGHT
MOMENT TO MAKE
THE ESCAPE.

THE
DESIGNER?

IS DEAD.
IT WAS THE
JOKER PLAYING
US ALL.

THERE. THAT
JUICY BIT OF
INFORMATION HAS
BOUGHT YOU ENTRY
INTO MY PRIVATE
LOUNGE.

PRIVATE...?





AND YOU
ANSWER.

DC COMICS
proudly
presents

THE DARK DESIGNS

FINALE

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BATMAN created by BOB KANE with BILL FINGER

YES,
ALFRED...
I WILL BECOME
A BETTER
BAT.

NEXT MONTH: JOKER WAR!