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40

SNYDER
CAPULLO
MIKI
PLASCENCIA

THE NEW 52!

BATMAN



Capullo
14

RATED T TEEN

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**This
moment.**

How many times
have you come
back to it?

The searing heat.
The vat, with its
strangely sweet
scent, a green
apple smell...

The funhouse
mirror curve
of that helmet.
Blood red.

And him. Him, right there,
inches from your fingers.
So close you could feel
the heat from him. There,
but already falling...

No. Letting himself
fall...like he knew. Like
he was laughing at you
from the start. At your
mission. At your life.
At all of it.

Like none of it
matters. Like
none of it means
anything.

Sometimes, in
your mind, you
get there. You're
fast enough.
You grab him.

But he laughs
even harder.

Like whatever
you do, it was
all, always...

BATMAN: ENDGAME PART SIX

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I told them all the masks have a knockout gas that'll be released should any of them use lethal force.

It isn't true, but it'll do. They're desperate.

DAMMIT. THERE ARE TOO MANY! IVY!

ON IT.

MY, YOU ARE LIGHT
ON YOUR FEET! WILL YOU MARRY ME?
I KNOW IT'S A SHOT IN THE DARK.
WHAT...TOO SOON?

WE CAN'T GET ANY CLOSER!

NOT ALL OF US.

BANE!

I HEAR YOU!



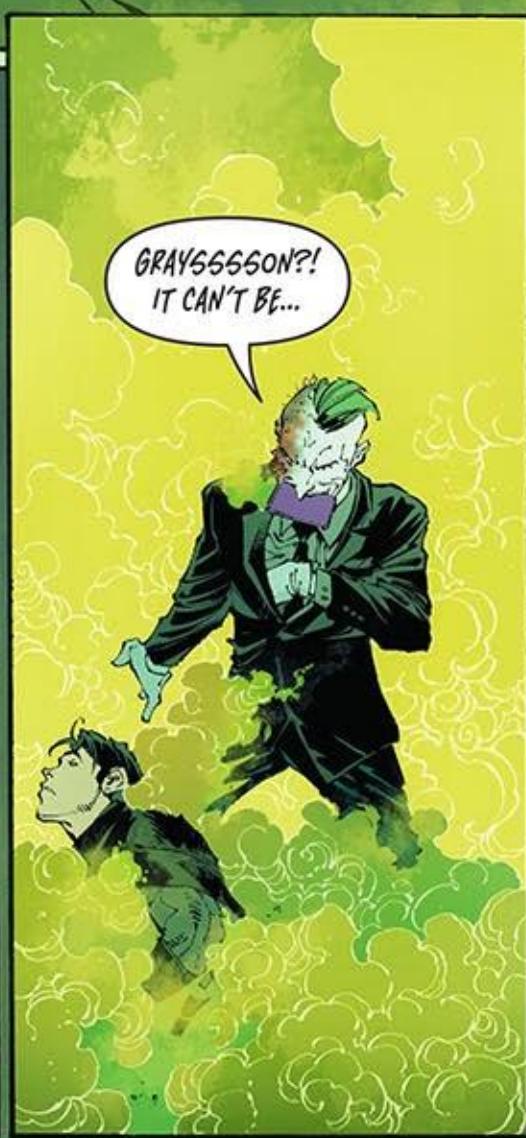


HEEEHEEEHEEEHEEEHEEE

HEE HEEEE HEE HEE HEE HEE







BATMAN,
YOU'RE PASSING
THE THOUSAND-FOOT
DEPTH MARK. YOU'RE
NEARLY TOO
DEEP TO--

I'M GETTING
CLOSE. THE
CABLE'S ALMOST
AT ITS END.

JUST PLEASE
HURRY... I'M RUNNING
AS MUCH INTERFERENCE AS
I CAN, BUT THE EXPLOSIVES
ARE NON-CONTINGENT. I CAN'T
KEEP THEM FROM DETONATING
MUCH LONGER, AND WITH YOU
THAT BLOODY DEEP... A
CAVE-IN WOULD--

THEN
JUST GET
READY TO
PULL ME
UP.

HOW
ARE THE
OTHERS?

I LOST
CONTACT.

IT
COULD BE
INTERCEPTORS.
JUST KEEP
GOING.



Now you just have to **find** the
damn stuff. The evidence is there.
You got your look at the Owls'
model... they mined not far away.
Still, the caverns are a maze.

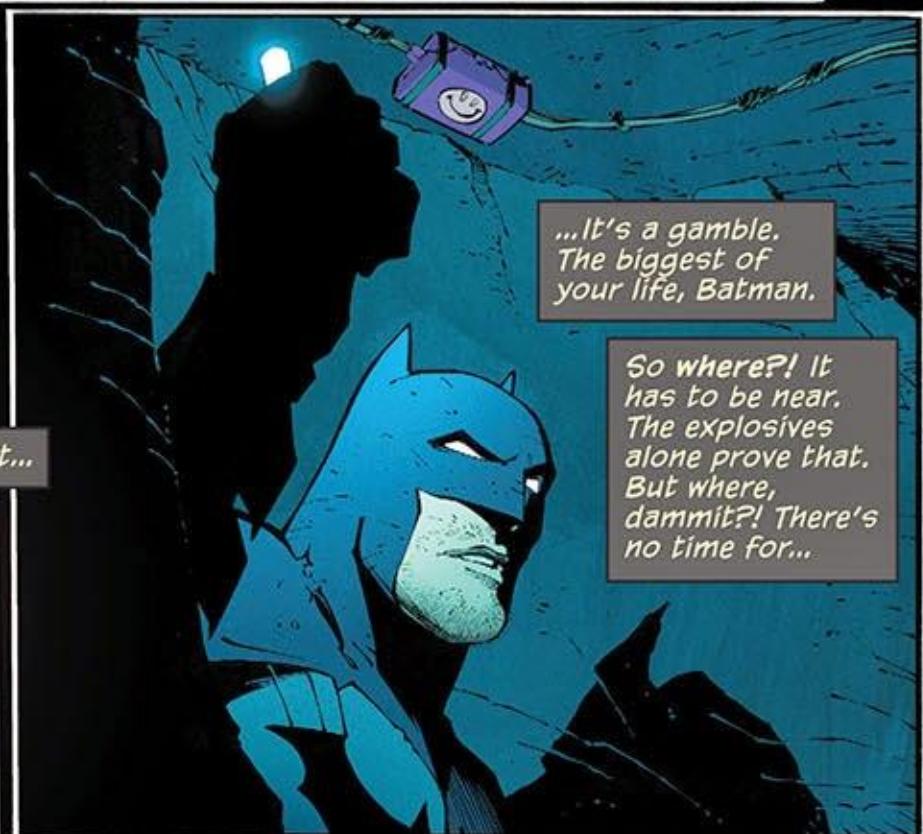
So your best bet?
The same eye that
your father gave
you, that led you
to that first cave.

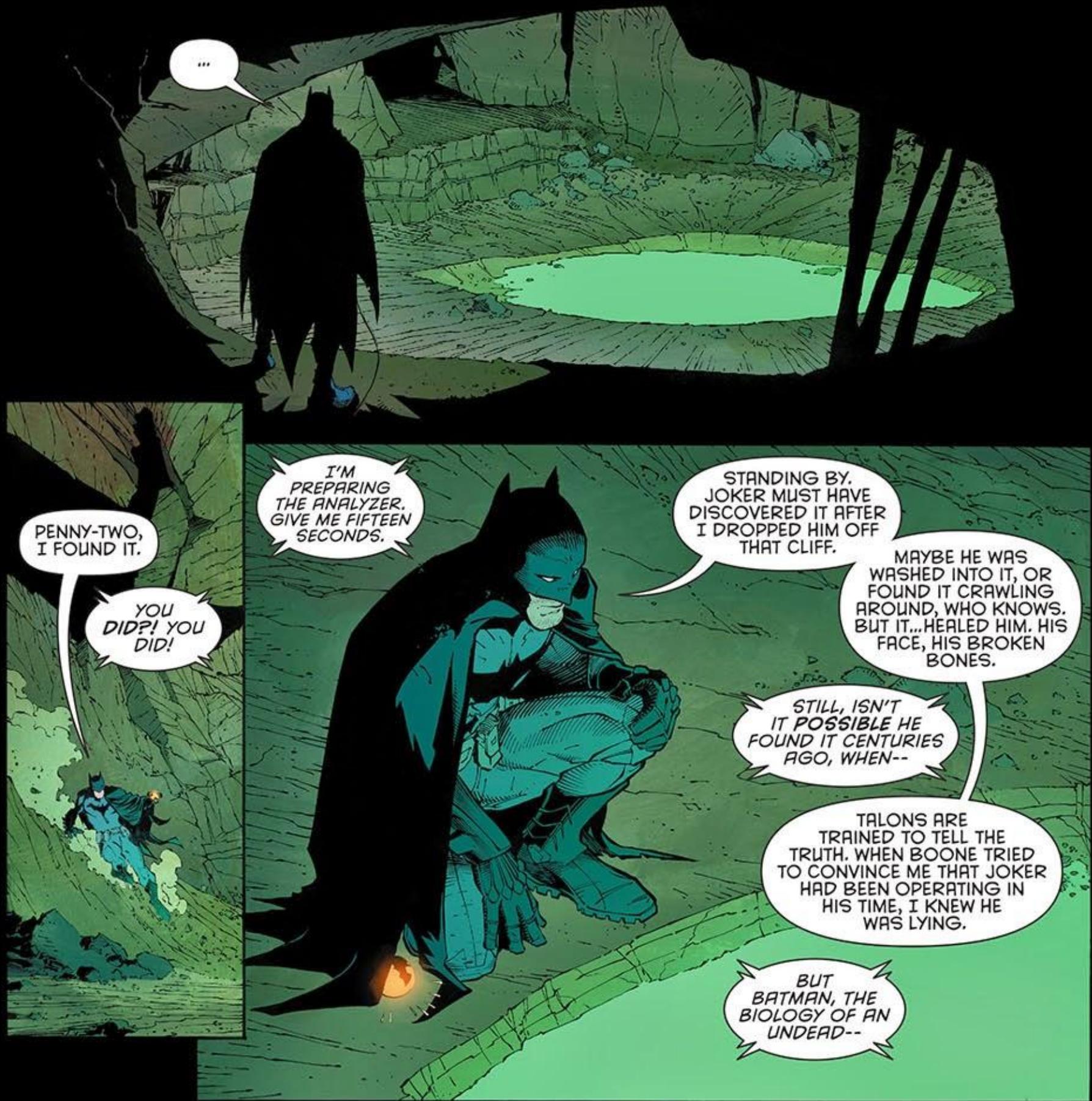
Releasing it from
the cliff you dropped
him from last time.
Letting it chart...

But...

...it's a gamble.
The biggest of
your life, Batman.

So where?! It
has to be near.
The explosives
alone prove that.
But where,
dammit?! There's
no time for...







DID SOMEONE
ORDER A SNAG?!
HAHAHAH!

AAAGH!

I REMEMBER YOU
TELLING ME YOU KNEW YOUR
CAVES BETTER THAN ANYONE...
WELL THESE ONES ARE MIIINE.
THE DEEPEST, DARKEST ONES IN
GOTHAM. WELCOME TO THEM,
BATSSSSS.

BRUCE, I'M
PULLING YOU UP!
TELL ME YOU'RE
BUCKLED IN!

-UHH-
HE'LL JUST...
FOLLOW IT UP.
HE'LL STOP
IT.

BRUCE, YOU'RE
BUCKLED IN, RIGHT?
ARE YOU BLOODY
BUCKLED IN?!

NO. PULL
THE EYE
UP.

BUT
B-- DO IT.

I HAVE
MORE LEFT TO
DO DOWN
HERE.



HAHA!
THAT'S THE
SPIRIT!

So fast. I always
forget how fast he
is. But now he
seems even quicker,
too quick to--

-Unh!-



I KNOW
WHAT YOU'RE
THINKING,
BRUCE...



SO FAST!
DID I TRAIN SINCE
WE MET LAST?
HAHA!



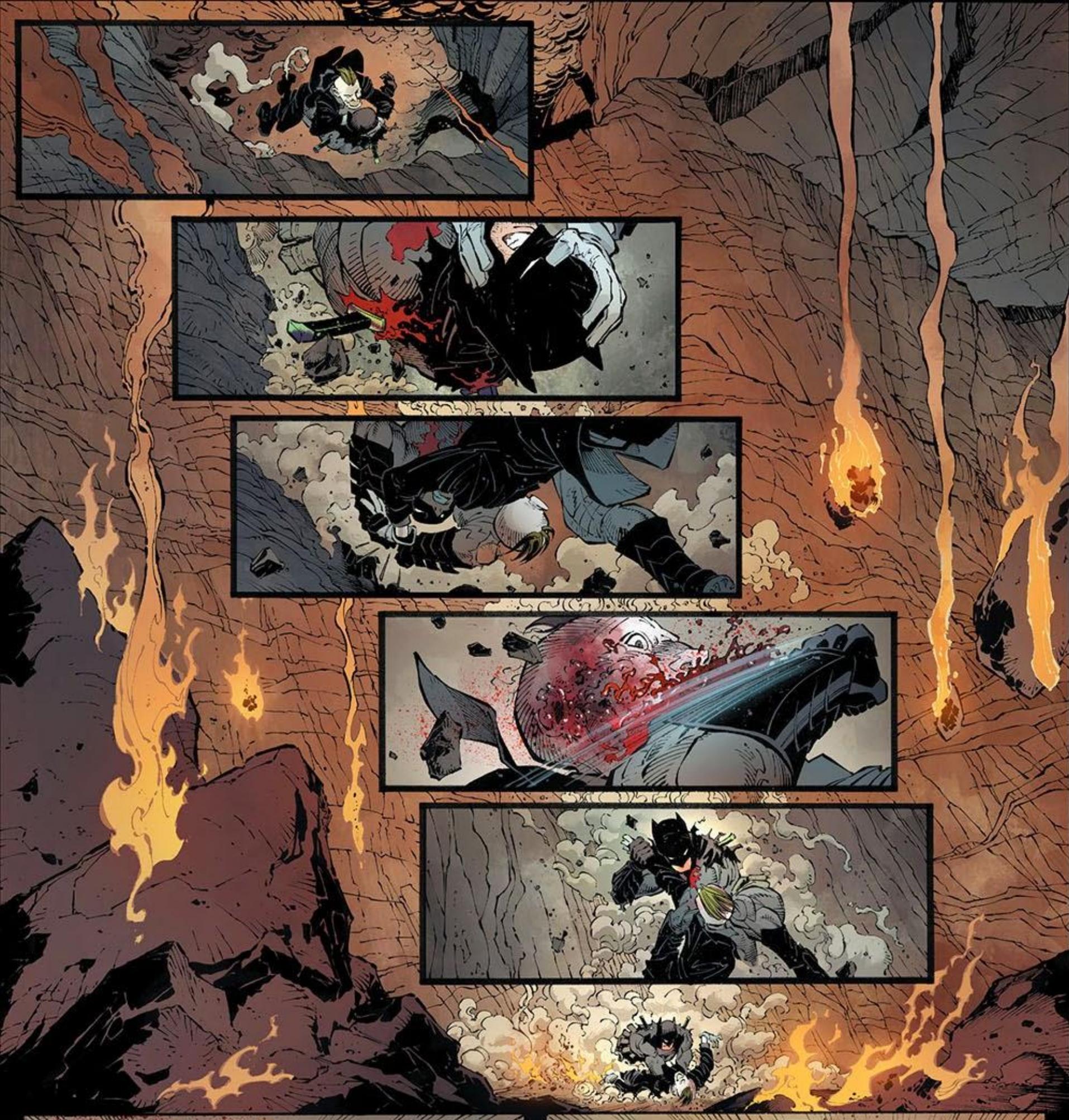
IS IT THE DIONESIUM? OR
MAYBE... JUST MAYBE, IS IT
THAT I WAS ALWAYS THIS
FAST AND I JUST LET YOU
THINK I WAS SLOWER?
HUH.

AWWW, DON'T LOOK
AT ME LIKE THAT!

JUST
THINK OF
THE GREAT
TIMES WE'VE
HAD...



...AND
SMILE!







=COUGH= TURN OVER,
BRUCE. I WANT YOU TO LOOK AT ME.
=COUGH= I WANT YOU TO SEE ME
FOR WHO I REALLY AM!

BUT THEN YOU...YOU CAME SWEEPING IN, TRANSFORMED INTO SOMETHING AS CRAZY AS ME, BIGGER THAN THEM, AND YOU FOUGHT ME ON IT.

AND FOR A LONG TIME, THE JOKE WAS ON ME, WASN'T IT, FIGHTING FOR MEANINGLESSNESS BUT GIVING MEANING BY VIRTUE OF THE FIGHT! HA!

BECAUSE I'M THE ONE WHO LAUGHS, YOU GET IT?! I'VE ALWAYS BEEN THERE, LAUGHING AT YOU, AT ALL OF YOU, AT THE GREAT JOKE, THAT YOU THINK YOUR LIVES HAVE MEANING! THAT ANY OF IT MATTERS! EVEN WHEN I WAS IN DISGUISE, WEARING MAKEUP AND RED, I SAID SO!

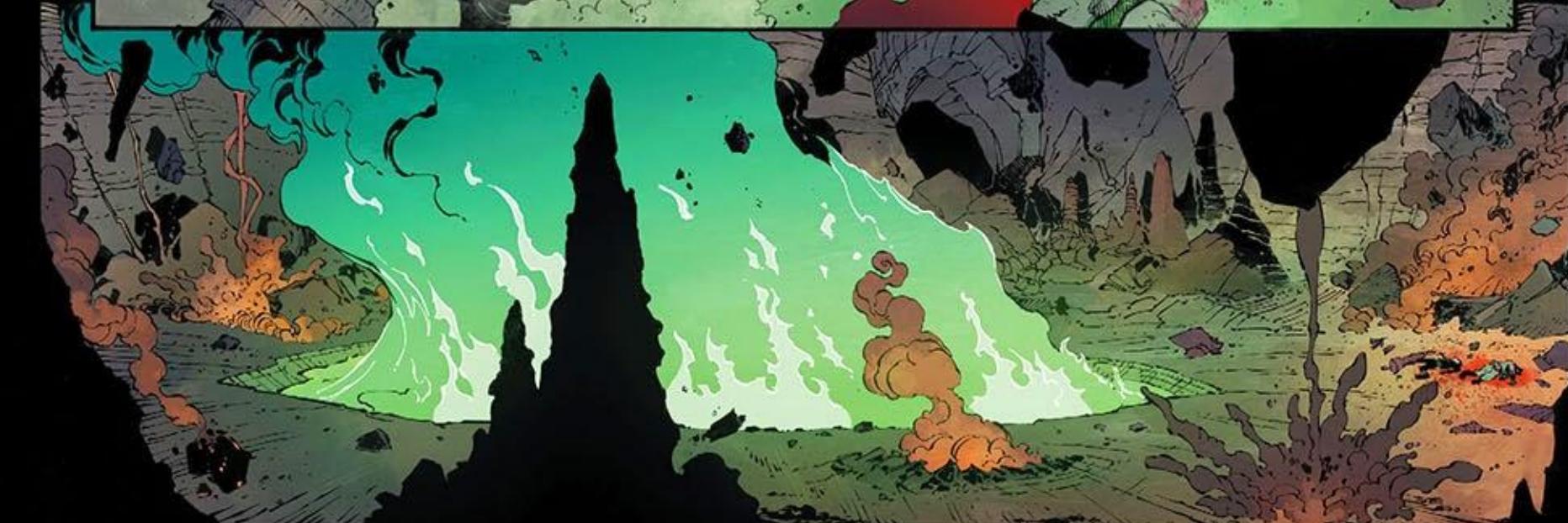
WHAT FUN WE HAD, BATTLING IT OUT. BUT THEN, WHEN YOU CHICKENED OUT, WHEN YOU RECOILED, WELL...IT WAS LIKE A LONG, SHARP...

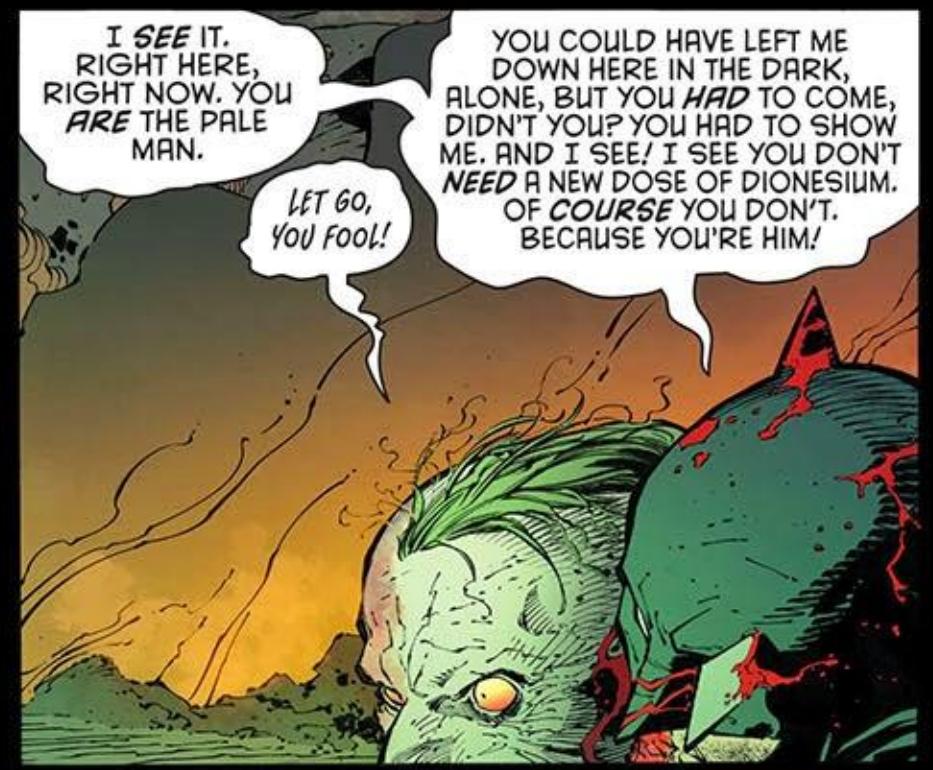
...KNIFFFE IN THE HEART!

=UNH= I COULD HAVE MADE YOU FOREVER, JUST LIKE YOU ALWAYS WANTED! MY BLOOD, THIS... I COULD HAVE =UNH= SAVED YOU! THIS COULD HAVE HAD A HAPPY ENDING!

IT COULD... HAVE BEEN... HILARIOUS!

IT'S... NOT OVER YET.









TWO WEEKS LATER.



...
WHAT I DON'T
UNDERSTAND IS... IN THE
SHORT TIME I'VE BEEN HERE,
I'VE SEEN HIM ENCOUNTER ALL
SORTS OF MATERIAL. ELECTRUM.
LAZARUS. MAGIC AND SCIENCE.
BUT HE NEVER... HE NEVER TOOK
ANYTHING TO PROTECT
HIMSELF.

IT'S LIKE HE
WAS DARING
DEATH. I JUST
DON'T...

I DON'T
KNOW.



HE LEFT A NOTE. IT'S
A LITTLE MYSTERIOUS.
AND BRIEF, TO SAY
THE LEAST. FRANKLY, I
DON'T UNDERSTAND
IT. DO YOU WANT
TO SEE IT?

NO.

YES.



HERE.
TAKE A
LOOK.



"SEE WHAT
I MEAN?"

"CRYPTIC."



"HE NEVER LIKED TO LOOK AT HIS OWN DEATH, JULIA. HE ONLY THOUGHT OF PREVENTING IT."

"BUT THE LAST FEW DAYS, I KNOW HE HAD TO LOOK AT IT MANY TIMES, IN MANY WAYS."

"MY HOPE WAS--AND ALWAYS HAS BEEN--THAT SOMEHOW, SEEING IT, UNDERSTANDING IT, WOULD LEAD HIM TO FIND A WAY OUT. I'VE ALWAYS KNOWN HE'D NEVER QUIT, BUT PERHAPS AT LEAST, LIKE YOU SAID, HE MIGHT FIND SOME GREATER PREVENTION. SOME ESCAPE..."

"BUT THAT'S FOOLISH. AND IT'S WHY JOKER...WHY HE WAS WRONG TO TEMPT BATMAN WITH A HAPPY ENDING. IT'S WHAT HE NEVER REALLY UNDERSTOOD ABOUT BATMAN, WITH HIS OFFERS OF IMMORTALITY AND TRANSCENDENCE..."

"IT'S THE THING THAT BRUCE KNEW TO BE TRUE ABOUT BATMAN, MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE."

"THE THING WE ALL KNOW, DEEP DOWN, BUT DON'T LIKE TO ADMIT..."

"...THAT THE STORY OF BATMAN IS, AND ALWAYS WILL BE, A TRAGEDY."

"BRUCE WOULD NEVER HAVE LET IT BE ANYTHING ELSE."

THE GOTHAM ROYAL THEATER

"BATMAN COULD LIVE FOREVER. HE COULD ESCAPE. BUT HE DOESN'T. HE DIES, JUST LIKE EVERY ONE OF US, EVEN THOUGH HE DOESN'T HAVE TO."

"THAT'S HIS FLAW."

"BUT IT'S ALSO HIS GREATEST STRENGTH. THE VERY THING THAT MAKES HIM IMMORTAL."

"HE SAYS, WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER. HE SAYS, LIVE BRAVELY IN THE TIME YOU HAVE AND SMILE AT THE VOID."

"THAT'S WHY THE NOTE SAYS WHAT IT DOES. WHY IT'S ONLY ONE WORD."

"WHY BATMAN'S LAST MESSAGE IS, AND WILL ALWAYS BE..."

