



616 AUG 2003

LOEB

LEE

WILLIAMS

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
A

BATMAN



JIM LEE
WILLIAMS

One mile out
from Metropolis.

Midnight.

METROPOLIS
TOWER THIS IS
LEXCORP ONE.
CLIMBING NOW TO
EIGHT THOUSAND
FEET AND TURNING
EAST OVER THE
ATLANTIC.

ROGER,
LEXCORP ONE. YOU'VE GOT
CLEAR SKIES ALL THE WAY TO
THIRTY THOUSAND FEET.
HAVE A SAFE RIDE.

For months now,
someone has been...
on the attack.

Recruiting and
educating my
oldest foes in new
and deadly ways.

WE COPY
THAT, METROPOLIS.
IT LOOKS LIKE SMOOTH
SAILING FROM HERE
ON IN...

ORACLE.
I'M IN
POSITION.

B. LISTEN TO ME.
I KNOW HOW MUCH YOU
WANT TO BRING THIS
TO AN END.

That sort of operation
requires time and money.

And as Bruce Wayne should know,
there are only a handful of people
who have enough of both.

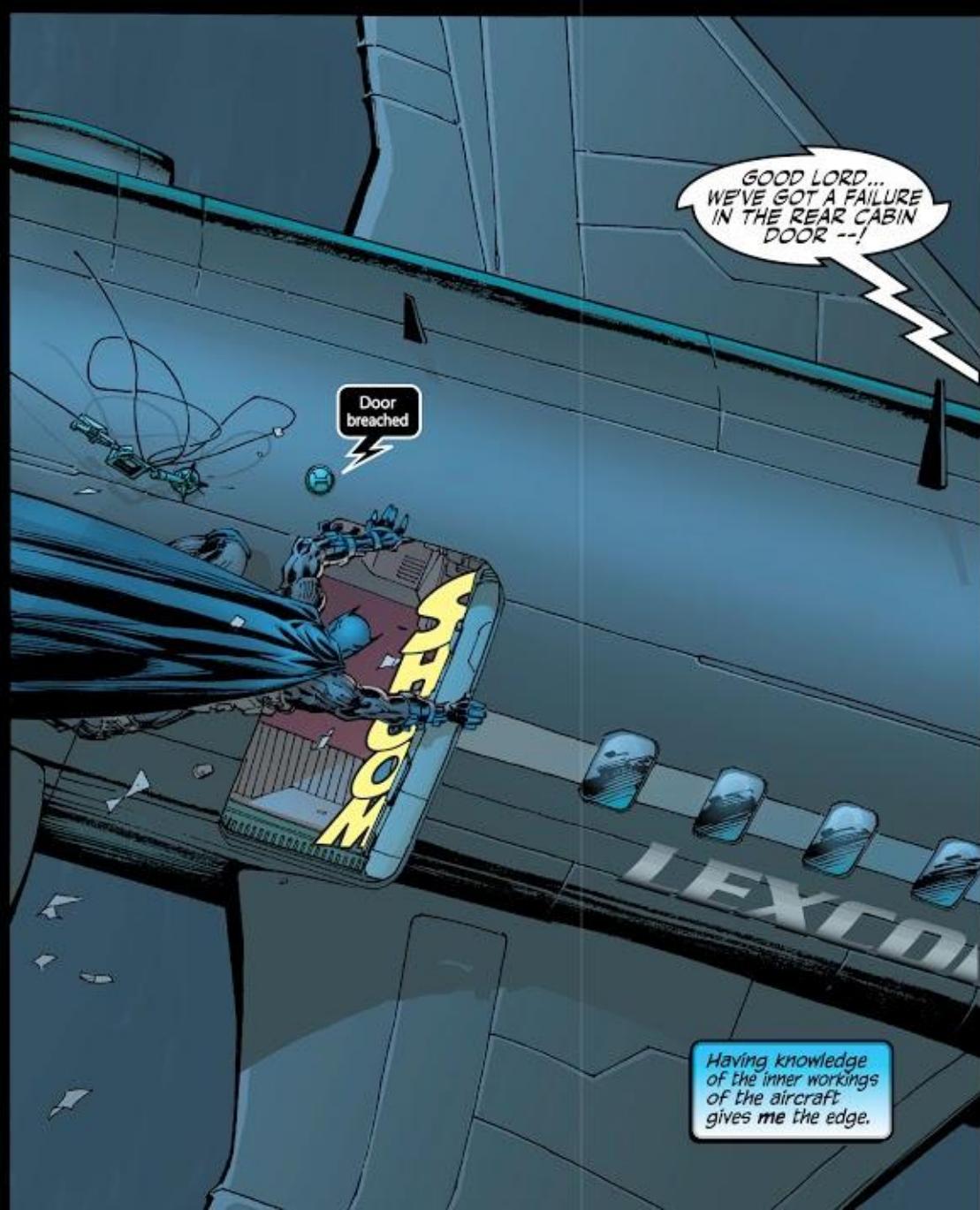
BUT EVEN
FOR YOU, THIS IS CRAZY.
YOU'VE GOT CIVILIANS
IN THERE, B.

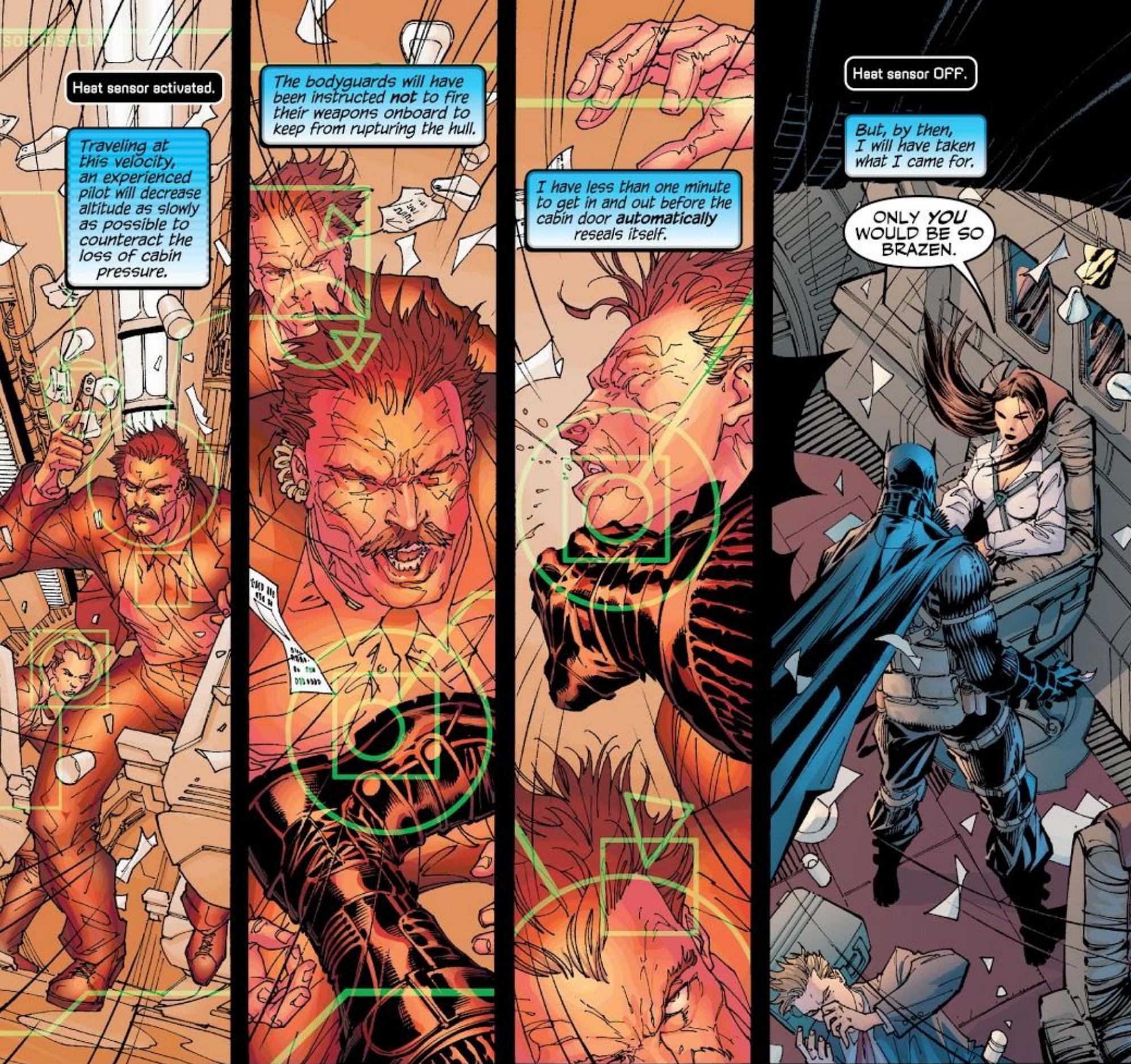
YOU WILL
TAKE THE WING
CONTROLS IN
THREE, TWO...

WILL
YOU LISTEN
TO ME?!

...ONE.

As a detective, my task
was to narrow that list
down to one suspect.





WHY ARE
YOU DOING
THIS?

Talia Head.
Ra's al Ghul's
daughter.

Jeph
LOEB
writes

Jim
LEE
pencils

Scott
WILLIAMS
inks
Richard
STARKINGS
letters
Alex
SINCLAIR
colors
Bob
SCHRECK
edits
Michael
WRIGHT
associate edits
special thanks to
Mark
CHIARELLO

I made a
promise on the
grave of my parents
to rid this city of the
evil that took their lives.
By day, I am Bruce Wayne,
billionaire philanthropist. At night,
criminals, a cowardly and superstitious lot.
call me

BATMAN

CREATED BY
BOB KANE

HUSH

Chapter Nine THE ASSASSINS



ASK YOUR FATHER.

One night, years ago, Robin -- Dick Grayson before he became Nightwing -- was ambushed inside his dorm room.



MY FATHER AND I NO LONGER SPEAK.
BUT, YOU KNEW THAT.



No one had seen or heard anything. It was as though he just vanished.

ESTRANGED OR NOT, HE WILL NOT ALLOW FOR YOU TO BE HURT.

Finally, I was contacted -- not as Batman, but as Bruce Wayne.



WRNNN

YOU WILL NEVER HURT ME, MY LOVE.



His kidnapper had uncovered my secret identity and challenged me to find and rescue Dick.

I AM NOT YOUR "LOVE."

It turned out to be a test staged by her father to see if I was a worthy suitor for Talia.



VRROOOOM

That is how I first met Ra's al Ghul...

Oracle worries my actions this evening will have repercussions.

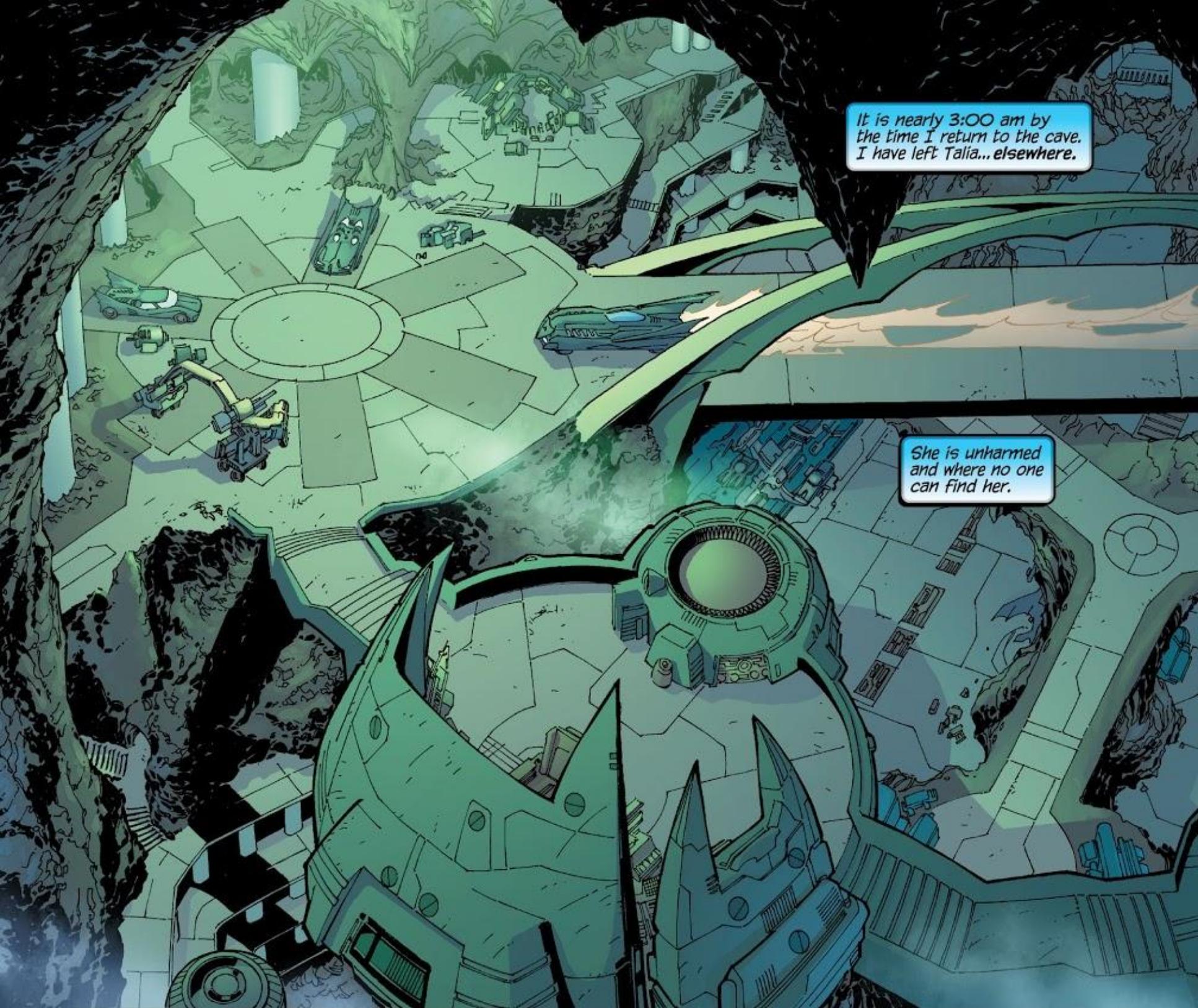
I'm counting on it.

MISTER PRESIDENT....!

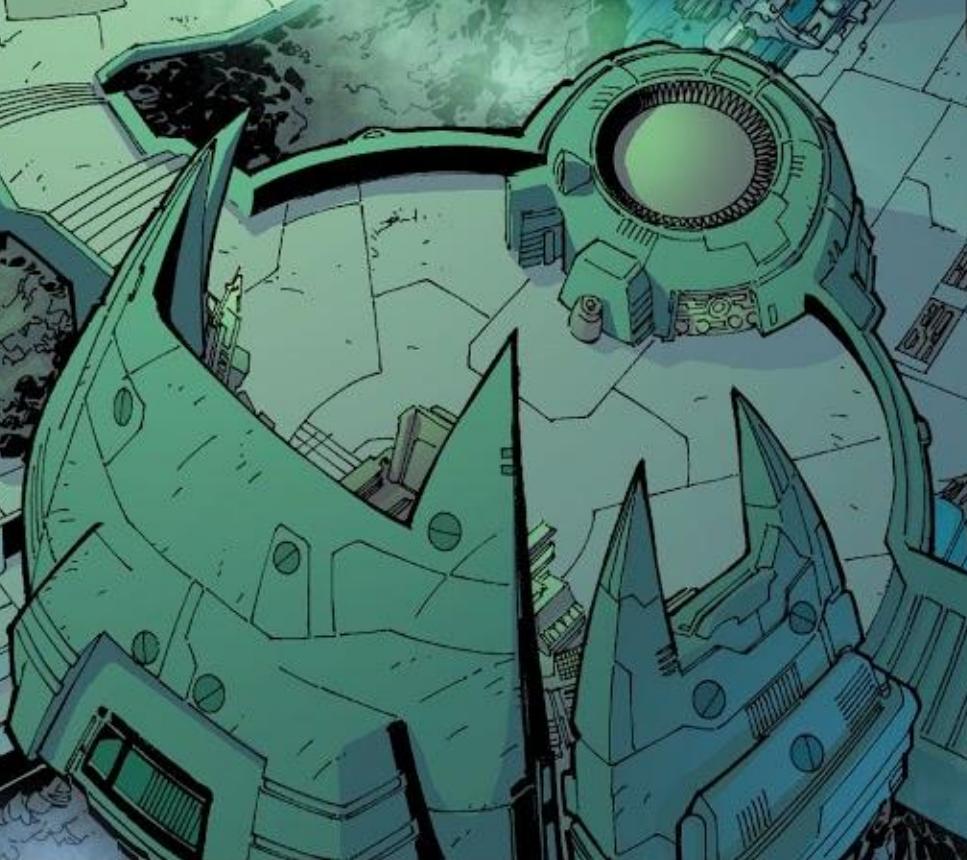
The White House. Sometime after midnight.

Where -- as incredible as it sounds -- Lex Luthor is the President of The United States.





It is nearly 3:00 am by the time I return to the cave. I have left Talia... elsewhere.

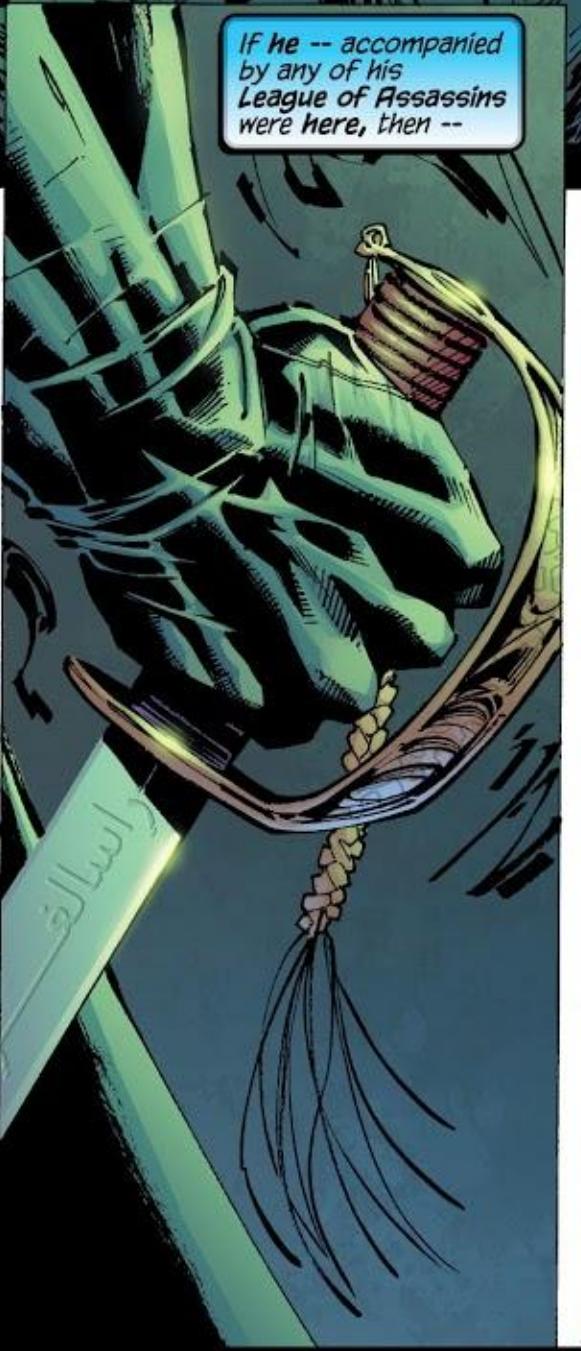


She is unharmed and where no one can find her.



My message has been received...

...However, Ra's has responded even more quickly than I expected.

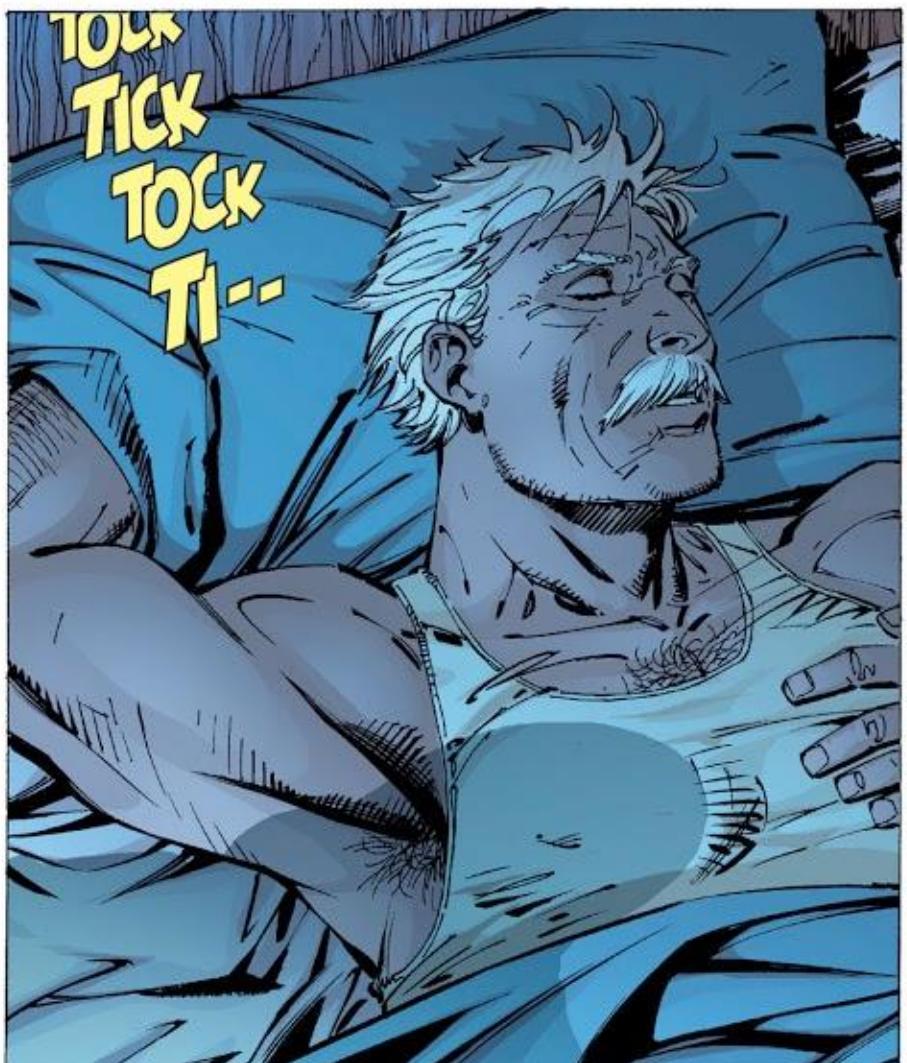


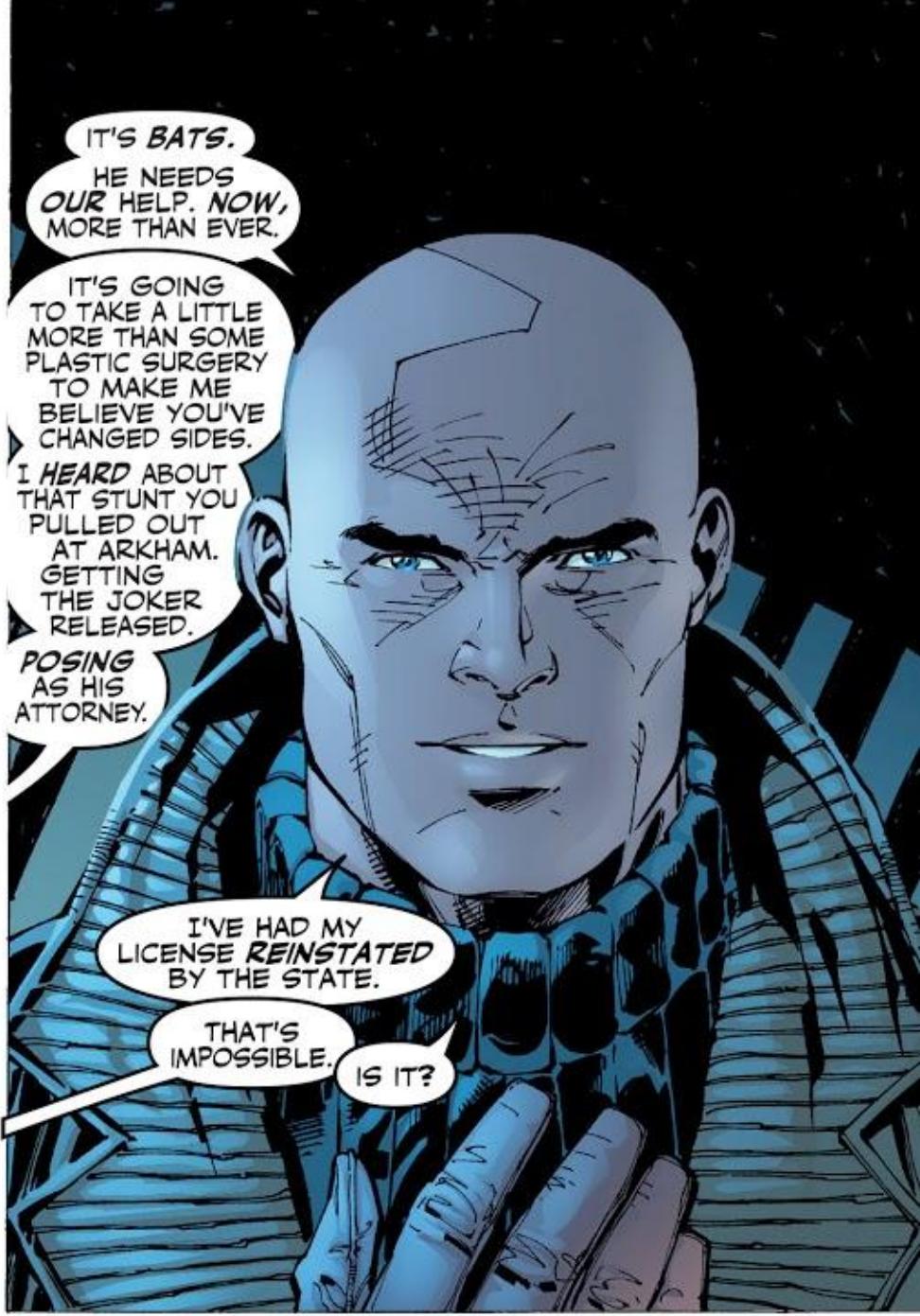
If he -- accompanied by any of his League of Assassins were here, then --



ALFRED!







The camel's bridle on
the hilt of the sword.

One of my earliest
encounters with Ra's
began with my finding
one he had left behind.

It brought me here,
to North Africa,
as it has again.



WHERE IS MY
DAUGHTER...
...DETECTIVE?

SAFE.

YOU
THINK I AM
RESPONSIBLE
FOR YOUR
RECENT...

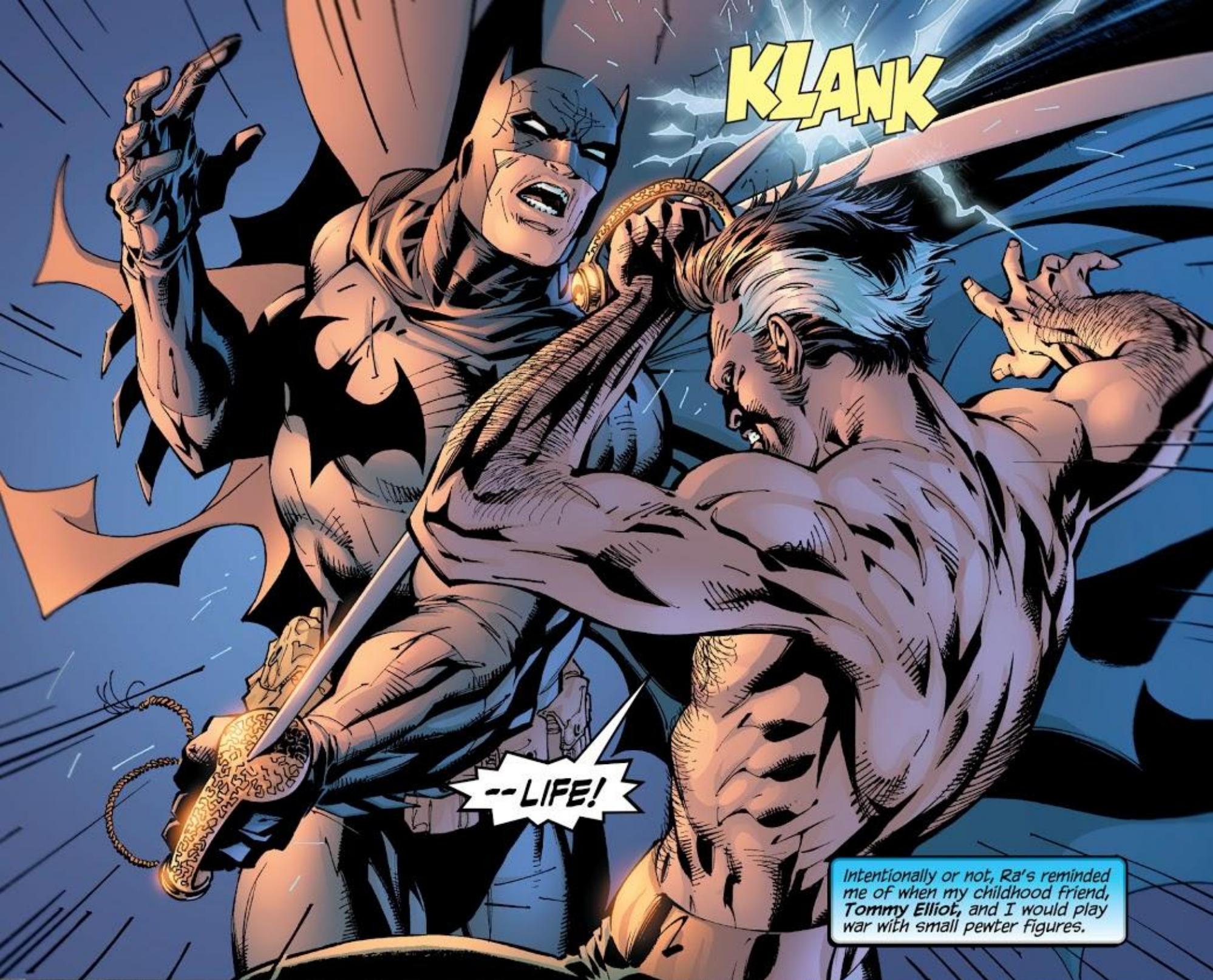
...MISFORTUNES.
THE DEATH OF YOUR
FRIEND THOMAS ELLIOT,
FOR EXAMPLE.

YOU ARE
MISTAKEN.

YOU HAVE
MEANS.
OPPORTUNITY.
AND
KNOWLEDGE
ONLY A FEW
POSSESS...
...ABOUT
MY PERSONAL
LIFE.

I WILL MAKE YOU
A PROPOSITION.
IF YOU
DEFEAT ME HERE
THIS EVENING, I WILL
HELP SOLVE YOUR...
DILEMMA.
SHOULD
I TRIUMPH, HOWEVER,
MY DAUGHTER IS TO BE
RELEASED --
-- AND YOU
WILL PAY FOR THIS
INSUBORDINATION
WITH YOUR --









I cannot --
will not --
fail her trust.

YOU'VE
CERTAINLY FOUND
THE PASSION FOR
THE GAME.

WHOEVER HAS
MANIPULATED YOU
INTO THIS FRAME OF MIND,
THEY ARE TO BE
COMMENDED.

THIS.

IS.

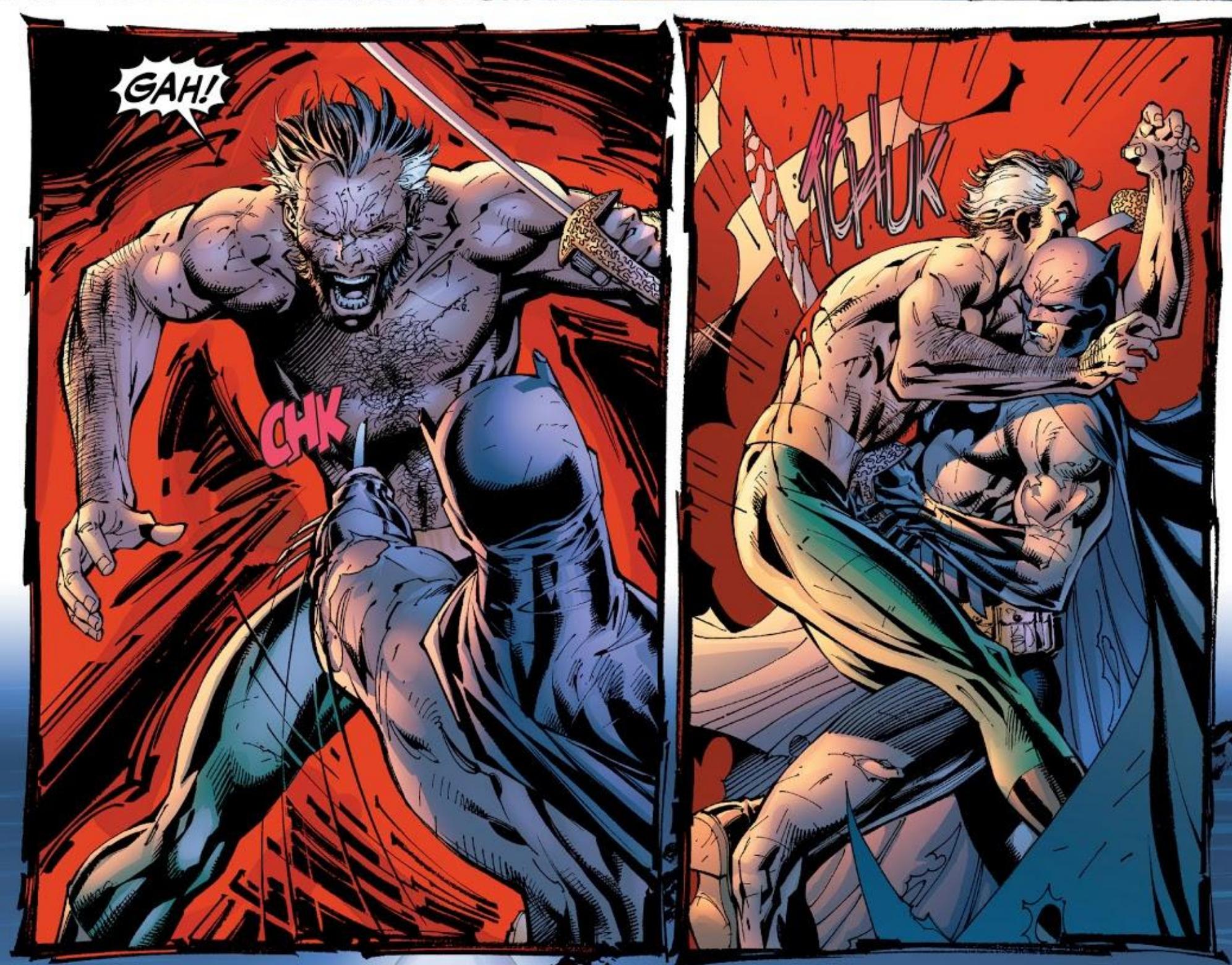
NOT.

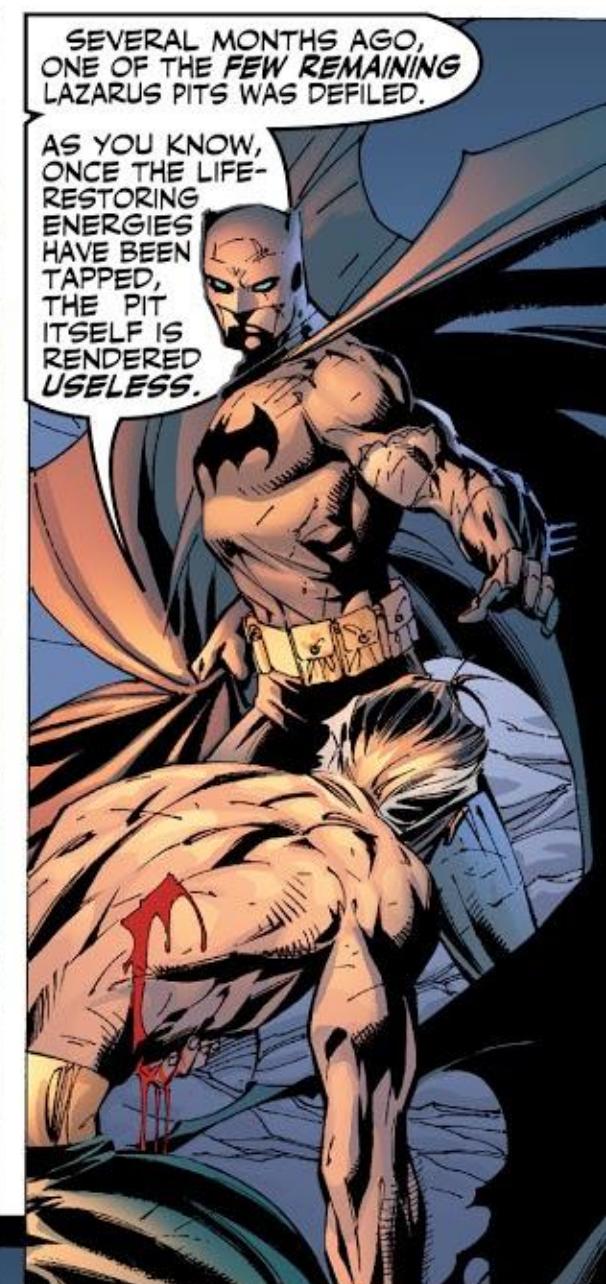
A.

SLASH

GAME!







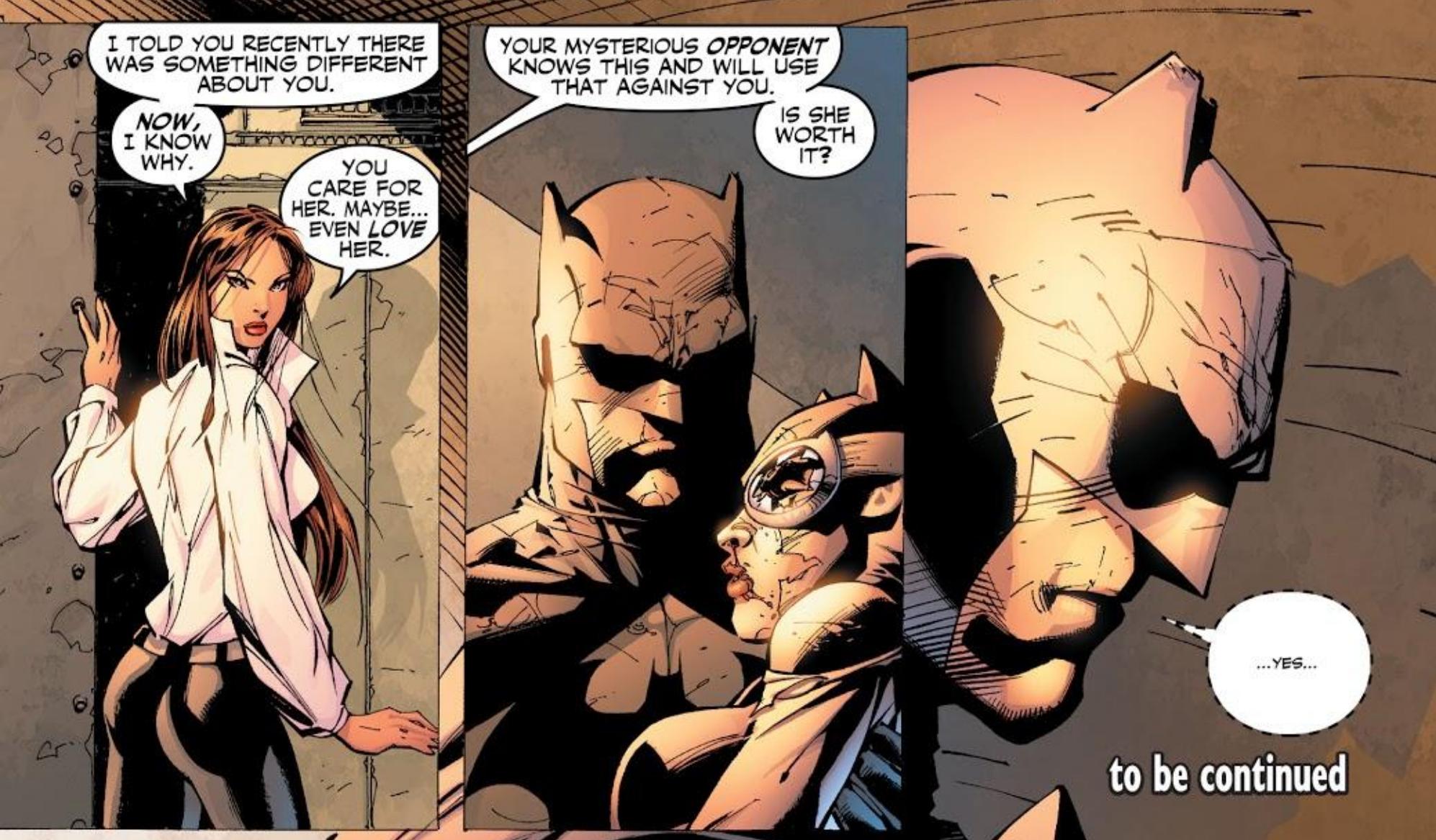


TELL MY FATHER.

SHMACK

GAMES...

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to be continued