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BATMAN

CATWOMAN'S
SECRET...

...WILL
**TEAR
THEM
APART!**

TYNION IV
JIMENEZ
MOREY

Jorge Jimenez
2011

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**DIAMOND
DISTRICT.**

THIS IS
DEATHSTROKE...
DO YOU COPY? IS
ANYONE LEFT
OUT THERE?

CHESHIRE?
MERLYN?
GUNSMITH?

SOOOORRY,
MISTAH DEE. THEY
CAN'T COME TO THE
PHONE RIGHT NOW!
WANNA TRY ANOTHER
NUMBER?

WHO THE
HELL IS THIS,
AND HOW THE HELL
ARE YOU IN MY
EARPIECE?

WELL, YOU
SEE. EACH OF THESE
BAT-DOOHICKIES
COMES EQUIPPED WITH
COMMUNICATIONS
BLOCKERS.

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DC COMICS
proudly
presents

THEIR DARK DESIGNS

PART 5

POINTY EARS
HIMSELF SAID IT
WAS OVERKILL TO
THROW SO MANY
YOUR WAY...

BUT HARLEY QUINN'S AN *OVERKILL* KINDA GAL.



MR. WAYNE...
YOU'RE SURE THIS IS A
GOOD IDEA?

MS. QUINN
IS CERTAINLY...
ENTHUSIASTIC, BUT
THIS FEELS LIKE A
DANGEROUS
PLAY.

IT'S A
TEMPORARY
SOLUTION, LUCIUS.
IF IT LOOKS LIKE SHE'S
GOING TO KILL HIM,
CUT HER CONTROL.
OTHERWISE,
KEEP MY LINE
CLEAR.

IT'S
BEAUTIFUL. ALL
OF THESE STRANGE
SKELETONS OF A WHOLE
NEW CITY GROWING
OUT OF THE
OLD ONE.

IT'S STRANGE
TO THINK HOW
DIFFERENT IT'S ALL
GOING TO LOOK
AND FEEL SO
SOON.

SELINA.

BRUCE.

I NEED
YOU TO TELL ME
EVERYTHING.

I
KNOW.

AND I'M
SORRY.

"IT STARTED YEARS AGO. NOT QUITE AT THE BEGINNING, BUT SOON AFTER.

"I FOUND THE CARD ON MY PILLOW. AN ORNATE "D" WITH A PIER NUMBER, A DATE, AND A TIME. CURIOSITY, I SUPPOSE, GOT THE BETTER OF ME.

"BACK THEN, DANGER HAD A DIFFERENT CONNOTATION. DANGER MEANT I MIGHT GET A BRUISE THAT WOULD BE HARD TO CONCEAL OUT OF COSTUME.

"MOSTLY, IT WAS EXCITING.

"AND THAT 'D'... I HAD HEARD THE URBAN LEGENDS.

"THE LEGEND OF A MASTER CRIMINAL. A MAN WHO CONCOCTED THE GREATEST CRIMES YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF.

"IT'S MOSTLY A JOKE, YOU SEE? LIKE YOU'D TALK ABOUT STEALING SOMETHING LUDICROUS AND OBVIOUS, LIKE THE CROWN JEWELS IN THE TOWER OF LONDON.

"AND SOMEONE WOULD SAY, 'WELL, HE PROBABLY STOLE THEM TWENTY YEARS AGO!'

"AND YOU KNEW EXACTLY WHO THEY MEANT."



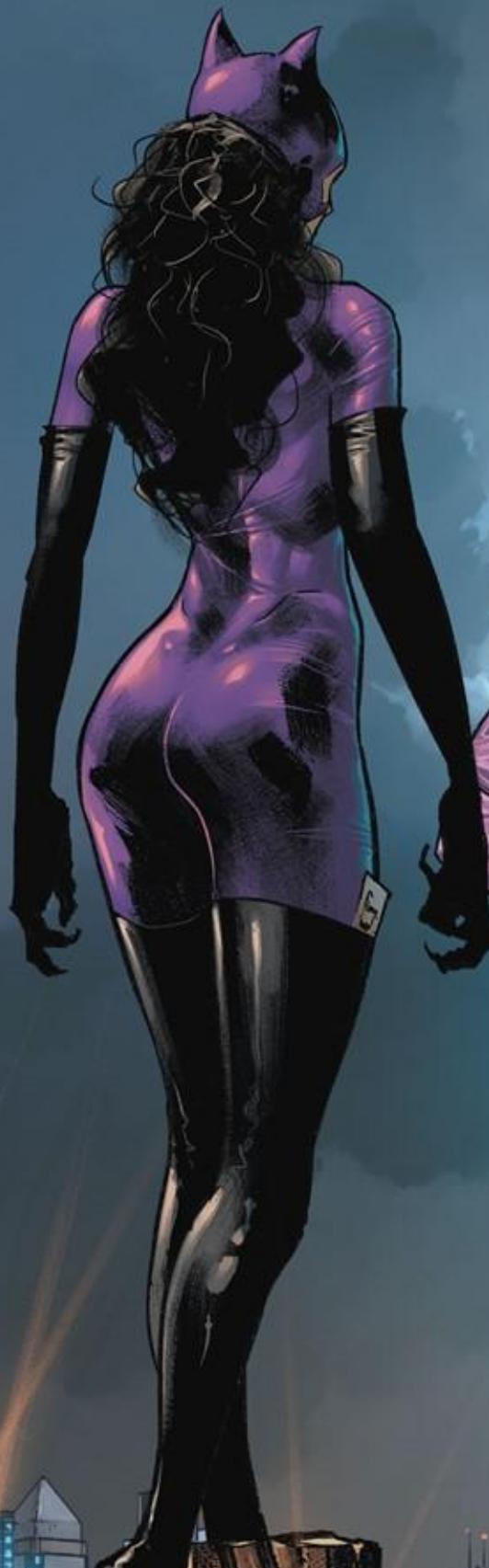
"I WASN'T THE
ONLY ONE WHO
GOT A CARD."

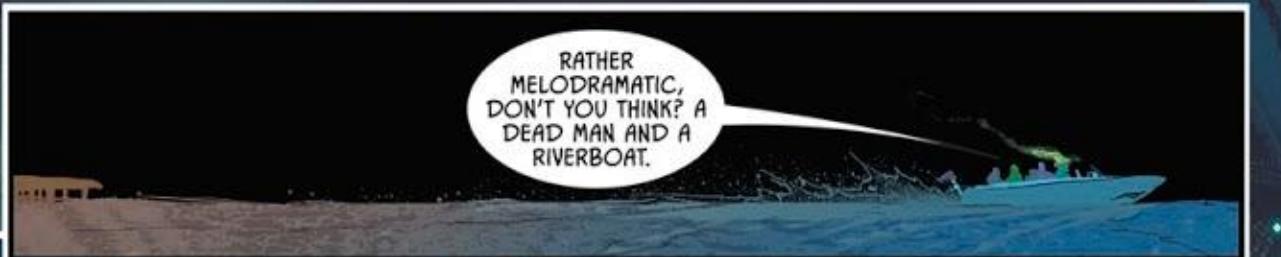
AH,
CATWOMAN.
I SEE THIS
DESIGNER FELLOW
HAS EXQUISITE
TASTE IN
CRIMINALS.

DON'T
SHAKE THE
JOKER'S HAND.
HE'S GOT
SOMETHING
HORRIBLE
IN IT.

SAYS
THE MAN WITH
THE QUESTION
MARK CANE.
HEH...

ENOUGH PRATTLE.







HELLO,
MY DEAR
GUESTS.

I
WELCOME YOU
TO TARTARUS
HOUSE.

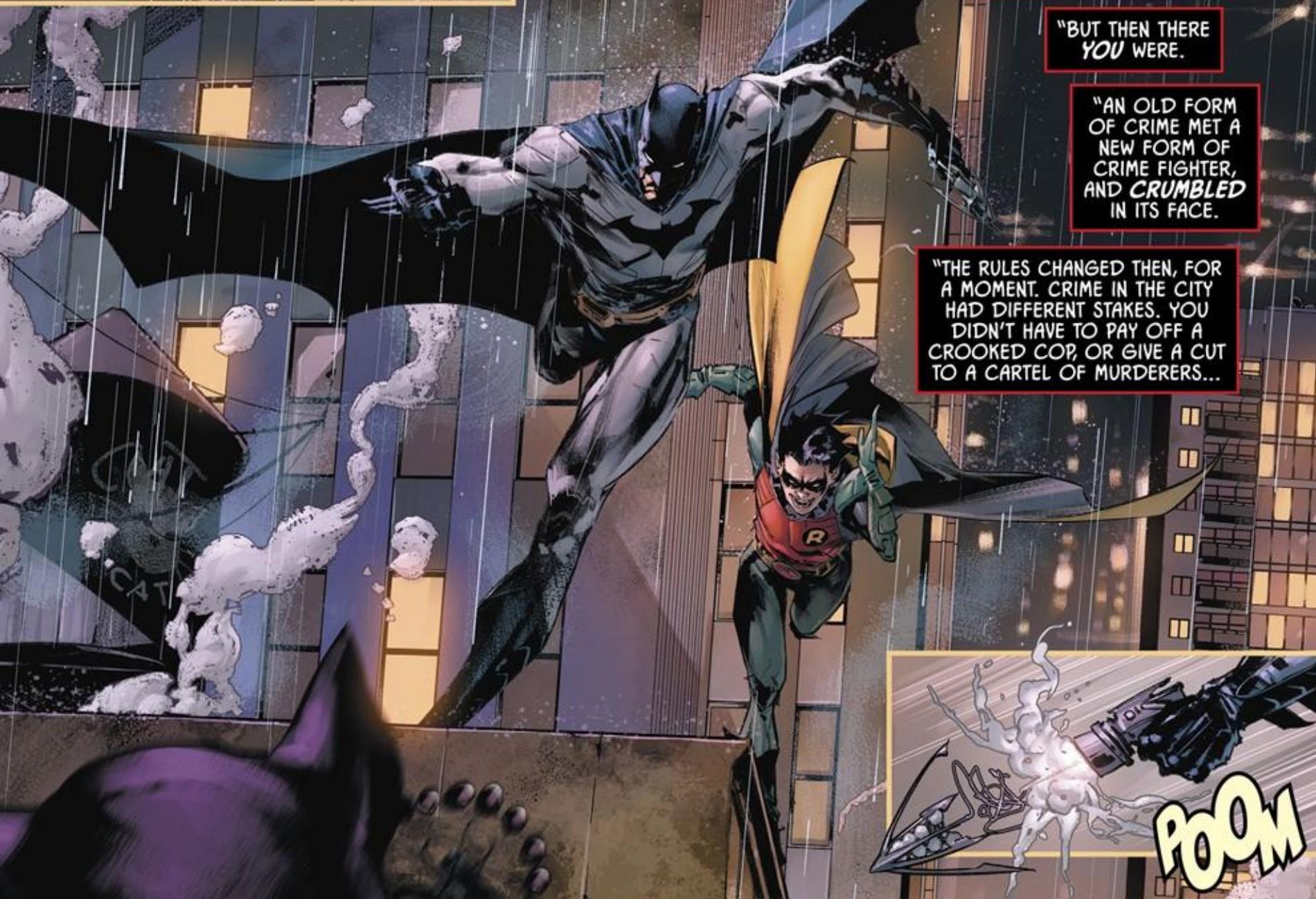
I AM
YOUR HOST FOR
THE EVENING. YOU
MAY CALL ME THE
DESIGNER.

PLEASE
HAND OVER
ALL OF YOUR
WEAPONS, AND
WE CAN
BEGIN.





"THERE HAD BEEN **DARKNESS** AT THE BEGINNING. I REMEMBERED THE GRIME ON THE STREETS. THE POWER OF THE FALCONE FAMILY AND THEIR ALLIES.



"THE CITY STANK WITH **CORRUPTION** AND **HORROR**. YOU WERE NEVER SURE IF YOU COULD SURVIVE THE WALK FROM THE SUBWAY TO YOUR RUNDOWN APARTMENT.

"AND IT FELT LIKE GOTHAM WAS SO BROKEN, IT COULD NEVER BECOME ANYTHING ELSE.

"BUT THEN THERE **YOU** WERE.

"AN OLD FORM OF CRIME MET A NEW FORM OF CRIME FIGHTER, AND **CRUMPLED** IN ITS FACE.

"THE RULES CHANGED THEN, FOR A MOMENT. CRIME IN THE CITY HAD DIFFERENT STAKES. YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO PAY OFF A CROOKED COP, OR GIVE A CUT TO A CARTEL OF MURDERERS...



"IF A PERSON HAD THE SKILLS, AND A COLORFUL COSTUME, THEY COULD ROB A BANK OR A VAULT FOR THE THRILL OF IT. AND SURE, THEY MIGHT HAVE TO TUSSE WITH THE DYNAMIC DUO.



"BUT ON A GOOD NIGHT, THEY MIGHT GET THEIR HANDS ON A DIAMOND THE SIZE OF A BULL'S HEAD, AND FLEECE IT FOR MILLIONS ON THE BLACK MARKET.



"AND THEY'D PUT THE MONEY BACK INTO BETTER EQUIPMENT. A BETTER COSTUME. BETTER TOOLS TO OUTWIT YOU."

AND BRUCE...
YOU STILL HAD
YOUR **INTENSITY**.
YOU'VE **NEVER**
LOST IT.

BUT WITH
A YOUNG MAN
FIGHTING AT YOUR
SIDE, YOU WERE TRYING
TO BE A **ROLE MODEL**.
SOMEONE HE COULD
LOOK UP TO.

YOU WERE
ALWAYS SURE
NOT TO CROSS A
LINE. YOU **TEMPERED**
YOURSELF, SO THAT ROBIN
MIGHT NOT CARRY THE
SAME **WOUNDS** YOU
DID INTO HIS
ADULT LIFE.

AND GOD...
THERE ARE DAYS
I STILL MISS THAT
TIME MORE THAN
ANYTHING.

THERE ISN'T
TIME FOR THIS
NOSTALGIA,
SELINA.

I'M SORRY.
THERE NEEDS TO
BE. YOU NEED TO
REMEMBER WHAT THAT
TIME WAS LIKE FOR
ANY OF THIS TO
MAKE SENSE.

I KNOW
THAT'S HARD,
BRUCE. I KNOW
ALFRED IS GONE, AND
YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH
SO MUCH PAIN, BUT THAT
MOMENT IS WHEN
ALL OF THIS
STARTED.

THAT'S WHEN
COMPLEXITY STEPPED IN.



"I HAD BEEN PLAYING THE GAME ON THE DETECTIVE'S TERMS. TAKING ONE STEP FORWARD PAST EACH STEP HE HAD TAKEN TO BEAT ME."

"IF I DESIGNED A CRIME WITH ONE DEGREE OF COMPLEXITY, HE WOULD COME BACK WITH TWO DEGREES OF COMPLEXITY IN HIS MEANS OF DEFEATING ME."

"BEATING HIM WOULD REQUIRE AN EXPONENTIAL LEAP FORWARD."

"AND I SPENT A YEAR IN A ROOM DOING JUST THAT."

"I KNEW TO WIN I WOULD NEED TO BECOME THE MAN I MIGHT BECOME AFTER TWENTY YEARS OF BATTLED HIM, WITHOUT HIM EVOLVING IN KIND."

"THE MAN WHO LEFT THAT ROOM WASN'T THE MAN WHO ENTERED. HE WAS THE DESIGNER."

HE FELL, OF COURSE. HUMILIATED AND BROKEN. I DO NOT BELIEVE HE SOLVED ANOTHER CRIME IN HIS LIFE.

AND ULTIMATELY, HE DIED A SHADOW OF WHAT THE WORLD REMEMBERED HIM TO BE.

WHAT I OFFER TO EACH OF YOU IS A CHANCE TO EVOLVE TO YOUR FINAL FORMS, AND OUTSTRIP THIS...CAPED CRUSADER. THE FOUR OF YOU COULD RULE THIS CITY AS AN UNDERWORLD UNITED. A PLAYGROUND YOU CAN MANIPULATE UNTIL YOU GROW BORED WITH IT.

I WILL GIVE YOU THE MEANS TO ACCOMPLISH WHAT YOU COULD NOT IN YOUR CURRENT STATES. AND YOU WILL GIVE ME HALF OF WHAT YOU REAP WHEN YOU UNLEASH YOUR DESIGNS UPON THE CITY.

AND YOU WILL NEVER SEE ME AGAIN.

"HE SAID WE WERE ALL AT STAGE ONE COMPLEXITY, MAYBE STAGE TWO. BUT AFTER A NIGHT IN TARTARUS HOUSE, HE WOULD HELP US EACH DEVELOP A STAGE TWELVE OR FIFTEEN DESIGN."

"THERE...WAS A KINDNESS IN HIS VOICE. HE WAS FRIENDLY. IT WAS A GOOD CONVERSATION, THOUGH IT LASTED FOR HOURS. HE WAS A CRAFTSMAN, AND HE WANTED TO HEAR ABOUT MY CRAFT."



"BY THE END OF OUR CONVERSATION, I WAS DESCRIBING WHAT WOULD BE THE LARGEST MONETARY HEIST IN THE HISTORY OF THE PLANET."

"THERE WAS A POWER TO IT. CAN YOU IMAGINE, BRUCE?"

"YOU WOULD **NEVER** HAVE SEEN IT COMING, AND YOU WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO STOP ME. AND I FELT SO POWERFUL IN THAT MOMENT. IT WAS LIKE THE MONEY WAS ALREADY MINE..."



"IMAGINE IF ONE DAY I WENT FROM STEALING A LARGE RUBY FROM A MUSEUM TO STEALING THE WEALTH OF ONE OF THE LARGEST COMPANIES ON THE PLANET. WITH NO MIDDLE STEP. NO HINT OF THE LEAP."



"PENGUIN AND RIDDLER WERE THE SAME. THEY CAME OUT OF THEIR SESSIONS WITH A GLOW ON THEIR FACES AS THEY DESCRIBED PIECES OF THEIR CRIMES."



"PENGUIN DESCRIBING A SHELL GAME OF ASSASSINS THAT WOULD END WITH HIM IN THE MAYOR'S OFFICE."



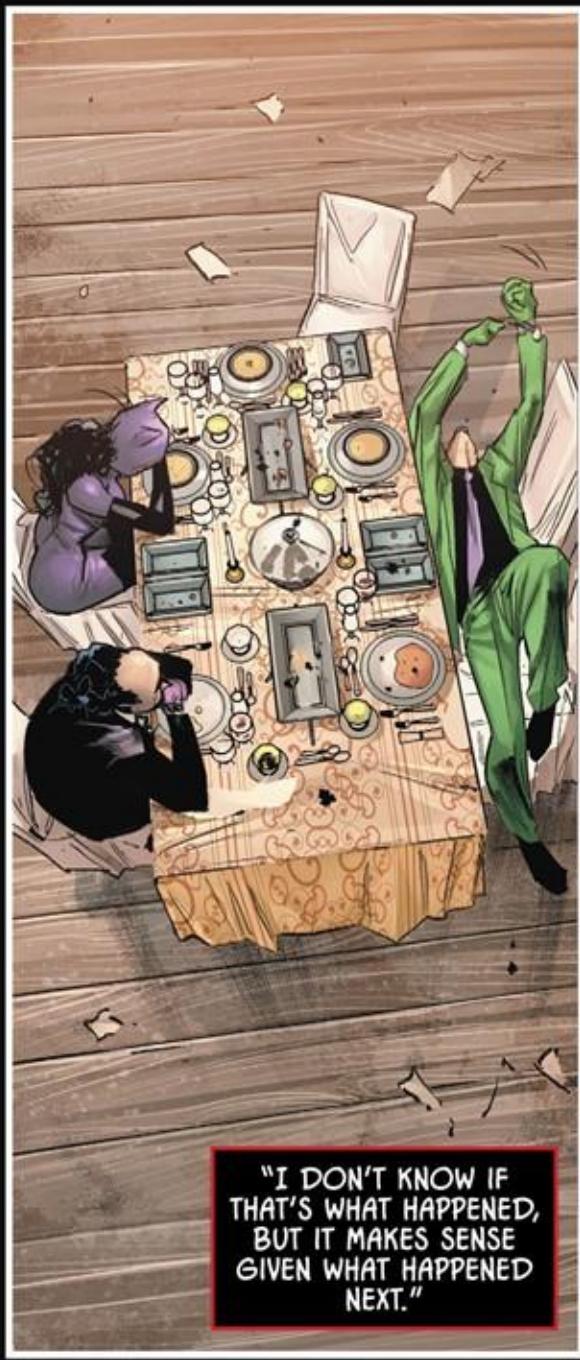
"...BUT THE JOKER...HE WENT IN, AND THE HOURS KEPT POURING BY...WITH THE REST OF US WAITING. AND GROWING MORE AND MORE UNEASY."



"IMAGINE BEING THE FIRST ONE TO UNDERSTAND WHAT THAT MONSTER WAS GOING TO BECOME. IMAGINE GOING STEP-BY-STEP FROM DIAMOND MAGNATES TO JOKER FISH TO GASING ENTIRE BUILDINGS TO MURDERING COUNTLESS FAMILIES."



"IT MUST HAVE BEEN LIKE STARING INTO THE ABYSS, BRUCE. REALIZING THAT THIS STRANGE CRIME BOSS WITH CLOWN MAKEUP WOULD KEEP GOING AND ADAPTING UNTIL HE BECAME SOMETHING APOCALYPTIC."



"I DON'T KNOW IF THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED, BUT IT MAKES SENSE GIVEN WHAT HAPPENED NEXT."





"I REMEMBER, AS RIDDLER AND PENGUIN STARTED THE FIRES, WATCHING JOKER. HE WAS JUST STARING OFF ACROSS THE WATER, AT GOTHAM CITY."



"AND AT THE SIGNAL HANGING IN THE CLOUDS ABOVE IT."



"SOMETHING IN HIM CHANGED THAT NIGHT... HIS EYES... THEY WERE DIFFERENT THAN THEY HAD EVER BEEN BEFORE."



"IT WAS MY FIRST TIME SEEING WHAT KIND OF EVIL HE WAS GOING TO BECOME."





THERE'S STILL SOMETHING
YOU'RE NOT TELLING
ME.

I KNOW.
IT'S THE PART
THAT'S THE HARDEST...

...BECAUSE IF THE
DESIGNER IS ALIVE SOMEHOW,
AND HE'S GETTING BACK AT ALL
OF US WITH OUR OWN PLANS...
THEN YOU NEED TO KNOW THE
TARGET OF THE HEIST I PLANNED.

I ALREADY
KNOW,
SELINA.

IT'S ME. MY FAMILY'S MONEY.
IT'S WAYNE ENTERPRISES. IT'S
THE MANOR. BILLIONS
OF DOLLARS.

IF THE
DESIGNER
STILL HAS YOUR
PLANS...

...I'M ABOUT
TO LOSE
EVERYTHING.

NEXT: THE COST!