



R.I.P. CONCLUSION



681  
DEC  
2008

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BY THE  
COMICS  
CODE  
A  
AUTHORITY

# BATMAN



GRANT  
MORRISON  
TONY  
DANIEL  
SANDU  
FLOREA

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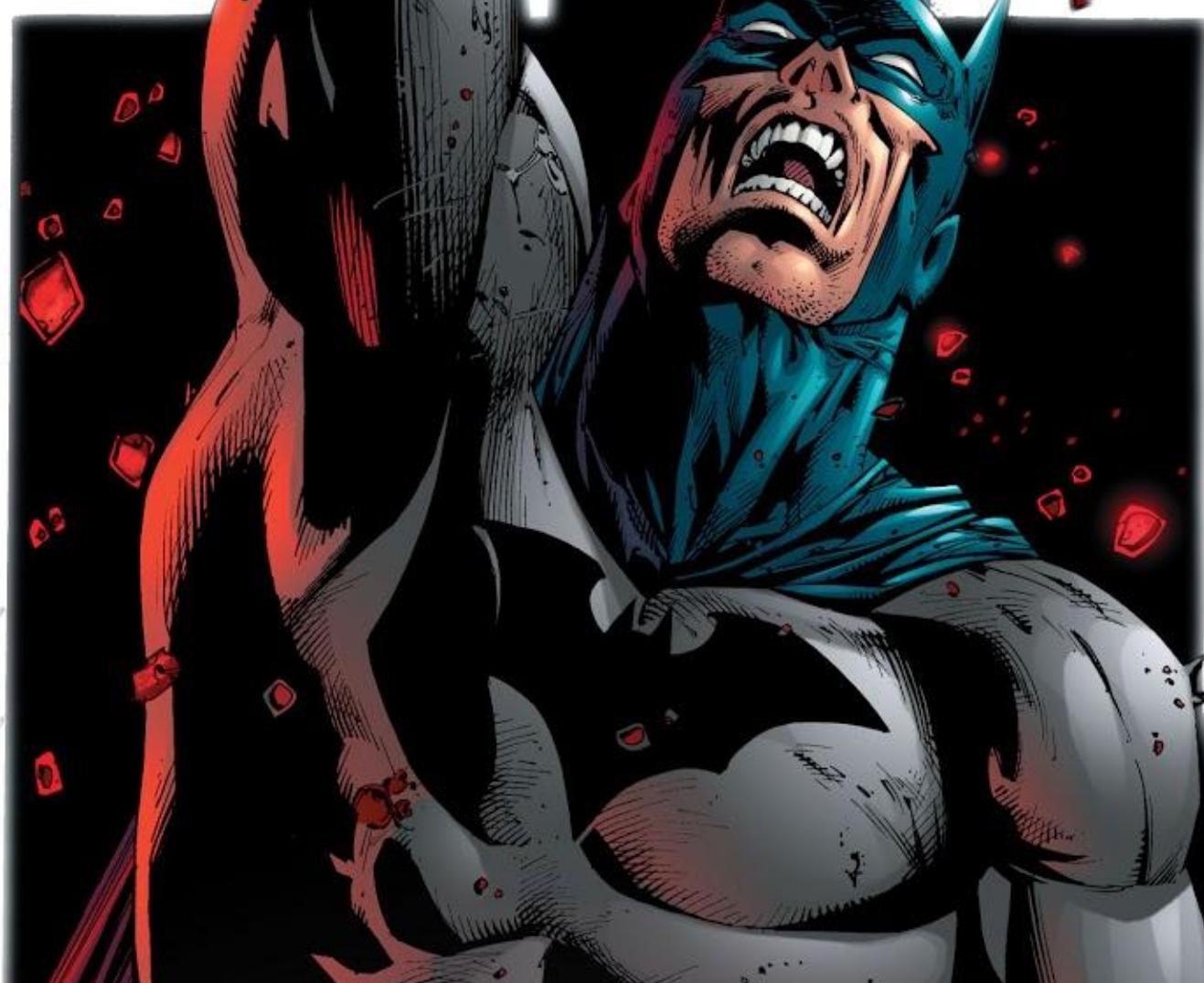


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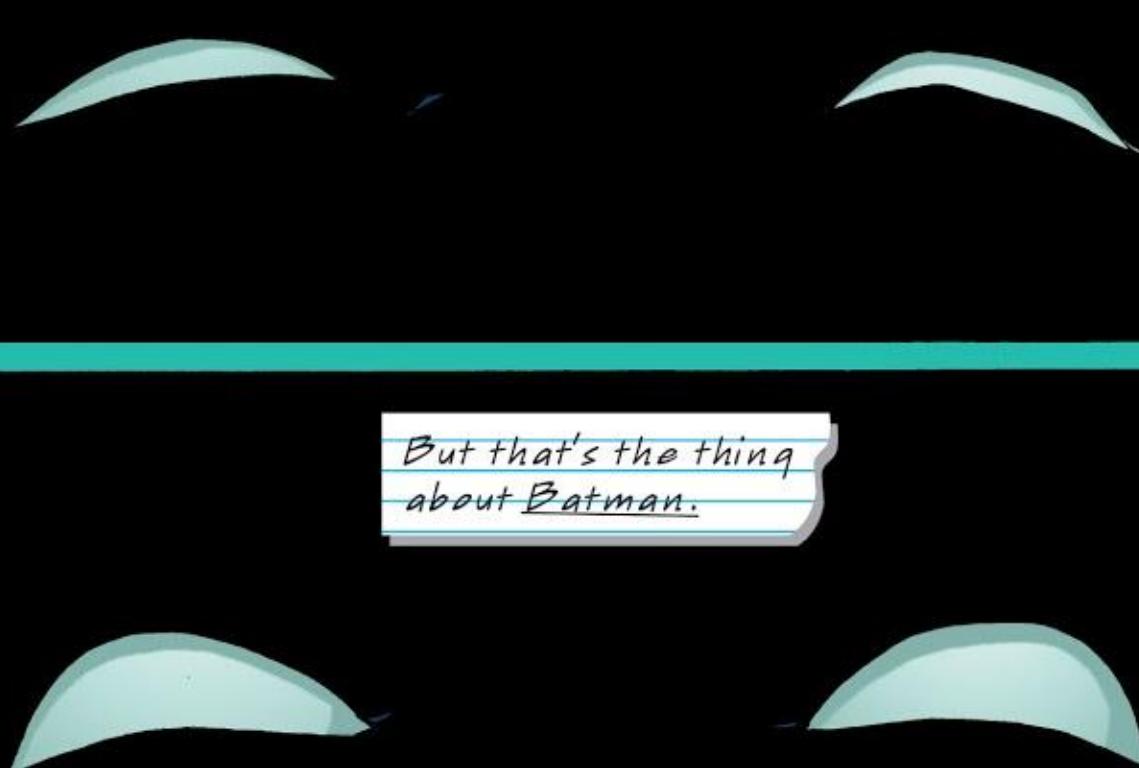
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AUTHORITY

# BATMAN



TONY  
DANIEL  
SANDU  
FLOREA  
MAJOR

GRANT  
MORRISON  
TONY  
DANIEL  
SANDU  
FLOREA



But that's the thing  
about Batman.

# BATMAN R.I.P. the conclusion

# HEARTS in DARKNESS

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BATMAN created by BOB KANE

Batman thinks  
of everything.



"The superior man thinks  
of evil that will come and  
guards against it."  
--The Book of Changes



...AS I LAY IN DARKNESS, I BEGAN TO EXPERIENCE VIVID HALLUCINATIONS OF THE PAST AND PRESENT, EVEN THE FUTURE.

BUT THEN I CAME TO THE END OF EVEN THAT.

I FOUND MYSELF IN A PLACE THAT'S NOT A PLACE.

THAT TOO IS CUSTOMARY.

IN THÖGAL, THE INITIATE LEARNS WHAT THE DEAD KNOW.

THE SELF IS PEELLED BACK TO ITS BLACK, RADIANT CORE.



THE CHAI IS GROWING COLD.

MISTER WAYNE.

MAY I ASK WHY YOU SUBJECTED YOURSELF TO SO RIGOROUS AND EXTREME A PSYCHOLOGICAL ORDEAL?

MMM

MAYBE I SHOULD WAIT UNTIL MASTER LO RETURNS TO DISCUSS THIS.

MASTER LO IS...INDISPOSED AT THIS TIME.

ALLOW ME TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS IF I CAN.

HAVE YOU EVER TRIED TO DO ONLY GOOD, AND FOUND THINGS JUST GOT WORSE?

COULD I HAVE BEEN, EVEN UNCONSCIOUSLY, MY OWN WORST ENEMY?

BEYOND THE VISIONS, I FOUND SOMETHING, IN THE DARK, INSIDE.

A SHAPE OF SOMETHING I CAN'T EVEN SAY OR DESCRIBE.

A SCAR ON MY CONSCIOUSNESS.

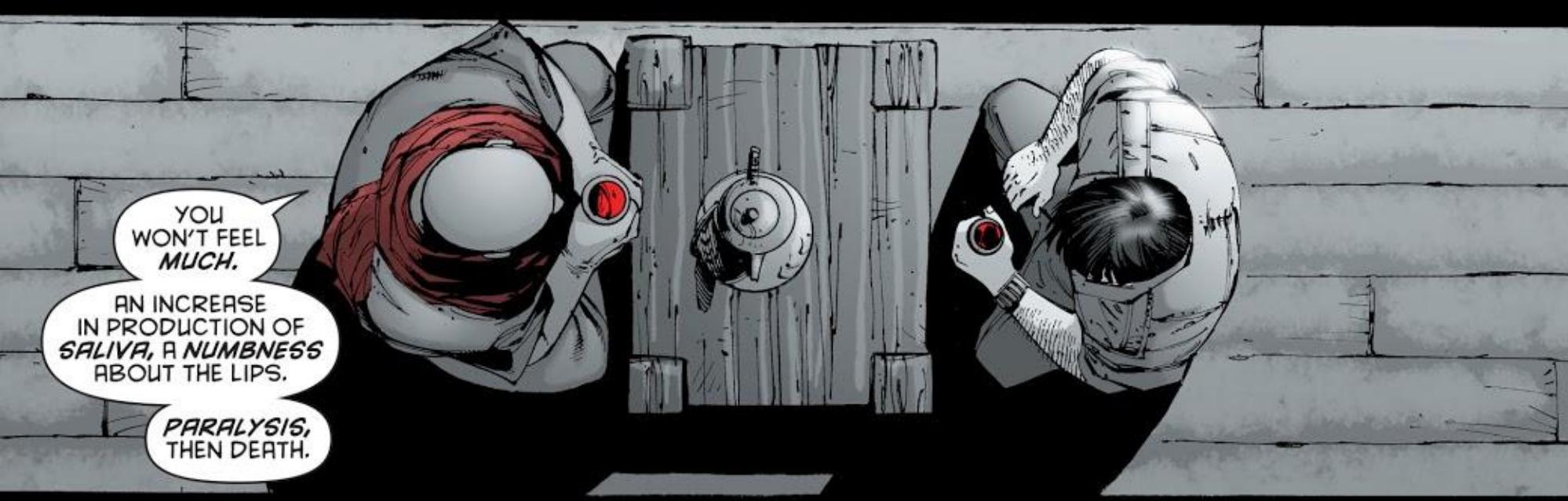








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A SOMEWHAT SHALLOW BED, DOCTOR HURT.



BUT YOU'VE  
PLAYED  
YOUR PART.

AND OUR  
RULES SAY YOU  
CAN ONLY BET  
AS A MEMBER  
OF THE BLACK  
GLOVE.

A GLOVE  
WITH ROOM  
FOR FIVE  
FINGERS AND  
NO MORE.

ahehehehehhhhummm  
and the qualifications  
for fingerhood are?

you have  
to be  
rich?

moi? I've  
flushed more  
money down the  
toilet than your  
dead man's hand  
could carry

famous and  
special? how many times  
have you seen this face on  
wanted posters?

you seem  
tense, soldier,  
almost...brittle

I'd like to  
bet you have  
no idea  
what you're  
dealing with

reiki  
to the  
rescue

mmheh

relaxation  
is so. much.  
easier. minus  
that stubborn  
old spine

you're  
short one  
trigger  
finger

MY  
HUSBAND!

OH GOD,  
HE CAN'T  
BE DOING  
THIS!

YOU  
PROMISED  
WE'D BE SAFE,  
DOCTOR!  
DOCTOR!

did anyone  
think to examine  
exhibit a?

heh  
heh heh  
heh

...I... I'LL  
TAKE  
THAT...

IT'S  
NOTHING... AN  
OLD BROKEN  
RADIO HE FOUND  
IN A DERELICT'S  
ABANDONED  
SHOPPING  
CART.

MAY  
I?

I DID MAKE  
MY FORTUNE IN  
ELECTRONICS,  
AFTER ALL,  
AND...

THERE! IT'S  
SIMPLY...

WAIT A  
MINUTE.

...THAT  
SHOULDN'T  
BE HERE.

IT'S AS  
IF IT'S BEEN  
CONVERTED TO  
**SEND** INSTEAD  
OF **RECEIVE**  
SIGNALS...

OH, DEAR  
LORD.

ARKHAM ASYLUM SECURITY  
INITIATE OVERRIDE.



I'VE FACED EXPERTS, LUNATICS, ARTISTS WHO EXPRESS THEIR FEELINGS THROUGH DEADLY TOXINS.

I CARRY ANTIDOTES FOR ALL THE POISONS I'M NOT IMMUNE TO.

I CAN USUALLY IMPROVISE IF I'M FACED WITH SOMETHING UNFAMILIAR.

SAVOR YOUR GLIMPSE OF THE VOID.

MASTER LO DIED BECAUSE I DIDN'T HAVE THIS WHEN I FOUND HIM.

YOU ASKED ME WHY I CHOSE TO ENDURE THÖGAL.

LBBL

I WANTED TO TASTE THE FLAVOR OF DEATH.

I WANTED TO KNOW THAT I HAD FINALLY EXPERIENCED EVERY EVENTUALITY.

IN THE CAVE, IN NANDA PARBAT, I HUNTED DOWN AND KILLED AND ATE THE LAST TRACES OF FEAR AND DOUBT IN MY MIND.

BLBB

TELL YOUR "DARK MASTER," WHOEVER HE IS, TO MAKE HIS MOVE SOON, BEFORE I COME LOOKING FOR HIM.

TELL HIM, HE WAS WRONG TO WAIT UNTIL I WAS READY.

TELL HIM...

...I LOOK FORWARD TO FACING HIM.

Obvious variations aside, there's only one human body...

206 bones, five major organs, 60,000 miles of blood vessels.

All it takes is time.

Days.

Months.

Years, spent memorizing the finite ways there are to hurt and break a man.

Preparing for all of them.

I've escaped from every conceivable deathtrap.

Ten times.

A dozen times.

I can slow my breathing and metabolism to control panic and conserve air.

Straitjacket's kindergarten.

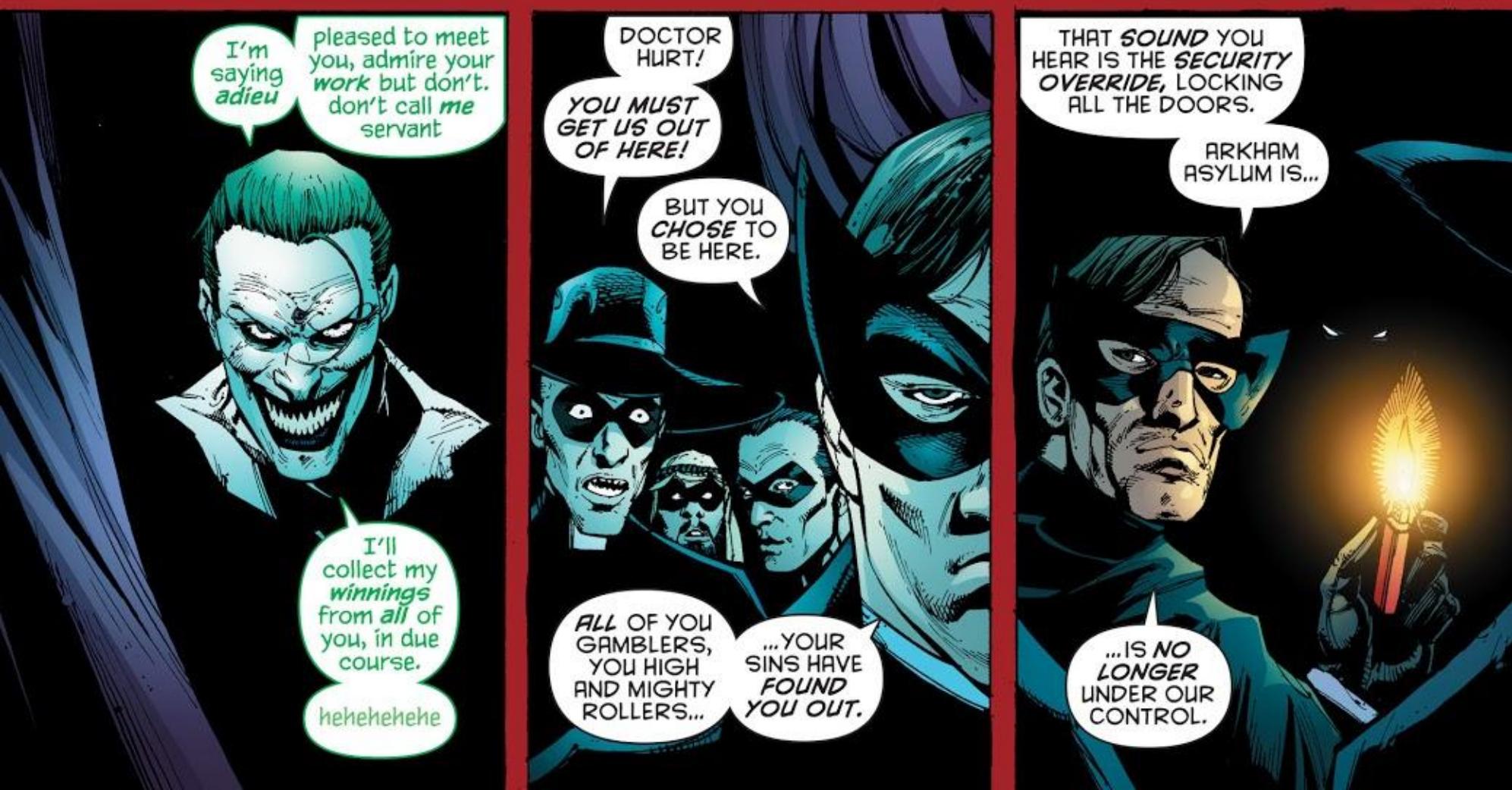
Locks, too.

Benchpressing a pine coffin lid through 600 pounds of loose soil that's filling your mouth, crushing your lungs flat and shredding your dehydrated muscles?

That's harder.



But far  
from impossible.



READY  
WHEN YOU  
ARE.

I  
THOUGHT  
I SMELLED  
DIRT.

THERE'S  
NOTHING YOU  
CAN DO, BRUCE--  
NO COURT ON THE  
PLANET WE CAN'T  
BUY, NO JUDGE OR  
JURY BEYOND  
THREATENING  
OR BRIBING.

NOW  
DO YOU  
GET IT?

THERE'S  
YOU RICH  
DOWN HERE.

AND THERE'S  
BLACK GLOVE  
RICH.

JABARI!  
DIALLO!

Jezebel Jet, brilliant,  
beautiful, too-good-  
to-be-true Jezebel.

OH.

I'M JUST  
NOT TALL  
ENOUGH.

When did I first suspect she was part of the trap?

"I want you to know I understand," she said.

I think it was then.

About a fraction of a second after I realized how heavily I'd fallen for her.

Almost instantly realizing it was the bad I'd been attracted to all along.

HE'S BREATHING HARD NOW, LOOK.

BEYOND THE LIMITS OF HIS ENDURANCE, HIS SANITY...

THIS UGLY CITY YOU LOVE IS OURS, BRUCE!

HE'S STAGGERING... LET'S DANCE.

LET'S.





*And rely on my allies to keep up.*

ARKHAM ASYLUM.

I HEARD HIM.

SOMETHING'S UP AT ARKHAM ASYLUM!

OUI, AFTER WE FACED THE BLACK GLOVE ON JOHN MAYHEW'S ISLAND, WE ALL BEGAN OUR OWN INVESTIGATIONS.

ROBIN, THIS MOVIE MADE BY MAYHEW, "LE GANT NOIR"...

THE ACTORS, THE DIRECTOR--ALL MURDERED, GONE MAD OR VANISHED.

THE STORY IS THE DEVIL HIMSELF PUT A CURSE ON THE WHOLE THING.

I THINK YOU HAVE TO GO TO BATMAN.

GALUCHO, THE CHIEF AND RAVEN, ET MOI.

WE'LL TAKE BOSSU'S RIOTERS UPTOWN.

...RANGER, SQUIRE AND I CAN HANDLE CALIGULA'S BOYS IN MIDTOWN.

KNIGHT VERSUS GLADIATOR!

NO CONTEST.

MUSKETEER'S TOTALLY RIGHT.

YOU SAVED THE CITY--THE CLUB OF HEROES CAN TAKE IT FROM HERE, ROBIN.

YOU GO GET BATMAN SORTED.

BERYL.

THANKS.

WISH ME LUCK.





HURT!

WE STEMMED  
THE TIDE OF CRIME  
IN GOTHAM CITY,  
UNDERMINING YOUR  
REASON TO BE.

WE DAUBED  
THE WALLS WITH A  
TRIGGER PHRASE  
YOU'D BEEN PRIMED  
NOT TO SEE  
UNTIL IT WAS  
TOO LATE.

SPLIT YOUR  
MIND, DRUGGED  
YOU, LEFT YOU  
*DERANGED*,  
POISONED AND  
BURIED YOU.

YOU IMAGINE  
YOURSELF  
*INDOMITABLE*.

"...I MUST  
PUT AWAY  
MY BATMAN  
COSTUME..."

"...AND RETIRE  
FROM CRIME-  
FIGHTING!"

I KNOW YOU  
BETTER THAN  
ANYONE.

A DELUSED  
TRUST FUND ORPHAN  
WHO VENTS HIS RAGE  
AND FRUSTRATION  
ON THE POOR IN  
ALLEYWAYS!

REPEAT  
AFTER ME...

I'M YOUR FATHER, BRUCE.

DOCTOR THOMAS WAYNE.

YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO DIE THAT NIGHT, TOO, ALONG WITH YOUR MOTHER... BUT CHILL LOST HIS NERVE.

A PATHOLOGIST FRIEND FAKED MY DEATH CERTIFICATE.

WAYNE BECAME HURT.

YOU'RE NOT THOMAS WAYNE.

AND STILL, THE CLOAK FITS.

AND IF NOT DAD, HAVE YOU DARED TO CONSIDER THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE?

MANGROVE PIERCE, STAR OF "THE BLACK GLOVE".

MY FATHER'S DOUBLE, AND MINE.

YOU HAD AN AFFAIR WITH JOHN MAYHEW'S WIFE AND HE HAD YOU FRAMED FOR HER MURDER...

NO, I SKINNED MANGROVE PIERCE ALIVE AND WORE HIM TO MAYHEW'S PARTY.

I AM THE HOLE IN THINGS, BRUCE, THE ENEMY, THE PIECE THAT CAN NEVER FIT, THERE SINCE THE BEGINNING.

WOULD I BRING YOU ALL THIS WAY AND NOT DELIVER THE KILLING BLOW?

THE  
BLACK GLOVE,  
AT GREAT EXPENSE,  
HAS MADE CERTAIN  
SHOCKING  
DOCUMENTS AND  
PHOTOGRAPHS  
AVAILABLE TO  
GOTHAM CITY'S  
MEDIA!

...UNLESS  
BATMAN  
AGREES TO  
SERVE THE  
BLACK  
GLOVE.

AND  
WILLINGLY  
DEDICATES HIS  
LIFE TO THE  
CORRUPTION OF VIRTUE.

YOUR MOTHER,  
YOUR FATHER,  
YOUR FAITHFUL  
BUTLER, ALFRED--  
ALL WILL STAND  
REVEALED AS  
DRUG ADDICTS,  
PERVERTS,  
CRIMINALS.

UNLESS, OF  
COURSE...

READY  
TO DEAL?

NOT  
NOW.

NOT  
EVER.

NOT  
EVEN FOR  
THEM?

THEN I CURSE  
THE CAPE AND  
COWL, AS YOU  
WILL SOON!

THE NEXT  
TIME YOU WEAR  
IT WILL BE THE  
LAST!

And so I write this  
final entry in the  
Black Casebook...

SHAKE  
HIM  
OFF!

SHAKE HIM  
OFF, YOU  
MORON!

I CAN'T  
CONTROL THE  
DAMN THING!

GNNNAAA

NO!

NOT  
LIKE  
THIS!

In my attempts to see clearly  
in the deepest dark, in my  
efforts to go to the still eye  
in the storm of madness, did  
I open up myself to some  
pure source of evil?

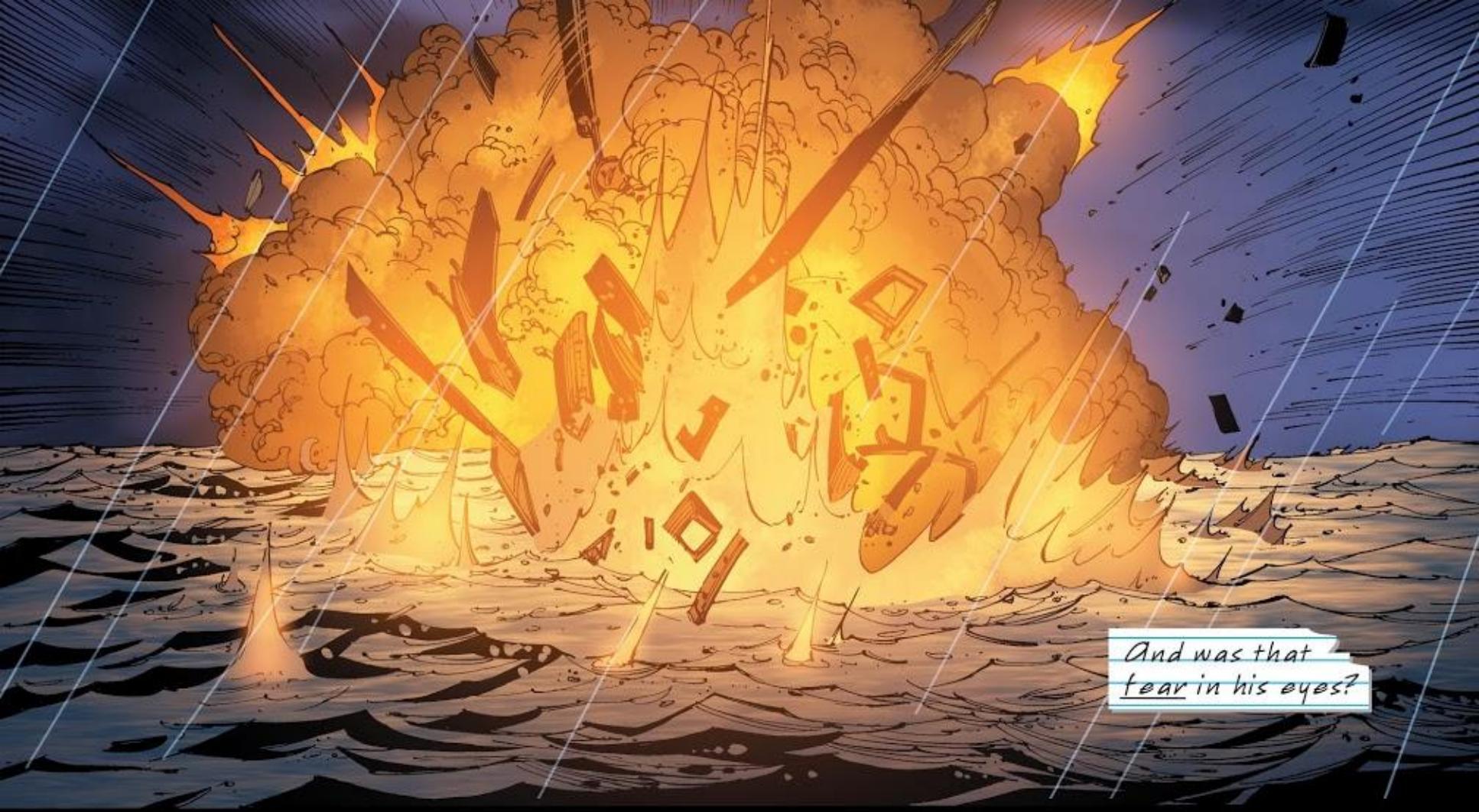
Did I finally reach  
the limits of reason?

RULES  
ARE  
RULES.

THE  
HOUSE  
ALWAYS  
WINS.

And find the  
Devil waiting?

THE  
BLACK  
GLOVE  
ALWAYS  
WINS.





...IF IT WASN'T FOR SIGNED SWIMSUIT SHOTS AND DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY YOU'D STILL BE IN CUSTODY.

I MEAN, AN ACTUAL PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL?

MAYBE IT'S TIME TO SWEAR OFF THESE ANNUAL PARTIES...

SHUT UP.  
I HAVE A COUNTRY.

I'LL BEGGER MY PEOPLE IF THAT'S WHAT IT TAKES TO BURY HIM!

JET.

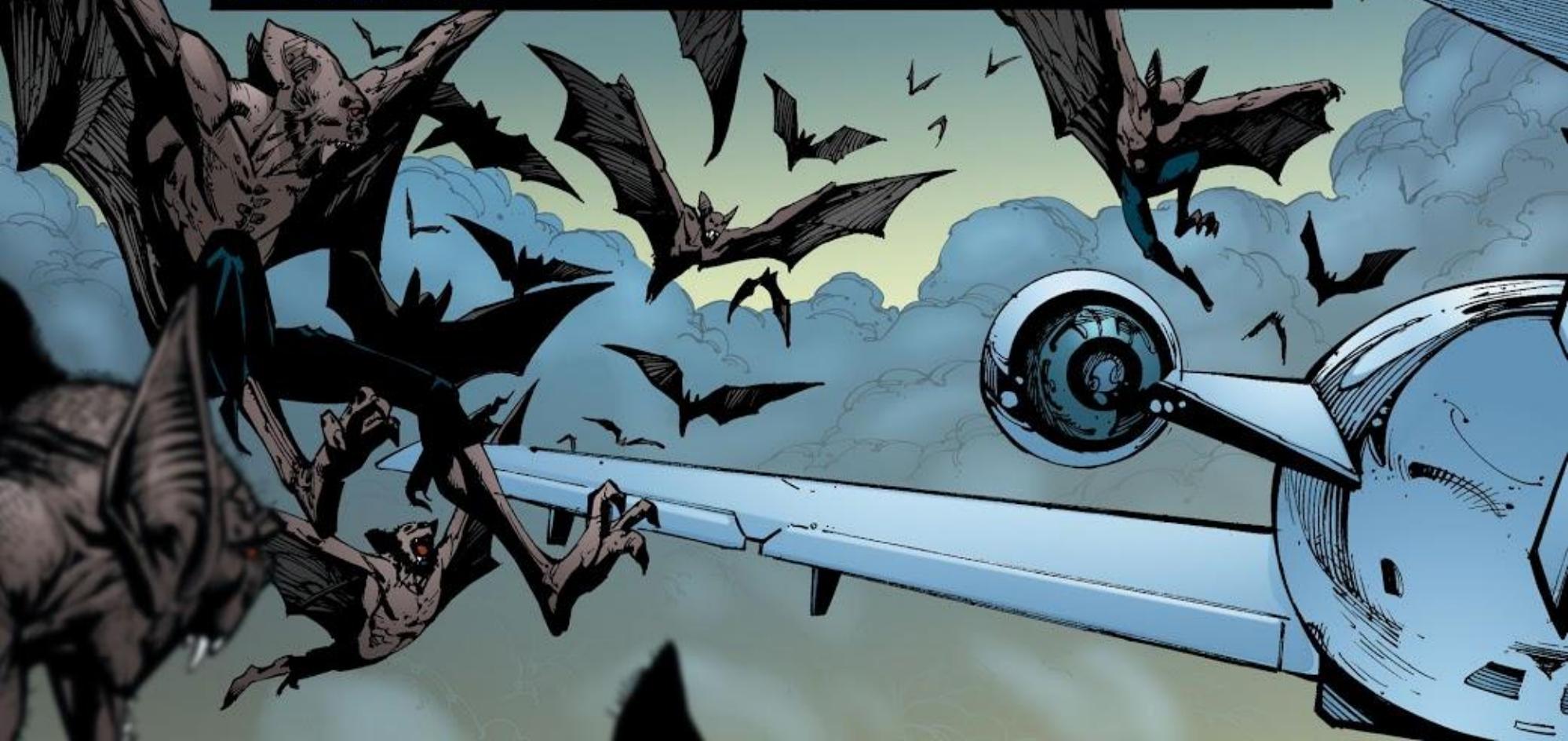
WHO THE #@%\$ IS THIS?

THIS IS A PRIVATE NUMBER.

2:35 IS THE MEETING WITH THE CULTURE MINISTER AND IF YOU REMEMBER TIME MAGAZINE HAS AN INTERVIEW SCHEDULED FOR--

SHH! WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? WHO IS THIS?

WHAT'S THAT SOUND?



SIX MONTHS LATER...

AESOME SL  
BELOVED CARDI

...ASIDE FROM RUMORS, THAT'S THE LAST TIME ANYBODY WE KNOW LAID EYES ON BATMAN FOR SURE.

COMPRIS,  
M'SIEU LE COP?

NO ONE CAN SAVE YOU FROM THIS.

EVEN BATMAN AND ROBIN ARE DEAD!

WE'RE SAFE IN THE HANDS OF GORDON'S BOYS, LIKE THIS HERO.

YOU SURE YOU DON'T WANT US TO HANDLE THE MESSY BUSINESS, BOSS?

WE'RE INTO IT.

THE JOKER GAVE ME A FACE TO MATCH MY APPETITES.

THE LIFE I KNEW IS OVER, BUT HERE IN GOTHAM I'M FREE TO LIVE WITHOUT RESTRICTIONS, HNN?

IF I CHOOSE TO BATHE IN THE BLOOD AND BRAINS AND PAIN OF THIS FOOLISH, INQUISITIVE POLICEMAN, I EXPECT YOU TO INDULGE ME.

?

IMPOSSIBLE.



EPILOGUE

# MASK OF ZORRO

...BUT HOW  
DID HE GET TO  
BE ZORRO?

WHY CAN'T I  
BE ZORRO?

WHY WAS  
HE CALLED  
ZORRO  
ANYWAY?

"ZORRO"  
MEANS "FOX"  
IN SPANISH,  
BRUCE.

STAY  
CLOSE.

IMAGINE IF  
ZORRO CAME  
RIDING DOWN THE  
STREET RIGHT  
NOW ON HIS  
HORSE!

HA HA.

I'M NOT SO  
SURE GOTHAM  
CITY WOULD **WELCOME**  
A MASKED MAN  
TAKING THE LAW INTO  
HIS OWN HANDS,  
BRUCE!

THE SAD  
THING IS THEY'D  
PROBABLY THROW  
SOMEONE LIKE  
ZORRO IN  
ARKHAM.

WHAT?

# НЯАИЭЯД

# BATMAN R.I.P.