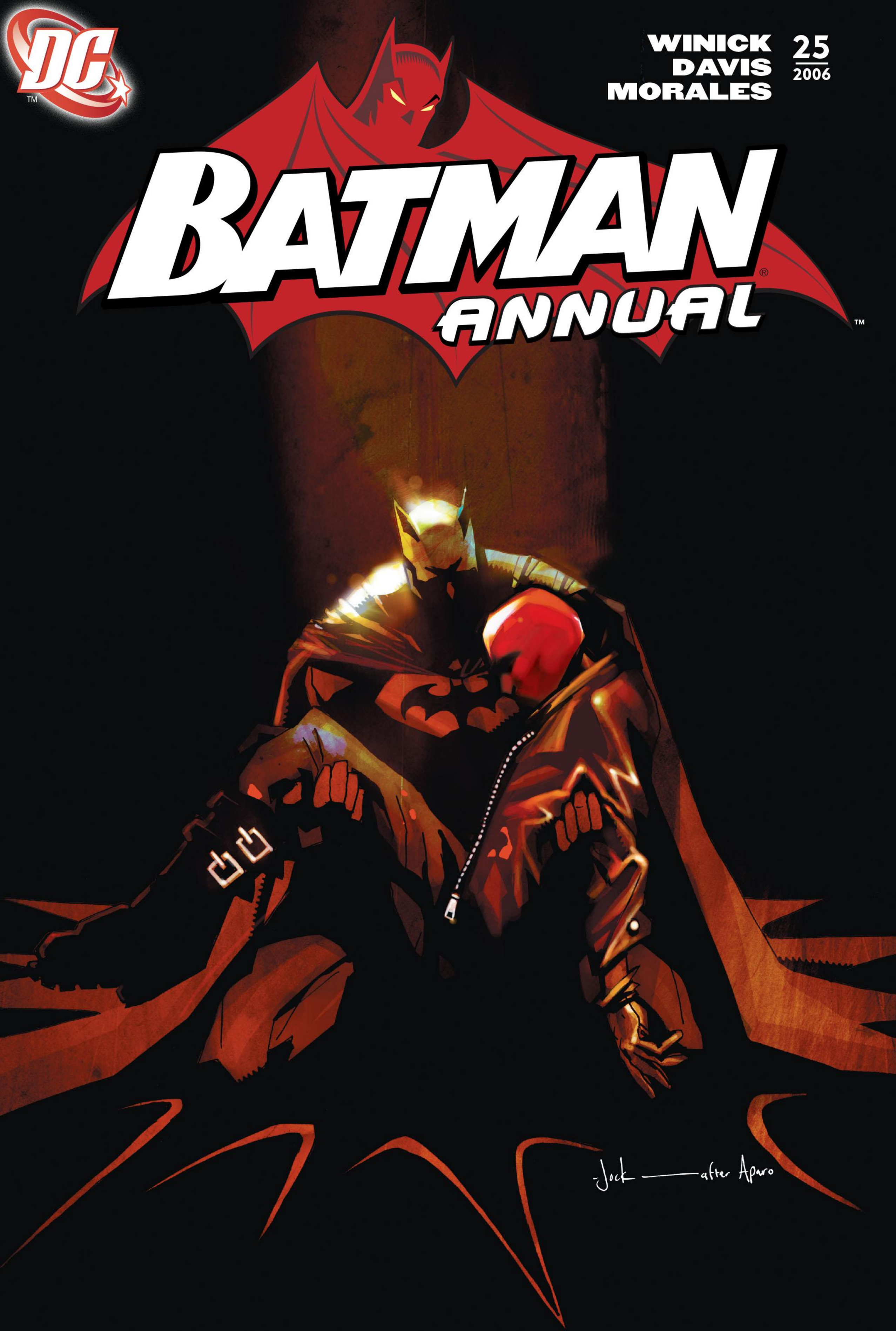

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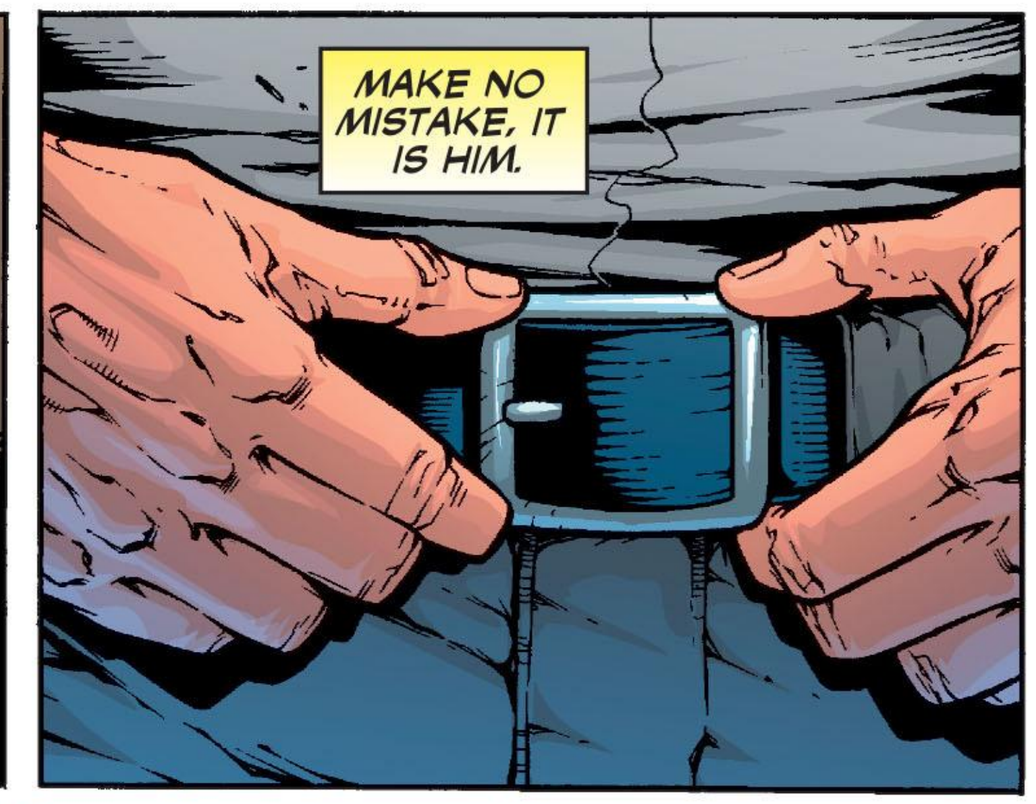
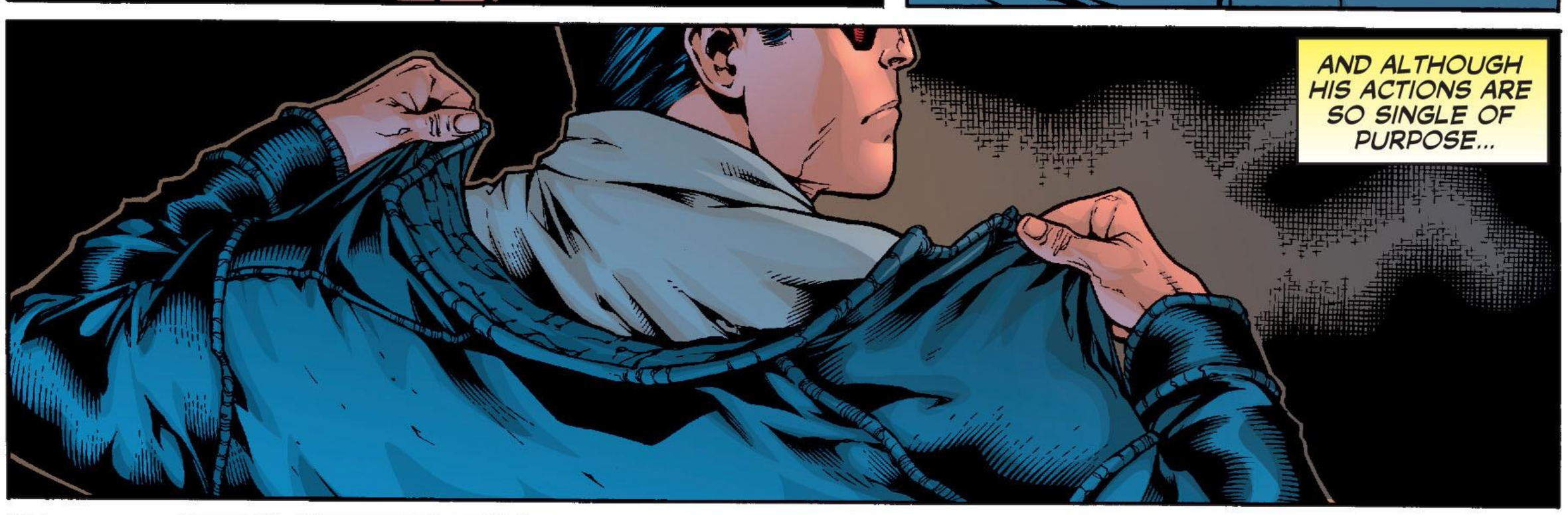
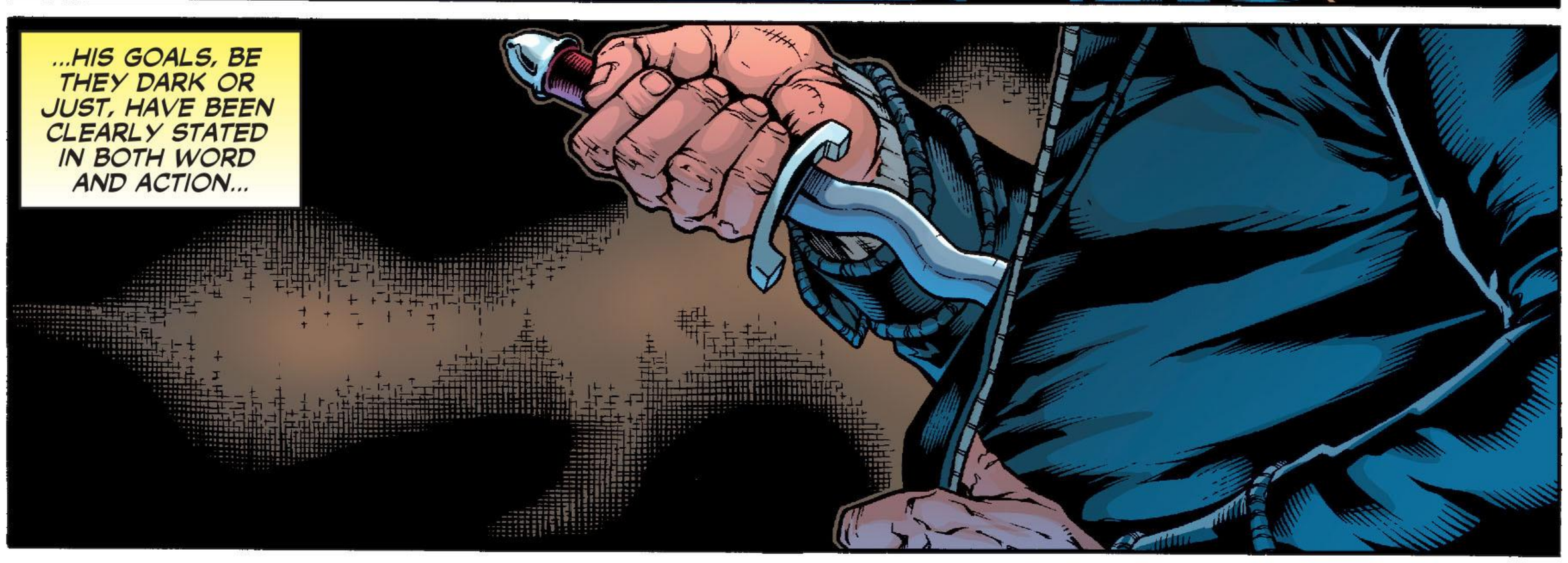
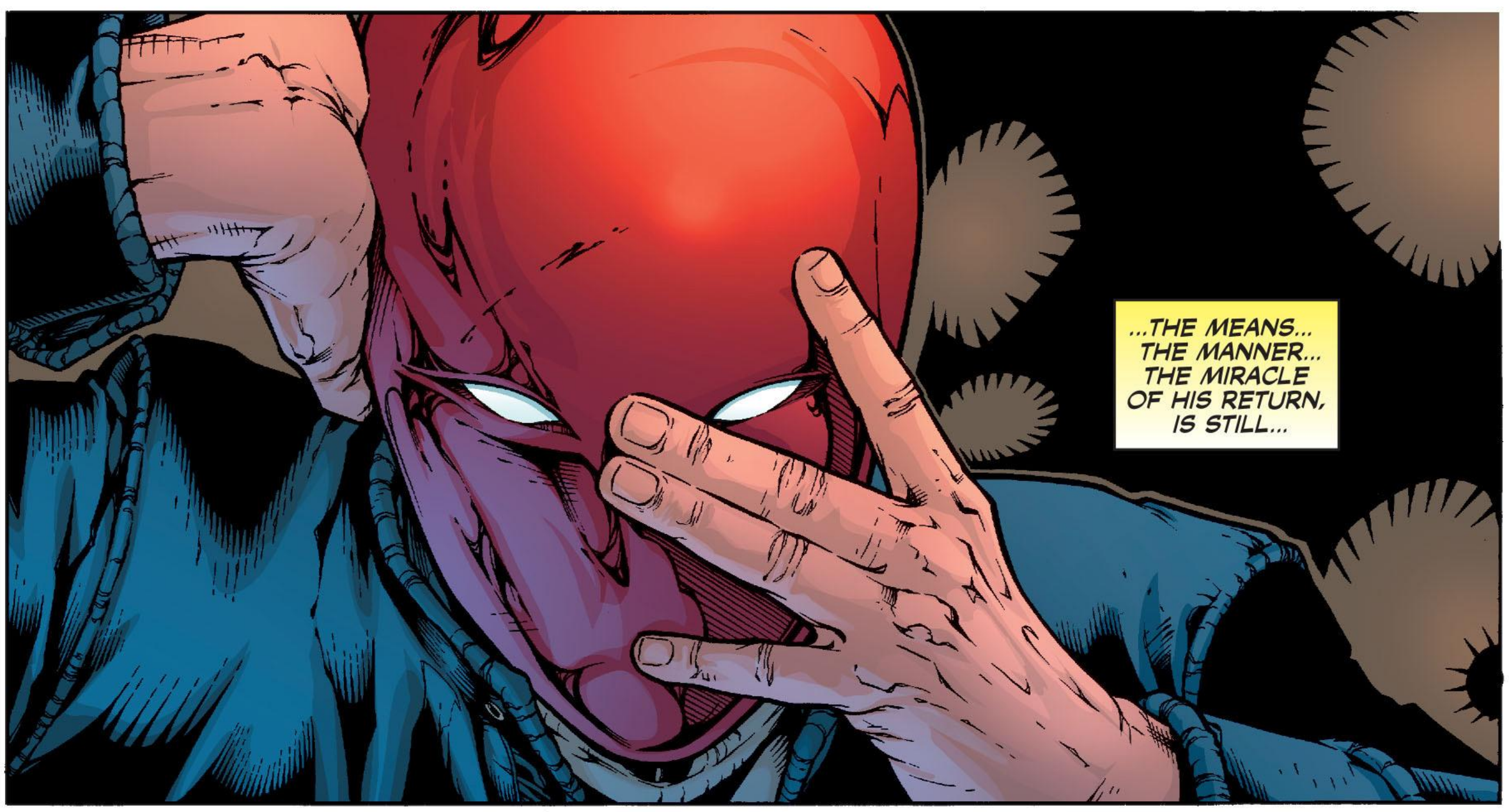
HE IS JASON TODD.

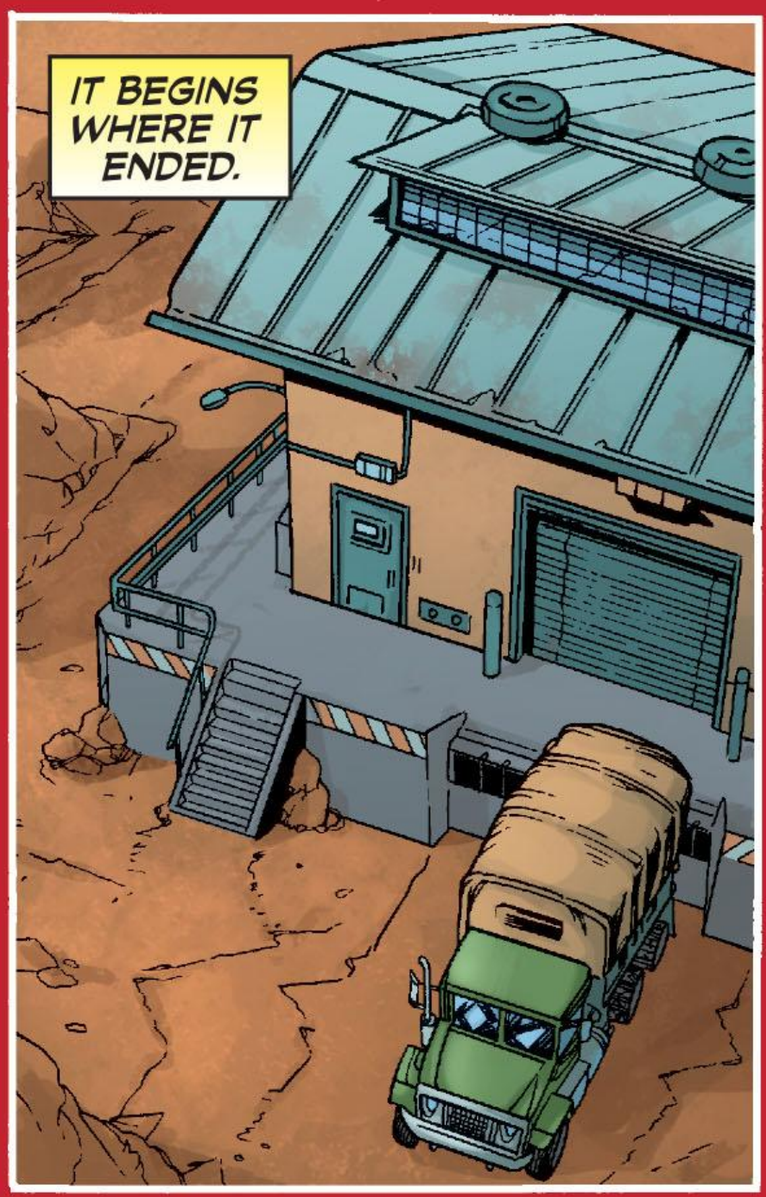

MAKE NO MISTAKE, IT IS HIM.

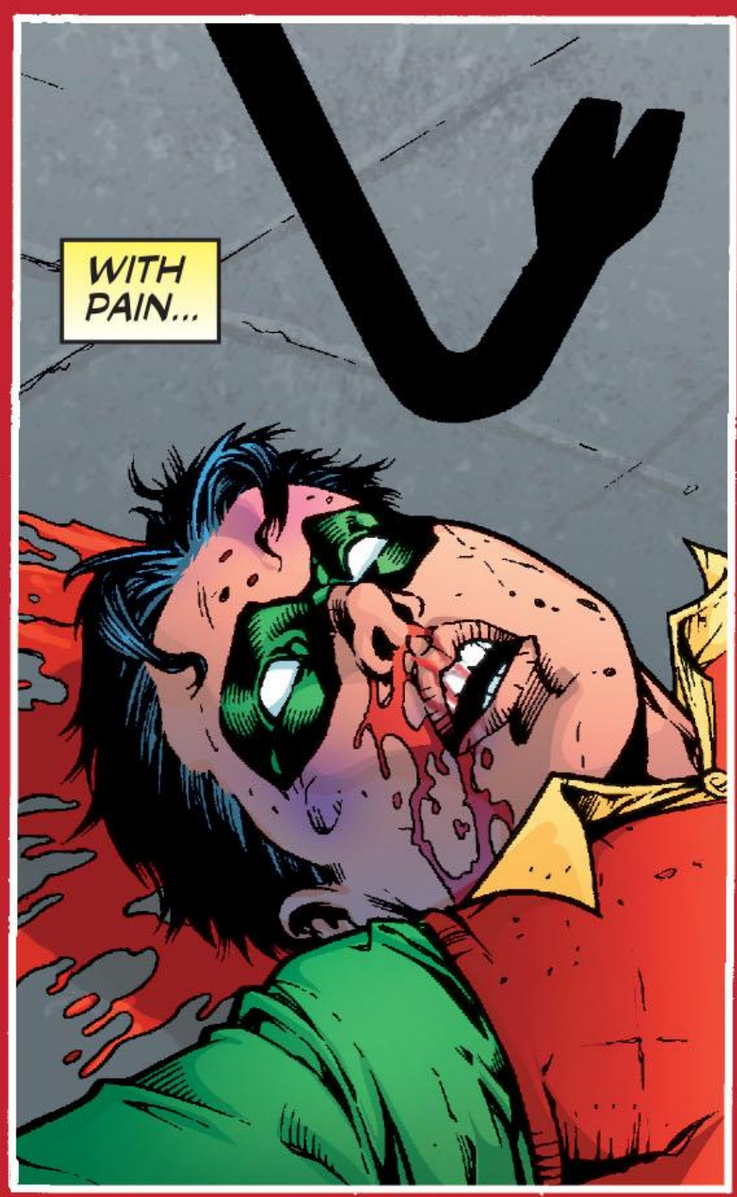

AND ALTHOUGH HIS ACTIONS ARE SO SINGLE OF PURPOSE...


...HIS GOALS, BE THEY DARK OR JUST, HAVE BEEN CLEARLY STATED IN BOTH WORD AND ACTION...


...THE MEANS... THE MANNER... THE MIRACLE OF HIS RETURN, IS STILL...

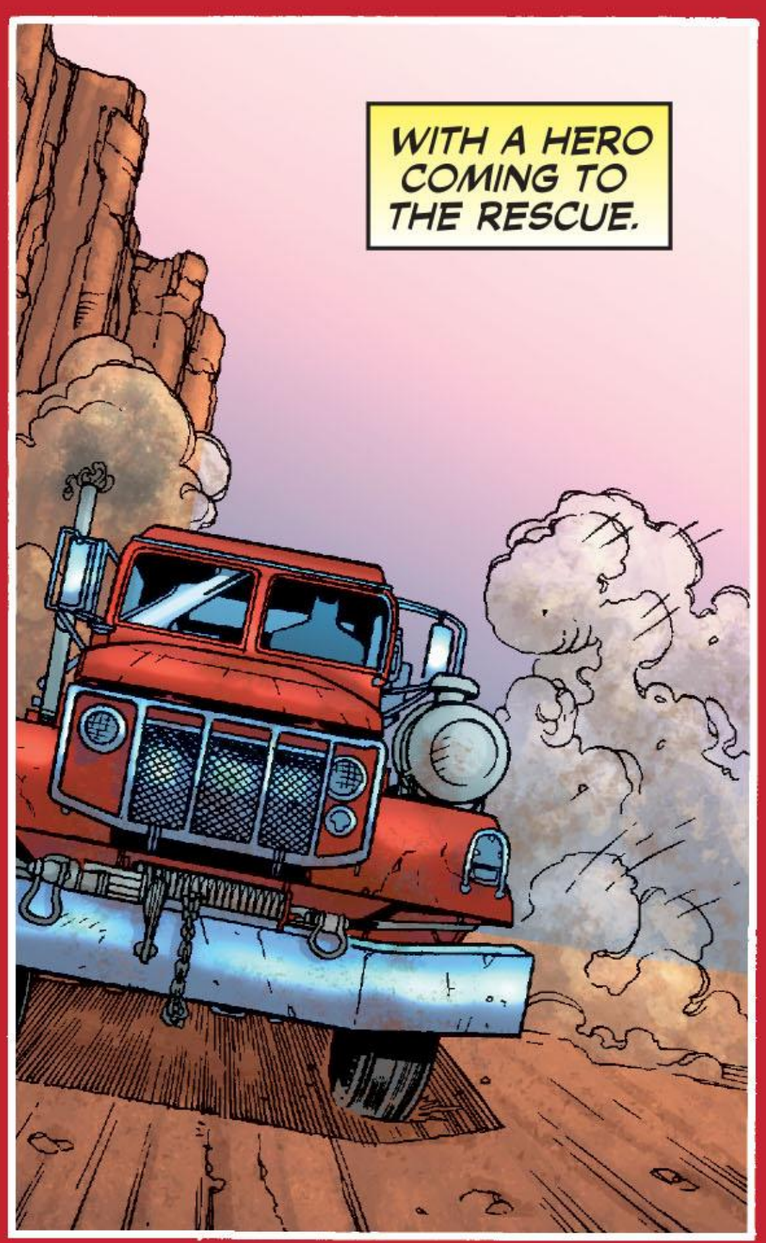
...A MYSTERY.
Daedalus and Icarus
THE RETURN OF JASON TODD
JUDD WINICK WRITER
SHANE DAVIS PENCILS
MARK MORALES INKS
ALEX SINCLAIR COLORS
TRAVIS LANHAM LETTERS
BRANDON MONTCLARE ASST. EDITOR
BOB SCHRECK EDITOR
BATMAN CREATED BY BOB KANE
PAGE 8 BY:
JIM STARLIN PLOT
JIM APARO PENCILS
MIKE DECARLO INKS
UNTIL NOW.


IT BEGINS WHERE IT ENDED.


WITH PAIN...

...DEALT FROM A FAMILIAR FACE.

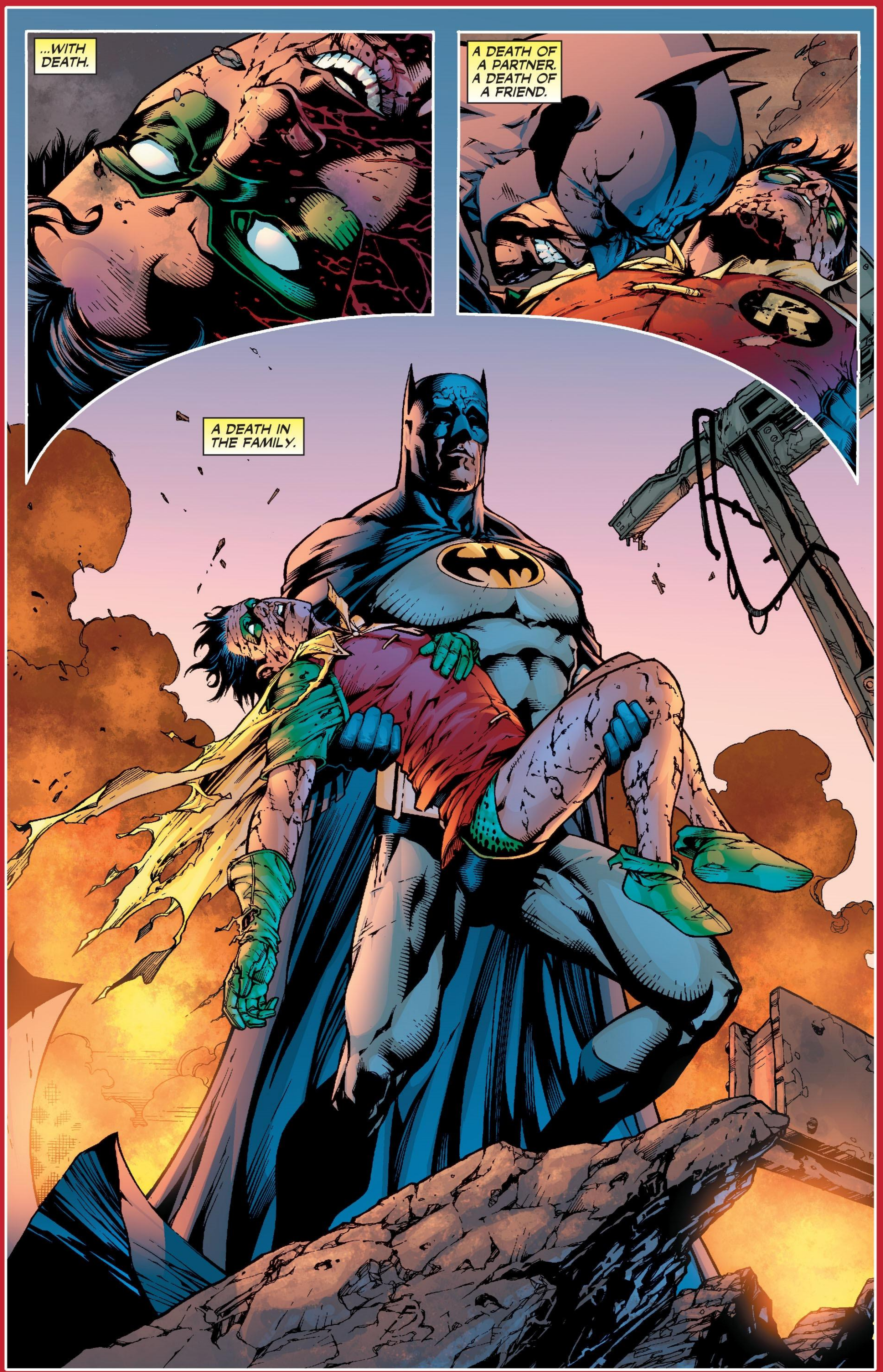
WITH A TICKING CLOCK.
00:57


WITH A HERO COMING TO THE RESCUE.

BUT THIS TIME...

...UNLIKE THE MANY TIMES BEFORE...

DIM
...HE WOULD FAIL.
AND THE HERO WHOSE QUEST WAS BUILT UPON TRAGEDY...
...WHO SOUGHT VENGEANCE TO QUELL THE PAIN OF GRIEF...
...FOUND HIMSELF ONCE AGAIN FACE-TO-FACE...



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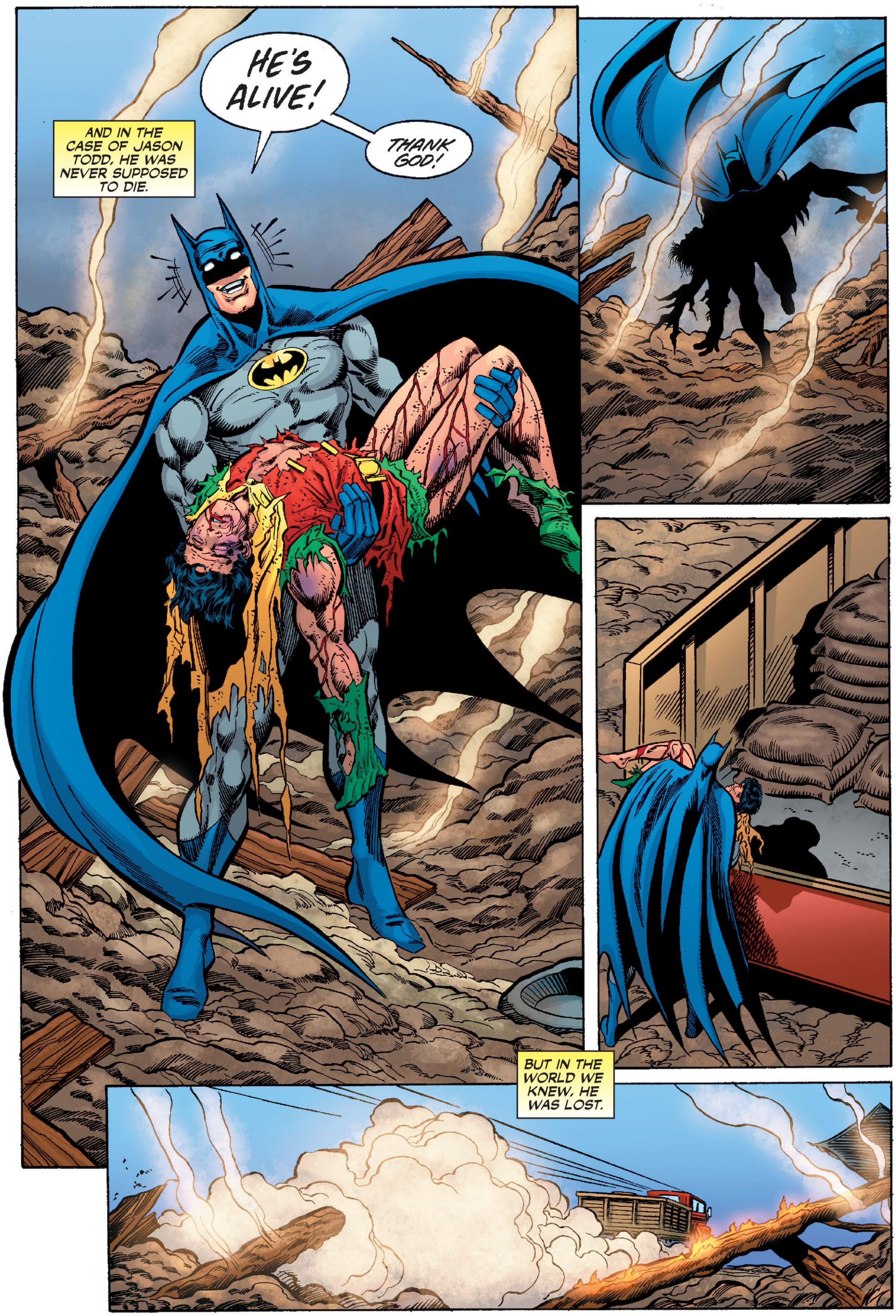
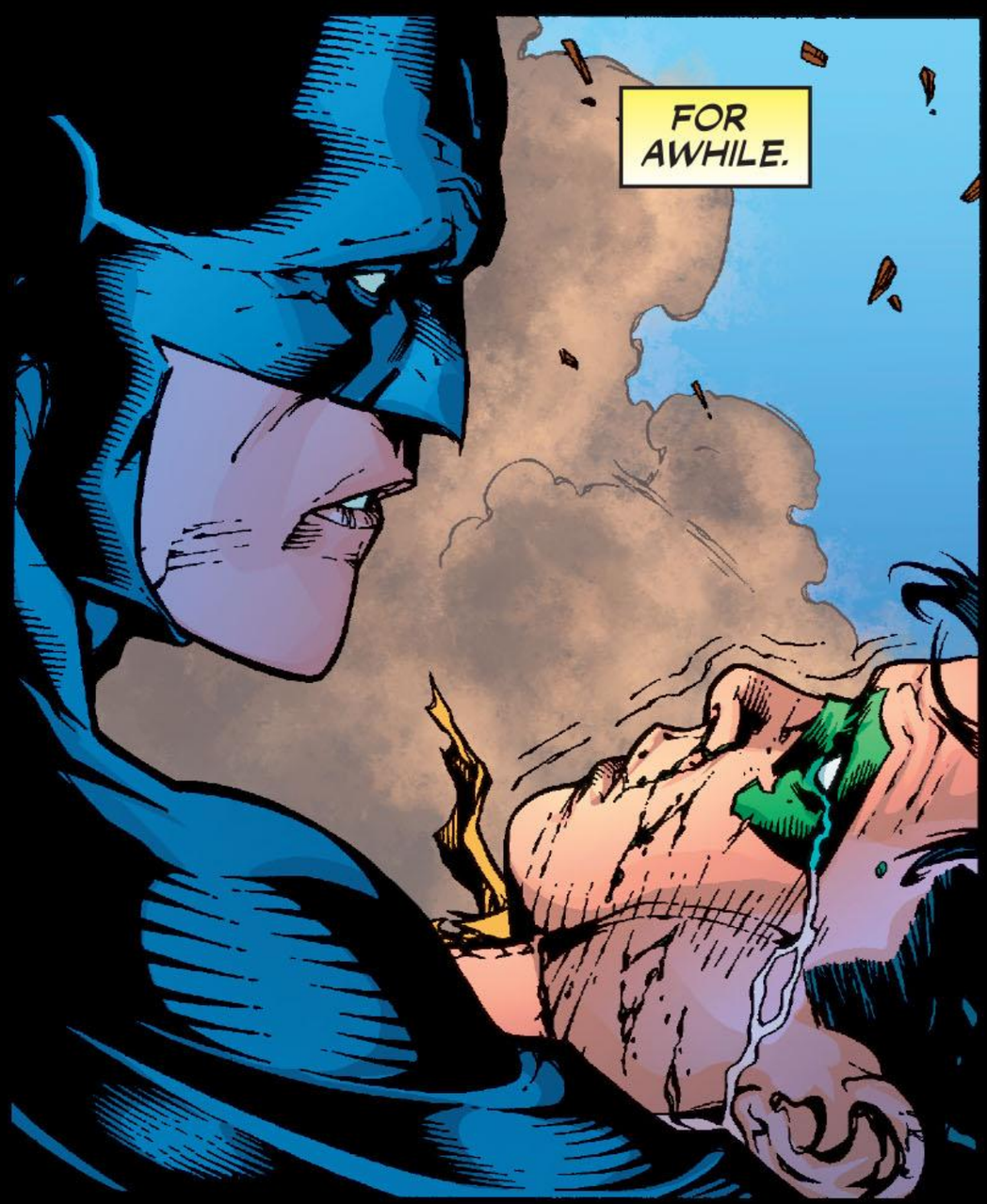
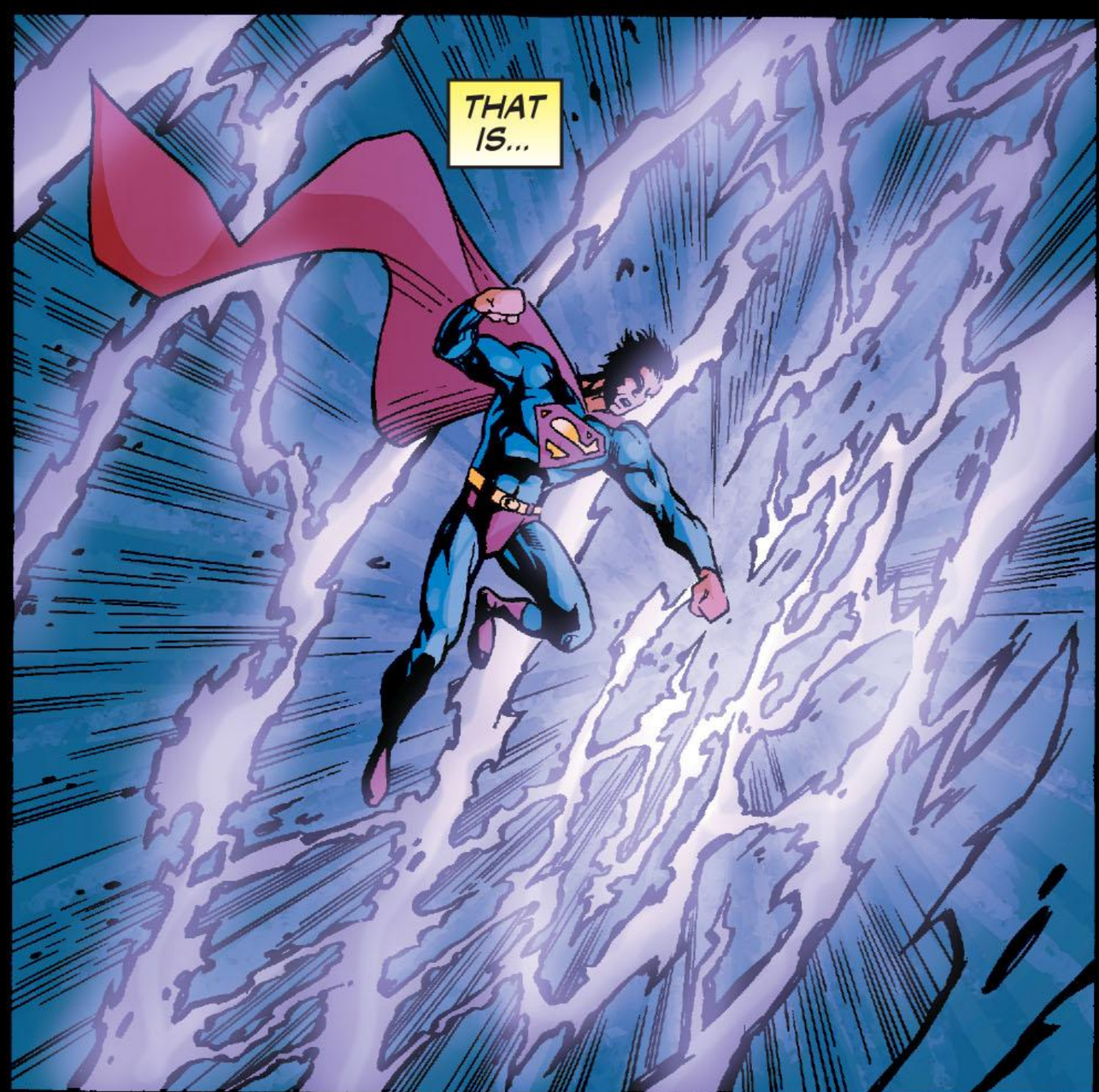
BUT WE HAVE LEARNED THAT TIME IS MORE FLUID THAN BELIEVED.
THAT THE ANGER AND FRUSTRATION OF A POWERFUL BOY TRAPPED BETWEEN HIS EXISTENCE AND NOTHINGNESS...
...COULD CHANGE THE WORLD THAT WE KNOW.
WITH EACH FIT OF RAGE, HIS FIST COLLIDING WITH THE WALL OF HIS PROVERBIAL CELL...

...HE SENT A RIPPLE ACROSS TIME THAT WOULD ALTER EVENTS.
THE STRANGE TRUTH OF THIS ANOMALY, THIS WAVE THAT SET SO MANY BITS OF TIME ON A DIFFERENT PATH DID NOT CHANGE HISTORY...
...BUT SET IT RIGHT.


AND IN THE CASE OF JASON TODD, HE WAS NEVER SUPPOSED TO DIE.
HE'S ALIVE!
THANK GOD!
BUT IN THE WORLD WE KNEW, HE WAS LOST.

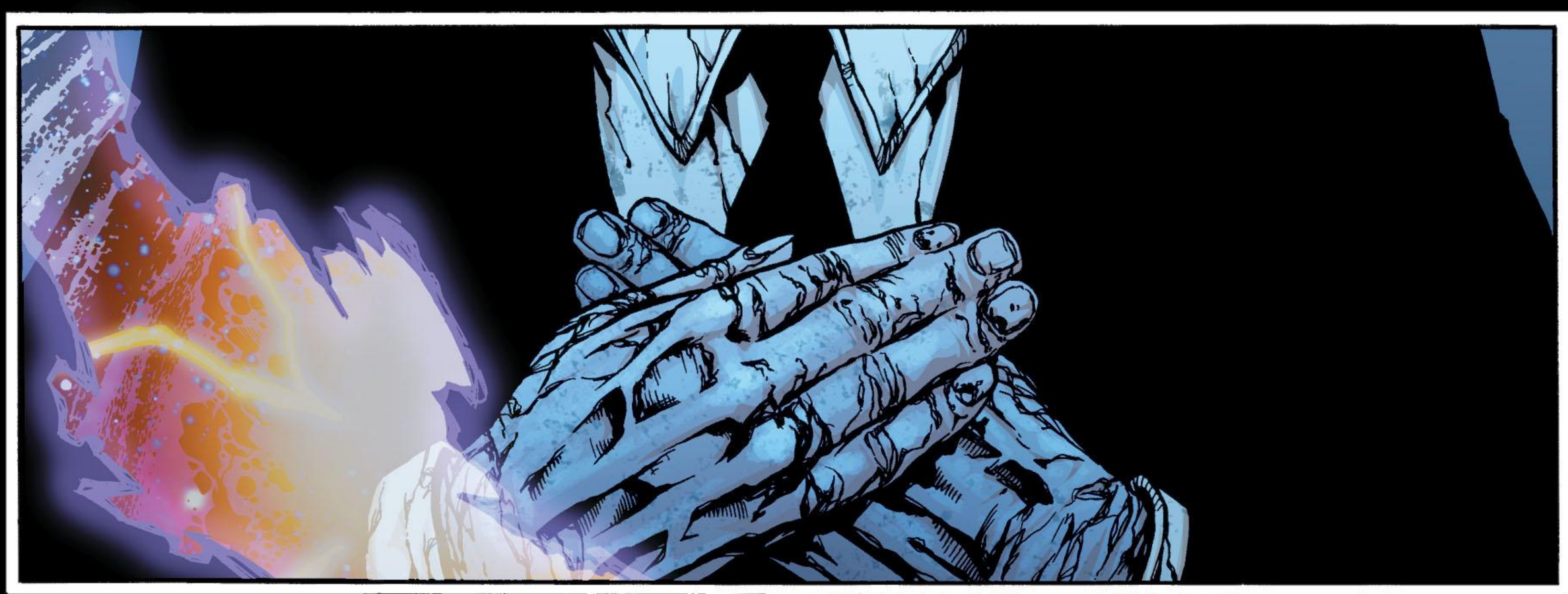

FOR AWHILE.

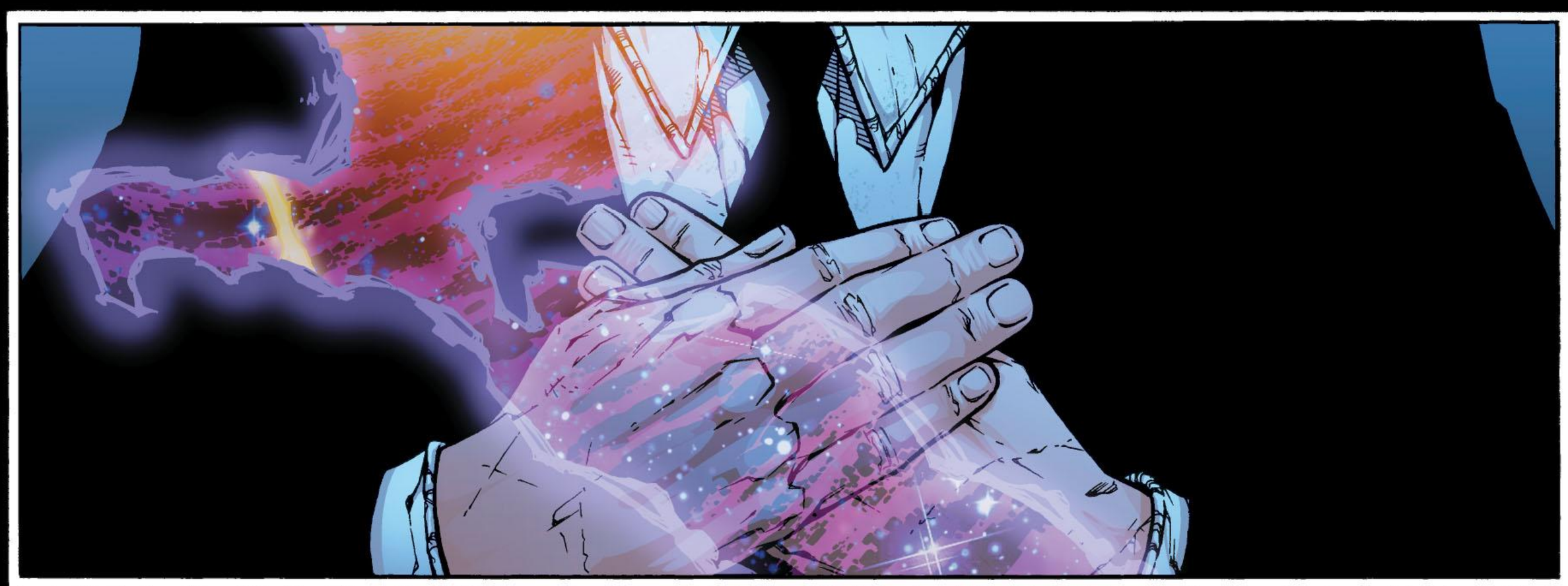

THAT IS...

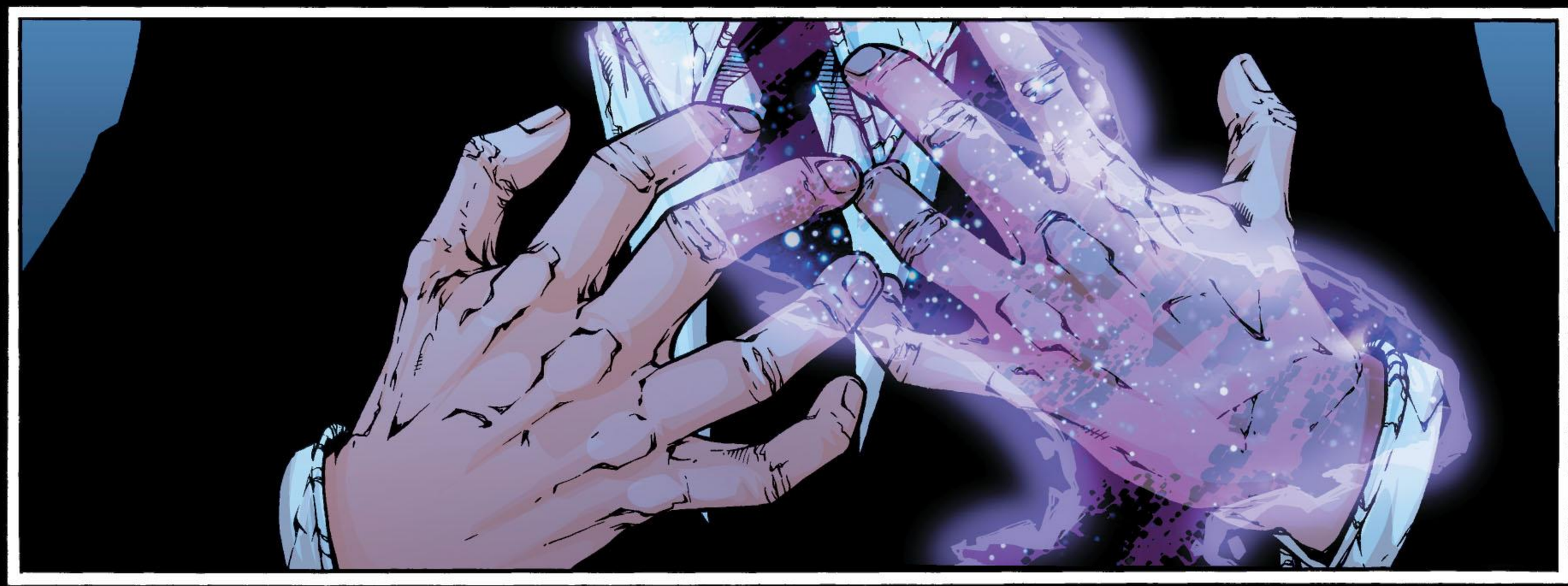
...UNTIL TIME DECIDED TO SET THINGS RIGHT.

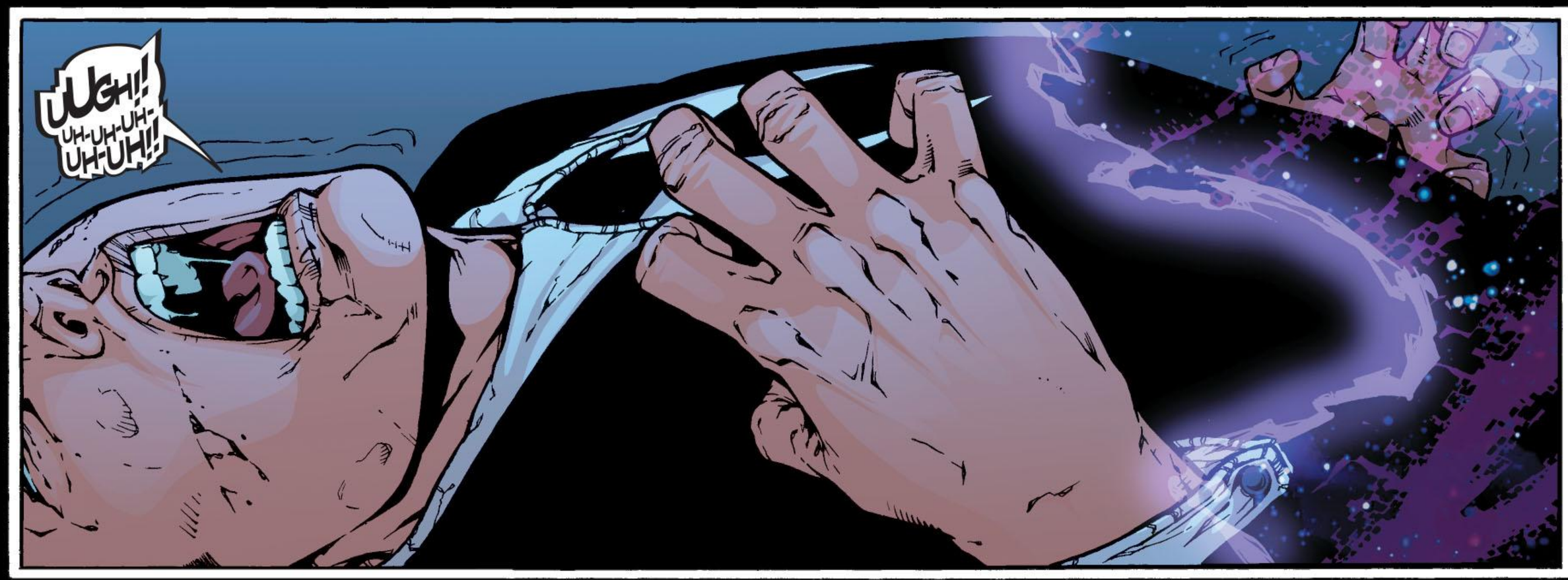
SIX MONTHS LATER.

HERE LIES
JASON TODD



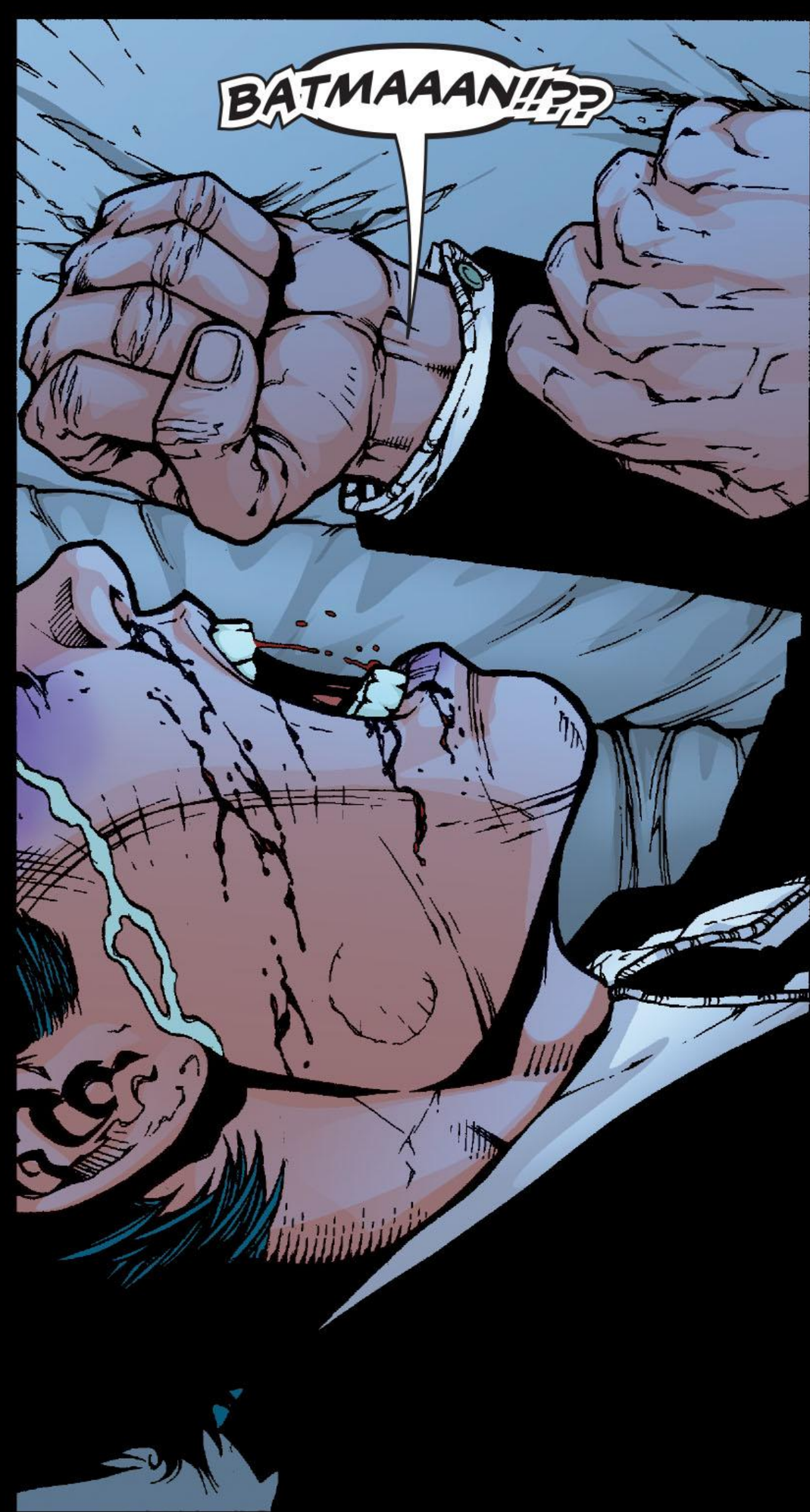





UGH!!
UH-UH-UH-UH-UH!!

AAAAH!!

AAAAAAHH


BATMAAAN!!??

HE WAS NOT BURIED IN COSTUME.
C'MON-- C'MON--C'MON-- C'MON--C'MON-- C'MON-- C'MON--!
ON HIS PERSON ARE NO KEEPSAKES OF HIS ALTER EGO.

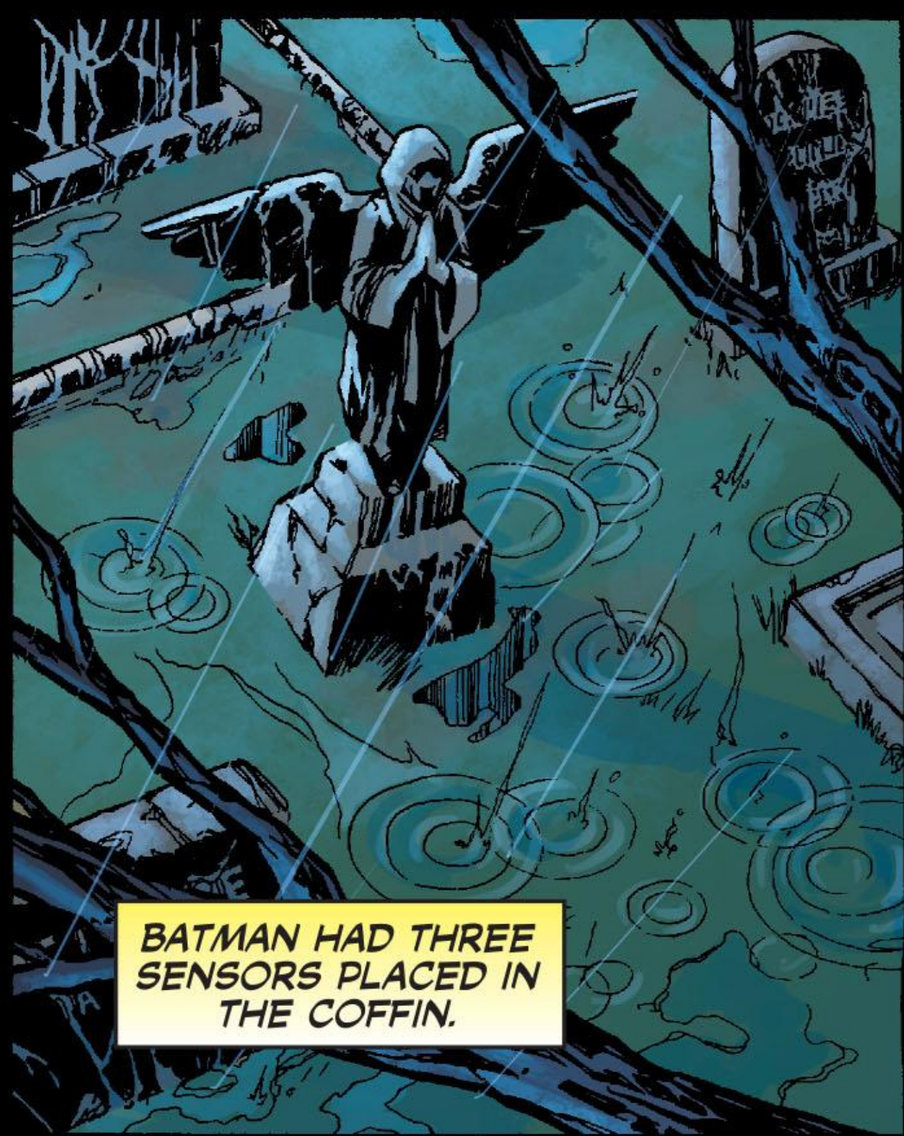
NO BATARANGS. NO TOOLS. NO EQUIPMENT OF ANY KIND THAT WOULD EVER TELL YOU THAT THIS BOY, IN THIS PINE BOX, WAS THE TEENAGED HERO WHO FOUGHT ALONG-SIDE THE DARK KNIGHT.
SOMETHING-- GOTTA HAVE-- SOMETHING...

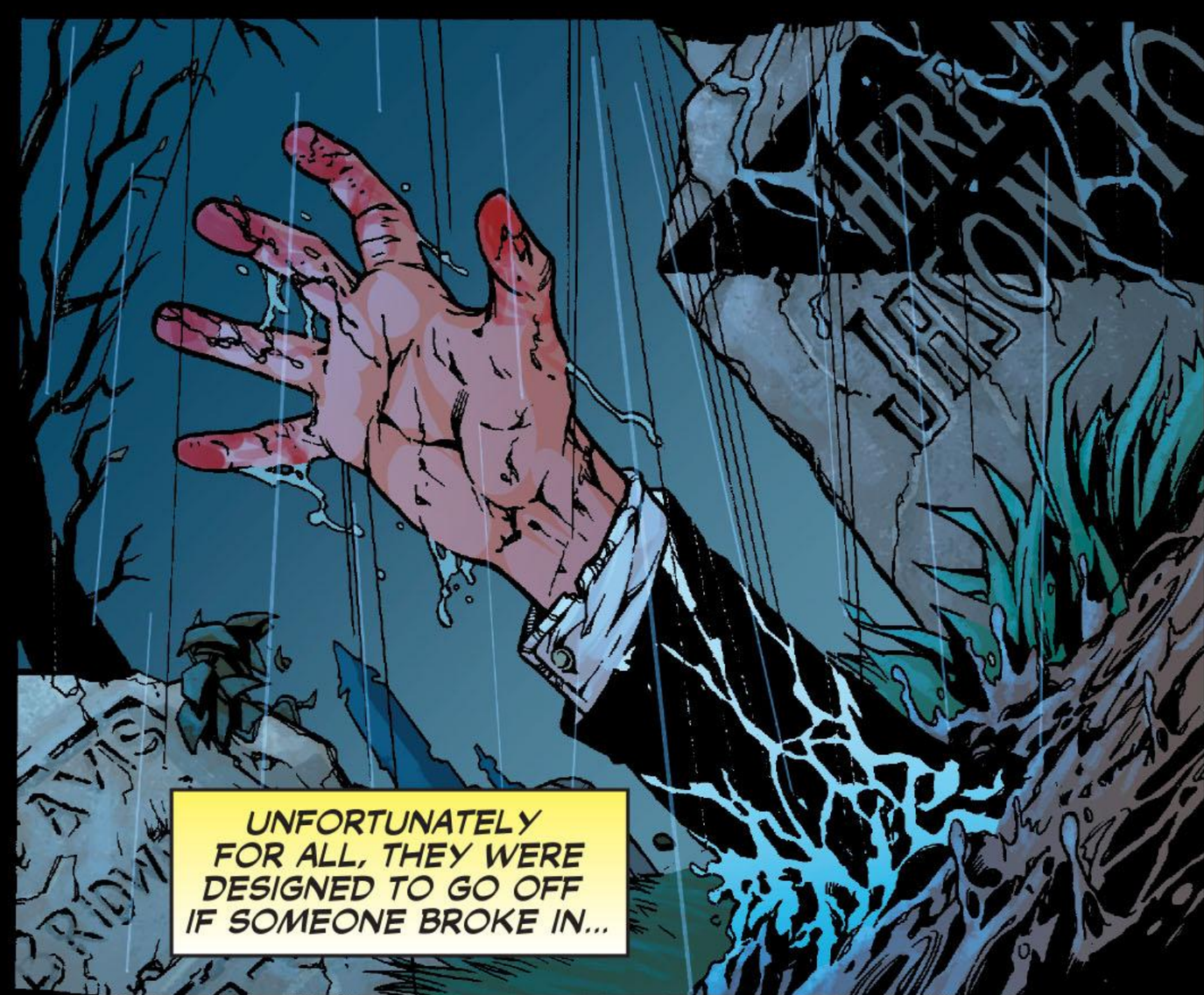
CALM... CALM DOWN... NOT ENOUGH AIR...CALM...
BATMAN HAS NO ROOM FOR SENTIMENTALITY OF ANY KIND WHEN IT COMES TO MAINTAINING HIS GREATEST SECRET.

GOTTA... GOTTA DIG...
AND THAT LEFT JASON TO FALL UPON INSTINCT.

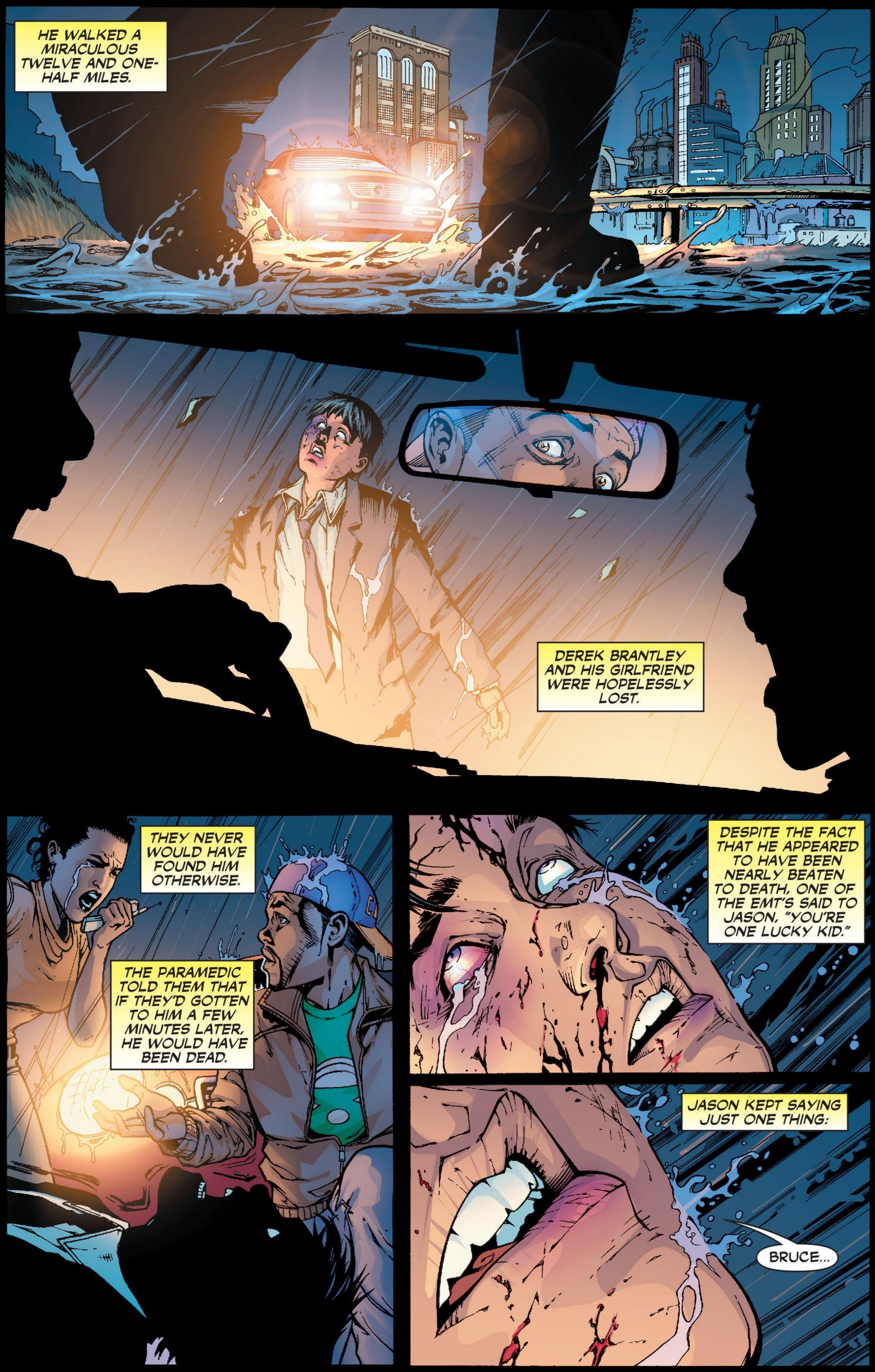
DIG...DIG YOUR WAY OUT...

ALL THE TRAINING THAT HE HAD RECEIVED SINCE HE WAS BUT A YOUNG BOY.
THAT PART OF HIM THAT QUELLS PANIC...
...AND PUSHES TO SURVIVE.

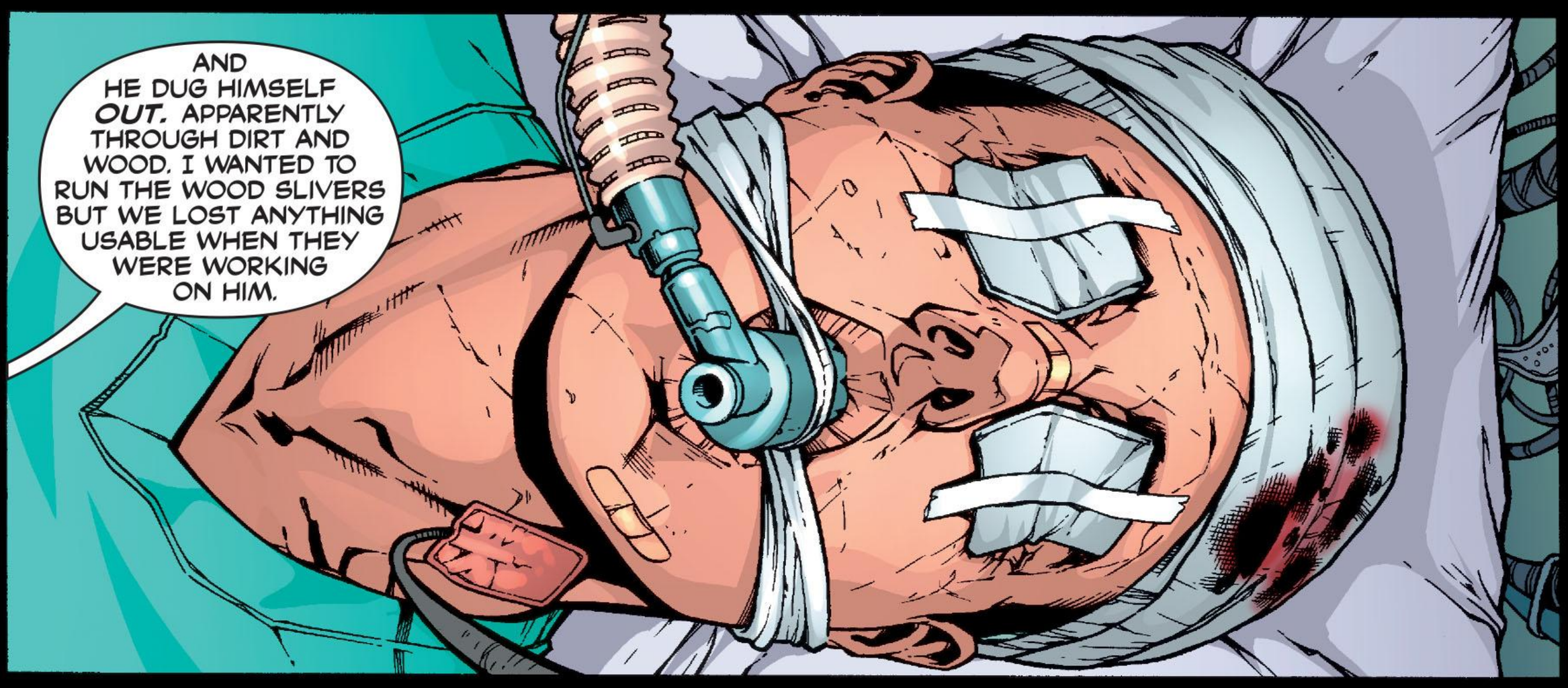


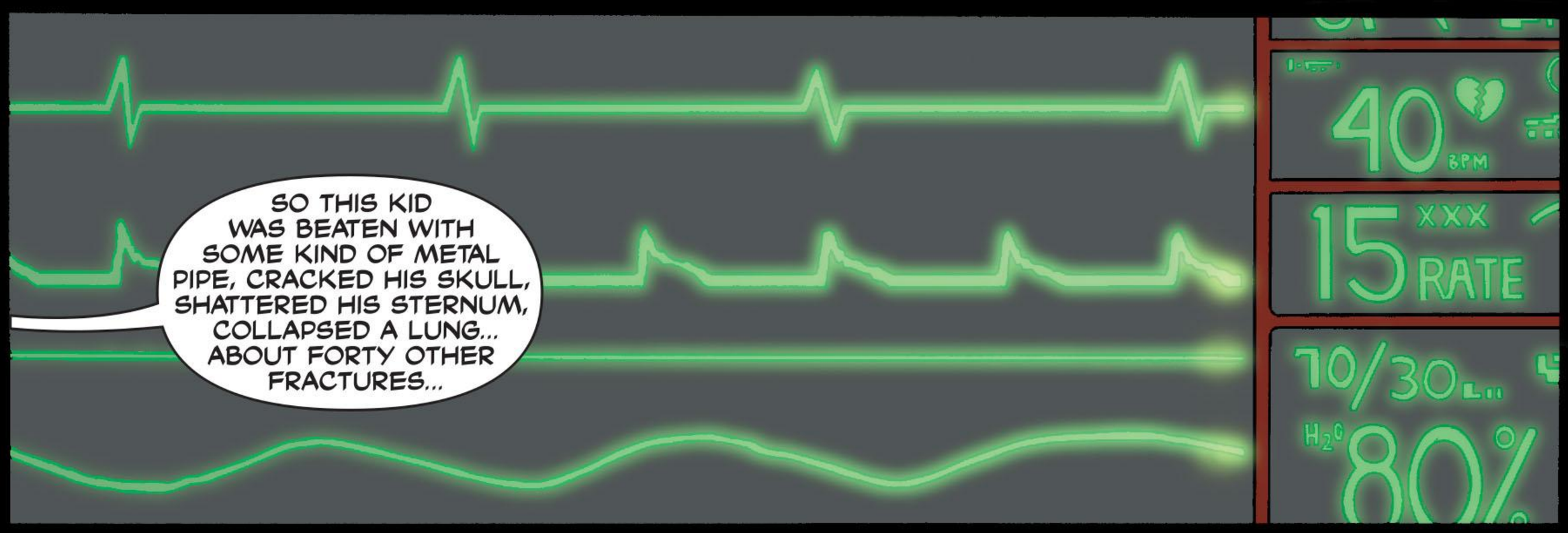


...NOT IF SOMEONE BROKE OUT.


HE WALKED A MIRACULOUS TWELVE AND ONE-HALF MILES.
DEREK BRANTLEY AND HIS GIRLFRIEND WERE HOPELESSLY LOST.
THEY NEVER WOULD HAVE FOUND HIM OTHERWISE.
THE PARAMEDIC TOLD THEM THAT IF THEY'D GOTTEN TO HIM A FEW MINUTES LATER, HE WOULD HAVE BEEN DEAD.
DESPITE THE FACT THAT HE APPEARED TO HAVE BEEN NEARLY BEATEN TO DEATH, ONE OF THE EMT'S SAID TO JASON, "YOU'RE ONE LUCKY KID."
JASON KEPT SAYING JUST ONE THING:
BRUCE...

HE'S IN A COMA? I THOUGHT THEY FOUND HIM ON FOOT?


AND HE DUG HIMSELF *OUT.* APPARENTLY THROUGH DIRT AND WOOD. I WANTED TO RUN THE WOOD SLIVERS BUT WE LOST ANYTHING USABLE WHEN THEY WERE WORKING ON HIM.

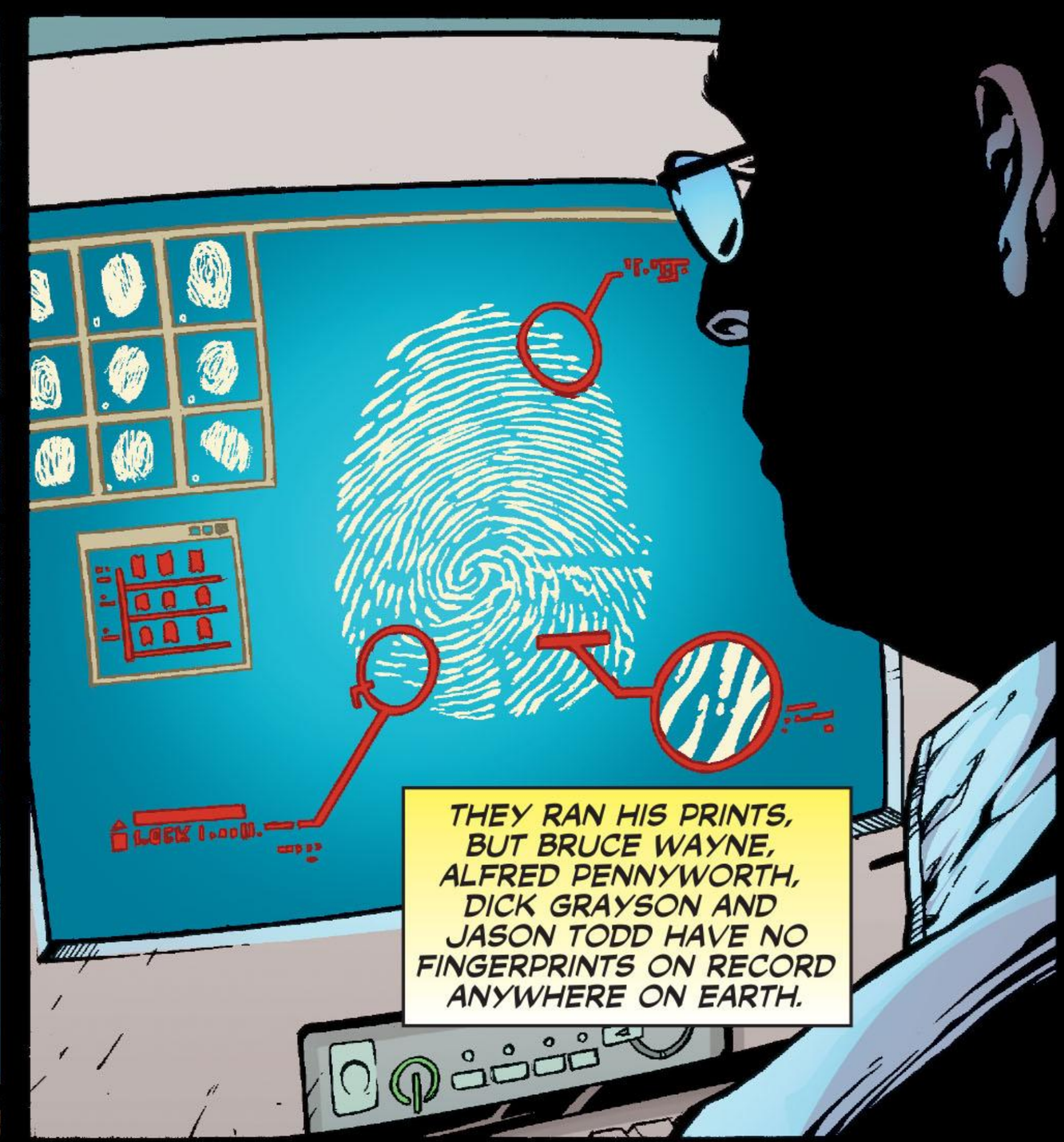

SO THIS KID WAS BEATEN WITH SOME KIND OF METAL PIPE, CRACKED HIS SKULL, SHATTERED HIS STERNUM, COLLAPSED A LUNG... ABOUT FORTY OTHER FRACTURES...
40 BPM
15 XXX RATE
70/30
80%

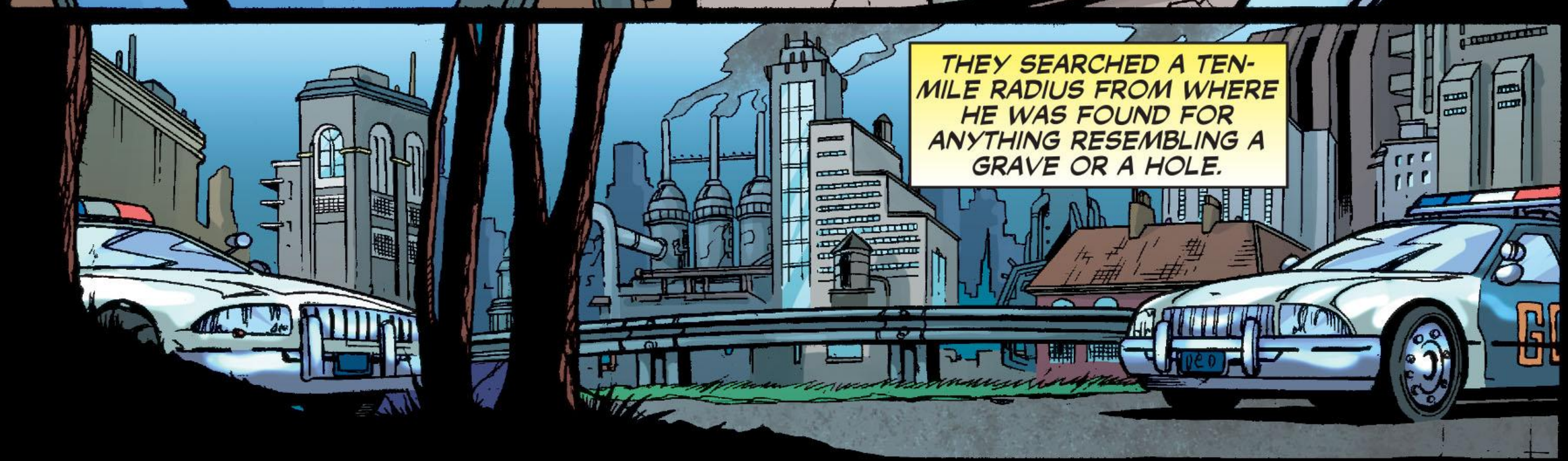
...*BLOWN* UP, THEN BURIED?
YEAH. AND HE'S STILL ALIVE.
GOD ALMIGHTY. LIKE FREAKIN' RASPUTIN.
MORE LIKE LAZARUS.

HE KEPT ASKING FOR "BRUCE." HE SAY WHO THAT WAS?
YEAH, JUST BEFORE HE WENT UNDER.

HE SAID IT WAS HIS FATHER.

THEY MADE A SEARCH FOR ANY MISSING PERSON WITH FATHER OR FAMILIAL RELATION WITH THE **FIRST** OR **LAST** NAME OF BRUCE. THEY FOUND NONE. JASON WASN'T MISSING.
MISSING PERSONS

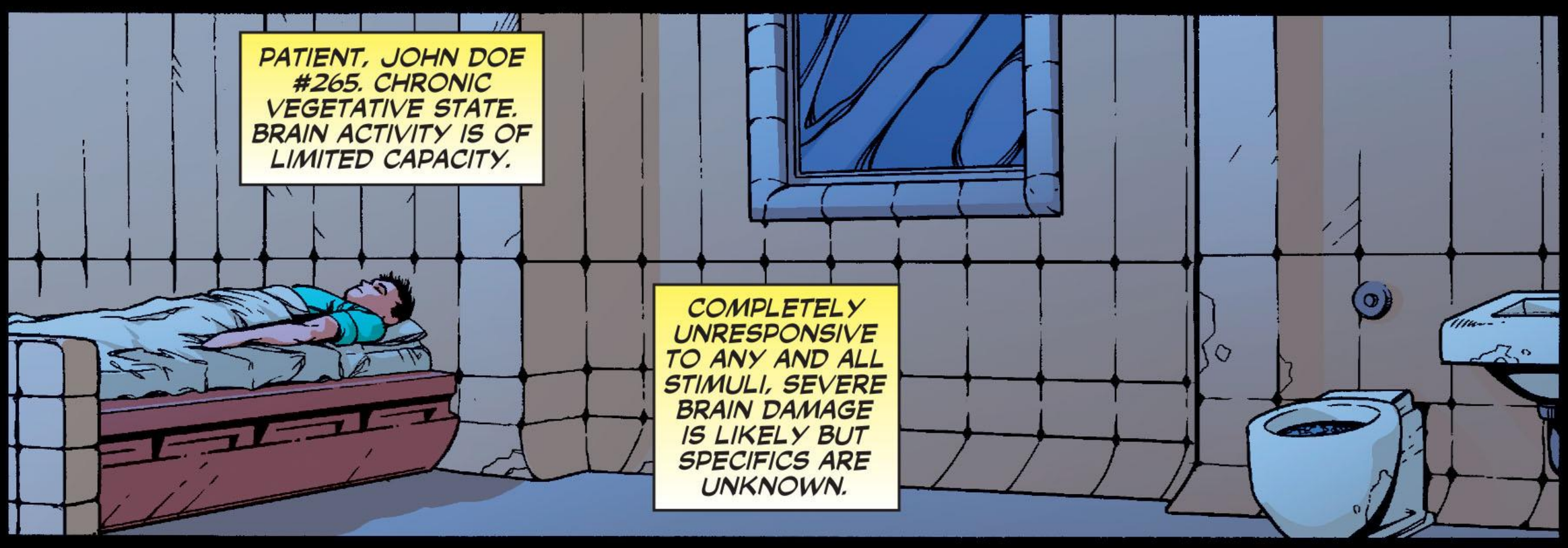

THEY RAN HIS PRINTS, BUT BRUCE WAYNE, ALFRED PENNYWORTH, DICK GRAYSON AND JASON TODD HAVE NO FINGERPRINTS ON RECORD ANYWHERE ON EARTH.


THEY SEARCHED A TEN-MILE RADIUS FROM WHERE HE WAS FOUND FOR ANYTHING RESEMBLING A GRAVE OR A HOLE.

THEY WERE A FEW MILES TOO SHORT.
GOOD LORD...
HERE LIES

AND SOME UNEXPLAINED OCCURRENCES HAVE A WAY OF COVERING THEMSELVES UP.
YOU SURE ABOUT THIS?
JASON
I MEAN, GRAVE ROBBERS, IT'S--
MAN, **WE** DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED HERE. AND I DON'T **WANT** TO KNOW...

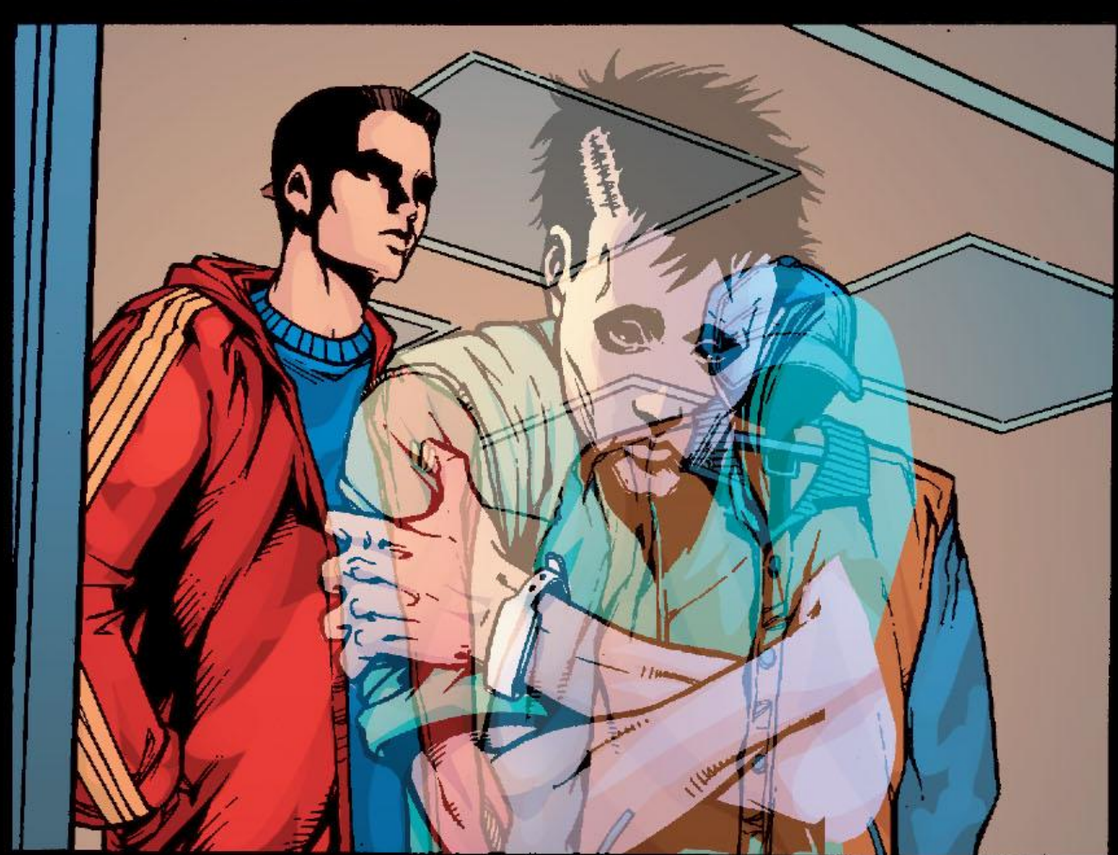
AND TIME HAS A WAY OF COVERING ALL TRACKS.
ASYLUM
HUNTINGTON CONVALESCENT HOME.
ONE YEAR LATER.


PATIENT, JOHN DOE #265. CHRONIC VEGETATIVE STATE. BRAIN ACTIVITY IS OF LIMITED CAPACITY.
COMPLETELY UNRESPONSIVE TO ANY AND ALL STIMULI, SEVERE BRAIN DAMAGE IS LIKELY BUT SPECIFICS ARE UNKNOWN.

ALL THIS WAS TRUE...
...BUT THE WILL IS SOMETIMES STRONGER THAN THE BODY.

AND INSTINCT IS SOMETIMES STRONGER THAN THOUGHT.
INSTINCTS THAT TELL HIM TO RUN.
INSTINCTS THAT HELP HIM TO ESCAPE.

INSTINCTS THAT HELP HIM SURVIVE.

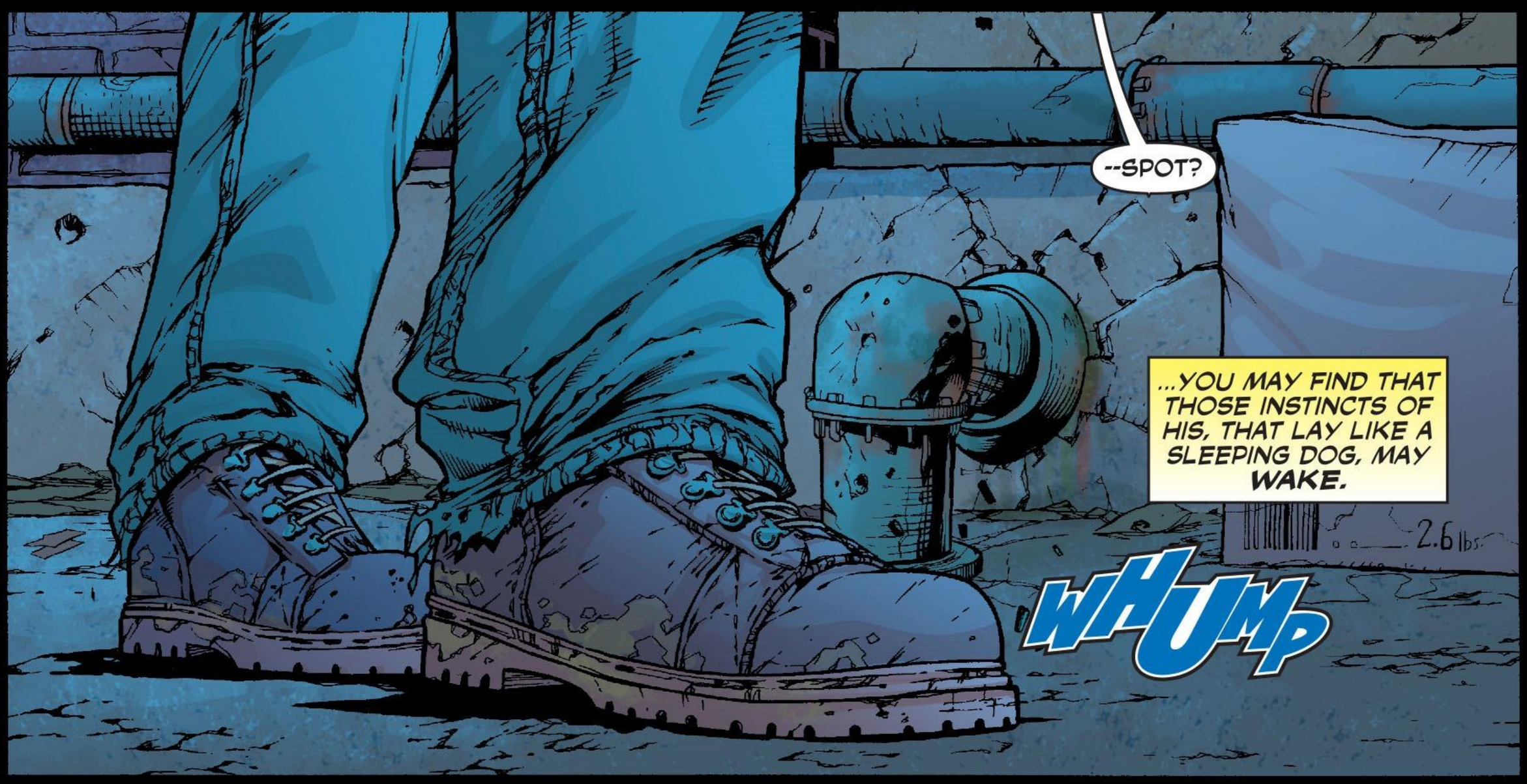


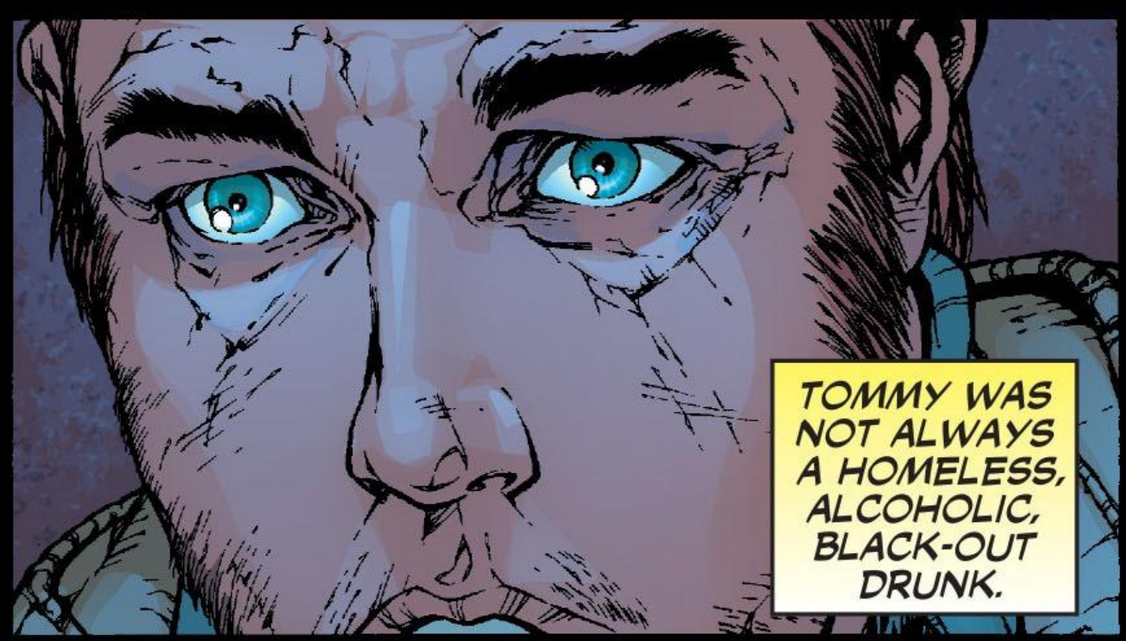
BAKER'S

BUT INSTINCTS CAN ONLY TAKE YOU SO FAR.
ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY AREN'T PARTNERED WITH REASON. WITH CLARITY.

OR WITH MEMORY.
ONE YEAR LATER.
GET OUT OF MY SPOT, PUNK.

YOU LISTENING TO ME? GET YOUR %$# UP!
MANY THINGS CAN JOG A MEMORY.
AW, JEEZ, MAN, THAT AIN'T YOUR SPOT, THAT AIN'T ANYBODY'S SPOT.
AND YOU ARE MESSING WITH A MEAL TICKET, MAN. THAT BOY ALWAYS SWIPES FOOD AND SHARES IT.
A SONG. A SMELL. A TASTE. A TOUCH.
I ONCE SAW HIM WALK OUT WITH A NINE-POUND TURKEY. HE'S GIFTED.
NEVER GAVE ME A THING!
OR IN THIS CASE--
AND HE'S IN MY SPOT!
AAAH!!
--PAIN.
QUIT WHINING, !@#$, AND GET THE HELL OUT OF MY--
AND FOR JASON, IF YOU POKE AT HIS MEMORY WITH A STICK...





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SUCCESSFUL ENOUGH THAT ON ONE NIGHT BATMAN DECIDED TO SHUT THEM DOWN.
BATMAN AND ROBIN.

THREE YEARS AGO...

...IN AN ALLEY...

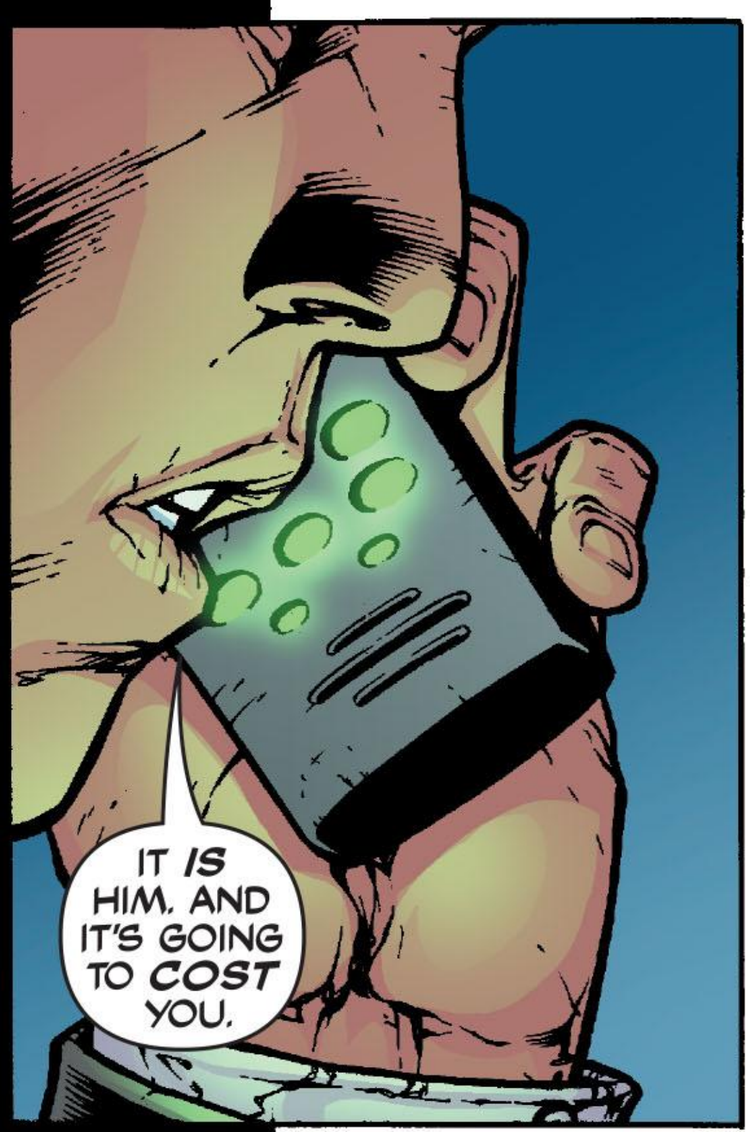
...JUST LIKE THIS ONE.

MAGERS
NITATION
MANY THINGS CAN JOG A MEMORY.

IT'S HIM. I SWEAR TO GOD IT'S HIM.
PHONE

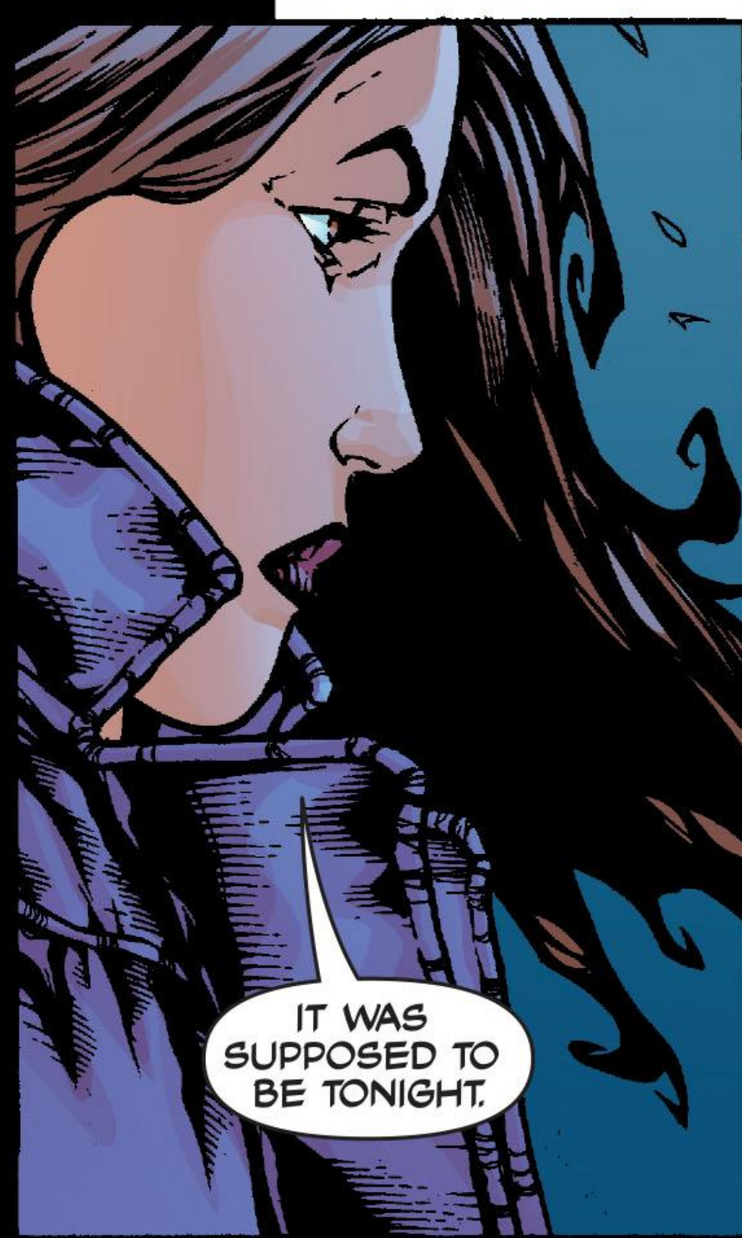
IT CAN'T BE...BUT IF YOU'RE EVEN REMOTELY RIGHT...

...I KNOW WHO MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN IT.

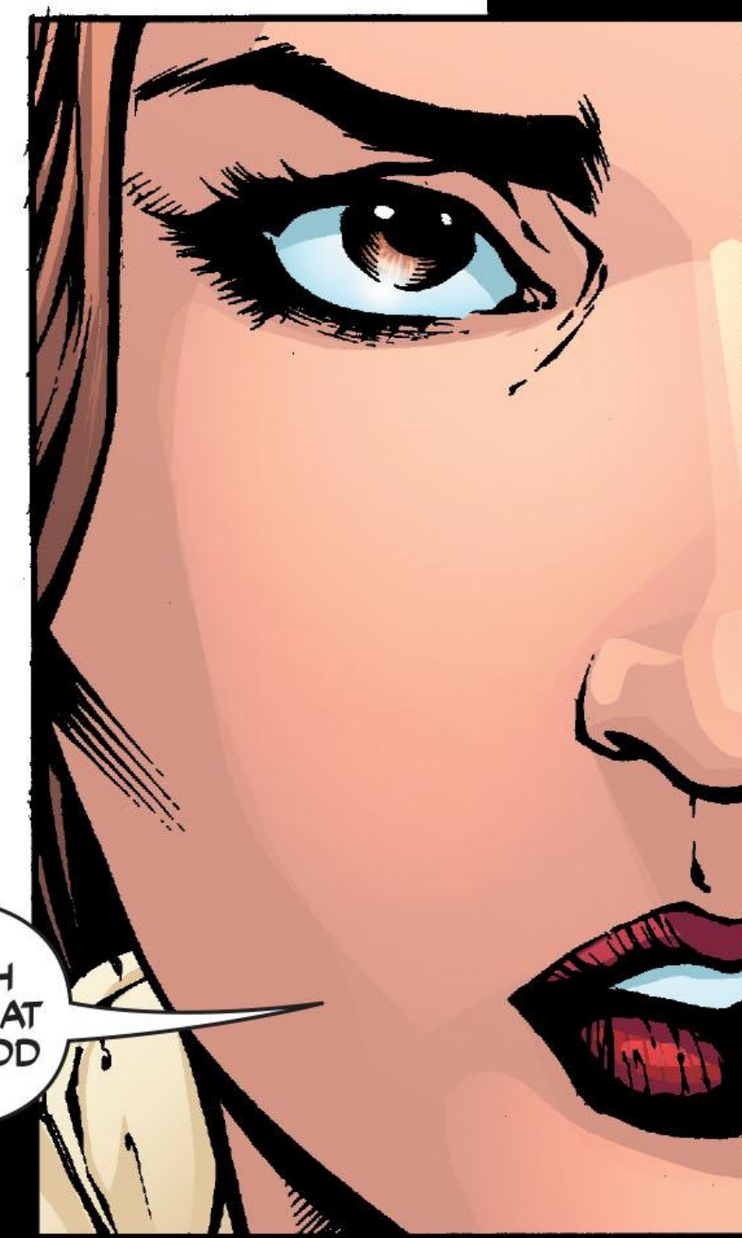

IT *IS* HIM, AND IT'S GOING TO *COST* YOU.

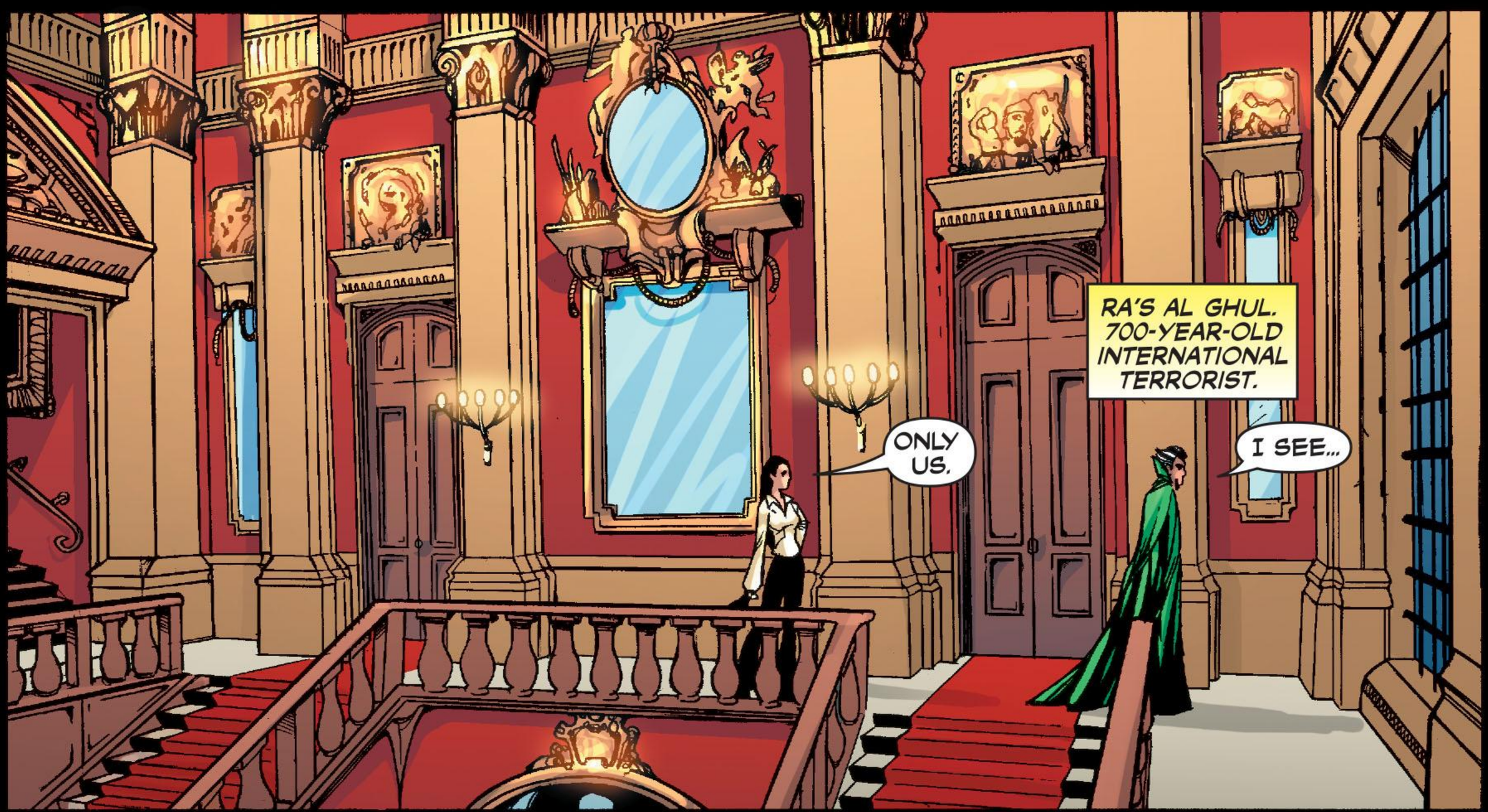
THEY'LL PAY.
I'M SURE THEY WILL.

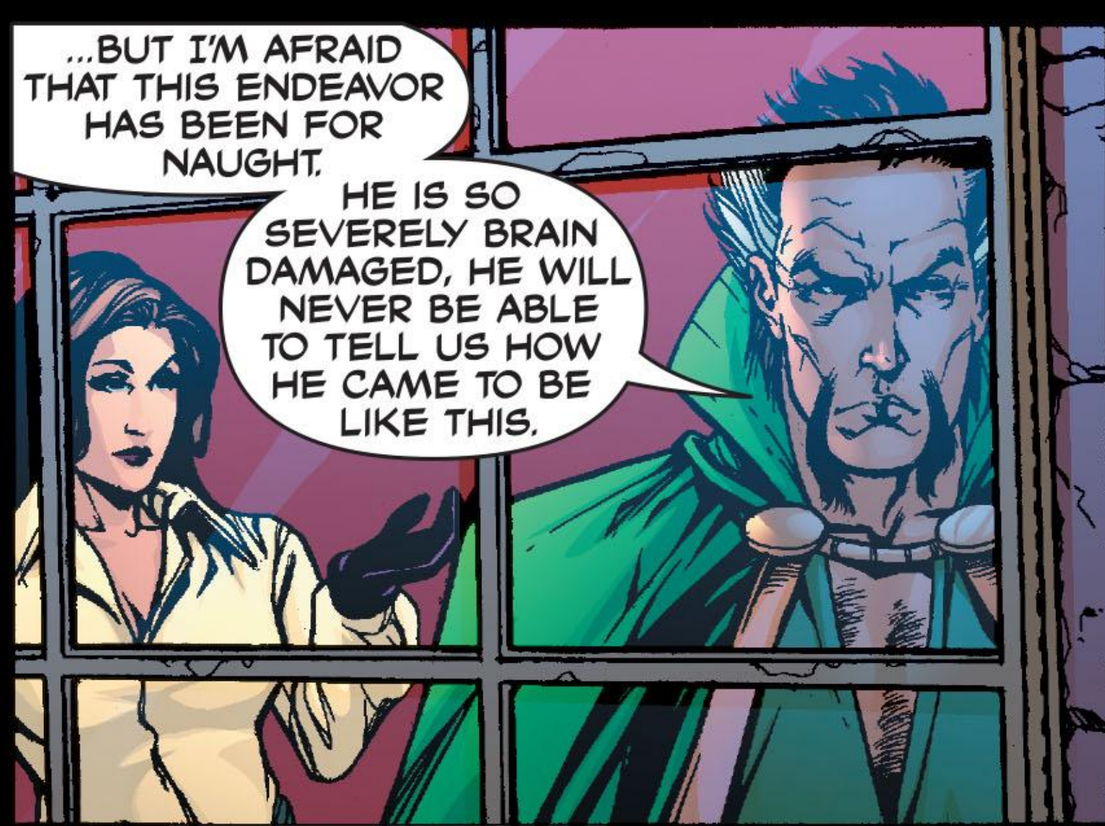
YOU'LL HAVE HIM TOMORROW.

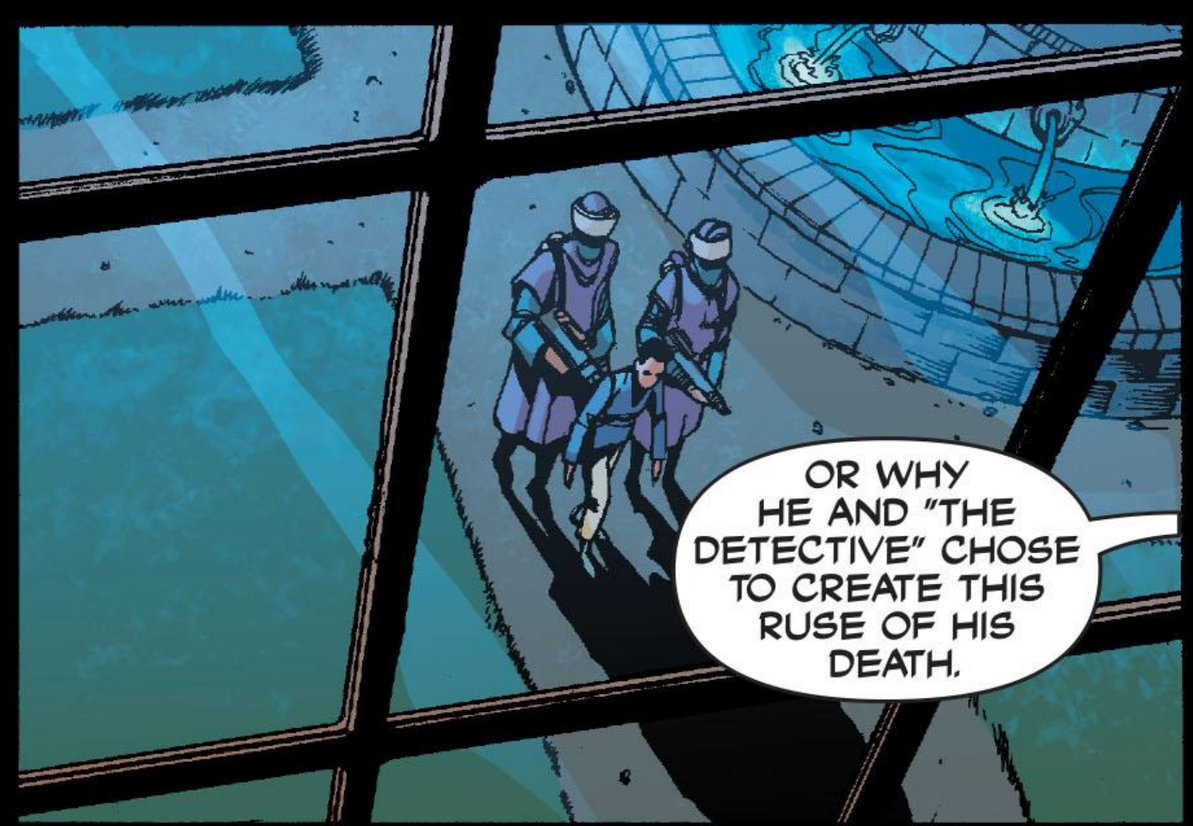

IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE TONIGHT.

NO ONE IS LEFT? ANYONE WHO KNEW ABOUT HIM ON ANY LEVEL IS DEAD?
YES.
NO ONE ON EARTH KNOWS THAT JASON TODD LIVES.




ONLY US.
RA'S AL GHUL. 700-YEAR-OLD INTERNATIONAL TERRORIST.
I SEE...

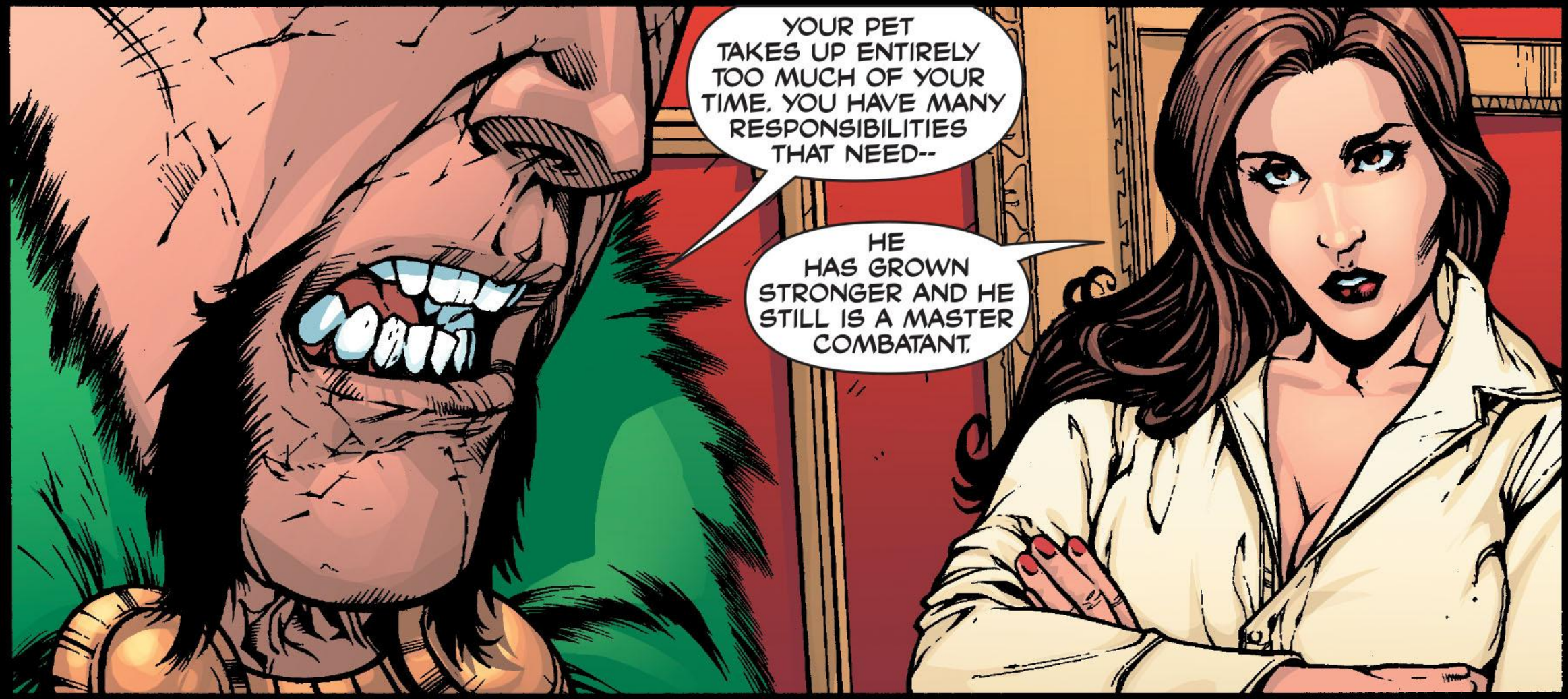

...BUT I'M AFRAID THAT THIS ENDEAVOR HAS BEEN FOR NAUGHT.
HE IS SO SEVERELY BRAIN DAMAGED, HE WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO TELL US HOW HE CAME TO BE LIKE THIS.

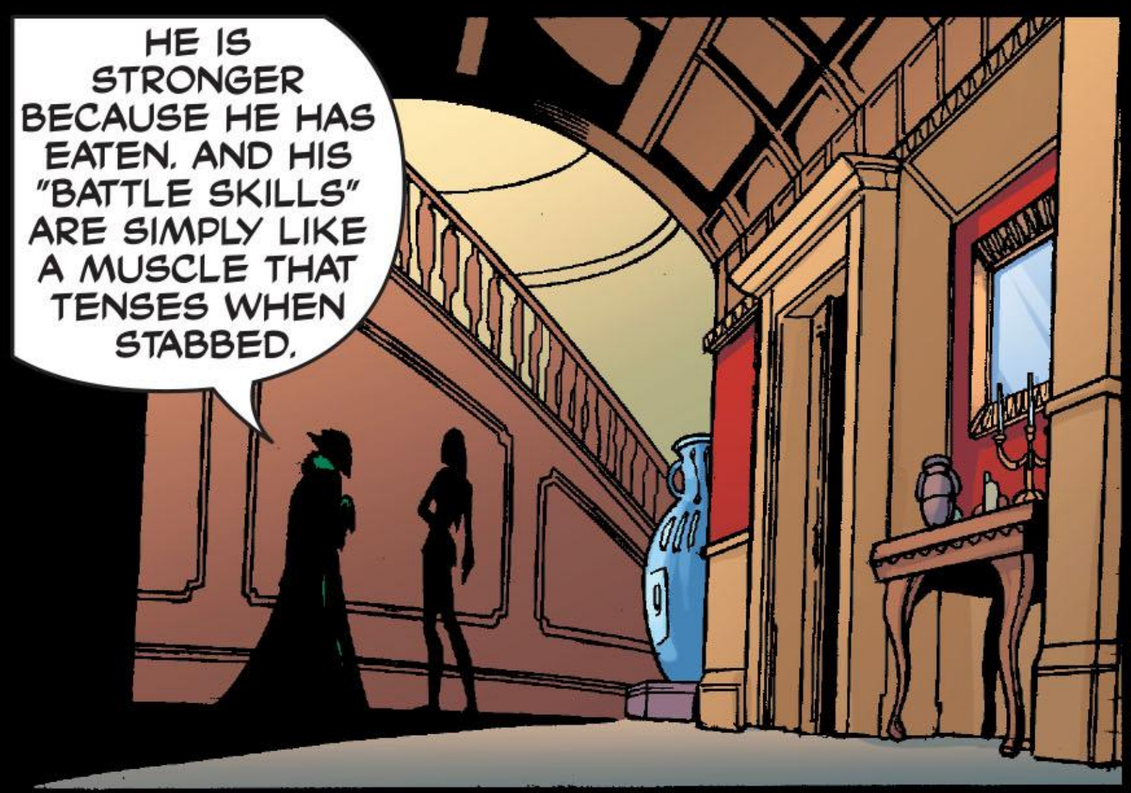

OR WHY HE AND "THE DETECTIVE" CHOSE TO CREATE THIS RUSE OF HIS DEATH.

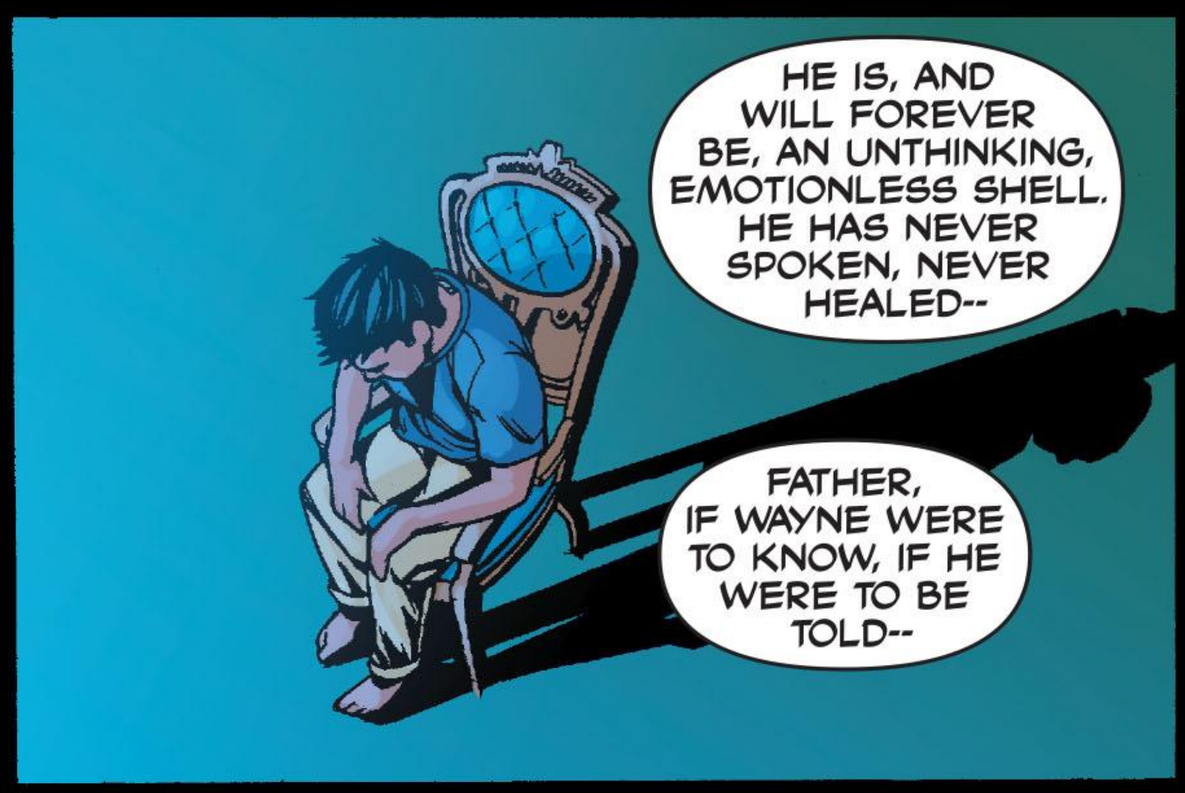
IF IT *IS* A RUSE.
TALIA AL GHUL. HIS DAUGHTER.

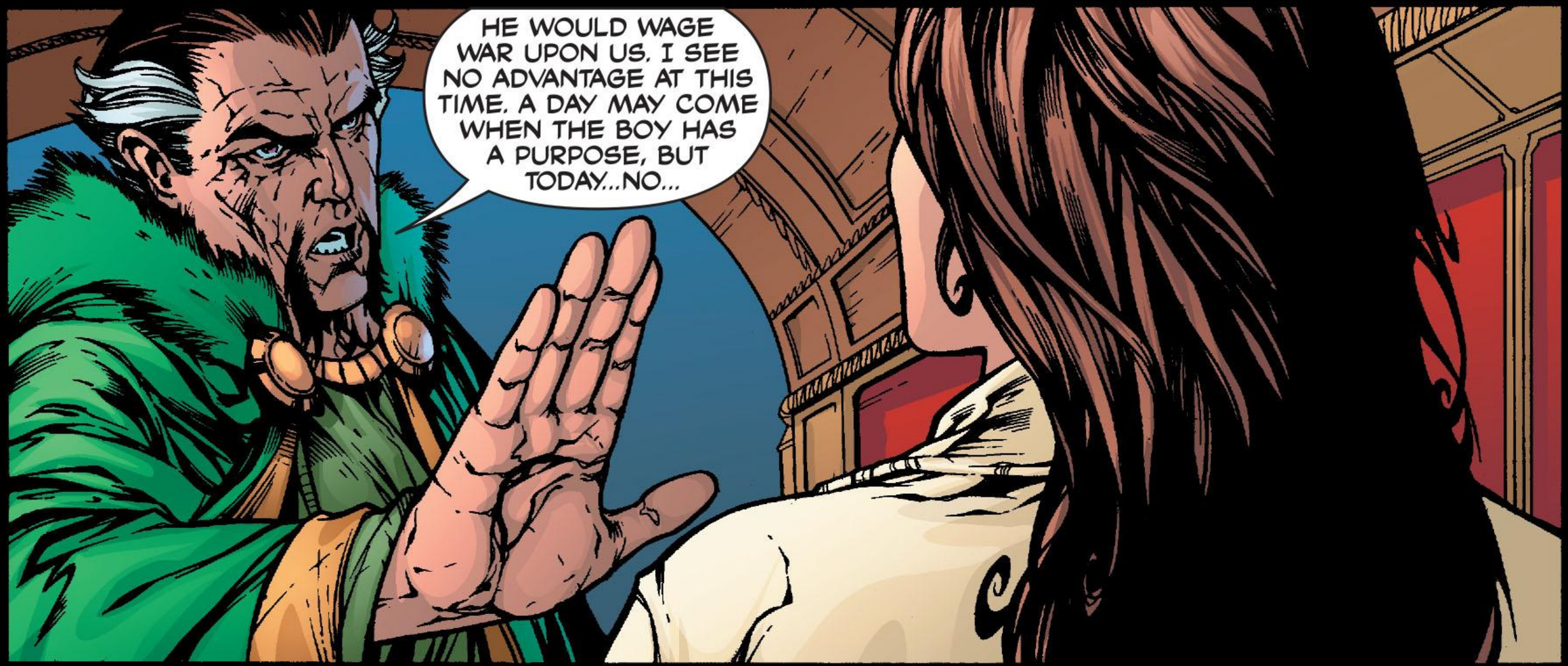
VERY WELL. YOU MAY KEEP HIM. FIND AN ANSWER. THAT WOULD BE WORTH ALL THE TROUBLE YOU'VE GONE TO.

ONE YEAR LATER.
I HAVE GROWN WEARY OF THIS.


YOUR PET TAKES UP ENTIRELY TOO MUCH OF YOUR TIME. YOU HAVE MANY RESPONSIBILITIES THAT NEED--
HE HAS GROWN STRONGER AND HE STILL IS A MASTER COMBATANT.

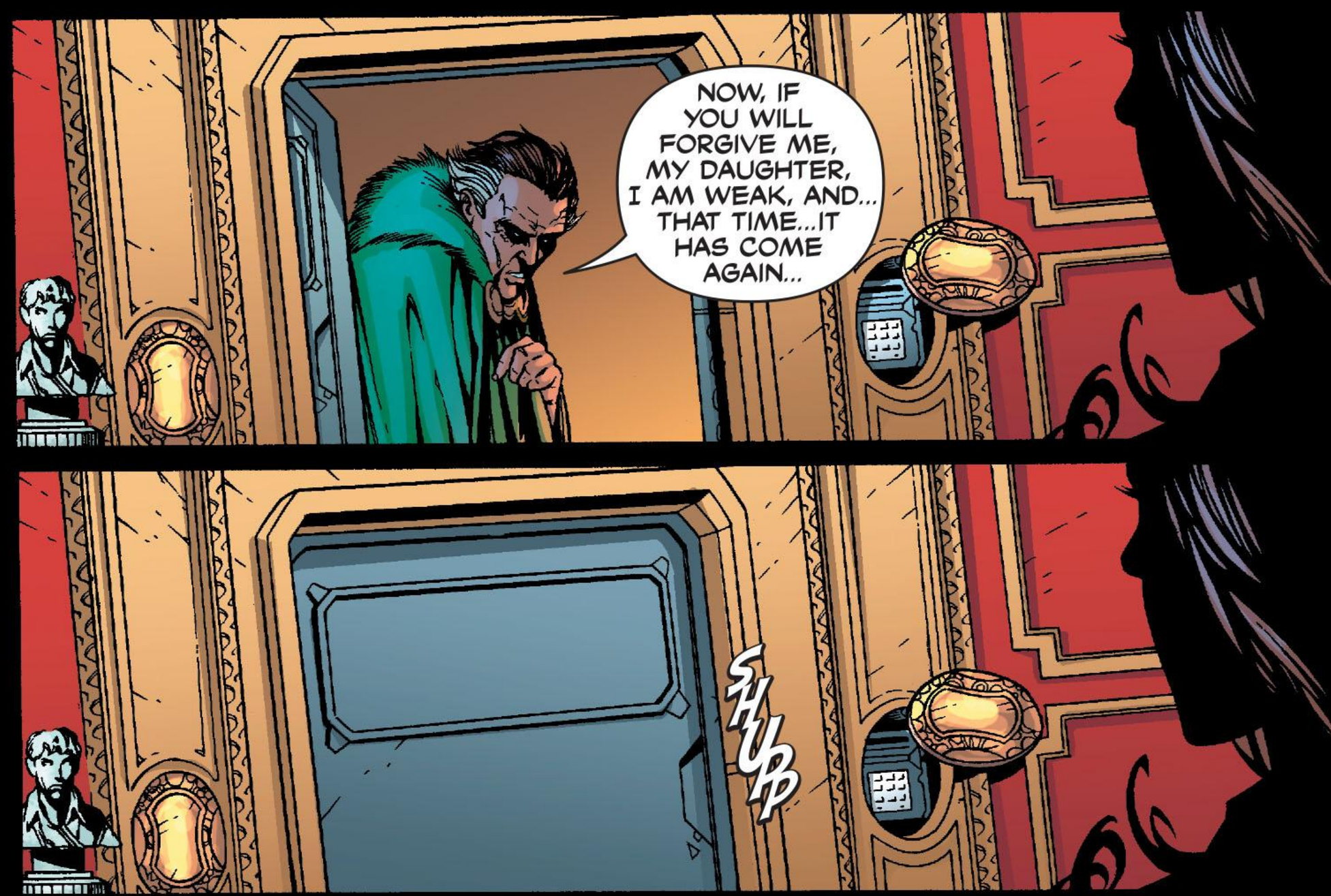

HE IS STRONGER BECAUSE HE HAS EATEN. AND HIS "BATTLE SKILLS" ARE SIMPLY LIKE A MUSCLE THAT TENSES WHEN STABBED.


HE IS, AND WILL FOREVER BE, AN UNTHINKING, EMOTIONLESS SHELL. HE HAS NEVER SPOKEN, NEVER HEALED--
FATHER, IF WAYNE WERE TO KNOW, IF HE WERE TO BE TOLD--


HE WOULD WAGE WAR UPON US. I SEE NO ADVANTAGE AT THIS TIME. A DAY MAY COME WHEN THE BOY HAS A PURPOSE, BUT TODAY...NO...

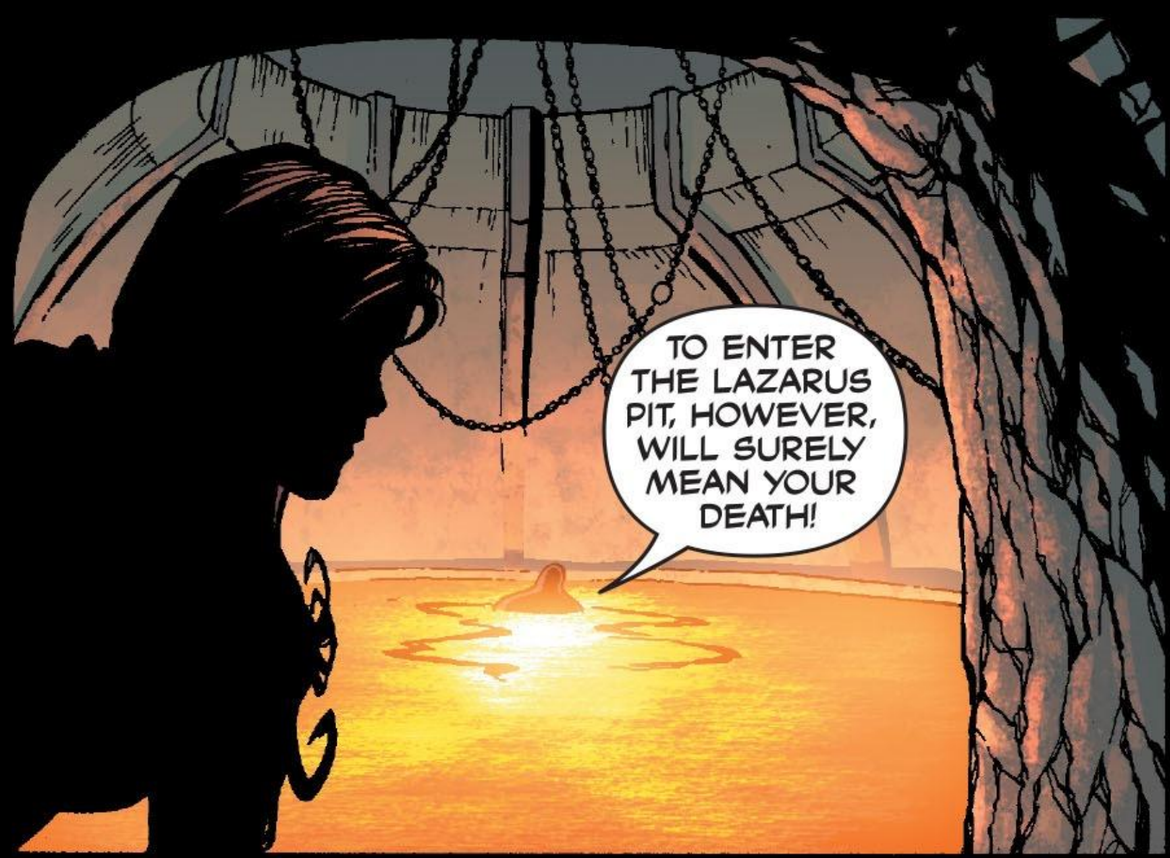
FATHER--!
HE IS USELESS TO US. I AM SENDING HIM AWAY.

HE WILL BE CARED FOR, AND KEPT, PROTECTED AND SHELTERED, OUT OF RESPECT FOR HIS MENTOR...AND HIS PRESENT CARETAKER.


NOW, IF YOU WILL FORGIVE ME, MY DAUGHTER, I AM WEAK, AND... THAT TIME...IT HAS COME AGAIN...
SHUP

THE HALL OF THE LIFE-REJUVENATING LAZARUS PIT.

I KNOW THAT DESPITE YOUR OATH OF OBEDIENCE, THE TEMPTATION OF IMMORTALITY BECKONS IN FRONT OF YOU, MY ACOLYTES!!



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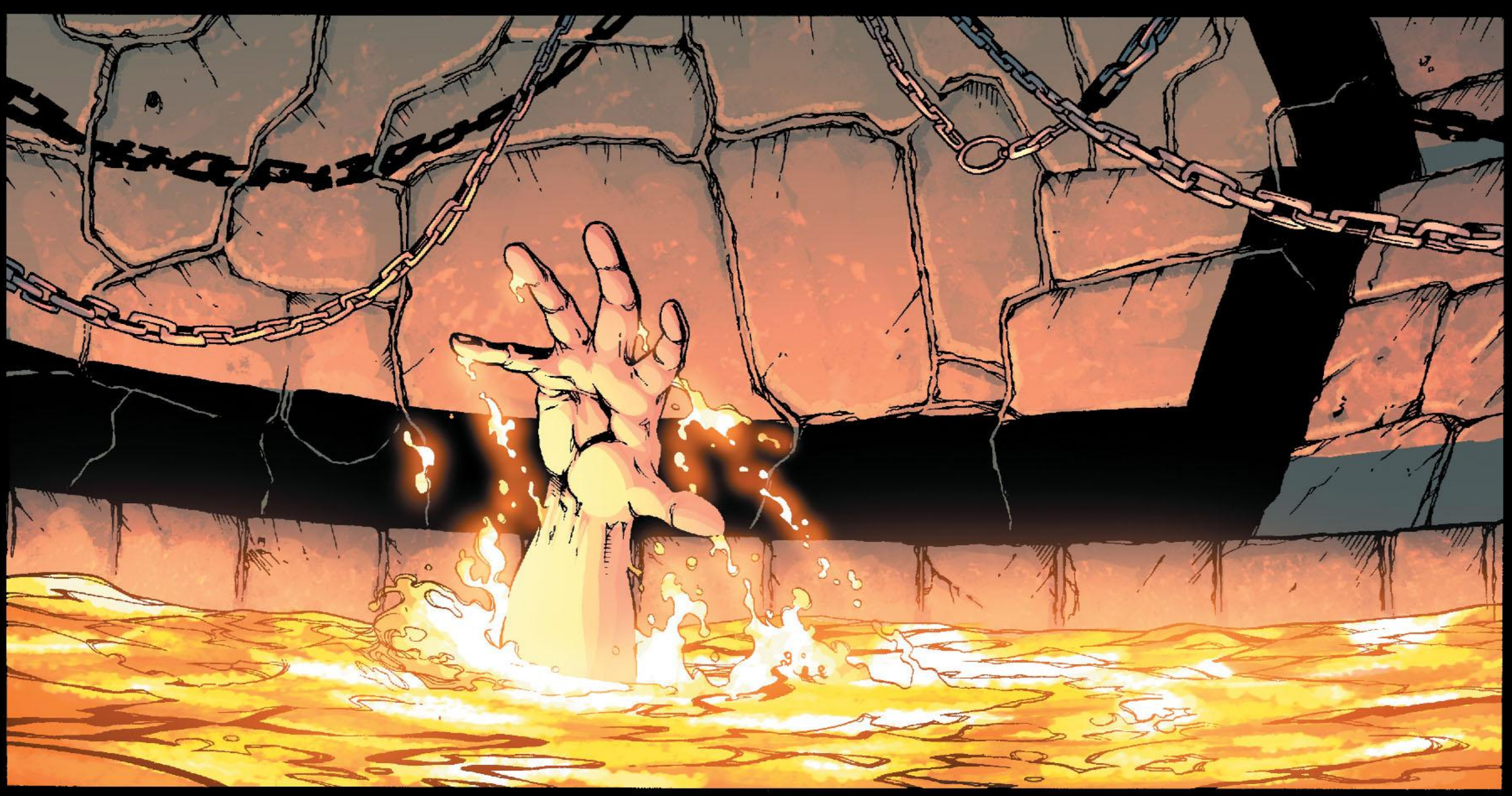
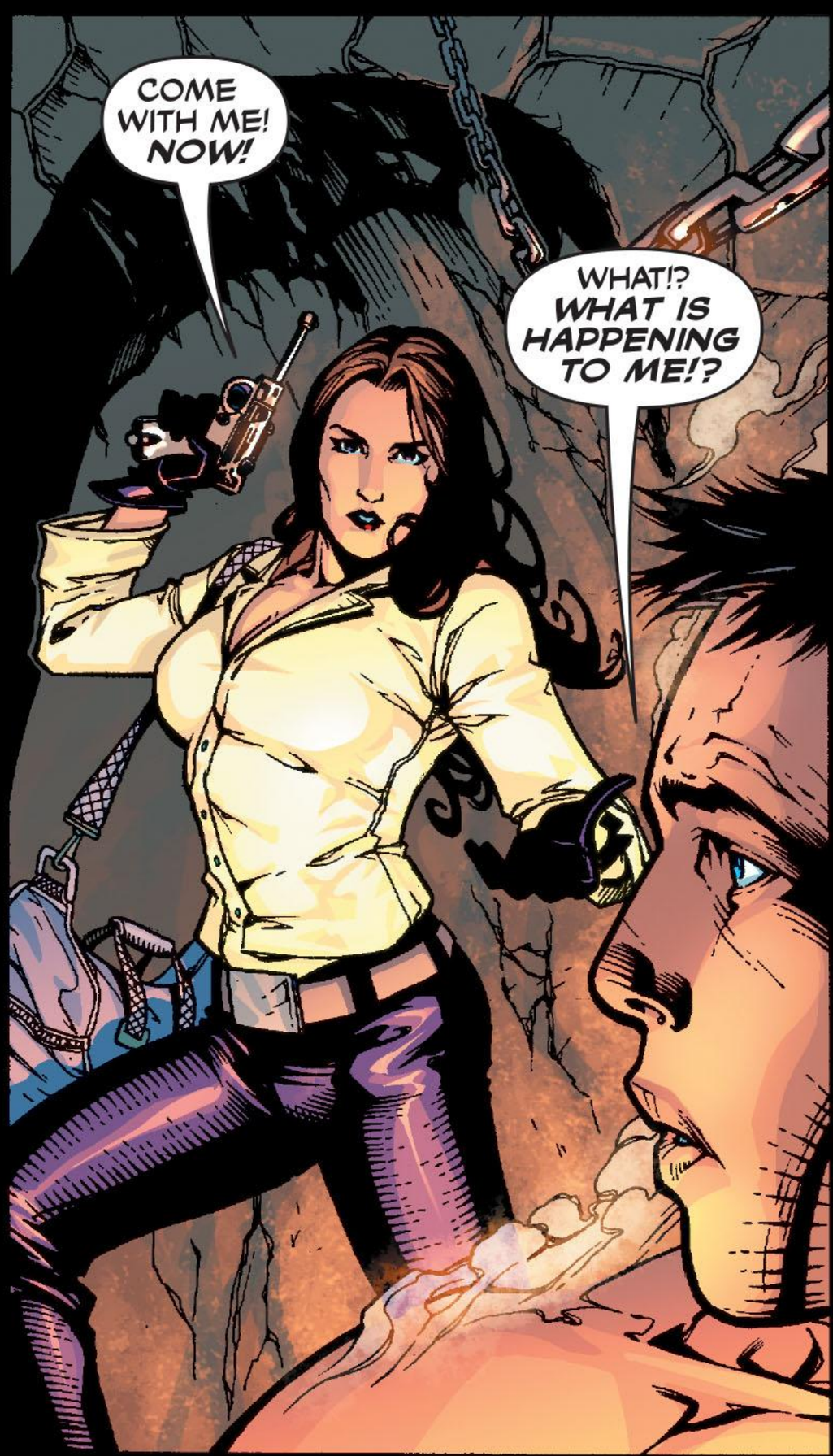


MANY THINGS CAN JOG A MEMORY...
R
...BUT FEW THINGS...

AAARRRRRGGHH!!

...CAN GIVE THOSE MEMORIES LIFE.



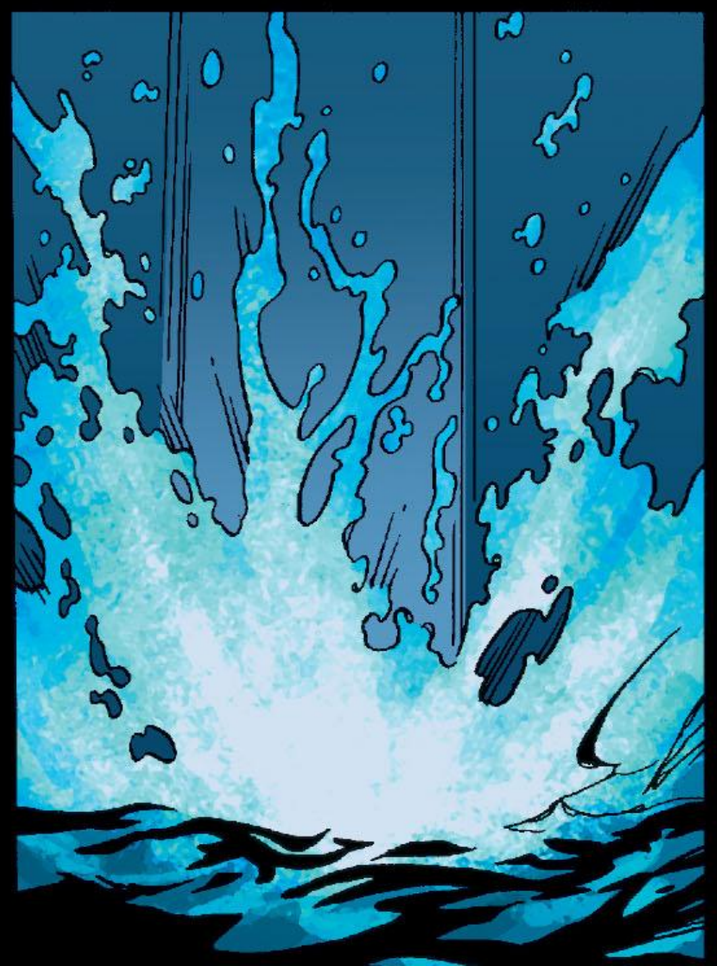
...AND CURSED YOUR SOUL!

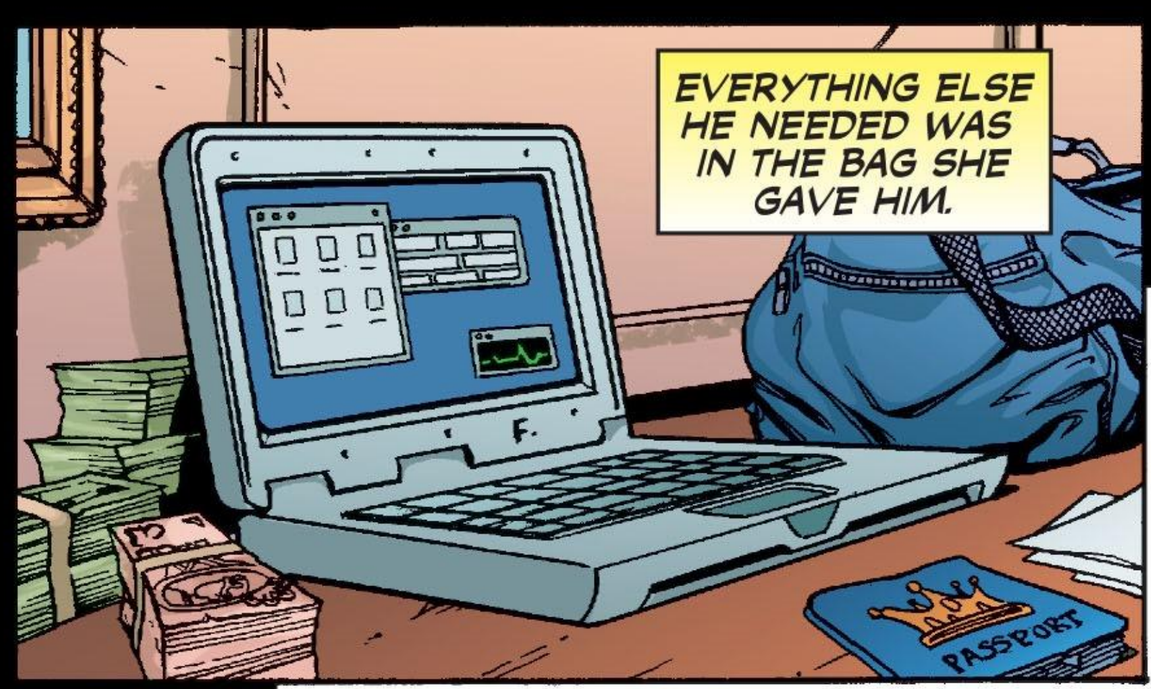
TALIA?! WHAT THE HELL DO YOU--WHERE WAS--!

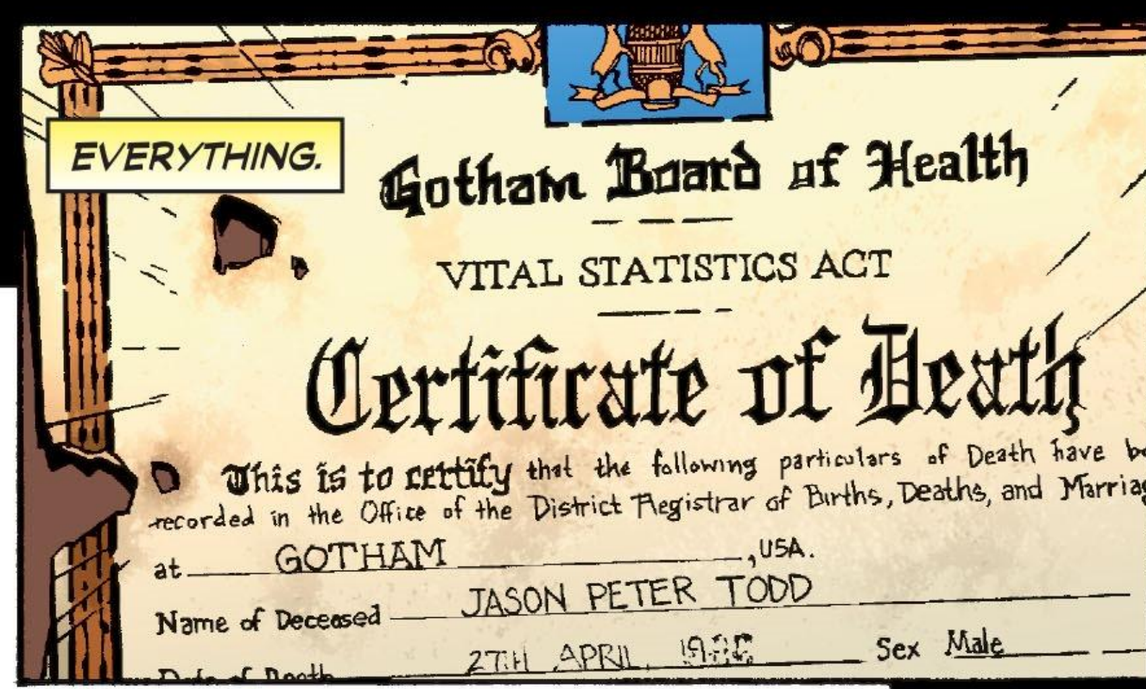
THERE IS NO TIME! I DID WHAT I THOUGHT WAS RIGHT! WHAT I THOUGHT YOU DESERVED!

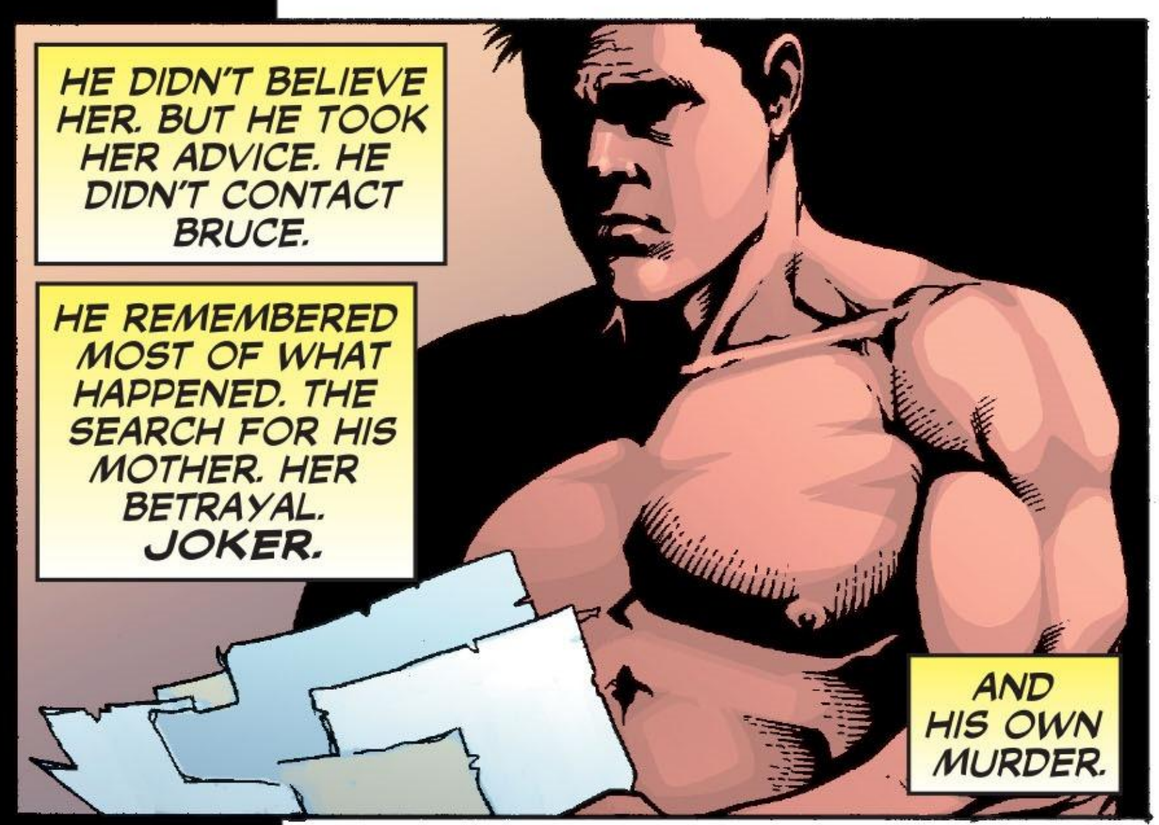
DO NOT GO AND FIND ***HIM,*** JASON! LEARN THE ***TRUTH*** BEFORE YOU DO!

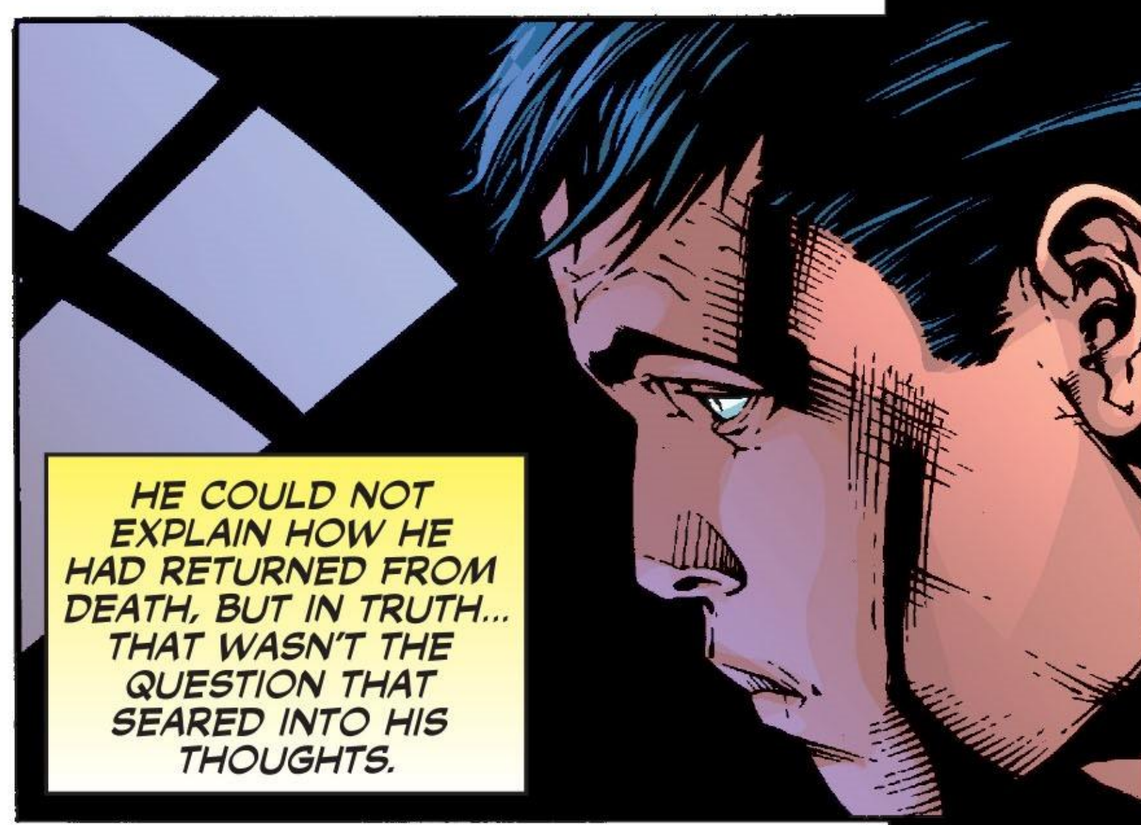
THE TRUTH?! WHAT--?!

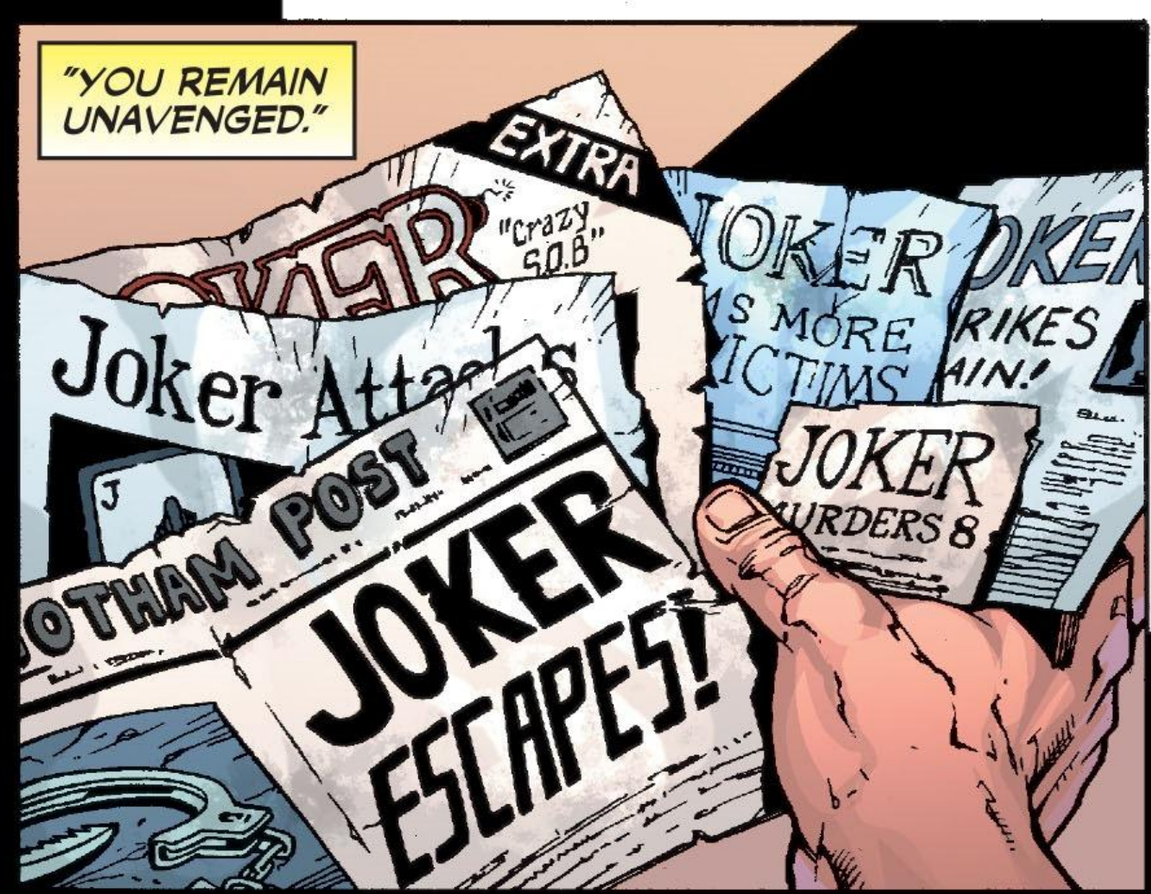












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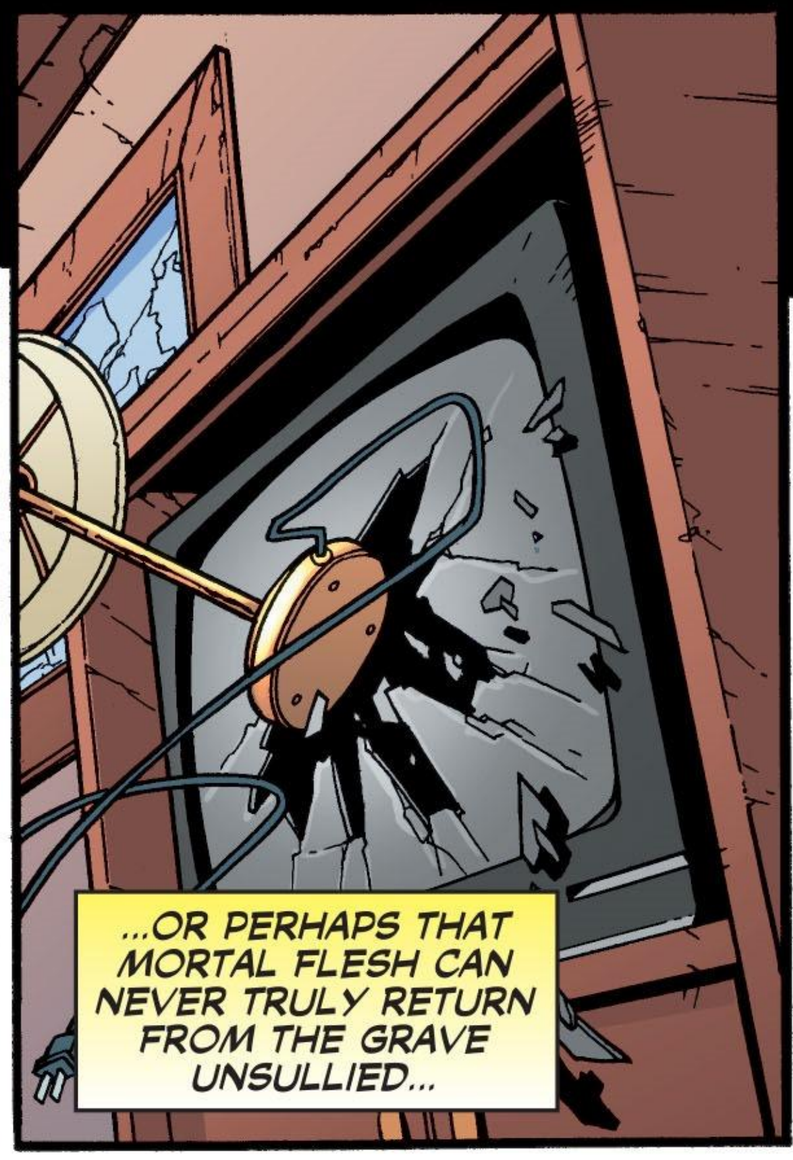

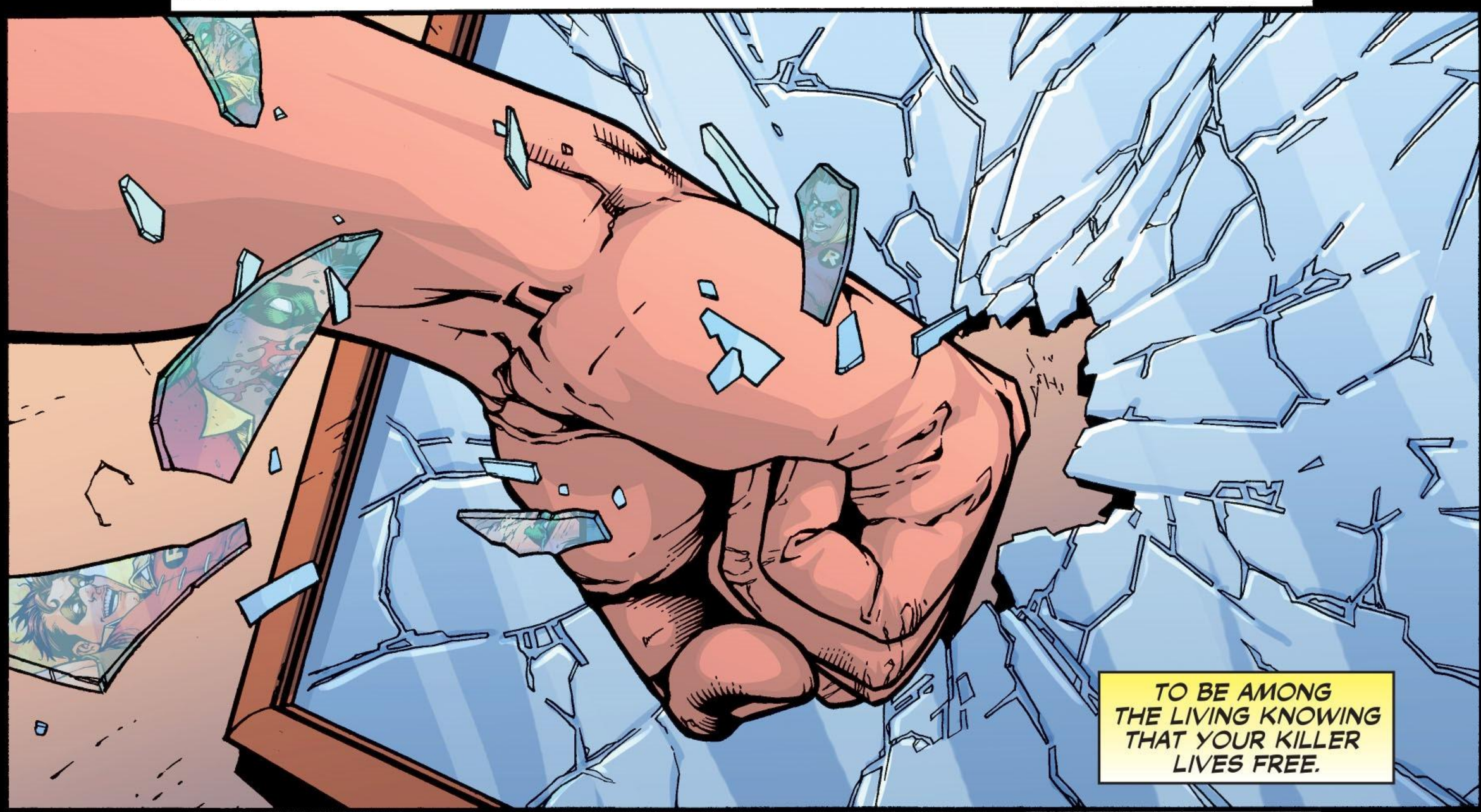

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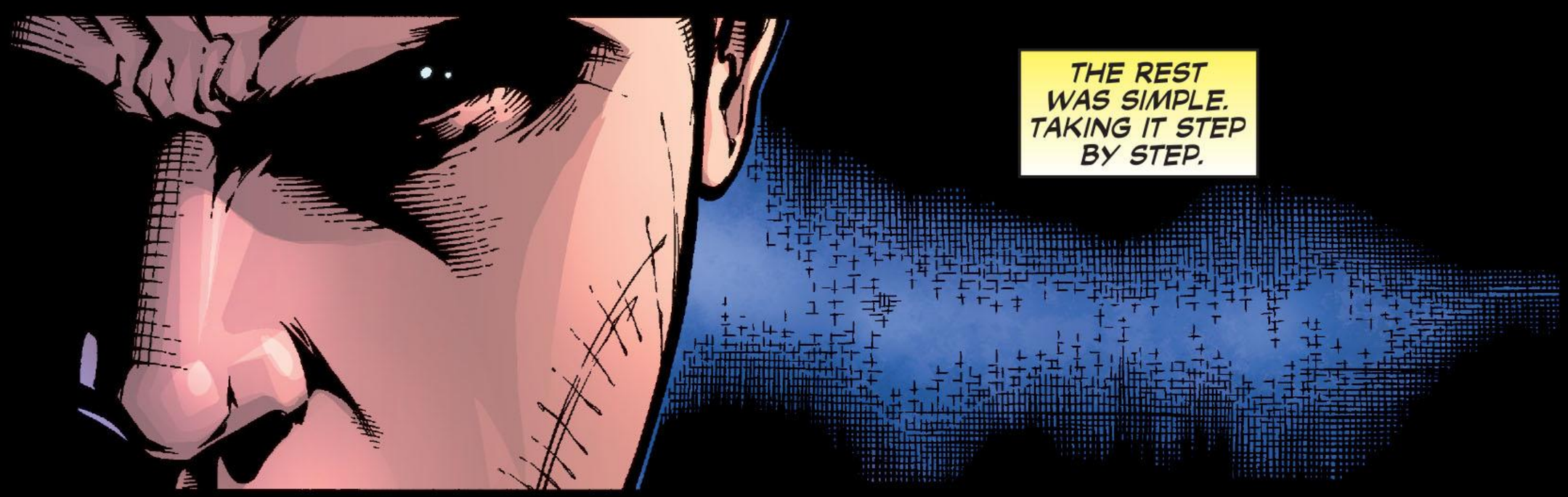
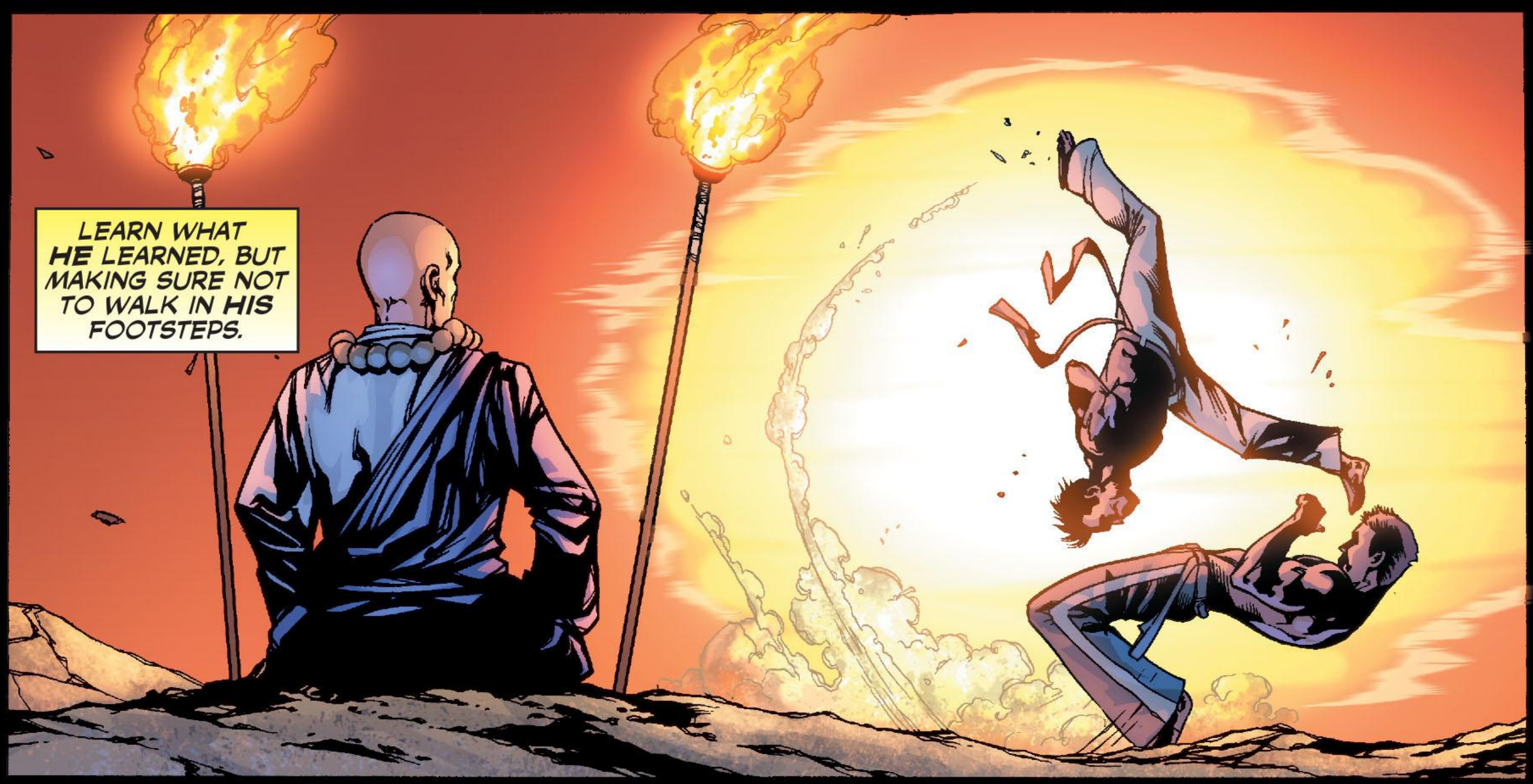
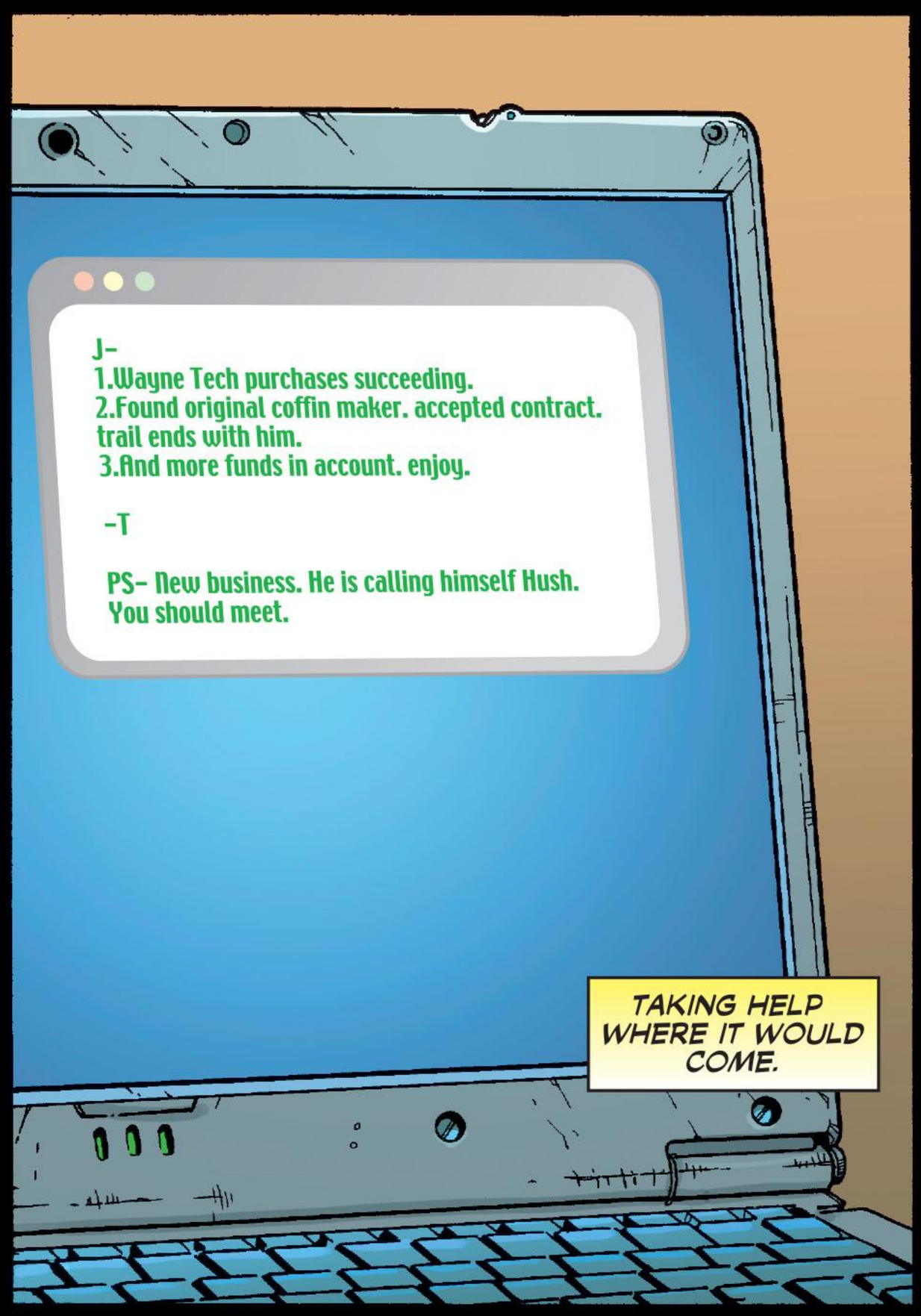
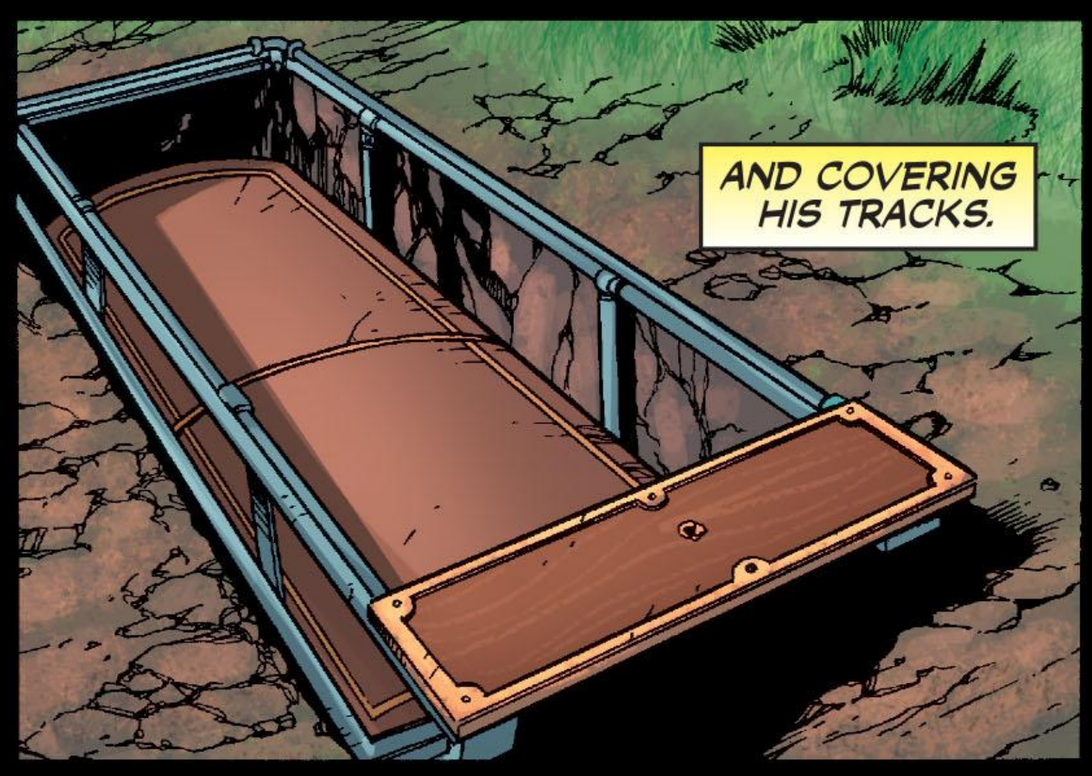
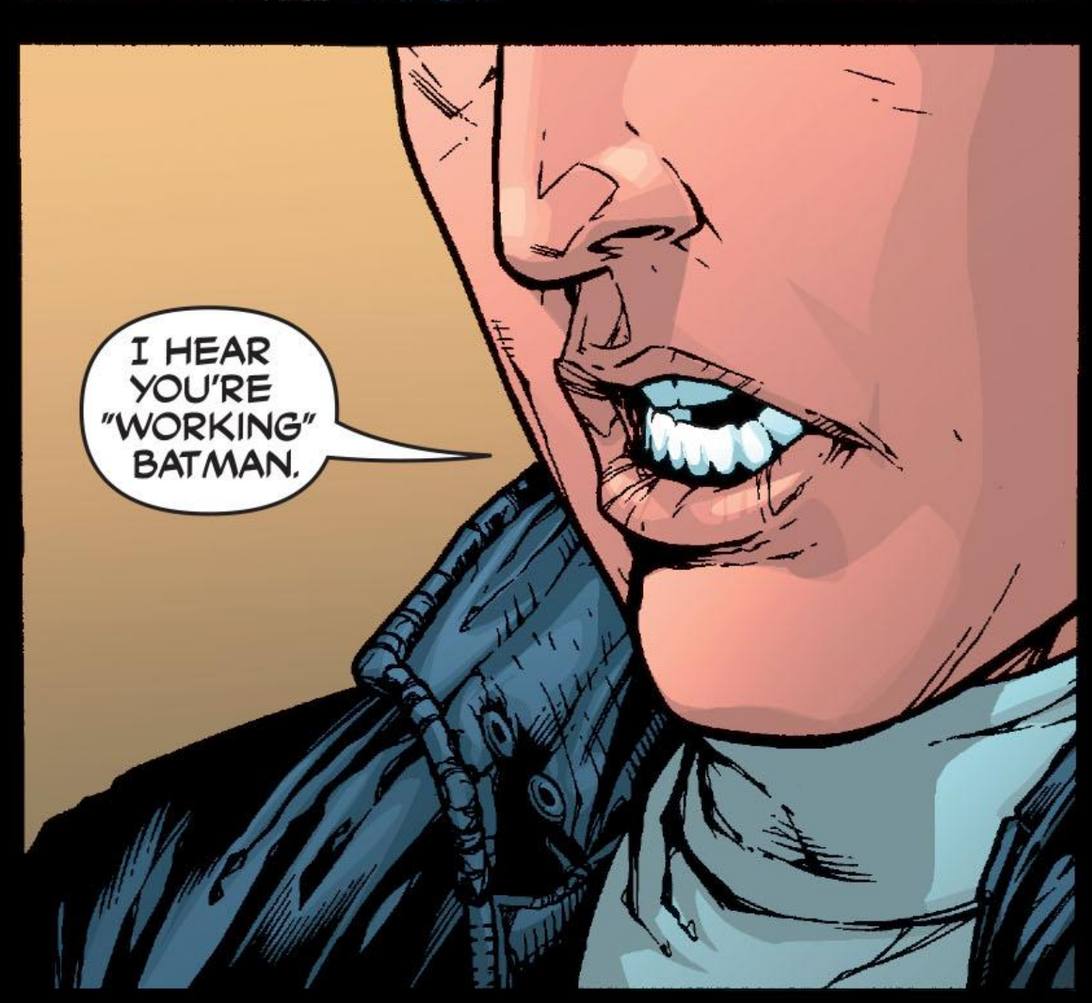

THE REST WAS SIMPLE. TAKING IT STEP BY STEP.


LEARN WHAT HE LEARNED, BUT MAKING SURE NOT TO WALK IN HIS FOOTSTEPS.


J-
1.Wayne Tech purchases succeeding.
2.Found original coffin maker. accepted contract. trail ends with him.
3.And more funds in account. enjoy.
-T
PS- New business. He is calling himself Hush. You should meet.
TAKING HELP WHERE IT WOULD COME.

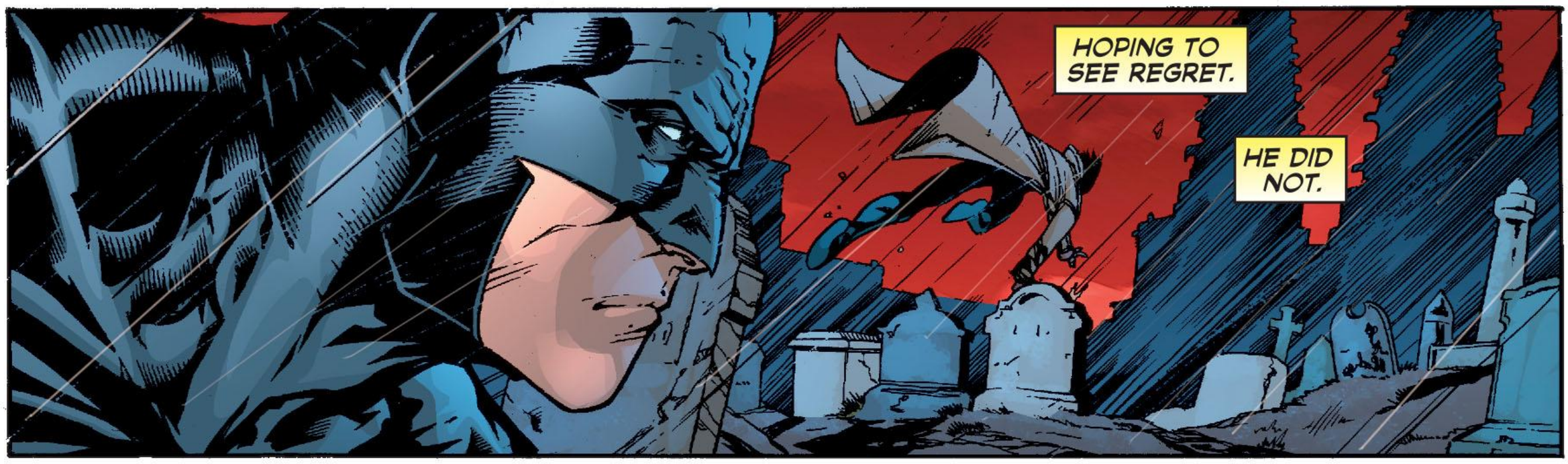

AND COVERING HIS TRACKS.


I HEAR YOU'RE "WORKING" BATMAN.

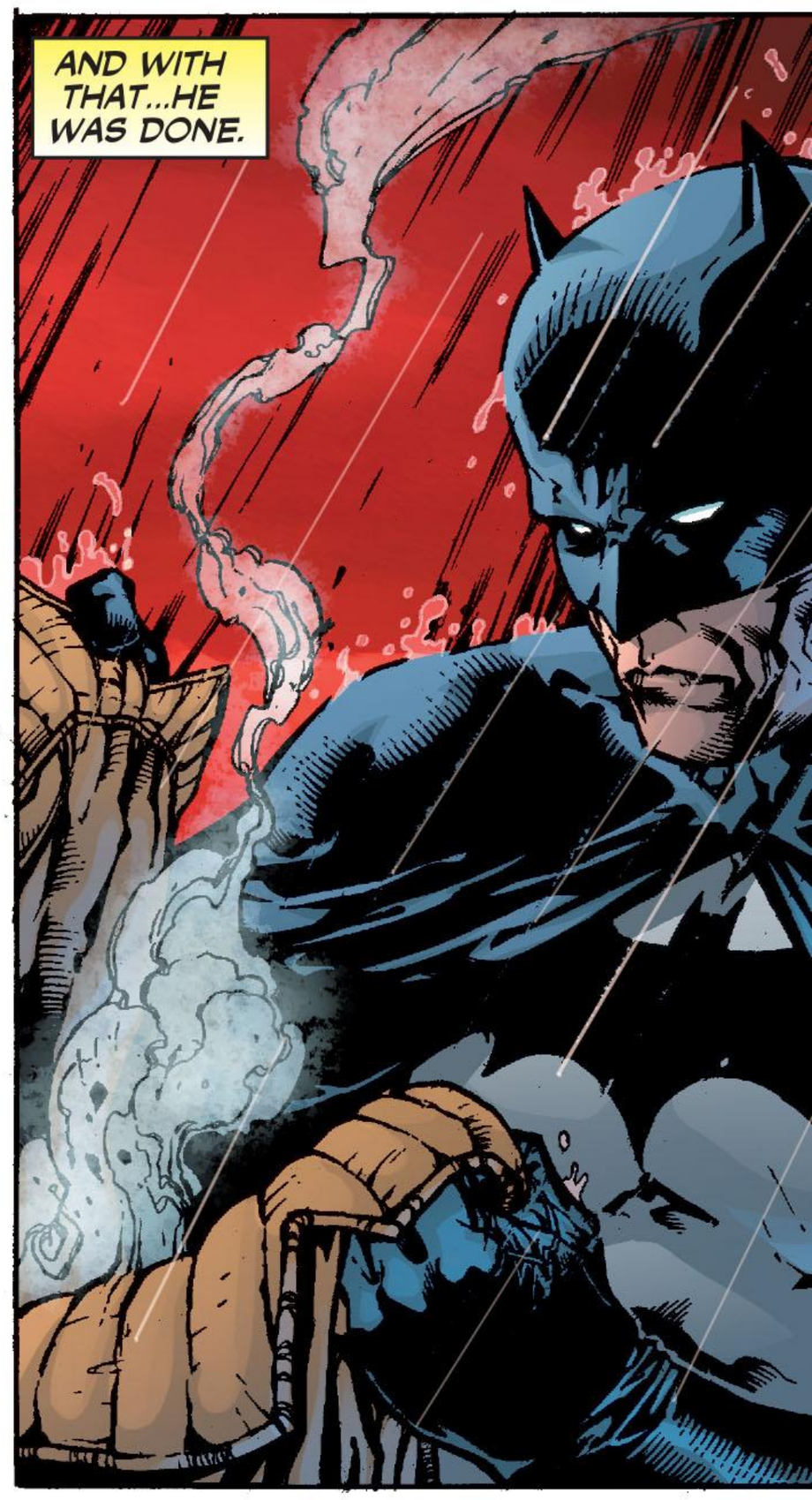
MAYBE. WHAT DO YOU CARE?
I CAN HELP. YOU WANT TO GET INTO HIS HEAD...?
"...I'M YOUR WAY IN."
TRYING TO GET ME ANGRY BY DOUBTING WHO I AM? THINKING THAT WILL MAKE ME SLOPPY?
HE HAD TO SEE HIM...

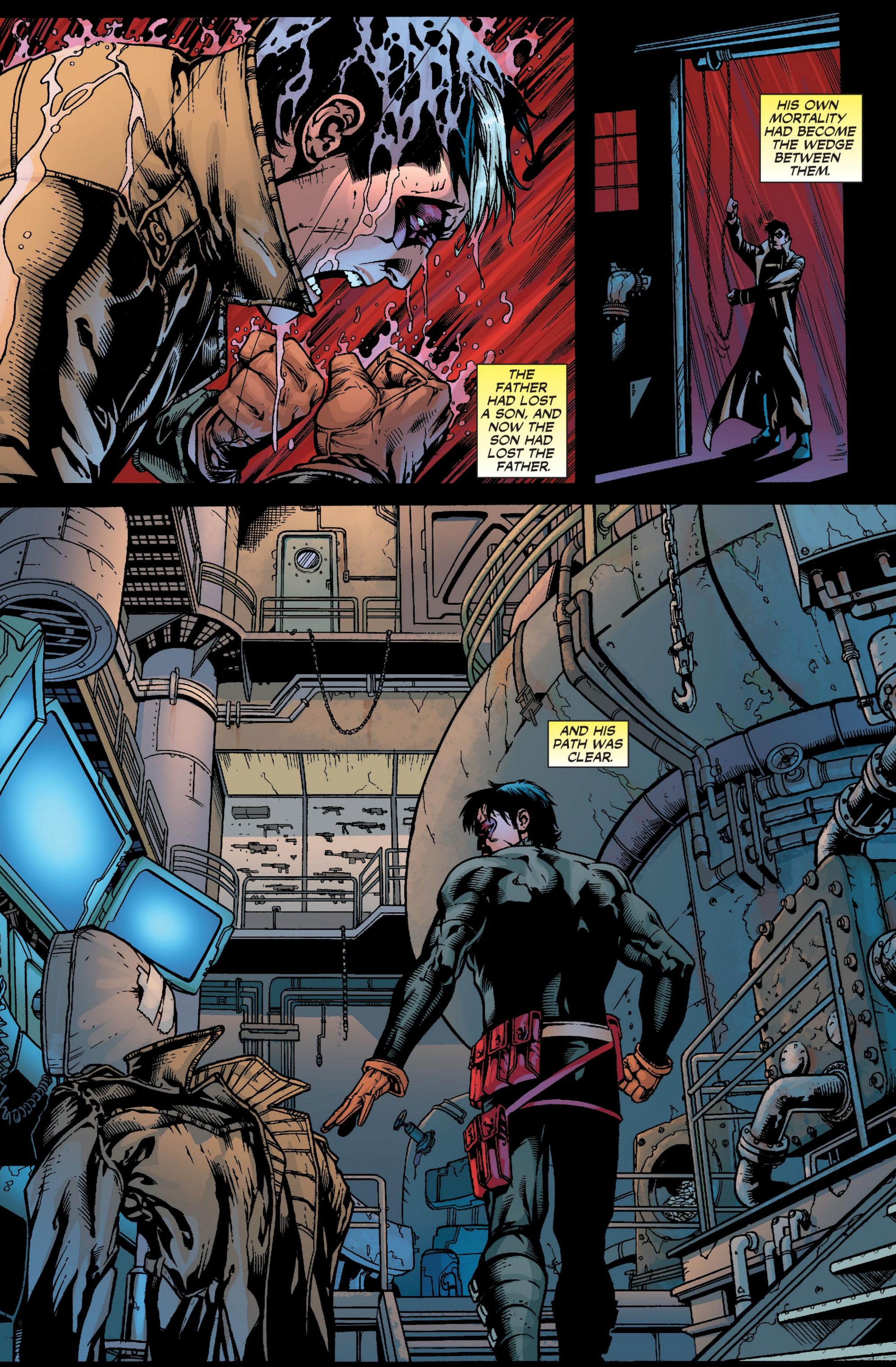
...NOT AS A MAN...
...BUT AS THE CREATURE HE CREATED.

HE WOULD FACE HIM AS A GHOST... AS A CREATURE CREATED BY HIM...
...HE JUST WANTED TO SEE HIS FACE.


HOPING TO SEE REGRET.
HE DID NOT.

AND HE SLIPPED AWAY BEFORE THE TRUTH COULD BE REVEALED.

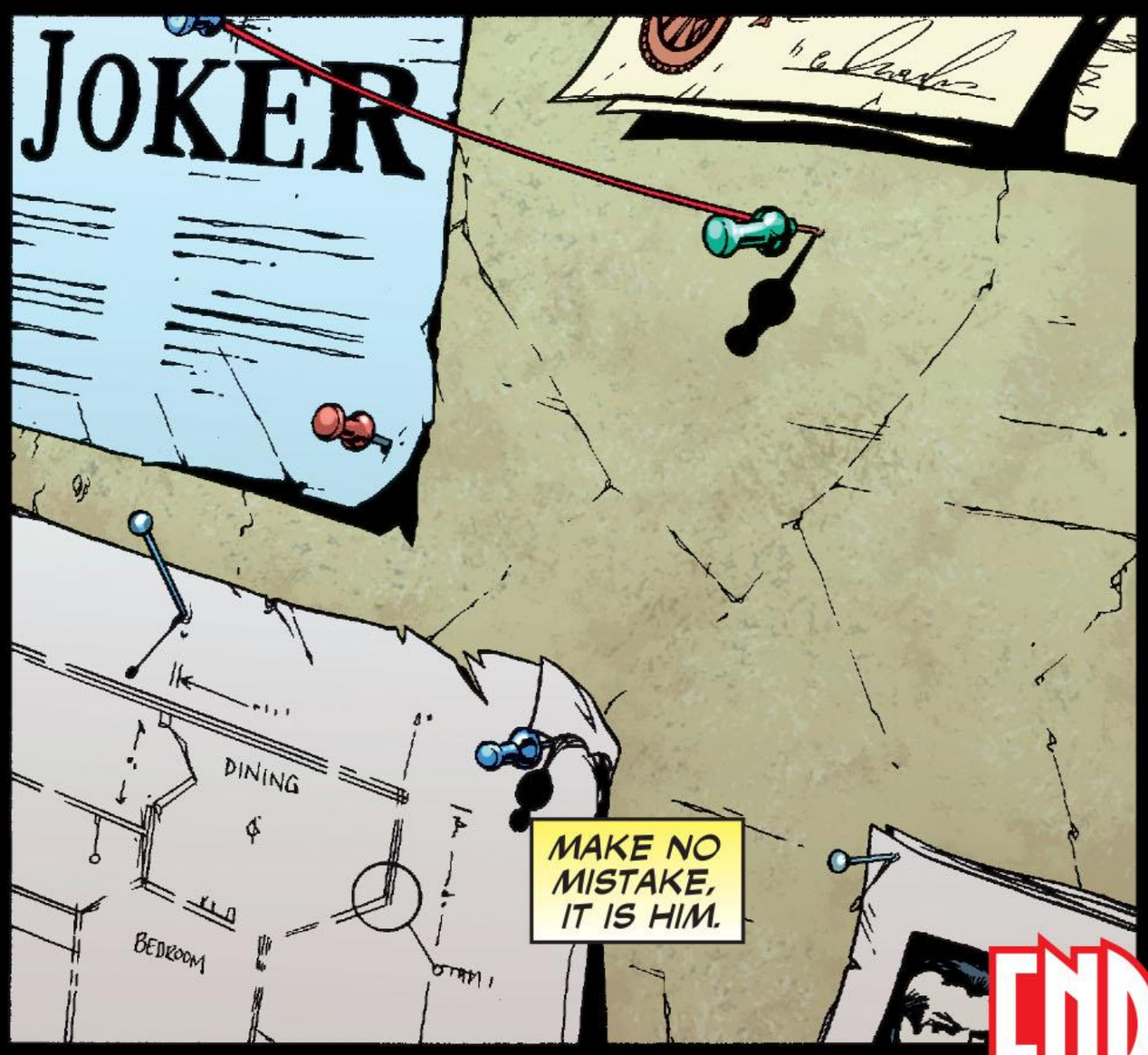

AND WITH THAT...HE WAS DONE.


THE FATHER HAD LOST A SON, AND NOW THE SON HAD LOST THE FATHER.
HIS OWN MORTALITY HAD BECOME THE WEDGE BETWEEN THEM.
AND HIS PATH WAS CLEAR.

8 SLAIN!
KILLER ON LOOSE
DEAD
GANG WAR
CRIM

HE IS JASON TODD.

JOKER
RED HOOD CRIME SPREE CONTINUES


JOKER
DINING
BEDROOM
MAKE NO MISTAKE, IT IS HIM.

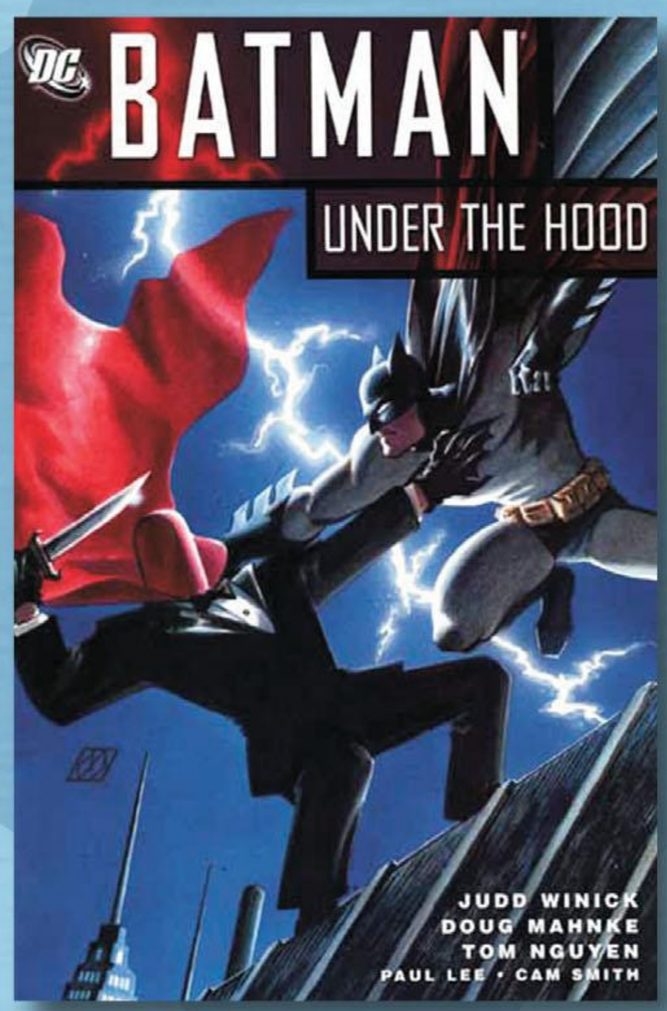
END

MORE CLASSIC TALES OF THE DARK KNIGHT

BATMAN: HUSH

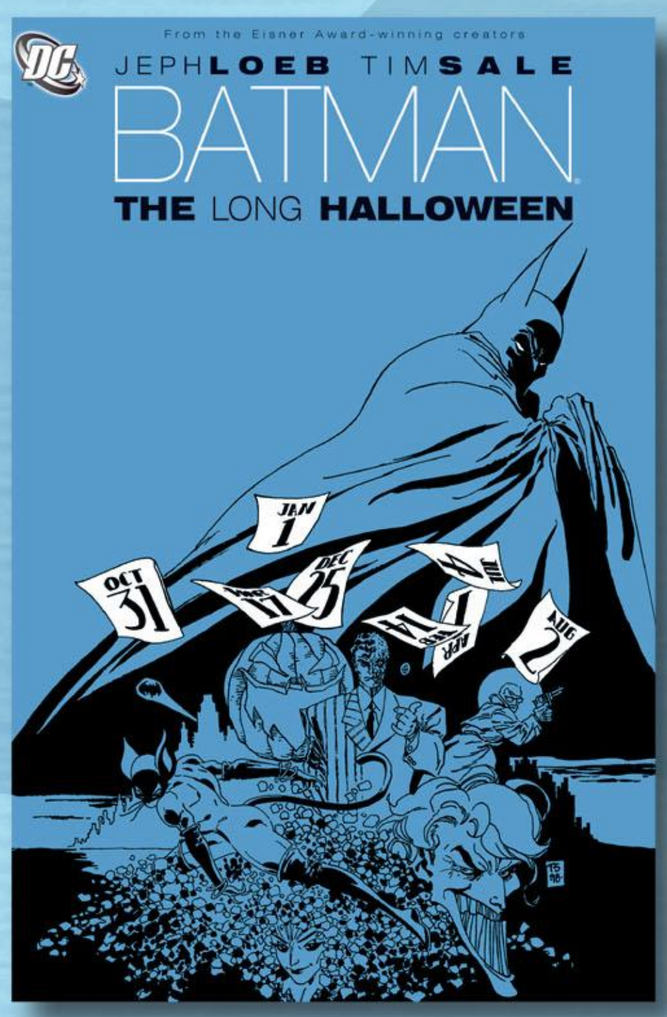
JEPH LOEB
JIM LEE

BATMAN: UNDER THE HOOD VOLS. 1 & 2



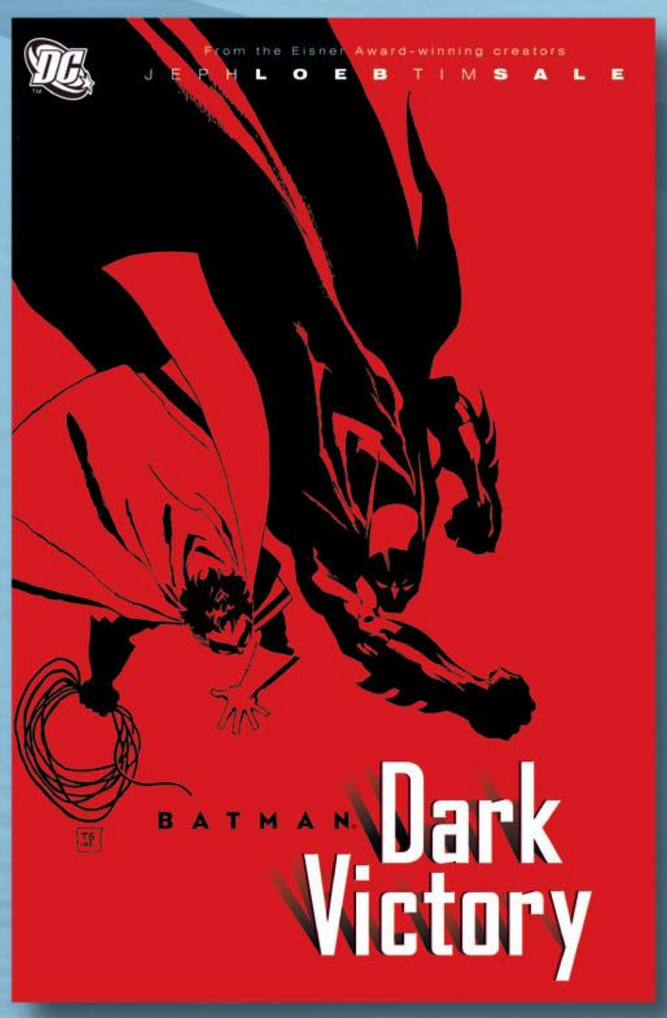
JUDD WINICK
DOUG MAHNKE

BATMAN: THE LONG HALLOWEEN



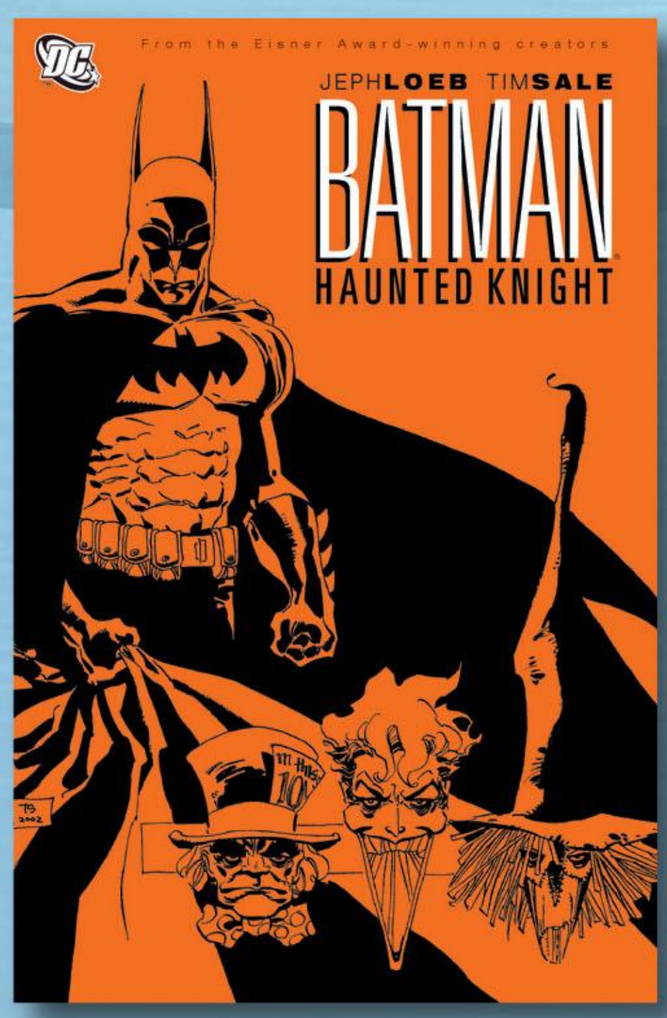
JEPH LOEB
TIM SALE

BATMAN: DARK VICTORY



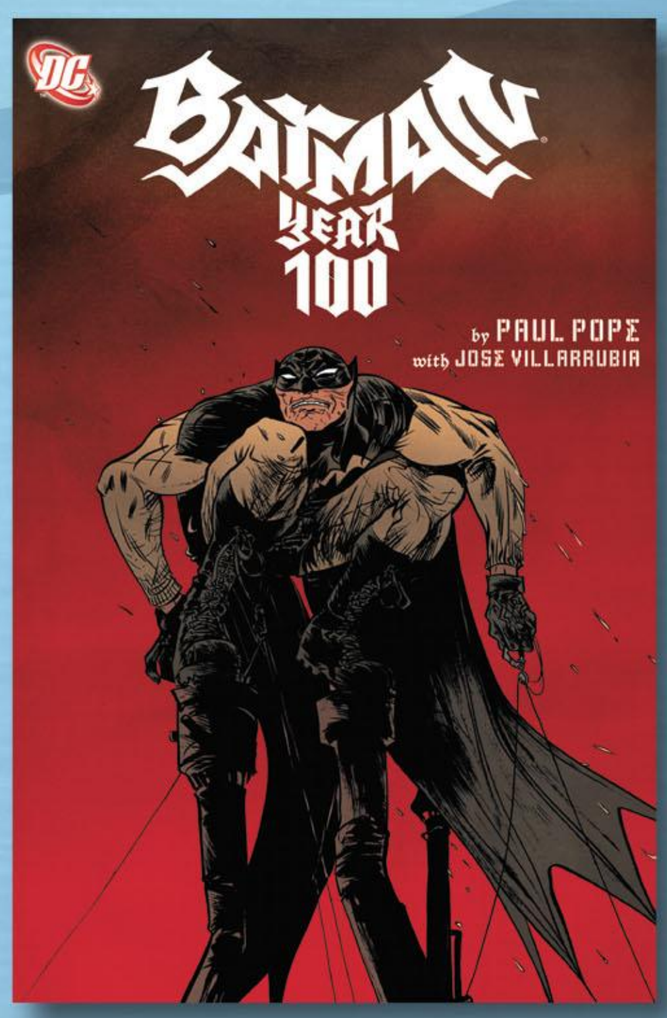
JEPH LOEB
TIM SALE

BATMAN: HAUNTED KNIGHT



JEPH LOEB
TIM SALE

BATMAN: YEAR 100



PAUL POPE

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