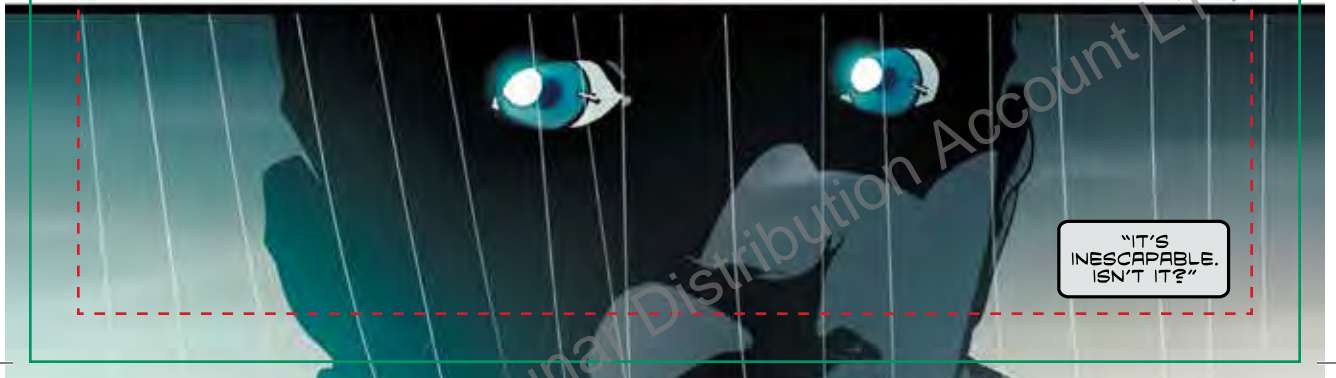


DC PROUDLY PRESENTS
THE KNIGHT PART I

WRITTEN BY
CHIP ZDARSKY
ART AND COVER BY
CARMINE DI GIANDOMENICO
COLOR BY
IVAN PLASCENCIA
LETTERING BY
PAT BROSSAU
VARIANT COVER BY
GREG CAPULLO,
JONATHAN CLAPION & FCP
EDITOR
BEN ABERNATHY
BATMAN CREATED BY
BOB KANE WITH BILL FINGER



"IT'S
INESCAPABLE.
ISN'T IT?"

THE
SADNESS.

BUT THE
QUESTION IS,
BRUCE...

...WHAT
WILL YOU DO
WITH IT?

TO LOSE YOUR
PARENTS AT
SUCH AN EARLY
AGE, TO SUCH
VIOLENCE.

IT'S ONLY BEEN,
WHAT, FIVE WEEKS SINCE
MS. DUNLOP REFERRED YOU
TO ME? AND YET YOU STILL SIT
THERE SILENTLY, WRAPPED IN
THAT SADNESS, LETTING
IT ENVELOP--

NO.

I'M NOT SAD, DOCTOR.
I STOPPED BEING SAD
YEARS AGO.

I
SEE...

...IT'S
SOMETHING
DIFFERENT
NOW, ISN'T
IT?

SOMETHING
THAT WON'T
LET GO, OR
DISSIPATE.

TELL ME,
BRUCE...

...HOW
DID YOU
HURT YOUR
HANDS?

GET HIM OFF!
GET HIM--







ALFRED?

I'M *SORRY*, ALFRED. BUT YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO LEAVE ME AT THE SCHOOL SO...



...LONG.
--WHY'S THE LIBRARY--

EMPTY?



I AM TIRED, MASTER BRUCE.

TIRED OF THE PHONE CALLS, TIRED OF THE FIGHTING.

YOU ARE THE ONLY SON OF THOMAS AND MARTHA WAYNE.



THEY HAD AN APPETITE FOR KNOWLEDGE. THE PROBLEMS THEY SAW?

THEY BROUGHT IN BOOKS FOR THE SOLUTIONS.



YOU SEEM INTENT ON SIMPLY USING YOUR FISTS.

WE WILL REFILL THIS LIBRARY, BOOK BY BOOK, YOU AND I.

YOU'LL LEARN SOLUTIONS THAT AREN'T SIMPLY TORN KNUCKLES...



...AND BEGIN MAKING YOUR PARENTS PROUD.



I THINK I *KNOW* HOW YOU HURT YOUR HANDS.

YOU'RE CLEARLY A *SMART* YOUNG MAN, BUT BEING SMART DOESN'T *QUELL* IT, DOES IT?

YOU'RE *RIGHT*. IT'S NOT *SAPNESS*.



IT'S *ANGER*.

AND YOU'RE LETTING IT OUT OF THE *CAGE* BEHIND THE *BARN*, YES?



TO RUN INTO THE *DARK WOODS*.

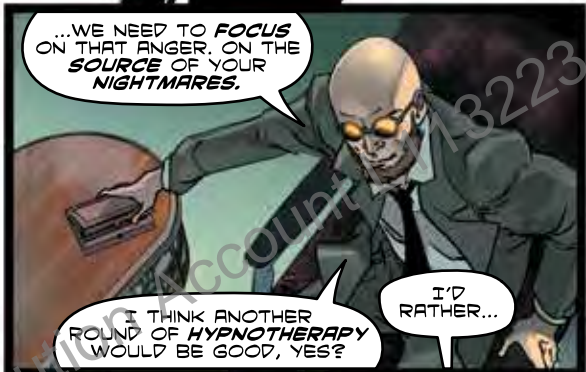
YOU CAME TO ME BECAUSE YOU WANT TO *CURB* THE *ANGER*, CURB THE--

NO. I WANT TO *CURB*...



...THE *NIGHTMARES*.

BUT TO DO *THAT*...



...WE NEED TO *FOCUS* ON THAT *ANGER*, ON THE *SOURCE* OF YOUR *NIGHTMARES*.

I'D RATHER...

I THINK ANOTHER ROUND OF *HYPNOTHERAPY* WOULD BE GOOD, YES?



...*NOT* TODAY, DOCTOR.

I TOLD YOU BEFORE, *BRUCE*...



...PLEASE CALL ME *HUGO*.

DO YOU NOT BELIEVE IT *WORKS*?

YOU'RE A *SMART* MAN, MR. WAYNE. BUT JUST MAYBE ABOUT THE *WRONG* THINGS.

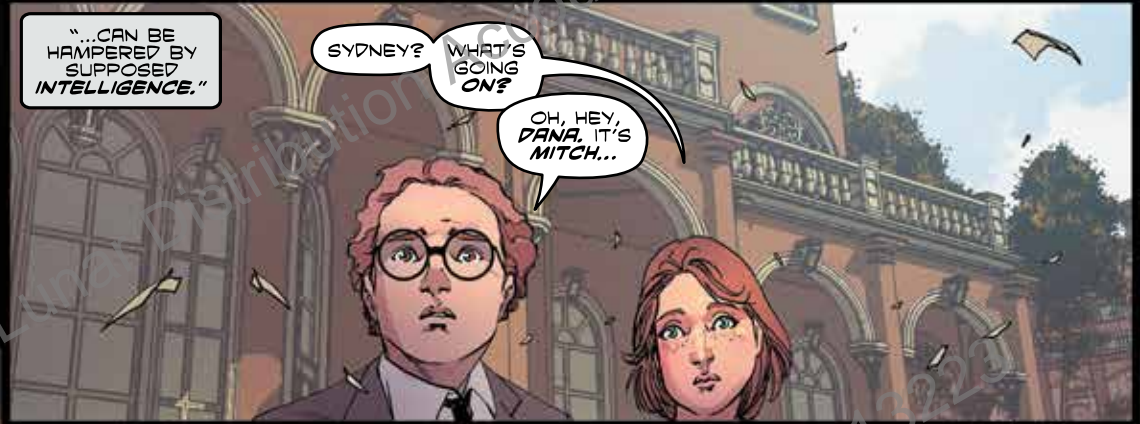
SOMETIMES *PROGRESS* AND *PERSONAL GROWTH*...

"...CAN BE HAMPERED BY SUPPOSED INTELLIGENCE."

SYDNEY?

WHAT'S GOING ON?

OH, HEY, DANA. IT'S MITCH...



...THEY'RE SENDING HIM HOME.



WHY?

APPARENTLY THERE WAS SOMETHING ON HIS TOWEL IN GYM CLASS?

LIKE GROUND-UP POISON IVY OR SOMETHING?



JEEZ.

WASN'T HE SENT HOME YESTERDAY TOO?

YEAH. HE GOT LOCKED IN THE BOILER ROOM AND FREAKED OUT...

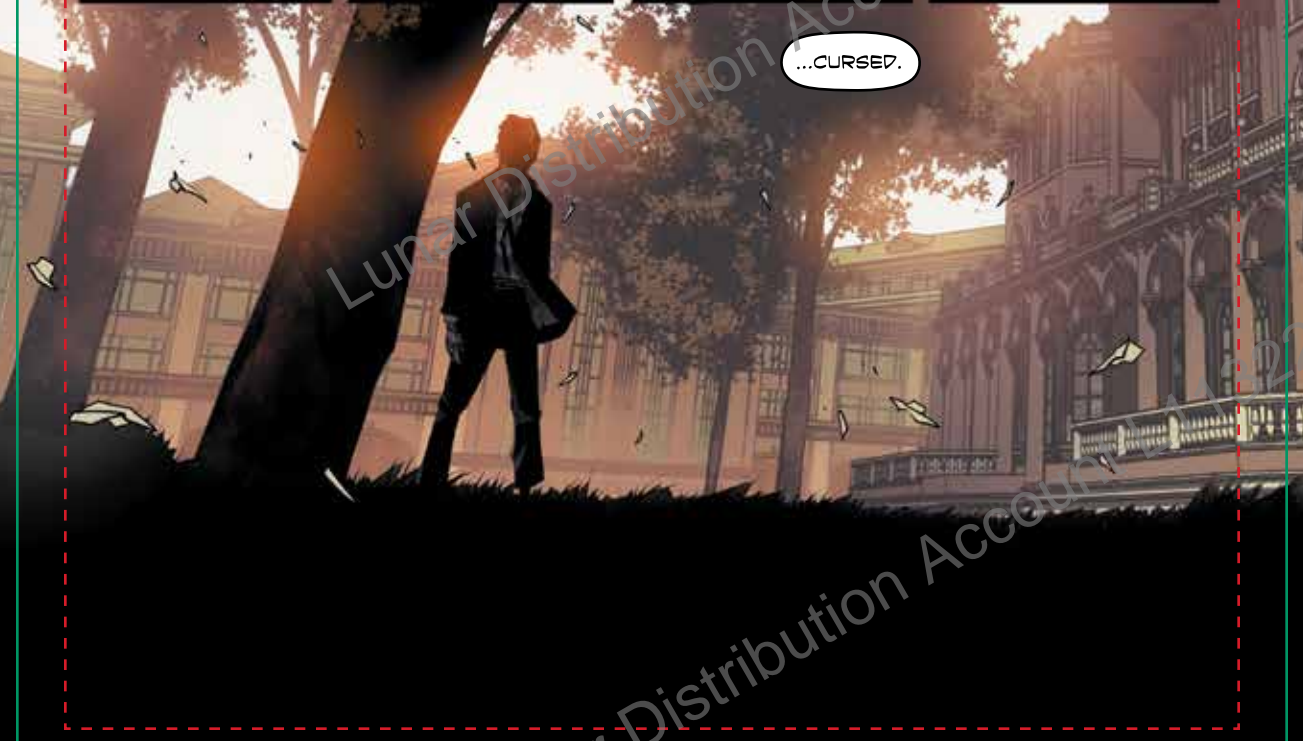


...I HEARD HE'S THINKING OF TRANSFERRING OUT OF GOTHAM ACADEMY.

SAYS HE'S FEELING...



...CURSED.



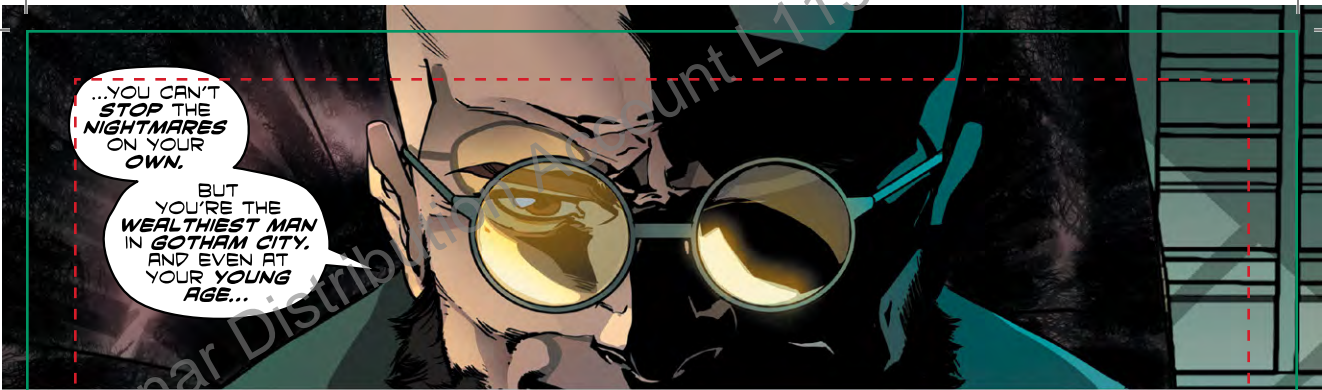


Lunar Distribution Account L113223



"FOR ALL
YOUR *SMARTS*,
FOR ALL YOUR
INTELLIGENCE..."

Lunar Distribution Account L113223



...YOU CAN'T STOP THE NIGHTMARES ON YOUR OWN.
 BUT YOU'RE THE WEALTHIEST MAN IN GOTHAM CITY, AND EVEN AT YOUR YOUNG AGE...



...YOU KNOW THIS MEANS YOU'RE ALONE.
 WHO CAN YOU TRUST WHEN EVERYONE WANTS WHAT YOU HAVE?

THERE ARE PEOPLE.

YES. YOUR BUTLER.



AND MS. PUNLOP. BUT I'M NOT BREAKING ANY CONFIDENTIALITY WHEN I TELL YOU HER FAMILY'S WEALTH IS NO LONGER WHAT IT ONCE WAS...



I CAN TRUST HER.

OF COURSE...



...I'M JUST HIGHLIGHTING HOW...ABNORMAL YOUR SITUATION IS.

BUT YOU'RE HERE.

SO LET ME HELP YOU.



DANA TRUSTS ME. YOU TRUST DANA...



...SO LET'S GET TO WORK, SHALL WE?

MMMM...
CAR'S STILL
WARM.

NOT FOR
LONG.

CAN'T YOU LIVE IN
THE **MOMENT** FOR
ONCE, BRUCE?

"A STORM'S
COMING."

"SURE,
WE'RE HAPPY...
BUT FOR HOW
LONG?"

OH,
PLEASE...

...THAT'S
NOT ME.

THAT'S
EXACTLY
YOU!

I'VE NEVER
KNOWN SOMEONE
WHO MANAGED TO
LIVE **FULLY**--AND
NEGATIVELY--IN
THE FUTURE!

IT'S NOT
TRUE.

I ALSO
LIVE IN THE
PAST.

HAR
HAR.

TELL
ME, MR.
FUTURE...

...HAVE YOU
APPLIED TO ANY
UNIVERSITIES
YET?

GOOD OLD
GOTHAM
UNIVERSITY.

WHAT
ABOUT
YOU?

SAME. MY MOM
INSISTED. SHE
BASICALLY
OWNS THE
SCHOOL.

SHE OF
COURSE WANTS
ME TO GO INTO
BUSINESS, BUT I
THINK I'LL TOY WITH
HER FEELINGS AND
SIGN UP FOR
INTERPRETIVE
DANCE.

BUT YOU COULD
GO TO ANY SCHOOL
IN THE **WORLD**.
WHY NOT YALE?
METROPOLIS?

BECAUSE
GOTHAM IS MY
HOME. I WANT
TO **HELP** IT.

UH,
HELP IT
HOW?



I'M GOING TO BE A COP.



AHAHAHA!

WHAT? I WANT TO STOP CRIME!

I'LL START BY TAKING CRIMINOLOGY AT S.U. AND THEN--



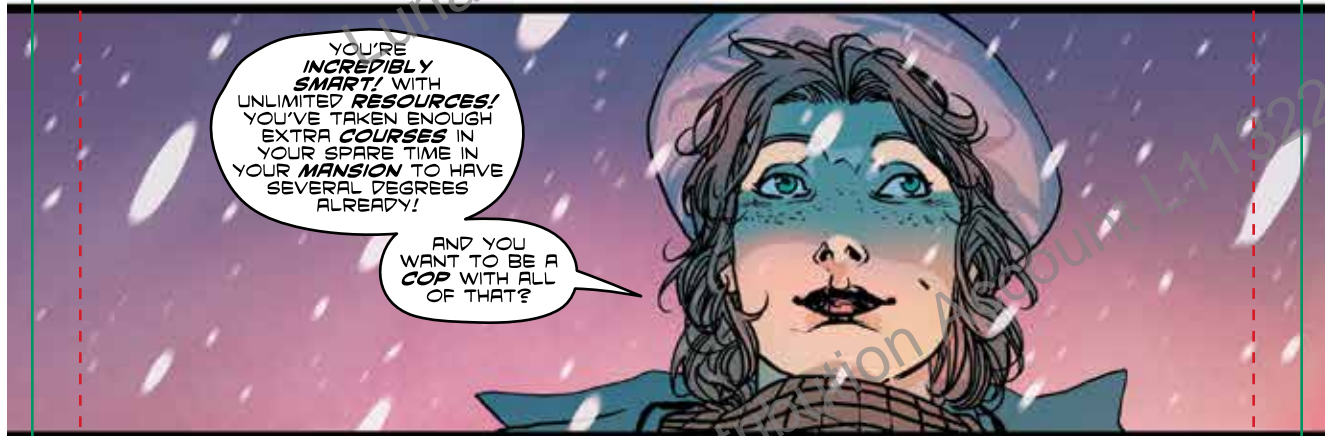
OH MY GOD, YOU'RE SERIOUS!

BRUCE, BESIDES THE FACT THAT NO POLICE FORCE WOULD HAVE ONE OF THE WORLD'S RICHEST MEN WALKING THE STREETS WITH A GUN--



I WOULDN'T CARRY A GUN. I'D--

...AND THERE'S ANOTHER REASON! YOU'RE TOO USED TO DOING WHATEVER YOU WANT!



YOU'RE INCREDIBLY SMART! WITH UNLIMITED RESOURCES! YOU'VE TAKEN ENOUGH EXTRA COURSES IN YOUR SPARE TIME IN YOUR MANSION TO HAVE SEVERAL DEGREES ALREADY!

AND YOU WANT TO BE A COP WITH ALL OF THAT?

BUT THAT'S NOT EVEN THE **BIGGEST** REASON...

LOOK, I'VE KNOWN YOU FOR A **LONG TIME**, BRUCE. I REMEMBER **MITCH SHANNON**.

THAT **BULLY** FROM THE **ACADEMY**? WHAT ABOUT--



HE WAS A **BULLY**.

BUT YOU **TORMENTED** HIM. IN **SECRET**, FOR THE REST OF THAT **SCHOOL YEAR**.

YOU **PROVE** HIS PARENTS TO PULL HIM **OUT** OF THE SCHOOL.



BRUCE... I LOVE YOU. BUT I **SEE** IT. IT'S ALWAYS **THERE**.

YOUR PARENTS WERE **KILLED**, AND YOU DON'T WANT **JUSTICE**...

THAT DAMNED **DARKNESS**.

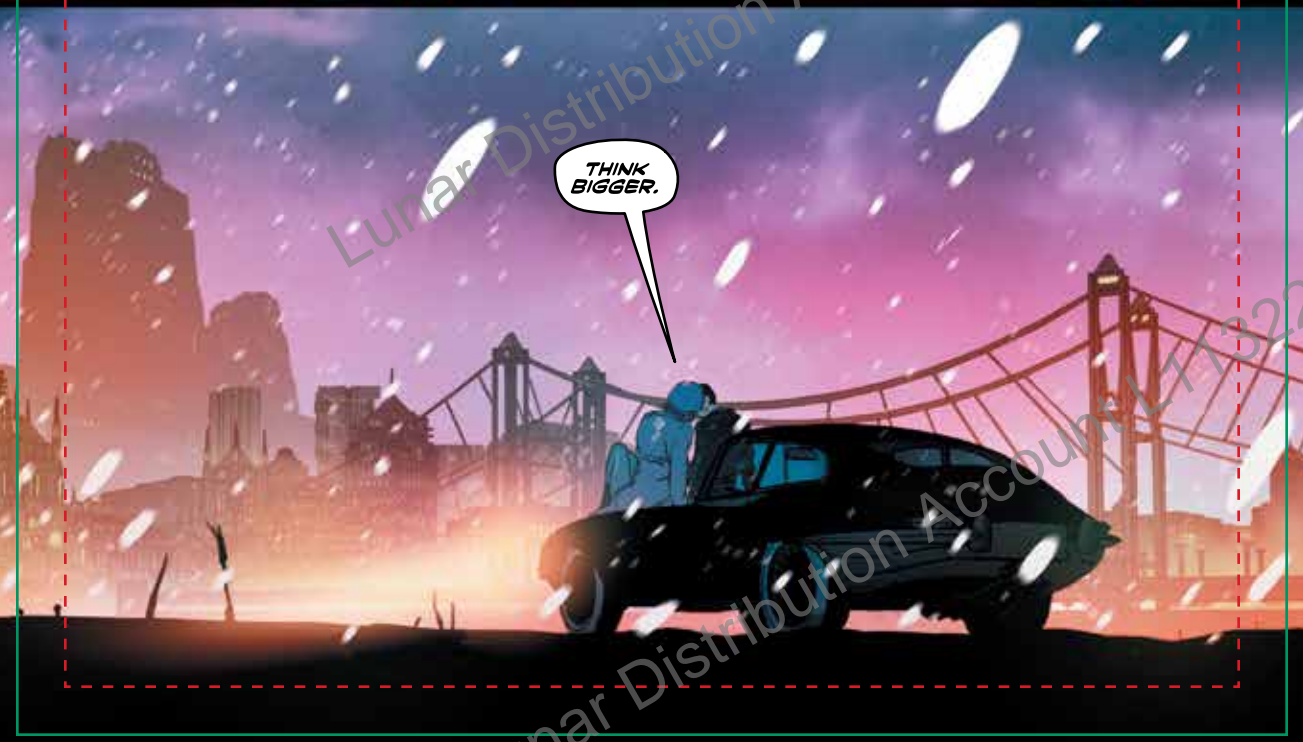


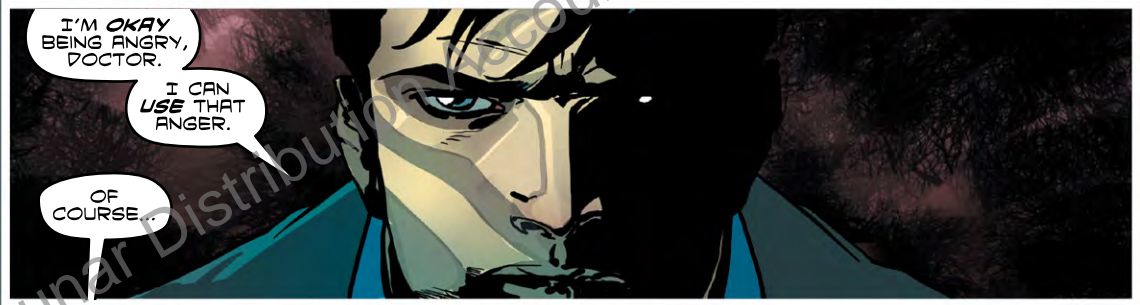
...YOU WANT **VENGEANCE**.

THE WORLD DOESN'T **NEED** ANOTHER **ANGRY COP**.



THINK BIGGER.

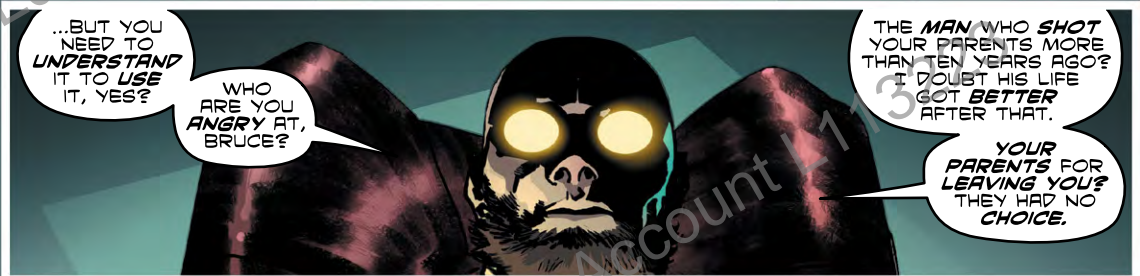




I'M **OKAY** BEING ANGRY, DOCTOR.

I CAN **USE** THAT ANGER.

OF COURSE...



...BUT YOU NEED TO **UNDERSTAND** IT TO **USE** IT, YES?

WHO ARE YOU **ANGRY** AT, BRUCE?

THE **MAN** WHO **SHOT** YOUR PARENTS MORE THAN TEN YEARS AGO? I DOUBT HIS LIFE GOT **BETTER** AFTER THAT.

YOUR PARENTS FOR **LEAVING** YOU? THEY HAD NO **CHOICE**.



I'M **ANGRY** AT THE **WORLD**.

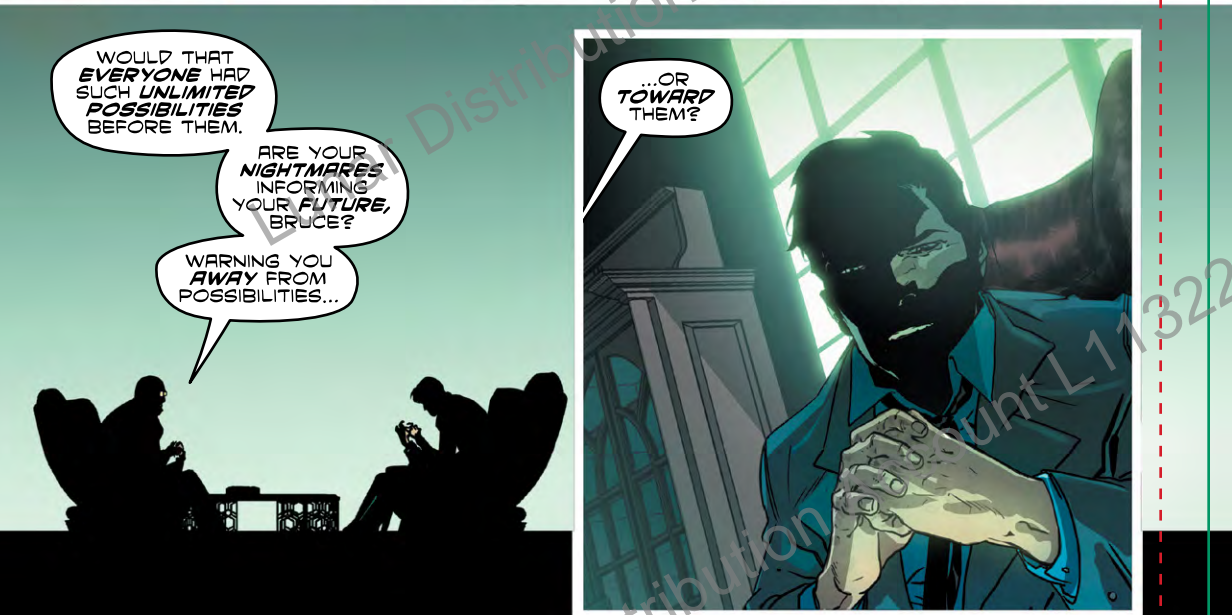
I'M ANGRY THAT WE LET PEOPLE **SUFFER**, THAT WE LET **BAD MEN** JUST DO WHAT THEY **WANT**.

"**BAD MEN**" DO WHAT THEY **WANT**...



...AND SO DO THE **RICH**. A LOT OF TIMES THOSE ARE ONE AND THE **SAME**.

YOU CAN DO **WHATEVER** YOU **WANT**, BRUCE.



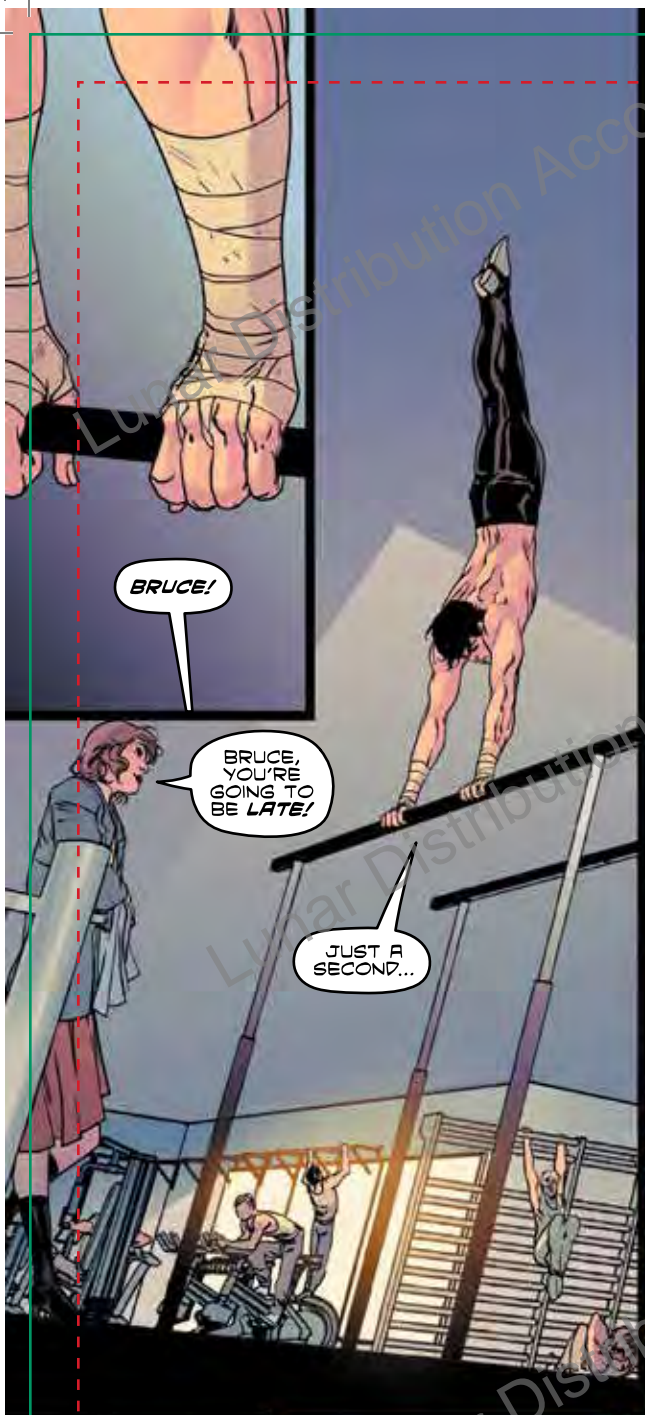
WOULD THAT **EVERYONE** HAD SUCH **UNLIMITED** **POSSIBILITIES** BEFORE THEM.

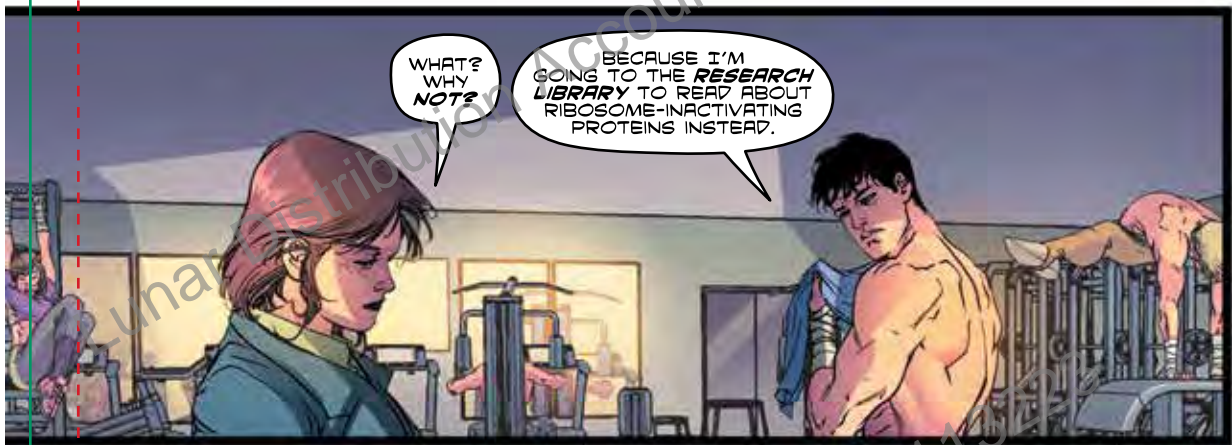
ARE YOUR **NIGHTMARES** INFORMING YOUR **FUTURE**, BRUCE?

WARNING YOU **AWAY** FROM **POSSIBILITIES**...



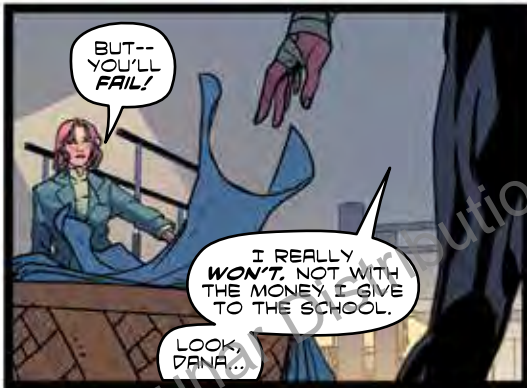
...OR **TOWARD** THEM?





WHAT?
WHY
NOT?

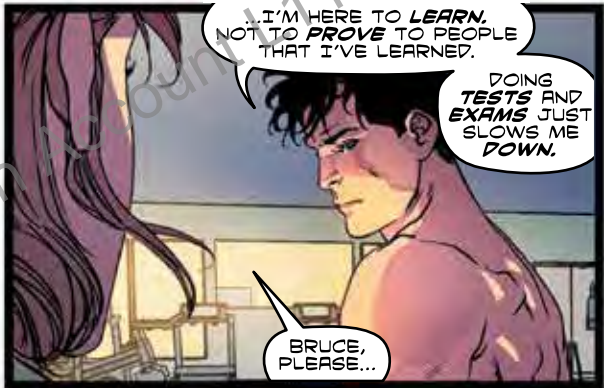
BECAUSE I'M
GOING TO THE **RESEARCH
LIBRARY** TO READ ABOUT
RIBOSOME-INACTIVATING
PROTEINS INSTEAD.



BUT--
YOU'LL
FAIL!

I REALLY
WON'T. NOT WITH
THE MONEY I GIVE
TO THE SCHOOL.

LOOK,
DANA...



...I'M HERE TO **LEARN**.
NOT TO **PROVE** TO PEOPLE
THAT I'VE LEARNED.

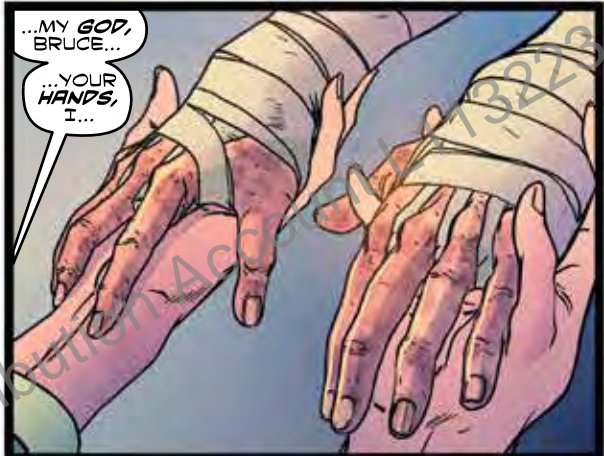
DOING
TESTS AND
EXAMS JUST
SLOWS ME
DOWN.

BRUCE,
PLEASE...



...PLEASE GO SEE
MY **PSYCHIATRIST**.
I'M **WORRIED**
ABOUT YOU.

YOU'RE JUST
COLDLY DRIVEN
DURING THE DAY
AND IN THE NIGHTS
YOU HAVE THOSE
NIGHTMARES
AND...



...MY **GOD**,
BRUCE...

...YOUR
HANDS,
I...



...WHAT ARE
YOU **DOING**
TO
YOURSELF?





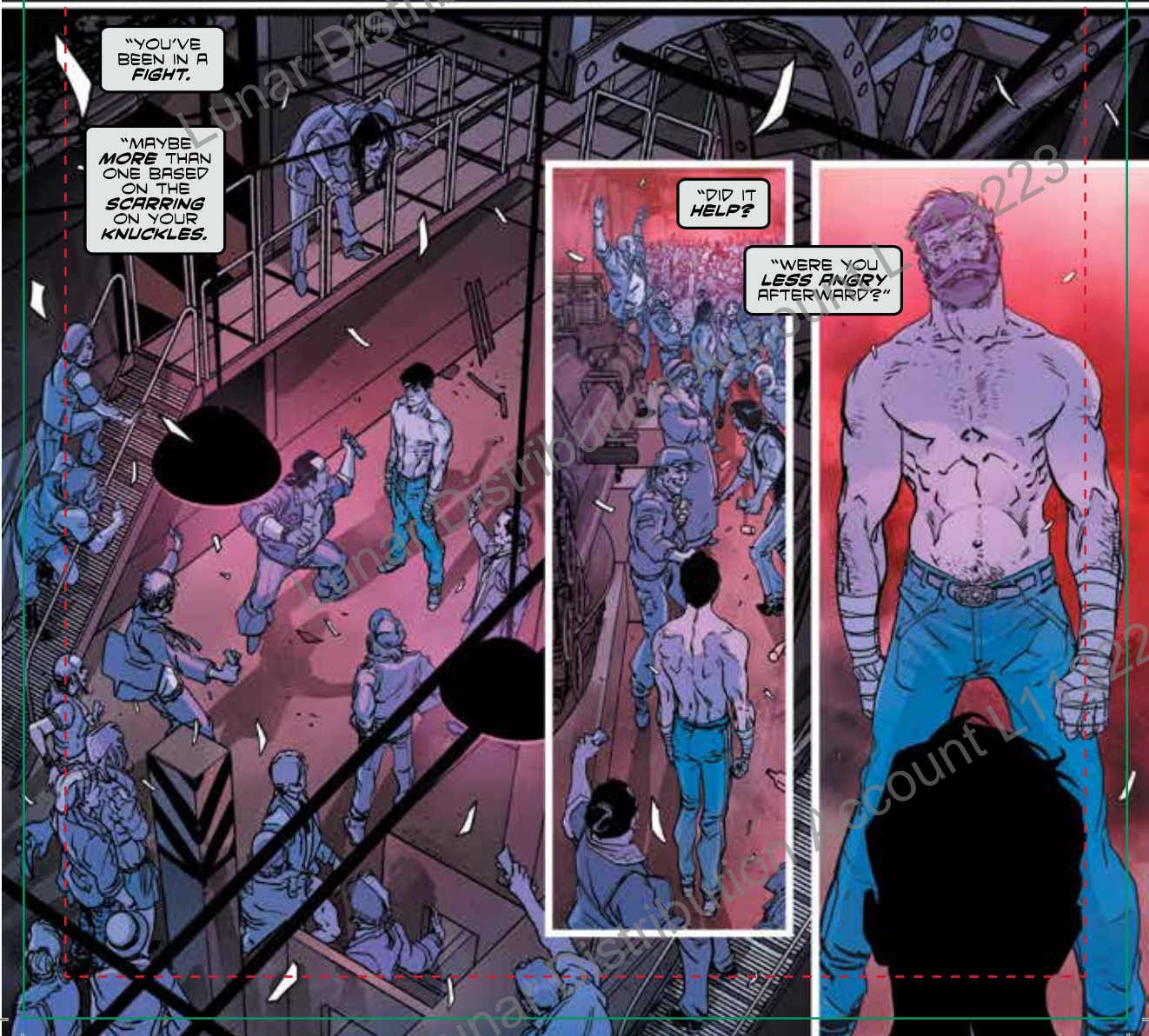
"I'M A DOCTOR OF THE MIND, BRUCE, BUT I DID ATTEND MEDICAL SCHOOL."

"AND I HAVE EYES."



"YOU'VE BEEN IN A FIGHT."

"MAYBE MORE THAN ONE BASED ON THE SCARRING ON YOUR KNUCKLES."

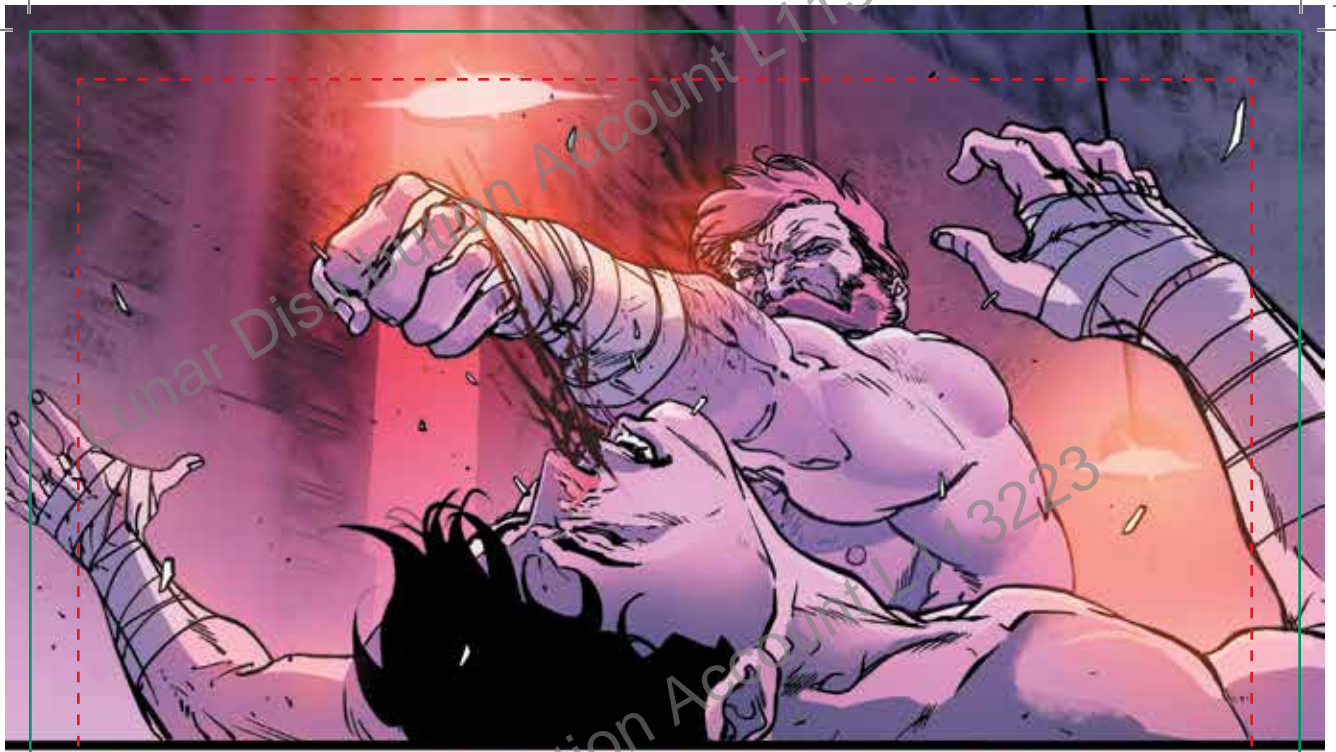


"DID IT HELP?"

"WERE YOU LESS ANGRY AFTERWARD?"







"MY GUESS IS, YOU WEREN'T."



"THAT THE ANGER STAYED."



"MY GUESS IS...IF YOU KEEP PUSHING HELP AWAY..."



"...YOU'LL NEVER BE OUT OF ANGER."

NOBODY MOVE!



'SPECIALLY YOU, HIRO.

J-JACK, I D-DIDN'T--

YOU RUNNIN' FIGHTS ON THE SIDE--



...WITHOUT CUTTIN' US IN?

NH!

HEY, BOSS!



RECOGNIZE THIS GUY?



WELL, HOLY #@\$%, IF IT AIN'T...



...BRUCE WAYNE.



YER FREE TO GO.
HOW?
PAL...



...WHY DO YOU THINK?
WELL THEN, I'D LIKE TO REPORT A CRIME.
I OVERHEARD ONE OF THE ARRESTING OFFICERS SAY THAT THEY RECEIVED ROUTINE KICKBACKS FOR THE FIGHTS.



YOU HEARIN' THIS, PHIL?

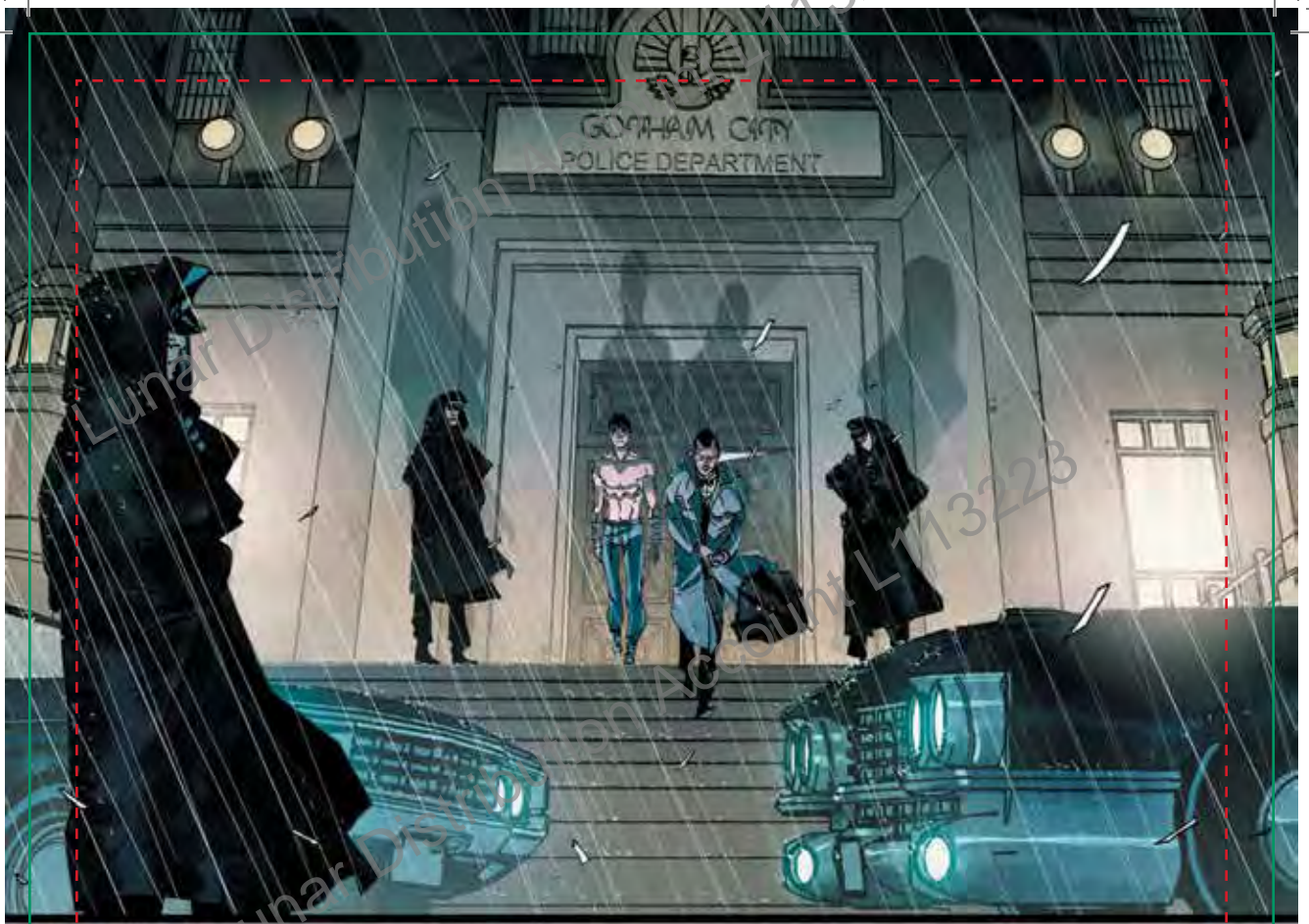
SURE AM. SOUNDS LIKE THIS BILLIONAIRE MAY BE A LITTLE OUT OF TOUCH.



YEAH. YOU KNOW HOW I KNOW THAT? 'CAUSE HIS "NEXT OF KIN" ON FILE...



...IS HIS BUTLER.





...I'M SORRY.
I DIDN'T MEAN TO DRAG YOU INTO THIS. I WAS...



...I WAS TRAINING. BEYOND JUST THE BOXING CLASSES YOU SET UP FOR ME.
NO MATTER WHAT, THE INSTRUCTORS ALWAYS TREAT ME WITH KID GLOVES. I NEEDED TO--



SKREECH

ALFRED?



ALFRED?
WHY ARE WE--



I'VE FAILED YOU.



FAILED?
ALFRED... YOU'VE GIVEN ME EVERYTHING.

WHAT I HAVE DONE...



...IS LET YOU BECOME A SPOILED, RICH BRAT.



I LOVE YOU, SON. I DO.

BUT FIGHTING IN SOME--SOME UNDERGROUND GAMBLING RING?

TO WHAT END? TO BECOME A HARD MAN? TO SIMULATE WAR WHEN OTHERS HAVE FOUGHT THEM SO YOU WOULDN'T HAVE TO?



THE MEN YOU WERE FIGHTING-- WHY WERE THEY THERE?

BECAUSE IT'S ALL THEY HAVE. A CHANCE TO MAKE RENT MONEY PROVIDED THEIR HOSPITAL EXPENSES DON'T CANCEL OUT THEIR WINNINGS.



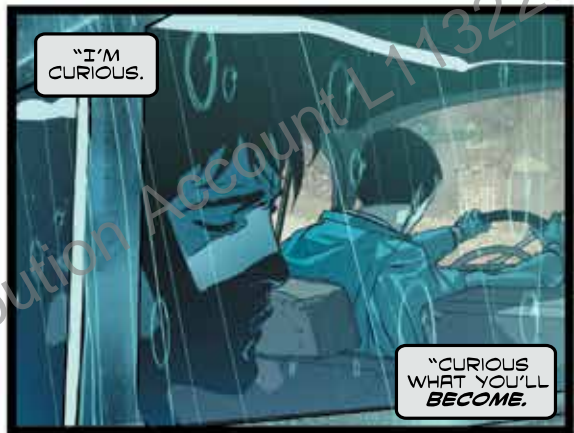
SCARED MEN WITH NOTHING, DOING THINGS MOST PEOPLE WOULDN'T IMAGINE...

...LIKE THE MAN WHO SHOT YOUR PARENTS FOR 150 DOLLARS AND SCATTERED PEARLS.



YOU'VE BEEN GIVEN EVERYTHING.

PROVE THAT YOU DESERVE IT.

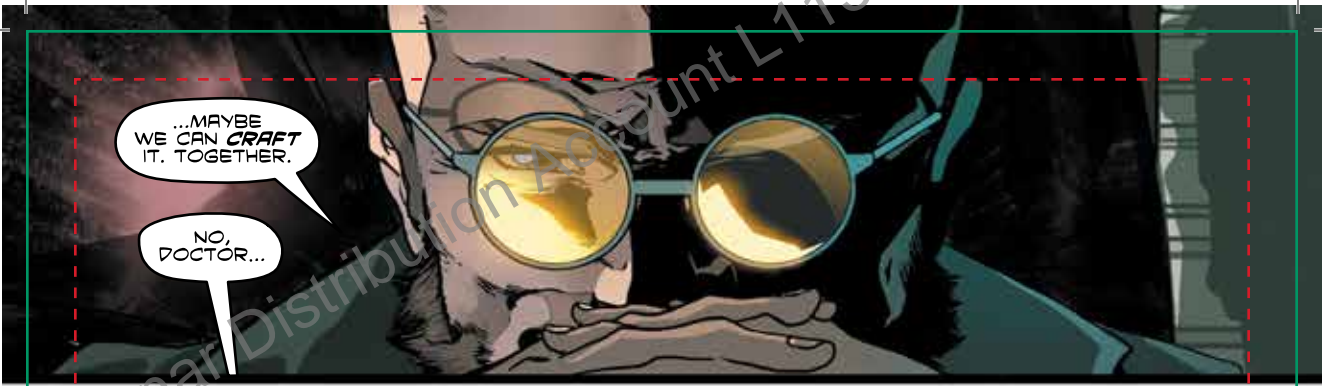


"I'M CURIOUS.

"CURIOUS WHAT YOU'LL BECOME.



"IF YOU STAY WITH ME AND OUR SESSIONS..."



...MAYBE WE CAN **CRAFT** IT. TOGETHER.

NO, DOCTOR...



...I DON'T THINK SO.

THOUGH I DO APPRECIATE YOUR **HELP**. YOURS AND...



...YOUR **HYPNOTHERAPY**.

IT'S **INTERESTING**, DOCTOR. I'VE BEEN DOING SOME **READING** ON THE MATTER, AND IT APPEARS YOUR VERSION OF THE PRACTICE...



...BEARS LITTLE IN **COMMON** WITH THE STANDARD **PRACTICES**.

IT SEEMS IT'S MORE AKIN TO "**STAGE HYPNOSIS**."

I HAVE **OPTIMIZED** HYPNOSIS TO BE MORE **EFFECTIVE**, YES.

WHERE ARE YOU **GOING** WITH THIS, **BRUCE**?



I'M **ANGRY**, HUGO. IT'S **TRUE**.

DANA RECOMMENDED YOU TO ME AND I ADMIT I WAS **CURIOUS**. BUT MOSTLY BECAUSE...



...SHE SEEMED **TIRED**.

I THOUGHT IT WAS THE **STRESS** OF HER **DWINDLING FINANCES**. BUT WHEN I LOOKED INTO IT, I REALIZED...



...IT WAS **FATIGUE** FROM **HYPNOSIS**, BOTH **DIRECT** AND **COVERT**.

AND HER **DWINDLING FINANCES**...



...WERE
DWINDLING INTO
AN **OFF-SHORE**
ACCOUNT.

WELL,
BRUCE...



...THAT IS
QUITE THE
DELUSION
YOU'RE
UNDER.

WE CAN
WORK ON
THAT, OF
COURSE...

OH, I'M
SURE...



...SOME
OTHER **TIME**
PERHAPS.

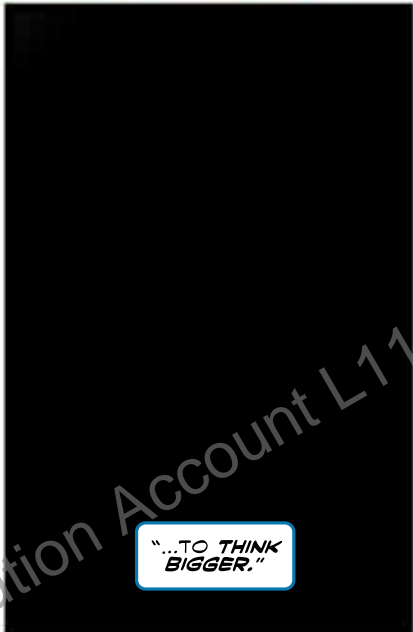


I ASSUME
THOSE ARE
THE **POLICE**
I HEAR.

AND WHERE
DO YOU THINK
YOU'RE GOING,
BRUCE?



I'M GOING
AWAY,
DOCTOR...



"...TO THINK
BIGGER."