



**LAS VEGAS. YEARS AGO.**



YOU *MISS* IT, DON'T YOU, BRUCE?

ZEE? HOW DID YOU FIND ME UP HERE?



MAGIC.

OR THE FACT THAT I'VE BEEN WANDERING THESE HOTELS AND CASINOS TWO MONTHS OUT OF EACH YEAR SINCE I WAS STILL A TODDLER.

BUT LET'S CALL IT MAGIC.



HOW'S THE SLEIGHT GOING?

I KEEP DROPPING THE COIN.

WELL, THAT'S *ONE* WAY TO MAKE IT DISAPPEAR.



THERE'S SO MUCH I WANT YOUR FATHER TO TEACH ME. SO MUCH I *NEED* TO KNOW BEFORE I MOVE ON. BUT HE WON'T EVEN CONSIDER IT UNLESS I MASTER THESE BASIC TRICKS.

AND I CAN'T GET MY DAMN HAND TO MAKE THE RIGHT SHAPES...



SO, HOW LONG WILL IT BE TO GET SOME KIND OF MASTERY? MONTHS, YERRS? AND THEN HOW MUCH FOR THE NEXT SKILL, AND THE NEXT?

HOW OLD WILL I EVEN BE WHEN I GET TO GO HOME?



WHY DON'T YOU JUST HOP THE NEXT BUS OUT OF HERE, THEN? WHY IS THIS SO IMPORTANT TO YOU?



HAVE YOU EVER SEEN GOTHAM CITY?

DAD PLAYED A SHOW THERE WHEN I WAS ABOUT TWELVE...

NO, I MEAN REALLY SEEN IT...

WHEN I WAS LITTLE MY MOTHER WOULD TAKE ME UP TO THE ROOF OF THE HOSPITAL LATE AT NIGHT, WHEN MY FATHER WAS WORKING, TO SHOW ME THE LIGHTS OF THE CITY. SHE WOULD TELL ME THAT THERE WAS NOTHING LIKE IT ON EARTH. AND EVEN HERE, I CAN TELL YOU, ZEE... SHE WAS RIGHT.

GOTHAM IS THIS BLINKING, FLASHING ELECTRIC RAINBOW OF LIGHT. EVERY COLOR IMAGINABLE CLASHING TOGETHER. THE RED NEON OF PARK ROW. THE PINKS AND BLUES OF THE DIAMOND DISTRICT. THE EVER-CHANGING LED BILLBOARDS OF ADAMS SQUARE. FROM THE LIGHTS IN THE OFFICE BUILDINGS, HOMES, AND CARS, TO THE SPOTLIGHTS THE POLICE BLIMPS TRACED THROUGH THE CITY EACH NIGHT.

IT WAS LIKE THE CITY WAS A LIVING THING. A GIANT BRAIN, WITH THE LIGHTS AS NEURONS, FIRING FROM PLACE TO PLACE, COMMUNICATING IN A WAY I WOULD NEVER UNDERSTAND, NO MATTER HOW MUCH I WANTED TO.

LIKE SOME HIGHER FORM OF INTELLIGENCE THAT I'LL NEVER MEASURE UP TO. THAT I'LL NEVER BE SMART ENOUGH TO UNDERSTAND, NO MATTER HOW MANY YEARS I WORK.

YOU BROOD BETTER THAN JUST ABOUT ANYONE I'VE EVER SEEN IN MY LIFE.

ZEE...

IT'S THE FEELING THAT YOU CAN DO EVERYTHING RIGHT, AND IT STILL WON'T BE ENOUGH.

I DON'T THINK THERE'S BEEN A DAY OF MY LIFE I HAVEN'T FELT LIKE THAT, BRUCE. NOT A DAY OF MY LIFE.

HERE. SHOW ME HOW YOU'RE HOLDING IT IN YOUR HAND...



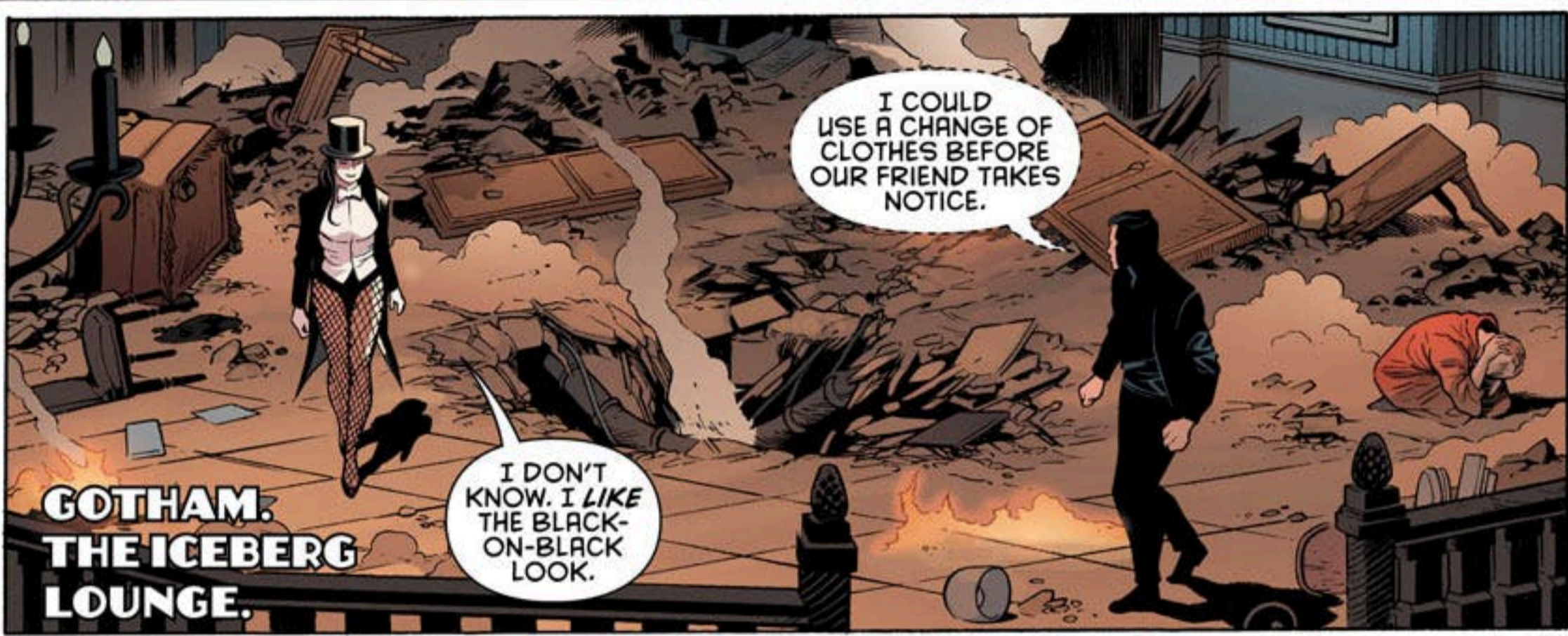
YOU KNOW, WHEN I AGREED TO DO A SHOW IN GOTHAM CITY, THIS IS PRETTY MUCH EXACTLY WHAT I PICTURED.

MAYBE A CLOWN OR A COLORFUL GANGSTER RATHER THAN THE GIANT ROBOT, BUT...

ZEE...

BEEN A WHILE SINCE YOU CALLED ME THAT.

**NOW.**



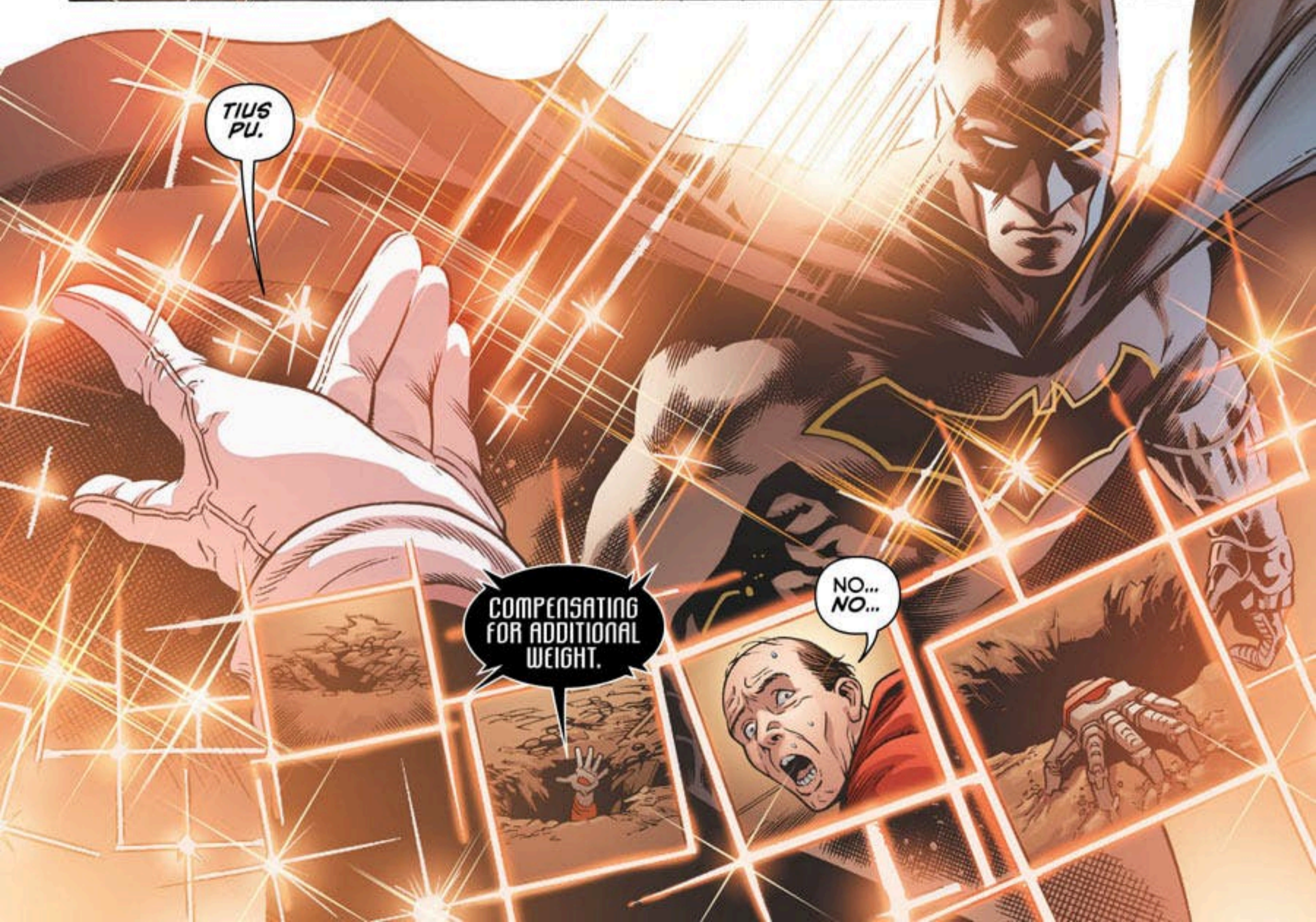
I COULD USE A CHANGE OF CLOTHES BEFORE OUR FRIEND TAKES NOTICE.

I DON'T KNOW. I LIKE THE BLACK-ON-BLACK LOOK.

**GOTHAM.  
THE ICEBERG  
LOUNGE.**



BUT IF YOU INSIST...



TIUS PU.

COMPENSATING FOR ADDITIONAL WEIGHT.

NO... NO...