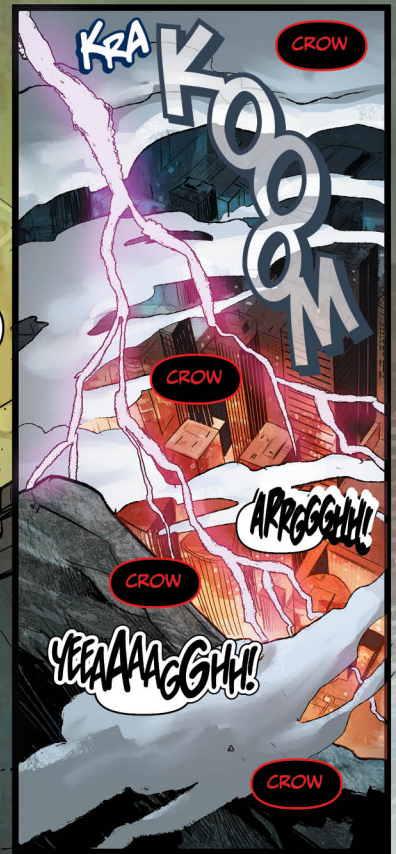


ARKHAM ASYLUM, GOTHAM CITY.
TWO DAYS AFTER THE APPEARANCE OF CHALLENGERS MOUNTAIN.

BEFORE GOING ANY FURTHER, READ DARK NIGHTS: METAL #1-2!



YOU'RE THINKING THAT THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE. YOU SEE MY HEIGHT, MY BUILD, YOU HEAR MY VOICE, AND YOU KNOW WHO I AM...

YOU KNOW I AM BATMAN. BUT YOU ALSO KNOW THAT I'M NOT.

YOU KNOW THAT I AM SOMETHING TWISTED AND WRONG, AND THAT TERRIFIES YOU.

CROW

CROW

CROW

CROW

BUT YOU SHOULDN'T BE AFRAID, EDWARD. YOU SHOULD BE EXCITED. I DIDN'T COME ALL THIS WAY JUST TO PLAY YOU LIKE I DID ON MY WORLD. I CAME TO DEAL YOU IN.

NO, NO, NO... YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT THIS ALL WRONG. YOU GET TO DECIDE THAT FOR YOURSELF.

WH-WHAT KIND OF GAME ARE WE PLAYING?



ALL YOUR LIFE, YOU'VE LIVED BY A SET OF ABSOLUTE TRUTHS, HARD AND FAST RULES THAT COULD NEVER BE BROKEN.

BUT TELLING THOSE TRUTHS ONLY GOT YOU LOCKED AWAY, WITH PEOPLE CALLING YOU INSANE. YOU AND SO MANY OTHERS...

BUT I HAVE A WAY OF CHANGING ALL THAT, EDWARD.

TELLING RIDDLES, CUTTING THROUGH THE COMPLEXITY OF THOSE RULES TO SEE THE TRUTH HIDDEN WITHIN.

MY METAL CARDS, FORGED WITH COSMIC METALLURGY, CARRY A POWER UNLIKE ANYTHING THIS LITTLE UNIVERSE HAS EVER SEEN BEFORE.

HOLDING IT IN YOUR HAND, YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS CAN RESHAPE REALITY TO YOUR WHIMS.

ALL YOUR LIFE, YOU HAVE BEEN RESTRAINED BY WHAT IS POSSIBLE. I WANT TO SEE WHAT YOU CAN DO WITHOUT THE RESTRAINTS, WITHOUT THE RULES.

TAKE THE CARD. JOIN THE FUN.

AND BUILD THE CITY INTO AN IMPOSSIBLE RIDDLE...

...THAT MAKES ME...

...LAUGH!



OUTSIDE OF GOTHAM.
NOW.

WHEN I LAST SAW MY FATHER, HE TOLD ME ABOUT A DARK MULTIVERSE.

AN IMPOSSIBLE PLACE OF NIGHTMARE, BEYOND HIS OR ANYBODY'S UNDERSTANDING, A PLACE FROM WHICH A THREAT WAS COMING THAT COULD TEAR DOWN OUR WORLD.

THEN I SAW SOMETHING IN HIS EYES I'M NOT USED TO. THE FEAR OF NOT KNOWING WHAT MIGHT BE HIDING IN THE DARK. THE FEAR OF ALL THE RULES FALLING AWAY.

THE LAST THING HE SAID BEFORE HE LEFT US WAS THAT WE WERE NOT TO FOLLOW IN HIS FOOTSTEPS UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCE.



PART OF ME FEELS BAD FOR DAMIAN--AND ANOTHER PART OF ME FEELS LIKE HE'S A VILLAIN WHO THINKS HE'S A GOOD GUY.

NOW'S NOT THE TIME TO COME DOWN ON HIM, BEAST BOY.

NOW'S EXACTLY THE TIME TO COME DOWN ON HIM, RAVEN.



A FEW DAYS AGO, A GIANT MOUNTAIN SHOWED UP IN GOTHAM CITY.

NOW NOTHING IS COMING OUT EXCEPT INSANE, END-OF-THE-WORLD-LEVEL RUMORS ABOUT SOME KIND OF LABYRINTH...

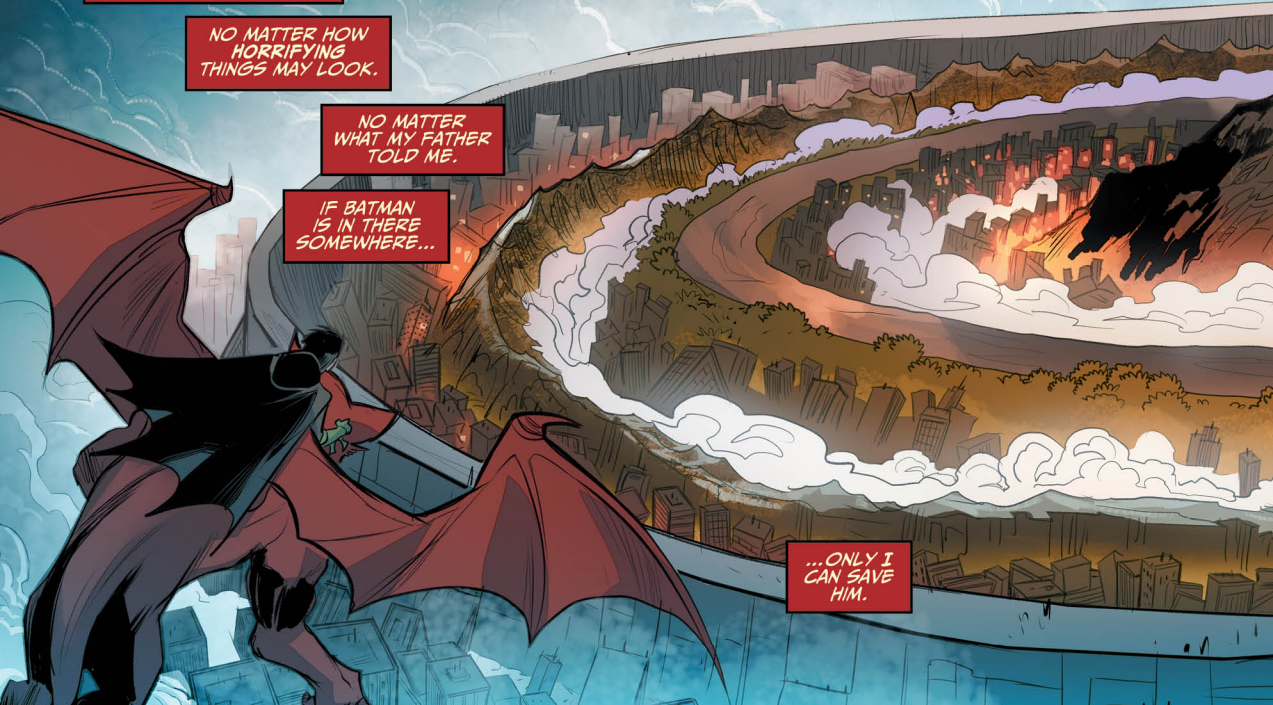
...AND THAT LITTLE PUNK HAS US HEADED STRAIGHT FOR IT WITH NO BACKUP!

GOTHAM IS MY FATHER'S CITY... WHICH MEANS IT'S MY CITY. I REFUSE TO LET IT FALL.

NO MATTER HOW HORRIFYING THINGS MAY LOOK.

NO MATTER WHAT MY FATHER TOLD ME.

IF BATMAN IS IN THERE SOMEWHERE...



...ONLY I CAN SAVE HIM.

HE'S CONCERNED FOR HIS CITY. AND WHATEVER INVADED OUR WORLD AND BEGAN TRANSFORMING IT CLEARLY HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH **BATMAN**. ROBIN HAS HAD NO CONTACT FROM HIM.

HEY, I LOST MY PARENTS, TOO, YOU KNOW.

EVERYBODY ON THE TEEN TITANS HAS A MESSED-UP FAMILY. THAT'S ONE OF THE REASONS I LOVE THE IDEA OF US. WE'RE THERE FOR EACH OTHER.

EXCEPT DAMIAN. DON'T FORGET HE KICKED KID FLASH OFF THE TEAM.

HE'S CONVINCED HIS BULLYING HAS HELPED US. AND IN A WAY... HE'S RIGHT.

AS THE ROOKIE OF THE TEAM, I'M NOT SURE HOW MUCH MY VOICE COUNTS...

A DAY LATER, **BATMAN**, **SUPERMAN** AND **WONDER WOMAN** VANISHED FROM THE FACE OF THE EARTH.

ALL OF OUR VOICES COUNT THE SAME, AQUALAD.

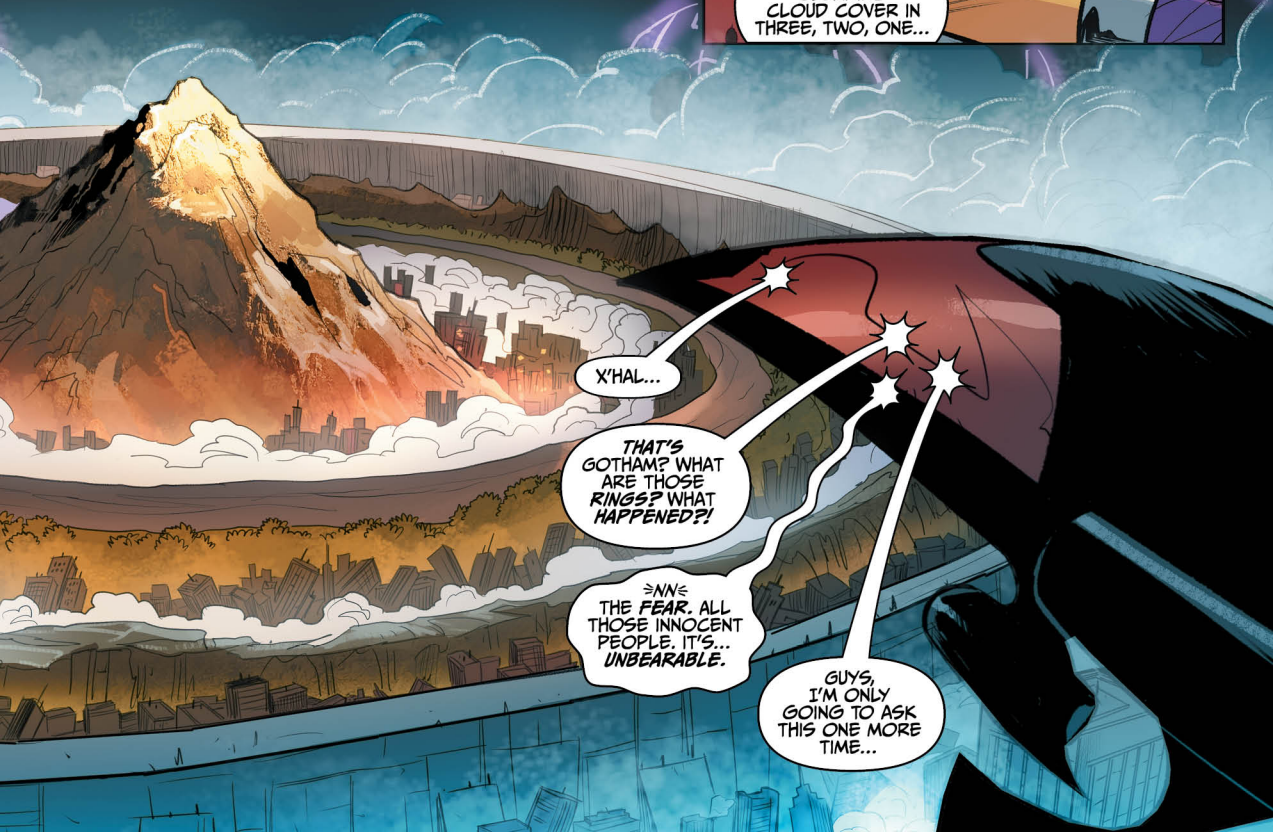
DAMIAN CAN BE HARSH, BUT HE CAN BE KIND, TOO, STARFIRE.

HE WAS THERE FOR ME WHEN MY DAD SHOWED UP. I WANT TO BE THERE FOR HIM NOW THAT HIS DAD'S GONE MISSING.



YOU ARE RIGHT, BUT WE MUST WORRY ABOUT ROBIN LATER.

WE ARE ARRIVING. CLEARING CLOUD COVER IN THREE, TWO, ONE...



X'HAL...

THAT'S GOTHAM? WHAT ARE THOSE RINGS? WHAT HAPPENED?!

≡≡≡ THE FEAR. ALL THOSE INNOCENT PEOPLE. IT'S... UNBEARABLE.

GUYS, I'M ONLY GOING TO ASK THIS ONE MORE TIME...