

Somewhere on the internet, I read a comment in anticipation of this issue complaining that Batman shouldn't be able to fight Darkseid head-on. The commenter reasonably argued that it just demeans Darkseid's status as a god if a mere mortal, even one in an insanely awesome set of armor (my words, not his), can battle on his level. I get that, but mortals outwitting gods have been a staple of fiction since mythological times. There's certainly an element of wishful thinking in it, but shouldn't a human at least be able to give a god a hard time? Shouldn't at least Batman? Anyway, Tomasi has all the circumstances he needs to sell the idea that Bruce can march onto Apokolips, face Darkseid, and depart alive. With Darkseid only newly revived and perhaps not at full power, and with Bruce as always with the advantage of surprise, it's not such a stretch that he can hold his own for a brief time. Besides, it's fairly clear throughout the battle that Darkseid isn't that fazed by any of Bruce's moves, even his best ones. I think that commenter can give this match-up a pass. There is a flaw with the sequence, however, mostly in that aside from everyone fighting for their lives (and Damian's), it's frequently unclear what's going on. Throughout the action, there's the threat posed by the failure of Vic's Mother Box, which he and Babs frantically try to repair. They succeed, but you don't see how; one minute it's broken, the next it's fixed. Where's the thrill in that? It seems like a missed opportunity to see Babs' intellect at work, and that's always a shame. Far more problematic is the arbitrary way in which Bruce uses the Chaos Shard to do whatever he wants, whenever he wants it. Admittedly, an object of such unfathomable nature and with such infinite potential as the Shard is probably capable of anything, but that's a *deus ex machina* if you've ever seen one. There's also the question of how Bruce just knows how to use the Shard, even when Darkseid does not. The question is most disturbing at two points: first, when he Bruce saves himself and transmutes the Shard by using it to deflect Darkseid's Omega Beams; second, [Spoiler alert, sort of.] when he uses the altered Shard to bring Damian back to life. And that brings us to the most serious flaw of the issue: the total lack of surprise in regards to Damian's resurrection. That's not entirely on Tomasi; in a world where every comic's cover and premise is previewed months ahead of time, it's virtually impossible to keep any major development a secret. This sucks for Tomasi, of course, since he spent months acting coy about "a" Robin coming to work with Batman and the suspense was completely spoiled long before the event came to pass. On the other hand, he could have made the most of it by crafting the circumstances of Damian's return a little better. He might've smoothed out Bruce's miraculous use of the Shard, for one, and maybe expanded the moment when Bruce is tormented with the decision of whether to use the Shard to save his parents or his son, which is nearly the sole emotional conflict of the issue. If there's a bright side to all this, it's that Damian will have to hit the ground running from the moment he arises. There's no question that Bruce will survive whatever it is he's suddenly dying from at the end of the issue; it's just a question of what it is and what Damian will do to repay the favor his father did him. In the process, we'll see how the kid has changed since his death—yet another point that's been spoiled by the modern preview process. The issue being as bare in substance as it is, it's up to Gleason to make what's there as powerful as possible. He's got to pull the Michael Bay: filling your vision with so much visual spectacle that you don't realize how nonsensical and thin what you're seeing is until later, after a refund is impossible.* The match between Bruce and Darkseid is as epic as you could possibly wish for, and the action practically screeches through the pages, giving you a sense of how chaotic and dire things are for our heroes. And when we finally get to the long-awaited reunion of Bruce and Wayne, there's such joy and love and wonder in the moment that you forget the insane circumstances that brought it about—for a little while, at least. You're just happy that both Waynes finally get the happiness so often

denied them. Some Musings: * Not that this issue is that bad. It's not Transformers: Age of Extinction. The post Batman and Robin #37 appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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