



APPROVED  
BY THE  
COMICS  
CODE  
A  
UTHORITY

# BATMAN

544

JUL 97

It's true! It's true!  
You're not just dreamin'.  
The Joker's conjured up  
**THE DEMON!**



MOENCH  
JONES  
BEATTY

KELLEY  
JONES  
& J.B.



Doug Moench Kelley Jones John Beatty  
WRITER PENCILLER INKER

Greg Wright Todd Klein Android Images  
COLORIST LETTERER SEPARATOR

Jordan B. Gorfinkel Dennis O'Neil Bob Kane  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR EDITOR BATMAN CREATOR

# MAJOR ARCANIA

AND ON THE NINETY-NINTH DAY OF  
HIS GREAT WORKING, LAUGHING HIS  
HINDQUARTERS OFF, THE JACKANAPE  
ROSE AGAIN FROM ARKHAM, HYEEHEE!  
HEE!

RISE HALFWAY UP THE  
KABBALISTIC TREE OF LIFE,  
THROUGH FIVE OF THE TEN SEPHIROTH,  
THEY SAY, AND GOD WILL DESCEND  
TO MEET YOU IN THE MIDDLE.

BUT FOLLOW THE  
ROOTS INTO THE UNDER-  
WORLD, GIVE THE SECRET  
WHISTLE AND I SAY...  
HELLO, DEVIL!

HYAH!  
THIS TIME, WITH THE  
LUCK OF LUNACY AND A  
FOOL'S FORTUNE, THE  
JOKE'S GONNA BE ON  
EVERYONE!

PART ONE:  
**JOINKIN' WITH  
MISTER D.**





AND WHEN I'M DONE WITH THOSE SOULS, AND THEY'VE BEEN RETURNED TO THEIR RIGHTFUL OWNER, THEY'LL BE INFINITELY RICHER IN EVIL--A DEAL THE DEVIL CAN'T REFUSE! HYPERHATE!

WAIT A MINUTE... WHY SHOULD I MAKE ANY DEAL AT ALL? WHY CUT THE GREEDY DEVIL IN FOR ANYTHING?

MAYBE I SHOULD JUST HIJACK A CLUTCH OF SOULS BOUND FOR HELL--INTERCEPT THE DAMNED THINGS BEFORE THE DEVIL EVEN GETS HIS NASTY TALONED MITTS ON THEM!



A BRILLIANT BRAINSTORM, AND PRECISELY WHAT I SHOULD DO... IF I COULD FIGURE OUT HOW.

WHICH I CAN'T.

Hieh.

AH WELL, BACK TO PLAN A!

FINISH THE MAGIC CIRCLE AND PERFORM MY DIABOLICAL CONJURING TRICK!

BESIDES, THIS IS A LOT MORE FUN!

WEEEEEEEEE HAHAHAHA!

AND ALSO BESIDES, I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO MEET THE DEVIL--FACE TO FACE, THAT IS, WITH NO MIRROR--

--JUST TO SHAKE HANDS WITH MY ONE AND ONLY IDOL!

AND AFTER THE DEAL IS STRUCK, WE CAN HOIST A FEW COLD ONES AND TALK SHOP, SWAP JOKES--MAYBE EVEN TRADE TIPS AND POINTERS!

HAHAHAHAHAHA

FROM HERE TO THERE  
OVER THE CIRCLE HE  
SWINGS--

AND FROM THERE  
TO HERE HE SLASHES  
AGAIN, ALL WITHIN  
THE TAIL-EATING  
SERPENT'S MAGIC  
HOOP!

--HIS MIGHTY  
PAINT SLASHING  
ANOTHER LEG OF  
THE PENTAGRAM,  
HYEE HA HAH!

Hyah  
hee  
HEE!

AND SO IT IS DONE, NO JEST! COMMON  
FLOOR CONVERTED TO PROTECTED  
GROUND--A MASTERPIECE OF  
GREAT MAGISTRY!

AND TO FLAMEL,  
RIPLEY, DEE, PARA-  
CELSUS, FLUDD,  
SAINT-GERMAIN,  
CAGLIOSTRO,  
FULCANELLI,  
CROWLEY AND  
ALL THE  
REST--

YOU'RE ALL PIKERS  
COMPARED TO THE NEWEST  
ADEPTON ON THE BLOCK--

--THAT FRESHLY  
MYSTICAL ESCAPE  
ARTISTE EXTRAOR-  
DINAIRE...

--I SAY  
THIS...

yeeehah!

THE ONE AND ONLY,  
THE WACKY BUT NEVER  
LONELY, THE FOOLISH  
AND ALWAYS GHOULISH...

TA DAA!

JOKER SUPREME!

BUT ALL  
KIDDING ASIDE,  
FOLKS...

IT'S TIME TO GET SERIOUS  
WITH THAT GOLDEN OLDIE, THAT  
OCCULT INCANTATION OF THE NINTH  
WORKING FROM THE NINTH CENTURY,  
MY OWN BRAND-NEW TRANSLA-  
TION OF A LITTLE DITTY CALLED--

--"CONJURING  
THE DEVIL"!

HEEE  
HEEE  
HEEE!

DIABOLUS INCANTATUM,  
ET SPIRITU OH SO ROTTEN;  
VITRIOL, VINEGAR, AND SULPHUR,  
VILE SMELLS OF THE DARK  
ENGULFER...

SUBTERRANEAN SATANICUS REX, ARISE TO  
WICKEDLY TROUBLE AND VEX; DEMONS WRIGGLE  
AND DEMONS Wobble, GOTHAM'S FUTURE  
'TIS TIME TO HOBBLE!

(OOH, I'M  
NASTY...)

ARKHAM  
ASYLUM:

AND THE BODIES  
WERE FOUND JUST LIKE  
THIS, JEREMIAH?

PRECISELY,  
SERGEANT  
BULLOCK...

WE'VE LEARNED TO TOUCH  
NOTHING AT THE SCENE  
OF A CRIME.

THIS ASYLUM O' YOURS IS S'POSED TO BE WHERE THEY  
GO AFTER THEY LEAVE A CRIME SCENE. IT AIN'T  
S'POSED TO BE A CRIME SCENE  
ITSELF.

SULP!?

GOOD  
FOR YOU,  
JEREMIAH--

--EXCEPT  
FOR ONE  
BIG FAT  
THING...

I, UH, REALIZE  
WE'VE HAD SEVERAL  
UNFORTUNATE ESCAPES  
HERE AT ARKHAM,  
SERGEANT, BUT--

ZIP IT,  
JEREMIAH-- I  
AIN'T IN THE  
MOOD.

NOW I ASSUME THIS  
LURID TRAIL O' DEATH  
LEADS ALL THE WAY  
OUT THE BACK  
DOOR--

--AND DOLLARS TO VERDA  
MAY'S DONUTS, THE STIFFS ALL  
GOT THE SAME CREEPY  
GRINS.

DEATH  
RICTUS?

NICE TRY,  
HARDBACK, BUT  
YOU'RE TOO NEW IN  
GOTHAM TO KNOW  
WHAT THESE LEERS  
REALLY MEAN...

OH?  
WHAT?



PROB'LY HAD YOUR  
ORDERLIES STIRRIN'  
THE POT.

COME ON, JEREMIAH--  
I WANNA SEE HIS  
CELL.

LOTTA BOOKS, HARDBACK--WITH  
WEIRD LATIN TITLES.

STUDIES OF  
DEMONOLOGY, THE  
OCCULT, ALCHEMY  
...WHICH IS PRETTY  
MUCH WHAT HE  
PERFORMED IN THE  
INFIRMARY LAB--

--SINCE CHEMISTRY  
DERIVES FROM ALCHEMY.

THIS THE USUAL TYPE O' BOOK  
YOU KEEP AROUND HERE,  
JEREMIAH?

OUR LIBRARY IS DENSE  
IN PSYCHOLOGY TEXTS, SERGEANT  
BULLOCK, SINCE THIS IS, AFTER  
ALL, AN ASYLUM FOR THE  
CRIMINALLY INSANE.

DE VERMIS  
MYSTRIS

YEAH?

AND WHAT THE DEVIL'S  
THE CONNECTION BETWEEN  
DEMONOLOGY AND  
PSYCHOLOGY?

SAY WHAT?

WE MAY DEBATE  
LABELS, SERGEANT--  
"MENTAL ABERRATIONS"  
OR "ENTITIES FROM  
HELL"...

...BUT IT WILL NOT CHANGE  
THE FACT THAT EVERY INMATE  
HERE IS POSSESSED BY HIS  
OR HER OWN DEMONS.

A STRONG ONE, SIR,  
INASMUCH AS THOSE AFFLICTED  
WITH MADNESS WERE ONCE  
THOUGHT TO BE "POSSESSED  
BY DEMONS"--AS THEY MAY  
WELL HAVE BEEN.

UHARR...

YO, HARDBACK,  
THIS AIN'T NOTHIN'  
BUT WHAT YA CALL  
"SEMANTICS,"  
RIGHT?

WELL, HARVEY, DEPENDS  
ON YOUR DEFINITION  
OF SEMANTICS.

LET'S GET THESE BOOKS  
BACK TO HEADQUARTERS--  
WE GOT REPORTS TO  
WRITE.

AS FOR YOU, JEREMIAH, SEEMS  
YOU GOT EVERYTHING IN THIS  
ASYLUM--EXCEPT SECURITY.

FAH--  
YOU'RE AS BAD  
AS HIM.

WORK  
ON IT,  
HUH?

TELL COMMISSIONER  
GORDON I'M INTERESTED  
IN HARDBACK BOCK'S  
**ANALYSIS OF THE  
BOOKS.**

BUT EITHER WAY--  
"MENTAL ABERRATIONS"  
OR "DEMONS"...

DIDJA  
CATCH THE  
COMEDY  
ROUTINE  
?

LOUD  
AND CLEAR,  
SERGEANT.

YOU  
GOT  
IT.

THE JOKER'S WILD--  
AND THERE'S GONNA  
BE HELL TO PAY.



JUST  
WHO ARE  
YOU?

PROTECTED BY THE CIRCLE  
IN WHICH YOU STAND,  
YOU FACE THE CONJURED  
DEMON ETRIGAN.

ETRIGAND?  
NEVER HEARD  
OF YOU.

I'VE JUST COMPLETED AN  
EXTENSIVE STUDY OF SATAN AND  
ALL HIS MINIONS AND I DON'T  
RECALL A SINGLE "ETRIGAND."



"ETRIGAN:  
ANCIENT DEMON  
FROM UNKNOWN  
LEVEL OF HELL..."

DAEMONICUS  
MALEFICARUM

"LATER  
KNOWN AS  
'HALF-A-  
MAN'."

AND WHY IS THAT,  
ETTIE? NOT ONLY DID  
I MISS SATAN, BUT  
THE ENTITY I DID  
SNAG IS ONLY HALF  
A DEMON?



SATAN, AS THE KING OF HELL,  
IS DIFFICULT TO CONJURE;  
IN HIS STEAD, THEN, 'TIS  
MY EVIL YOU MUST  
PONDER.

HMPH!

EVASIVE  
ANSWER,  
ETTIE.

PERHAPS WE'D BEST READ ON  
IN MY GUIDEBOOK TO FALLEN  
ANGELS...

"SEVERAL  
THOUSAND YEARS  
AGO"--BUT WHEN  
WAS THIS  
WRITTEN?

--THE ARCHFIEND  
BELIAL DECIDED IT  
WAS TIME TO SIRE  
AN HEIR...

"AFTER A PREDICTABLY NASTY  
COURSHIP WITH A SERPENT  
SPIRIT OF DECEIT, BELIAL PRE-  
SENTED HIS VILE OFFSPRING  
FOR ALL OF HELL TO HAIL."

da-dah?

"BUT WHEN ETRIGAN ATTAINED Maturity, it is  
SAID, HIS INSUFFERABLE DEEDS INTIMIDATED EVEN  
LUCIFER, GREATEST DEMON OF THEM ALL, WHO  
INSISTED THAT BELIAL CONTROL HIS SON."

"NO EASY TASK, AND  
BELIAL DECIDED MAGIC  
WAS REQUIRED--AS  
WELL AS ANOTHER  
SON.

HEH,  
HEH,  
HEH..."

"AND SO HE  
SEDUCED A  
MORTAL  
WITCH..."

"THE FRUIT OF THEIR UNION  
WAS THE GREATEST SORCERER  
THE MORTAL WORLD HAS EVER  
KNOWN..."

"MERLIN THE  
MAGICIAN."

CAN THAT  
BE RIGHT?

BZZZZZ

MERLIN WAS YOUR  
BROTHER? TELL ME, ETTIE-  
BABE, JUST HOW MUCH OF  
THIS IS SHEER FAIRY  
TALE?

OF THAT, RASH MORTAL,  
YOU MUST DECIDE;  
BUT READ ON, AND ENJOY  
THE RIDE.

"FOR A TIME, THE MATURED MERLIN CONTROLLED  
ETRIGAN WITH THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE--BUT THEN  
EVIL THREATENED CAMELOT, AND MERLIN KNEW THE  
DEMON MUST BE HIDDEN, LEST HE FALL INTO THE  
WICKED HANDS OF MORGAN  
LE FAY.

"THE MAGICIAN CHOSE  
A CAGE OF FLESH..."

"...THE MORTAL  
KNOWN AS  
JASON BLOOD."

"TO BIND ETRIGAN, MERLIN AGAIN USED THE STONE'S POWER--  
AND AS A RESULT, JASON BLOOD RECEIVED THE IMMORTAL LIFESPAN  
OF THE DEMON HE BOUND, BOTH NOW LOATHING THEIR NEW ETERNAL  
LIVES."

"ONLY A SPOKEN SPELL, KNOWN TO  
PRECIOUS FEW, MAY RELEASE THE  
DEMON FROM THE FLESH OF BLOOD."



"FOOL"  
WILL DO.

NOW LET'S GET DOWN TO BUSINESS!  
BEFORE I MADE THE MISTAKE OF  
CONJURING YOU, I HAD PLANNED  
TO BARGAIN WITH THE DEVIL.

IN RETURN FOR HIS  
ASSISTANCE IN A CERTAIN  
SCHEME, I WAS PREPARED  
TO OFFER MY SOUL--AND  
A RICH ONE IN DARKNESS  
IT IS.

HEE HEE  
HEE.

IF YOUR BURNING BED IN HELL  
IS ALREADY MADE, WHY  
SHOULD THE DEVIL OR EVEN  
I GIVE YOU AID?

OOPS... HADN'T  
THOUGHT OF  
THAT.

UH... HOW ABOUT A DIFFERENT SOUL?  
MAYBE LEGIONS OF SOULS, REAPED VIA  
THAT SCHEME OF MINE?

THEN 'TIS WITH THE MASS DEATH  
YOU WOULD BRING  
THAT YOU HOPE TO TEMPT  
HELL'S OWN KING?

UM... YEAH,  
WHY NOT?

A BODY'S DEATH  
BY VIOLENCE AND  
FATE...

...DICTATES  
NOT THE  
SOUL'S FINAL  
FATE.

SO JUST KILLING  
'EM DOESN'T NECESSARILY  
SEND 'EM TO HELL, HUH?



HE'S ALWAYS BEEN MY PERSONAL DEMON, BUT NOW HE'S DABBING IN ACTUAL DEMON-OLOGY... MAKING A STUDY OF THE BLACK ARTS.

I MEAN, THERE ARE NO REAL DEMONS, ARE THERE?

I'M AFRAID THERE ARE, ALFRED... OR AT LEAST ENTITIES WHICH MIGHT AS WELL BE DEMONS.

NOT... LITERALLY, SIR? SURELY IT'S JUST THE LATEST TWIST OF HIS MADNESS?

I'VE ALREADY CHECKED HIS EVERY PAST HAUNT AND HIDEOUT-- NOTHING, NOT A TRACE.

THEN WHAT CAN YOU DO?

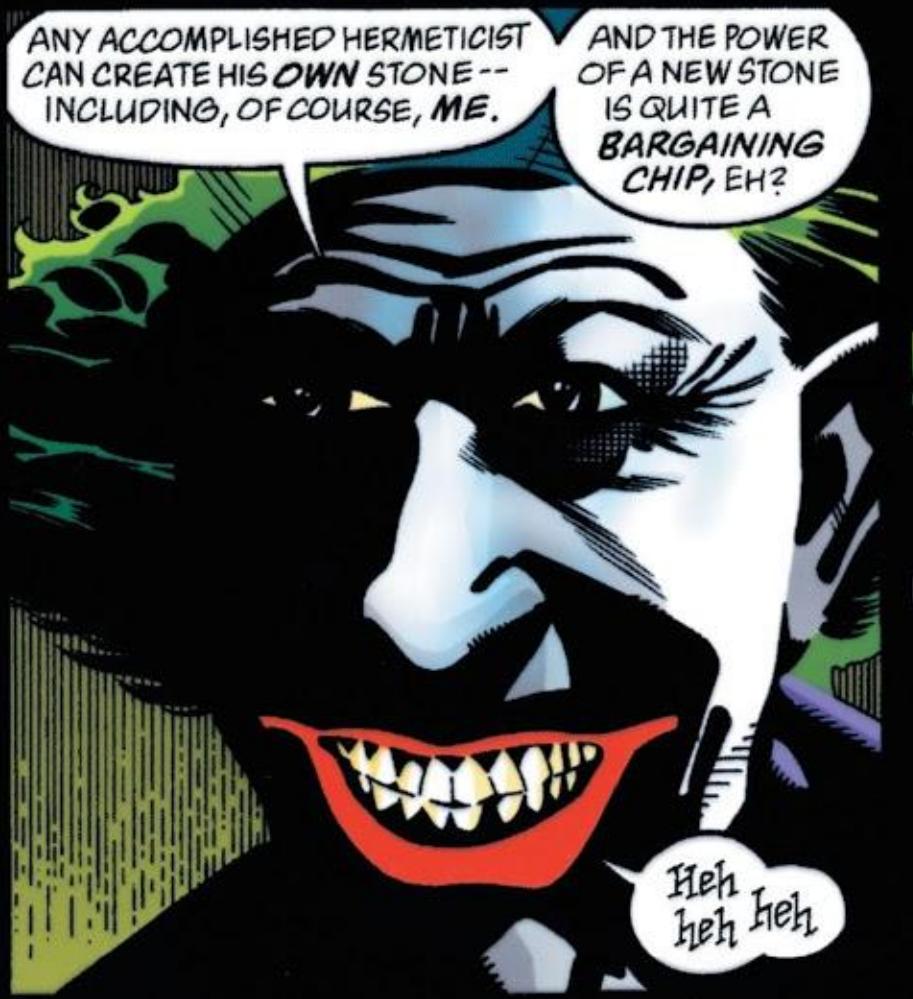
KEEP UP MY NIGHTLY PATROLS -- WAIT FOR SOME WORD OR SIGN OF WHATEVER HE'S UP TO THIS TIME -- HOPE I CAN STOP IT BEFORE ANYONE'S HURT...

EITHER HE'S LEFT GOTHAM, OR HE'S GONE TO GROUND IN SOME NEW PLACE.

HOPE HE KILLS HIMSELF THIS TIME -- HOPE HE GOES TO HELL FOR GOOD AND FOREVER.

THE SAME THINGS I'VE ALWAYS DONE.

SKWEE EEEEEE







YES? AND THEN?



F-FAIR ENOUGH...

AND LIKE YOU SAID, ETTIE-BABE, IT'S A DEAL.

SHAKE ON IT?



UH RRR



GOTCHA!

HYAHAHAHAHAA!



HEY,  
LIGHTEN UP,  
ETTIE-BABE!  
IT WAS JUST  
A JOKE!





NEXT:  
NIGHT of  
the DYING  
JOKERS





**novus**  
Distributions