



BATMAN

472 US \$1.00
DEC 91 CAN \$1.25
UK 60p



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THE
Idiot
ROOT: PART ONE

ALAN
GRANT
—
NORM
BREYFOGLE

The Idiot

PART ONE: THE QUEEN OF HEARTS

My experiment took place in a ruined temple deep in the Amazon rain forest.

I was hoping that by linking four damaged minds in a telepathic union they might be dragged back into the light.

...a world created by four minds bound together by the tendrils of the Amazonian Idiot Root, whose telepathic properties I had discovered.

All went as intended, with some simple communication with the patients. They had made contact in their gestalt world...

They would establish a mental world of their own making, a world within a world where their minds might wander and grow and heal...

And then came the most wonderful, the most frightening, the most absurd discovery of my career...

There was someone else there.

A fifth person was inhabiting their mental universe...

PETER MILLIGAN
WRITER

NORM BREYFOGLE
ARTIST

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BATMAN 472. December, 1991. Published monthly by DC Comics Inc., 1325 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10019. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to BATMAN, DC Comics Subscriptions, P.O. Box 0528, Baldwin, NY 11510. Annual subscription rate \$12.00. Canadian subscribers must add \$8.00 for postage and GST. GST # is R125921072. All other foreign countries must add \$12.00 for postage. U.S. funds only. Copyright © 1991 DC Comics Inc. All Rights Reserved. The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this magazine are entirely fictional. All characters featured in this issue and distinctive likenesses thereof are trademarks of DC Comics Inc. Advertising Representative: Print Advertising Representatives, 355 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10017 (212) 949-6850. Printed in U.S.A. DC Comics Inc. A Warner Bros. Inc. Company

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RIO DE JANEIRO.

DOWNTOWN NEAR THE FAVELLAS, THE POOREST OF THE SLUMS, THE CROWDS GATHER FOR THE NIGHT...

SOME COME TO BE SPECTATORS.



OTHERS TO CONDUCT THEIR BUSINESS.

THERE IS ONE WHO COMES BECAUSE OF A SPECIAL HUNGER.

A HUNGER THAT CAN NEVER BE SATISFIED.

THE BLOOD IS AS WARM AS THE BRAZILIAN NIGHT...



TWO DAYS LATER:

THE DEATH COUNT
IS NOW SIX.



SIX.

IN HIS MIND'S EYE HE
CAN SEE THE VICTIMS.
THE APPALLING VIOLATION
OF THEIR BODIES...



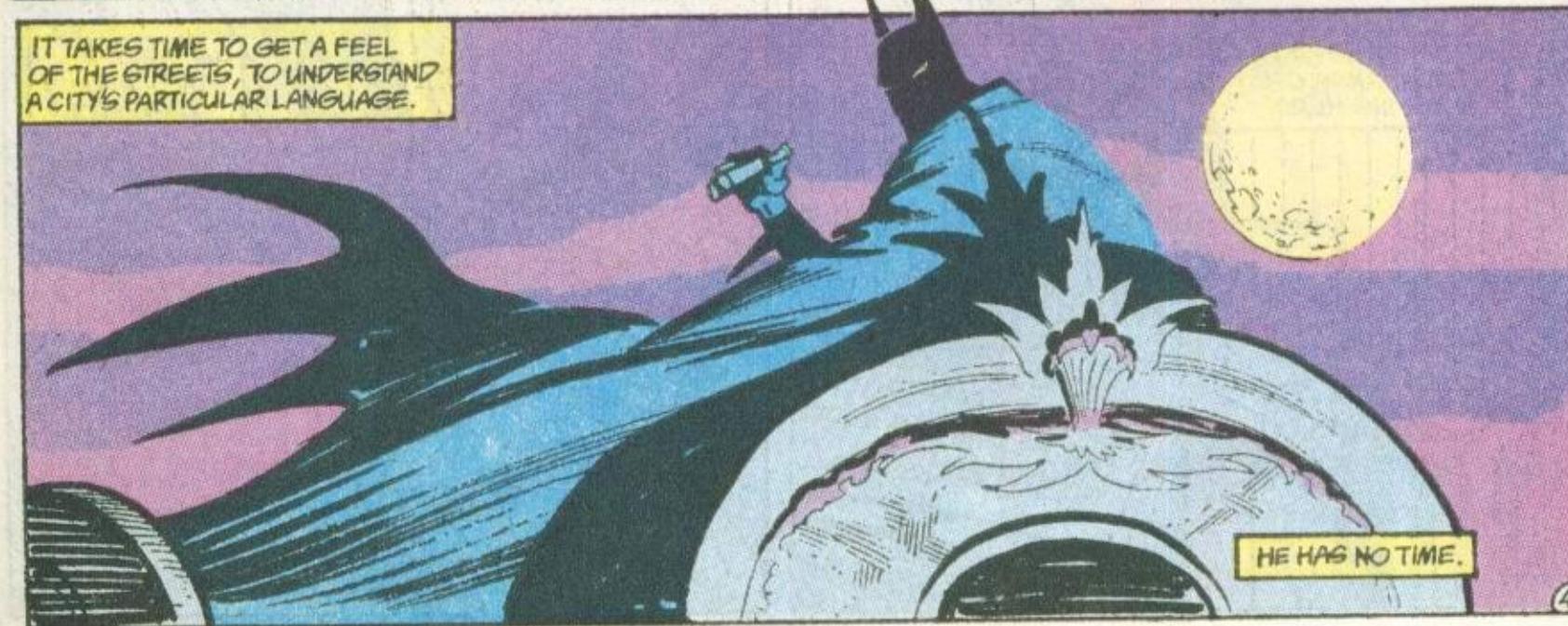
IS THAT WHY HE'S IN RIO?
BECAUSE HE KNOWS HOW
BAD SHE IS?

BECAUSE HE HAS THE
BEST CHANCE OF
STOPPING HER?

GOTCHA
NEWS
MORE KILLING IN RIO
--QUEEN OF HEARTS
CLIPS ECTED

OR BECAUSE HE KNOWS
HE COULD HAVE STOPPED
HER, THREE YEARS AGO?

IS THAT IT?
GUILT? A GUILTY
CONSCIENCE?



AS SOON AS HE HEARD THE QUEEN OF HEARTS WAS IN RIO, HE CAME.

SHE ESCAPED FROM JAIL FIFTEEN MONTHS AGO. RIO IS A GOOD PLACE TO LOSE YOURSELF...

FOR ALL THIS TIME SHE FOUGHT THE THING INSIDE HER, TRYING TO KEEP IT INSIDE HER...

SIX DAYS AGO SHE LOST THE FIGHT.

THE NIGHT DUTY OFFICER AT THE POLICE MORGUE IS TOO SCARED TO TALK, LET ALONE ARGUE.

THE BATMAN'S PORTUGUESE IS CLIPPED BUT ADEQUATE.

HE HAS TO SEE THE BODIES, TO MAKE SURE ...

OH YES. IT'S HER. THE BODIES ARE AS BAD AS HE REMEMBERS.

THE STERNUM CRUSHED, THE RIBS HACKED OUT.

THE HEART MISSING.



THE WOUND IS RAGGED.
THE QUEEN IS FOLLOWING
HER USUAL PATTERN...

SHE STARTS OFF UNDER
SOME KIND OF CONTROL...

BUT THE MORE SHE
KILLS THE MORE
FRENZIED SHE
BECOMES...



SHE'LL BE HURTING NOW,
IN SOME PART OF HER.



SIRENS, GETTING
CLOSER. THE FLASH
OF A JOURNALIST'S
CAMERA.

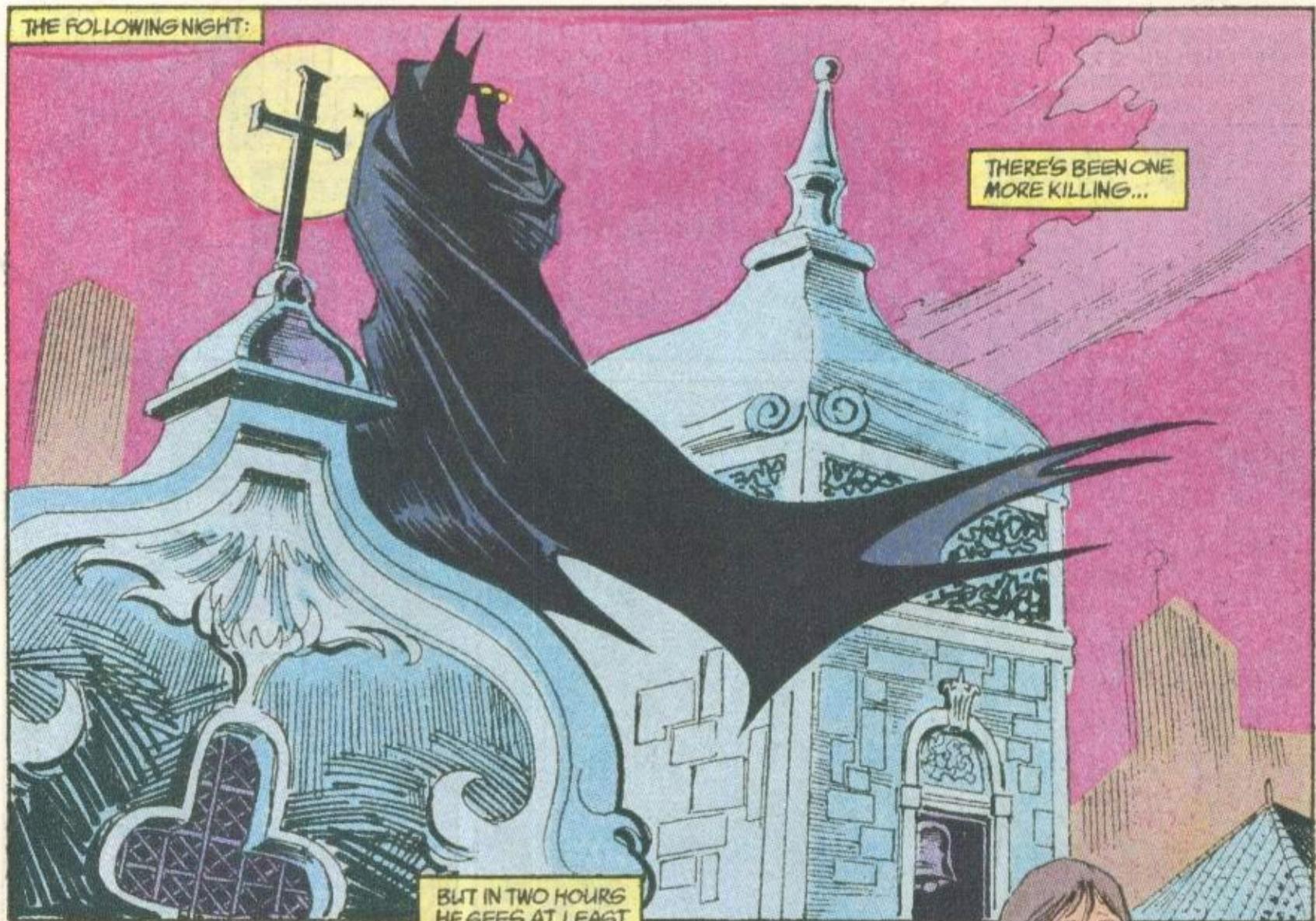


WEEOOOEEEEE





THE FOLLOWING NIGHT:



THE STREETS ARE HOT AND STICKY TONIGHT AND HE HAS TO REMEMBER THAT HE IS HERE FOR THE QUEEN OF HEARTS. HE MUSTN'T GET SIDETRACKED...

BUT THERE, HE SEES IT. HE CANNOT IGNORE IT...

LIKE A SLICK CARD SHARP THE YOUNG DEALER SLIPS THE VIAL TO THE BOY...

THE QUEEN TARGETS DEALERS. MAYBE THIS PUNK HAS HEARD SOMETHING ABOUT HER ON THE STREET-LINE...

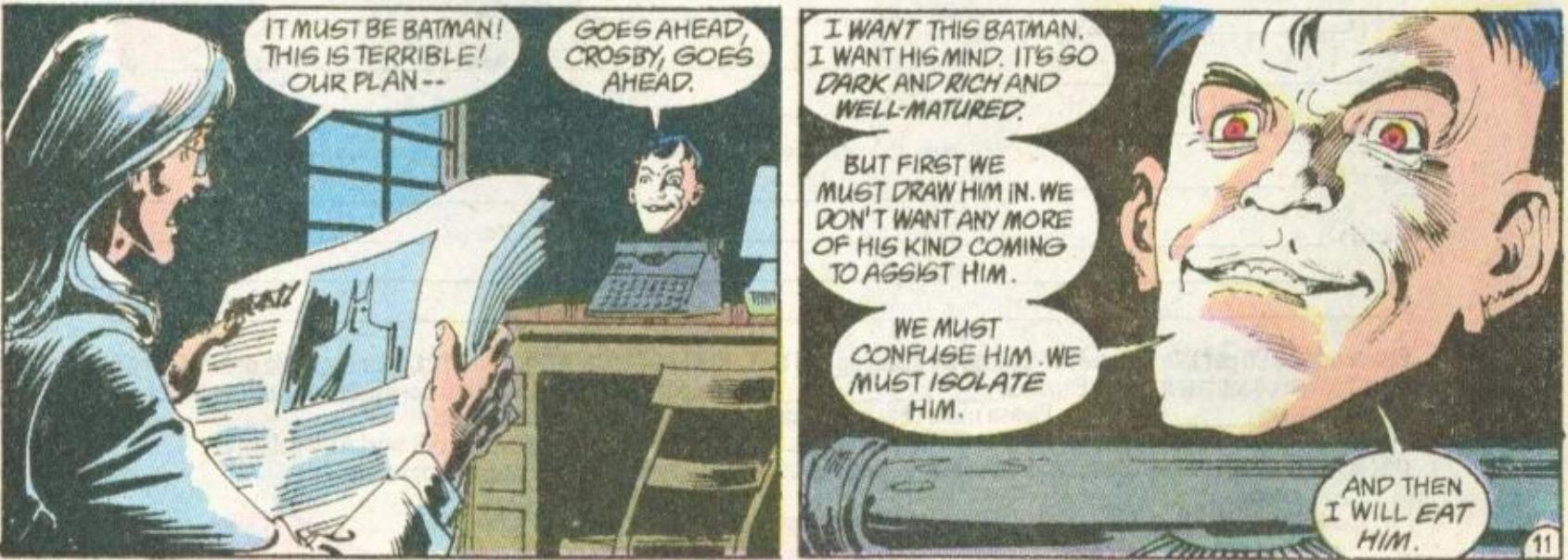
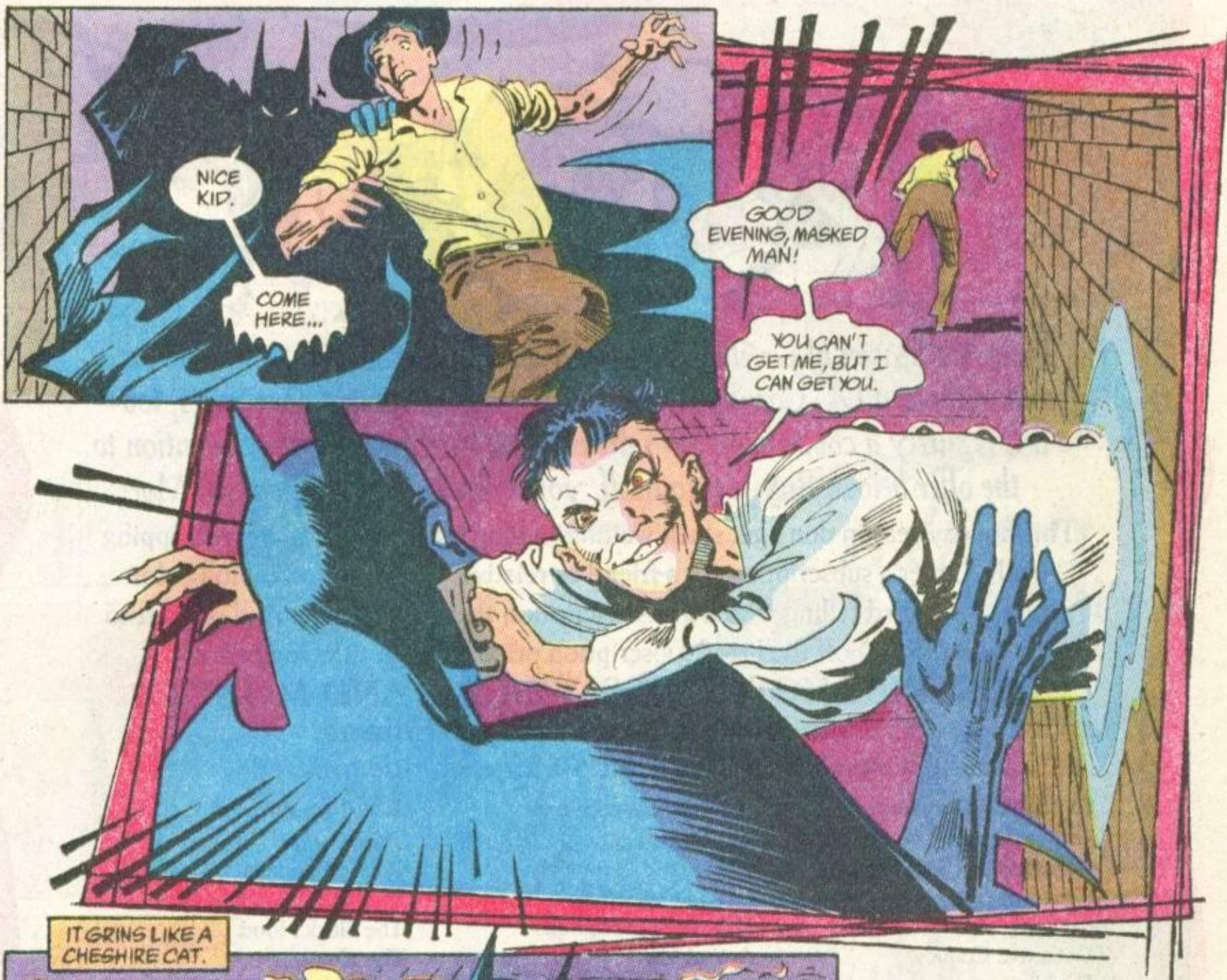
MAYBE HE KNOWS SOMETHING ABOUT THE DEAD BOYS.

YOU'RE IN A DANGEROUS BUSINESS.

H-HUH?

THE QUEEN OF HEARTS IS WORKING THIS NEIGHBORHOOD...

DROP DEAD.



WHAT HAPPENED BACK THERE? THE QUEEN. THE DEAD BOY'S THAT CRAZY GRINNING MIRAGE.

ARE THEY CONNECTED OR WHAT?

Caesar Miraflores Hotel

NIGHT COVERS RIO DE JANEIRO. THE QUEEN WILL BE OUT. HE HOPES SHE HAS SEEN HIS PICTURE IN THE PAPERS.

HE HOPES SHE STILL WANTS HIS HEART.

THE QUEEN WAS ONCE A REGULAR, SANE, RATHER STYLISHLY MALICIOUS CRIMINAL...

SHE USED TO RUN WITH HER HUSBAND, THE JACK OF CLUBS. BUT HE DIED...

SOME BAD JUNK, A MESSY OVERDOSE WITH STRYCHNINE AND LAVATORY CLEANER IN HIS VEINS.

IT BROKE THE QUEEN'S HEART...

THE PHONE. EITHER TIM OR ALFRED.

BRNG

ONLY THEY KNOW THE NUMBER OF THIS WAYNE-TECH APARTMENT...

HELLO... TIM?

HI, BATMAN.

I'VE JUST GROWN A SECOND HEAD AND ONE OF MY ARMPITS HAS GONE MISSING.



IT'S IMPOSSIBLE. BUT IT HAPPENED. "INSIDE YOUR HEAD" THE VOICE SAID.

IT'S A SINKING FEELING, KNOWING YOUR OWN MIND MIGHT TURN TRAITOR ON YOU.

AT FIRST IT HAD SOUNDED EXACTLY LIKE TIM...

SUDDENLY THE NIGHT SEEMS EVEN MORE MENACING THAN USUAL.

NO. HE CAN'T ANSWER IT.

BRNGG

BRNGG

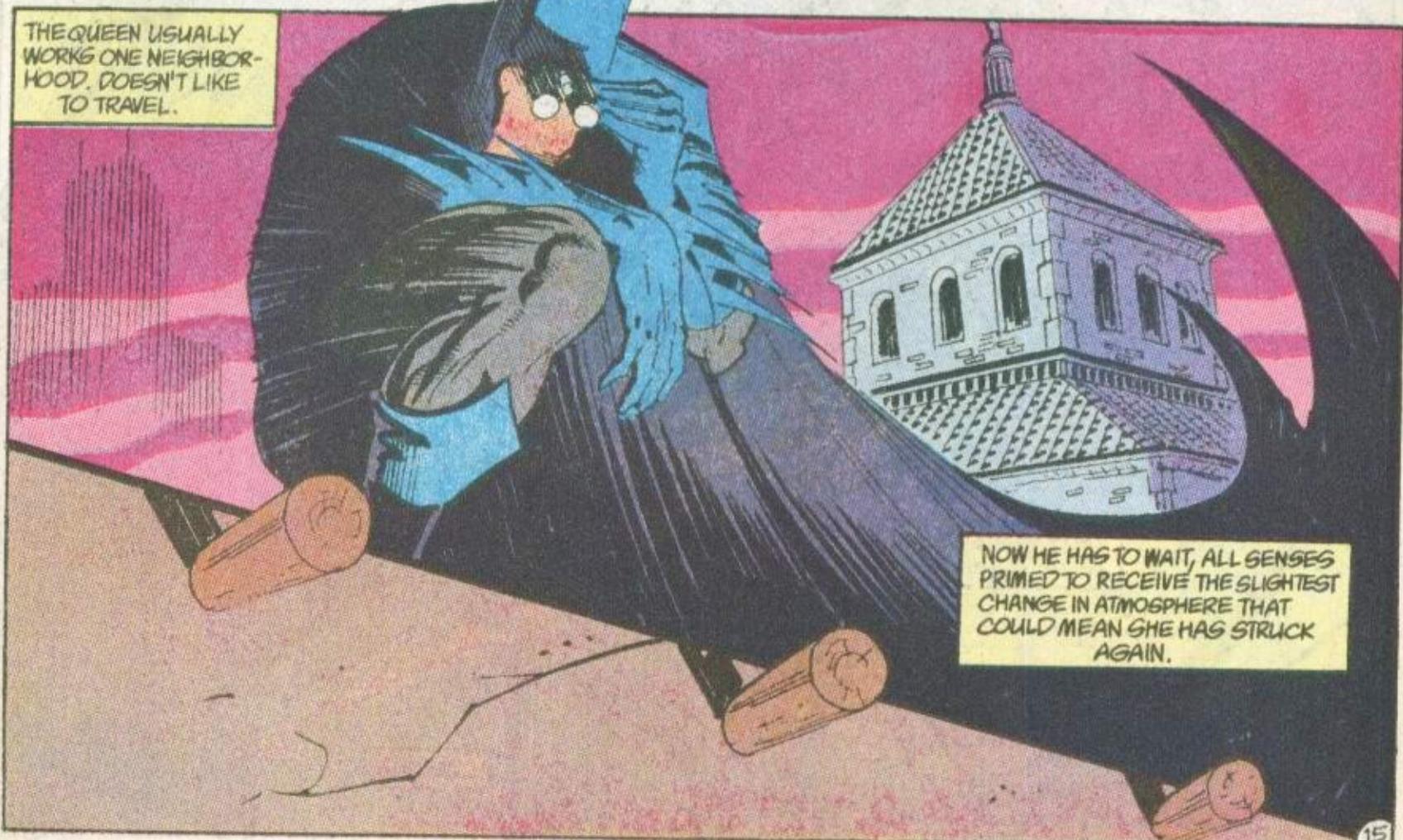
HE CAN'T BELIEVE ANYTHING HE HEARS.

AFTER TWELVE RINGS IT STOPS.

HE CAN'T ANSWER THE PHONE OR CONTACT ANYONE UNTIL THIS THING IS OVER...

UNTIL WHATEVER'S INSIDE HIS HEAD...

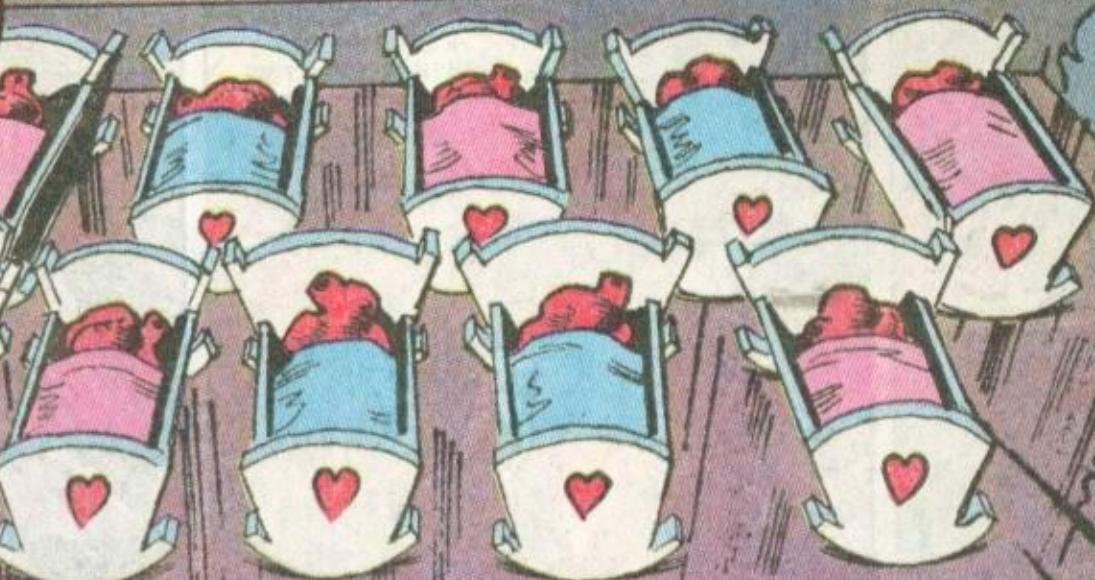
...IS OUT.



THERE, THERE, MY
KIDDIE WINKIES. WHAT
A LOVELY FAMILY!

THERE'RE TEN OF YOU
ALREADY AND TONIGHT
MOMMY WILL BRING YOU
BACK A VERY SPECIAL
BROTHER!

AND IF YOU'RE ALL
VERY GOOD PERHAPS
I'LL HAVE A TRANSPLANT
ONE DAY!



WON'T IT BE
SUPER TO GET RID
OF THIS SILLY OLD
HEART!

CUCHEE-
GOO!

OH HOW MOMMY
HATES THE WAY THAT
IT RACES AND BEATS
WITH SUCH UNNATURAL
RHYTHMS!

IT MAKES
ME DO SUCH AWFUL
THINGS!

'BYE
FOR NOW,
SWEETHEARTS...

REEEE

MOMMY HAS
TO GO COLLECT
HER NEW BABY!

ZWEEEEEEEEE



HALF AN HOUR LATER HE HEARS A SCREAM, LIKE A STONE DROPPED INTO THE NIGHT...



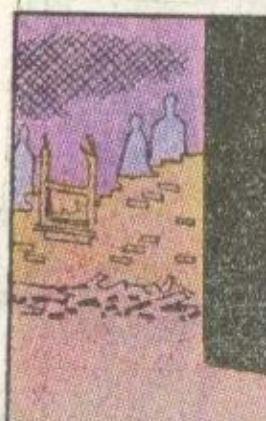
MAKING RIPPLES OF FEAR AND DEATH.



A SMALL CROWD HAS GATHERED. THE SOUND OF APPROACHING SIRENS MEANS HE HAS LITTLE TIME...

THERE. THERE IT IS. A SIGN. LYING IN THE GARBAGE, WAITING FOR HIM...

A DOLL'S CRADLE. THE QUEEN ALWAYS USED TO KEEP HER "BABIES" IN LITTLE CRADLES...



DO YOU WANT ME, QUEEN? DO YOU STILL WANT MY HEART?

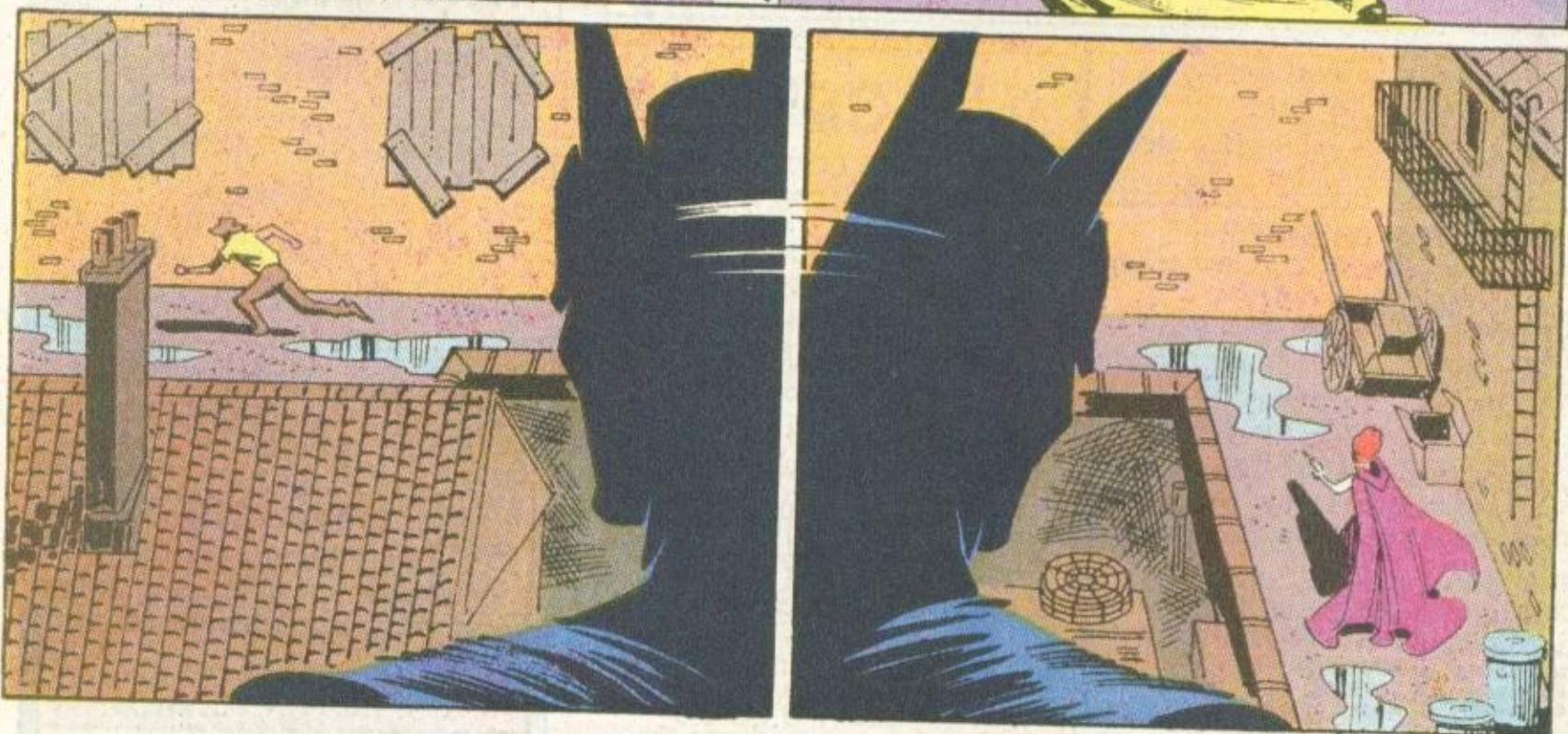


WHERE ARE YOU, QUEEN? ANY MORE CRADLES TO ROCK?









I'M NOT SCARY
ONCE YOU GET TO
KNOW ME, CUTIE
PIE ...

REEEEEEE

YAAHH!

WIMP!

GNNNNNNGG

COME, ZENO. OUR WORK
MUST NOT BE CURTAILED
NOW.

HNNF

FOOL!
IT WON'T BE HEAVEN
AWAITING YOU!

HE FEELS THE LIQUID BRUSHING
HIS FACE. THE QUEEN HAS
CAUGHT MOST OF IT...

CHASH!

AND THEN
EVERYTHING
TURNS SOFT.

THE COLORS RUNNING
TOGETHER, HIS LEGS LIKE
HONEY, THE QUEEN OF HEARTS
SWAYING AND A VOICE
BEHIND HIM SAYING...

PSST. THIS IS
MY WORLD NOW. THIS
IS THE WORLD WITHIN
THE WORLD.

LET ME
INTRODUCE
MYSELF...

I AM THE
IDIOT.

I HAVE COME
TO STEAL YOUR
MIND AWAY!

**CONTINUED IN
DETECTIVE #639!**

BAT-SIGNALS

Dear Denny and Kelley:

I must say that my absolute favorite moment in any comic happened in BATMAN #466. I am, of course, referring to page 22, panel 2. It was at that moment that Batman thought, "I made the right choice. He has what it takes. And more."

THANK YOU, ALAN GRANT!!!!!! This one panel totally made my day! Finally, Batman admits that his choice to make Tim the third Robin was a good decision. Although I enjoyed the entire story, that one panel really made me want to stand up and cheer. Finally, Tim is accepted! Tim is accepted! Tim is accepted!

Once again, THANK YOU, ALAN GRANT!!!!!!

Jason Crase
3022 Huntington Dr.
Arlington Heights, IL 60004

Dear Bat-Signals,

Re: BATMAN #466

Again, another story with Tim out in public, in costume. He is turning into Batman Jr. Nothing wrong with that, I guess! He handled the sniper very well.

There were people who liked Jason Todd (not very many judging by previous letter columns) and didn't want him to die. There were people who liked Dick Grayson and never wanted Jason in the first place, and they hated him and wanted him to die. I'd have to say I'm with them. When Jason died even I was choked up. But I got to miss the character Robin no matter who he was.

Ever since 1940, Robin has been a tradition in BATMAN and 'TEC almost. Tim could make it. But Jason was a little unstable. I think Dick could've made it.

What about Tim's father? Tim hasn't gotten home yet?

Sincerely,
John Richardson
Midland, TX

Well, John, Tim's father is still in critical condition, but he's getting better. What happens when he recovers and gets back together with Tim? That's a good question. You'll just have to wait and see.

Dear Denny, Kelley, and Alan,

"No More Heroes" in BATMAN #466 was the absolute best one-shot story that Alan Grant has ever done. The dark cunning of Batman, the skill and compassion of Robin, and the guilt and indecision of the sniper were superbly crafted into a masterpiece.

And then there is Norm's art. Batman on the second panel of page 14, and Robin on the last panel of page 20 showed how both these characters should look. Kudos to the whole creative team.

And I think it was important to notice that it was Robin, not Batman, who nailed Willy the Sap at the end. Also, Robin was the one who comforted the distraught would-be killer. This issue should finally lay to rest any debate about whether Robin can handle himself.

Now all that's left is for Ace to join the action, and you'll be set for the '90s... and beyond.

Thanks for listening,
Jay McIntyre
35 Meadow Ln.
Doylestown, PA

Dear Kelley,

BATMAN #466 was the stuff comic book legends are made of.

Don't get me wrong; I'm not some snot-nosed fanboy who proclaims every hot artist and/or writer is the next Kirby or Kane, but it's issues like these that establish writers and/or artists as legends.

Grant and Breyfogle are at their best when they do these short, one-to two-issue, hard-hitting and message-driven stories. Nearly their entire run on DETECTIVE comprised such excellent work. Who can forget such memorable stories as "Trash," "Street Demonz," and the Anarky storyline? All were one to two issues long, and all were beautifully done. And they didn't ignore the classic Bat-villains, either. The Joker, Cat-Man and Catwoman all made appearances...in one-issue stories, no less! Using such major villains in one-timers was practically unheard of until then.

But I digress. The overall quality of these stories has been so good that I haven't even been considering the actual art or words, just basking in their glow! Issue #466 was very well done, and reminiscent of "Trash" and "Street Demonz" in that they were all excellent and message-driven. The speech by Robin on page 16 was beautiful. And the art... Wow! I'd never noticed Breyfogle much, but I'm really starting to like him lots, even though I still consider Aparo's Batman to be definitive.

Sincerely,
Matt Springer
16050 Ellis Ave.
So. Holland, IL 60473

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That's the beauty of it, Matt. Whether you prefer Aparo's classic Batman or Breyfogle's soon-to-be classic Batman, you can see 'em both—just buy both BATMAN and DETECTIVE COMICS! What a deal!

Makes you feel all warm inside, doesn't it?

Dear Kelley,

Perhaps it was intentional since Robin's return is still new, but I thought he stole the show in BATMAN #466 and should have been on the cover. It's good again to have a Robin you can like.

To me, this issue seemed to say that we have a funny way of choosing heroes.

Melissa Page

236 New Salem Loop
Nortonville, KY 42442

Dear Denny and Kelley,

Whew! At first I thought that this issue wouldn't feature Robin along with Batman. What happened to the logo, BATMAN WITH ROBIN? You threw me off when I didn't see this on the cover. I really liked the cover logo on issue #465. How about bringing it back and making it a regular for this magazine?

Ya know, with all these biweekly titles out now, I'm gonna be broke for most of the summer! If you guys keep on putting out stories like issue #466, though, it will be worth it! I especially liked pages 13 and 20. These action sequences were very powerfully drawn. Norm Breyfogle draws the new Robin better than anyone else (so far). And if not for Alan Grant's stories, Norm wouldn't be able to display these wonderful images. They're a great team with great talents.

After these two one-part stories, we're just about due for a multi-partner, aren't we? How about a story featuring the Ventriloquist?

Thanks for the kind attention,

Marc Johnson
1734 Shadewood Ln.
San Diego, CA 92139

A multi-part story featuring the Ventriloquist? Like, say, starting in BATMAN #475, crossing over into DETECTIVE #642, and finishing up in BATMAN #476? Like maybe call it

"The Return of Scarface?" Something like that?
Yeah, OK!

Dear Batman,
I like you very, very much. I do not like Joker.

Matt Funk
(Matt's address withheld because I can't read his writing)

Be careful what you say, Matt. The Joker can read your writing.

Hey, guys,

I just finished BATMAN #466 and I am upset. Batman says on the last page, "I made the right choice. He has what it takes. And more."

Do you know why this hurts? Because you're making a mockery of the memory of Jason. Jason was killed by popular vote, and could've been as good a Robin as anybody. He had what it took, too, but the audience didn't want him. Now you're saying the audience does want this one. I don't believe it. Why would they sacrifice Jason for Tim?

I'm not saying get rid of Tim, because I know you wouldn't. He's here to stay. But please either quit telling us how good Tim is (if he's that good, we'll figure it out ourselves) or don't forget Jason. He was a good soldier, and according to you he was mourned by millions. Remember him.

Thank you for your time,
(Name withheld because the writer didn't sign the letter)

Bat-Dude,

Re: BATMAN #466

Made the right choice??? Hey, did you know reckless child endangerment is against the law??? Somebody stop that caped creep!!!

Partying through '91,
(Same address as above,
still lacking a signature)

Chill out, Partying through '91. You're just sore about Jason.

Dear DC Comics,

Hi. My name is Zack Keener. I'm from St. Peters, Missouri. I was wondering if you would think of a movie called "Son of Batman."

Starring me.

I'm not trying to be greedy, but please just think about it.

Sincerely,
Zack Keener
10 Amanda Ct.
Saint Peters, MO 63376

Sorry, Zack. We're not in charge of the movies, just the comic books.

Dear Sirs,

A few months ago someone brought up the issue of the origin of the dinosaur and the giant 1947 penny in the Batcave, in the letter column of one of the Batman titles. I'm sorry, but I am unable to locate the issue now and I cannot recall which title it appeared under. The way in which the question was answered led me to believe that the writer did not know the answer either.

I have recently come across a writer's reference in a comic eleven years old which indicates that the mechanical tyrannosaurus first appeared in a story in BATMAN #35, and the giant penny appeared in WORLD'S FINEST #30. I do not have these issues, and as far as I know, they have never been reprinted. If no one at DC is familiar with their contents, could you please print this letter so your readership can help solve this interesting little issue of Bat-history?

Sincerely yours,
Dr. Andrew C. Kolbert
2 Physikalisches Institut
Universitat Stuttgart
WEST GERMANY

I checked those issues in the DC Library, Andrew, and you are correct! Congratulations. We don't have any official prizes I can give you, but if that professorship gig doesn't work out, give us a call—you sound like you have the makings of a fine assistant editor.

SPECIAL APOLOGY DEPARTMENT: If you've been to your local comics store recently, chances are you've seen the stunning ELSEWORLDS poster advertising our upcoming Batman projects. Because of design considerations, we had to cut out the part of the poster that had the artist's signature on it. It was painted by Norm Breyfogle. Sorry, Norm.

(If you haven't seen it, go check it out! It's great.)

MEANWHILE, IN GOTHAM CITY...
Batman's gone, Robin's alone, and the Joker just escaped from Arkham Asylum! He's got some nasty plans in store for the people of Gotham, and it's up to Robin to stop him! You can't afford to miss this one, folks! ROBIN II: JOKER'S WILD, by Chuck Dixon, Tom Lyle, and Bob Smith. Issues one and two on sale this month.

NEXT ISSUE: Things go from bad to worse as Batman enters the Idiot Zone to do battle with the Idiot himself! First pick up part two in DETECTIVE #639, then come back here for part three of "The Idiot," by Peter Milligan and Norm Breyfogle.

—Kelley Puckett
much too tired to think of
a groovy exit line

From the Den



Did you hear that whoosh? Rest easy. It wasn't the hurricane it must have sounded like. It was six people breathing a sigh of relief.

The six are Archie Goodwin, Jonathan Peterson, Kelley Puckett, Mike Carlin, Dan Jurgens and me. (Oh, and Mac, who has access to my computer and everything else. She makes seven.) We happy few were the only earthly creatures who knew the identity of Monarch. Monarch, for those of you who haven't been keeping up on your required reading, was the rampaging baddie from the future who made life miserable for characters in almost all of DC's annuals this year. In the first installment, we established that he (or she) was a hero from the present era who, at the end of the next decade, goes sour and time-travels to eradicate any potential enemies. The drama was played out in the ensuing 13 stories and came to a climax in a book that left the printers a few hours ago. As I type this, on the evening of September 4, some of you are probably looking at it.

The series would have lost considerable impact if anyone learned early who, exactly, Monarch is. Only those with an absolute need to know (or who have access to a certain computer) were in on the secret. (Our publisher, Paul Levitz, refused to let us tell him Monarch's real name. If the word got out, nobody was going to blame him.) So we seven have had to very, very carefully watch our tongues for months now. It hasn't been easy. Jonathan and I would be chatting about the project and I'd start to speak the forbidden syllables and then I'd notice that Jon's office mate, Dan Raspler, had wandered in and...was he really absorbed in the script he was reading? Or was he listening? Well, we would take no chances. 'Bye, Jon. And 'bye, Dan. And don't pretend you didn't hear me, Raspler!

Of course, if Dan had overheard anything, he would have kept mum, as would anyone else on the staff. But we seven had made a pact and we were determined to honor it.

We did. Do you know that self-censorship is a colossal pain? No? Then you weren't around to hear us say "ouch."

But the need is no more and—
HANK HALL. YES, THAT HANK HALL—HAWK OF THE HAWK AND DOVE TEAM. HANKHALL/HAWK/HANKHALL/HAWK/HAWK/HAWK/HAKHAWKHANKHAWKHANKHAWKHANKYHAWKYHAHAHAHA HAHAHA

Whoosh.

DEHNLU