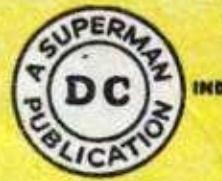


BATMAN
No. 40

APRIL...MAY
TEN CENTS



BATMAN



BATMAN AND ROBIN
ARE BAD LUCK FOR
THE JOKER
WHEN HE JOINS
"The 13 Club"

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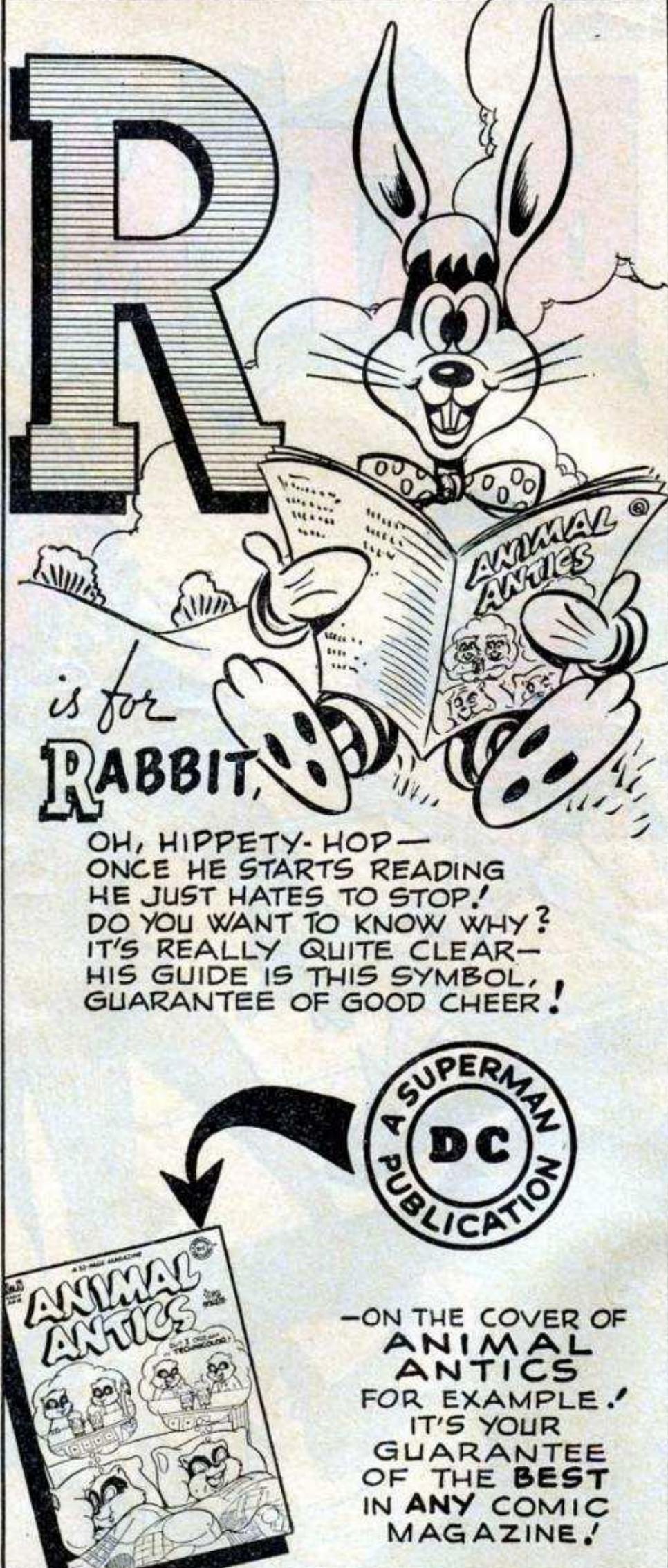
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-ON THE COVER OF
ANIMAL ANTICS
FOR EXAMPLE!
IT'S YOUR
GUARANTEE
OF THE **BEST**
IN **ANY** COMIC
MAGAZINE!

BATMAN

WITH
ROBIN

- THE BOY WONDER -

WHO RAISES ONE CORNER OF HIS
RED MOUTH IN MOCKERY OF
THE LAW, THE OTHER SIDE IN
SARCASM AT HIS FELLOW MAN?
YES, IT'S THAT NEFARIOUS CRIME
CLOWN — **THE JOKER!** NOW HE
RETURNS TO GOTHAM CITY,
LAUGHING SARDONICALLY TO
BECOME A PROPHET OF EVIL:
BUT, IN ENDEAVORING TO
BRING BAD LUCK TO OTHERS,
HE REAPS BAD LUCK FOR
HIMSELF — WHEN HE MIXES
WITH **BATMAN** AND **ROBIN**,
IN A STRANGE CONTEST
OF MADCAP CRIME
WHICH ENDS IN
"The R Club!"

BOB
KANE

EVENING... AND ALL GOTHAM CITY RADIOS TUNE IN ON A STRANGE, NEW TELEVISION PROGRAM...



AND SO, TELEVISION AUDIENCE, BEGINS ANOTHER MEETING OF THE **13 CLUB**, ORGANIZED BY LOCAL CITIZENS TO PROVE THAT BAD LUCK SUPERSTITIONS ARE NONSENSE! PRESIDENT RAY STANDISH WILL OFFICIATE...

YES, IT'S THAT MIRTHFUL MONTEBANK—
THE JOKER!

HA! HA! SO THEY THINK DEFYING SUPERSTITION WON'T BRING BAD LUCK? AS SHAKESPEARE SAID, "JESTERS DO OFT PROVE PROPHETS!" I, THE GRIM JESTER, WILL SEND THE 13 CLUB A PROPHECY THAT WILL **MAKE THEM SUPERSTITIOUS**—AT A PROFIT TO MYSELF!



AND WHILE THE JOKER PLANS—JAMES BLANNING SPILLS SALT...



...AND GRAY, MARTIN AND JONES, STORE OWNERS, LIGHT CIGARETTES—**THREE ON A MATCH**... WHILE NICHOLAS NOBLE BREAKS A MIRROR!





WHILE THE JENNINGS BROTHERS, CONTRACTORS, WALK UNDER A LADDER... ED CHANDLER OPENS AN UMBRELLA INDOORS, AND MILT BUNDY PUTS HIS SHOES ON A TABLE...



AND NOW WE PRESENT A MAN WHO DEFIED SUPERSTITION BY BECOMING OUR 13TH MEMBER!... YES, WHAT IS IT, BOY?

PACKAGE FOR THE 13 CLUB? MARKED "URGENT!"



THE PACKAGE IS OPENED...

Since you invite bad luck, you invite me. An old superstition says that to be behind an 8-ball means black years—so, I send the 13 Club omen!



THE JOKER! OH, MY! WE'LL NEED PROTECTION! GENTLEMEN, WE CAN'T ALLOW THE JOKER TO RUIN OUR CLUB! ORDER! ORDER!

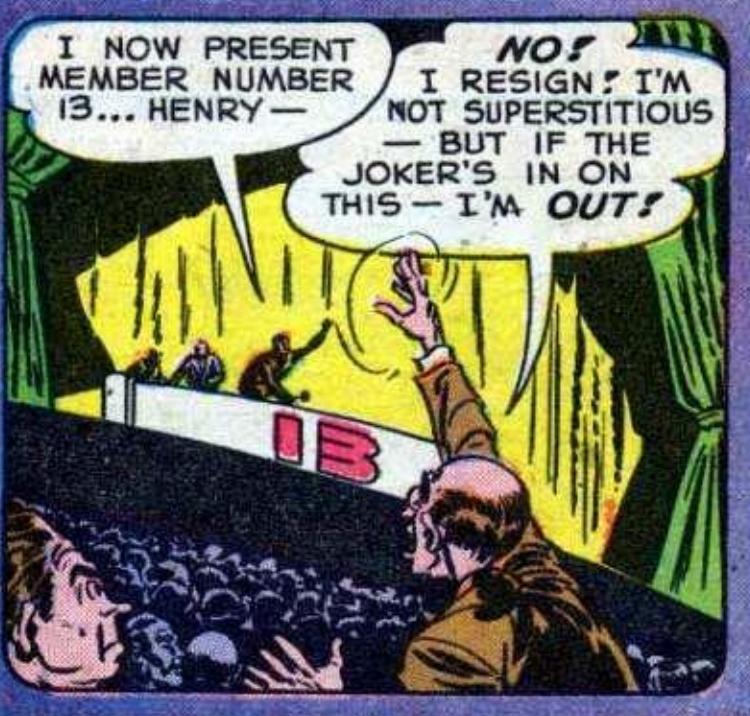


I NOW PRESENT MEMBER NUMBER 13... HENRY —

NOS!
I RESIGN? I'M NOT SUPERSTITIOUS — BUT IF THE JOKER'S IN ON THIS — I'M **OUT!**

DESPERATE, STANDISH TURNS TO THE TENSE AUDIENCE ...

WHO AMONG YOU WILL BECOME MEMBER NUMBER 13? SURELY SOMEONE ...?



SILENCE! AND WITHOUT A 13TH MEMBER, THE CLUB IS A FAILURE! THEN A FIRM VOICE SPEAKS...



MEANWHILE, THE JOKER LISTENS IN...

SO IT'S A DUEL OF WITS
ONCE AGAIN— WITH BATMAN!
HA, HA! I'LL PROVE THAT
13 IS HIS UNLUCKY
NUMBER! HA, HA!



LATER, AFTER BATMAN DONS THE GARB OF BRUCE WAYNE AGAIN...

ONE MINUTE WE'RE SITTING QUIETLY IN A STUDIO AUDIENCE— THEN SUDDENLY YOU CHANGE TO BATMAN AND GO UP ON THE STAGE? WHY?

TO SEE WHAT THE JOKER IS UP TO— AND TO STOP HIM FROM RUINING THE 13 CLUB?

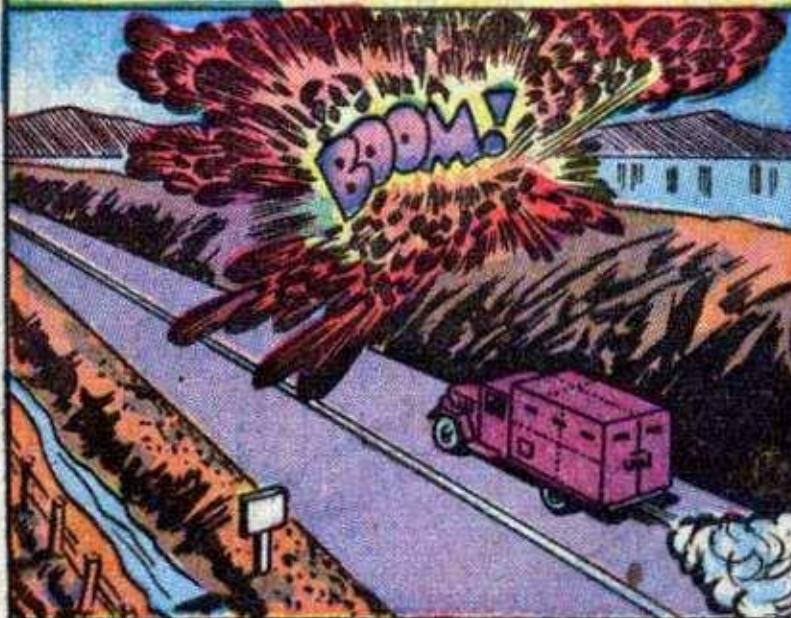


THAT NIGHT, UNINVITED GUESTS APPEAR AT THE STANDISH MANSION...

NOW— WHILE OUR "BLACK CAT" CROSSES STANDISH'S PATH— WE'LL LOOT HIS HOME! HA, HA!



NEXT DAY, TNT. BLASTS A HOLE IN A DIKE BEING BUILT BY BLANNING, THE ENGINEER WHO SPILLED SALT...



AND SALT WATER SPILLS FROM THE BAY, FLOODING THE ROAD AS A BANK TRUCK PASSES...





THAT GIGGLING GARGOYLE IS STRIKING 13 CLUB MEMBERS IN THE ORDER OF THEIR APPEARANCE ON THE PROGRAM: FIRST, STANDISH, THEN BLANDING! NEXT —

GRAY,
MARTIN
AND JONES,
THE STORE OWNERS
WHO LIT THREE CIGARETTES ON A MATCH?



AT THAT MOMENT...

THREE STORES IN A ROW? VERY CONVENIENT! I RUN A FUSE TO EACH STORE—AND I CAN LIGHT ALL THREE ON ONE MATCH! HA! HA!

Gray's HABERDASHERY

Martin's LEATHER GOODS

JONES Fine Furs



LATER... AS THE BATMOBILE ARRIVES...

TOO BAD,
BATMAN!
THE JOKER
GOT HERE
FIRST!

HE FIRED
THE THREE
STORES ON
ONE MATCH, OF
COURSE! ALL
WE CAN DO NOW
IS HELP THOSE
FIREMEN!



INSIDE THE FUR STORE...

OUT O' THE WAY!
WE'RE THE SALVAGE
SQUAD AND WE'VE
GOT WORK TO
DO!



HEY,
WHAT'S
THE
IDEA?

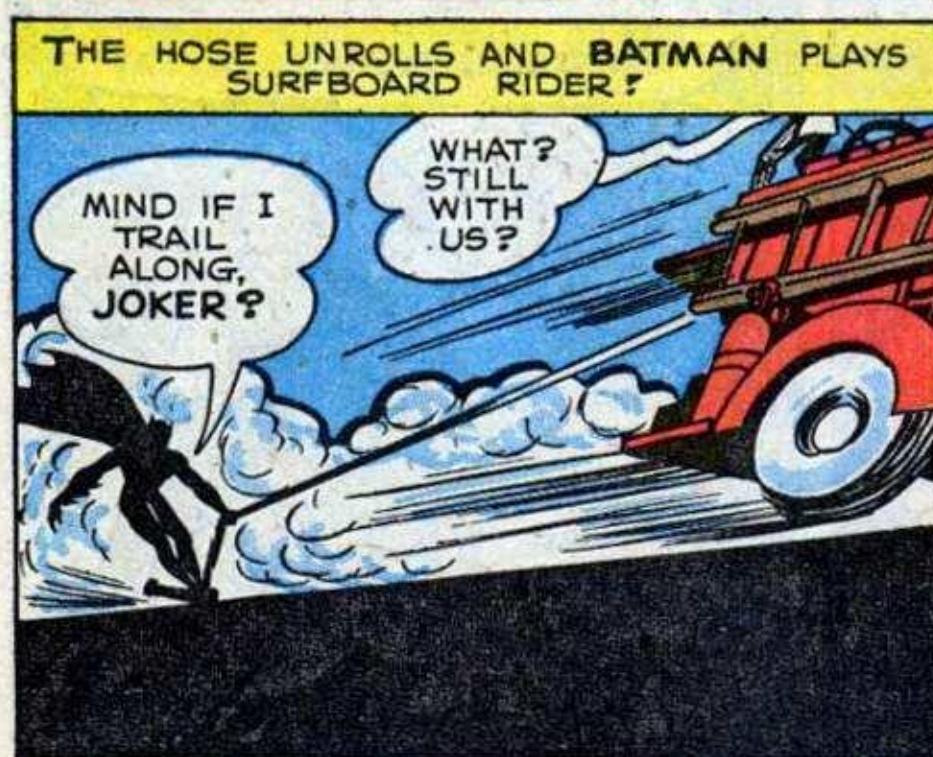
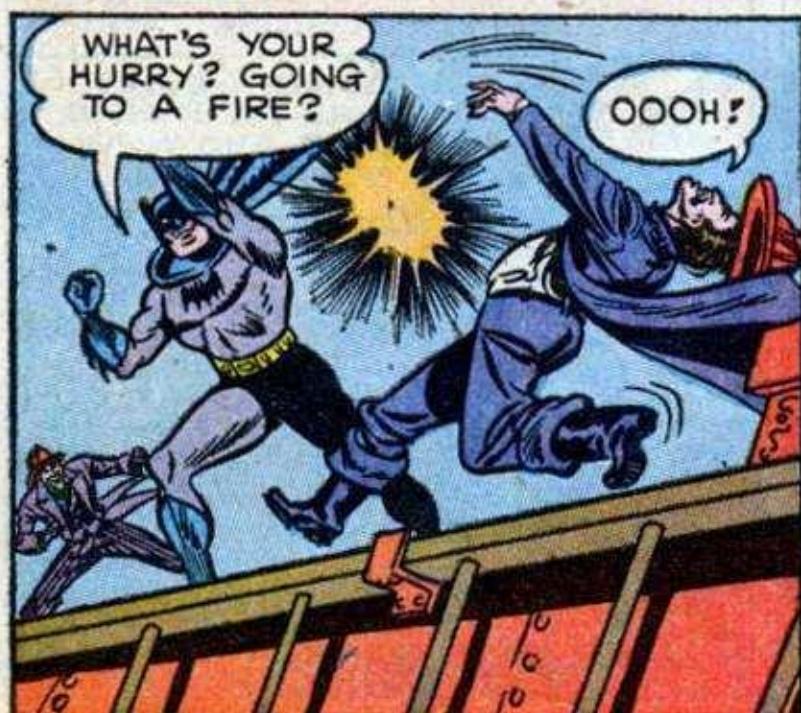
THEY'RE PHONIES! REAL
SALVAGE MEN WOULD COVER
THINGS WITH RUBBERIZED
TARPAULINS WITH ROLLED-UP
EDGES THAT CARRY OFF
THE WATER!

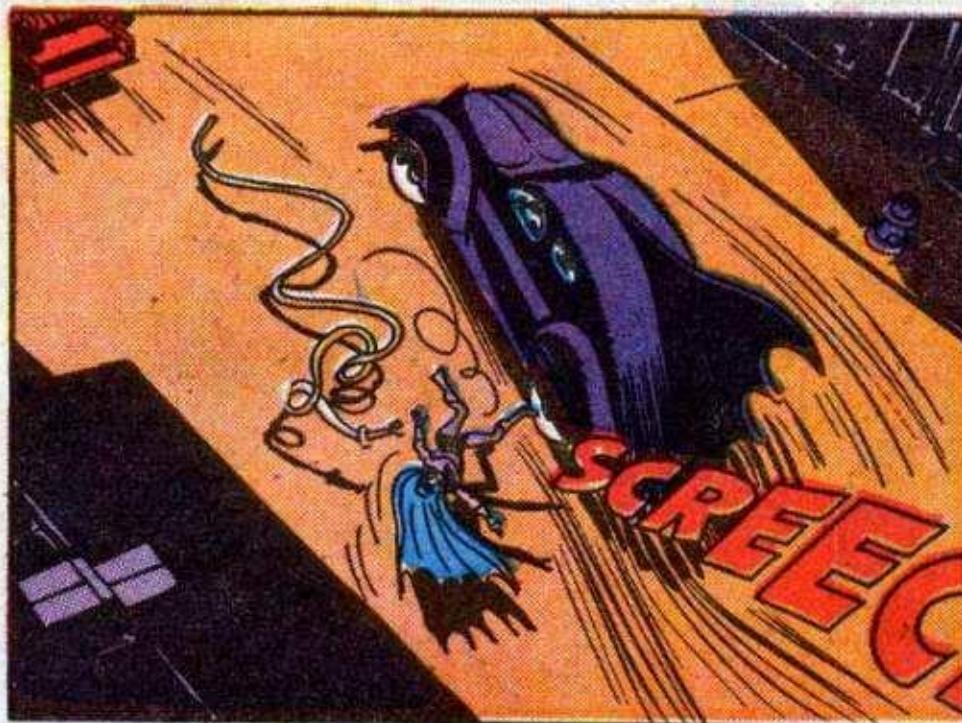


THIS'LL QUENCH YOUR THIRST
FOR ACTION, BATMAN! HA! HA!



BATMAN





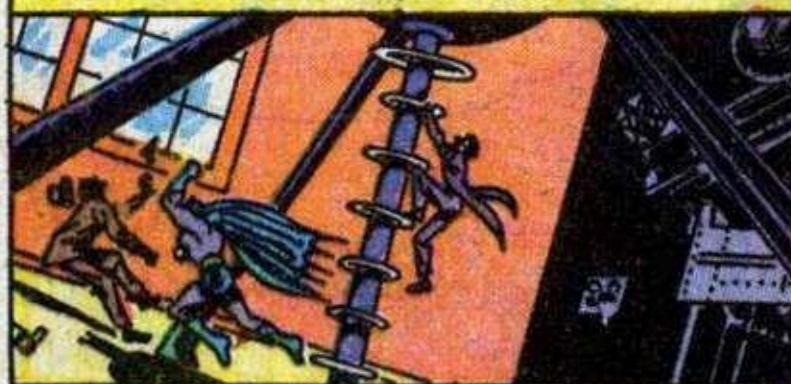


BUT THE JOKER GLOATS TOO SOON!

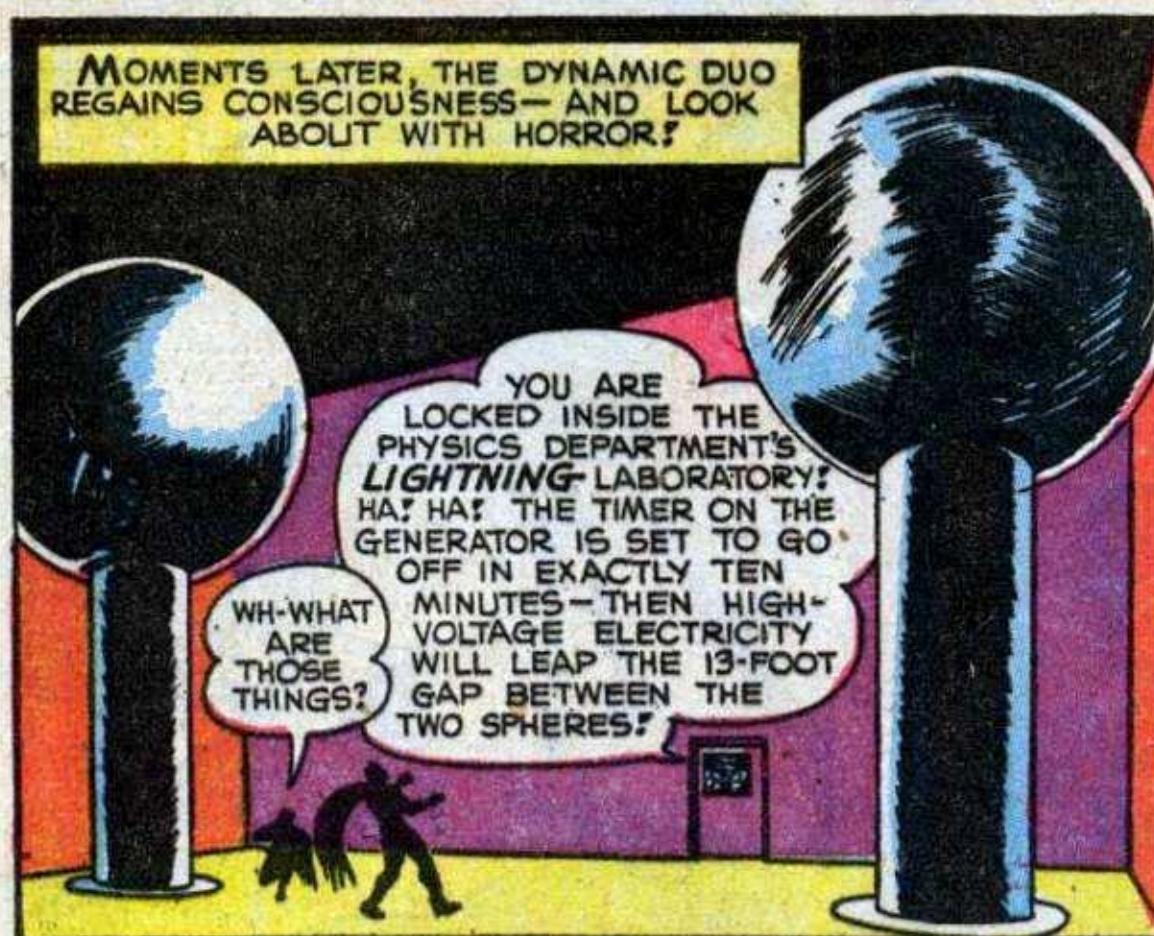
SO YOU WANT
TO BE ALONE,
JOKER?



WHILE BATMAN TURNS TO MEET THE ATTACK OF A THUG, THE MADCAP OF MENACE SCALES THE TUBE'S INSULATORS ...



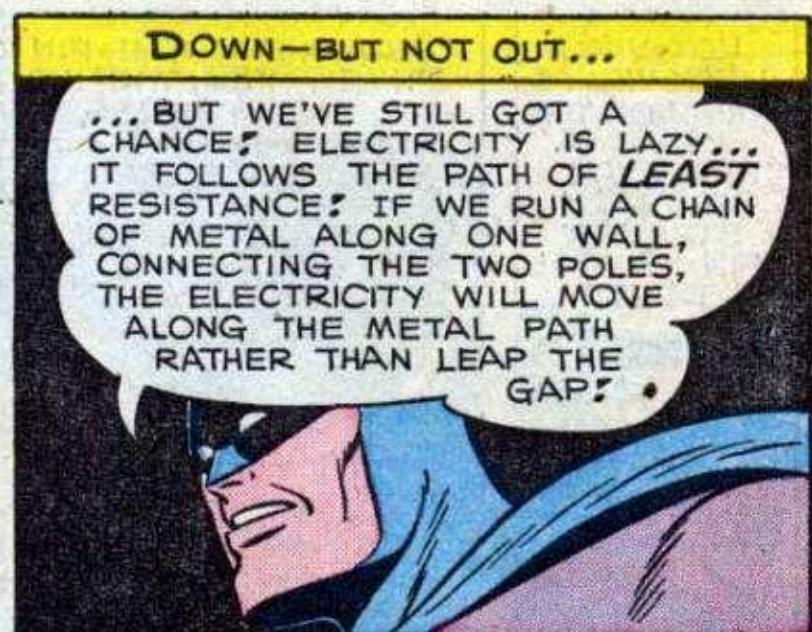
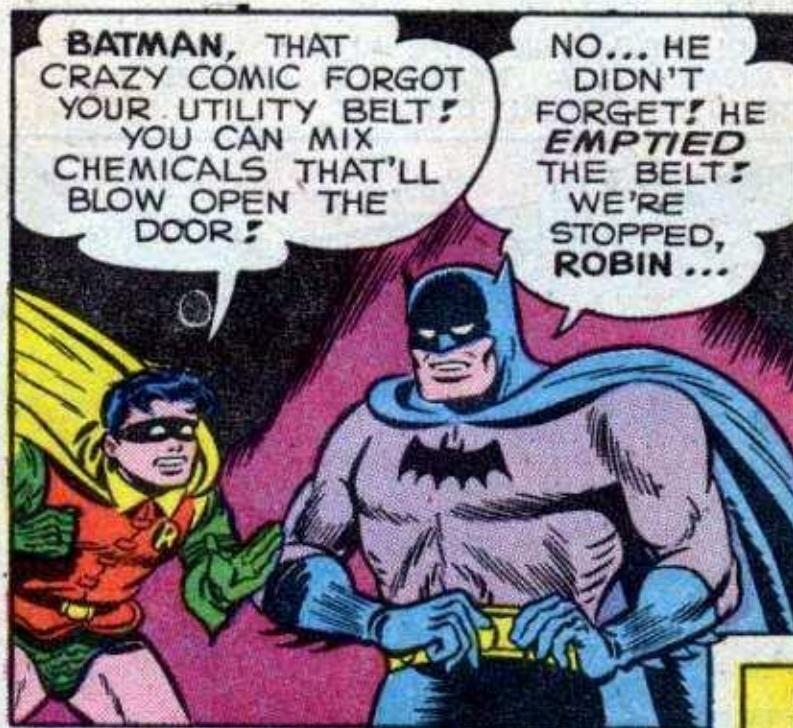
MOMENTS LATER, THE DYNAMIC DUO REGAINS CONSCIOUSNESS—AND LOOK ABOUT WITH HORROR!



WH-WHAT
ARE
THOSE
THINGS?
YOU ARE
LOCKED INSIDE THE
PHYSICS DEPARTMENT'S
LIGHTNING LABORATORY!
HA! HA! THE TIMER ON THE
GENERATOR IS SET TO GO
OFF IN EXACTLY TEN
MINUTES—THEN HIGH-
VOLTAGE ELECTRICITY
WILL LEAP THE 13-FOOT
GAP BETWEEN THE
TWO SPHERES!

YOU'RE
TRAPPED IN THE
ELECTRICAL FIELD!
THE SPHERES WILL
THROW OFF
LIGHTNING SPARKS
THAT'LL BURN YOU
TO A CRISP!
GOODBYE,
BATMAN—
GOOD LUCK!
HA! HA! HA! HA!







NOT YET,
LOOK WHAT I
FOUND ON THE
FLOOR? A
PIN ... AN
ORDINARY
STRAIGHT
PIN — THAT'LL
DO IT!

AND THE LITTLE PIN COMPLETES THE LIFE-LINE! JUST IN
TIME — FOR, THE NEXT MOMENT, A FORK OF FLAME
DANCES OVER THE METAL CHAIN!



AND AT THAT
MOMENT...

THE GENERATOR'S ON!
HOLY COW — AND
BATMAN AND ROBIN
ARE IN THERE!



THE SWITCH IS THROWN AND THE DANGER
IS PAST...

I REMEMBERED
ABOUT THE PLATINUM
AND HURRIED OVER
HERE ... THEN I
HEARD THE
GENERATOR... WOW!

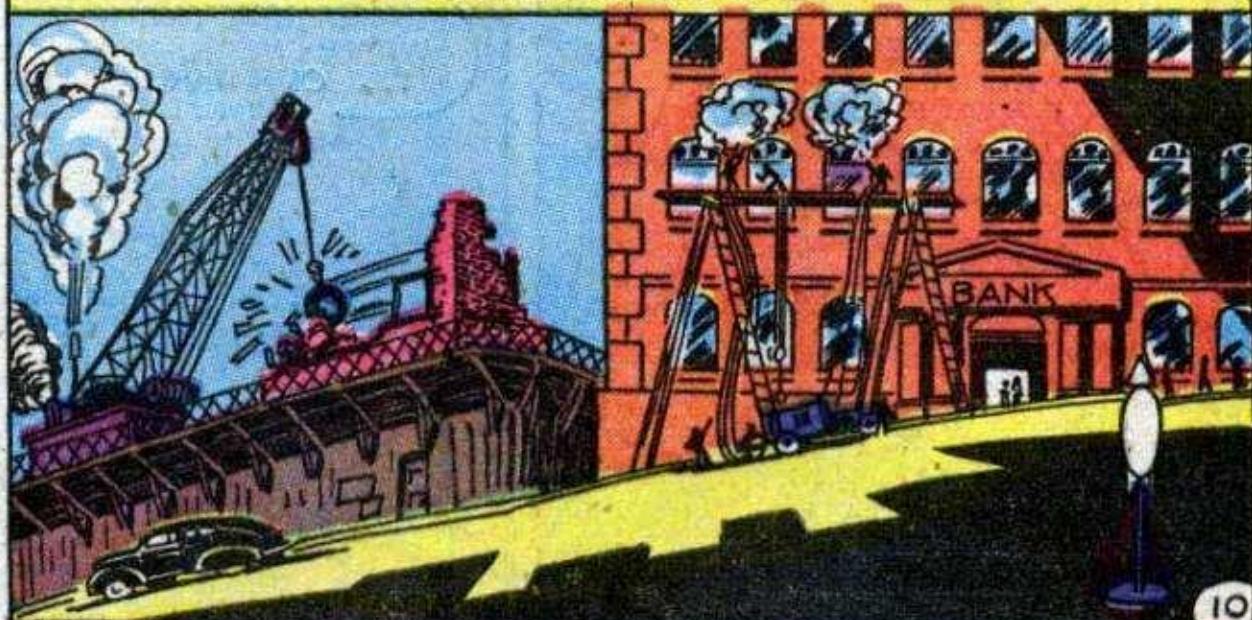
NO WONDER THEY
SAY, "SEE A PIN,
PICK IT UP, ALL
THE DAY YOU'LL
HAVE GOOD
LUCK!"



LATER...

IF OUR LUCK
HOLDS, WE
CAN CATCH THE
JOKER WORKING
ON THE
JENNINGS
BROTHERS?
REMEMBER—
THEY WALKED
UNDER A
LADDER!

SIDE BY SIDE ARE TWO CONTRACTING JOBS BEING DONE
BY THE JENNINGS BROTHERS — A SANDBLASTING AND
A HOUSE-WRECKING JOB!



SUDDENLY, A DRIVERLESS CAR HURTELS DOWN THE STEEP HILL, SMASHES INTO THE LADDERS SUPPORTING THE SANDBLASTERS!



AND IN THE ENSUING CONFUSION, THE JOKER GETS CONTROL OF THE WRECKING DERRICK!

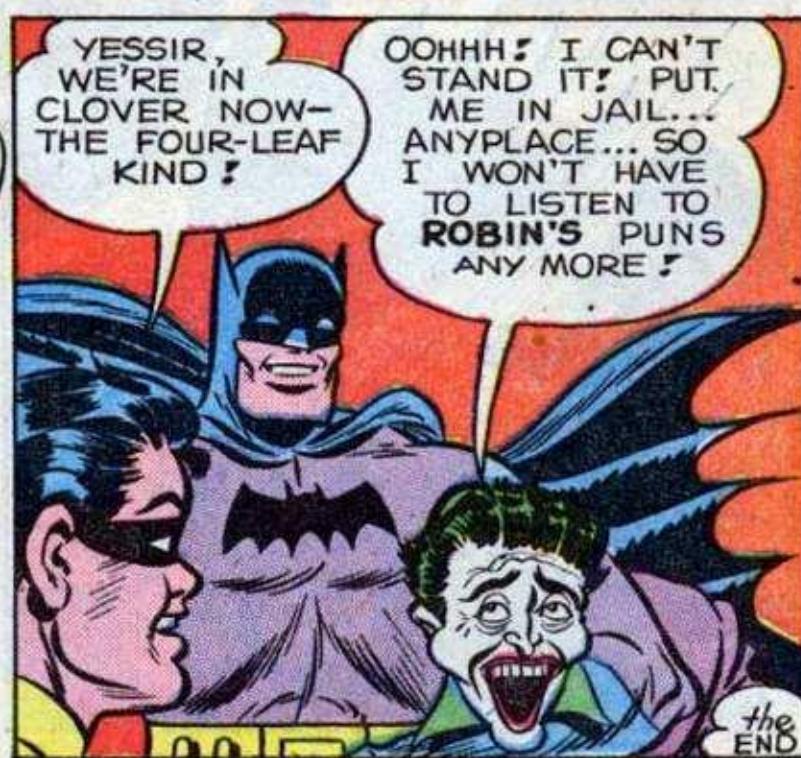


THEN THE HARLEQUIN OF HATE AND HIS PACK ENTER THE BANK...



WHILE, OVERHEAD, TWO MANTLED AVENGING ANGELS APPROACH...





BATMAN

WITH
ROBIN

- THE BOY WONDER -

BOB KANE



DID YOU EVER WONDER WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THE MIGHTY TEAM OF **BATMAN** AND **ROBIN** SHOULD BE BROKEN UP? WELL, NOW IT CAN BE TOLD... FOR TRAGEDY STRIKES, AND BRUCE WAYNE'S UNTIMELY DEATH IS MOURNED PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY— AND ONLY ALFRED, THE BROKEN-HEARTED BUTLER, REMAINS TO STAND BESIDE THE FORLORN DICK GRAYSON ... BUT THE UNDERWORLD MUST NEVER KNOW THAT BRUCE'S DEATH MEANS THE END OF **BATMAN**, LEST A TIDAL WAVE OF CRIME BE UNLEASHED! AND SO WE HAVE THE SAD, YET STIRRING AND WARMLY, HUMAN STORY OF—

"The CASE of BATMAN II."

ONE MORNING, THE GOTHAM CITY NEWSPAPERS CARRY A TRAGIC HEADLINE...



AND AS THE SHADOW OF TRAGEDY HOVERS OVER GOTHAM HOSPITAL, DICK GRAYSON AND THE FAITHFUL WAYNE BUTLER, ALFRED, KEEP ANXIOUS VIGIL...



DR. CROFT? IS HE-?

WE'VE DONE OUR BEST, DICK! NOW WE CAN ONLY WAIT — AND HOPE!



THROUGH THE LONG NIGHT, THE SLEEPLESS WATCHERS WAIT ...



AND AS THE GRAY DAWN BREAKS...

MY BOY, YOU MUST BE BRAVE! THAT'S WHAT HE'D HAVE WANTED!

THEN HE'S—
NO! OH,
NO!



I'M SORRY, DICK! HE WAS MY FRIEND, TOO ...





"BRUCE WAYNE IS DEAD!" SCREAM THE HEADLINES... AND SOME DAYS LATER, IN THE BLEAK MANSION HE ONCE INHABITED...

MR. HENRY BUSH, SIR—THE LATE MR. WAYNE'S LAWYER?

HUH...?

SO SAD! TSK, TSK; AS EXECUTOR OF MR. WAYNE'S VAST ESTATE, WHEN WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE ME READ THE WILL?

WILL?... OH, YES...

AND AS THE BUSTLING LAWYER DEPARTS...

WHAT A GREAT MAN MR. WAYNE WAS, SIR! HIS AFFAIRS ARRANGED AS IF HE KNEW HIS LIFE MIGHT END AT ANY MOMENT!

NOT QUITE, ALFRED!

HE DIDN'T PROVIDE ANOTHER BATMAN—AND WE NEED ONE! THE UNDERWORLD MUST NEVER KNOW THAT BATMAN DIED WHEN BRUCE WENT!

HOW TRUE, MAWSTER DICK! BUT NO ONE CAN EVER TAKE BATMAN'S PLACE!

A SECOND BATMAN? THE IDEA SEEMS PREPOSTEROUS TO THE BEREFT BOY AND THE BUTLER, WHO WANDER THROUGH THE BATMAN'S HALL OF TROPHIES...

I'VE GOT TO CARRY ON ALONE—BUT IT'S A BIG ORDER!

REMEMBER THIS CASE, ALFRED? YOU SAVED BATMAN'S LIFE—AND NEARLY LOST YOUR OWN!

IF ONLY I COULD HAVE—(SNIFF)—GIVEN MY LIFE—(SNIFF)—FOR HIM THIS TIME!

BATMAN



MEANWHILE, IN ANOTHER PART OF THE CITY...

BEETLE BOLES! I THOUGHT YOU WERE IN THE BIG HOUSE!

FOR YOUR INFORMATION, COPPER, I CRASHED OUT - AN' YOU AIN'T TAKIN' ME BACK!

LOANS OPEN ALL NIGHT

Cafe

LET'S GO! THE WHOLE POLICE DEPARTMENT CAN'T STOP US NOW!

AAA-AA-A-A...

MINUTES LATER, THE AWESOME BAT SYMBOL FLAMES IN THE SKY?

OH, OH - COMMISSIONER GORDON'S CALLING FOR HELP? BUT I DON'T DARE TELL EVEN HIM THAT BATMAN IS DEAD!

IF ONLY I COULD TAKE HIS PLACE!

SHORTLY...

ROBIN! THANKS FOR COMING! BUT - WHERE'S BATMAN?

I'M ON DOUBLE DUTY TONIGHT, COMMISSIONER GORDON! BATMAN'S ER-BUSY!

BEETLE BOLES IS ON THE LOOSE! HE KILLED A POLICEMAN TONIGHT! WE'VE GOT A LEAD - BUT YOU CAN'T TACKLE HIM AND HIS MOB ALONE!

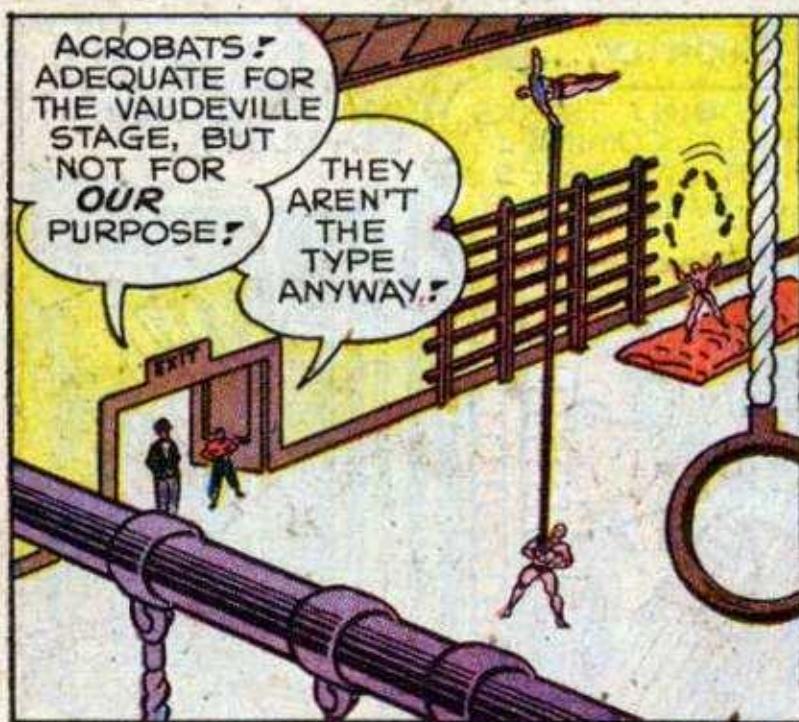
I'M NOT AFRAID. LET ME TRY!

I DON'T QUESTION YOUR COURAGE, ROBIN - BUT NO ONE BUT BATMAN COULD STOP BOLES SINGLE-HANDED! I'LL GIVE YOU THE DETAILS WHEN BATMAN'S WITH YOU!

WELL... IF YOU INSIST! I'LL BRING THE BATMAN HERE TOMORROW!



Quite an order Robin has undertaken to fill! With Bruce Wayne gone, where will he find another Batman? True, a man of faultless physique and keen mind might, after years of intensive training, come close to the qualifications... But Robin has only 24 hours!



BATMAN



MY NAME'S DICK GRAYSON. MIND IF I ASK YOU SOME PERSONAL QUESTIONS?

FIRE AWAY! I'M BILL RANDALL— AND I HAVE NOTHING TO HIDE!



YOUR AERIAL SOMERSAULTS REMINDED ME OF SOME I SAW BATMAN DO!

THAT'S THE FINEST COMPLIMENT I'VE EVER HAD! I'VE LONG ADMIRED THE BATMAN!



ARE YOU MARRIED? ARE YOU A PROFESSIONAL ACROBAT? HAVE YOU A JOB THAT TIES YOU DOWN?

ONE "NO" ANSWERS THEM ALL. I'M SINGLE—AN AMATEUR ATHLETE—AND MY BUSINESS PRACTICALLY RUNS ITSELF!



IF YOU'LL COME TO THIS ADDRESS IN AN HOUR—ALONE— YOU'LL MEET HIM!

YOU'RE NOT KIDDING, GRAYSON? THANKS A MILLION!



AN HOUR LATER, BILL RANDALL KNOCKS AT THE DOOR OF A DILAPIDATED SHACK ON A BACK STREET...



AND IMMEDIATELY...

HELLO! HAVEN'T I SEEN YOUR PICTURE IN THE PAPERS AS THE MYSTERIOUS SLEUTH WHO HAS SOLVED SEVERAL STRANGE CRIMES?

YOUR POWERS OF OBSERVATION ARE ADMIRABLE, SIR! COME IN!



FROM THE SHACK'S CELLAR, A SECRET PASSAGE LEADS TO THAT EERIE SUBTERRANEAN RETREAT— OFTEN MENTIONED, BUT SELDOM SEEN— THE **BAT CAVE!**

BILL RANDALL,
I BELIEVE? DICK
GRAYSON TOLD
ME ABOUT
YOU?

ROBIN!
THIS IS
GREAT!...
BUT WHERE'S
BATMAN?

YOU'LL SEE HIM
IN A MOMENT—
BUT FIRST, PUT
THIS ON!

A **BATMAN**
UNIFORM:
I'LL ENJOY
THIS!

AND NOW— A CRITICAL MOMENT IN THE HISTORY OF MODERN MAN'S BATTLE AGAINST CRIME!

HOW DO I
LOOK? WHERE'S
BATMAN?
....HUH—

MEET **BATMAN**, BILL—
YOURSELF, IF YOU'RE
WILLING TO DEDICATE
YOUR LIFE TO THE JOB...

YOU SEE, **BATMAN** IS DEAD!... BUT IF YOU DON'T WANT TO TAKE ON HIS DANGEROUS RESPONSIBILITIES, WE CAN FORGET THE OFFER I MADE TO YOU— AND LOOK FOR SOMEONE ELSE!

BATMAN—
DEAD?

BUT BILL RANDALL AGREES TO TRY TO REPLACE **BATMAN**...

THIS IS THE PROUDEST AND SADDEST MOMENT OF MY LIFE! I KNOW I CAN NEVER BE AS GOOD AS **BATMAN** —BUT I PROMISE I'LL DO MY BEST!

THANKS,
BILL... ER,
BATMAN?

THE SINCERITY OF "BATMAN II" IS EVIDENT—BUT THAT IS NOT ENOUGH: THERE ARE ARDUOUS TESTS SUCH AS THIS BLINDFOLDED EXPERIMENT IN NERVE AND MUSCULAR CONTROL...



AND THIS ONE, CALLING FOR SURE FOOTING AND A FINE SENSE OF BALANCE!



YES, PRECISION TEAMWORK IS OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE IN THE WORK OF THE DYNAMIC DUO!



THEN, THERE ARE SPECIAL WEAPONS AND UNIQUE DEVICES WHOSE MYSTERIES MUST BE REVEALED TO BATMAN II ...



MY WORD! HOW CLUMSY OF HIM!

YES, INDEED—
VERY
EFFECTIVE!



TAKE OFF YOUR UTILITY BELT, AND I'LL EXPLAIN ITS CONTENTS—AND THE BELT-BUCKLE RADIO? THEN WE'LL TRY OUT THE BATMOBILE AND THE BATPLANE!

FINE!



AND THE VALUE OF REHEARSAL FOR IMPORTANT ACTION IS APPRECIATED ALSO BY BEETLE BOLES, MASTER OF SAVAGE UNDERWORLD STRATEGY!

THAT NIGHT IN AN ABANDONED THEATER...



ONE MOVE AN'
I'LL LET YA HAVE IT!

BRRR-R-R-R!
GOT YA,
COPPER!

SNAP IT UP!

AND NOT FAR AWAY...

COMMISSIONER GORDON MENTIONED UNDERWORLD RUMORS THAT BEETLE'S GOING "THEATRICAL" - SO WE'LL PLAY OUR HUNCH!

MY WORD!
I CAME ALONG TO COACH "BATMAN II" -
BUT IT'S ALL I CAN DO TO KEEP UP WITH HIM!

THE OLD LANE THEATER HAS BEEN CLOSED FOR YEARS - BUT THERE ARE LIGHTS BEHIND THOSE BOARDED WINDOWS!

LANE THEATER
STAGE DOORS

IT WAS A GOOD HUNCH!
WE'LL CROSS ON OUR ROPES, EH?

YOU'LL BE OUR RESERVE FORCE, ALFRED! IF YOU HEAR US YELL, COME ON THE RUN!

ALL RIGHT, ROBIN ... I'LL TRY NOT TO THINK YOU'RE LEAVING ME HERE BECAUSE YOU THINK I'D NOT BE OF MUCH HELP!



INSIDE THE PLAYHOUSE...

BUT, BEETLE, HOW CAN WE PRETEND DEY'RE **REAL** COPS WIT' **REAL** GUNS— WHEN DEY AIN'T?

USE YOUR IMAGINATION, FOOL! IMAGINE BATMAN'S POUNCIN' ON YA, AN' THE HOT SEAT'S WAITIN'...



SUDDENLY....

WHY **IMAGINE** IT? LET'S BE REALISTIC!



CRACK THAT SAFE!

I'LL FIX YA, SMARTY!



PARDON MY HEEL, HEEL!

WE'LL TURN DA TOMMYSUNS ON 'EM!



NOW YOU CAN TELL THE JUDGE I **FRAMED** YOU— WITH WINDOW FRAMES!



BEETLE BOLES FIRES— NOT AT THE CAPE WARRIORS, BUT AT A TAUT ROPE UPSTAGE! AND ABRUPTLY...

INTO THE WINGS, LUGS! I'LL PIN 'EM DOWN!

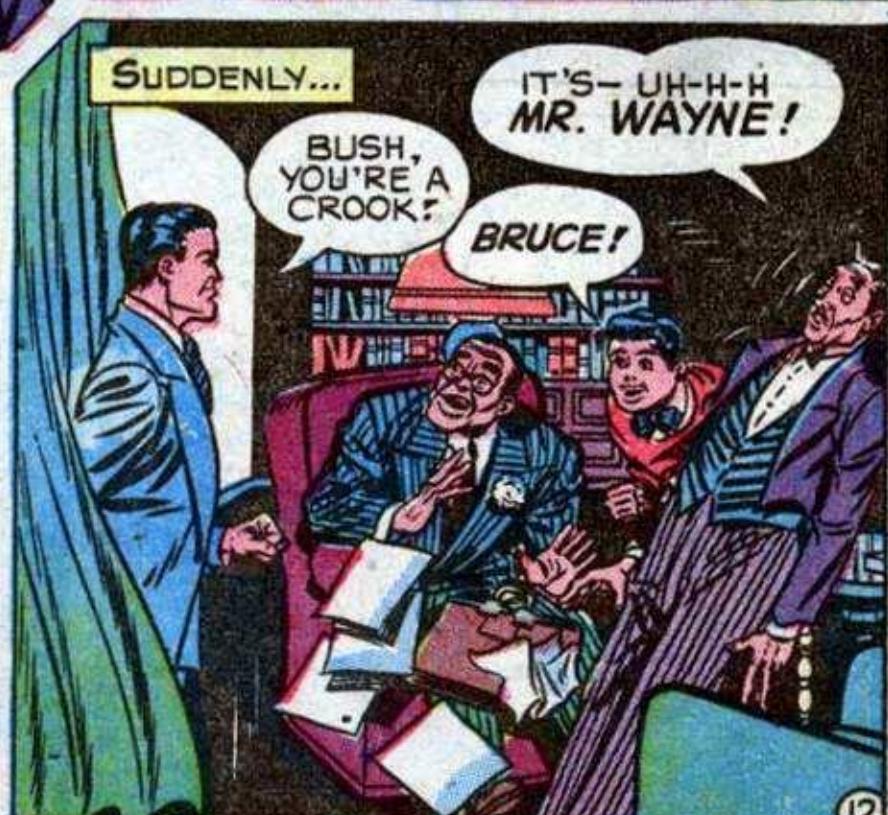




ALFRED'S NEXT MOVE SEEKS TO MEAN CERTAIN DEATH—YET HE DOES NOT HESITATE!



BATMAN





**PROF.
PIPPI**

WHOLESALE DEALER IN STAR DUST, AND AN ASTROLOGICAL ORACLE OF THE FUTURE OF WHOM THERE ARE NONE ORACLER—!

THIS IS A MONTH DURING WHICH THE PLANETARY ASPECTS WILL BE MOST FAVORABLE TO THOSE BORN UNDER THE SIGNS OF JUPITER, VIRGO, ARIES AND CAPRICORN.— ALSO THOSE WITH A BULGING TRUST FUND, A YACHT AND A 500 ACRE ESTATE, WITH NO MORTGAGES! GREAT PROMISE OF IMPROVEMENT IS IN STORE FOR MANKIND GENERALLY AND—I ALSO PREDICT THAT...

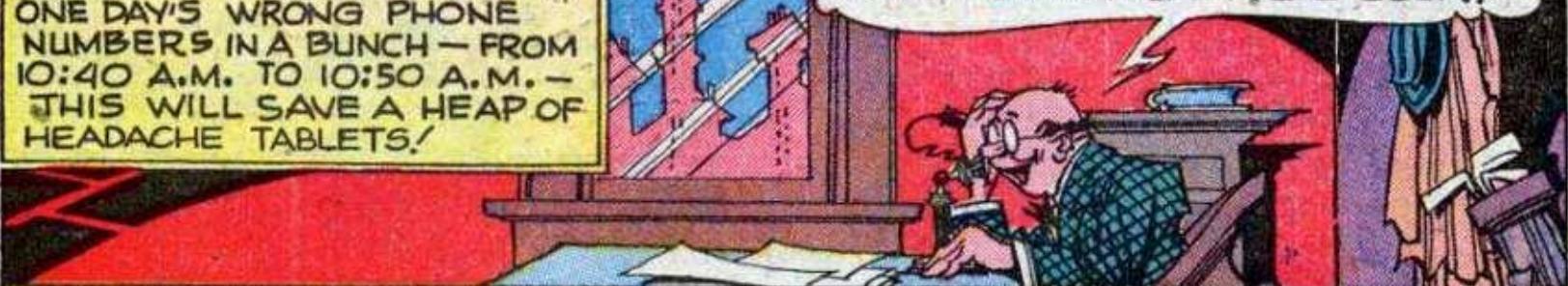


... BY A SECRET CHEMICAL PROCESS, CERTAIN GRAIN STALKS OF STRAW, WHEN CROSSED WITH LEATHER SWEATBANDS (SIZED TO SUIT), WILL SOON PRODUCE A VERY HUSKY CROP OF STRAW HATS ANNUALLY!

YEAH... NEXT YEAR I'M GONNA RAISE ME SOME PANAMAS!

AND BY A NEWLY DISCOVERED DEVICE YOU WILL GET ALL OF ONE DAY'S WRONG PHONE NUMBERS IN A BUNCH— FROM 10:40 A.M. TO 10:50 A.M.— THIS WILL SAVE A HEAP OF HEADACHE TABLETS!

THANK YOU, THANK YOU! THANKS! NOW I'M GONNA PLAY A LI'L GOLF!!





QUICK-FREEZING PROCESSED FOOD WILL FILL THE RESTAURANT MENUS A FEW SHORT MONTHS FROM NOW! AND AN ORDINARY MEAL WILL BE ORDERED SOMETHING LIKE THIS—



MAGNESIUM, THE LIGHTEST METAL IN THE WORLD, WILL SOON FILL ITS OWN IMPORTANT PLACE IN WORLD AFFAIRS—AND IN A BIG WAY!



FLOATING COUNTRY ESTATES WILL SOON BE AVAILABLE TO THE TOURIST-MINDED STAY-AT-HOMES - LABRADOR IN THE SUMMER - THE CARIBBEAN IN THE WINTER (SEASICKNESS BOTH WAYS EN ROUTE) SIZED 5 TO 20 ACRES, SPEED 20 KNOTS -



A NEW VENDING MACHINE THAT PROMISES TO GIVE YOU A HAIRCUT, SHAMPOO, SHAVE, SINGE, SHINE WITH COFFEE AND DOUGHNUTS - ALL IN 3 MINUTES, TO THE TUNE OF LOHENGRIN, WILL SOON BE OFFERED FOR PUBLIC SALE —



AND SCIENCE WILL FINALLY PERFECT A METHOD FOR TAKING THE SHINE OUT OF A BLUE SERGE SUIT, WHILE ALSO CHANGING THE COLOR, SIZE, AND STYLE OF THE GARMENT, ALL IN ONE 3 MINUTE OPERATION.



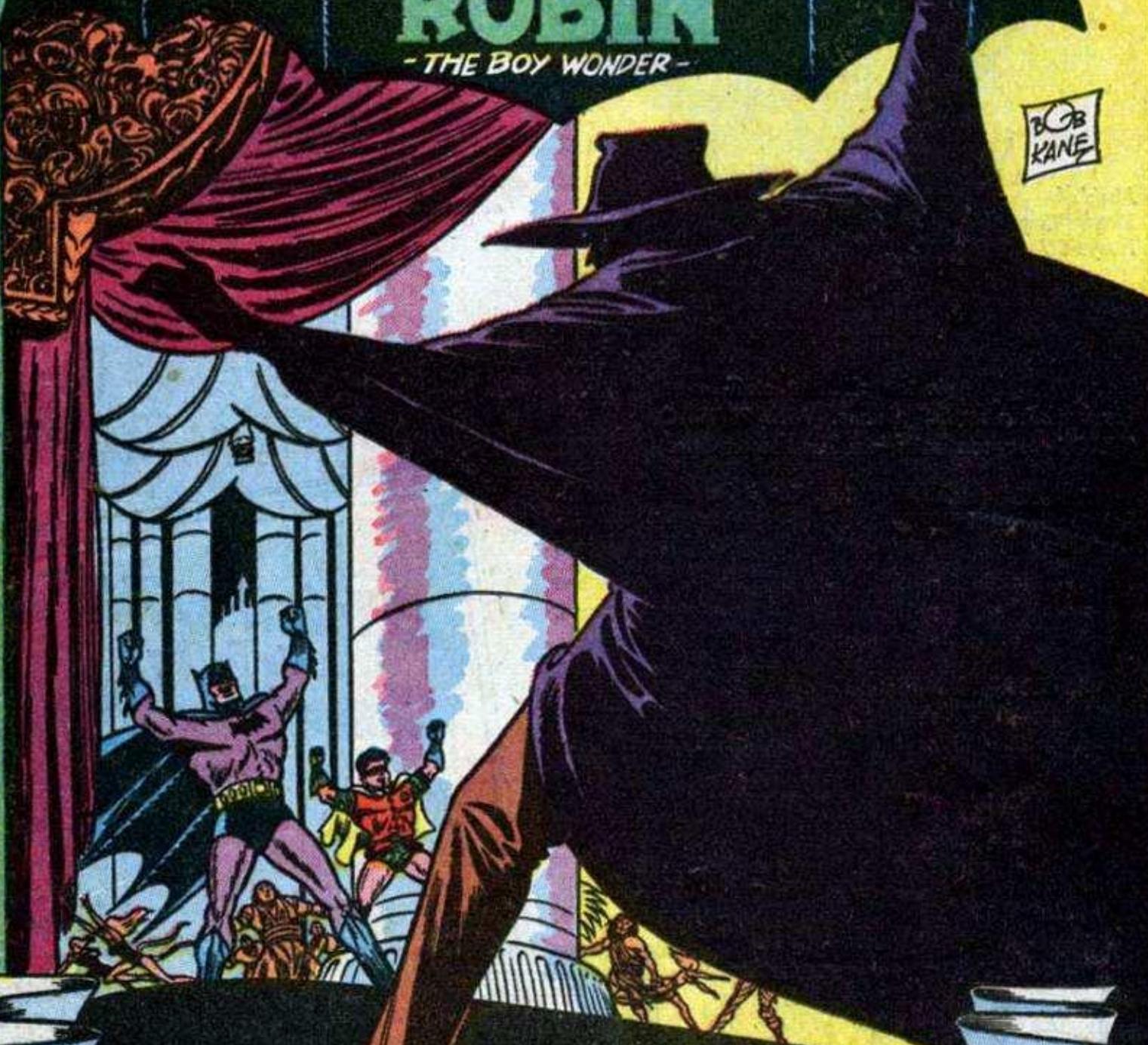


BATMAN

WITH
ROBIN

- THE BOY WONDER -

BOB
KANE



TRAGEDY IN THE GRAND TRADITION BROODS OVER THE GOTHAM CITY OPERA, WHERE LOVELY HEROINES SIGH FOR GOLDEN-THROATED HEROES AND DYING IS MERELY THE FINAL NOTE OF PATHOS IN MELODIOUS MAKE-BELIEVE! BUT WHEN A PHANTOM KILLER STILLS FOREVER THE GOLDEN VOICES OF FAMOUS SINGERS — THEN BATMAN AND ROBIN ENTER THE SCENE TO SOLVE THE SHOCKING CASE OF — "THE GRAND OPERA MURDERS!"



OPENING NIGHT OF GOTHAM CITY'S GRAND OPERA SEASON BRINGS OUT SOCIETY FOLK— ALSO MANY SINCERE OPERA-LOVERS...



I Pagliacci
COLIN VANNING
VIOLA ESTES
GRAHAM LENO

IT BRINGS, TOO, A GREAT SHOW OF ARTISTIC TEMPERAMENT BACKSTAGE!



BEHIND THE DOOR, VANNING DRESSES FOR THE ROLE OF CANIO IN *I PAGLIACCI*...

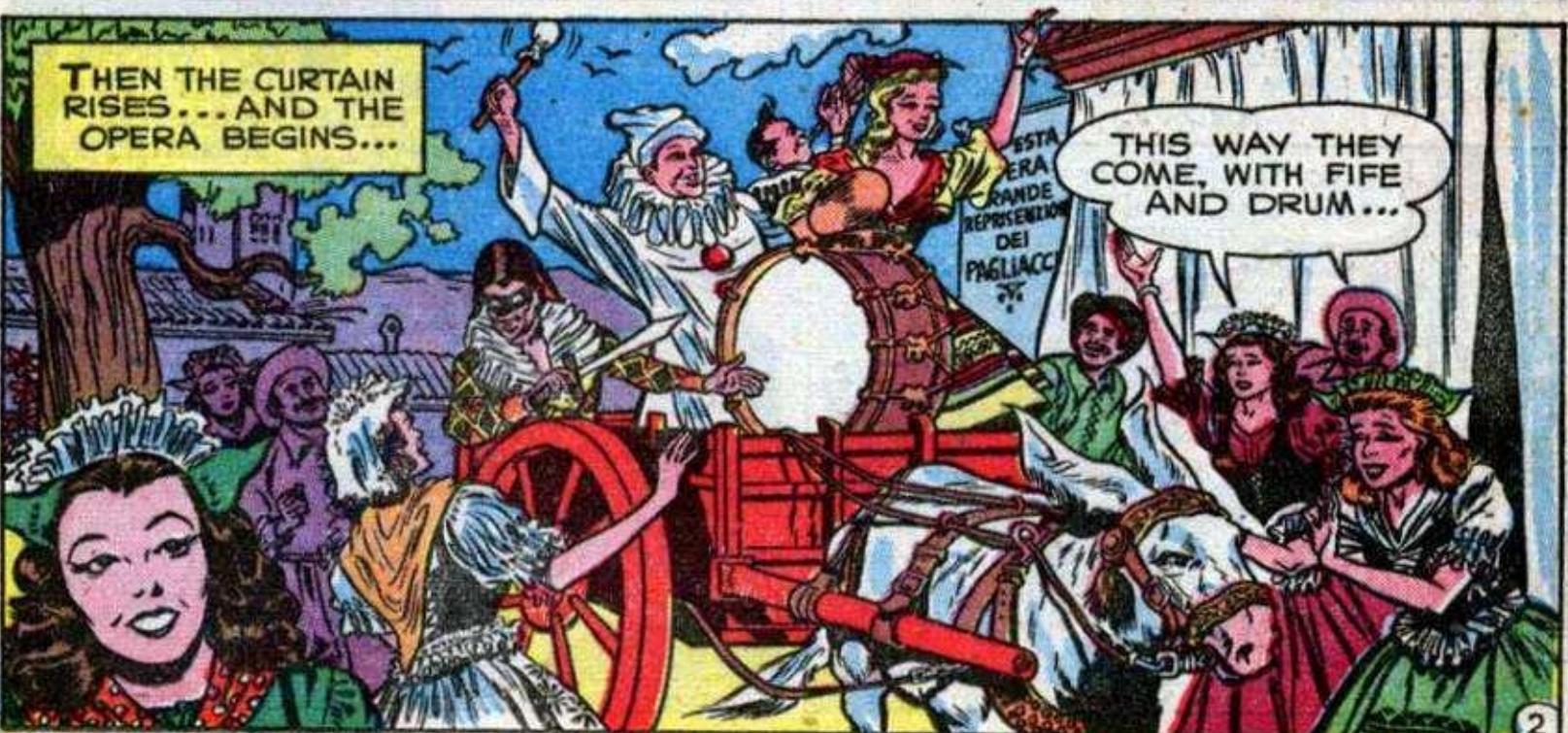


Y-YES, SIR,
MR. VANNING,
SIR?

MEANWHILE, **Bruce Wayne** AND HIS YOUNG WARD, **Dick Grayson**, ENTER THEIR OPERA BOX...



THEN THE CURTAIN RISES... AND THE OPERA BEGINS...





PRESIDENTLY, THE LAST ACT, DURING WHICH THE OPERA NEARS ITS TRAGIC CLIMAX...



A FAKE BLADE FLASHES --- AND CANIO PRETENDS TO SLAY COLUMBINE AND SILVIO - A VILLAGER WHO RACES TO PROTECT HER - ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPT...



NOW FOR THE TRAGIC CLOWN'S CLOSING LINE - "THE COMEDY IS ENDED!" BUT, INSTEAD...



IN THE CORRIDOR BEHIND THEIR BOX, BRUCE AND DICK REMOVE OUTER CLOTHES - AND BATMAN AND ROBIN RACE FOR THE WINGS!

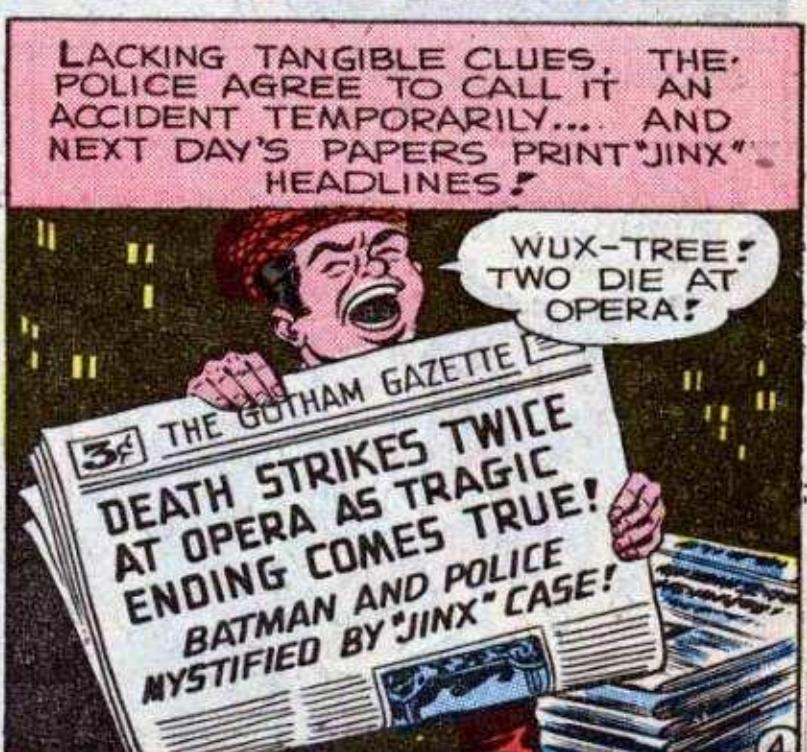
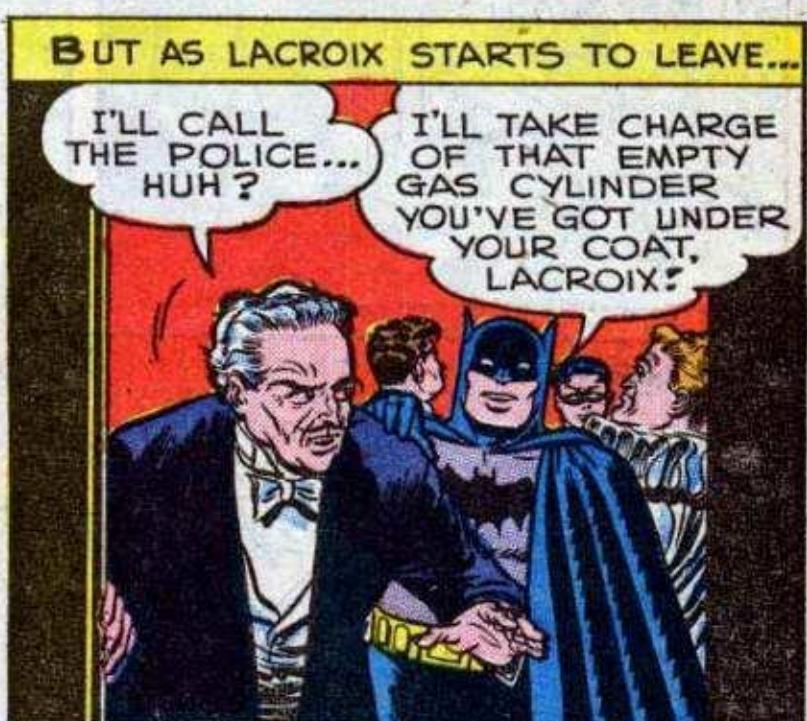


AS THE CAST GATHERS AROUND THE VICTIMS, MANAGER-DIRECTOR LACROIX EMERGES FROM THE PROMPTER'S BOX, AND...



NEXT MOMENT...



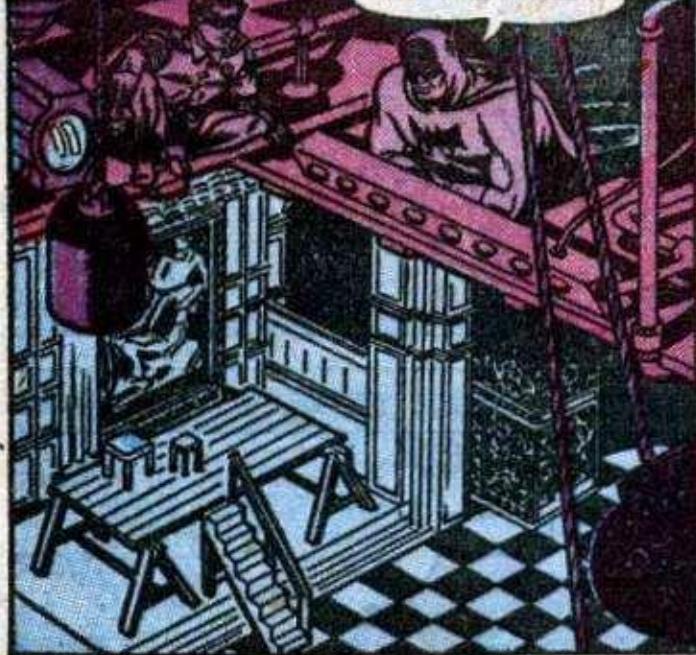




TOSCA IS THE NEXT OPERA ON THE BILL... AND TWO SPECTATORS ARRIVE EARLY TO CONCEAL THEMSELVES HIGH ABOVE THE STAGE!

EVERYTHING'S READY—AND THE STAGEHANDS ARE OUT TO SUPPER!

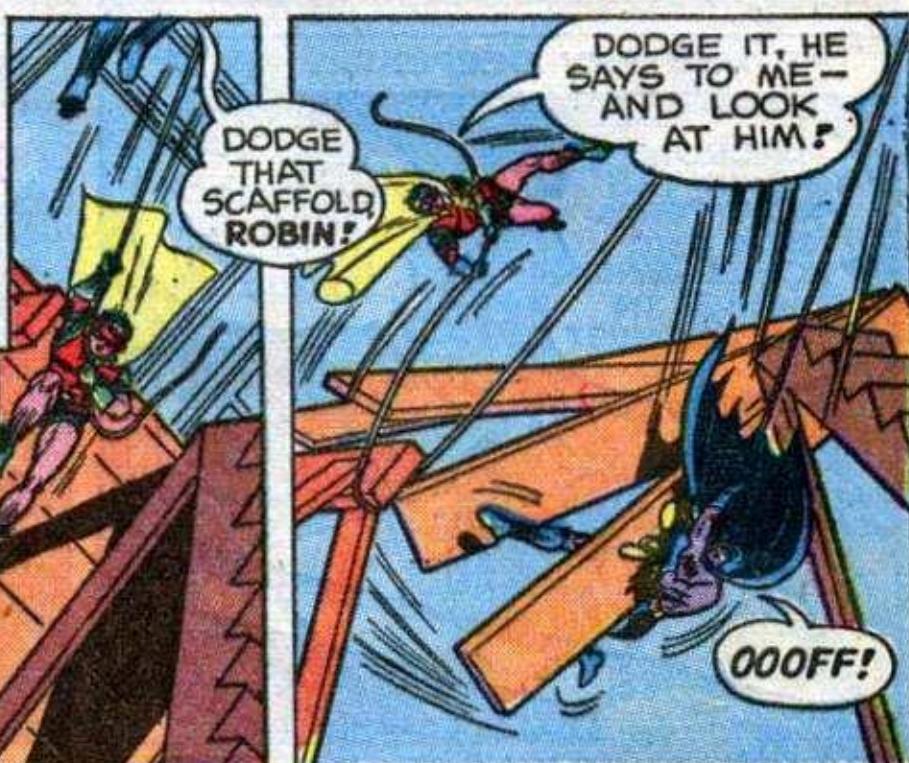
WHEN THE CURTAIN RISES, COLIN VANNING, AS MARIO, WILL BE ON THAT SCAFFOLD, PAINTING A MURAL!



SUDDENLY—A DARK FIGURE APPEARS BELOW...

ON YOUR TOES, ROBIN! THIS LOOKS LIKE PLANS FOR ANOTHER "ACCIDENT"!

NO DOUBT ABOUT WHO THE KILLER IS AFTER **THIS** TIME! HE'S FIXING THAT SCAFFOLD SO IT WILL FALL WITH VANNING!



LIKE GRIM BIRDS OF PREY, THE DUO SWOOPS—BUT THEIR QUARRY IS NOT TO BE TAKEN BY SURPRISE!

BATMAN! YOU'LL NEVER CATCH ME!

SECONDS LATER, AS THEY RUN OFF-STAGE...

CROWLEY? DID YOU MEET ANYBODY RUNNING OUT OF HERE?

NO. I'VE BEEN DRAPED OVER MY FAVORITE JUKE BOX FOR THE LAST HALF HOUR!



AFTER A FUTILE SEARCH, THE DYNAMIC DUO WATCHES AND WAITS AS THE OPERA NEARS THE LAST, FATAL SCENE...

THE FIRING SQUAD FOR THE MOCK EXECUTION OF MARIO... I LOADED THE GUNS—with blanks—SO NOBODY WILL GET KILLED IN **THIS** SCENE!

LOOK! CROWLEY—AT THE TABLE WHERE THE MUSKETS WERE LAYING!



THEN CROWLEY RUSHES UP TO BATMAN...

I FOUND A BLANK CARTRIDGE ON THE TABLE! WHAT IF SOMEONE PUT A **REAL** ONE IN ITS PLACE IN ONE OF THE MUSKETS?

GREAT SCOTT—
AND THEY'RE READY TO SHOOT!

READY—AIM—

SHOTS RING OUT — BUT FAR MORE THRILLING TO THE AUDIENCE IS AN UNSCHEDULED ENTRANCE BY BATMAN!



ABOUT TIME
THEY PEPPED UP
THESE OLD
OPERAS!

AFTER THE CURTAIN FALLS...

HERE'S THE BULLET-HOLE! SEE? IT WOULD HAVE BEEN **ME** IN VANNING IF I HAD NOT INTERFERED! THEY'RE AFTER ME AND THE KILLER IS SOMEONE ON THIS STAGE!

THE BARREL OF NOYES' MUSKET SHOWS IT FIRED A REAL BULLET!

CROWLEY HAS CHARGE OF THE PROPS AND HE HANDED ME THAT MUSKET!



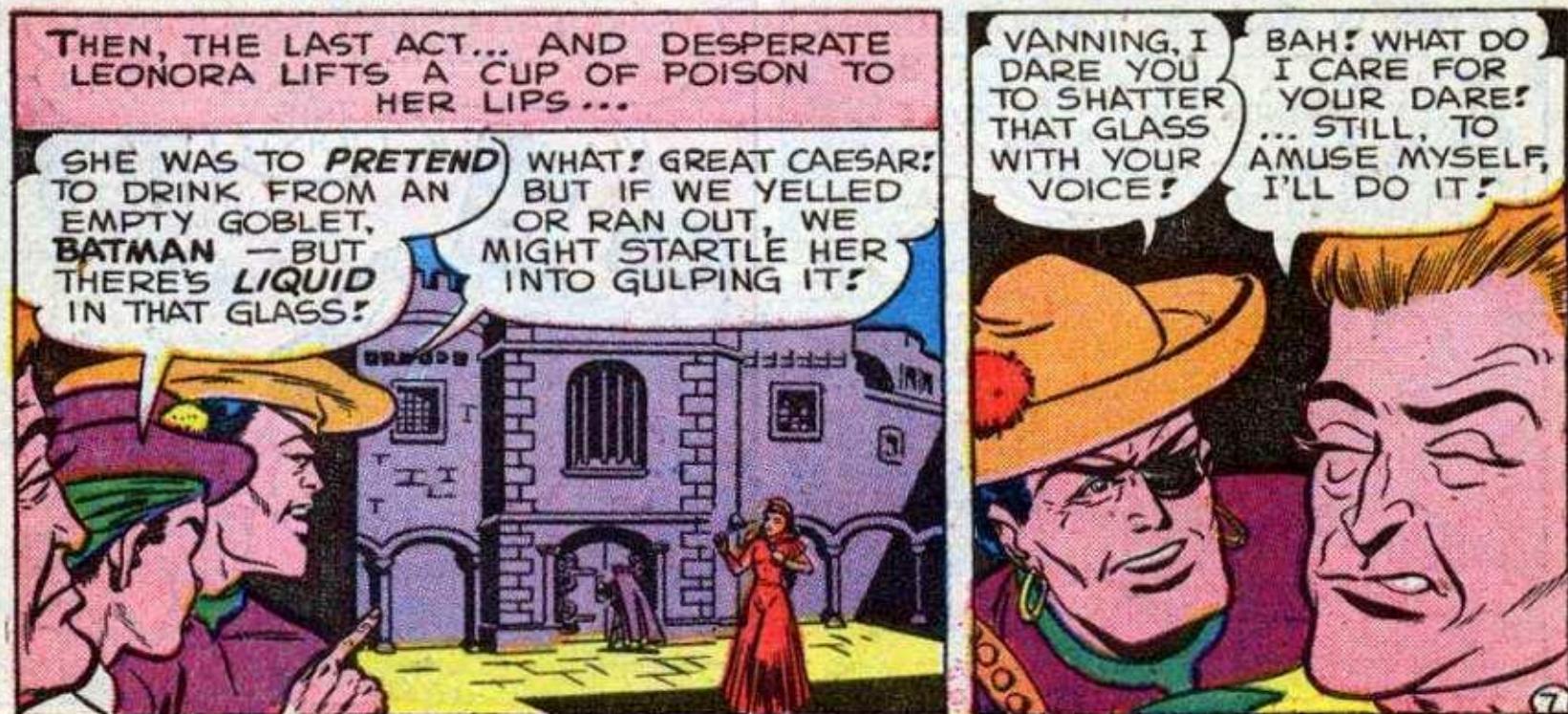
LATER, IN MANAGER LACROIX'S OFFICE...

WE'LL TRY A NEW STRATEGY TO SOLVE THIS CASE, LACROIX! ROBIN AND I WILL SING IN YOUR NEXT OPERA— IN DISGUISE!

SHADES OF MOZART? GOOD SINGERS DIE— AND I MUST REPLACE THEM WITH DETECTIVES! LET ME HEAR YOU SING...

LAY THAT PISTOL DOWN, BABE... BRAVO! BEST SINGING I'VE HEARD YET IN THIS JOINT!





AND A SINGLE, MAGNIFICENT, PIERCING NOTE FILLS THE THEATER AS LEONORA HESITATES, THE GOBLET VIBRATING IN HER HAND...



SO LEONORA DOES NOT DRINK—BUT PRETENDS DEATH ANYWAY AS THE DEATH OF MANRICO IS ENACTED...



SUDDENLY, A CLOCKWORK MECHANISM CLICKS HIGH ABOVE THE STAGE... THEN...



AS STEEL CLASHES ON STEEL IN MID-AIR, NOYES LEAPS FROM THE WINGS, AND...

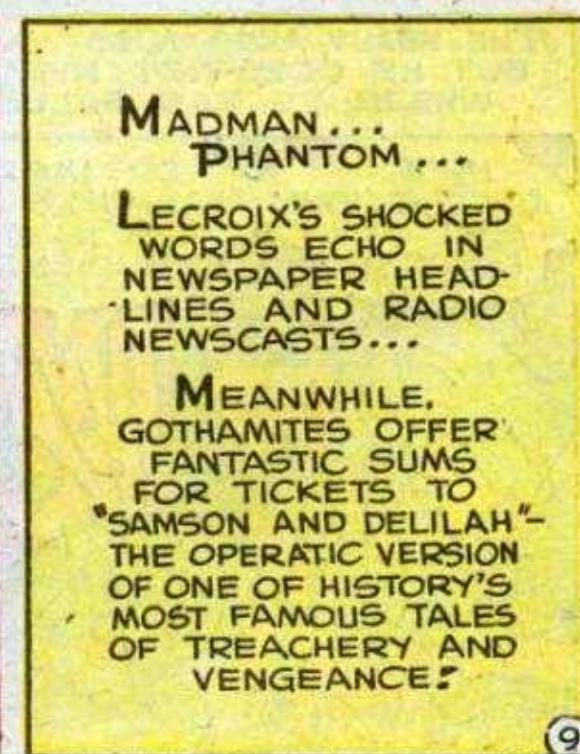
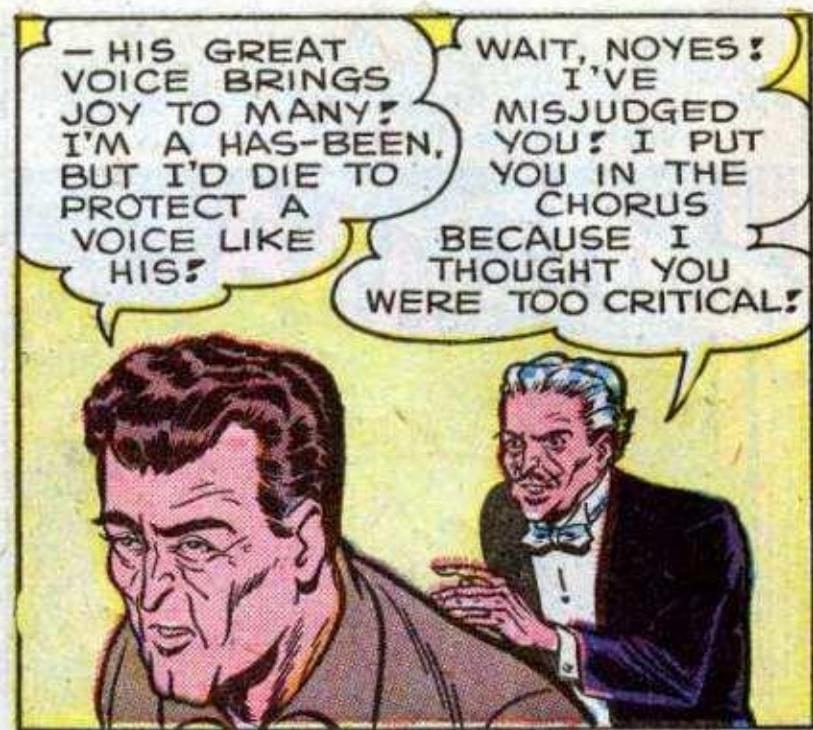
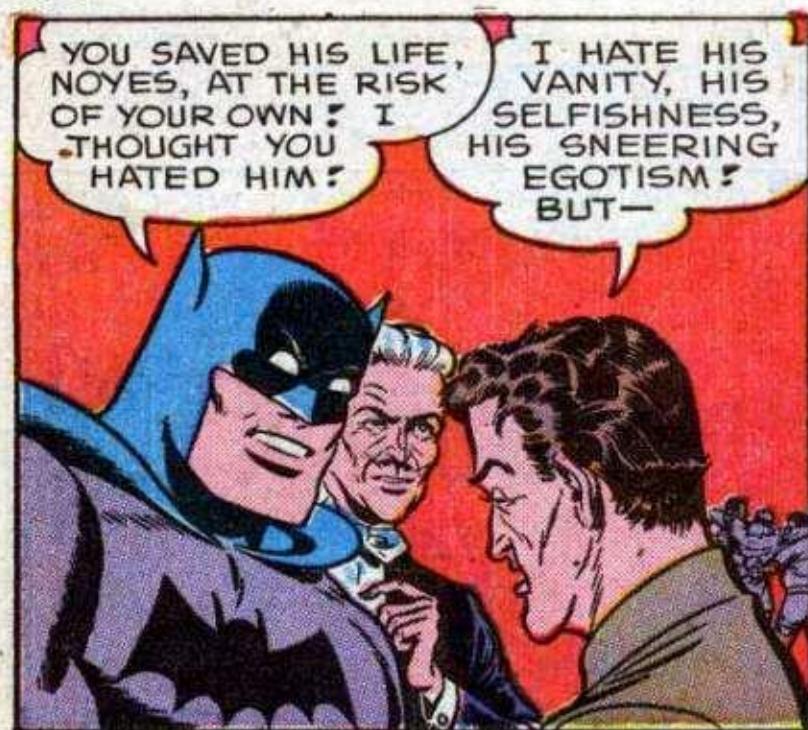


THE HEAVY AXES MISS VANNING—BUT HE DOES NOT RISE FROM WHERE HE HAS FALLEN!



BUT FATE IS NOT READY FOR COLIN VANNING TO DIE...





NEXT DAY, BATMAN AND ROBIN WATCH PREPARATIONS FOR THE BIG SPECTACLE ...

PRESENTLY ...

WHY, HE'S CUTTING THE ROPES SO THEY'LL BREAK UNDER A STRAIN!

HEY—
WHAT'S THE IDEA?

YOU SEE,
ROBIN, IN
THE FINAL
SCENE, FALLING
SCENERY WOULD
CRUSH THE
ACTORS IF:
NETS AND ROPES
DIDN'T CATCH THE
PIECES!

YOU AGAIN?
TAKE THAT!

BATMAN!
HELP!

COMING,
ROBIN!

THANKS,
PAL!

HE'S NOT AS
GOOD AT DODGING
AS YOU ARE!

I'LL MAKE
HIM SORRY
FOR THAT!

OOOH-H-H!

HE RIGGED THE NET
SO HE COULD PULL
IT DOWN WITH THAT
ROPE—AND HE'S
GETTING AWAY!

HO-HO
HO-HO!



ONCE MORE, THE DYNAMIC DUO
SEARCHES BACKSTAGE IN VAIN!

MUST BE A
THOUSAND
HIDING PLACES
HERE!

HMM—THE DOOR
OF VANNING'S
DRESSING ROOM
IS OPEN! LET'S
GO IN!

COLIN
VANNING

OH, BOY, WHAT A
MAKE-UP KIT! PAINTS,
PUTTY, FALSE WIGS
AND WHISKERS,
NOSTRIL PLUGS,
AND...

NOSTRIL
PLUGS?
HMM...
HEY—LET'S
HAVE A LOOK
AT THAT KIT!

SUDDENLY...

WHAT ARE
YOU DOLTS
DOING IN MY
DRESSING
ROOM?

VANNING? THE
DOCTOR TOLD
YOU TO STAY
IN BED?

BAH! ALL DOCTORS
ARE FOOLS! AND
I REFUSE TO LET
ANYTHING
INTERFERE WITH
MY SINGING!

PLEASE,
VANNING, DON'T
GO ON! I'M
AFRAID OF
WHAT MAY
HAPPEN TO
YOU! BESIDES,
I PROMISED NOYES
YOUR ROLE!

LET NOYES SING
THE SECOND TENOR
LEAD! AND DON'T
WORRY ABOUT ME!
I KNOW WHAT
I'M DOING!

I THINK
HE DOES.
AT THAT,
LACROIX!
LET HIM
SING!

JUST BEFORE CURTAIN TIME, THE NET
AND ROPES ARE GIVEN A FINAL TEST...

THIS
IS
FUN!

WHAT I'M
DOING MAY NOT
BE ART—BUT
IT'S IN THE
CAUSE OF
ART!

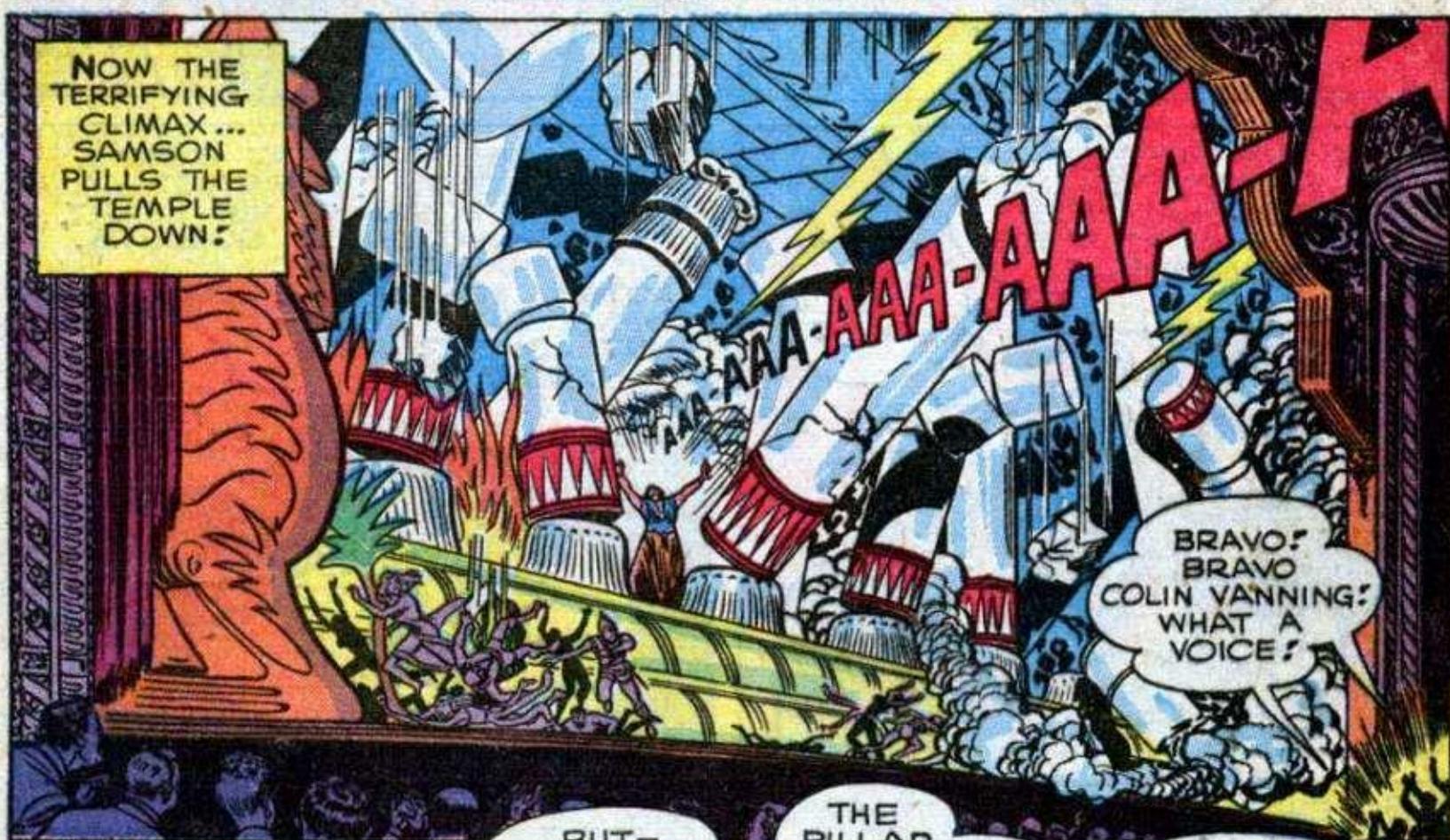
THEN—ON WITH THE SHOW! AND AS THE MIGHTY SAMSON IS LULLED BY THE SONG OF THE BEAUTIFUL DELILAH...



FINALLY, AS SAMSON IS SHORN OF HIS STRENGTH-GIVING LOCKS AND BLINDED...



NOW THE TERRIFYING CLIMAX... SAMSON PULLS THE TEMPLE DOWN!



AS THE CURTAIN DROPS, MUFFLING THE WILD APPLAUSE...

VANNING WON'T TAKE ANY BOWS, LACROIX? HE'S DEAD!

BUT—
BUT THAT
PIECE OF PILLAR
IS ONLY CARDBOARD
AND CANVAS!
HOW COULD IT
KILL HIM?

THE
PILLAR
DIDN'T KILL
HIM! VANNING
SANG HIMSELF
TO DEATH!

NOYES IS
RIGHT! HE
COMMITTED
SUICIDE IN A
LAST VAIN GRASP
FOR FAME — OR
INFAMY!



VANNING RELEASED THAT POISON GAS THE FIRST NIGHT, WEARING NOSTRIL PLUGS TO SAVE HIMSELF! HE WANTED TO KILL OTHERS BEFORE HIMSELF!

BUT WHY?

HIS HEART AILMENT WOULD HAVE FORCED HIS RETIREMENT SOON! SO HE PLANNED TO DIE—AND TO TAKE WITH HIM THOSE WHO WOULD CONTINUE TO GET THE APPLAUSE HE LOVED.

A GREAT SINGER—BUT A MADMAN!



HE WAS AN EGOMANIAC! HE WANTED TO DIE SPECTACULARLY SO THAT HE WOULD BE REMEMBERED!

AND HE DID!



WHEN HE HAD THAT STROKE LAST NIGHT, HE REALIZED HE COULD BURST HIS HEART, AS HE SHATTERED GOBLETS, WITH THAT TERRIFIC NOTE! TONIGHT, HE SANG THAT NOTE—BUT LOUDER AND LONGER...

UNTIL HIS HEART SHATTERED!



SO ENDS OUR STORY, AS TRAGICALLY AS ANY OPERA! AND ANOTHER EVENING ...

NOYES RATES THE BREAKS HE'S GETTING! HE HASN'T VANNING'S COLOR, BUT HE'S A GREAT TENOR!

TAKE A LOOK, BRUCE! THERE'S CROWLEY AND LACROIX!



BUT I NEED YOU AT REHEARSAL, CROWLEY!

SEE MY ASSISTANT! I NEED SOME JUKE-BOX JIVE TO FORTIFY ME AGAINST TONIGHT'S SCREECHING!

