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SEP 90



PART THREE OF THREE

# BATMAN

DARK KNIGHT

DARK CITY

APPROVED  
BY THE  
COMICS  
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# DARK KNIGHT, DARK CITY

PART  
III

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DRAWS the blade across his pink skin, SLICES through the windpipe . . .

A BACKSTREET TRACHEOTOMY, because THE RIDDLER has lodged a ping pong ball in the baby's throat.

And now he's running with the baby, holding him close . . .

He must get to the hospital before he loses too much BLOOD . . .

Scrambling out of the sewer, sprinting down the street . . .

Oh, Batman, you are my FINEST CREATION, my FAVORITE CHILD . . .

HOW'S HE DOING?

STILL ON LIFE SUPPORT.

HIS NAME'S MICHAEL.  
EIGHT DAYS OLD. I  
TRIED TO SAVE HIM,  
JIM...

MAYBE I JUST  
SUCCEEDED IN  
KILLING HIM.

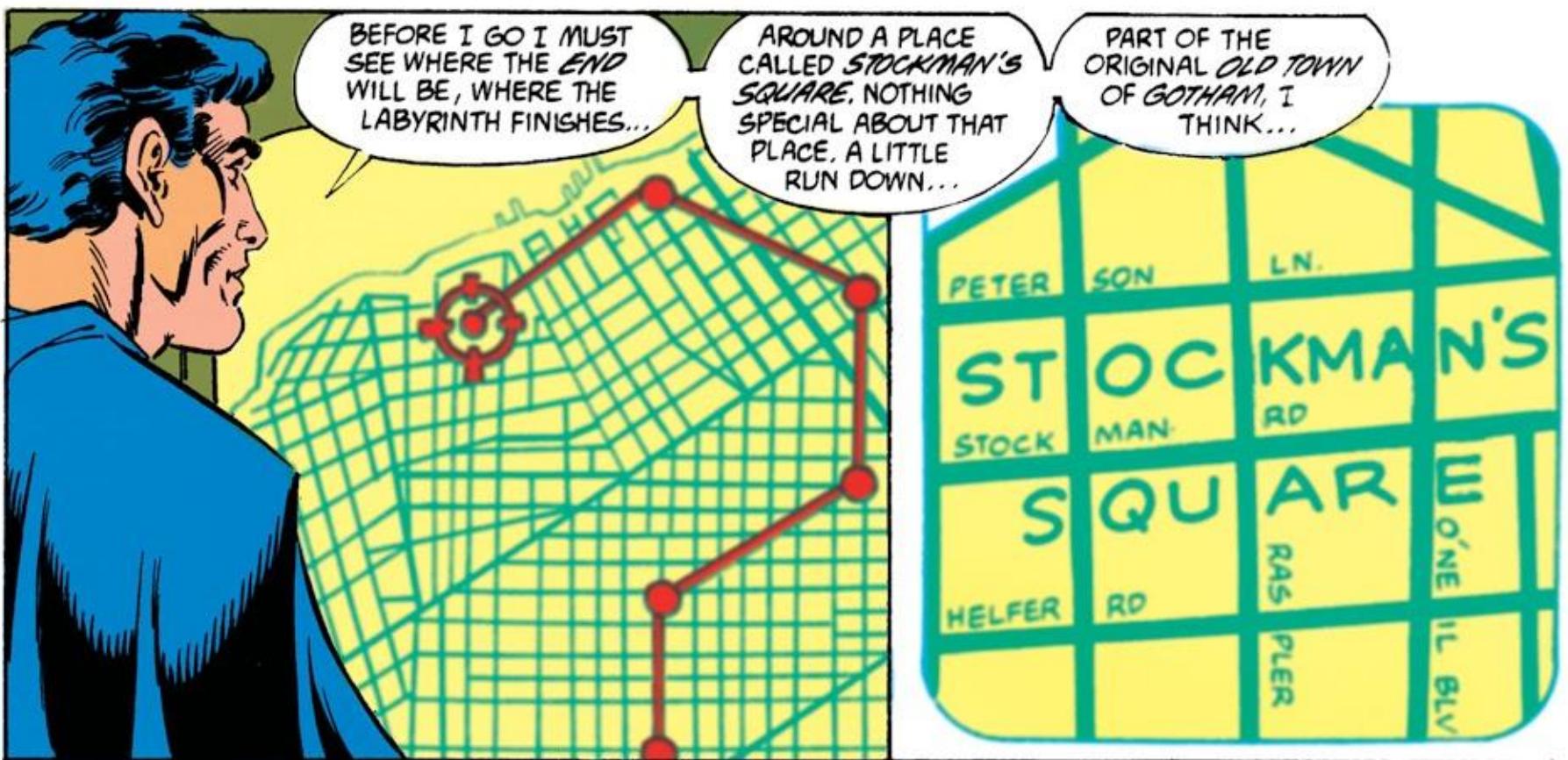
IF THE WORST  
COMES, YOU DIDN'T  
KILL HIM. THE  
RIDDLER DID.

YOU'VE GOT  
THREE BABIES  
BACK. HE ONLY  
HAS ONE LEFT  
NOW...

THIS WAS  
PINNED TO  
MICHAEL'S  
DIAPER. MY  
NEXT CLUE.

HOPE I  
DON'T GO  
CRAZY  
BEFORE  
I SOLVE  
IT.







THE CIRCUS DOESN'T OPEN TILL LATE. BY THEN, THE RIDDLER AND I WILL BE ELSEWHERE...

PERHAPS STOCKMAN'S SQUARE, THE END OF THE QUESTION MARK...

SHACK OF FREAKS

THE AMAZING DANNY KELLY  
ICE-IDENT RYAN  
VING PETT

WIDE LOAD  
WHO, OR WHAT IS...  
THE ORDSTER  
TIGHT-ROPE TOM

THE HUMAN DOGS  
ICE-IDENT RYAN  
VING PETT

IT'S A GAG!  
TICKETS  
GREG W.  
POKEZ  
HERE

THE HOUSE

ABANDON ALL  
SCOURGE CASH  
YE WHO ENTER

THE RAIN BEATING A SLOW TATTOO  
ON MY CLOAK, THE CITY WAKING  
ALL AROUND ME, I STEP FURTHER  
INTO THE LABYRINTH...

COME ON, RIDDLER,  
WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?  
GIVE ME A  
CLUE.

A GOAT?  
WHY A GOAT,  
RIDDLER? WHY A  
GOAT IN THE HALL  
OF MIRRORS?

THERE'S NO WAY  
BACK NOW.





I HAND THE BABY TO A PASSING SQUAD CAR AND THEN I'M HEADED FOR A PLACE CALLED STOCKMAN'S SQUARE. THE END OF THE LABYRINTH.

WHAT KIND OF MINOTAUR WILL I FIND THERE?

ON THE WAY I CALL ALFRED THEN THE HOSPITAL...

MICHAEL'S STILL ON LIFE SUPPORT. IT COULD GO EITHER WAY.





What a pity my TIMBERS here are OLD and ROTTEN ...

And so EASILY BROKEN ...

THE GAMES ARE OVER.

I'M GONNA ROAST HIM NOW.

IDIOT! THE PREPARATIONS ARE COMPLETE. HE DIES WHEN I SAY SO...

I'M THROUGH WITH ALL THAT MUMBO-JUMBO. HE GOES NOW...

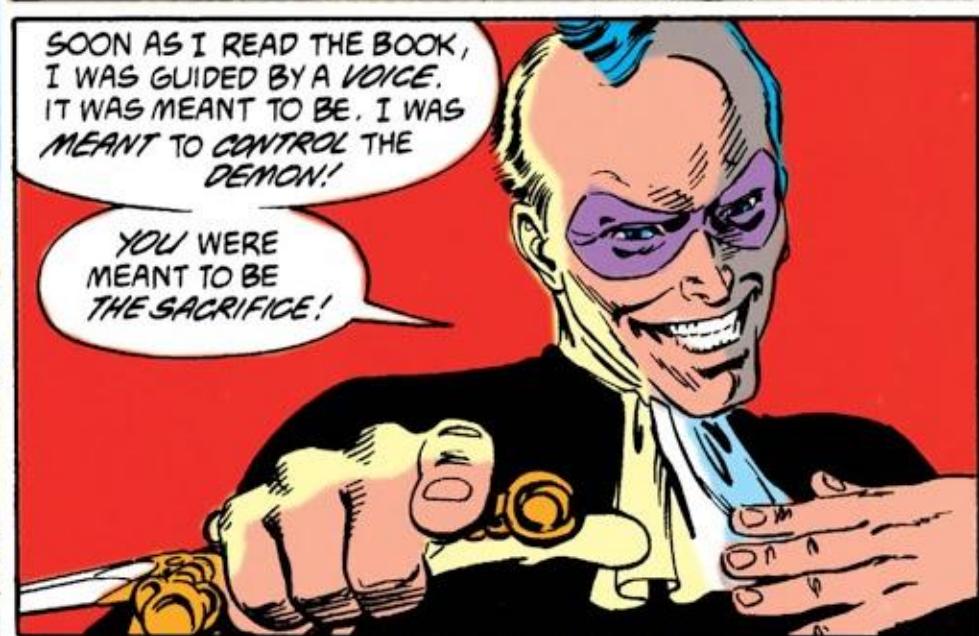
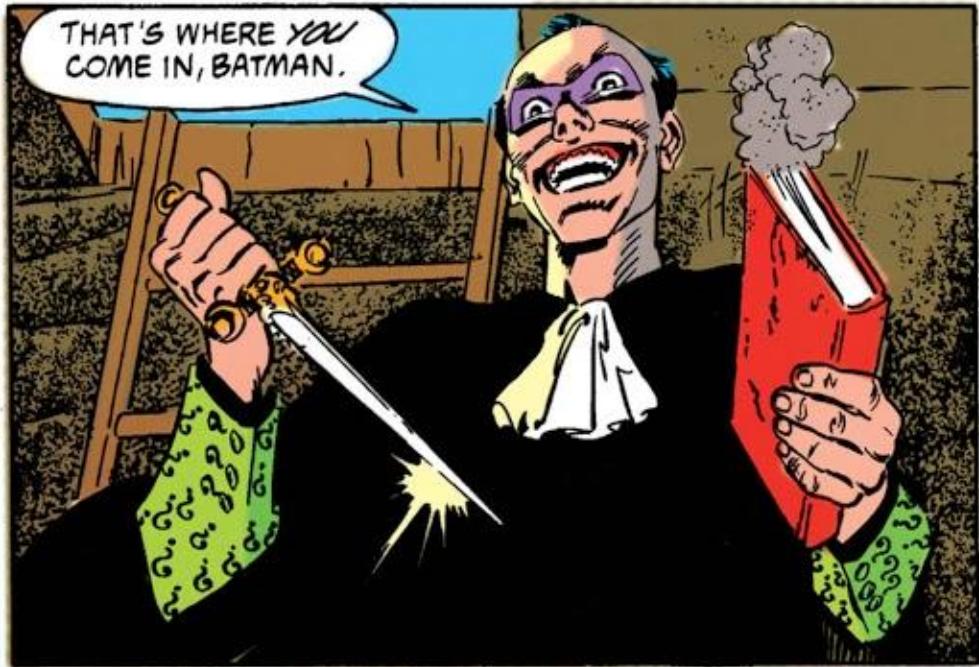
BBMM

YOU SHOT ME, YOU SHOT ME, TO SAVE BATMAN.

OF COURSE I DID. BATMAN'S MY TICKET TO RIDE.

THE HUMAN BAT...





"SECONDLY SHE HAD TO BATHE IN HUMAN BLOOD."

"I JUST USED THE BLOOD ALREADY STORED IN THE BLOOD TRANSFUSION CENTER."

"NEXT CAME A DANSE MACABRE, A DANCE WITH THE DEAD, DUG UP FROM A LOCAL CEMETERY."

"THAT'S WHY MY STIFFS FLUNG THEMSELVES INTO YOUR ARMS. MY, YOU BATS HAVE SUCH NATURAL RHYTHM..."

"THE FOURTH STAGE WAS TO SLAY A WILD DOG WITH A SILVER DAGGER. THEY DON'T COME MUCH WILDER THAN PIT BULL TERRIERS, DO THEY?"

"THEN...THIS IS THE ONE I'M MOST PROUD OF...SHE HAD TO SLIT THE THROAT OF AN UNBAPTIZED CHILD. BUT A GOOD GUY LIKE YOU WOULDN'T DO THAT..."

"...UNLESS IT WAS THE ONLY WAY TO SAVE IT! AS IN A TRACHEOTOMY!"

"LAST WAS THE REGULAR BLACK MAGIC SABBATH DANCE, ACROBATICS BEFORE THE DEVIL, REPRESENTED BY A HORNED GOAT..."

"IT TOOK A FLAME THROWER TO MAKE YOU DO THE ACROBATICS, BUT THEY STILL COUNT..."





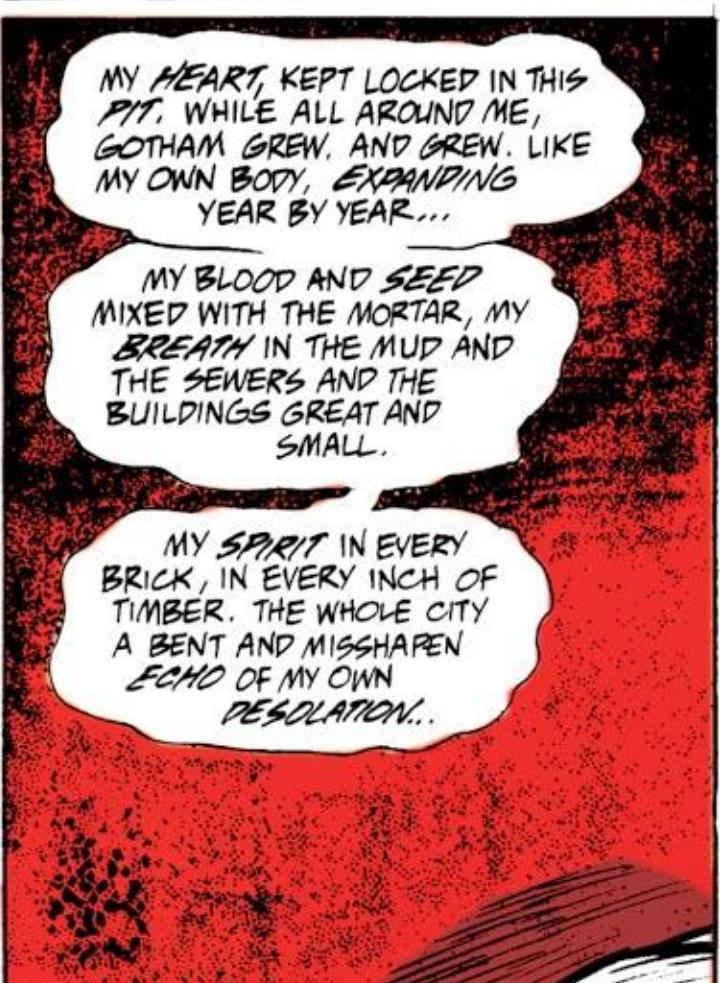




I TALK NOW THROUGH THE HUSK OF THE CREATURE THAT SO SCARED STOCKMAN. AS YOU SEE, JUST A LARGE BAT, MADE HUGE BY THE OCCULTISTS' HEIGHTENED SENSES...



THEY LEFT ME IN LIMBO, BATMAN. SUMMONED, UNDER NO ONE'S CONTROL, BUT AS TRAPPED AS THE GIRL...



MY HEART, KEPT LOCKED IN THIS PIT, WHILE ALL AROUND ME, GOTHAM GREW, AND GREW, LIKE MY OWN BODY, EXPANDING YEAR BY YEAR...

MY BLOOD AND SEED MIXED WITH THE MORTAR, MY BREATH IN THE MUD AND THE SEWERS AND THE BUILDINGS GREAT AND SMALL.

MY SPIRIT IN EVERY BRICK, IN EVERY INCH OF TIMBER. THE WHOLE CITY A BENT AND MISSHAPEN ECHO OF MY OWN DESOLATION...



BUT I WAS PATIENT, I WAITED.

I WAITED FOR A MAN WHO WOULD SET A TRAIL OF RIDDLES...

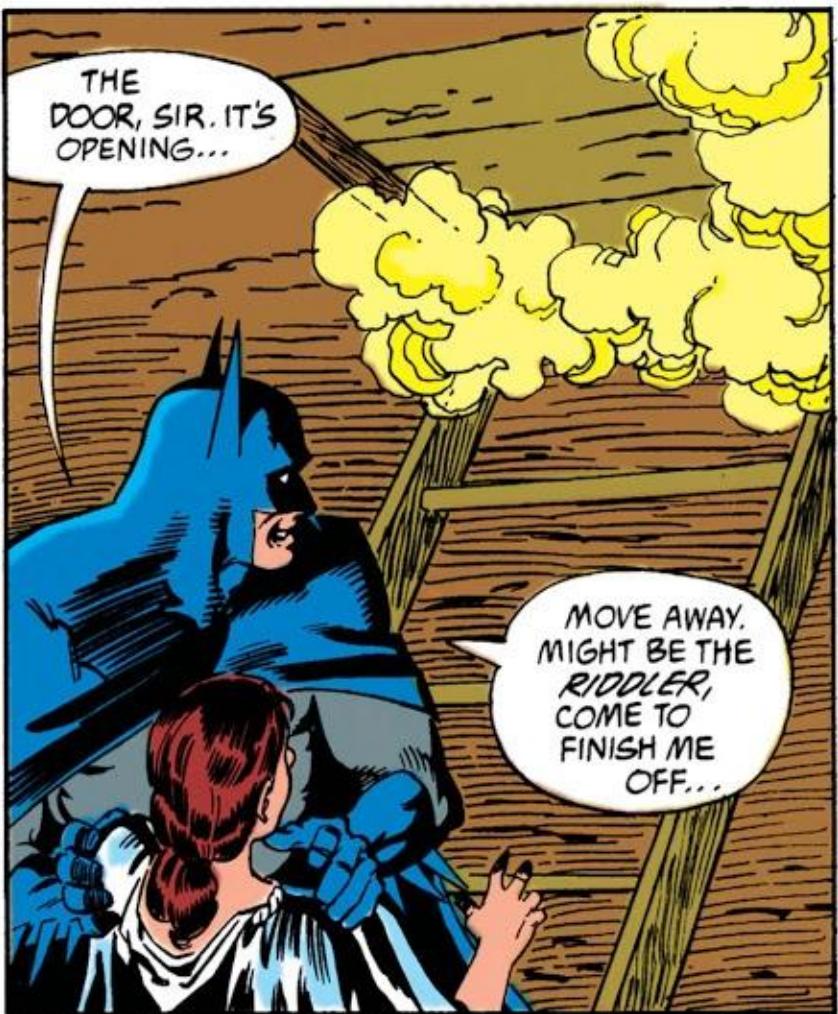
I WAITED FOR A BAT WHO WOULD ANSWER THEM...

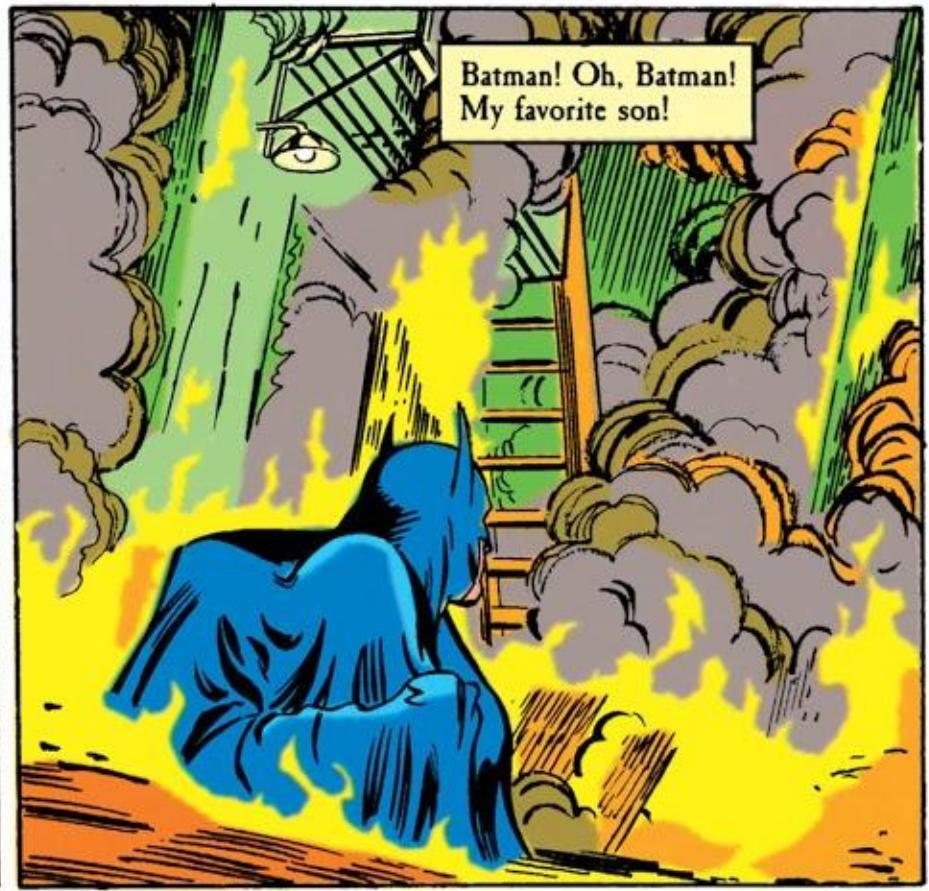
SO THAT HE MIGHT FREE ME.

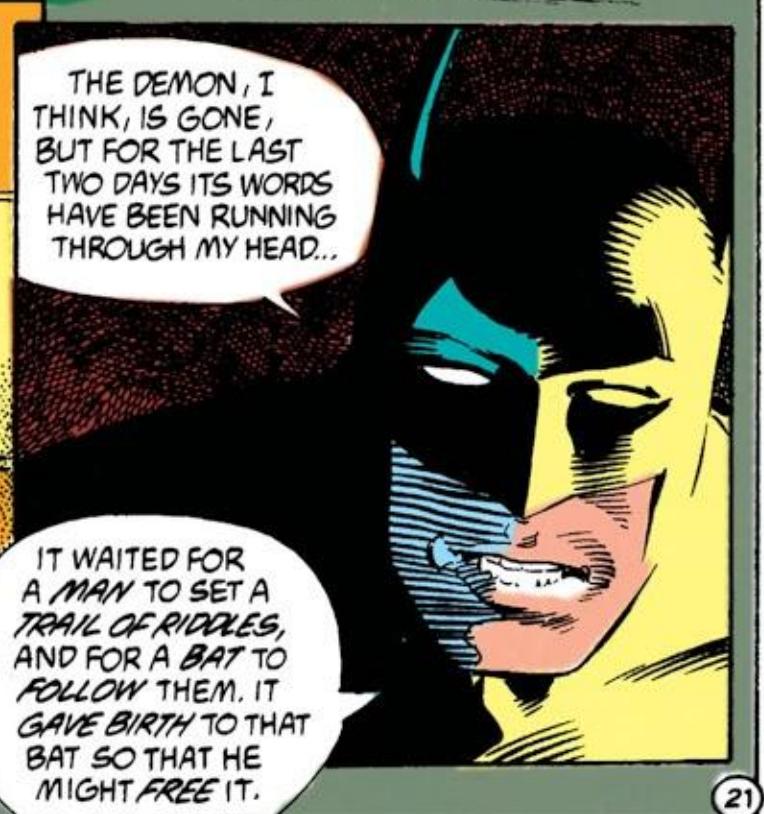
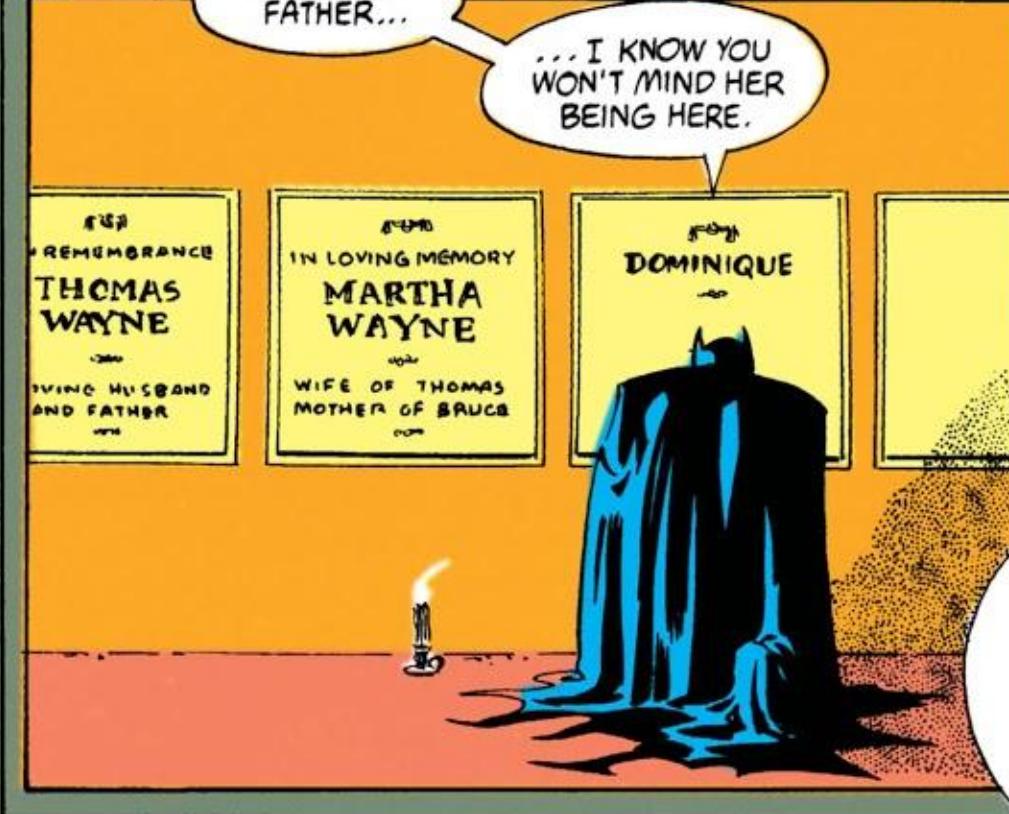


FREE HER, BATMAN. UNTIL SHE IS FREE, I CANNOT BE FREE. NOR CAN YOU.

FREE HER. YOU ARE BROTHER AND SISTER OF THE BAT. ONLY HER BROTHER CAN SAVE HER, AND FREE ME...





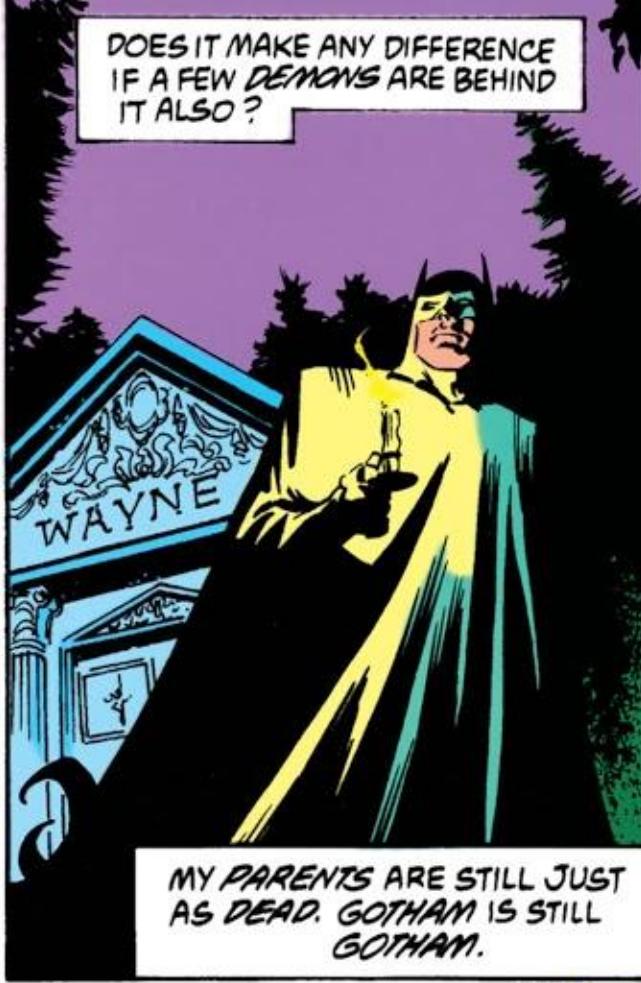


GAVE BIRTH? GOTHAM SHAPED ME,  
IN THAT IT WAS ON GOTHAM'S  
STREETS THAT YOU WERE KILLED...

BUT WAS IT THE CITY OR THE  
DEMON? ACCIDENT OR  
DESIGN? ENVIRONMENT?  
ZEITGEIST? BIOLOGY?  
DEMONS?



I SHAKE MY HEAD, BREATHE DEEPLY,  
TRY TO FORGET IT. YOU'RE BORN,  
AND YOUR HISTORY, YOUR TIME, YOUR  
PLACE, IS A MOLD INTO WHICH  
YOU'RE THROWN...



I AM STILL...  
STILL WHATEVER  
I AM...

THE BABY, MICHAEL, IS STILL  
ALIVE, PULLING THROUGH.  
I'LL VISIT HIM TOMORROW.



I'LL LOOK DOWN AT HIM AS  
MY PARENTS MUST ONCE HAVE  
LOOKED DOWN AT ME. I MIGHT  
EVEN MAKE A FUNNY FACE.

AS I HEAD BACK TO THE  
HOUSE, I SEE A BAT FLY  
ACROSS A SLIVER OF  
YELLOW MOON.

A BAT, DRIVEN BY A  
DARK AND PRIMITIVE  
INSTINCT THROUGH THE  
NIGHT...

I FOLLOW.





**novus**  
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