

P R E L U D E :
LEGACY

Twelve Steps to
the Heart of HELL

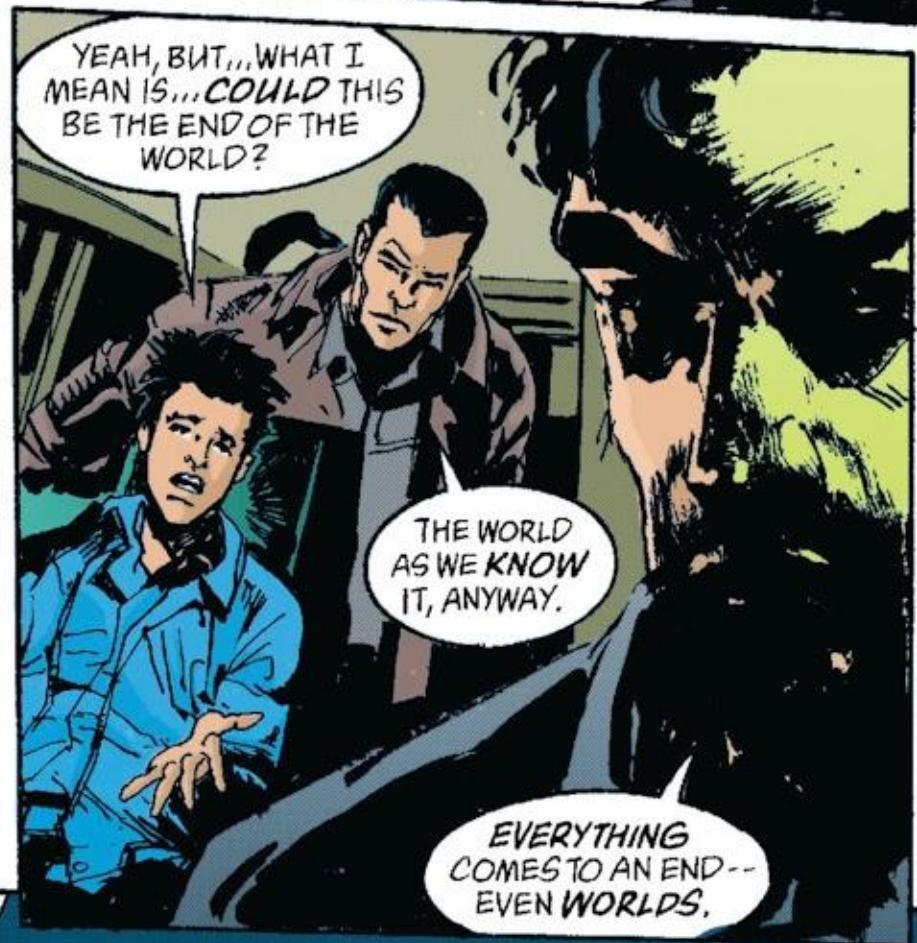


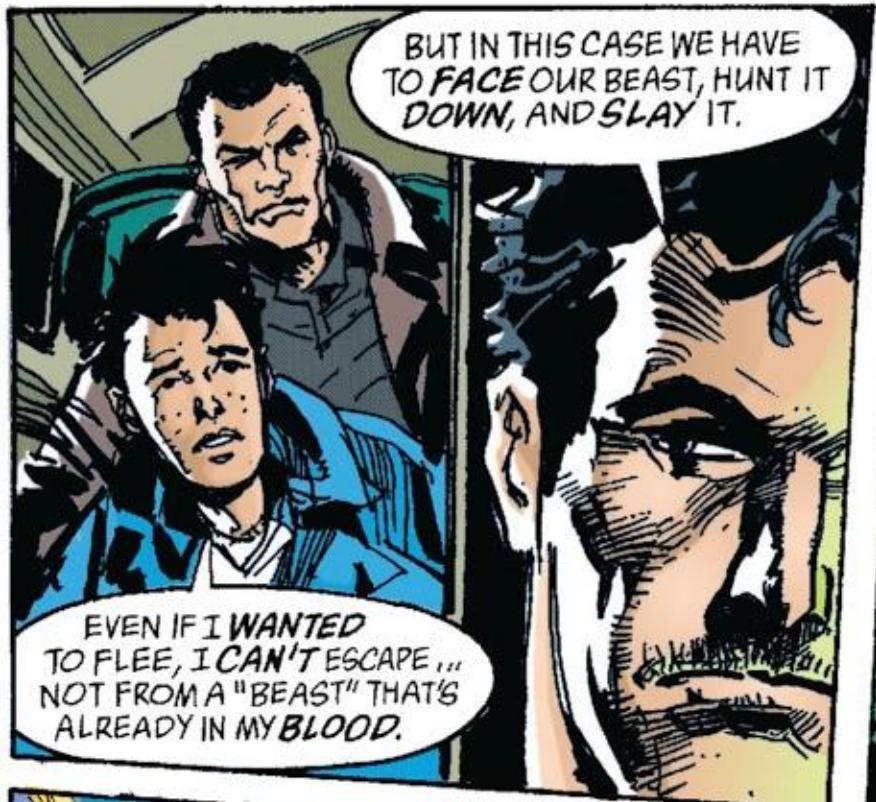
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BATMAN CREATED
BY BOB KANE

TIM--!

"When the world is
pregnant with death,
a secret long hidden
will be revealed."
~~anon.







SHHHHUFFFT



GOTHAM:

I DON'T CARE IF IT
WAS VOTED DOWN NINE
TO THREE OR NINE
MILLION TO THREE.

BUT THE MOTION
HAS ALREADY BEEN
DEFEATED...

MERE REALITY, VODER, WHILE
ILLUSION IS MUCH MORE POWER-
FUL. AS THE NEW DISTRICT ATTORNEY,
YOU HAVE EVERY
RIGHT TO
MANIPU-
LATE THE
MEDIA--

PUSH FOR
IT ANYWAY,
VODER.

--VIA A PRESS CONFERENCE
ANNOUNCING YOUR FIRM INTENTION
TO PURSUE A QUARANTINE OF
ALL CLENCH SURVIVORS.

POLICE PREOCCUPATION
ALWAYS OPENS INTRIGUING
OPPORTUNITIES.

THE CITY'S STILL A
POWDERKEG. LIGHT THE
FUSE. CREATE A LITTLE
CHAOS IN THE STREETS...

VERY WELL, I'LL
START FAXING PRESS
INVITATIONS RIGHT
NOW.

YOU BET
YOU WILL,
VODER,
SKILIKE

THERE-- AN ENTRANCE TO
THE UNDERGROUND RUINS AZRAEL
DESCRIBED... BUT WE'LL HAVE TO
GET PAST THE GUARDS...

I'LL TAKE
THE FRONTAL
ASSAULT.

MEET YOU
UP BEHIND THEM,
ROBIN.

IT'S A DATE,
NIGHTWING.











WHAT I WANT TO KNOW IS, WHO'S PAYING THOSE GUARDS--AND TRYING TO USE PLAGUE AS A WEAPON.

ACCORDING TO AZRAEL, THE CONTROL AND CURE OF THE VIRUS IS AN ANCIENT SECRET--THE PRIZE IN A THREE-WAY CONTEST LASTING TWO THOUSAND YEARS.

OF THE THREE ORIGINAL CONTENDERS--THE ORDER OF ST. DUMAS, THE VATICAN, AND THE SHADY PLAYER KNOWN AS "THE IMMORTAL"--TWO STILL EXIST TODAY.

BUT AZRAEL SAYS IT'S NOT DUMAS, NOT NOW, AND I CAN'T SEE TODAY'S VATICAN EMPLOYING TUAREG THUGS...

NOR WOULD TUAREG SERVE THE VATICAN.

THEN EITHER THE "IMMORTAL" LED SOME SECRET SOCIETY WHICH SURVIVES INTO THE PRESENT, LIKE THE DUMAS ORDER AND THE VATICAN... OR A NEW PLAYER HAS ENTERED THE GAME.

IF MY SUSPICION IS CORRECT, THE ANSWER MAY BE BOTH.

HERE--A CHAMBER LIKE THE ONE AZRAEL DESCRIBED...

AND THERE--THOSE JARS WITH STRANGE CABALISTIC MARKINGS... LIKE THE VIAL WHICH CONTAINED THE FALSECURE.

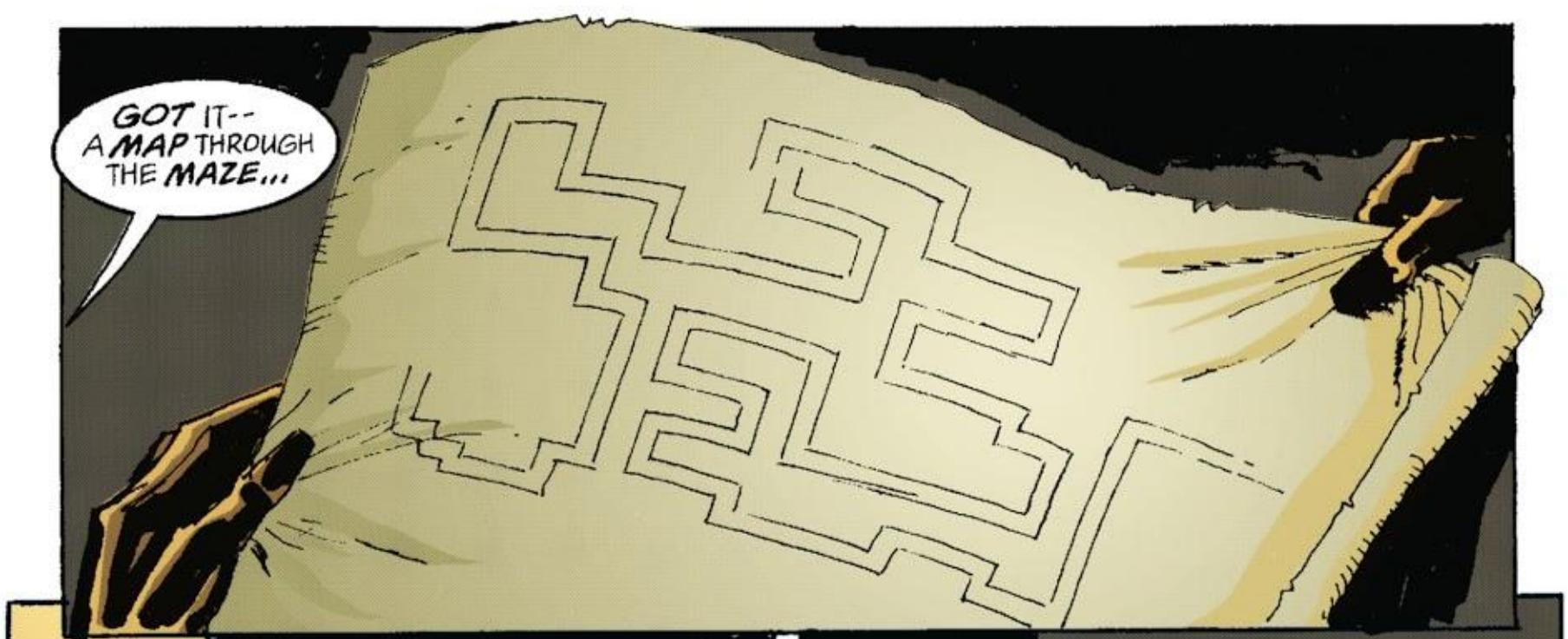
WHAT DO YOU--

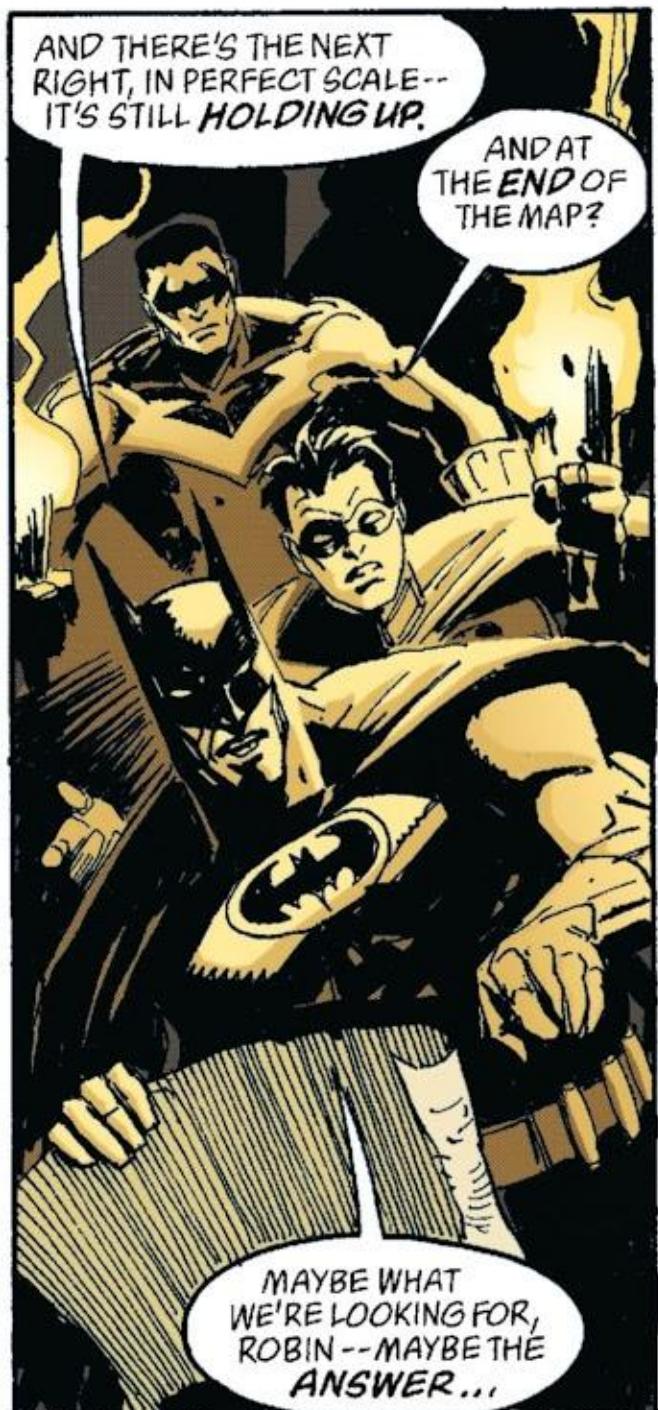




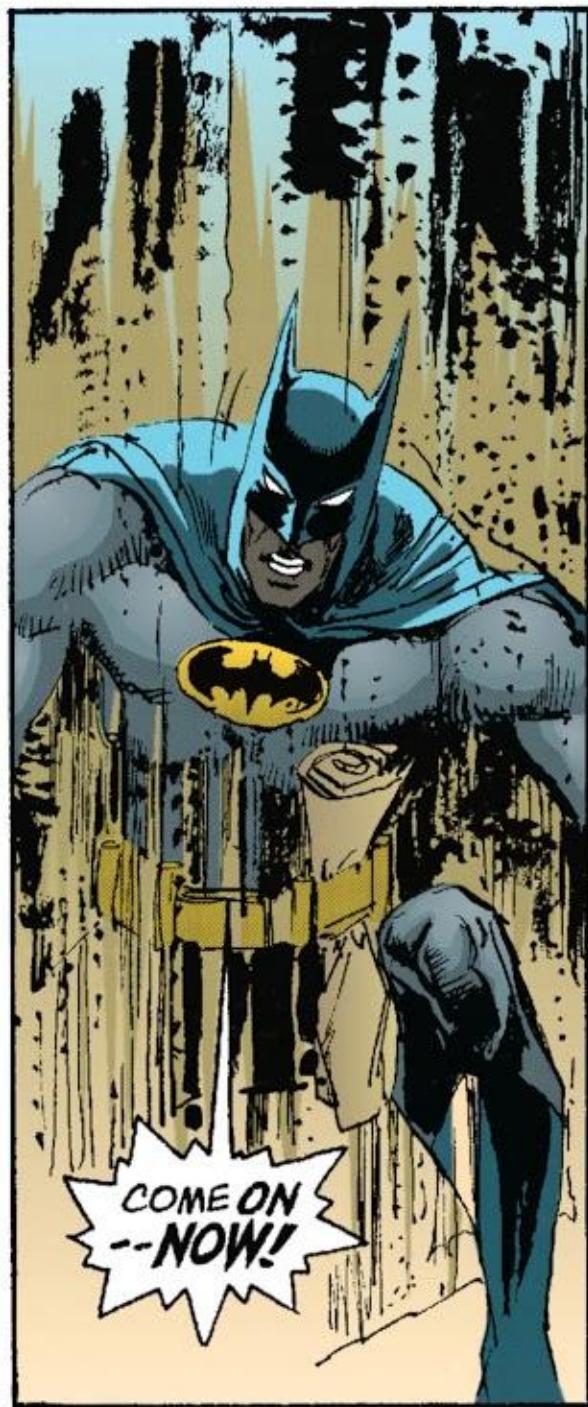


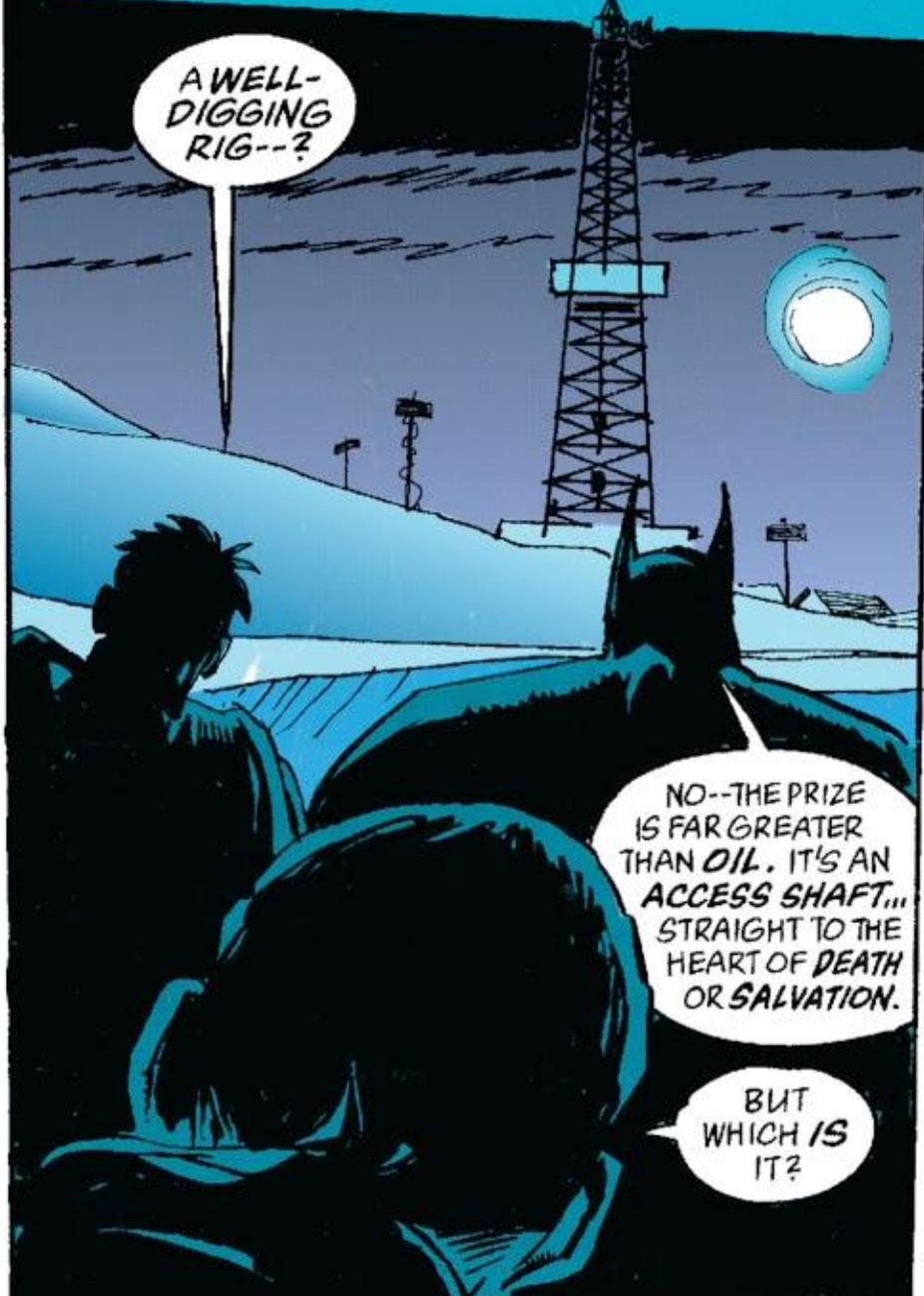










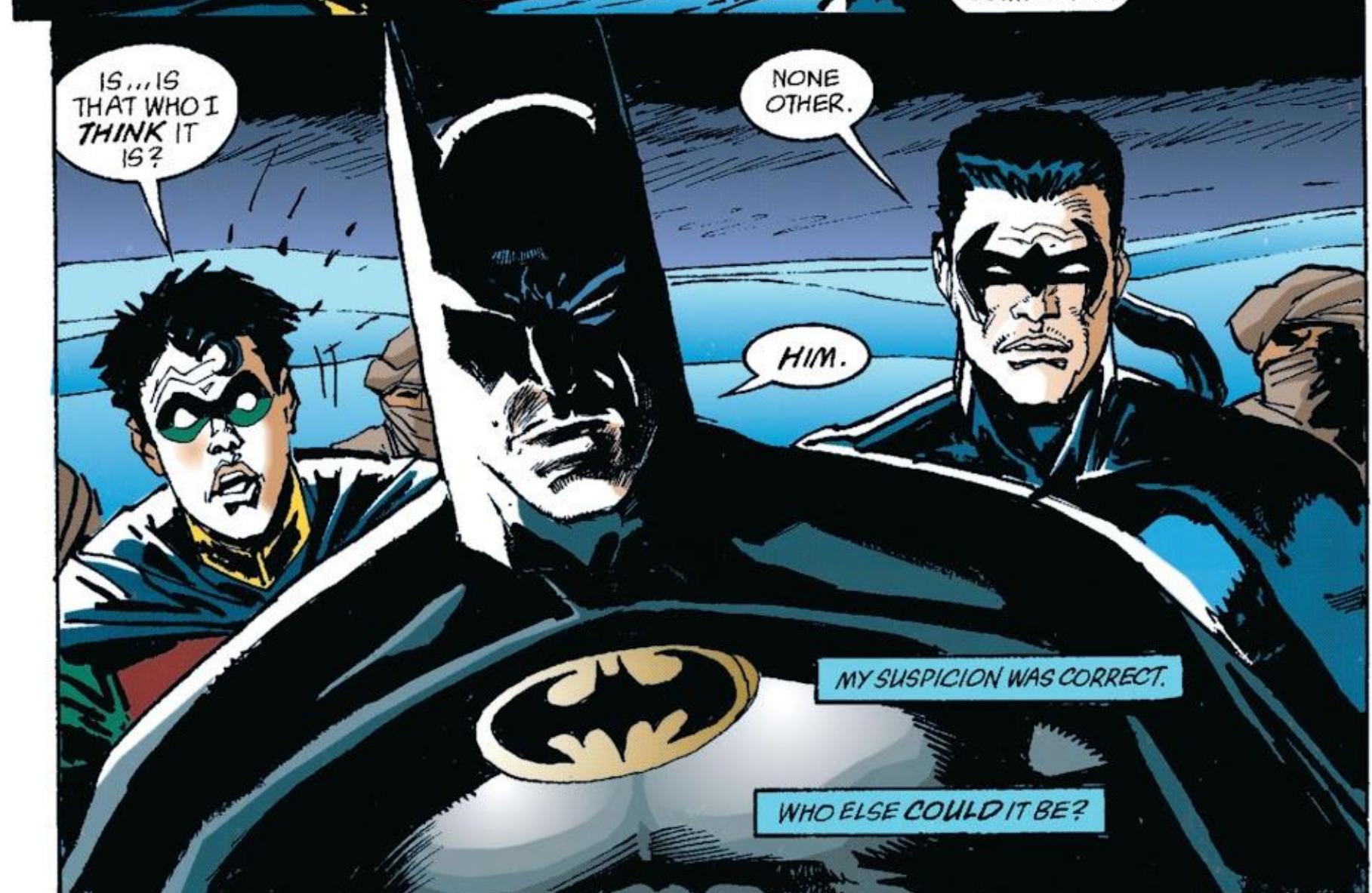


SO WHO'S BIG ENOUGH
TO CREATE A WHOLE CITY
OF TENTS IN THE MIDDLE
OF THE DESERT?

ONLY ONE
POSSIBILITY.

THE SAME
"SUSPICION" YOU
MENTIONED EARLIER,
BUT YOU NEVER SAID
WHO THAT SUSPI-
CION--





CONTINUED IN DETECTIVE COMICS #700!!

Deadman Wade



"THIS IS WHAT
AWESOME
LOOKS LIKE"

