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BATMAN

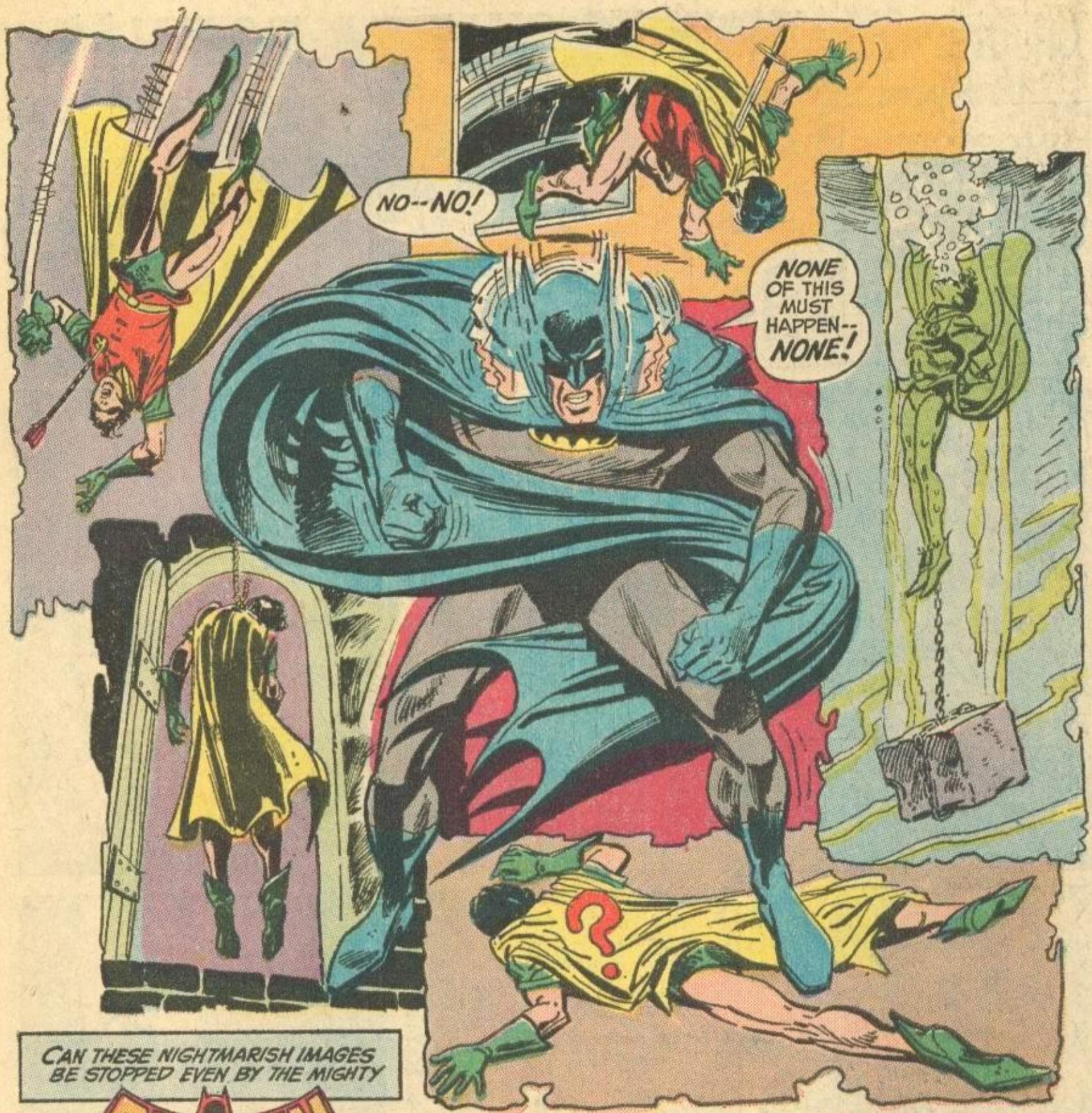
APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE

AUTHORITY

ROBIN--?
OH, NO--
**NOT
AGAIN!**

"HOW
MANY WAYS
CAN A
ROBIN
DIE?"

5-1301



CAN THESE NIGHTMARISH IMAGES
BE STOPPED EVEN BY THE MIGHTY

BATMAN

...OR WILL THIS "DREAM OF DREAD" STEAMROLLER OVER THE RAW, EXPOSED NERVES OF A TORMENTED CRIME-FIGHTER... LEAVING HIM POWERLESS TO PREVENT THE GRISLY REALITY OF...

"HOW MANY WAYS CAN A ROBIN DIE?"

STORY: FRANK ROBBINS — ART: IRY NOVICK & DICK GIORDANO

S-1329

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Chapter One: "HOW TO SHAFT A ROBIN!"

OUT ON PATROL AFTER A "MISSION ACCOMPLISHED", THAT DREAD CRIME-FIGHTER OF GOTHAM... THE BATMAN... IS CONFRONTED BY A NEW, ALARMING CHALLENGE...

THE BAT-SIGNAL--?!

BUT I JUST LEFT POLICE HEADQUARTERS, WHERE IT SHOULD ORIGINATE FROM!

THAT BEAM IS COMING FROM THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF TOWN!

IT'S GOT TO BE A PHONY!

A RUSE TO LURE ME... TO WHAT?

--A TRAP?

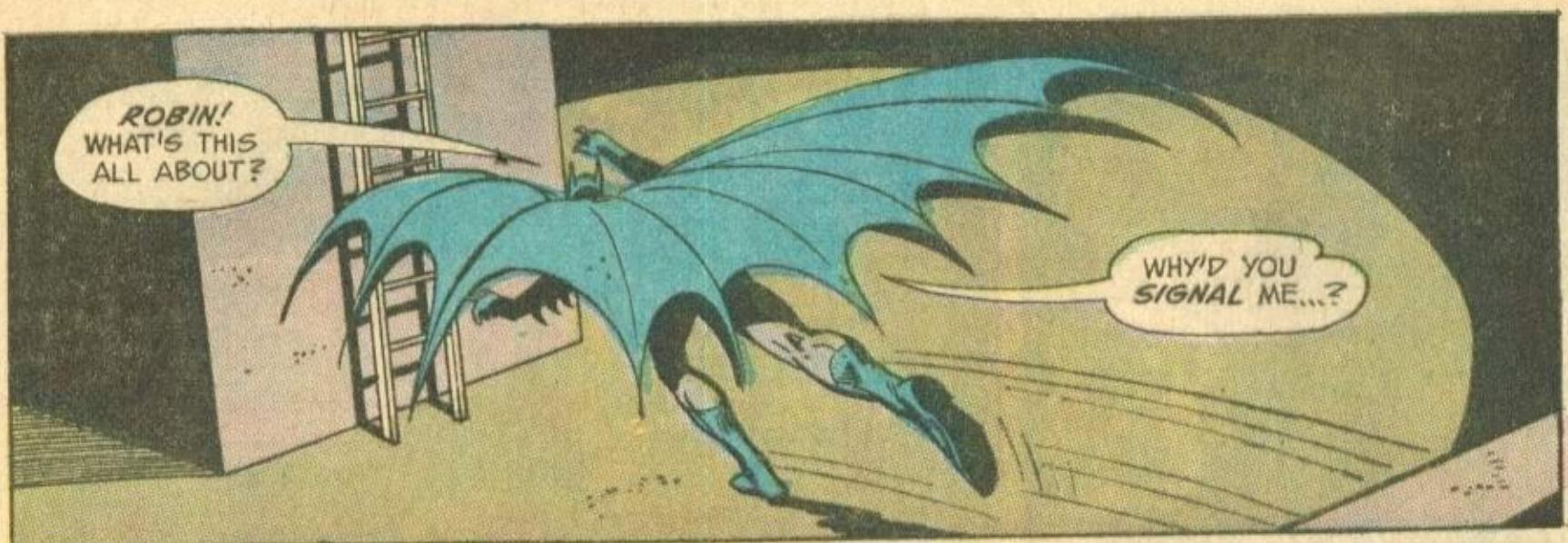
ONE THING'S FOR SURE... HE WANTS ME IN THE WORST WAY!

THERE IT IS! COMING FROM THE TALLEST BUILDING IN GOTHAM...

...WITH THE AIRCRAFT-WARNING BEACONS ON ITS TOWER!

BUT WHO IS OPERATING ONE OF ITS POWERFUL SEARCH-BEAMS AS A BAT-SIGNAL?

ROBIN?!



SWIFTLY RETURNING TO
THE FALLEN ROBIN...

DICK--
ARE YOU...
A--DUMMY?!

THEN IT
WAS ALL
A TRICK...
...FOR
WHAT MAD
PURPOSE?

THIS ATTACHED
NOTE FIGURES
TO TELL ME...

BATMAN--
HOW MANY WAYS CAN
A 'ROBIN' DIE?

P.S. THIS IS ONLY
THE FIRST! TOMORROW
NIGHT AT THE ELEVENTH
HOUR... YOU CAN WITNESS
THE NEXT!

THE "NEXT..."
WHERE?

AND COULD
THE KILLER'S
SECOND VICTIM
BE THE REAL
ROBIN?

TORMENTED BY THE HARROWING POSSIBILITY, THE MASKED
MANHUNTER ALLOWS NOTHING TO STAND IN HIS WAY...

KARASH!

GOTTA FIND
OUT... RIGHT
NOW!

SWIFTLY
DIALING
AN UPSTATE
NUMBER...

DON'T CARE
WHO I WAKE...
AS LONG AS
HE IS THERE!





CHAPTER
TWO:

"HOW TO CARVE A ROBIN!"



DESPITE HIS DECIPIERING OF THE COMING NIGHT'S CODED RENDEZVOUS, THE BATMAN KNOWS NO SLEEP...

-- NOT WITH THE PLAGUING KNOWLEDGE OF ROBIN'S DISAPPEARANCE GNAWING AT HIM!...

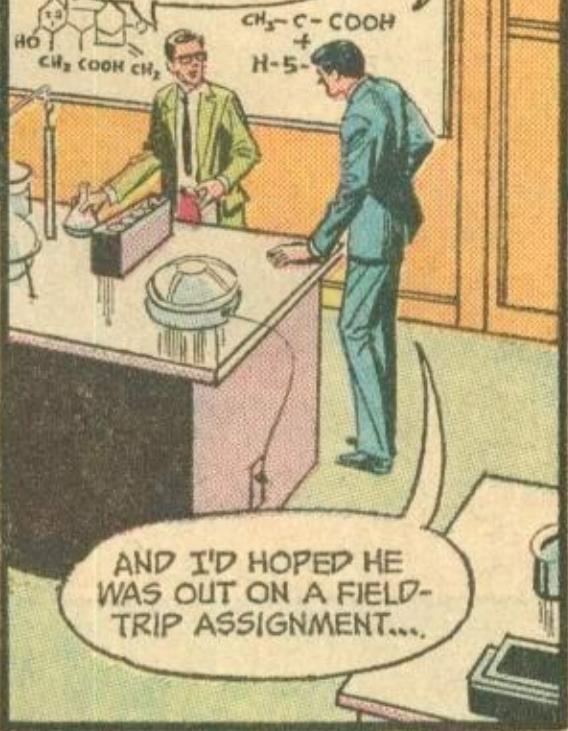
SO FAR THIS GAME OF MURDER HAS BEEN SHEER BLUFF! BUT UNTIL I CAN BE SURE WHERE DICK IS...



DAYLIGHT FINDS THE CAPE CRUSADER AT THE COLLEGE IN HIS COVER ROLE AS BRUCE WAYNE, DICK GRAYSON'S GUARDIAN...

I ASSUMED HE WAS AT HOME WORKING ON TERM PAPERS...

UH-UH!



SO THE NIGHT OF THE APPROACHING "ELEVENTH HOUR" SEES A WEARY AND BAFFLED BATMAN RETURNING TO GOTHAM IN EVEN GREATER DREAD...



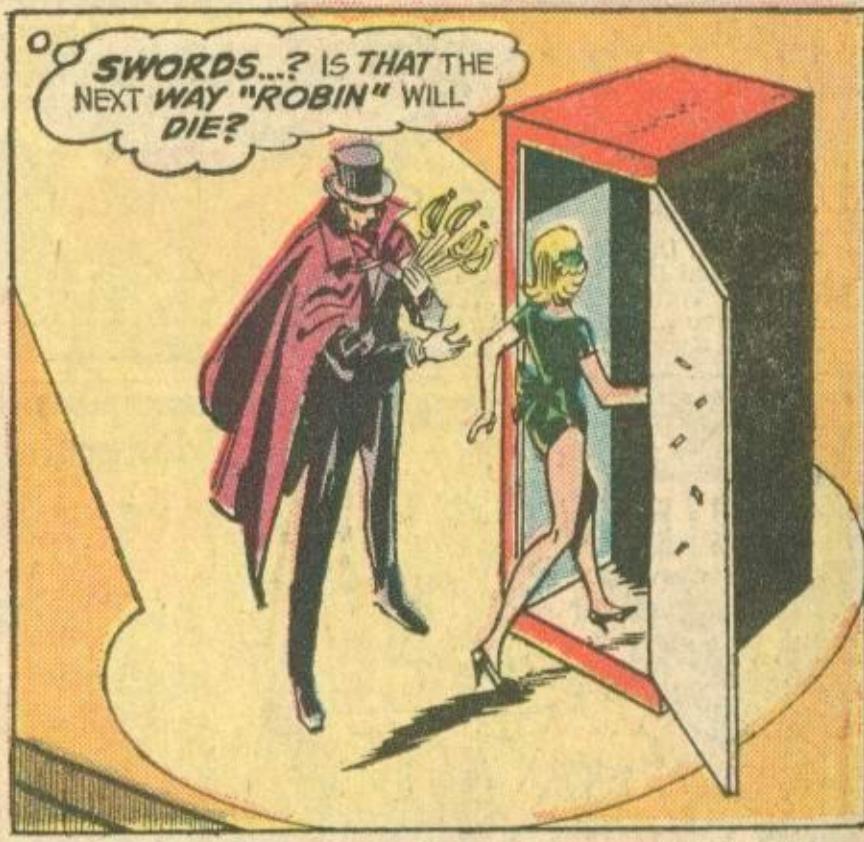
APPREHENSIVELY, HE STAKES OUT THE "STRIPED-ARROW COUNTRY CLUB"...

THAT SIGN DISPELS ANY SUSPICION THAT ONE OF THE RESPECTED CLUB MEMBERS MIGHT BE MY "SUSPECT..."

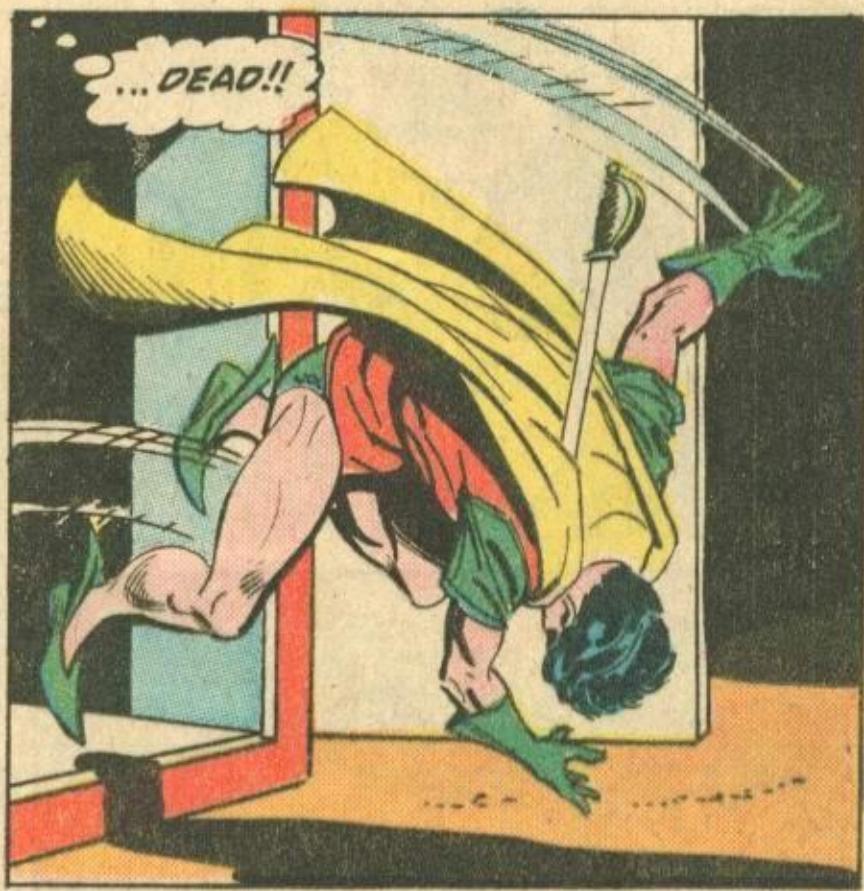


THE "KILLER" IS MORE LIKELY TO BE ONE OF THE ENTERTAINERS BROUGHT IN FOR THIS EVENT!





A MOMENT OF HUSHED EXPECTANCY AS CHANDRA WITHDRAWS THE LETHAL BLADES, AND THEN WITH A FLOURISH...THE DEATH-TRAP IS OPENED...



AS IF BY MORE MAGIC, THE CARNIVAL REVELRY IS TRANSFORMED INTO SCREAMING CHAOS...EVEN AS AN AVENGING SPECTER DROPS TO THE STAGE...

ONCE MORE I'VE FAILED "ROBIN"! BUT THIS TIME...

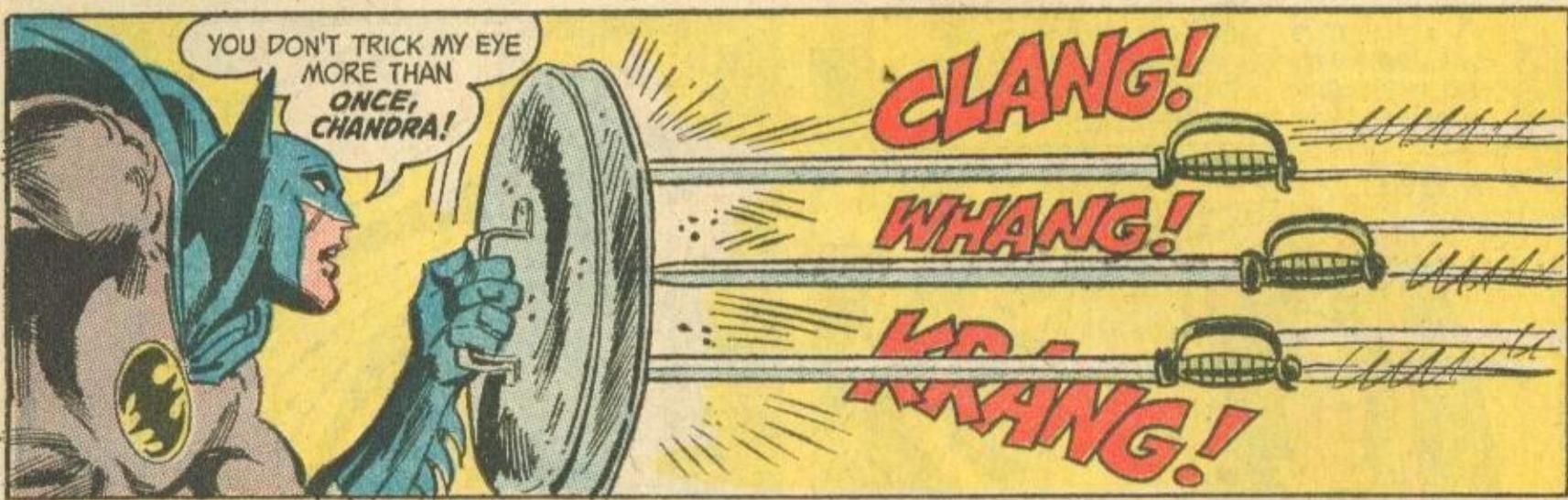
...YOU WON'T PULL A "VANISHING ACT" ON ME-- KILLER!



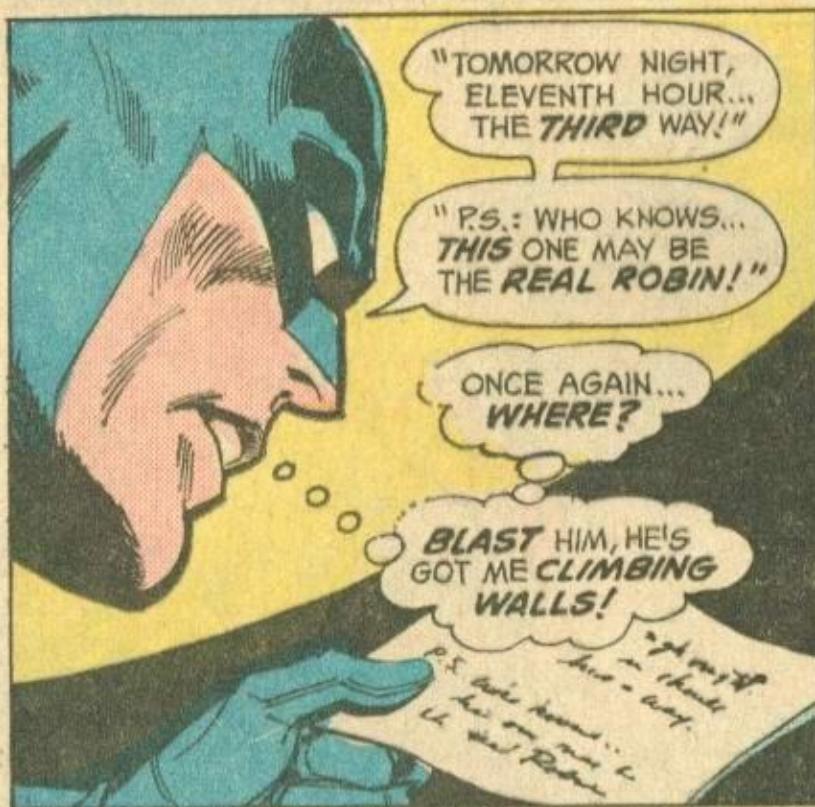
MY HAND, BATMAN--IS FASTER...

...THAN YOUR EYE!









CHAPTER
THREE:

"HOW TO BURY A ROBIN"

DEEP!

THE THIRD NIGHT OF THE BATMAN'S TORMENT IS SHROUDED IN DRIFTING MIST... AND DARK MYSTERY...

THE FISHING-BOATS ARE UNLOADED ALONG HERE...

BUT WHAT'S IN THE SCHEMER'S MAD MIND THIS TIME?

HOW CAN I SAVE ROBIN... IF I CAN'T FIND HIM?

AND IN THIS FOG I CAN BARELY SEE...

THEN, SUDDENLY... THE CREAK OF A HOISTING BLOCK-AND-TACKLE...

CRE-EAK!

WHA...?

A BOUND FIGURE MATERIALIZES FROM THE MIST ABOVE...

...AND PLUMMETS LIKE A ROCK TOWARD THE DARK WATERS BELOW!

THAT FIEND! THIS COULD BE THE LIVING ROBIN!

I CAN'T CHANCE THAT IT'S JUST ANOTHER DUMMY-TRICK!

DEEP UNDER THE MURKY WATERS AN ANGUISHED BATMAN FIGHTS TO FREE "ROBIN"...

A CONCRETE-WEIGHT CHAINED TO HIS ANKLES!

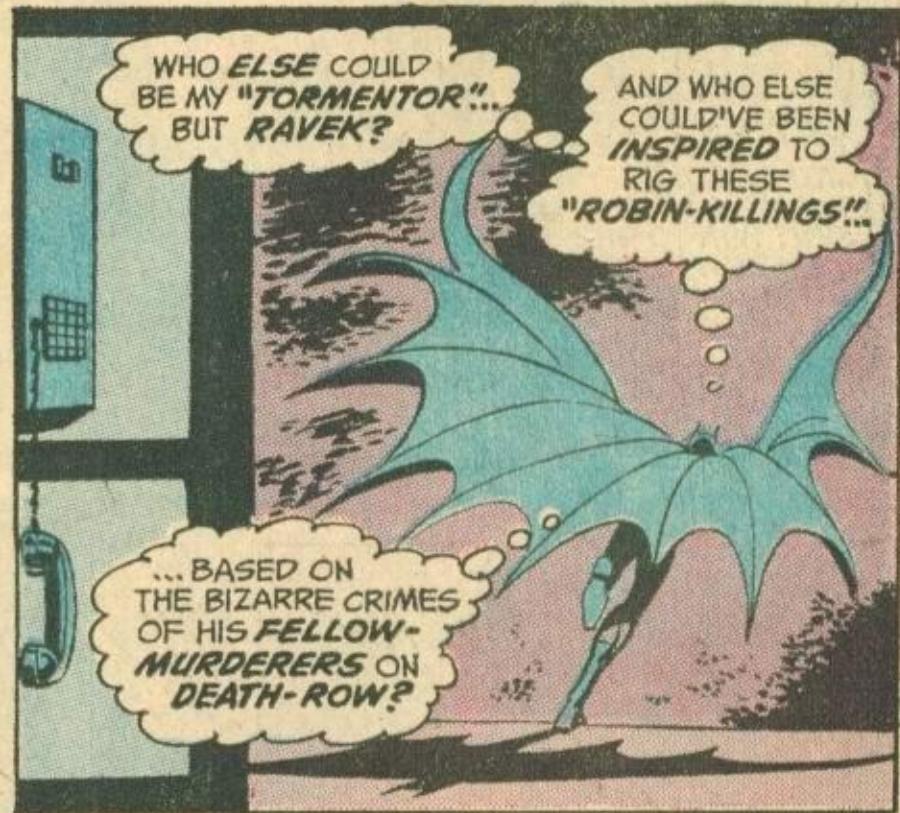
GOTTA CUT IT LOOSE...



CHAPTER FOUR: "HOW TO TWIST A ROBIN'S NECK!"







CHAPTER
FIVE

HOW TO CHOP UP A ROBIN!

THIS CHAPTER PENCILLED BY DICK DILLIN

THE BRUTAL REVELATION OF THE "TORMENTOR'S" IDENTITY GOADS THE BATMAN INTO A FRENZIED RACE AGAINST AN UNKNOWN DEADLINE...

RAVEK... THE "BUTCHER"! A TWISTED KILLER WITH ONLY ONE FIXED IDEA IN HIS HEAD...

...TO DESTROY THE MAN WHO SENT HIM TO THE DEATH-HOUSE... DESTROY HIM SLOWLY BY MENTAL TORTURE!

...TO MAKE ME SWEAT AND CRINGE AS HE MUST'VE DONE DURING THOSE LONELY MONTHS ON DEATH-ROW... WAITING FOR HIS EXECUTION!

BUT NOW I KNOW WHERE TO FIND HIM! HE'S RETURNED TO THE SCENE OF HIS LAST MACABRE SLAYING...



YES, ROBIN--
HE'S COME AT
LAST-- AS I
KNEW HE
WOULD!

YOUR "SAINTLY"
PROTECTOR...
ARRIVING TO
SAVE YOU!

A SHAME YOU
CAN'T HEAR ME
IN YOUR
DRUGGED
STATE-- NOR
WITNESS YOUR
OWN DEATH!
AS THE
BATMAN WILL...

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING.

PASSING NIGHTMARE
RE-CREATIONS IN WAX,
THE BATMAN SILENTLY
STALKS THE EERIE
MUSEUM... HUNTING...
HUNTING...

ROBIN'S GOT TO
BE HERE... SOME-
WHERE! IF I CAN
ONLY FIND SOME
SLIGHT TRAIL... A
DRAGGING HEEL-
MARK... ANYTHING!

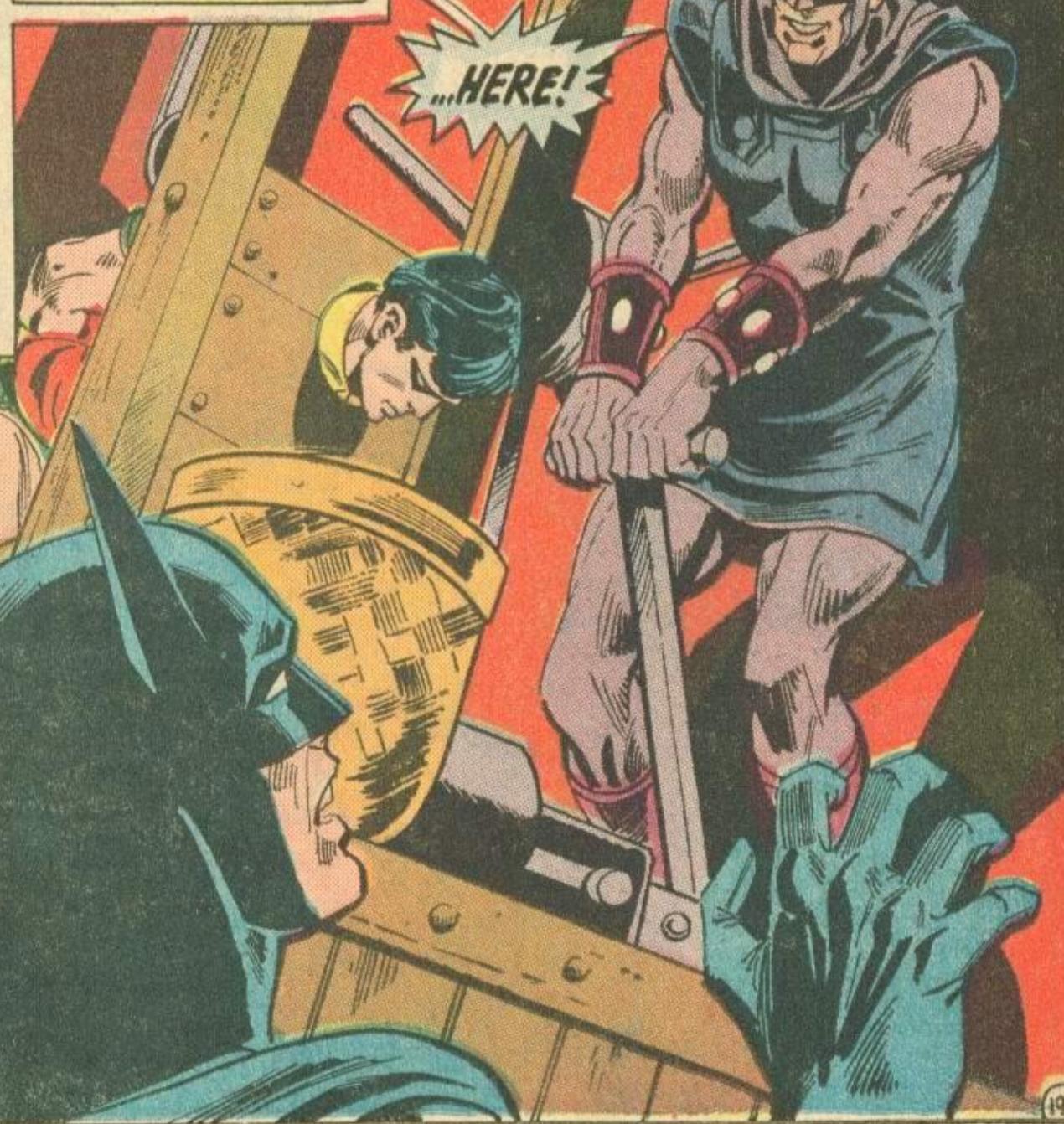


SUDDENLY... TO THE
CLICK OF A THROWN
LIGHT-SWITCH...



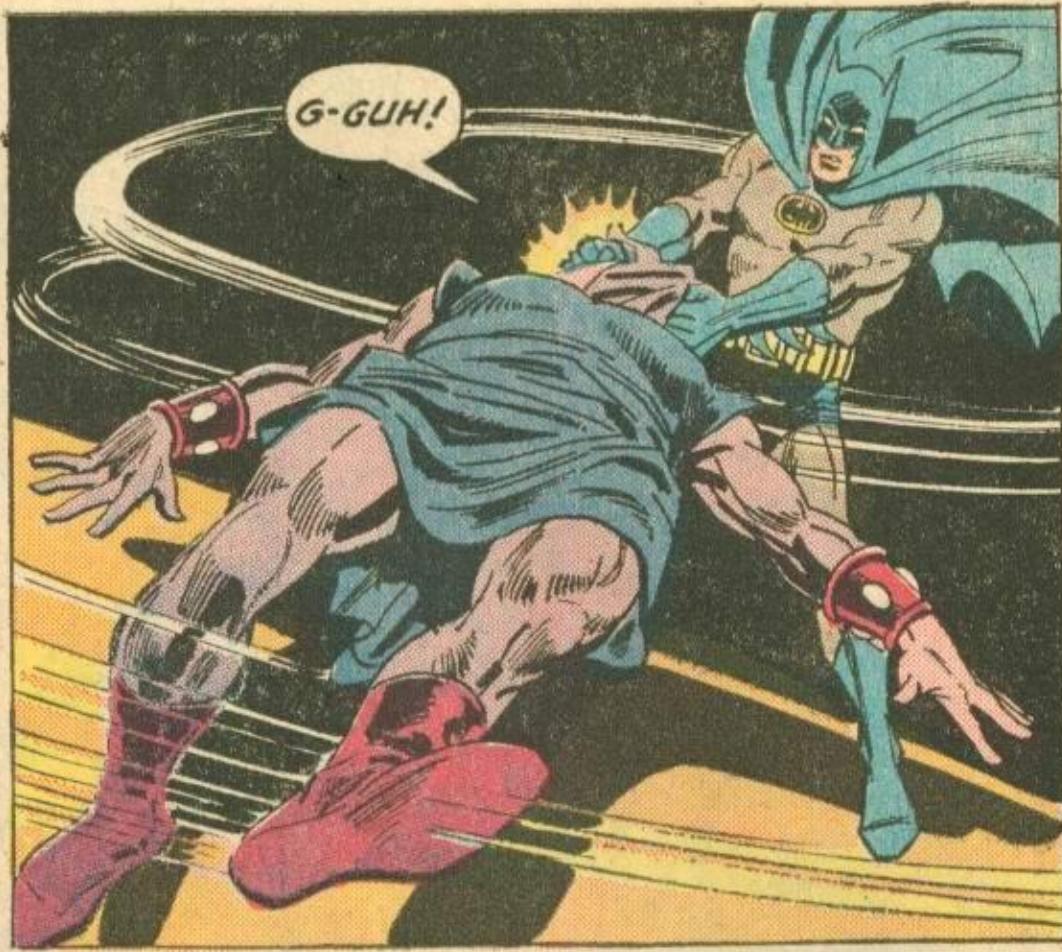
LOOKING
FOR ROBIN,
BATMAN?

THEN
LOOK...









LATER, AS A DISORIENTED
ROBIN COMES OUT OF
HIS DRUG-INDUCED FOG...

B-BATMAN...?
WHERE... WHERE
AM I...?

AS CLOSE
TO DEATH
AS I EVER
HOPE YOU
GET, SON!

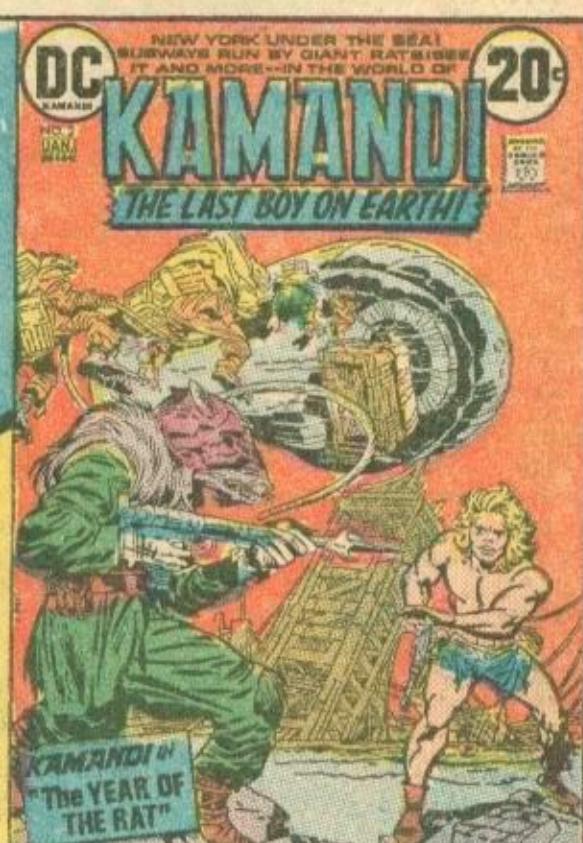
UGH

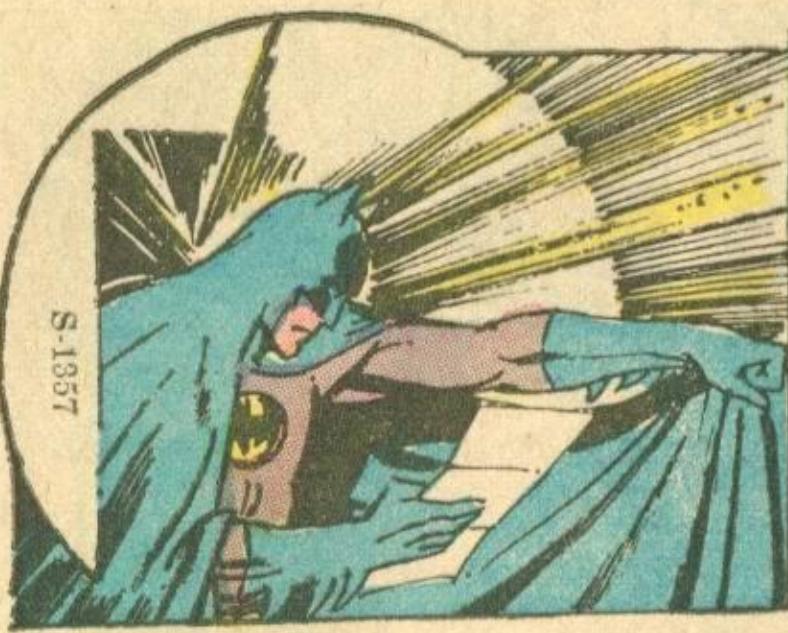
IRONIC,
ISN'T IT,
BATMAN
...IF I'D
BEEN
AWAKE
THROUGH
IT ALL--

...THIS ROBIN
WOULD HAVE
DIED A
THOUSAND
DEATHS!

THE END

NEXT ISSUE ON SALE ON OR ABOUT DEC. 14





S-1357

LETTERS to the **BATMAN**

The Batman) trying to capture a female criminal, and of all things accuses him of man-handling a "helpless" girl! As for Talia, she's an idiot who likes to straddle the fence between good and evil; worst of all is the sub-plot, that *Batman* is supposedly in love with this amoral creep!

The art by Neal Adams and Dick Giordano was lousy but understand that it was Adams' fault, not Giordano's. Even since Adams won the *Shazam* award, his art contains less and less detail. What has happened to his one-time imaginative layouts?

—JAMES T. MCCOY, JR., Valley Station, Ky.

(Now let's zero in on another correspondent in another "camp"!—JS)



Dear Editor:

Being a bit behind the times, I've known of J.R.R. Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings" trilogy for about a year, and have just gotten around to reading it. I know now what all the excitement is about. Tolkien is a master storyteller. But between chapters, I picked up a batch of new comix, *Batman* #243 being in the bunch. And, wonder of wonders, "The Lazarus Pit" had me back in Tolkien-land again! I was much reminded of the Fellowship by *Batman & Company*, who have set off on a quest almost as hopeless as Frodo Baggins'. Coming to the end of the issue, I saw the Demon come on like the Dark Lord, Sauron, with an evil glint in the eyes and a face of hatred, hatred for all but himself.

All of which is to say, Denny O'Neil's current work is as captivating as the Ring Tales, only a little more shallow, a little more compact. Don't take offense at the previous statement, though. Surely you can't expect to equal Tolkien's epic in 24 pages!

Denny's work has an advantage over the Ring-lore, though! The medium in which he works is able to portray the action through a series of pictures, pictures by another literary and artistic giant, Neal Adams. Neal's simple, solid paneling was beautiful.

With this series, Denny has captured my attention as few others in the comix medium have. If this beginning segment is any indication, the best in comix is definitely yet to come.

—MARK LUCKE, Beeville, Tex.

(When you're hot, you're hot! And when you're cold (which is the reaction of the next correspondent to this *Batman* issue), it's burial time!—JS)



Dear Editor:

The latest issue of *The Batman* (#243) had within its covers one of the most poorly written and illustrated stories published in the last four years! I thought (and hoped) the "camp" era was dead, but you seem determined to bring it back!

I just can't understand why you're so determined to bring "camp" back. It's been proven that the majority of readers want a *Batman* that is a fearsome, dark avenger of justice; who fights crime not for fun, but because his parents were slain by a hood named Joe Chill when he was a child! He became *The Batman* in the hopes he could prevent such tragedies in the future. We want *The Batman*, not some clod that calls himself *Batman*!

"The Lazarus Pit" was trite and incoherent in plot, characterization, and more particularly in dialogue. The featured characters of Ling, Molly Post, Talia, and our Caped Clod . . . er . . . Crusader were extremely stereotyped. Ling is an egotistic fool who has a vague conception of justice; Molly Post is stupid, sees *Batman* (I refuse to call this dummy

Dear Editor:

A couple of years ago, as the "camp" craze was dying out, I wrote you a letter calling for the return of *The Batman* of old—dark, mysterious, swift avenger of the night. It was something of a long time coming, but we've been getting it for a while now, so it's time to say thanks. *The Batman* is delightful. I'm sure the younger crowd is digging the action and suspense.

But for the older crowd.

Well, you know he's a little bit "crazy"! Denny O'Neil has a marvelous sense of subtle fun, and his scripts usually show *Batman* as the somewhat fanatic character he truly must be. I mean, to run around in a costume, vigilante-like, calling crooks "filthy scum" while bashing in their heads . . . and never even stopping for coffee! Of course he's a little "crazy"—and I love it!

Talia (whew!) kisses *Batman* in "The Lazarus Pit" and cape-and-cowl says, "Your lips are warm, as always!—And as always, they chill me . . . to the marrow!" What fun! And Neal Adams digs exotic costumes, I see. Not to mention exotic females.

As I enter my senior year at New York University, it gets a little harder to stand those indulgent, condescending smiles from people who say, "Ah, you still read comix books?" But what the heck—there's still a lot of us—and we're having a good time!

—LOREN LIEBERTHAL, New York, N.Y.



Dear Editor:

Magnificent is the word for #243 of *Batman*! Once again, you, Denny O'Neil and Neal Adams, and your staff have presented us with a masterful work of literature. "The Lazarus Pit" was an excellently carried out piece of material, and I must congratulate Mr. O'Neil on it. And I was so glad to see Neal Adams back on *Batman*! He is one of the few who portrays *Batman* as the true creature of the night that he should be . . . even in the daytime!

Ra's al Ghul is one of the most original villains and the first worthy opponent *Batman* has faced in a very long time. He is cunning and very intelligent. He seems to have the most efficient, logical, analytical, diabolical mind I have ever seen in an opponent of *Batman*. He has to be all these things, or else how could he stand up against *The Batman* this long, and have *Batman* worried . . . so worried he was forced to eliminate Bruce Wayne as part of his master plan!

—GAIL BURT, Temple City, Cal.



Address communications to LETTERS TO THE BATMAN, National Periodical Publications, 909 Third Ave., New York, N.Y., 10022.