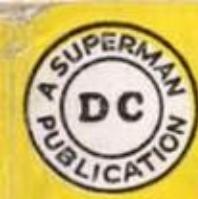


NO.53... JUNE...JULY

TEN CENTS



BATMAN

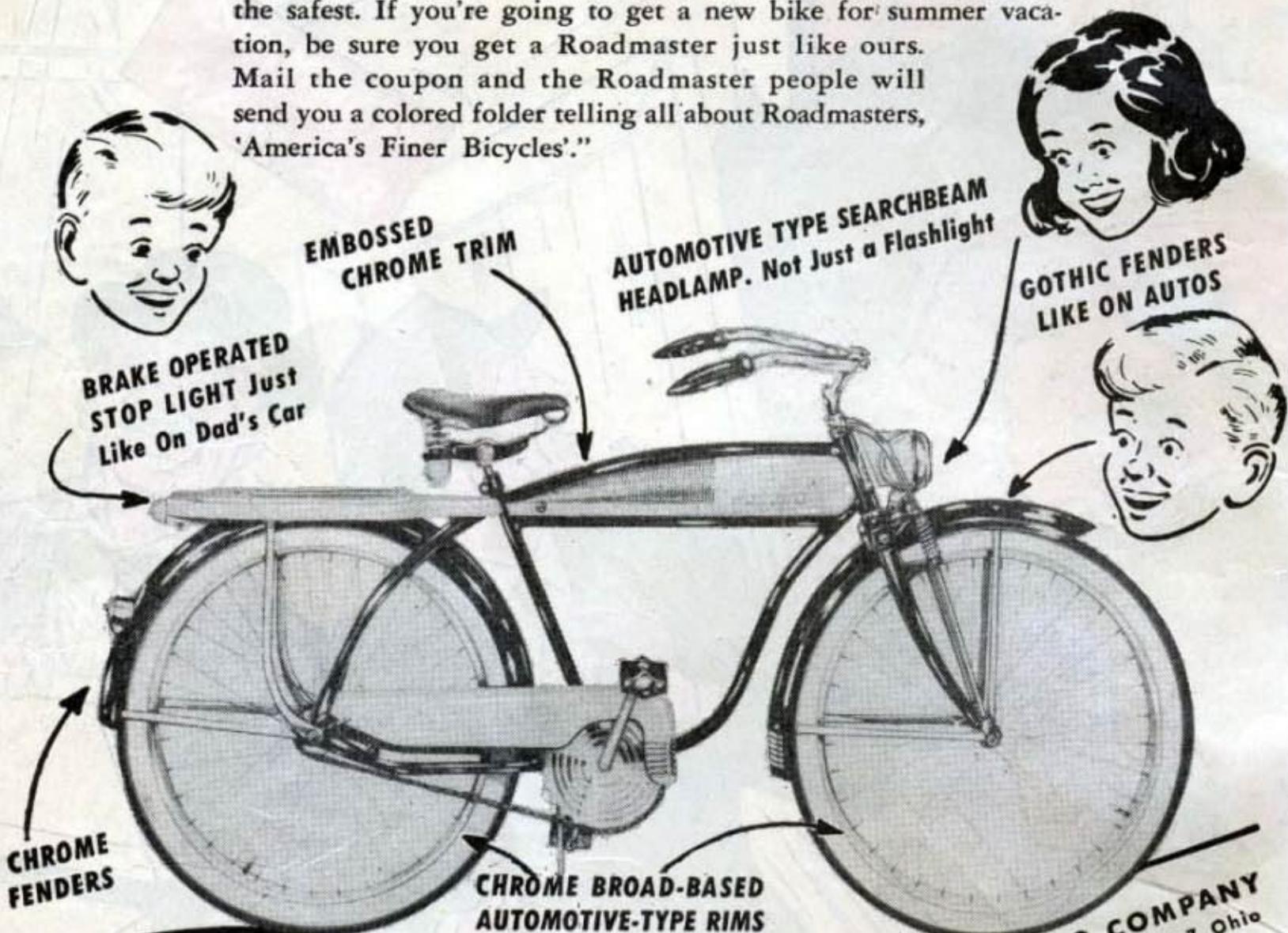
A 52 PAGE
MAGAZINE





Bobby and Jane tell you why they chose **ROADMASTER*** for their Summer Vacation

• "When Dad said we kids could get new bicycles for summer vacation, we rushed downtown and looked at every bicycle we could find. We even tried them out, and what do you think? We both chose Roadmaster Luxury Liners. They're really super! Roadmasters have so many things just like Dad's new automobile —chromium, Gothic fenders . . . stop-light operated from the brake . . . a real searchbeam headlamp . . . broad base rims that hold more air . . . two-tone colors and shiny sparkling embossed chrome trim. Yes, and the man who sold them to us said they were 100% safer because the frames are electronically welded. We think they're the best-looking bicycles on the road, and the safest. If you're going to get a new bike for summer vacation, be sure you get a Roadmaster just like ours. Mail the coupon and the Roadmaster people will send you a colored folder telling all about Roadmasters, 'America's Finer Bicycles'."



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Gentlemen: Please rush to me a folder showing the Roadmaster
in colors.
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PLEASE PRINT

BATMAN

WITH
ROBIN

- THE BOY WONDER -

CAN YOU IMAGINE THE
JOKER, SARDONIC JESTER
OF THE UNDERWORLD, RAIDING A JEWELRY
SHOP, YET ESCAPING WITH ONLY A
STOLEN HAIRPIN AS HIS LOOT? WHAT'S
BEHIND THIS APPARENTLY RIDICULOUS
CRIME AND OTHER PREPOSTEROUS
PRANKS THAT FOLLOW? WHAT NEW
KNAVERY HAS THE HARLEQUIN OF
CRIME DEVISED IN AN ALL-OUT ATTEMPT
TO MAKE MONKEYS OUT OF BATMAN
AND ROBIN? THE AMAZING ANSWER
- IS IN THE HARROWING ADVENTURE
CALLED: "A HAIRPIN,
A HOE,
A HACKSAW,
A HOLE
IN THE
GROUND!"

HA

HO

HA

HO
HA

HO
HA
HA

Bob
Kane

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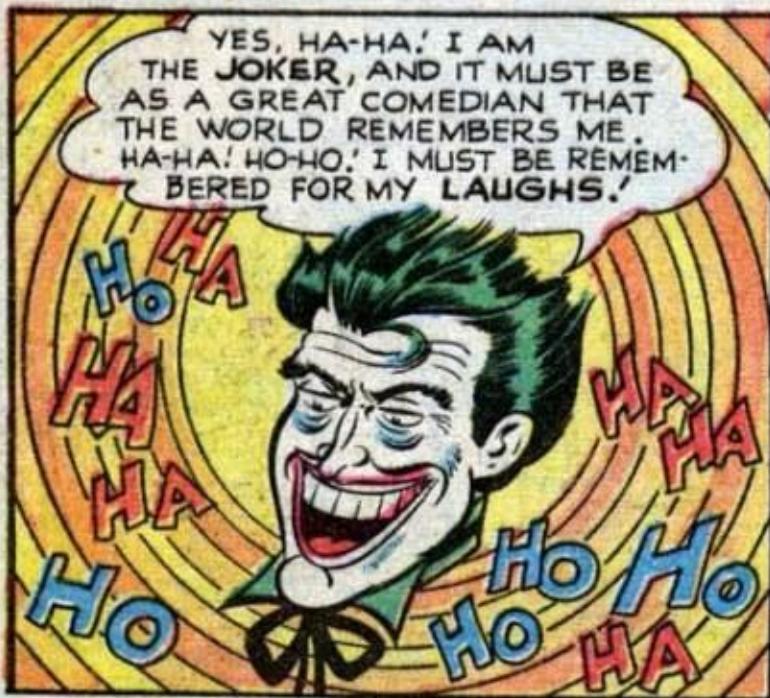
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BATMAN

IN HIS SECRET HIDEOUT NEAR GOTHAM CITY, THAT FEARSOME VILLAIN, THE JOKER, TAKES STRANGE INVENTORY OF HIS POSSESSIONS...



A MOMENT LATER, THE CLOWN PRINCE OF CRIME ENTERS HIS MAGNIFICENT SILVER ROOM...

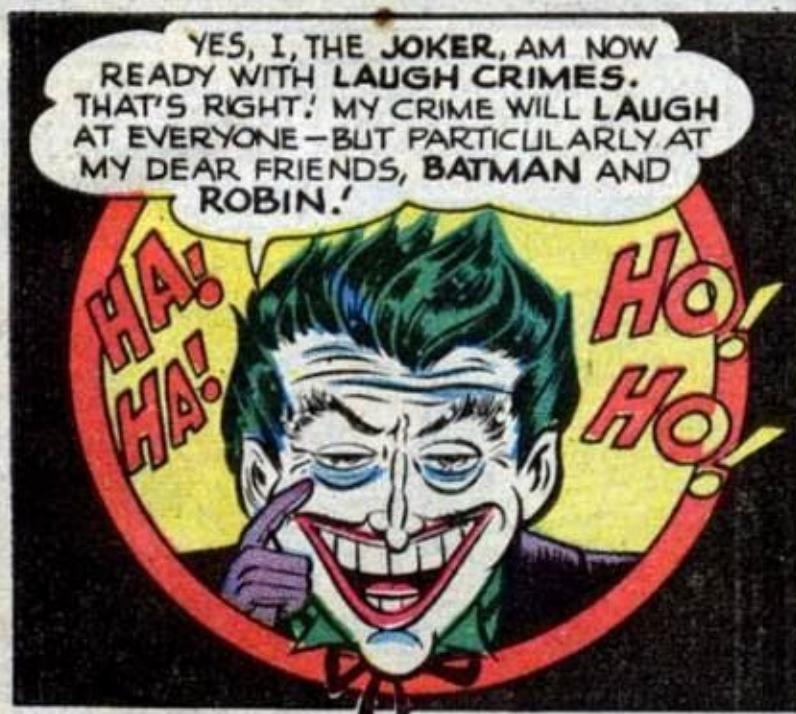


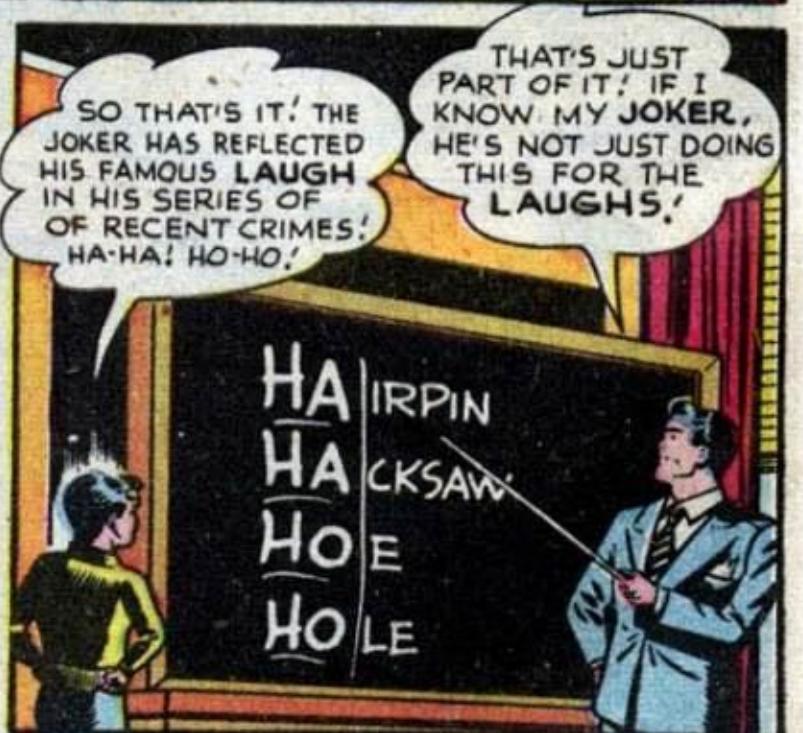
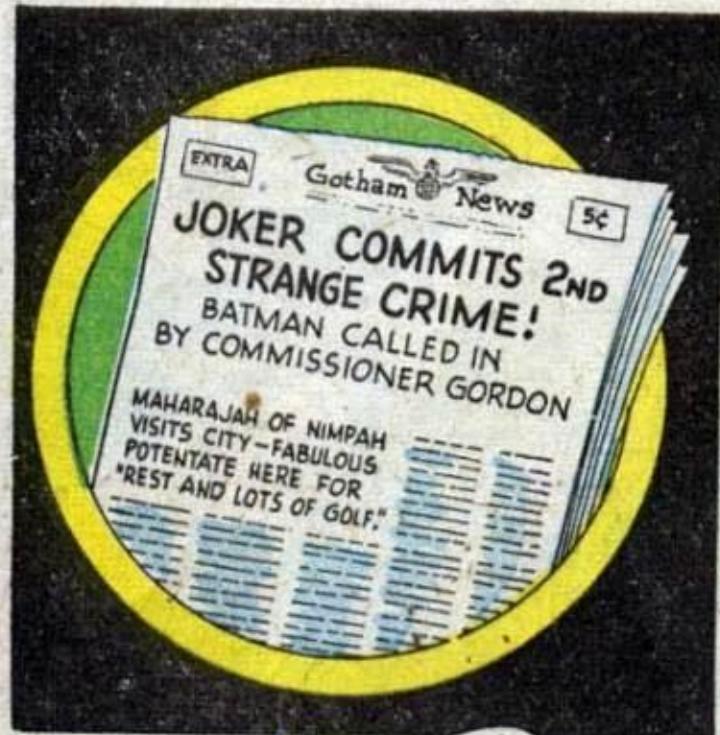
HIS TWISTED BRAIN FIRED BY THIS NEWEST FANCY, THE JOKER SCORNFULLY LISTENS TO A TOP RADIO COMIC...



MEANWHILE, IN ANOTHER PART OF GOTHAM CITY, SOCIALITE BRUCE WAYNE, AND HIS YOUNG WARD, DICK GRAYSON, ARE ALSO BUSY WITH TELEVISION ...







SUDDENLY, AN EERIE SIGNAL LIGHTS UP THE SKY, SUMMONING THE GREAT CRIME-FIGHTERS, BATMAN AND ROBIN, TO POLICE HEADQUARTERS.

AND UNDOUBTEDLY IT INVOLVES THE JOKER!

SOMETHING'S UP!



PRESENTLY...

THIS RECORD JUST ARRIVED, BATMAN. IT'S FOR YOU — FROM THE JOKER!

HA-HA! BATMAN! BY NOW YOU'VE PROBABLY DISCOVERED THAT I'VE HIDDEN MY FAMOUS LAUGH WITHIN MY LATEST CRIMES! BUT WAIT, BATMAN—WAIT! WAIT TILL MY LAUGH STARTS TO ECHO!



ECHO? WHAT DOES HE MEAN BY THAT?

HMM. ECHO MEANS TO COME BACK. COME ON, ROBIN—I THINK WE HAVE SOME MORE BLACKBOARD WORK TO DO!



YOU SEE, ROBIN? MAYBE THIS IS WHAT THE JOKER MEANT. IF HIS LAUGH "CAME BACK", IT WOULD LOOK LIKE THIS.

HMM. IN THE FIRST INSTANCE, THE JOKER USED HIS LAUGH TO START WORDS. IF NOW HE USED THE "ECHO" TO END WORDS, HE MIGHT...THAT'S IT! I'VE GOT IT!

YES—BUT IT STILL DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE.

HAIRPIN
HACKSAW
HOE
HOLE

AH
AH
OH
OH



BATMAN



BATMAN

THE PUTT IS PERFECT, AND AS THE BALL DROPS, A CLOUD OF TEAR GAS BURSTS FROM THE CUP...

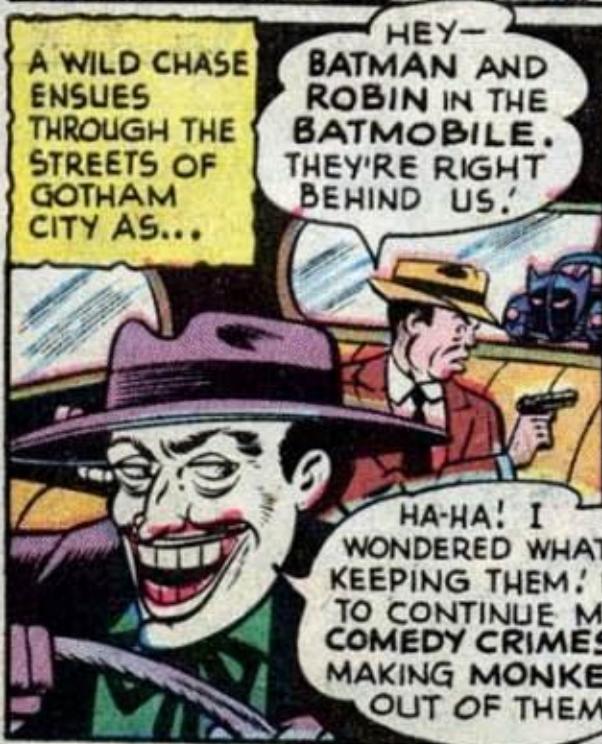
GET THOSE MASKS ON AND GRAB THE CLUBS!

CAN'T SEE (COUGH) FUMES...



A WILD CHASE ENSUES THROUGH THE STREETS OF GOTHAM CITY AS...

HEY—
BATMAN AND
ROBIN IN THE
BATMOBILE.
THEY'RE RIGHT
BEHIND US!



THE JOKER'S SPEEDING CAR VEERS INTO AN ALLEY IN THE CITY'S INDUSTRIAL OUTSKIRTS, AND...

A FITTING PLACE TO TRAP THE BATMAN—
IN A PLACE THAT MANUFACTURES LAUGHS!

A JOKUSON NOVEL
TRICKS - JOKES
STAGE EFFECTS



KER-CHOO!
IT'S—
SNEEZING POWDER!

KER-CHOO!

HA-HA! HO-HO!
BUT REMEMBER—
THE JOKER IS NOT
TO BE SNEEZED AT!

CAUTIOUSLY, BATMAN AND ROBIN PICK UP THE TRAIL IN A MISTY WAREHOUSE FILLED WITH WEIRD PROPS AND TRICK DEVICES...





BATMAN

BUT...

(SPLUTTER)
WATER
PISTOLS!

HO-HO..HA-HA!
YOU FORGOT THIS IS A TRICK
NOVELTY WAREHOUSE! DID
YOU EVER SEE ANYTHING
FUNNIER?!!

GLUG!
GLUG!

BUT BEFORE THE JOKER AND HIS MEN CAN FULLY ENJOY THEIR
MADCAP PRANK, THE ENRAGED CRIME-BUSTERS SWING INTO
ACTION...

ENOUGH'S
ENOUGH!

YES-I DON'T LIKE PLAYING
STRAIGHT MAN FOR THE
JOKER!

YOU MIGHT
CALL ME AN
INDIAN-GIVER.

THIS ONE AIN'T NO
WATER-PISTOL-
OOOFF!

WELL, THAT TAKES CARE
OF THEM. NOW TO GET THE
JOKER! PICK UP THAT WATER
PISTOL, ROBIN. WE MAY GET
SOME FINGERPRINTS FOR
OUR LABORATORY FILE ON
THE JOKER'S MOB.

BUT AS THE LAWMEN PREPARE
TO LEAVE, THE SARCOPHAGUS
BEHIND THEM SLOWLY
OPENS, AND...

THE JOKER'S SWIFTNESS SURPRISES BATMAN AND ROBIN. BEFORE THEY CAN RECOVER...

HA-HA! I HAVE ALL I NEED FOR THE LAUGH CHAPTER IN MY GREAT BOOK ON COMEDY! DON'T YOU AGREE, BATMAN?

HEY, BOSS—LET'S SEE WHO THE BATMAN IS! TAKE OFF HIS MASK!

HA-HA! WHY NOT?

BUT SUDDENLY THE JOKER'S HAND HALTS IN MID-AIR, AS...

NO-WAIT! I COULD UNMASK YOU NOW, BATMAN, BUT THAT WOULD ONLY TAKE AWAY WHAT LITTLE FUN IS LEFT TO ME—THE FUN-LOVING JOKER!

YES, BATMAN, I WILL LET YOUR IDENTITY REMAIN A SECRET. FOR YOU AFFORD ME THE THRILL OF A SUPREME BATTLE OF WITS EACH TIME WE MEET!

THE CRIME CLOWN QUICKLY CONFERS WITH HIS HENCH-MEN. THEN...

NO, BATMAN, I WON'T END OUR ASSOCIATION ABRUPTLY! I'LL GIVE YOU A SPORTING CHANCE FOR YOUR LIFE—WAIT AND SEE, HA-HA!

AND, HOURS LATER AT THE JOKER'S HIDEOUT...

I'M GOING TO LEAD YOU TO TWO DOORS, BATMAN—ONE LEADS TO FREEDOM—ONE TO DOOM! TAKE YOUR PICK, BATMAN—but MAKE SURE YOU PICK THE RIGHT DOOR! HA-HA!

BATMAN



BATMAN



THEN, AS BATMAN AND ROBIN EMERGE FROM THE CELL WITH THE JOKER, HE SUDDENLY SNAKES OUT OF THEIR GRASP, AND...



BAT-MAN

WITH
ROBIN

- THE BOY WONDER -

BOB
KANE

CAN A PAINTED FACE ON CANVAS AGE AND
CHANGE LIKE THE FLESH OF A MAN?
CAN BRUSH STROKES SHOW A MAN'S
TRUE SOUL AND CONSCIENCE?
BATMAN AND ROBIN FIND OUT
WHEN THEY INVESTIGATE THE
MOST BIZARRE MYSTERY OF THEIR
CAREERS AND COME FACE TO
FACE WITH...

"THE
PORTRAIT of DOOM!"



BATMAN



ABRUPTLY, FABIAN'S INNOCENT FEATURES ARE TWISTED BY A MURDEROUS RAGE...



YOU... YOU MAY DECEIVE THE WORLD WITH YOUR HARMLESS FACE, BUT YOUR PORTRAIT WILL SHOW YOUR REAL SELF... YOUR EVIL SOUL! AS YOU COMMIT EVIL, YOUR PORTRAIT WILL REVEAL IT!



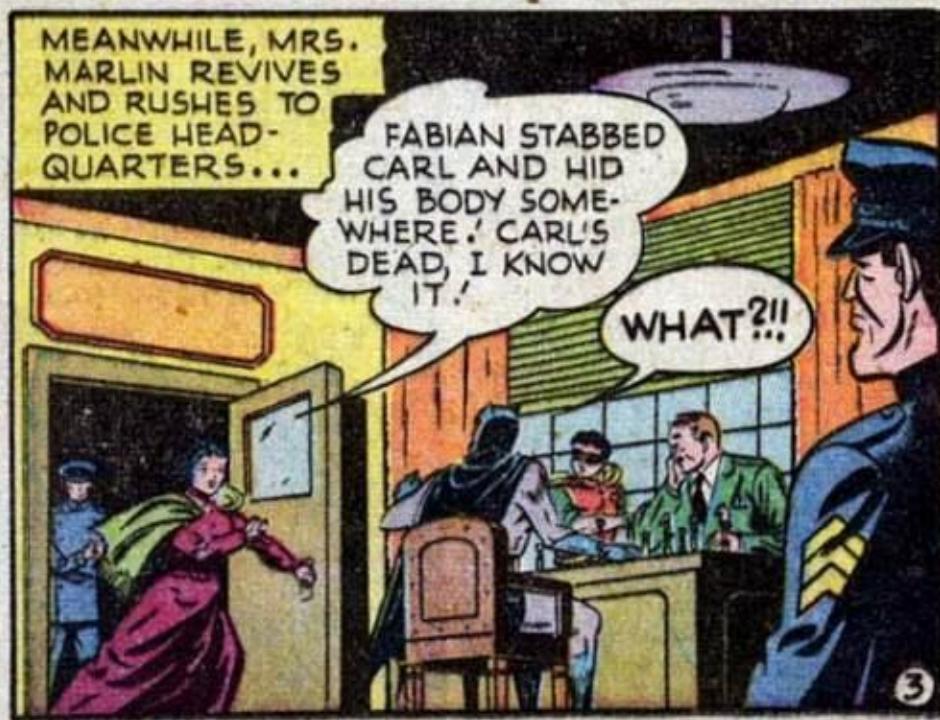
UNKNOWN TO FABIAN, MRS. MARLIN OVERHEARS EVERYTHING FROM AN ADJOINING ROOM...



BUT AS FABIAN FLEES, ONLY THE STARING MOON SEES A HAND REACH FROM THE SWIFT RIVER...



MEANWHILE, MRS. MARLIN REVIVES AND RUSHES TO POLICE HEADQUARTERS...



BUT AFTERWARD, IN HIS GARRET, FABIAN DENIES ANY KNOWLEDGE OF MARLIN'S DISAPPEARANCE!



MUCH LATER, FABIAN LAUGHS WITH SAVAGE GLEE...

I'VE GOTTED AWAY WITH MURDER BECAUSE OF MY FACE! HA! HA! WHY SHOULD I WORK FOR MONEY WHEN I CAN STEAL AND BE THOUGHT INNOCENT? MY FACE IS MY FORTUNE!
HA! HA!



SUDDENLY, FABIAN HESITATES BEFORE HIS PORTRAIT, PUZZLED...

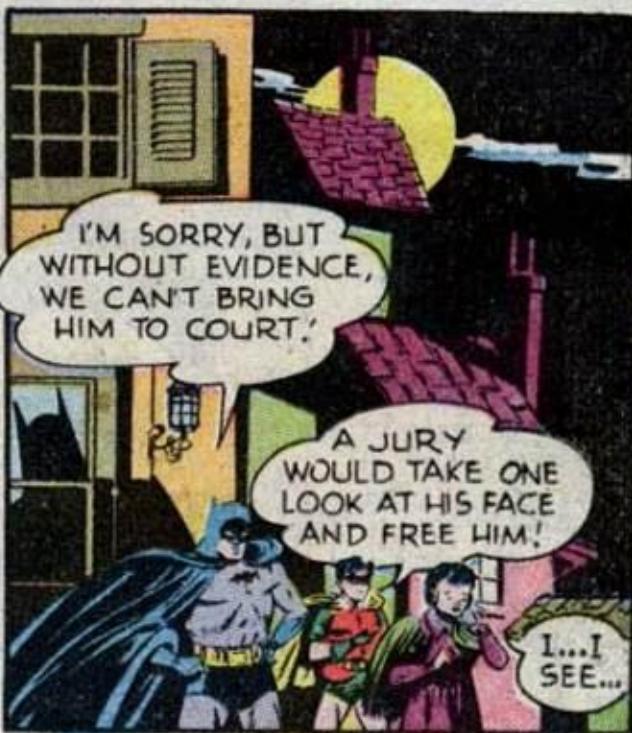
STRANGE! THE EXPRESSION LOOKS CHANGED! THERE SEEKS TO BE CRUELTY IN THE MOUTH... CUNNING IN THE EYES! AGH... IT MUST BE A TRICK OF THE LIGHT.



THE SIMPLE, HONEST FEATURES OF FABIAN'S FACE SEEM TO REBUKE HIS ACCUSERS...

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE! THIS MAN COULDN'T KILL ANYONE. BE-SIDES, WE'VE NO EVIDENCE... NO CASE AGAINST HIM!

DON'T BE FOOLED BY HIS INNOCENT FACE! HE'S A MONSTER!



AS FABIAN LEAVES, HE IS TRAILED BY TWO MANHUNTERS WHO ARE NOT YET CONVINCED OF HIS INNOCENCE...

LET'S KEEP AN EYE ON BABYFACE!



LIKE A GIGANTIC BAT WITH FLARING WINGS, THE **BATMAN** SCALES THE OPERA HOUSE'S FIRE ESCAPE...

THIS WILL TAKE US BACKSTAGE! WE'LL BE ABLE TO WATCH EVERYTHING FROM THERE!

THE CALL TO ACTION IS SWIFT, FOR MASKED FABIAN IS ALSO BACKSTAGE, CLAWING AT THE OPERA STAR'S PEARL NECKLACE!

AND WE'LL TAKE YOU!

I'LL TAKE THAT, CARMEN! HA-HA!

SUDDENLY, SHARP STEEL FLASHES...

OH... A SWORD CANE, EH? THE "TOREADOR" WON'T MIND MY BORROWING HIS ESPADA TO FENCE WITH YOU!

HE WON'T MIND MY BORROWING HIS BULL FIGHTER'S CAPE EITHER!

THE ENTANGLING CAPE DELAYS THEM JUST LONG ENOUGH...

DID YOU SEE A MASKED MAN RUN OUT OF HERE?

HUH? GOSH, NO! I GOT ENOUGH TO DO GETTIN' THIS SCENERY MOVED!

LATER, THEY DISCOVER HOW THE GETAWAY WAS MADE!

HMM... I WONDER IF FABIAN **WAS** THE BANDIT? OTHER MEN HERE TONIGHT WORE CLOTHES LIKE THIS.

LOOK... THE MASKED BANDIT'S CLOTHES! HE GOT OUT IN ANOTHER DISGUISE! GOLLY... THOSE STAGE HANDS... HE MUST'VE BEEN ONE OF THEM!

THE NEXT MORNING,
FABIAN'S EYES FALL
ON HIS PORTRAIT
WITH GROWING
HORROR...

IT'S NOT
THE LIGHT!
IT'S TRUE...
THE PICTURE
HAS CHANGED.



ONLY THEN DOES
HE RECALL MARLIN'S
LAST WORDS...

YOU MAY DECEIVE THE
WORLD WITH YOUR HARM-
LESS FACE, BUT YOUR PORTRAIT
WILL SHOW YOUR REAL SELF...
YOUR EVIL SOUL! AS YOU
COMMIT EVIL, YOUR PORT-
RAIT WILL REVEAL IT!



WHEN I KILLED MARLIN THE
MOUTH GREW CRUEL... THE EYES
TURNED CUNNING! NOW, AFTER
THE ROBBERY, NEW LINES OF EVIL
APPEARED! YES... EVERY TIME I
COMMIT A CRIME, THE PORTRAIT
WILL SHOW IT—THOUGH MY
OWN FACE IS UNCHANGED.



SO MARLIN'S WORDS
HAVE COME TRUE! HE'S
SHOWN ME AS I REALLY
AM... A LIVING JEKYLL-
HYDE! BAH! LET THE
PICTURE CHANGE—SO
LONG AS MY OWN
FACE REMAINS
HANDSOME, I
DON'T CARE!

IN DEFiance OF THE
PORTRAIT, FABIAN
COMMiTS NEW
CRIMES OF
VIOLENCE...

THE DAPPER
BANDiT HAS
GOTTEN AWAY
AGAIN!



AND WITH EVERY VIOLENT CRIME, MORE
LINES OF EVIL SEAR THE PORTRAIT'S HIDEOUS
FACE—DEPICTING GREED, HYPOCRICY, VIOLENCE!



BATMAN

BUT THE PORTRAIT IS LIKE A LIVING MIRROR OF FABIAN'S OWN CONSCIENCE, AND AT LAST...

I CAN'T STAND THE WAY IT HAUNTS ME! I MUST GET RID OF IT! I'LL SELL IT FOR A GOOD PRICE! IT'S A GENUINE MARLIN.

AS FABIAN LEAVES, HE IS AGAIN WATCHED.

THIS IS A NEW DEVELOPMENT! WE'D BETTER STICK CLOSE TO HIM!



EVERY ART DEALER VIEWS THE PAINTING WITH LOATHING...

UGH! IT'S A FOUL THING! NO ONE WOULD EVER BUY SUCH A PAINTING! TAKE IT OUT OF HERE!



AN EXCLAMATION OF HORROR BURSTS FROM THE MANHUNTER'S LIPS AS HE VIEWS THE FRIGHTFUL PAINTED FACE LEERING AT HIM!

WHAT?! IT'S YOUR PORTRAIT... BUT WHAT HAPPENED TO IT? IT'S CHANGED INTO THE FACE OF A MONSTER!



BATMAN!

SO DISTURBED IS FABIAN THAT BITTER WORDS SPILL FROM HIS LIPS...

MARLIN AND I... WE... WE QUARRELED! MARLIN CURSED ME! HE SAID I WAS EVIL AND THAT THE PORTAIT WOULD SHOW IT! AND NOW THE PORTAIT CHANGES EVERY DAY! IT'S DRIVING ME MAD.





WAS MARLIN RIGHT? IS THE PORTRAIT CHANGING BECAUSE YOU COMMIT CRIMES? ARE YOU THE DAPPER BANDIT? DID YOU MURDER MARLIN? TALK! TALK!

NO... NO.

I'VE TALKED TOO MUCH ALREADY! I CAN'T SELL BATMAN THE PAINTING... IT WILL CONTINUE TO SHOW HIM MY GUILT!

I'VE CHANGED MY MIND! THE PAINTING IS NOT FOR SALE.'

SOMETIME LATER...

SINCE I CAN'T SELL IT, I'LL THROW IT AWAY! IT'LL BE DESTROYED IN THE CITY'S INCINERATORS WITH THIS REFUSE! I'LL BE FREE... FREE OF ITS CURSE!

WATCHING FROM A SAFE DISTANCE...

NO... FABIAN MIGHT SEE YOU! WAIT A FEW MINUTES TILL HE GETS OUT OF SIGHT!

HE'S LEAVING - I'LL GET THE PAINTING NOW!

BUT WHEN THEY DO GO FOR THE PAINTING...

IT COULDN'T JUST DISAPPEAR... LIKE MARLIN!

IT'S GONE!

WAIT! PERHAPS MARLIN IS STILL ALIVE... AND IS SECRETLY TOUCHING UP THE PAINTING EVERY DAY WITH QUICK-DRYING PAINT!

FOR REVENGE! HE'S TRYING TO DRIVE FABIAN CRAZY!

SNAP

SUDDENLY, A FINGER OF LIGHT MARKS AN AWESOME SYMBOL IN THE NIGHT SKY!

THE BAT-SIGNAL!
POLICE HEAD-
QUARTERS IS
PAGING US.
LET'S GO!



AT HEADQUARTERS, THEY ARE TOLD SHOCKING NEWS!

WE JUST
FISHED MARLIN'S
BODY OUT OF THE
RIVER! HE MUST'VE
BEEN IN THERE
FOR DAYS!

WHAT?!

IF MARLIN IS DEAD
— THEN HOW CAN
WE EXPLAIN THE
CHANGING PORTRAIT?

PAINTS CAN'T
COME TO LIFE!
THERE MUST BE
A TRICK TO
THIS! LET'S
QUESTION
FABIAN
AGAIN!

AS THEY APPROACH
FABIAN'S GARRET,
SUDDENLY — A
SCREAM OF A
SOUL IN TERROR!

EEYOWW!!!

THAT CAME
FROM FABIAN'S
ROOM! COME
ON!

LOOK...
THE PORTRAIT...
IT'S COME
BACK!

HE'S
FAINTED!

SUDDENLY
BATMAN
STUDIES
THE FLOOR...

AH! SO I WASN'T
FAR WRONG, AFTER ALL!
ROBIN, IF WE WAIT,
WE CAN EXPECT A
VISITOR!

SOON AFTER...
FURTIVE FOOTSTEPS
... AND INTO THE
ROOM STEPS A
FAMILIAR FIGURE...

HE'S STILL IN A DEAD
FAINT! GOOD! WOULDN'T
HE BE SURPRISED TO
KNOW I'VE BEEN PAINTING
THE "CHANGES" ON
HIS PORTRAIT
EVERY DAY!



BUT WE'RE NOT!
YOU SHOULDN'T
HAVE DROPPED
A BOBBY
PIN!

YOU BROUGHT
THE PAINTING BACK!
YOU WERE TRAILING
FABIAN, TOO! ONLY
YOU GOT THE
PAINTING BEFORE
WE DID!



I KNEW A JURY
WOULD NEVER CON-
VICT FABIAN BECAUSE
OF THE LACK OF EVIDENCE
AND HIS INNOCENT
FACE, SO I TRIED TO
MAKE HIM CONFESS
THROUGH HIS CON-
SCIENCE! BUT I'VE
FAILED...

NOT YET! YOUR
PLAN IS A GOOD
ONE, BUT IT DOESN'T
GO FAR ENOUGH!



SOMETIME LATER,
FABIAN REGAINS
CONSCIOUSNESS...

OH... MY
HEAD! NOW I
REMEMBER... THE
PAINTING... IT
CAME BACK!



THEN WITH A CRY
OF AGONY, FABIAN
RECOILS AS HE
SEES HIS OWN FACE
IN THE MIRROR!

AGHHH!
MY FACE... MY FACE!
THE EVIL HAS GONE
FROM THE PORTRAITS
FACE TO MY OWN
FACE!

WHAT...?
THE PORTRAIT...
IT'S LIKE IT
USED TO BE!



BATMAN

OH... MY FACE...
MY FACE! MARLIN'S
CURSE HAS COME
TRUE—BECAUSE
I KILLED HIM!

ABRUPTLY...

HE ADMITTED
IT! YOU HEARD
HIM BATMAN
AND ROBIN.'

YES... WE
HEARD!

YOU!

SUDDENLY, FABIAN TEARS
HIMSELF FREE AND...

I WON'T
LET YOU
ARREST ME!

AFTER HIM! WE
CAN'T LET HIM
GET AWAY!

THERE HE
GOES!

THEN BATMAN'S SILKEN
LASSO WHIPS OUT OVER
THE QUAIN'T ROOFTOPS
OF GOTHAM CITY'S
BOHEMIAN VILLAGE...

AND TAKING A SHORTER ROUTE,
BATMAN CUTS OFF HIS QUARRY'S
RETREAT!

WOA,
FABIAN!
YOU'RE NOT
GOING
ANYWHERE!



BATMAN

BATMAN

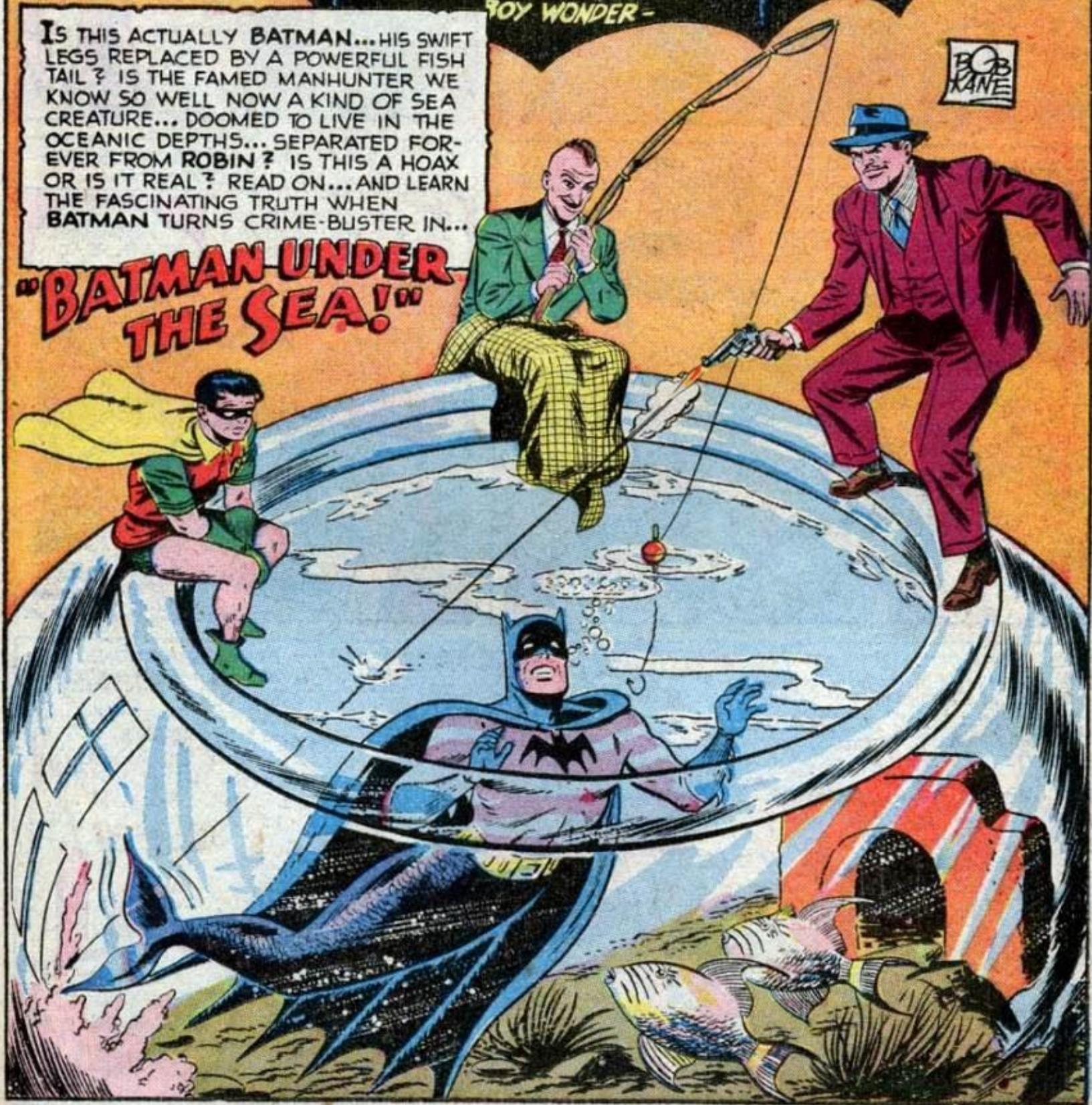
WITH
ROBIN

BOY WONDER -

IS THIS ACTUALLY BATMAN... HIS SWIFT LEGS REPLACED BY A POWERFUL FISH TAIL? IS THE FAMED MANHUNTER WE KNOW SO WELL NOW A KIND OF SEA CREATURE... DOOMED TO LIVE IN THE OCEANIC DEPTHS... SEPARATED FOREVER FROM ROBIN? IS THIS A HOAX OR IS IT REAL? READ ON... AND LEARN THE FASCINATING TRUTH WHEN BATMAN TURNS CRIME-BUSTER IN...

"BATMAN UNDER THE SEA!"

BOB KANE



BATMAN

ONE AFTERNOON AS BRUCE (BATMAN) WAYNE AND HIS YOUNG WARD, DICK (ROBIN) GRAYSON DINE AT THE HOTEL DOLPHIN, FAMED FOR ITS SEA FOOD...

BRUCE, LOOK AT THE ODD FACE OF THAT PARALYZED MAN BEING WHEELED IN!

HMM! HE DOES HAVE QUEER FEATURES, DICK! ALMOST LIKE A FISH...

SALT WATER, SIR?
ARE YOU SURE?

WAITER, I WANT A BIG PLATE OF SHRIMP... OYSTERS... AND CLAMS! AND BRING ME A GLASS OF SALT WATER!

YOU HEARD MR. PHAETON! HE WANTS A DRINK O' SALT WATER!

THEIR MINDS TRAINED TO SEEK OUT CLUES, BRUCE AND DICK AMUSE THEMSELVES BY EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITIES OF THE ODD CUSTOMER...

THE WAY MR. PHAETON—OR WHATEVER HIS NAME IS—GULPS DOWN THAT FOOD, YOU'D THINK HE WAS A FISH OUT OF WATER!

MAYBE HE'S A MERMAN! HE COULD BE USING THAT BLANKET TO HIDE HIS FISH TAIL!
HA! HA!

THEN, AS THE MAN FINISHES HIS SEA-FOOD PLATTER, SUDDENLY...

OH, SIR! YOU'RE IN LUCK! YOU FOUND A PEARL IN ONE OF YOUR OYSTERS.

ANOTHER PEARL? I HAVE SO MANY OF THEM. KEEP IT AS A TIP!

DICK, NO WONDER THAT FELLOW WHEELING MR. PHAETON LOOKED FAMILIAR! HE'S STACK HAWLEY, THE GANGSTER!

YOU'RE RIGHT, BRUCE! HE'S THE ONE WHO SELLS WEAPONS TO GANGSTERS!

SWIFTLY, BRUCE QUESTIONS THE WAITER ABOUT MR. PHAETON...

I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT HIM, MR. WAYNE—NOBODY DOES, EXCEPT THAT HIS LEGS ARE PARALYZED... HE LIVES IN THIS HOTEL WHENEVER HE'S IN TOWN... AND HE INSISTS ON SEA WATER FOR HIS BATHS.

BATMAN

HE DRINKS SALT WATER AND BATHES IN SEA WATER! I'M ALMOST BEGINNING TO BELIEVE HE IS A MERMAN!

DON'T LET YOUR FANTASTIC IMAGINATION RUN AWAY WITH YOU! WHAT PUZZLES ME IS WHY STACK IS WORKING FOR PHAETON!

THAT NIGHT, AS MR. PHAETON IS WHEELED FROM THE HOTEL, HE IS WATCHED BY TWO CAPE MANHUNTERS — BATMAN AND ROBIN.

HE'S BEING WHEELED INTO THAT SPEED-BOAT!

WE'LL HIRE A BOAT AND TRAIL THEM FROM A DISTANCE.



BUT THE MAN WHO RENTS THE SPEEDBOATS IS IN PHAETON'S PAY AND QUICKLY CONTACTS HIS BOSS BY WALKIE-TALKIE!

LISTEN, BOSS!
BATMAN AND ROBIN
ARE AFTER YOU!

SOON AFTER, AT PHAETON'S COMMAND, A DECK GUN THUNDERS, HURLING A SHELL THROUGH THE BATMAN'S BOAT!

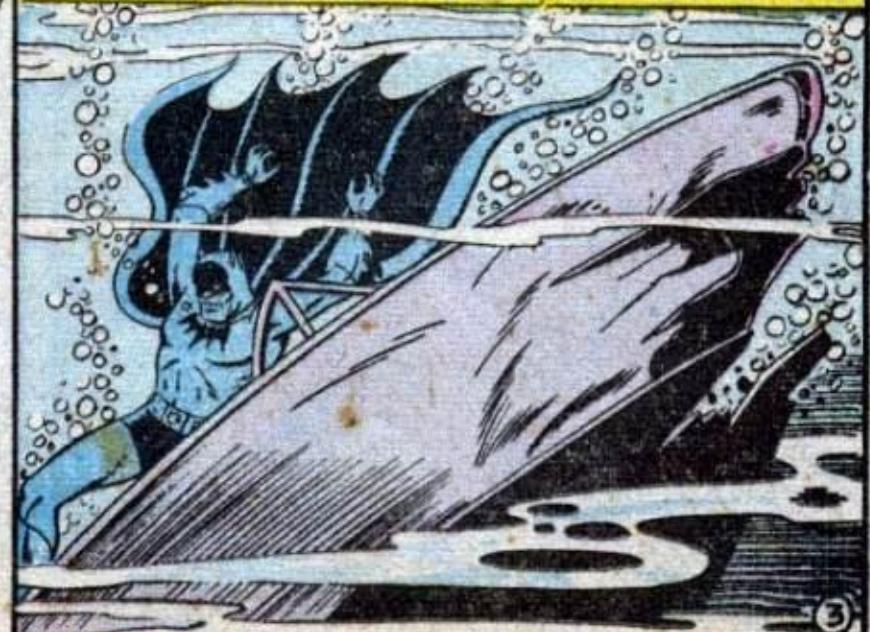
GRAB THAT LIFE PRESERVER
AND JUMP OVERBOARD! I'LL
BE RIGHT BEHIND YOU!



I COULDN'T TELL ROBIN OR HE'D HAVE REFUSED TO LEAVE ME... BUT HIS IS THE ONLY GOOD LIFE PRESERVER! THE REMAINING ONE WAS WRECKED BY THE SHELL.



SUDDENLY, ANOTHER SHELL BLUDGEONS THE CRAFT AND THE BOAT BEGINS TO SINK, DRAWING THE UNCONSCIOUS BATMAN UNDER THE WAVES.



AFTER WHAT SEEMS HOURS LATER ...

HE'S RE-GAINING CONSCIOUSNESS!

OH...WHAT...MY COWL...PULLED BACK! STRANGERS LOOKING AT MY FACE!

DON'T WORRY, BATMAN... YOUR SECRET IDENTITY IS SAFE WITH US!

SUDDENLY BATMAN STARES WILD-EYED, DISBELIEVING WHAT HE SEES, YET SOMEHOW KNOWING IT IS ALL TERRIBLY REAL.

YOU...YOU'RE A MERMAID! YOU'RE ALL FISH PEOPLE!



THEN BATMAN IS AWARE OF A NEW SENSATION!

I'M BREATHING! I'M UNDER WATER...YET I'M BREATHING! IT'S IMPOSSIBLE!

OH, YES, IT'S POSSIBLE—BECAUSE I, THETA OF THE SCIENCE COUNCIL, OPERATED ON YOU AND GAVE YOU GILLS!



PRESENTLY, WHEN BATMAN TRIES TO STRUGGLE TO HIS FEET IN PROTEST...

MY LEGS! WHAT HAPPENED TO MY LEGS! THEY'RE GONE! IN THEIR PLACE—A TAIL. WHERE ARE MY LEGS?



GIVE ME BACK MY LEGS!

YOU WERE DROWNING! WE JUST HAD TO PLACE YOU IN THE CONVERTING CHAMBER AND GIVE YOU GILLS AND A TAIL! CAN'T YOU UNDERSTAND? IF WE HADN'T OPERATED, YOU'D HAVE DIED!

I'M SORRY, BUT YOU CAN NEVER LEAVE HERE! THE SEA WILL BE YOUR HOME FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE! YOU'RE A MERMAN NOW.



BATMAN, ONCE THE MOST VALIANT FIGHTER OF THE CRIMINAL UNDERWORLD, DOOMED NOW TO STAY FOREVER IN THE UNDERWORLD OF THE SEA!

LATER... I'LL NEVER SEE GOTHAM CITY AGAIN... THE BUSY STREETS ! AND ROBIN... I'LL MISS HIM... I'M ALONE NOW... IN AN ALIEN WORLD!

FINALLY BATMAN REALIZES HE MUST MAKE THE BEST OF THE SITUATION...

AT LEAST I'M ALIVE, THANKS TO YOU! I'LL LEARN TO ADAPT MYSELF TO MY NEW LIFE.

GOOD! I'M SARIN... RULER OF THE SEA PEOPLE! THIS IS THETA, OUR LEADING SCIENTIST, EVEN THOUGH SHE IS A FEMALE!

THEN FOLLOWS A GUIDED TOUR OF THE AQUATIC COMMUNITY!

THIS IS OUR MUSEUM! HERE ARE CURIOS TAKEN FROM SUNKEN SHIPS WE FIND ON THE SEA FLOOR!

A LIFE PRESERVER FROM THE S.S. TITANIC! ALL THIS IS THE SALVAGE OF THE CENTURIES!

WE KNOW OF YOUR EXPLOITS, BATMAN, BECAUSE OF OUR LIBRARY OF BOOKS AND NEWSPAPERS COLLECTED FROM SUNKEN SHIPS! WE COAT THE PAPER WITH CHEMICALS IMPERVIOUS TO WATER.

FROM NOW ON, YOU'D BETTER CALL ME BAT-MERMAN!

HERE IS GOLD TAKEN FROM SUNKEN TREASURE SHIPS! IN YOUR LAND OF AIR-BREATHERS, MEN WOULD KILL FOR SUCH WEALTH! HERE IT IS WORTHLESS, OF NO USE AT ALL.

SUDDENLY, AS THEY LEAVE THE SALVAGE MUSEUM...

SOUND THE ALARM! WE'RE BEING ATTACKED AGAIN BY PHAETON!

THEN ROBIN'S IMAGINATION WASN'T FANTASTIC, AFTER ALL! PHAETON IS A MERMAN!

EVEN AS THE CLARION CALL TO ARMS SOUNDS, A FLIP OF BAT-MERMAN'S POWERFUL TAIL HURLES HIM INTO THE MARAUDERS!

I MAY BE A MERMAN, BUT I HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN TO FIGHT LIKE BATMAN!



FLAME-THROWERS HERE? IN THE SEA?

YOU! SO THEY SAVED YOU FROM DROWNING AND MADE YOU ONE OF US! FLAME THROWERS, FORWARD!

THEN BAT-MERMAN DOES A STRANGE THING... HE RETREATS!

LOOK! HE'S TURNED TAIL! HE'S LOST HIS COURAGE!

IT CAN'T BE TRUE! THOSE NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS OF HIS BRAVERY COULDN'T HAVE ALL BEEN LIES!

BUT BAT-MERMAN'S RETREAT IS ONLY BATTLE STRATEGY, FOR...

AS LONG AS WE'RE FIGHTING A WAR, I'M GOING TO RECRUIT THESE JELLY FISH CALLED PORTUGUESE MAN-OF-WAR!

PRODDED FORWARD, THE JELLY FISH FURIOUSLY WHIP THEIR TENTACLES ABOUT IN THE RANKS OF PHAETON'S ARMY!

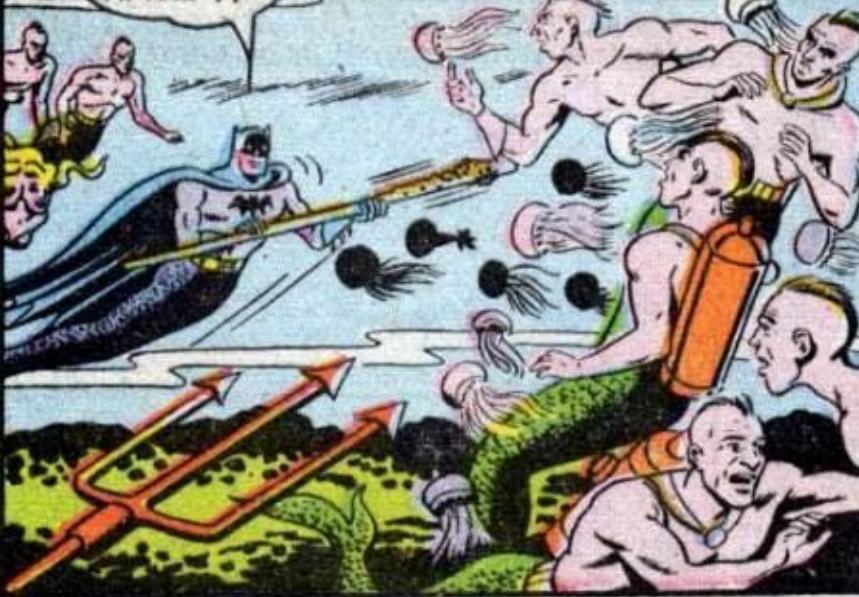
LET 'EM HAVE IT!

OWW!

YI-III!

THEY'RE WITHDRAWING! WE'VE WON... AND ALL BECAUSE YOU WERE CLEVER ENOUGH TO PROD THE JELLY FISH WITH THEIR STINGING TENTACLES!

NO WONDER YOU WERE SO ESTEEMED BY AIR-BREATHERS! BAT-MERMAN... YOU'RE WONDERFUL! (SIGH)



WHEN BAT-MERMAN EXPLAINS ABOUT PHAETON'S LAND ACTIVITIES...

PHAETON IS A RENEGADE SCIENTIST! I'VE LEARNED HOW TO CHANGE LAND MEN INTO MERMEN... BUT OBVIOUSLY HE KNOWS THE SECRET OF DOING THE REVERSE.'

THEN WHY HASN'T HE LEFT? WHY HAS HE REMAINED, A MERMAN?

I THINK HE'S BEEN BUYING WEAPONS FROM STACK HAWLEY SO HE CAN RAID YOUR MUSEUM! HE WANTS THE GOLD AND PEARLS SO HE CAN LIVE ON LAND IN LUXURY. BUT HE DIDN'T GET THE TREASURE. THAT MEANS HE'LL ATTACK AGAIN!



AND PHAETON'S ATTACK COMES THAT VERY INSTANT, WITH ANOTHER WEAPON PURCHASED FROM STACK HAWLEY—DEPTH CHARGES!

OH... THE CONCUSSION!



NOW THAT HE HAS THE TREASURE, HE'LL BE READY TO CONVERT HIMSELF INTO A LAND MAN! WE MUST FIND HIS HIDEOUT BEFORE THAT HAPPENS!

WE'LL FORM SEARCHING PARTIES. IF I FIND A CLUE, I'LL SIGNAL YOU!



LATER... THETA AND BAT-MAN SCAN THE SEA FLOOR FOR CLUES...

SEE! THE CHESTS WERE HEAVY, SO THEY DRAGGED THEM PART WAY!

IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE THAT I'M TRAILING A CRIMINAL AS I WOULD IN GOTHAM CITY.. ONLY I'M DOING IT 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA!



SUDDENLY, UNBELIEVINGLY... AN EERIE LUMINESCENCE FLASHES A FAMILIAR SYMBOL INTO THE OCEANIC "SKY".

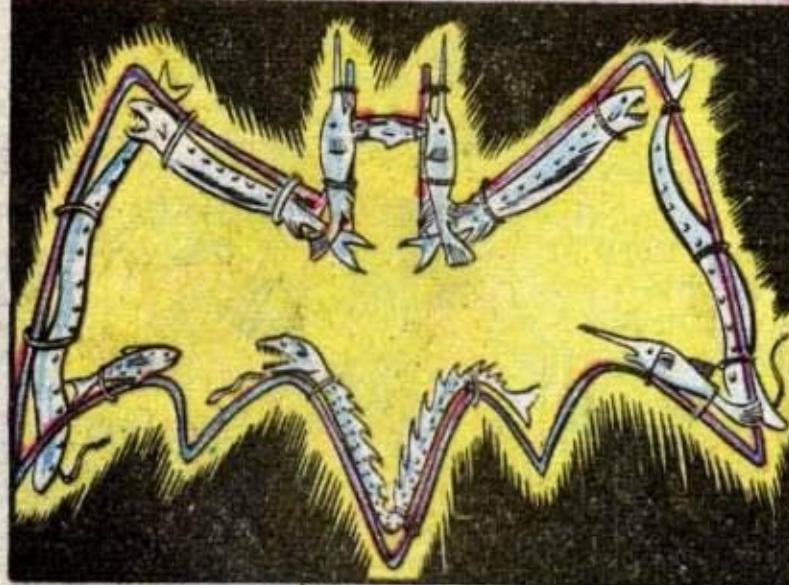
IT MUST BE FROM SARIN! HE SAID HE WOULD SIGNAL YOU!

THE BAT-SIGNAL... HERE... AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA?



BATMAN

THE ANSWER—LUMINOUS FISH, GROUPED TOGETHER ON A WIRE FRAME SO THEIR LIGHT "BATTERIES" FORM THE SHAPE OF A BAT!



SWIFTLY, THE BAT-MERMAN AND THE MERMAID SWIM TOWARD THE BECKONING BEACON...



ABRUPTLY...

IT WAS A TRICK
TO LURE US
INTO A TRAP!

AMBUSHED!

YES... AND I,
GERUN, PLANNED
IT! IT IS BECAUSE
I AM SO CLEVER
THAT I AM
PHAETON'S
ASSISTANT!



THETA... LOOK
OUT! THEY
HAVE BLOW
PIPES!

FOOLS! YOU
ONLY HIT THE GIRL
WITH A POISON
DART. AIM FOR
THE BAT-
MERMAN!

OHH!
I'M
HIT!



VENGEFULLY, BAT-MERMAN LASHES
AT THE KILLERS, HIS POWERFUL FISTS
AND TAIL WHIPPING THEM MERCI-
LESSLY!

YOU ROTTEN
MURDERERS!

MY ARM—
IT'S BROKEN!

YII! HE
FIGHTS WITH THE
FURY OF A TIGER
SHARK!

THWACK



FEARFULLY, PHAEON'S MEN
FLEE!

IT'S TOO LATE. THE
POISON WILL KILL ME
SOON!

YOU'VE STILL GOT
A CHANCE—if I CAN
FIND A SEA STAR!



HAS THE BAT-MERMAN LOST
HIS MIND? HOW CAN A SEA
STAR SAVE THETA'S LIFE?

BATMAN



BAT-MERMAN RETURNS SHORTLY, GINGERLY CARRYING A SPINY CREATURE WHOSE MOUTH HE PLACES AGAINST THE WOUNDED SHOULDER...

WHEN THE POISON IS DRAWN OUT AND THE WOUND BANDAGED, THETA LOOKS AT BAT-MERMAN WITH GLOWING EYES...

BUT THE QUESTION MUST REMAIN UNANSWERED FOR, SUDDENLY...

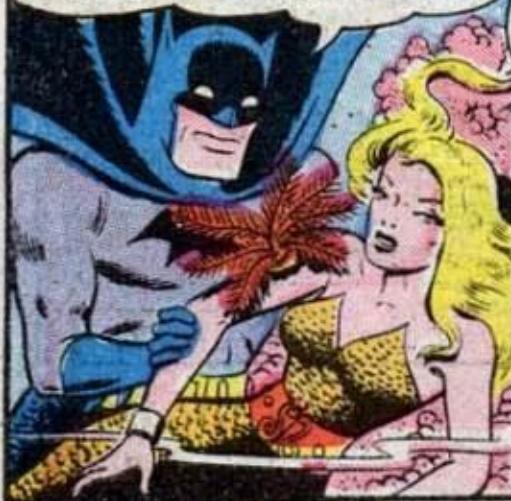
THIS IS A SEA STAR... A RELATION OF THE COMMON STAR FISH! PEARL DIVERS USE IT AS A LEECH!

UH... IN YOUR SURFACE WORLD, WERE... WERE YOU EVER IN LOVE? DID... DID YOU

HAVE A SWEETHEART?

NO... BUT THERE WAS A GIRL... VICKI VALE... I USED TO LIKE HER! WHY DO YOU ASK?

GERUN BLUNGLED THE JOB! I ALWAYS FIND I MUST DO THINGS MYSELF!



LATER, BAT-MERMAN AWAKENS — A PRISONER INSIDE THE SUNKEN LINER!

AIR... (GASP)... AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA?

YOU OUGHT TO KNOW THAT SOMETIMES AIR WILL BE TRAPPED IN A SINKING SHIP AND REMAIN AS AN AIR POCKET! SO YOU WILL DIE SOON... GASPING LIKE A FISH OUT OF WATER... BECAUSE YOU'RE BREATHING AIR!

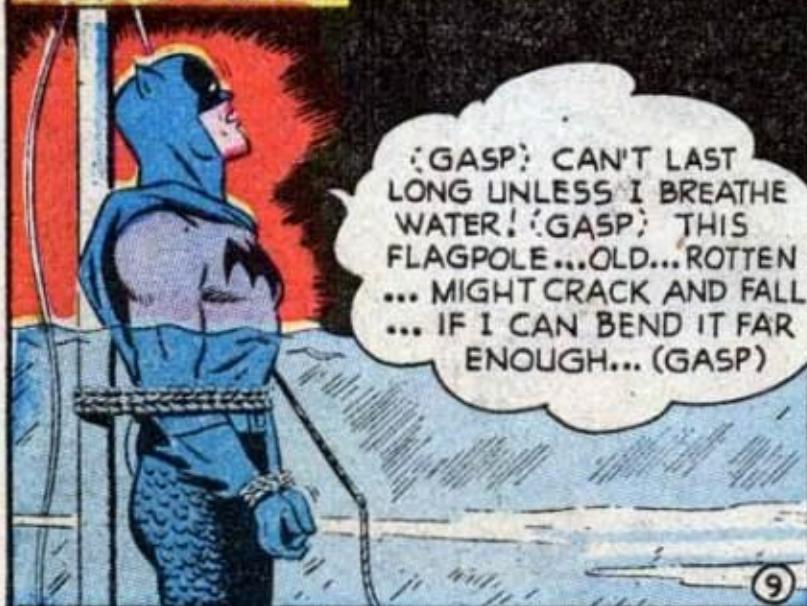


THUS THE MIGHTY CRIME-FIGHTER IS LEFT TO HIS IRONIC FATE!

BUT THE VALIANT LAWMAN'S STRENGTH IS WEAKENING FAST...

(GASP) CAN'T LAST LONG UNLESS I BREATHE WATER! (GASP) THIS FLAGPOLE... OLD... ROTTEN... MIGHT CRACK AND FALL... IF I CAN BEND IT FAR ENOUGH... (GASP)

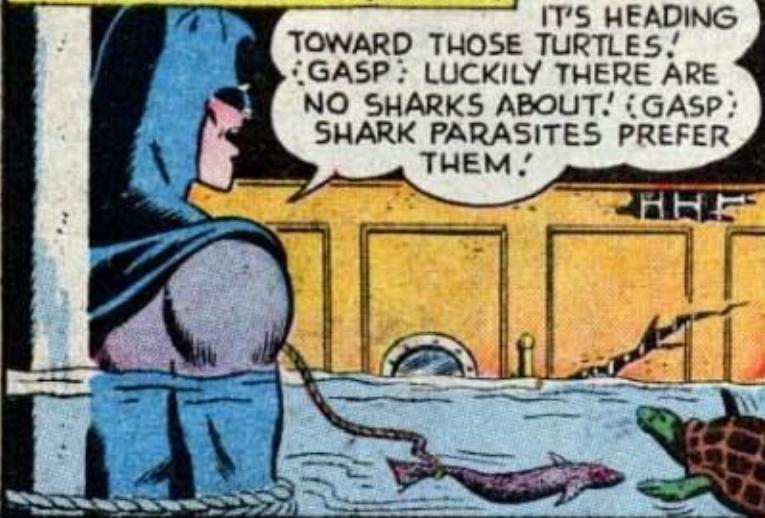
(GASP) I SEE SOME SHARK PARASITES! WITH ONE OF THOSE CREATURES AND THIS DANGLING ROPE, I MAY FOOL PHAETON YET!



WHAT IS BAT-MERMAN'S PLAN FOR ESCAPE?

AS ONE CURIOUS FISH IDLES NEAR HIS HAND, BAT-MERMAN GRABS HIM, SOON KNOTS THE ROPE ABOUT HIS TAIL, AND ...

TOWARD THOSE TURTLES!
(GASP: LUCKILY THERE ARE NO SHARKS ABOUT! (GASP: SHARK PARASITES PREFER THEM!)



THE TURTLE'S PROGRESS HALTED, THE HUGE TERRAPIN ANGRILY CHURNS AND TUGS, BUT THE SUCTION DISK HOLDS FAST, AND...

C-RACK!

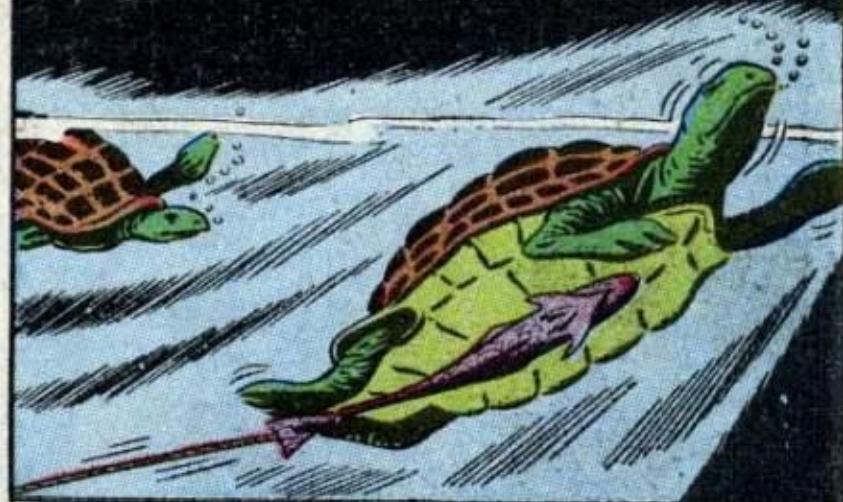
IT'S WORKING! (GASP: THAT TURTLE IS POWERFUL! (GASP: THE STRAIN IS TOO MUCH... THE POLE IS CRACKING!



BECUSE YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL! BESIDES, I NEED YOUR SKILL TO WORK THE CONVERTER CONTROLS! GERUN, MY ASSISTANT, WAS THE ONLY ONE I TAUGHT THE SECRET, BUT HE'S INJURED!

BUT CAN'T YOU WORK THE CONTROLS FROM INSIDE?

LOOKING FOR A PLACE OF SAFETY, THE PARASITE FISH ATTACHES ITS AMAZING SUCTION DISK TO A TURTLE SHELL!



ELSEWHERE, ON THE DECK OF THE HULK...

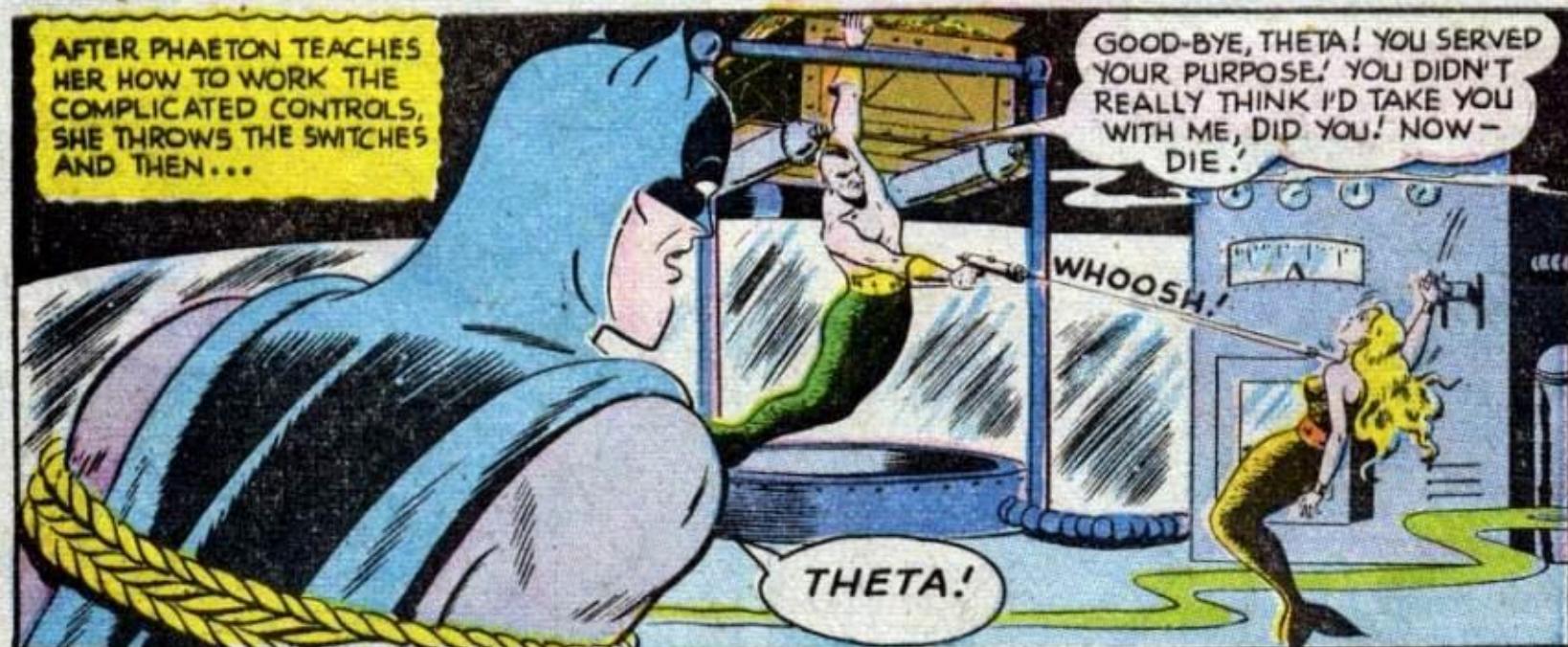
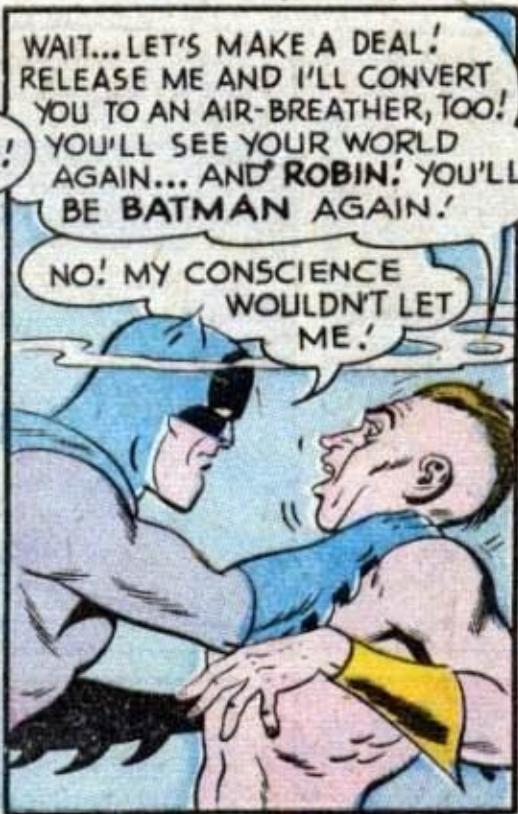
LOOK, THETA... GOLD... PEARLS! ON THE SURFACE THEY ARE A MEASURE OF WEALTH! THEY BUY SERVANTS, LUXURIES! YOU CAN SHARE ALL THAT WITH ME... AS MY WIFE!

YOU'RE PROPOSING TO ME? WHY?



I COULD, IF MY HANDS WERE FREE, BUT I'LL BE HOLDING THE TREASURE CHEST! SO, AFTER SENDING ME UP FIRST, YOU CAN FOLLOW! THEN WE'LL LIVE LIKE A KING AND QUEEN! WHAT'S YOUR ANSWER?





INSIDE THE CONVERTER, BAT-MERMAN HAS HIS LAST GLIMPSE OF THETA'S LOVELY FACE, AND THEN—ROARING BLACKNESS!



AND WHEN BATMAN AWAKENS—ROBIN IS BENDING OVER HIM!



BEWILDERED, BATMAN RELATES HIS STORY...

BUT THAT'S CRAZY... FANTASTIC! IT'S YOUR DELIRIUM, I TELL YOU!

PERHAPS, I'LL KNOW AFTER WE GET BACK TO THE HOTEL DOLPHIN AND GET PHAETON.



SOON AFTER, THE CRIME-BUSTERS CRASH INTO A HOTEL ROOM...

BATMAN... ALIVE!

OUR DECK GUN DIDN'T GET YOU, BUT THIS GUN WILL...

NO SECOND TRIES, STACK!



SEE? NO FISH TAIL... NO GILL MARKS BEHIND THE EARS!

IT STILL DOESN'T EXPLAIN WHY PHAETON DRINKS SALT WATER ... AND USES SEA WATER IN HIS TUB!

I HAVE A SALT DEFICIENCY! AND I'VE BEEN TOLD SEA WATER IS GOOD FOR WEAK LEGS!



THEN, AFTER INVESTIGATION, ANOTHER MYSTERY IS EXPLAINED...

NOW YOU KNOW WHY PHAETON HAS SO MANY PEARLS. IT'S BECAUSE HE'S IN THE GEM-SMUGGLING RACKET AND STACK IS HIS PARTNER!

YES... EVERYTHING FITS... YET...

IF PHAETON REALLY WAS A MERMAN, HE WOULDN'T BE ONE NOW BECAUSE OF THE CONVERTER! THAT IS IF IT ALL HAPPENED... SO YOU SEE, I'LL NEVER REALLY KNOW IF IT WAS REAL OR A DREAM... I'LL NEVER KNOW...



