



AFTERSHOCK

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY

555 | JUNE 98

BATMAN

WHERE DO
YOU BEGIN...
WHEN THERE IS
SO MUCH HORROR...?

MOENCH
BEATTY
BUSCEMA

TRAPPED BY RATS

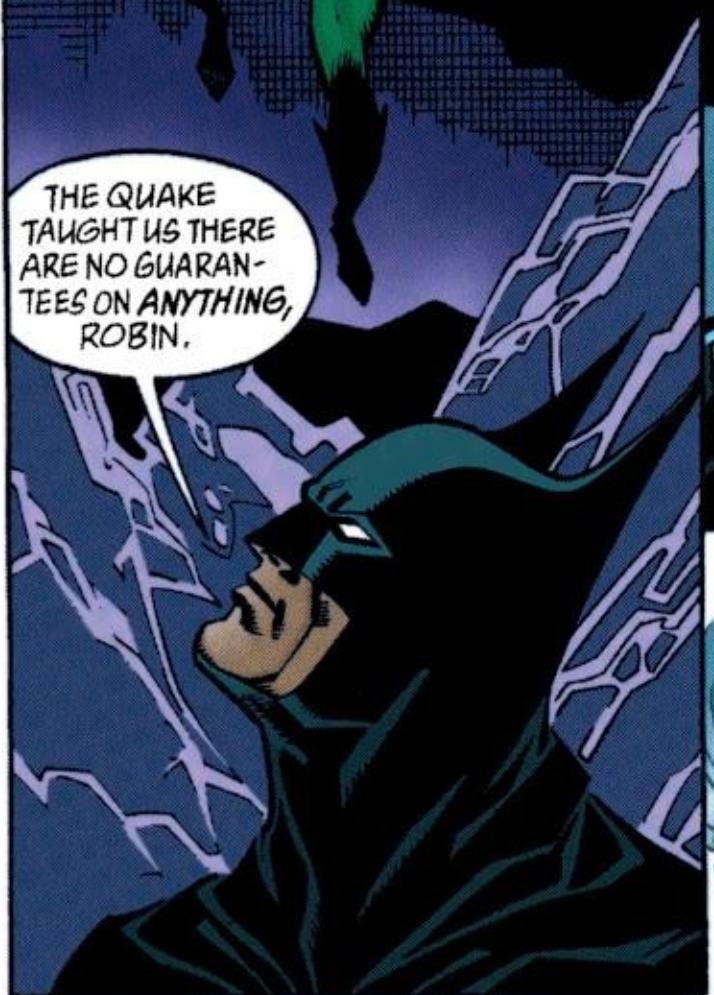
CHAINS SHOULD
BE SECURE, BATMAN,
BUT NO GUARANTEE
WHEN WE YANK 'EM.

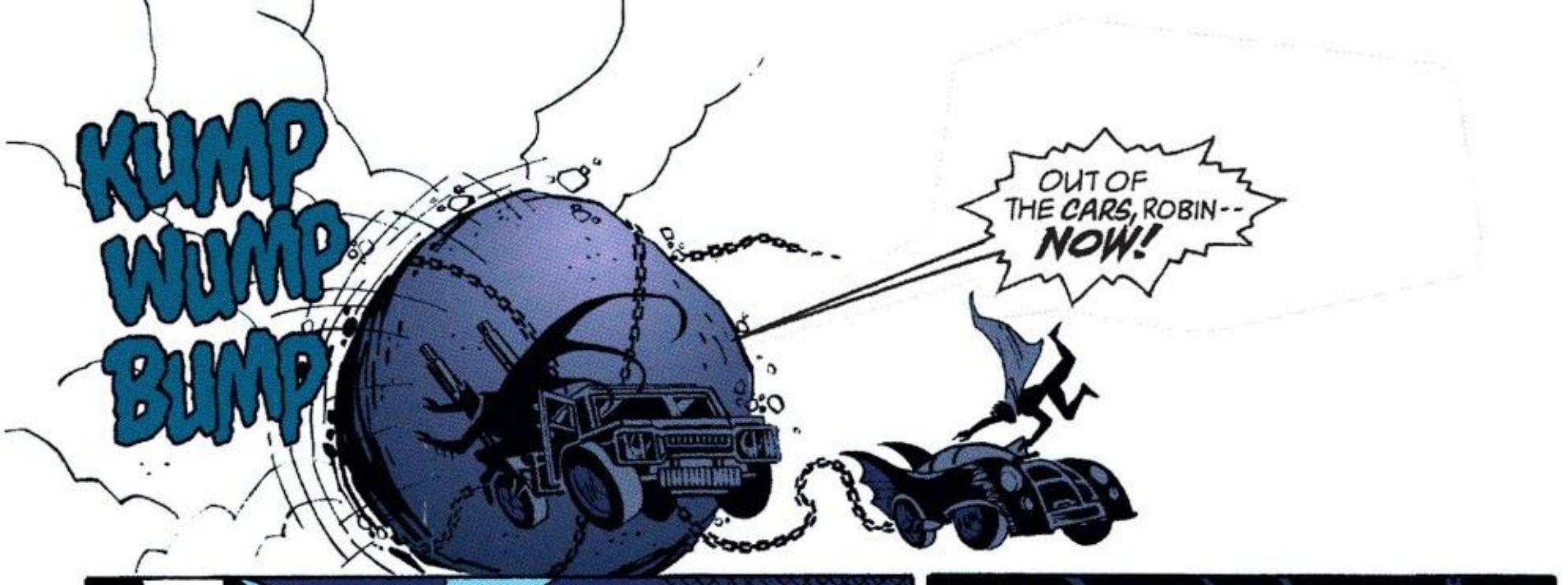
BOULDER MIGHT REFUSE
TO BUDGE--OR BUDGE BIG
TIME AND DROP THE REST
OF THE CAVE AROUND
OUR EARS.

DOUG MOENCH:
WRITER
JOHN BEATTY:
PENCILLER
SAL BUSCEMA:
INKER
GREGORY WRIGHT:
COLORIST
ANDROID IMAGES:
SEPARATIONS
TODD KLEIN:
LETTERER
JORDAN B. GORFINKEL:
ASSOCIATE EDITOR
DENNIS O'NEIL:
EDITOR
BATMAN CREATED BY
BOB KANE

AND IT
MIGHT DO
WHAT WE WANT,
ROBIN...

CLEAR
ACCESS TO
THE ROCKET
TUNNEL.





--VESPER FAIRCHILD, YOUR "SIREN OF THE NIGHT," WITH OUR USUAL FORMAT SUSPENDED TO BRING YOU QUAKE-RELATED NEWS...



THE MOST DRAMATIC STORY REMAINS THAT OF THE COMMUTERS TRAPPED IN THE COLLAPSED SUBWAY TUNNEL.

WITH THE QUAKE OCCURRING AFTER RUSH HOUR, RIDERSHIP WAS RELATIVELY LIGHT...



"...AND IT IS POSSIBLE THAT AS MANY AS A DOZEN MORE RIDERS WERE IN THE LAST CAR WHEN IT WAS SEPARATED FROM THE REST OF THE TRAIN."

NO! AS LONG AS WE'RE ALIVE, WE CAN'T GIVE UP HOPE.

YES, BUT HOW LONG WILL WE BE ALIVE?



UNTIL SOME THIRTY-SEVEN HOURS AGO, RESCUE WORKERS WERE AT LEASTABLE TO LOWER FOOD TO THE TRAPPED VICTIMS--

--BUT YESTERDAY'S RELATIVELY MILD AFTER-SHOCK SEALED OFF EVEN THAT NARROW CREVICE.

AND RESCUE WORKERS ARE NOW CONVINCED THAT ANY CONVENTIONAL EXCAVATION EFFORTS COULD BACKFIRE BY CAUSING A TOTAL COLLAPSE.

AS ONE WORKER PUT IT, "THOSE PEOPLE ARE IN A DANGEROUS SITUATION DOWN THERE, TRAPPED LIKE RATS, AND ALL OUR EQUIPMENT IS USELESS NOW..."



"AND THAT'S ONLY IF THERE'S SOME WAY TO GET DOWN THERE!"

SUBWAY ROCKET'S INTACT--AND THE TRACK LOOKS GOOD TOO...

BUT ARE YOU SURE WE CAN REACH THEM THIS WAY?



THE POLICE REPORTS PUT THE TRAPPED CAR AT MARKER ONE-NINETEEN IN THE "C" LINE--THE ONE THAT REPLACED THIS ABANDONED TUNNEL WE USE FOR THE ROCKET-CAR...

...AND WHICH RUNS PARALLEL TO IT FROM MARKERS EIGHTY-SEVEN TO ONE-TWENTY-FIVE.



SO IF WE CAN GET TO THE POINT CORRESPONDING WITH MARKER ONE-NINETEEN--

ACTUALLY, ONE-TWENTY-TWO--AND THEN WE WALK A BIT.

STRAPIN.

WHY ONE-TWENTY-TWO?

SCHAOWWW

BECAUSE THAT'S WHERE THE SEPARATING WALL IS ONLY FOURTEEN FEET THICK--EASIEST TO BLAST THROUGH.

GREAT.

EXPLOSIVES IN A TUNNEL A HUNDRED FEET UNDERGROUND-- AND ALREADY DAMAGED BY THE QUAKE.

ANOTHER REASON FOR MARKER ONE-TWENTY-TWO-- BECAUSE IT'S AWAY FROM THE DAMAGE.

YOU HOPE.

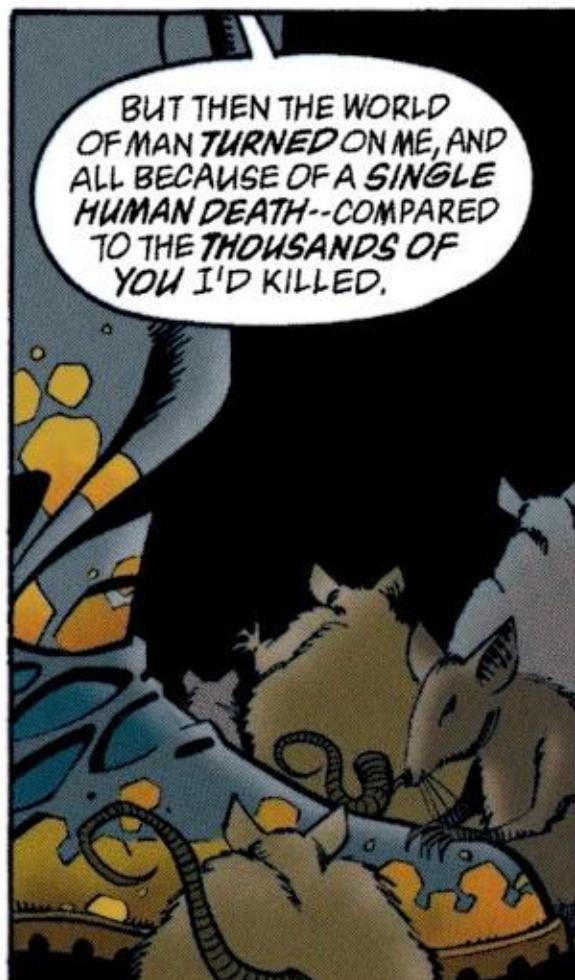
YES, ROBIN--I HOPE.

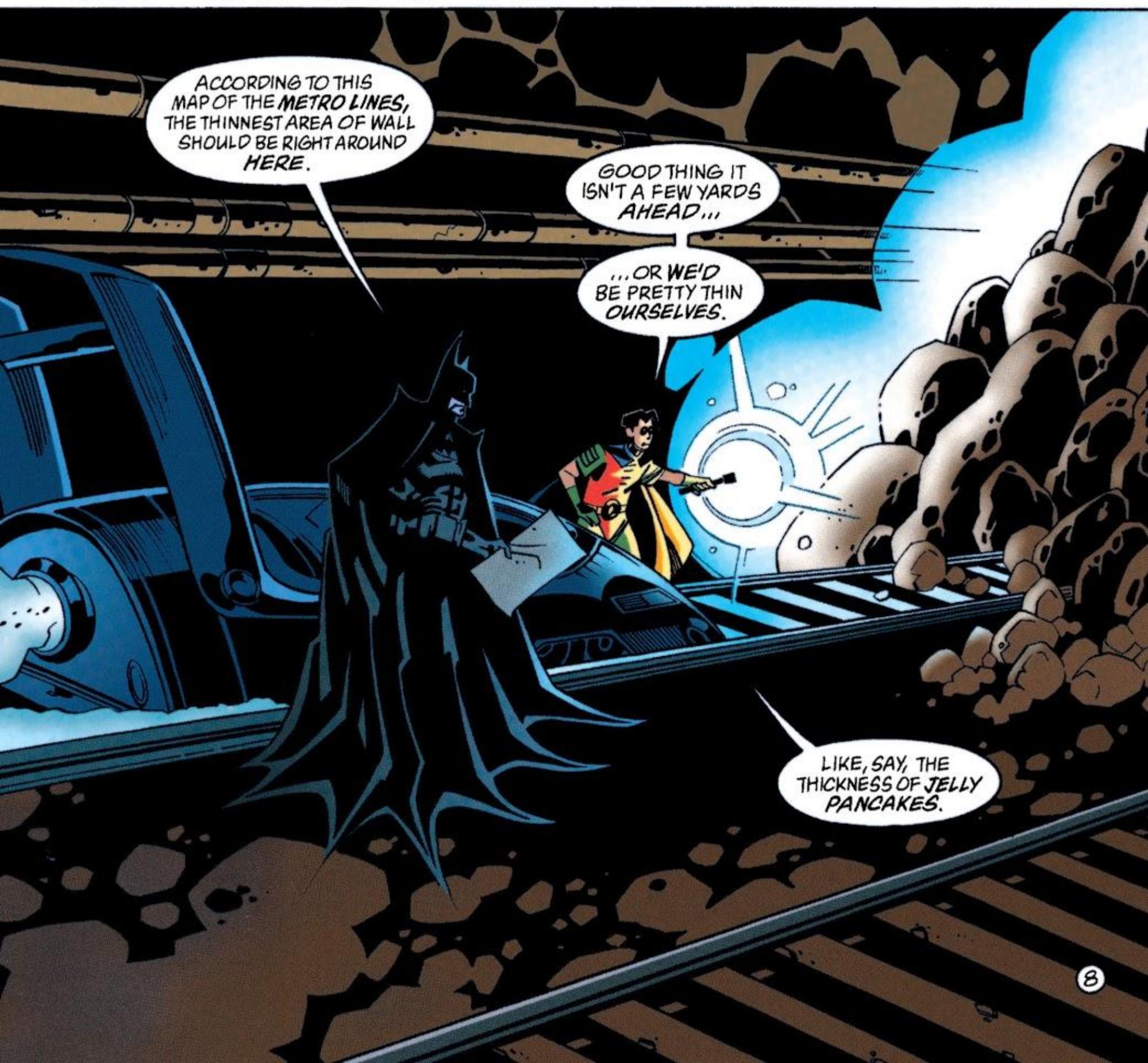
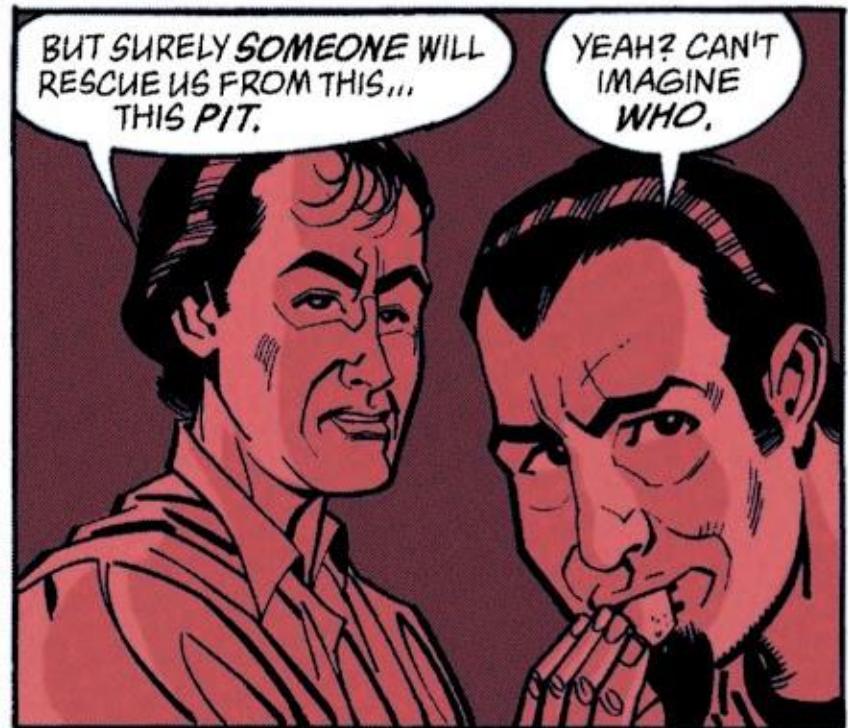
SKWEEE EEE REEE
PATIENCE, MY LITTLE FRIENDS--NO NEED TO EAT EACH OTHER NOW.

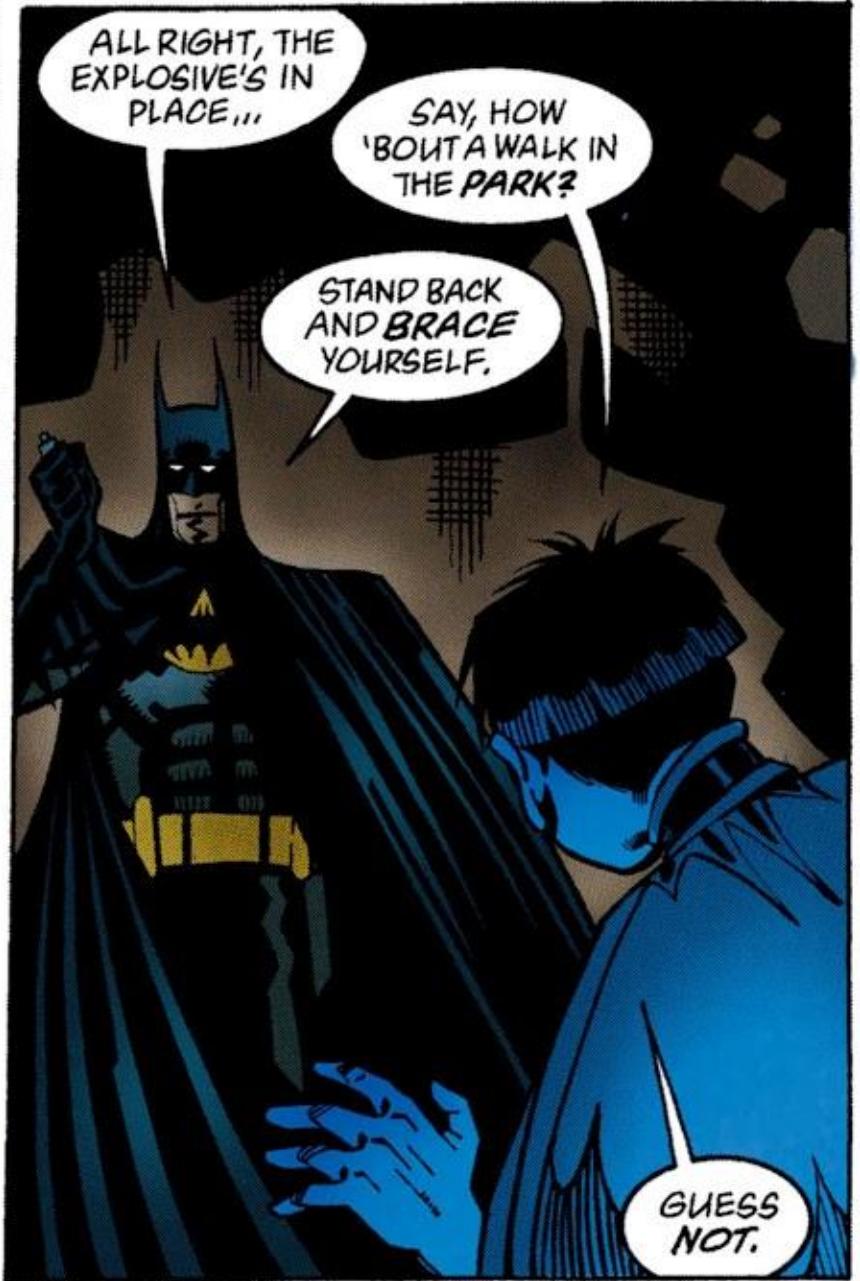
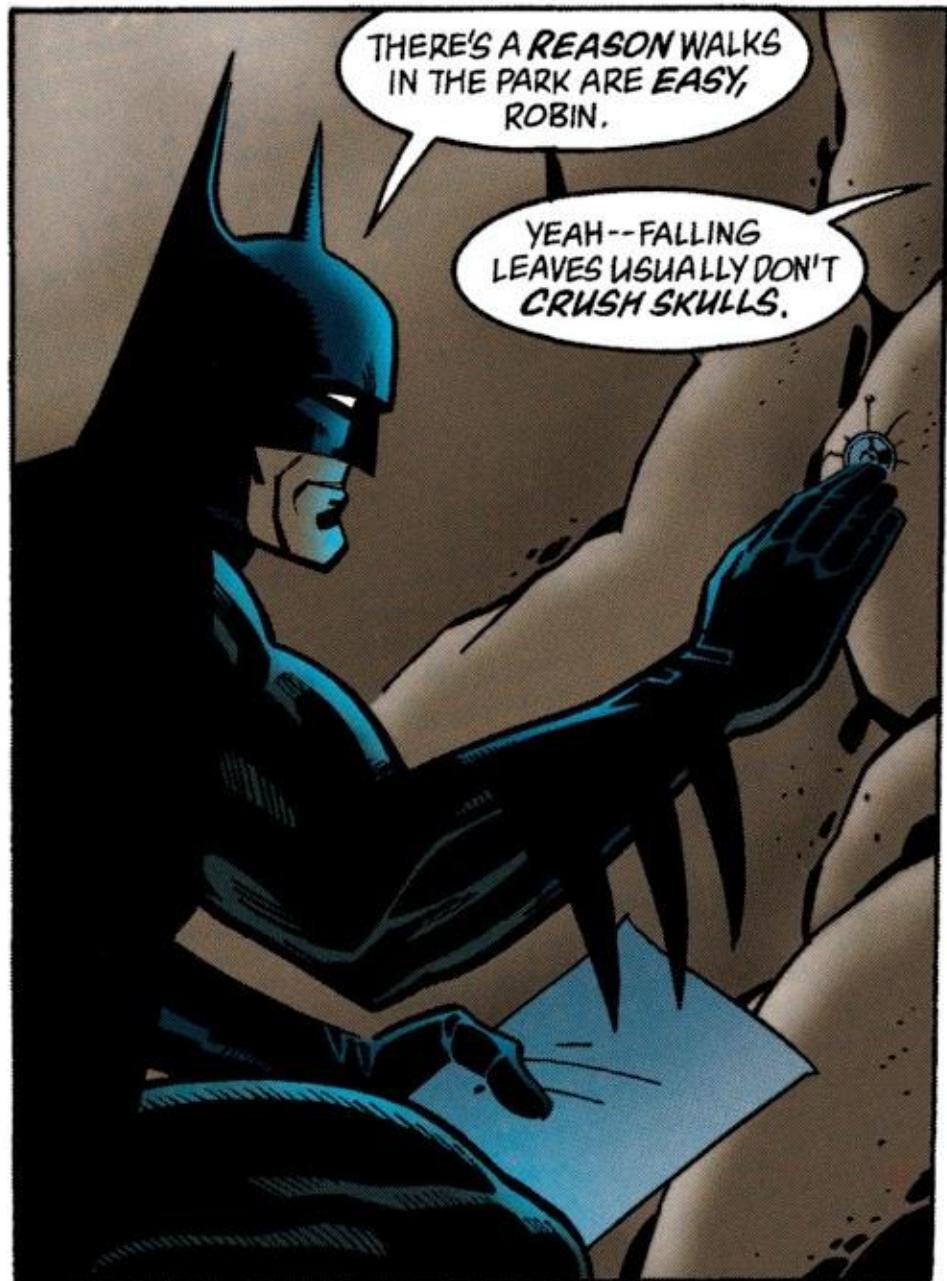
CHREEE EEE SKEEE
I'VE FOUND YOU-- AND YOUR LONG ORDEAL WILL SOON BE ENDED.

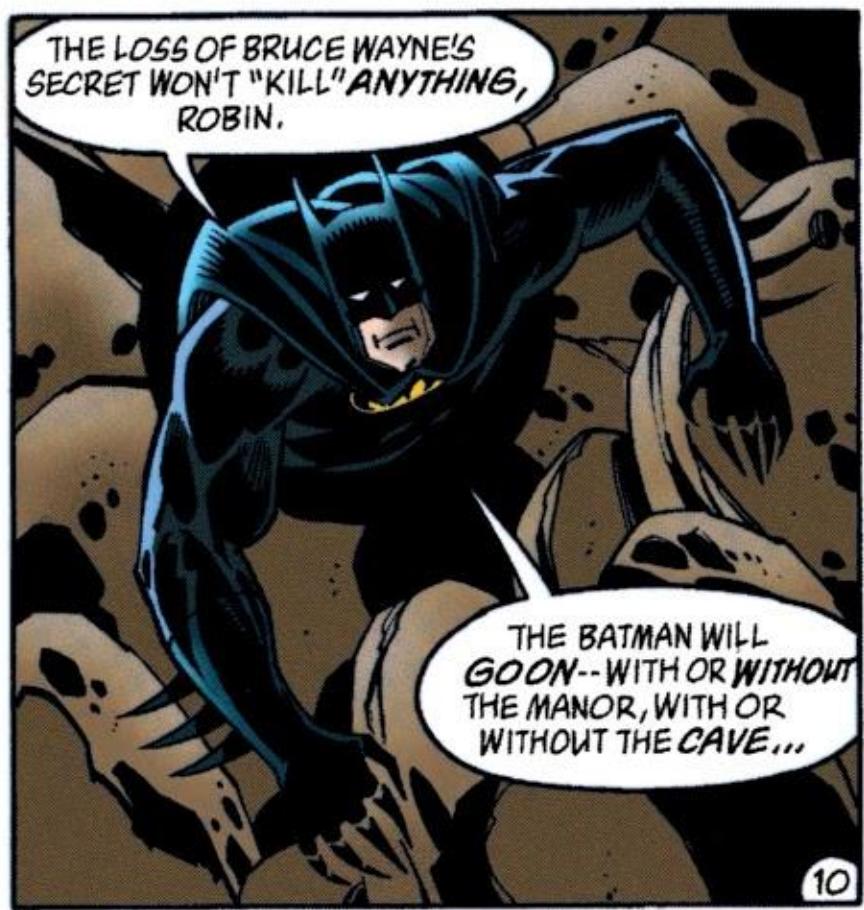
EEE EE SKWEE
AS GOTHAM'S RAT-CATCHER, I SLAUGHTERED YOU BY THE SCORES, THE HUNDREDS, THE THOUSANDS...

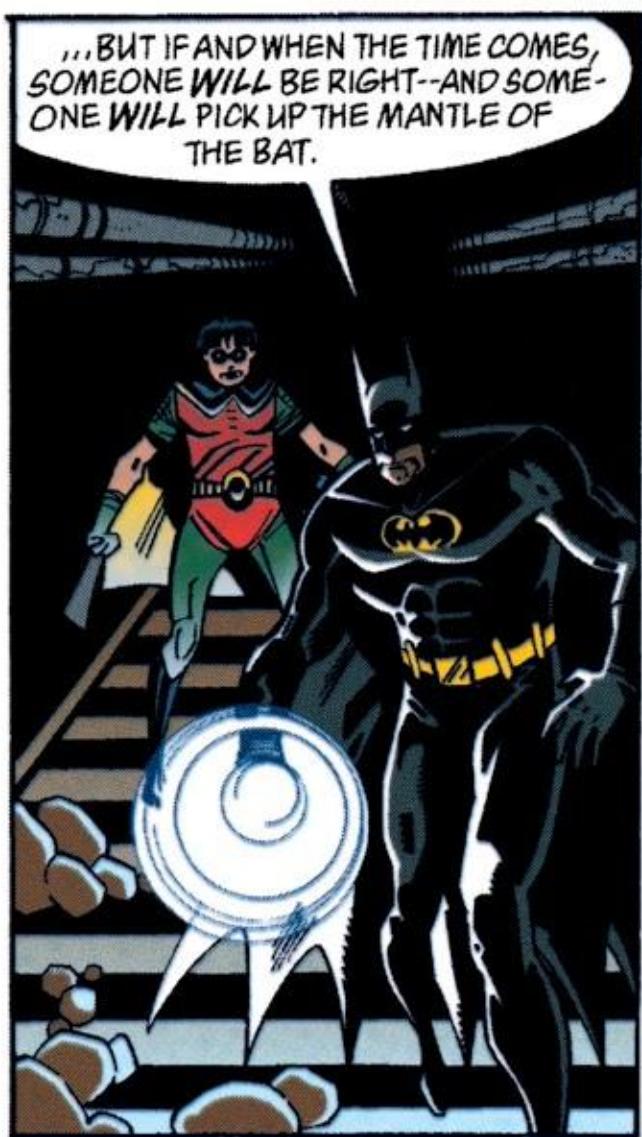
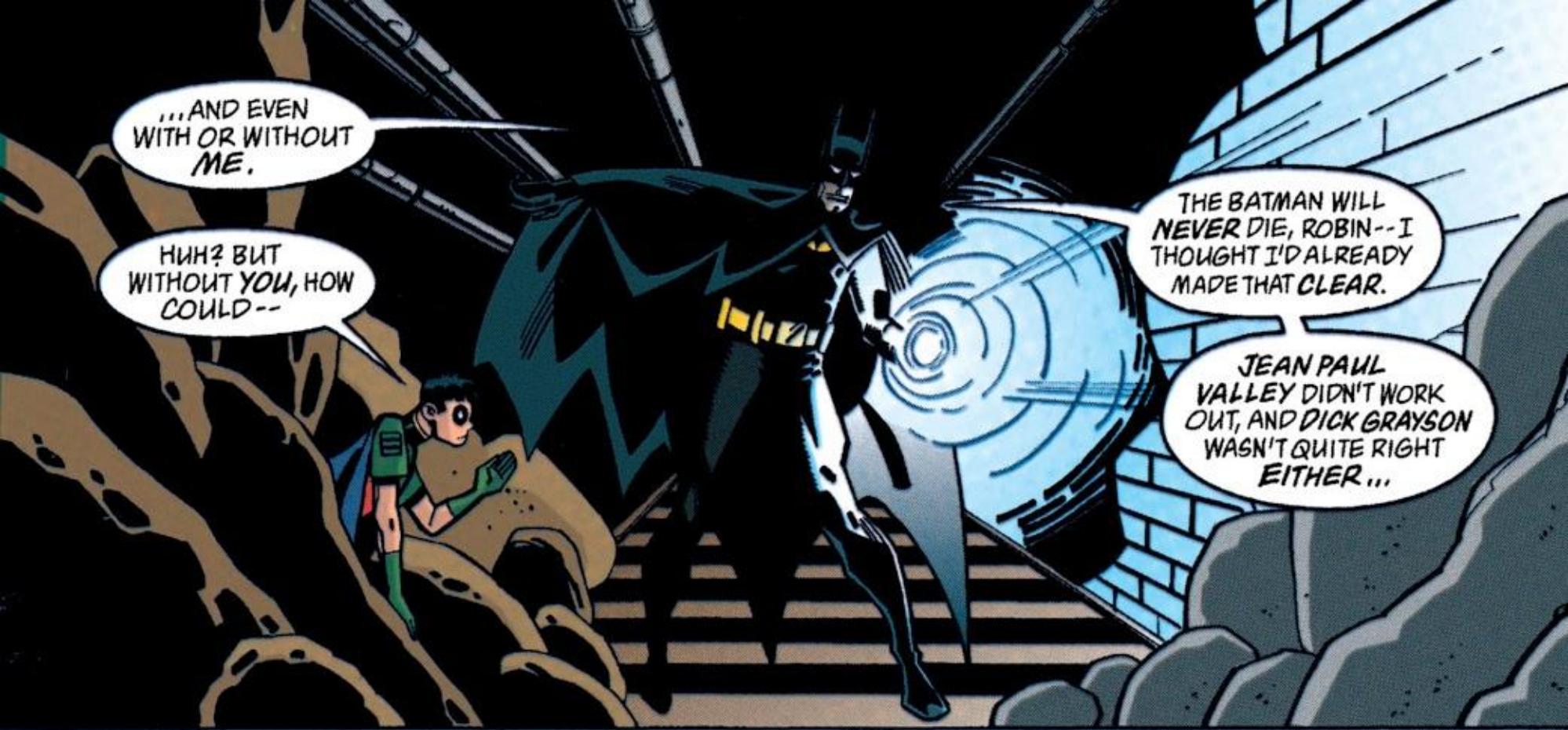
SKWEE EEE CHEEEE















ARE YOU REALLY
HERE TO HELP US GET
OUT?

IS THE
CITY--

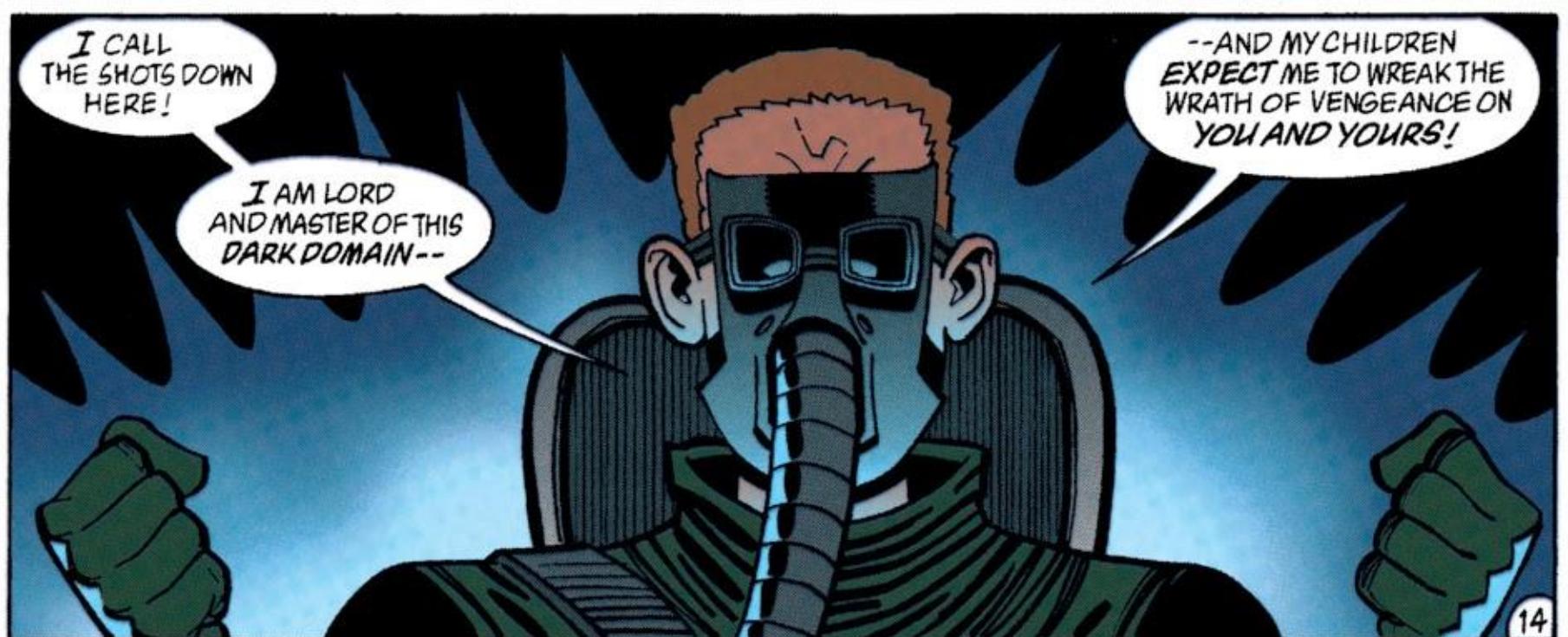
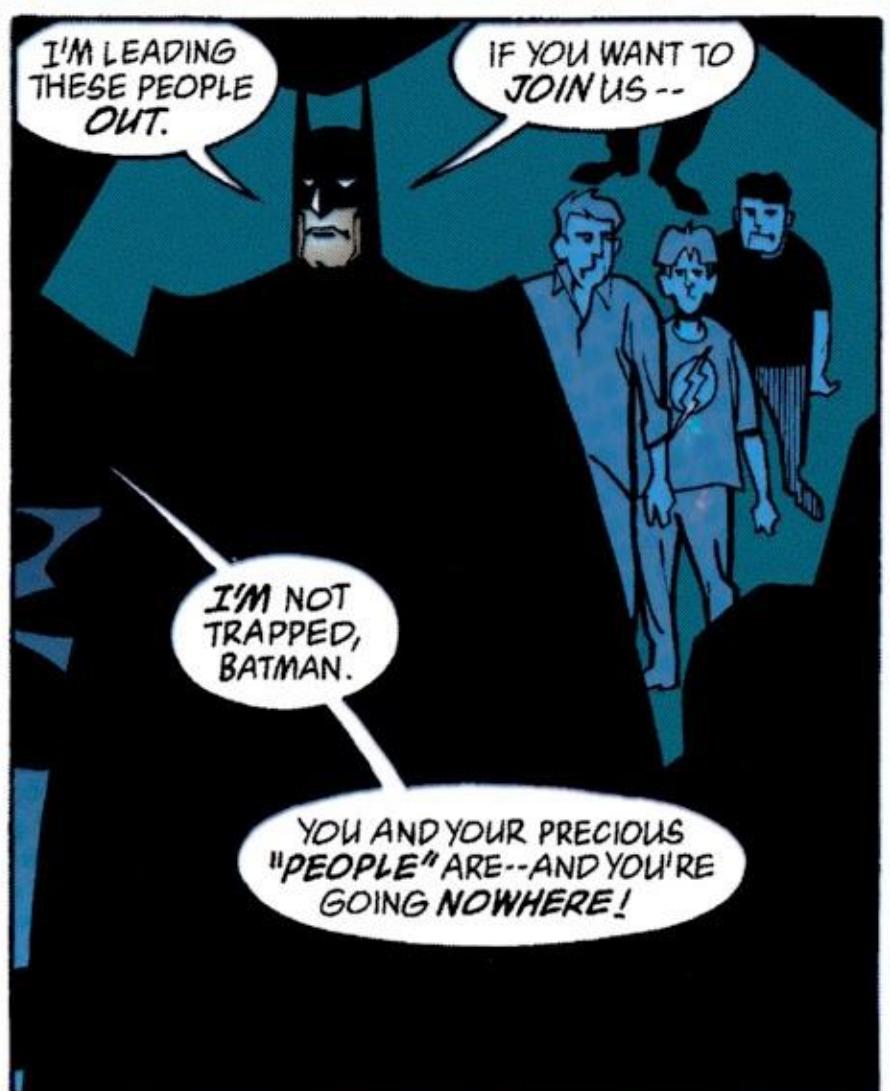
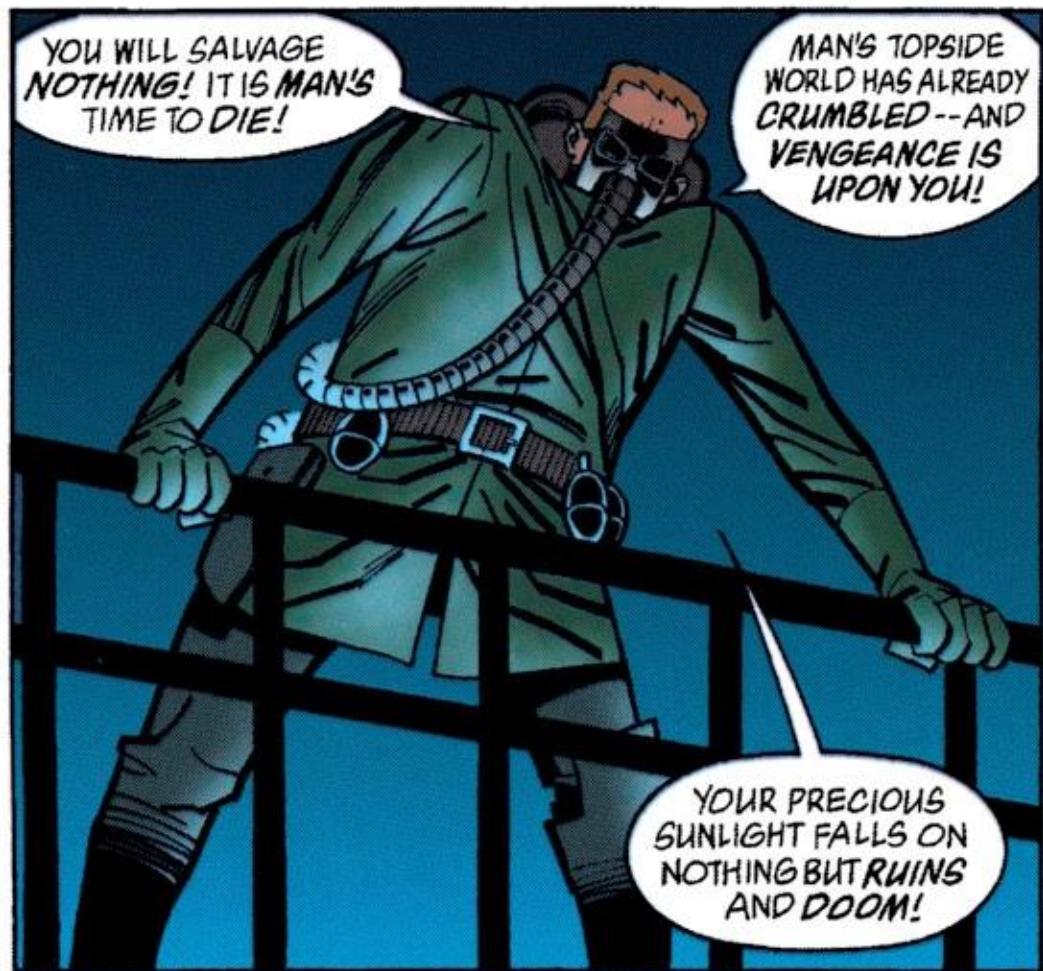
YEAH, AND WHAT'S
HAPPENING ANYWAY?
THEY LOWERED A NOTE
WITH OUR FOOD--SAID
IT WAS AN EARTH-
QUAKE.

NOT
NOW.

EVERYONE
OUT FIRST.

THEN IF YOU'LL
JUST STAY CALM,
YOU'LL ALL BE
SAVED.

YOU WILL
SAVE NO ONE,
BATMAN!



IF YOUR "CHILDREN"
ARE RATS, FLANNEGAN,
MAYBE YOU BELONG IN
ARKHAM ASYLUM
RATHER THAN BLACK-
GATE PRIS--

EVERY RAT SAVED NOW MAKES UP
FOR ONE KILLED IN MY DELUSED
PAST AS GOTHAM'S EXTERMINATOR!

WHAT MULTITUDES?

THE ONES TRAPPED
DOWN HERE BY THE SO-
CALLED "QUAKE"--

BUT MANY POOR LITTLE
CREATURES WERE KILLED--MY
DEBT IS ENORMOUS--AND I CAN
REDEEM MYSELF ONLY BY
SAVING MULTITUDES!

-- JUST LIKE THE
FILTHY HUMAN VERMIN
WHO WERE TRAPPED IN
THAT SUBWAY CAR!

THESE PEOPLE
ARE INNOCENT
COMMUTERS.

HUMANS ARE CRUEL,
DEVIOUS PREDATORS--

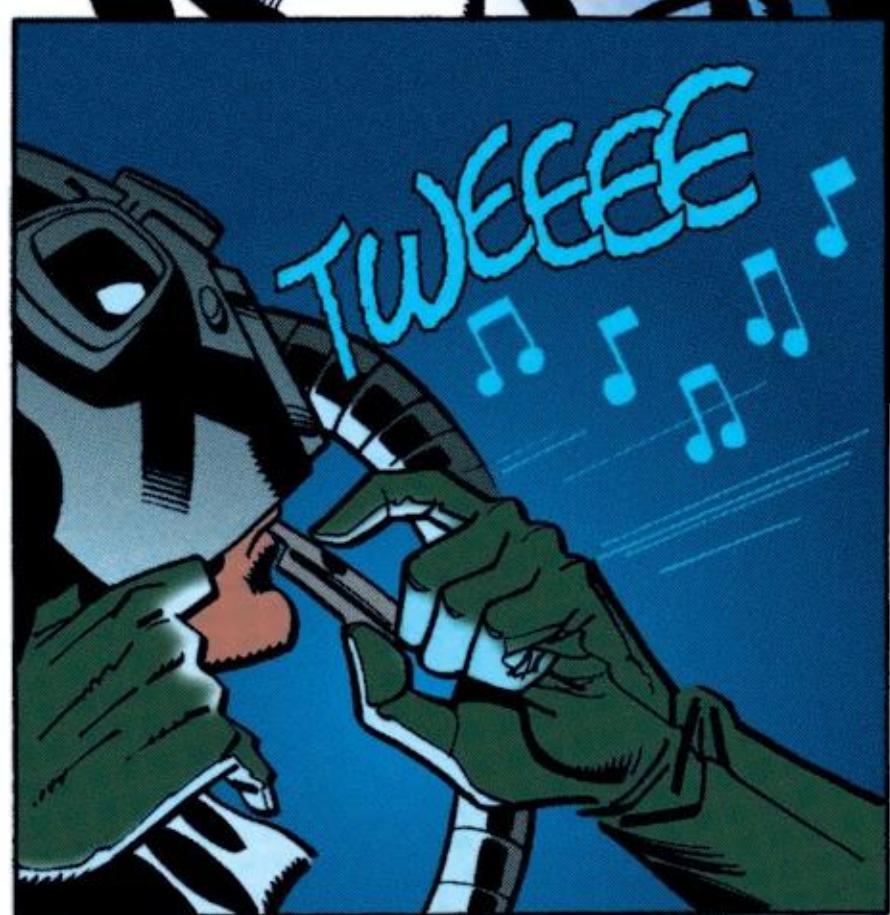
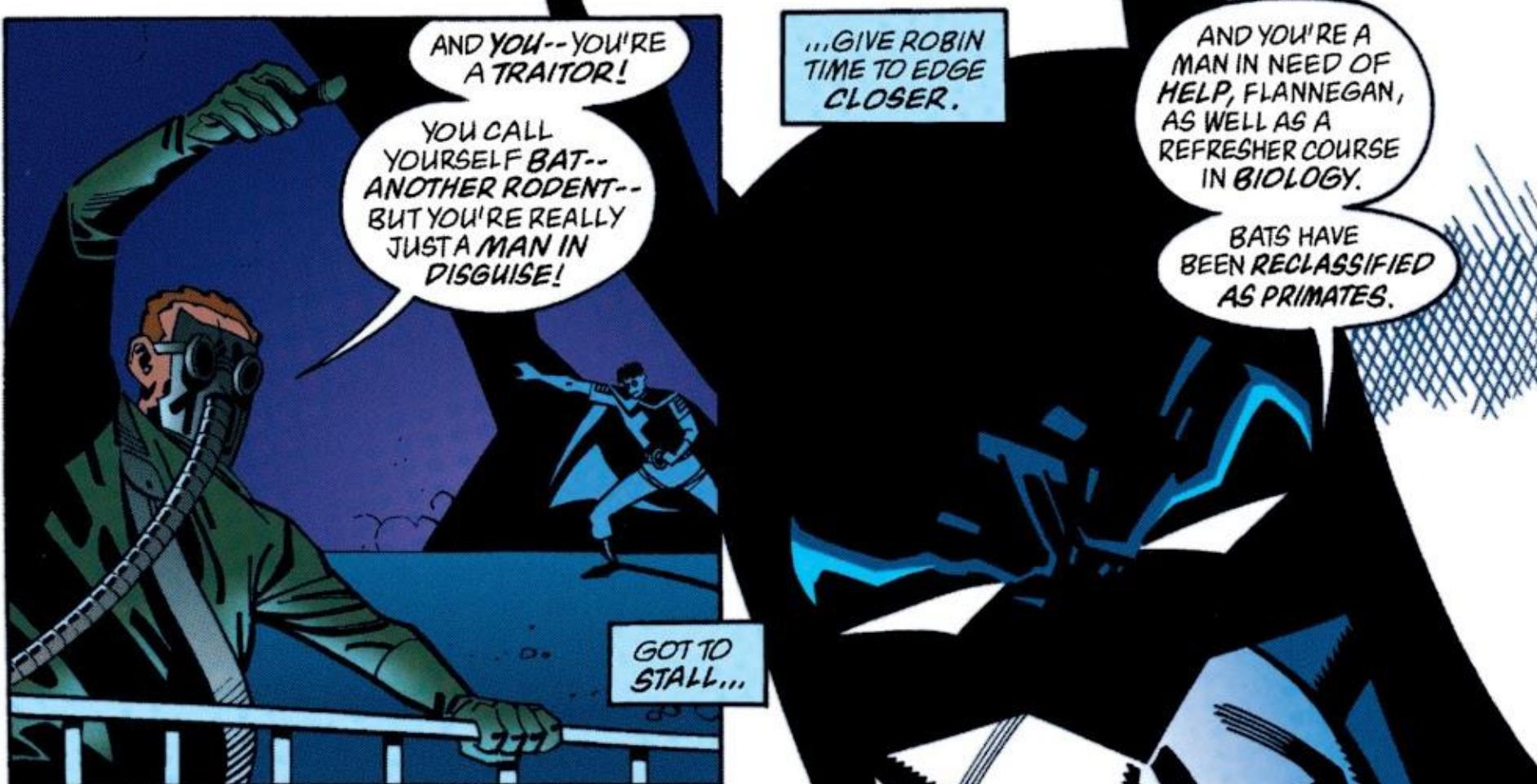
YOU'RE HUMAN,
FLANNEGAN.

NO! I'VE SEEN
THE LIGHT--OR RATHER
THE DARK, THE SWEET
MOIST DARK OF THESE
TUNNELS...

HUMANS ARE
NEVER INNOCENT,
BATMAN!

-- BUSILY
EXTERMINATING
EVERY SPECIES
ON EARTH,
INCLUDING
THEMSELVES!

...AND IT
HAS MADE
ME MORE
RAT THAN
MAN!





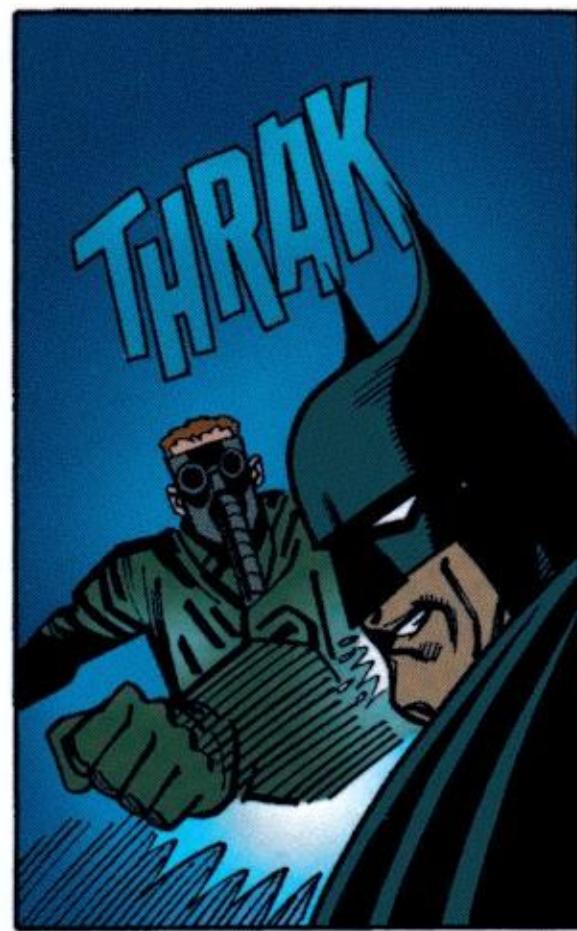
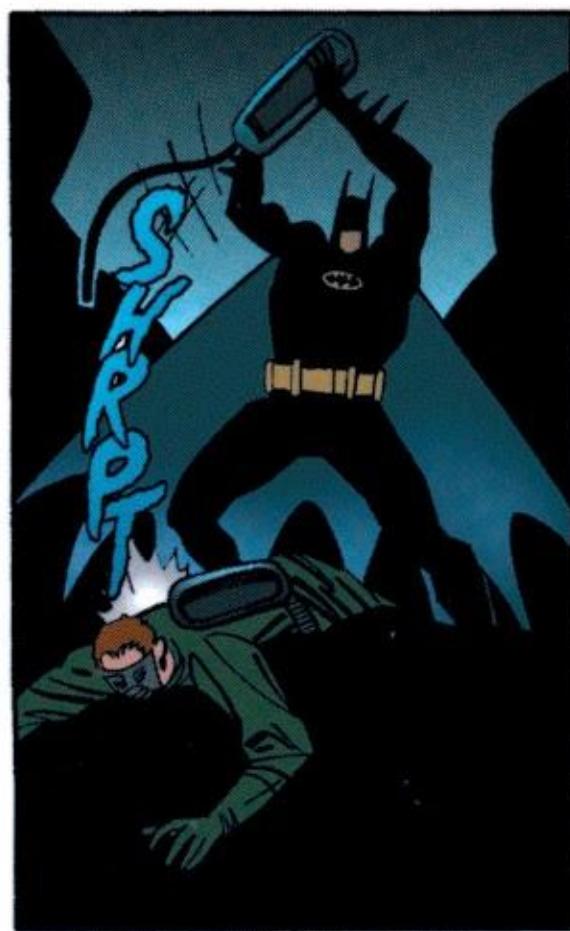


YOU SENT THEM TO HELL, FLANNEGAN! YOU SET YOURSELF UP AS THEIR MAD GOD, MADE THEM FOLLOW YOU-- AND YOU LED THEM TO THEIR DEATHS!

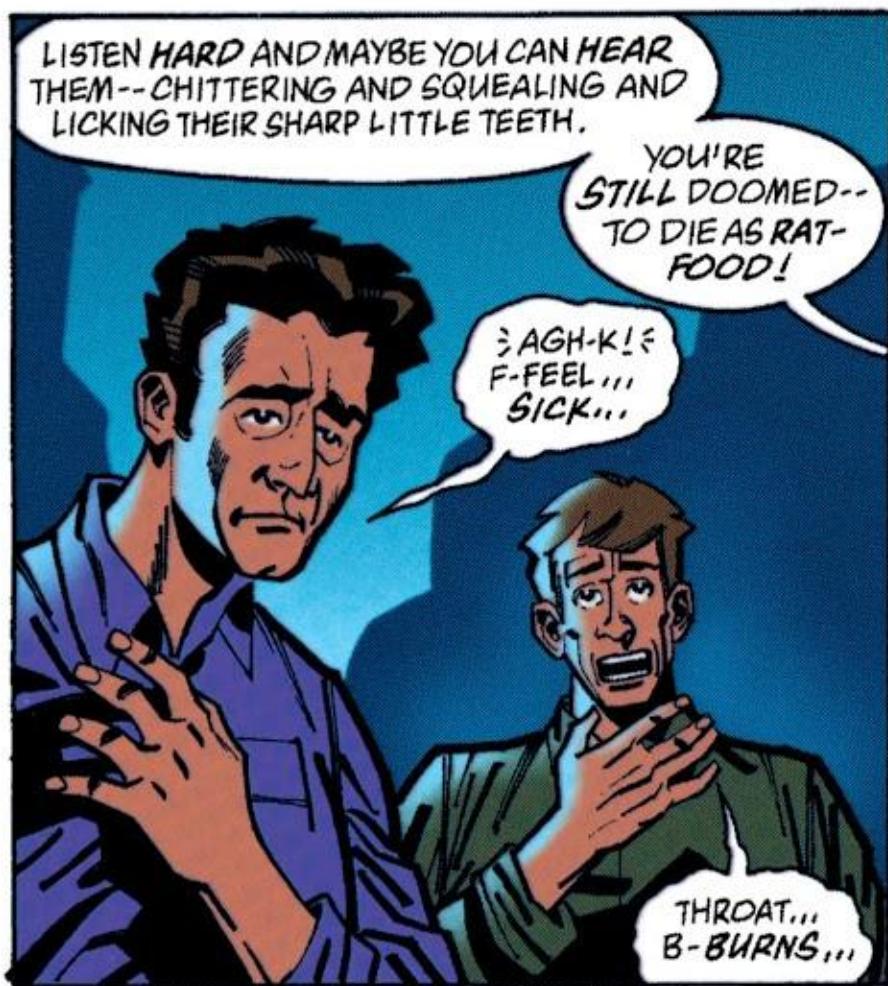


IT'S YOUR FAULT, BATMAN-- AND THEIRS! FILTHY HUMAN VERMIN!









--MIRACULOUS ESCAPE BY THOSE TRAPPED SUBWAY RIDERS, SOME OF WHOM ARE CLAIMING THEY WERE SAVED BY "THE BATMAN."

RELIEF WORKERS, HOWEVER, NOTE THAT THE VICTIMS HAVE ENDURED PROLONGED STRESS AND MAY BE DISORIENTED.

"AFTER ALL," SAID ONE AMBULANCE ATTENDANT, "THE BATMAN IS ABOUT AS REAL AS ALIEN ABDUCTORS."

WE...WE DID IT.

BUT THERE'S A LOT, ROBIN, STILL TO DO.

IN POSSIBLY RELATED NEWS, POLICE HAVE TAKEN ANOTHER BLACKGATE ESCAPEE BACK INTO CUSTODY...

"WITH THE BLACKGATE FACILITY STILL AWAITING REPAIRS, OTIS FLANNEGAN--ALIAS RATCATCHER--IS BEING HELD IN A RELATIVELY UNDAMAGED CELL AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS."

NOW YOU COME TO ME...

...BUT YOU'RE TOO LATE.

YOUR GOD IS CAGED.

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"AFTERSHOCK" CONTINUES WITH UNEXPECTED TWISTS IN--

HELP MONEY RESCUE
UTRAPPED RUINS!