



WAR OF THE GODS

15

# BATMAN

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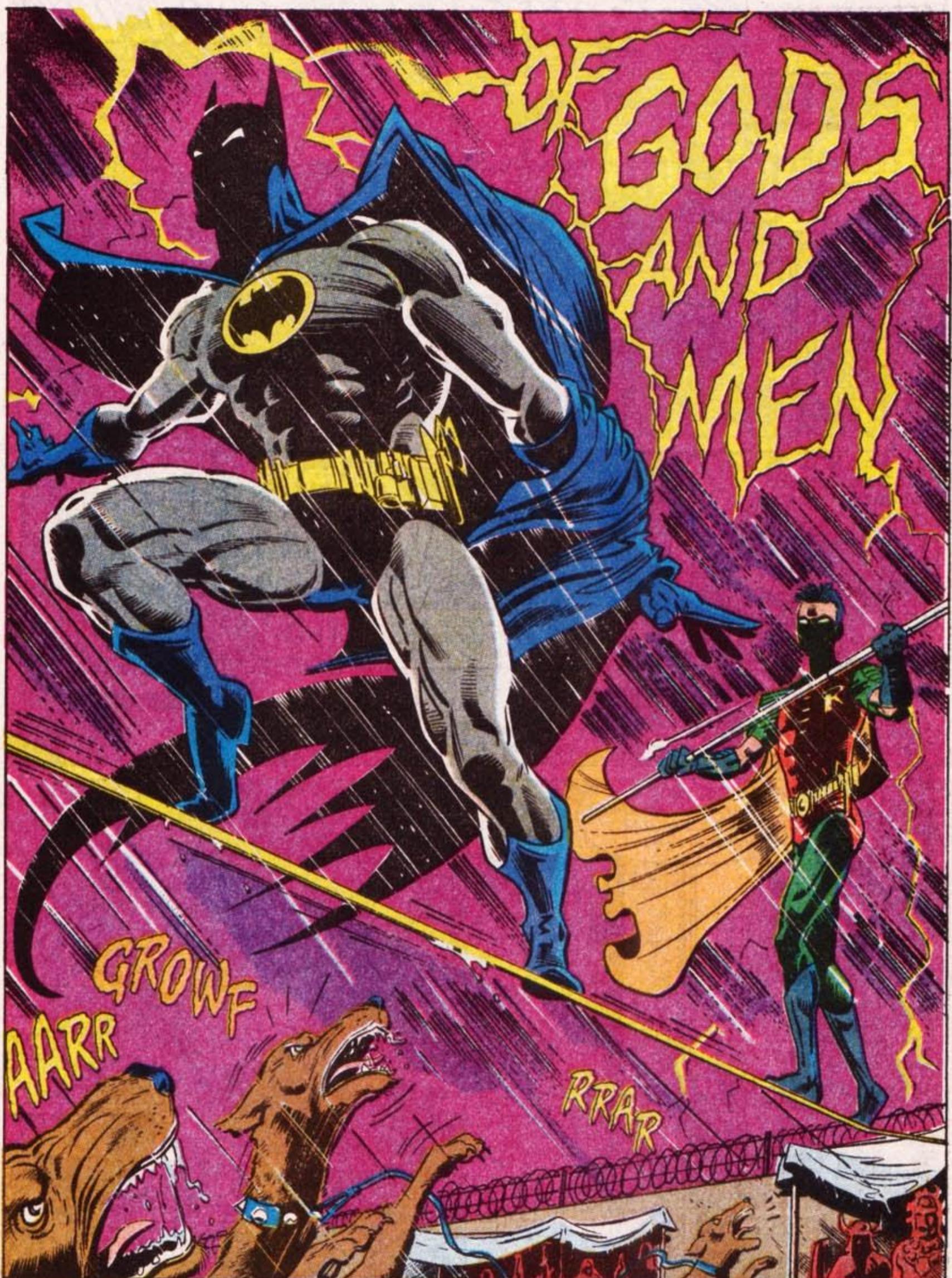
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# BATMAN LORD OF GODS AND MEN



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LUCK'S HOLDING SO FAR.  
NOISE OF THE STORMS  
DROWNING OUT THE  
DOGS' HOWLS.

RRUMBLL LLLL

MAYBE THE GODS  
ARE WITH US  
ON THIS ONE.

SNAP

GRR

THEN AGAIN--

KRASHH!

YOU HEAR  
SOMETHING,  
RINGO?

--WHEN COULD  
YOU EVER TRUST  
A GOD?

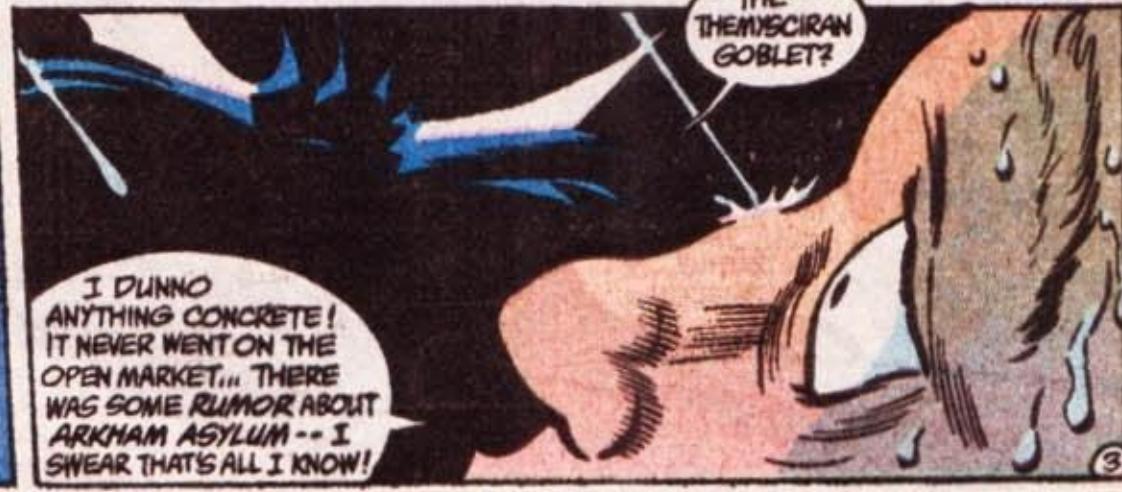
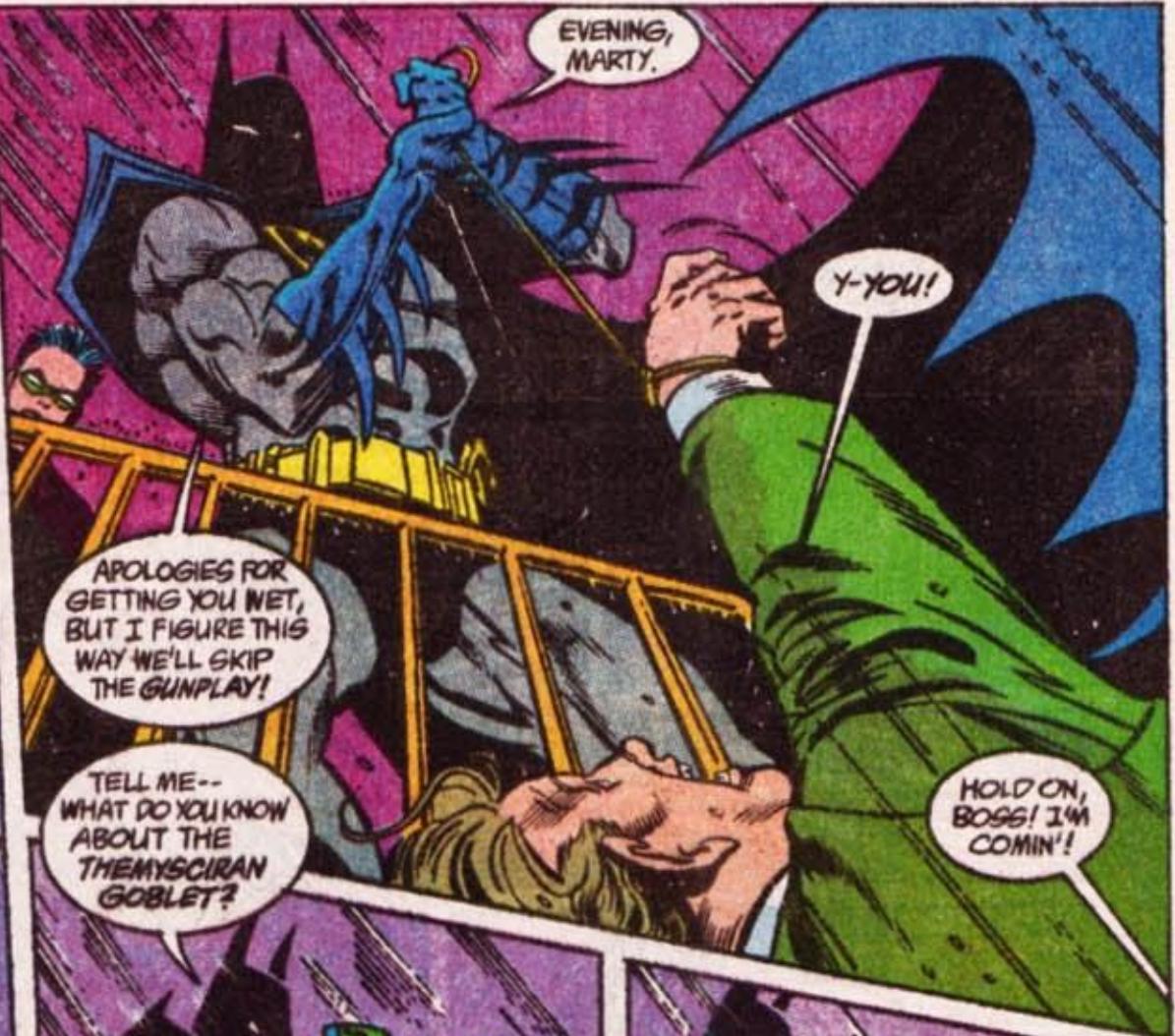
PROBABLY JUST THE  
STORM SPOOKIN' THE  
DOGS, MR. ROLLINS.

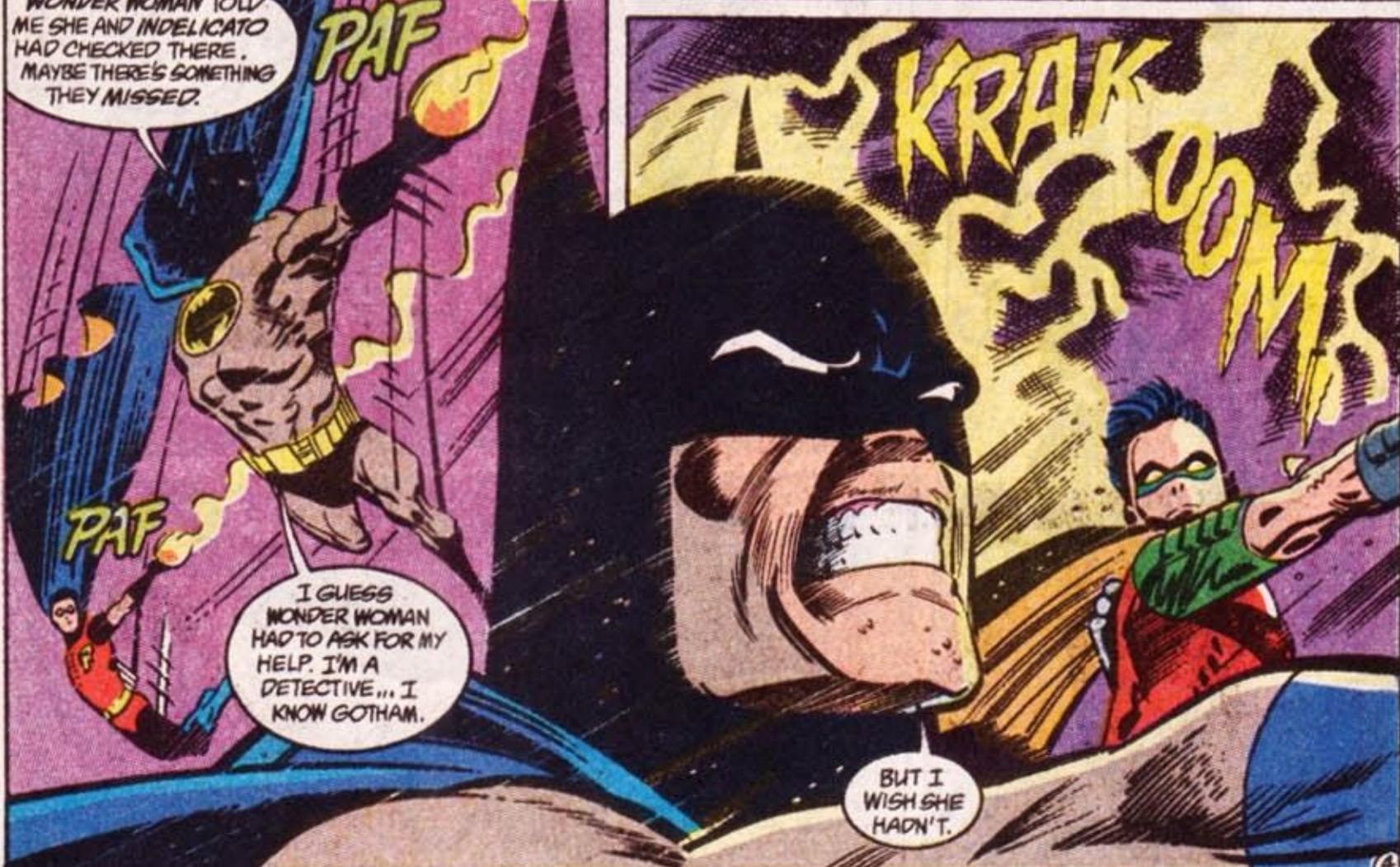
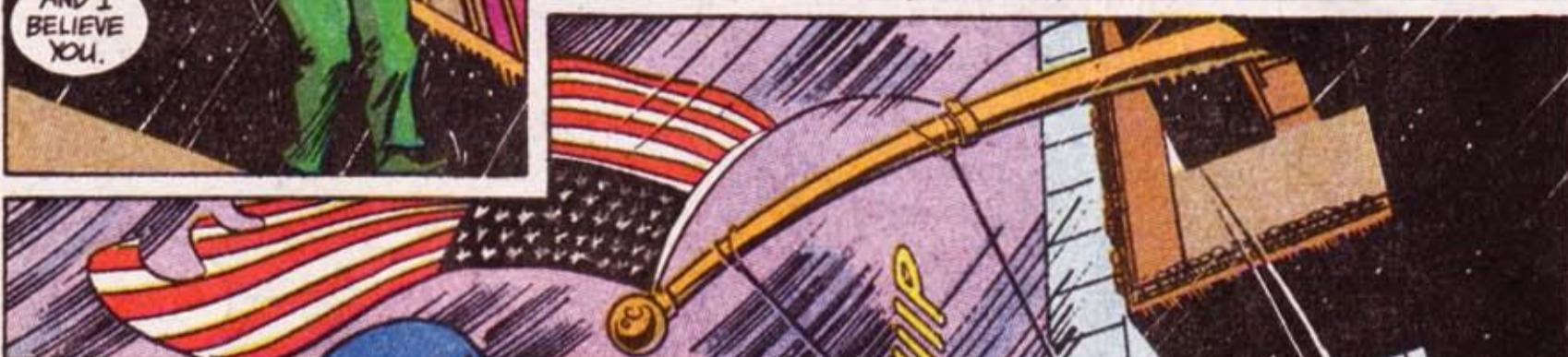
BETTER CHECK  
ANYWAY. THOSE GARGOYLES  
ARE WAY TOO VALUABLE  
TO TAKE ANY CHANCES!

GUESS I'M JUST  
SPOOKED MYSELF.  
QUICKER WE FIND A  
BUYER FOR THESE,  
THE HAPPIER--

I TOLD  
YOU BOSS--  
NOTHIN'!

WHAT THE  
DEVIL--?







HE WAS PROBABLY  
PLANTING A TRACER,  
YOU KNOW.

AUTO-ALARM SAYS  
HE WAS DEFINITELY  
PLANTING A TRACER--

--BUT AT  
LEAST THIS WAY  
WE KNOW EXACTLY  
WHERE HE IS!

ARKHAM  
ASYLUM  
FOR THE  
CRIMINALLY  
INSANE

--IT WAS  
A NIGHTMARE,  
BATMAN!

TWO NURSES KILLED--  
GOOD MEN, BOTH OF THEM--  
AND TWO PATIENTS. THE  
CHEETAH CUT THEM  
TO RIBBONS!

WAS IT A  
SOLO ESCAPE?  
ANYONE ELSE LEAVE  
WITH HER?

THREE OTHERS TOOK  
ADVANTAGE OF THE CONFUSION  
--WE HAD TWO BACK WITHIN THE  
HOUR. THE THIRD'S STILL  
LOOSE.

OLD FRIEND  
OF YOURS, I BELIEVE--  
KILLER CROC, HE  
CALLS HIMSELF.

ANOTHER GIFT FROM THE  
BLASTED GODS! BUT KILLER'S  
NOT THE PROBLEM TONIGHT.  
HE DOESN'T HAVE THE BRAINS  
TO BE INVOLVED IN THIS.

...NO, NO NAMES THERE  
I CAN CONNECT TO CHEETAH--  
OR THE GOBLET. WE DRAW  
ANOTHER BLANK!

THIS IS A  
COMPLETE LIST  
OF INMATES...?

THERE'S  
ONE AVENUE  
WE HAVEN'T  
EXPLORED--

ARMED  
ASYLUM  
OFFICIAL RELEASES

RELEASED THE  
DAY BEFORE CHEETAH'S  
ESCAPE... IT'S TOO MUCH  
OF A COINCIDENCE.  
IT HAS TO BE HIM!

GOOD  
THINKING,  
ROBIN!

YOU! STEP  
OUT IN THE  
LIGHT!

ER... HI  
AGAIN!

DON'T GIVE UP EASILY, DO YOU, INDELICATO? THOUGHT I TOLD YOU TO GET OFF OUR CASE?

YOUR CASE?  
LISTEN, BIG MAN--  
I'M THE  
COP!

YOU'RE A VIGILANTE!  
YOU'RE ILLEGAL! I  
COULD ARREST YOU ANY  
TIME I CHOOSE!

WHAT DO YOU  
SAY TO THAT,  
HOTSHOT?

A NIGHT IN  
JAIL MIGHT BRING  
YOU DOWN OFF THAT  
HIGH HORSE!

SCRAIII

SHRIP

BATMAN--!

DOWN!

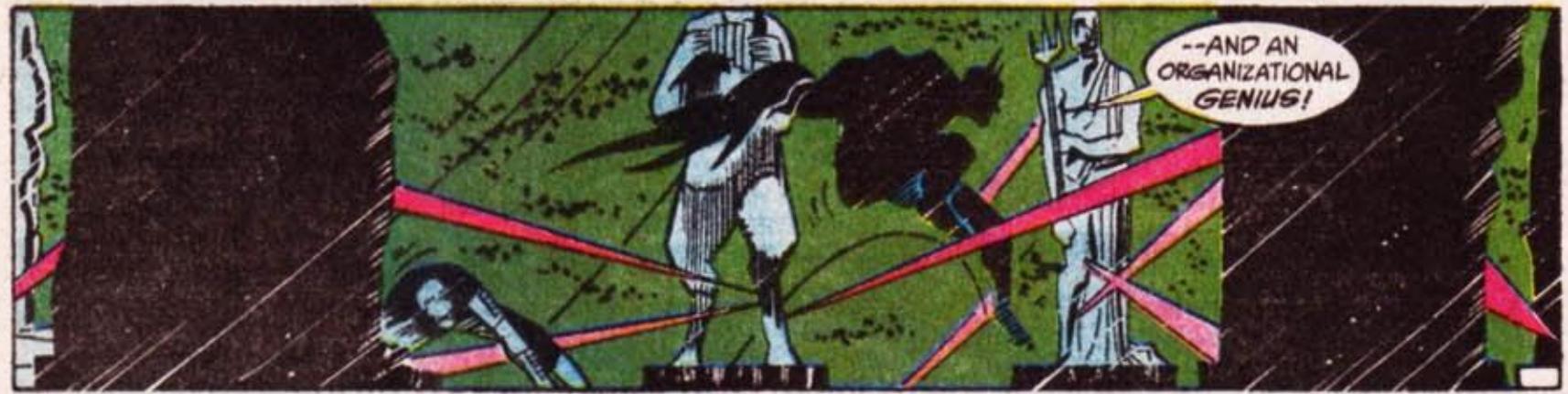
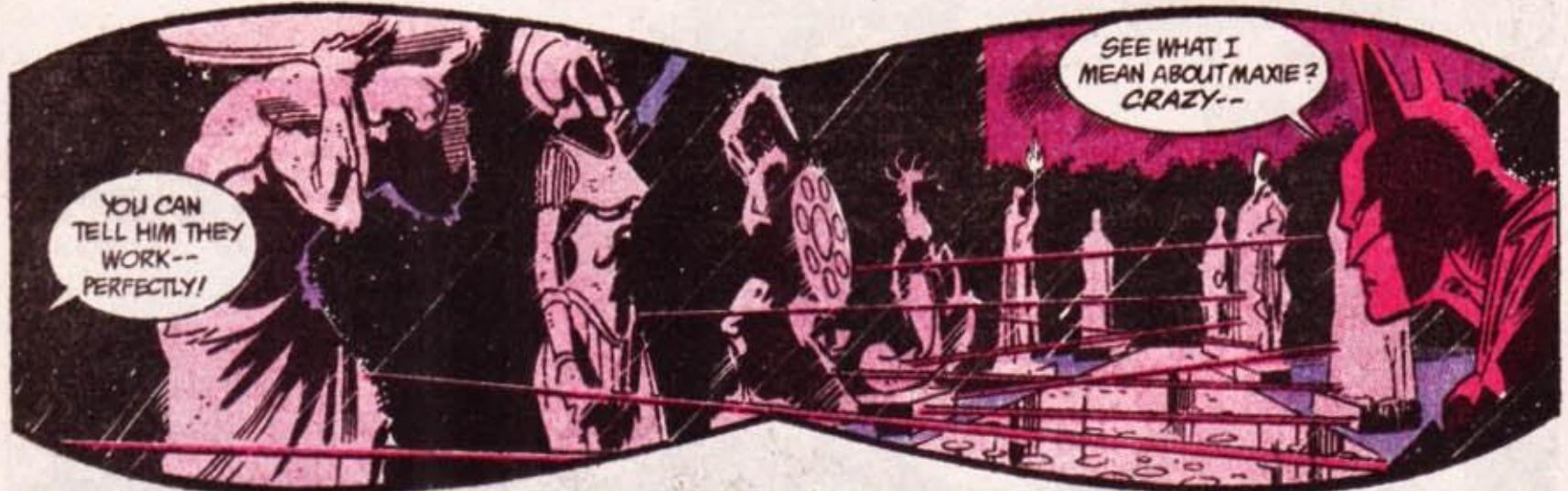














WE GOT DOUBLE TROUBLE,  
SIRE! INTRUDERS IN THE GROUNDS--  
AN' FARO CALLED TO SAY THEY  
PICKED UP ANOTHER BY THE  
GATES!

WHAT?  
TRESPASSERS-->SMIFF--  
IN THE HALLOWED HALLS  
OF OLYMPUS? TAKE  
THEM!

ONLY THEIR  
DEATHS WILL  
ASSUAGE MY  
WRATH!

AAAA-  
TCHOOO!

HOLD YOUR  
FIRE! YOU MIGHT  
HIT CHARLIE!

TOUGH,  
CHARLIE!

THE BOSS'LL  
HAVE US ALL IN  
THE PIT IF THIS  
CREEP GETS  
AWAY!

BRRRT!

WHERE IS  
HE? WHERE'D  
HE GO?

JUST TOO MANY  
OF THEM--

CHARLIE...!

LOOK  
OUT! THE  
STATUE--!

HNNF!

NO CHOICE BUT TO PLAY  
IT THEIR WAY!

ARGH!

RUNCH!

AAAAA!

I SUGGEST  
YOU THROW DOWN  
YOUR WEAPONS AND  
SURRENDER.

WH-WHERE?

NO--  
;SMIFFE--  
BATMAN!

YOU  
SURRENDER OR  
YOUR ACCOMPLICE  
DIES! ;SMIFF!;

INDELICATO!

I'M  
SORRY,  
BATMAN--I  
SHOULD HAVE  
LISTENED!

BUT IT DOESN'T  
MATTER ABOUT ME! YOU  
HAVE TO GET THAT GOBLET  
BACK! FOR GOD'S SAKE,  
DON'T SURRENDER!

SILENCE!

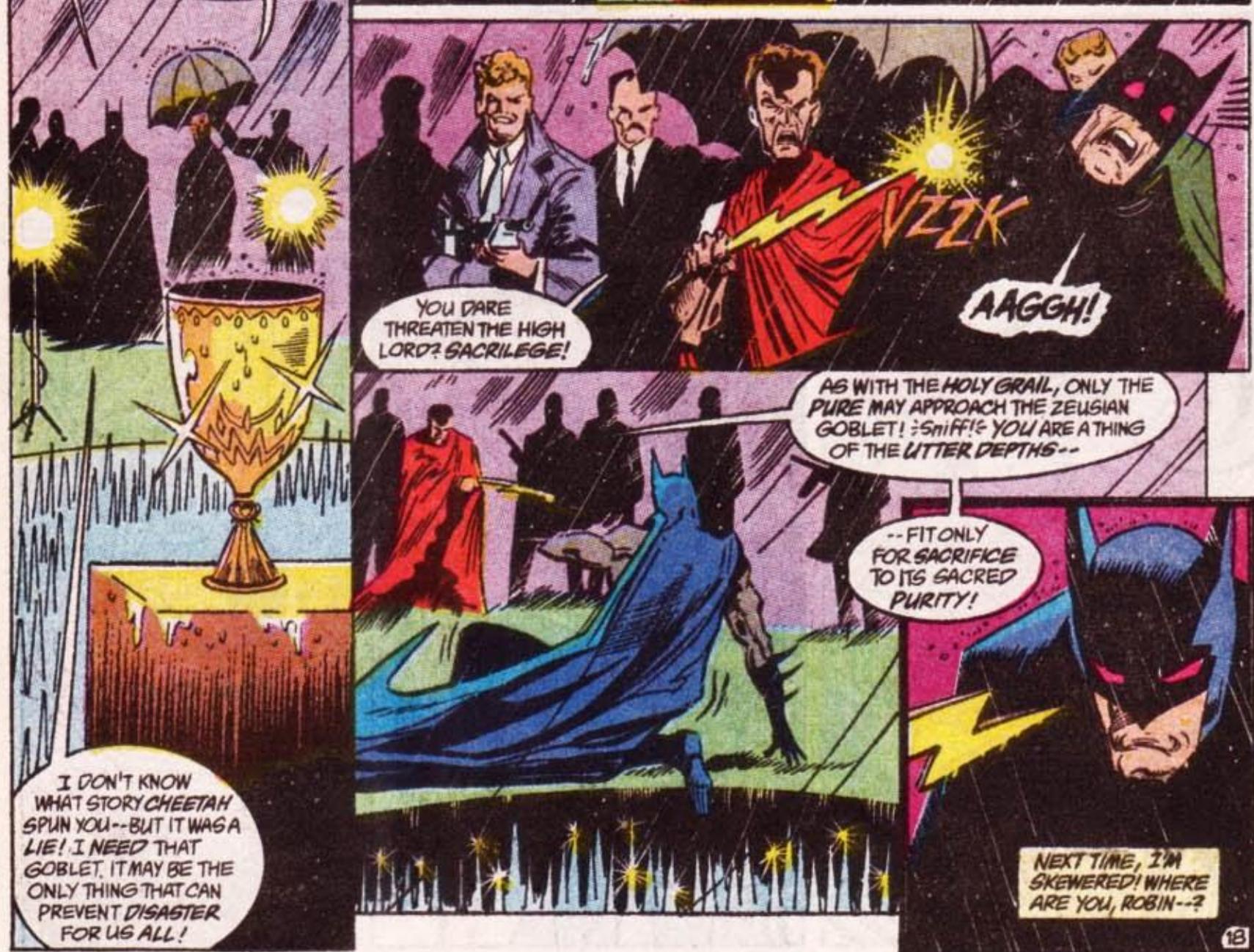
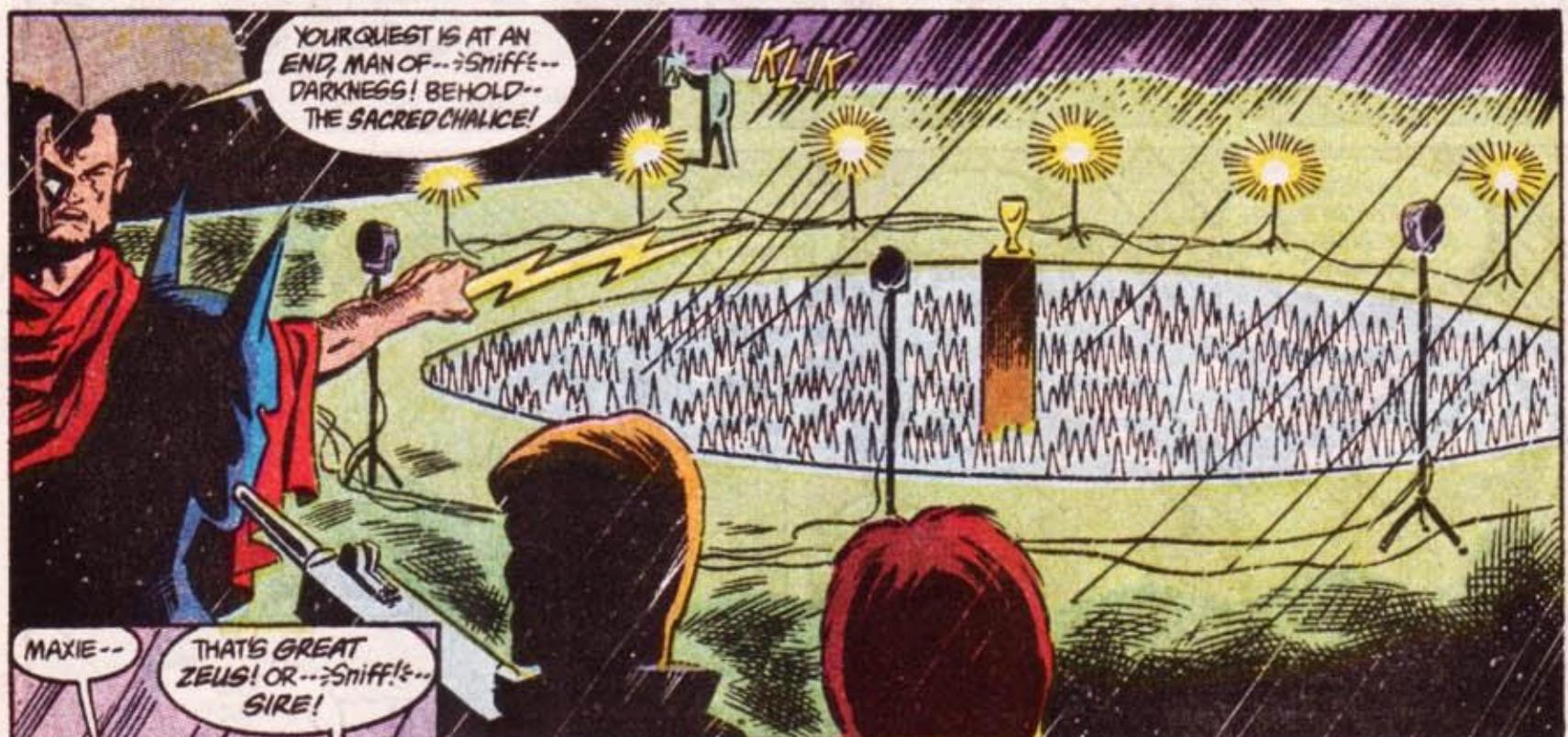
VSSK!

AAAHH!

WELL?

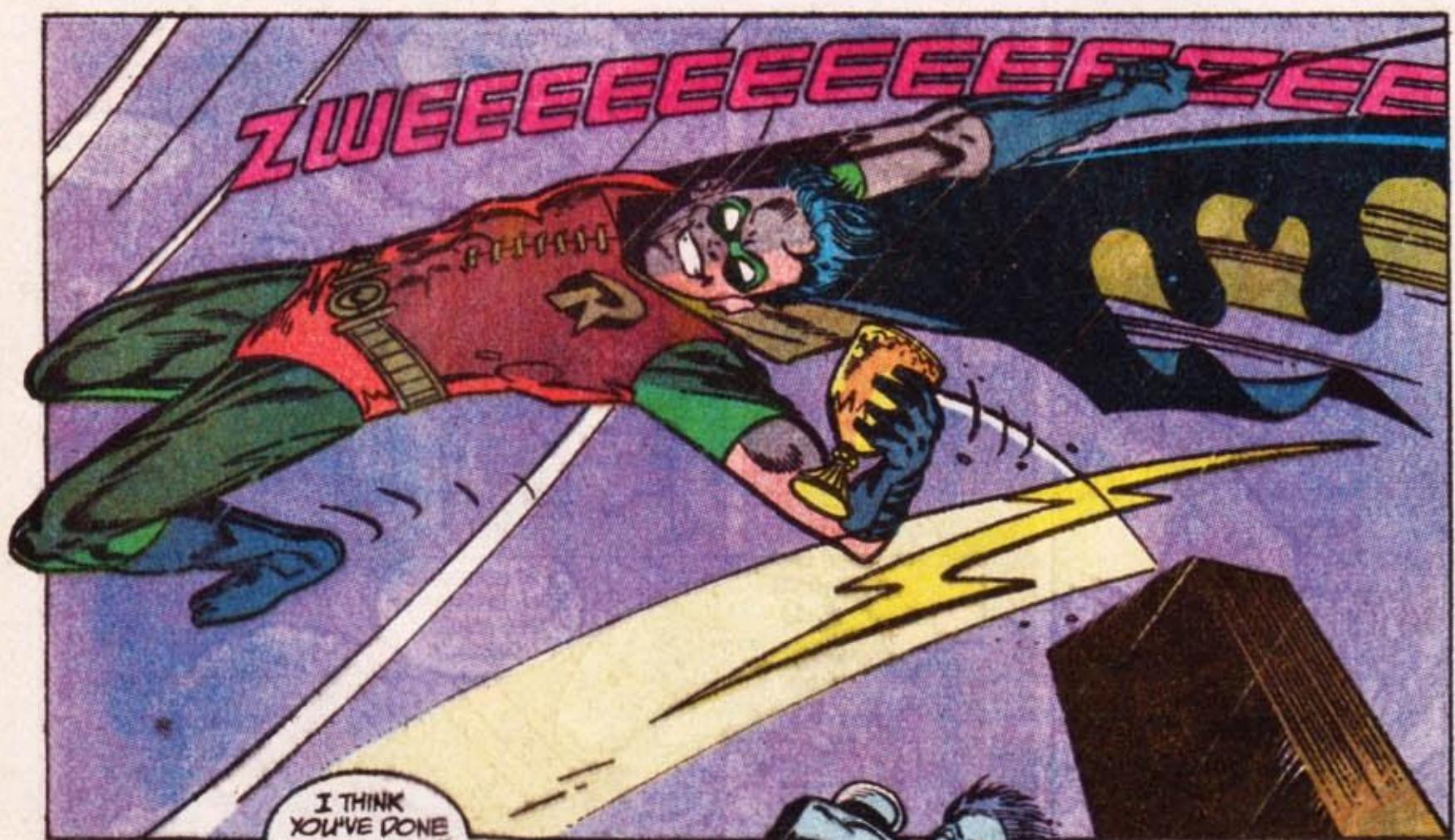
YOU  
WIN.

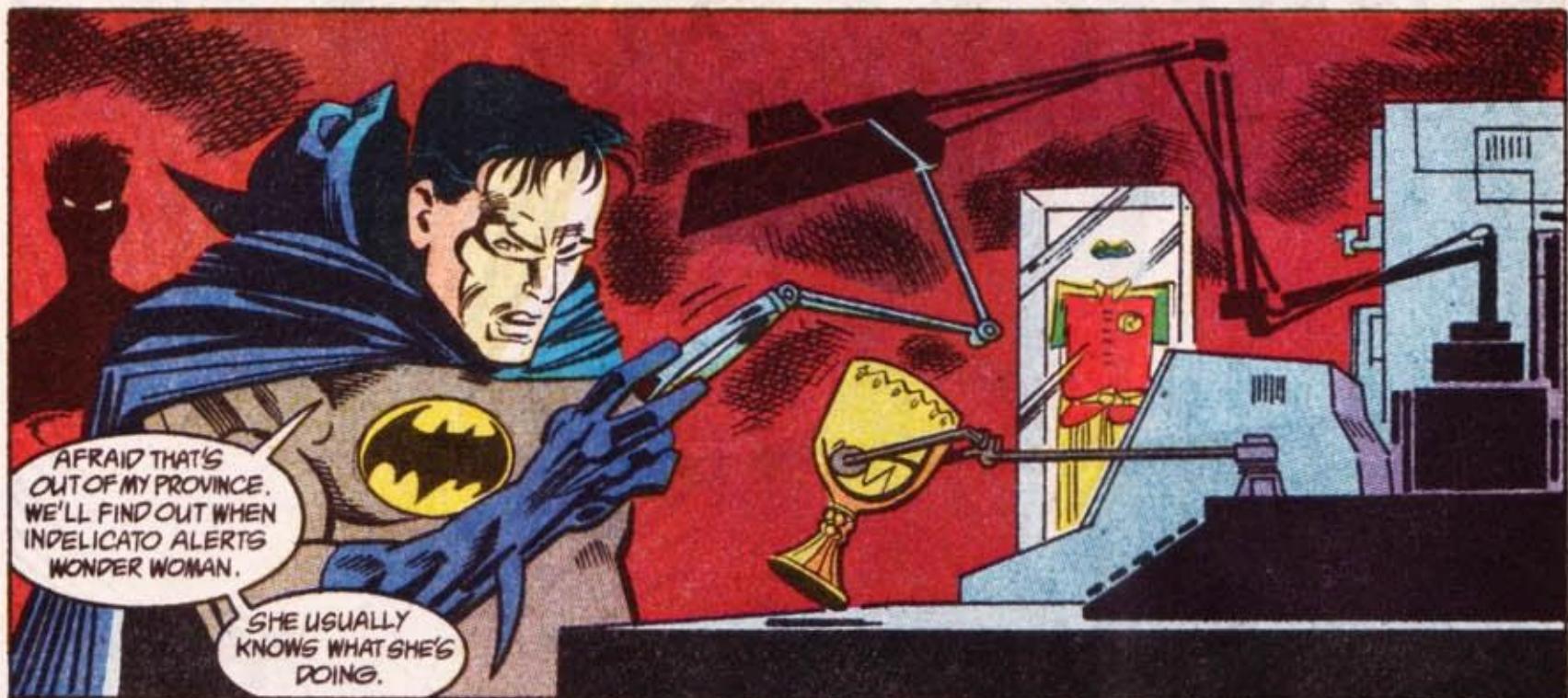
THANK  
YOU.





ZWEEEEEFF ZEE





# RUMMBBLLLL

KILLER  
CROC

--FOR AM I  
NOT THE GREATEST--  
-SMIFFIE- GOD  
OF ALL?

ARKHAM-  
SWEET  
ARKHAM

FLAYFACE!

CRIMSON MAN

DAD  
MAN

lame

Two Face  
Two Face  
When is a Prison  
not a Prison?  
-Riddler?



RICK

Luis Ahmad

DENNY

STORY CONTINUED IN  
WAR OF THE GODS #3!

# BAT-SIGNALS

Dear Denny and Kelley,

I gotta tell ya...the last thing I ever expected to see in BATMAN is a '90s version of Bat-hound. What's next? Kathy Kane comes back from the dead?

Delmo (The Saint) Walters Jr.  
1299 Grand Concourse  
Bronx, NY 10452

How'd you guess, Delmo?  
(Just kidding, folks.)

.....

Hey, Kelley—

Re: BATMAN #464

Was this "Spirit of the Beast" trilogy done because of Alan Grant's genuine concern over the plight of the Native Americans in this land or because of the tremendous critical and financial success of Costner's "Dances with Wolves" vehicle?

Just curious.

Uncle Elvis  
17650 Dawson Rd.  
Dawson Springs, KY 42408

Whoah. Talk about cynical.

Actually, Elvis, I think Alan wrote the story to get in good with the Native Americans so that the Hopi will offer him refuge in 1998 when the polar ice caps melt and tidal waves destroy anything below six thousand feet above sea level.

Well, you asked.

.....

Dear Purveyors of Bat-Lore,

Despite the fact that I've been an avid comics fan since I was able to hold a comic upright and read it, I've only previously written one letter to a comic. What, you may ask, has caused me to write my second? A more or less "policy statement" informally announced in DETECTIVE COMICS #629, and brought about, apparently, by some readers' complaints of an overabundance of supernatural and occult elements in the Bat-titles.

I must vehemently disagree that the supernatural elements in the Batman-tales need to be toned down. Gothic literature is overflowing with ghosts, demons, vampires, and more concrete dark-hearted figures, and it is from this literary tradition that the Batman descends. This is more than aptly demonstrated through such excellent works as GOTHAM BY GASLIGHT and "Dark Knight/Dark City."

While the Batman is not, and should not be, supernatural in the same sense as Dr. Fate or Zatanna, the use of occult elements is an inherent aspect of the Batman mythos, and to take them away is to detract from the legend itself. Even when the Batman was first being published, Bob Kane and Bill Finger would meet in front of Poe Park, named for Edgar Allan Poe, a master of the Gothic genre, to discuss story ideas.

The Batman is a man living in a dark mansion, under a dark curse of death, which has taken his parents and his young ward from him. He is a man driven by darkness, but fighting for the light. He fights both villains firmly grounded in reality, and those who are otherworldly, though neither type is any less demonic in their intentions. He lives in a city named for the genre; the dark, mist-shrouded Gotham is a battleground where the common man, whether in or out of costume, fights the subversive forces of darkness on a night-to-night basis.

If the concern comes from a misguided religious point of view, then nothing I can say is likely to change my fellow readers' minds, but never let it be said I was easily deterred. One of the fundamental tenets of the Christian Church is that Satan is, to put it colloquially, out to get us all. If the Batman is fighting these villains who have seemingly erupted from Hell, then I fail to see how this compromises that point of view, or the belief that these evil beings must be rejected.

Batman's uniqueness comes from the fact that his ongoing and accumulative legend is not just Gothic, but a genre unto itself, Gothic Noir. Without Gothic elements, it is simply a tale with Noir ambience, and without its Noir aspects it is simply a Gothic story. Together, when done well, these genres combine to form powerful and deeply striking tales of dark survival, but apart neither can sustain itself, because apart they become bland and ordinary.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice an opposing point of view.

Ken Boesem  
R.R. #7, Box 17  
Richbar School Site  
Quesnel, B.C. V2J 5E5  
CANADA

You make a very impressive argument for what unfortunately seems to be the minority viewpoint. Most of our readers (at least the ones who write in) don't agree with you.

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Ken, and the use of the supernatural will be toned down somewhat in the near future. This decision was made not only in response to your letters, but to maintain a balance that even Denny feels has been skewed recently.

Thanks for your letter.

\*\*\*\*\*

Denny, Kelley, Alan, Norm, Steve, Adrienne, and Todd—

Re: BATMAN #464—"Spirit of the Beast" Part Three: "Sacrifice"

Thank you for a very satisfactory conclusion to a relatively typical Grant/Breyfogle story. Still, this type of story is ideal for Batman and I thoroughly enjoy seeing him get out of Gotham and into a different environment. Batman is a character that lends himself well to atmosphere, which Alan Grant seems to have a good sense of. This was very reminiscent of some of your early Batman stories, Denny!

And Norm's artwork was as good as always, if not better, particularly on page 21 and the fight sequence on pages 12 to 15. And speaking of art, this was one of the best covers I have seen from Norm—if not for the pencilling, then most definitely the colouring. Now I realize Norm doesn't colour—but who did colour this cover? Was it Adrienne, or do you guys have a separate cover colourist? Kudos to whoever did it, anyway!

Before signing off, I'd just like to implore you not to turn Dog into Bat-hound, although I think he'll make a welcome addition to the "family." It was also nice to hear a voice from the Wayne Foundation. I'd like to see a lot more of Lucius Fox and the Wayne Foundation, and maybe even Selina Kyle in her civilian identity—someone to knock over Vicki Vale and make life as interesting for Bruce Wayne as Catwoman does for Batman.

David Cullen  
Apt. #9, 1188 Wellington St.  
Halifax, N.S. B3H 2Z8  
CANADA

As you can see in #465, Bruce has his hands full already, David, but since Selina is a favorite of Alan and Peter's, it shouldn't be too long before she appears again.

The one and only Bob Le Rose handles the cover "colouring" and deserves every kudo he can get.

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Denny and Kelley:  
Re: BATMAN #464

This issue was quite an unexpected pleasure. This year, as far as BATMAN goes, I have been strangely disappointed; for example, the first two issues of the "Spirit of the Beast" trilogy promised so much, and yet didn't deliver. BATMAN #464, however, broke the disappointing mold with quite an enjoyable story.

My first nod, surprisingly, is to Mr. Norm Breyfogle, who has been the target of much criticism from me this year. In this issue, however, I was floored by most of the art. The cover was one of the most eye-catching on the racks this week, and the splash page was the best Batman drawing by Norm in quite a while.

Alan's writing took about nine pages to get off the ground, but starting with page 10, "Sacrifice" was one of the best Batman stories that he's ever written. Page 10 itself was a completely unexpected scene, as we learned that not only is Two-Hearts Black Wolf's grandson, but Black Wolf was the child forced to eat human flesh so many years ago. Page 11 was a nice intro to the battle scenes, which literally took my breath away. Pages 12 through 15—with a special nod to the spectacular page 14—were no doubt the most exciting and best laid-out pages in any comic so far this year. A lot of artists have a weak area, and that is fight scenes. Norm Breyfogle has transcended the panel boundaries of comics in the past, and with BATMAN #464, he sets a new standard for action in comics. These four pages held me spellbound; I wanted to study them closely and flip excitedly to the next one at the same time.

Page 16 was another excellent moment in "Sacrifice"; I assume that the hologram was Harold's work. Page 18 was a total shock. I had no idea Black Wolf would sacrifice his grandson. That one scene is a great tribute to your writing, Alan; you caught me completely off-guard. Pages 19 and 20 were very touching moments; it's not often a writer can shift from the shocking to the sad with such a smooth transition. Norm's artwork, especially page 21, helped this change of pace even more, showing that when he's hot, he's hot.

Although this letter has been unending praise so far, I must say that the last panel on the last page was the most ridiculously campy moment I have ever seen in a BATMAN comic. I'm just glad Batman didn't say, "I'll have a dog named Ace travelling with me!" You would've really gotten me ranting and raving then!

Overall, BATMAN #464 was the best issue since #457. I'm anxiously awaiting Tim Drake's return next issue, a scant fourteen days away.

Robin Rules!  
Jason Crase

3022 Huntington Dr.  
Arlington Heights, IL 60004

And now for a brief comment on the BATMAN ANNUAL #15...

Dear Bat-men,

I started reading BATMAN comics in '89 when the movie was released. From the time I started reading this title I thought I had seen the best I was going to see, but then comes the BATMAN ANNUAL #15 (ARMAGEDDON 2001 crossover). The first thing that attracted me to it was the mystical power of the front cover, with Batman lurking in the shadows with the 'cuffs on. Secondly the art...the emphasis on Batman's dark, avenging side and the Joker's mad, supposed sanity by Jim Fern, especially the picture of the dead Joker on the fourth to last page, second panel. And last, but definitely not least, the story. Wow, I never expected to see his future depicted like that, what with all his archenemies being killed off, no partner, Alfred so frail. No matter how bleak his future after that future I liked it all, especially the inclusion of Harold and Tim. I love the concept.

Yours faithfully,  
Luke Powell  
Melbourne  
AUSTRALIA

Thanks, Luke. The cover was painted by Scott Hampton, artist of the upcoming BATMAN: NIGHT CRIES graphic novel. If you liked that cover, you're going to love the book.

\* \* \* \*

**YOU SCRATCH MY BACK, I'LL SCRATCH YOURS DEPARTMENT:** The multi-talented Alan Grant has written a computer game called DEMONIAK. It's produced by Palace Software and is currently available for the Amiga. Plans to release Macintosh and IBM versions proceed apace. I haven't seen it myself, but with Alan at the helm, you can bet it'll be quite a trip.

**NEXT ISSUE:** Caped Crusader catch criminal? Killer Croc kill Caped Crusader? Killer Croc croak? Be here! Thirty day! Grant/Breyfogle/Mitchell!

—Kelley kinda krazy

IS THERE EVERY WEEK!

WHERE ARE YOU?

FIND OUT WHAT EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT IN MAN OF STEEL, SUPERMAN, ADVENTURES & ACTION!

## From the Den



Ran into my old friend Sergius in The French Quarter the other day. I was there to attend one of my favorite conventions, the New Orleans Science Fiction and Fantasy Festival. I never learned what Sergius was doing in Louisiana.

He hasn't changed much in the 20 or so years since I last spoke with him. He's still lanky, skinny and unkempt, with a bit more in the middle and a bit less on top, though what's there still needs a comb.

Before I could begin the ritual small talk, he began to jabber, as if we'd seen each other only minutes instead of decades earlier. "I just found out something very important," he said. "I found out—pay attention, now, 'cause this is vital—how you get into Funky Heaven."

"Oh?"

"You gotta listen to jazz in Preservation Hall right here in the French Quarter and you gotta ride the Cyclone at Coney Island in Brooklyn."

"What's Funky Heaven?" I asked.

He dropped his head, studied the pavement for a full minute, and then stared straight into my eyes. "If you do not upon hearing the words 'Funky Heaven' immediately and totally grok fully and unequivocally and in utter completeness from the micro to the macro of it, in every tiny nuance, with every fiber of your being, the glorious wholeness of both funkiness and heavenliness, then I am deeply and sincerely afraid that no matter how many Cyclone rides you take and no matter how often you listen to jazz in Preservation Hall you will never grok it at all."

He pivoted and loped off in the direction of Jackson Square.

"What's 'grok' mean?" I yelled after him, but I don't think he heard me.

DENNY