



BATMAN®

545 | AUG 97

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY



Abracadabra. Alakazat.
The Joker and Demon
Kre are after the BKT!

MOENCH
JONES
BEATTY

DOUG KELLEY JOHN
MOENCH WRITER JONES BEATTY
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DENNIS O'NEIL BATMAN
CREATED BY BOB KANE

MAJOR ARCANA

PART TWO

STAY ALERT TODAY,
ALFRED, FOR ANY WORD
ON THE JOKER--AND NOTIFY
ME AT ONCE.

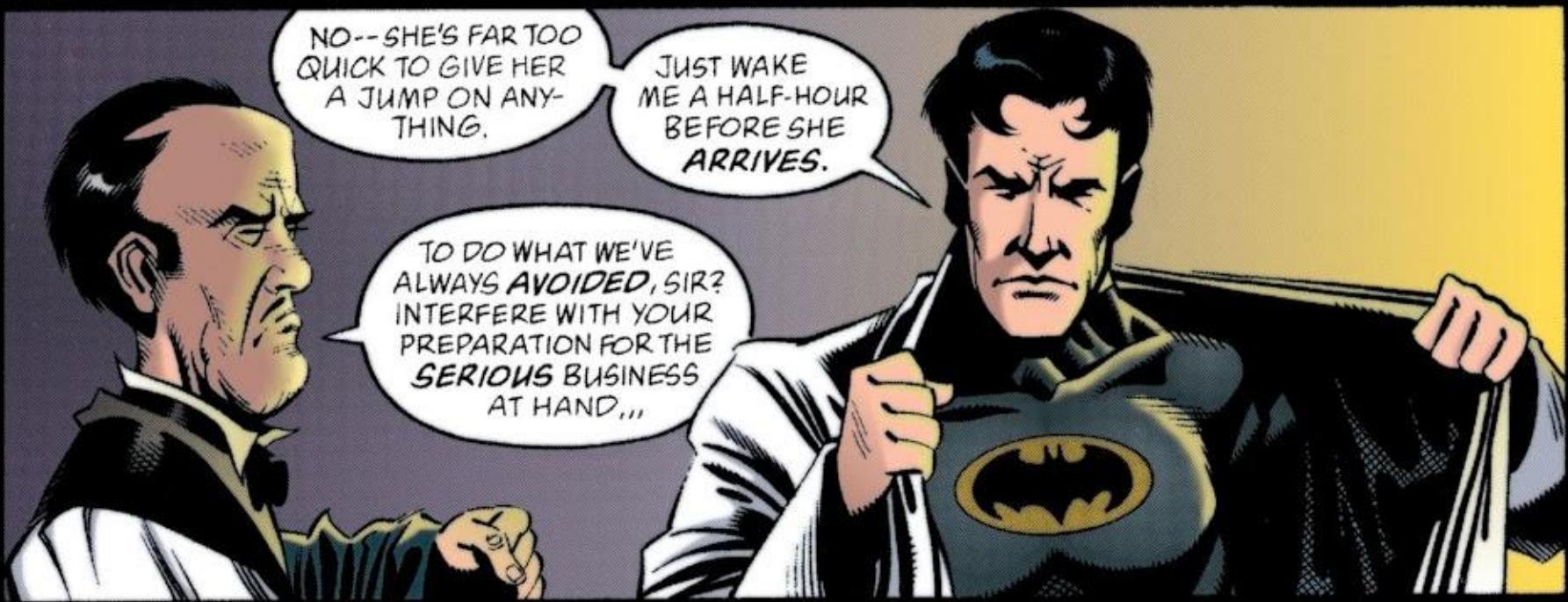
DOES THIS
MEAN YOU'LL BE
SLEEPING TODAY,
SIR?

IF I
CAN.

I NEED TO
BE READY FOR
ANYTHING
TONIGHT.

NIGHT OF THE DYING JOKERS







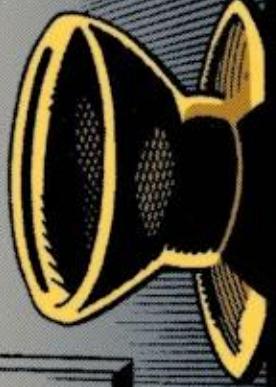
A GOOD SPEECH, AND IT FELT TRUE--BUT WAS IT? OR HAVE I JUST LIED TO MY BEST FRIEND?

DO I ACTUALLY NEED VESPER, MERELY WANT HER, OR BOTH?



DO KEEP YOUR WITS ABOUT YOU, SIR!

AND DON'T LET THE MASK SLIP AS SHE CHARMSS YOU INTO CARELESSNESS.



HARDBACK BOCK WAS RIGHT--ALCHEMY ALMOST MAKES SENSE, TO EXPLAIN THE DEATH-LEER POISON.

BUT WHY THE BOOKS ON DEMONOLOGY?



WHAT IS THE JOKER UP TO? WHAT IS HE REALLY BREWING?

HNF!

I'VE A GOOD MIND TO SPOIL THE SOUP.

MID-MORNING:



WHAT I'M MIXING HERE, ETTIE-BABE, IS A CUNNING VARIANT OF MY NORMALLY FATAL JOKER JUICE.

WHILE IT WILL STILL CONSTRICT THE FACIAL MUSCLES INTO A GROTESQUE MIMICRY OF MY OWN INIMITABLE GRIN--

IT DOES, HOWEVER, ACTION THE LIMBIC NERVOUS SYSTEM, heh heh heh...

--THIS CONCOCTION IS NON-LETHAL,

...NEATLY LULLING ITS SUBJECT INTO AN OBEDIENT TRANCE.

ANSWER ME, FOOL, AND WITH MAXIMUM EXPEDIENCE...

FOR WHAT PURPOSE DO YOU REQUIRE THIS POTION OF OBEDIENCE?

WELL, ETTIE, I SUPPOSE I COULD CONJURE MORE DEMONS LIKE YOURSELF--

--BUT SINCE I HAVE NOTHING TO OFFER IN EXCHANGE, THEY'D ONLY EVISCERATE ME, HYEEH HEEH!

ERGO, I'VE GOTTA CREATE MY OWN LACKEYS...

DONE!

AND RIGHT ON CUE!

WHO--?

TOK
TOK
TOK

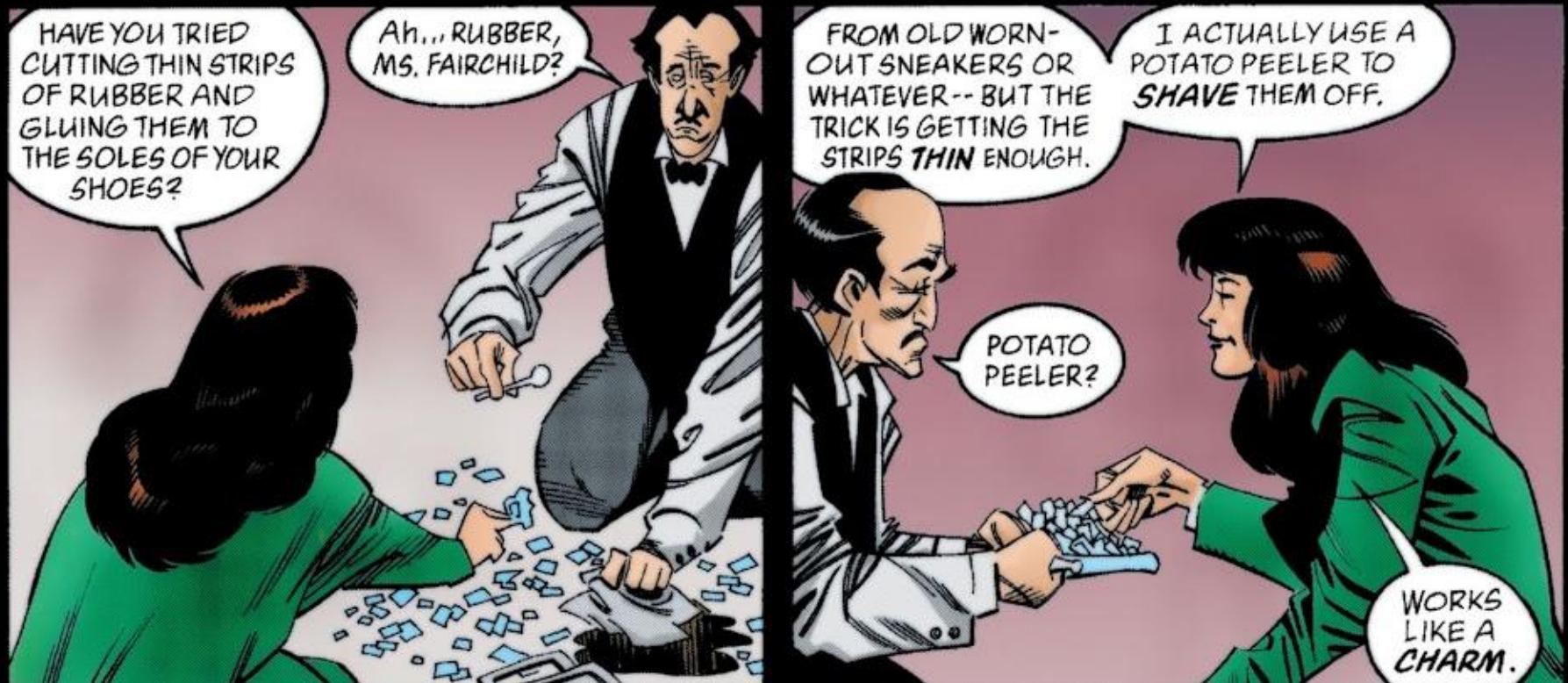


HYAHAAHAHAHAHA!









IN FACT,
ALFRED
MAYBE
RIGHT TO
REJECT
VESPER
COMPLETE-
LY.

--TASTIEST SOUP
I'VE EVER SAMPLED,
ALFRED.

WHAT IS
THAT UNUSUAL
FLAVOR? CUMIN?

ALREADY
DARK--HOURS
SINCE LUNCH.

FINALLY.

EH--?

WHY, YES, MS. FAIRCHILD,
THAT IS THE "SECRET INGREDIENT."

YOU'RE A
WIZARD, OLD BEAN,
BUT DO DROPTHE
FORMALITY.

IF YOU CAN'T ADDRESS
ME AS "SIREN OF THE NIGHT,"
THEN PLEASE SETTLE FOR
"VESPER."

I, ah... I'M AFRAID
MS. VESPER IS AS FAR
AS I CAN GO, MADAM.

CLOSE
ENOUGH,
ALFIE-
BOY.

--SOMETHING
WRONG,
BRUCE?

BRUCE?

UH, NO,
VESPER... I
WAS JUST...

UH,
ACTUALLY,
VESPER...

...IT IS
GETTING
LATE.

HADN'T YOU BEST
GET TO THE STUDIO
FOR YOUR RADIO
SHOW?

I'M ALREADY
FULLY PREPARED
FOR TONIGHT'S
INTERVIEW,
BRUCE.

I COULD STAY
FOR AT LEAST
ANOTHER HOUR...
UNLESS...



I REGRET TO SAY, MS. VESPER,
THAT MASTER BRUCE HAS
TAKEN SUDDENLY ILL.

NO DOUBT THE
PROVERBIAL "SPLITTING
HEADACHE," ALFRED...

"AND THERE'S A
REAL SWITCH..."

GOOD NIGHT, MS. VESPER--
AND THANKS FOR THE RUBBER-
SHAVING DEMONSTRATION!

THANK YOU,
ALFRED, FOR THE
BARLEY SOUP
RECIPE!

"...BUT I SUPPOSE IT
HAPPENS TO THE **BEST**
OF US, EH, ALFRED?"



FASTER--
OR I'LL
LOSE HIM.

SLOWER,
GIRL--OR YOU'LL
SCARE HIM
OFF.



WE THINK IT STARTED WITH GAS COMING THROUGH THE AIR DUCTS.

THE BUILDING'S PRETTY MUCH CLEARED EXCEPT FOR GUARDS AND CLEANING CREWS--BUT THAT'S STILL DOZENS.

THEY'RE MAKING CALLS FROM INSIDE...



"THE FIRST ONES WERE TO 9-1-1, REPORTING THE GAS AND WEIRD LAUGHTER COMING OVER THE BUILDING LOUDSPEAKERS..."

HELLO,
NEWS-10
?



"...BUT NOW
THE CALLS
ARE TURNING
INCREASINGLY
BIZARRE!"

THIS IS ONE OF THE
LAUGHING FOOL'S MANY
MINIONS-- ANNOUNCING
THE ADVENT OF HELL
IN GOTHAM!

STAY TUNED
FOR FURTHER
UPDATES!

AT LEAST
THEY'RE STILL
ALIVE, JIM.

HAVE YOU
PENETRATED THE
BUILDING?

WAITING FOR
GAS MASKS TO ARRIVE
AT THE SCENE--

--BUT EVEN
THEN I'M NOT SURE
I WANT TO SEND MY
PEOPLE IN...

"DARKHAVEN'S ROOF IS LINED
WITH GARGOYLES, AND IT
SEEMS THEY'RE BEING USED--"

LOOK
OUT!

STAY
BACK!

KRUMPH

--TO KEEP
EVERYONE
AT BAY."





LAUGHING GAS
AND FALLING
GARGOYLES--naught
but a MISCHIEF
SPREE...

OF WHAT NEED,
FOOL, HAVE YOU
FOR MY POWERS
AND ME?

YOU'LL
COME IN HANDY
LATER, ETTIE-
BABE.

RIGHT NOW
YOU CAN BE MY
BODYGUARD--
AND WHAT A
BODY, EH?

HYEH
HEE
HEE

THE VESTIBULE AND
THE ELEVATORS, BUT--

FREEZE!--

-- INTO
AN EASY
TARGET!

HAW HAW HAW
BAMM BAMM

A NIGHT-GUARD--
OVERCOME BY
JOKER'S GAS...





GOT TO
STOP
HIM--

--WITHOUT
HURTING
HIM.

KRATCH

NYUH?

AT LEAST
NOT TOO
MUCH.

DING

TOP
FLOOR.

BUT WHERE'S THE
ACCESS TO THE
ROOF?





NEXT ISSUE:
THE CONCLUSION--
**HELL
TO PAY**





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Distributions