



THE NEW 52™

•ANNUAL•



18
1994
\$2.95 US
\$4.00 CAN
£2 UK

BATMAN

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
CARTOON
AUTHORITY



DA VINCI

DIRECT SALES



01811

7 61941 20187 0

Black Masterpiece

DOUG MOENCH
WRITER

FREDERICO CUEVA
PENCILLER

ALBERTO PEZ
INKER

PHIL ALLEN
COLORIST

STEVE HAYNIE
LETTERER

JORDAN B. GORFINKEL
ASSISTANT EDITOR

DENNIS O'NEIL
EDITOR

BOB KANE
CREATOR



BATMAN ANNUAL 18. Published annually by DC Comics, 1325 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10019. Copyright © 1994 DC Comics. All Rights Reserved. The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this magazine are entirely fictional. All characters featured in this issue and the distinctive likenesses thereof are trademarks of DC Comics. For advertising space contact: Tom Ballou, (212) 636-5520. Printed on recyclable paper.

Printed in Canada.

DC Comics. A Division of Warner Bros.-A Time Warner Entertainment Company

- JENETTE KAHN, President & Editor-in-Chief • PAUL LEVITZ, Executive Vice President & Publisher • JOE ORLANDO, VP-Creative Director •
- TOM BALLOU, VP-Advertising • BRUCE BRISTOW, VP-Sales & Marketing • PATRICK CALDON, VP-Finance & Operations • TERRI CUNNINGHAM, Managing Editor •
- CHANTAL D'AULNIS, VP-Business Affairs • LILLIAN LASERSON, VP & General Counsel • BOB ROZAKIS, Executive Director-Production •

CHAPTER I CLOAK, DAGGER, AND DEATH



HAVE A CARE, LEONARDO--
THIS IS NOT THE FIRST
TIME YOU HAVE FLIRTED WITH
BLASPHEMY IN MY
PRESENCE.

THE GIFT OF
WHAT I FEEL IS
NOT BLASPHEMY,
GIULIANO.

GOD MADE
ME A MERE
MAN--

--BUT WAS IT
NOT GOD, TOO,
WHO CONFERRED
MY ABILITY TO
ASPIRE TO THE
DIVINE?

SHEER
SOPHISTRY,
LEONARDO,
AS PLATO
DEMONSTRATED
WHEN HE SAID--

AH! IS IT NOT
IRONIC,
GIULIANO, THAT
SO RELIGIOUS A
GROUP AS YOUR
MEDICEAN
CIRCLE SHOULD
LEAN SO HEAVILY
ON THE PAGAN
PLATO?

NOT AT ALL!
PLATO EXISTED
BEFORE OUR SAVIOR,
YET HIS PHILOSOPHY
OF THE IMMORTAL
SOUL IS ENTIRELY
CONSISTENT
WITH--

PERHAPS...
BUT I AM MORE
CONCERNED WITH
ACHIEVING
WONDERS IN THE
HERE AND NOW...

...WITH THE
GLORY OF THE
TRANSCENDENT
IN THE REAL
WORLD...

AS SUCH, PERHAPS
I AM MORE
SCIENTIST THAN
ARTIST.

OR PERHAPS
YOU ARE
SIMPLY--

IT IS LATE,
GIULIANO,
AND YOUNG
TOMAS...

YES, YES--
I SUPPOSE WE
MUST LEAVE,
DIODORA.

ONCE AGAIN,
LEONARDO, AN
ENLIGHTENING
VIEWING--IN
ITSELF WORTH
FAR MORE
THAN YOUR
STIPEND.

FAREWELL,
GIULIANO--AND
YOU HAVE A CARE,
FOR THESE STREETS
OF FLORENCE STILL
TEEM WITH
INTRIGUE.

LEONARDO FARES
WELL UNDER OUR
PATRONAGE,
GIULIANO...

PERHAPS--BUT
HE THINKS TOO
MUCH AND
PAINTS TOO
LITTLE.

HIS HANDS ARE
TOUCHED BY
HEAVEN, BUT
HIS MIND IS
FIXED IN--

FATHER...I WISH
TO PAINT...LIKE
LEONARDO.

EH--?



SHRRUKT

MOTHER...
FATHER...

N0000000

YOU...
KILLED...
THEM.

BUT YOU ARE
NO MERE
ASSASSIN...

YOU ARE A
FOUL DEMON...
FROM THE BOWELS
OF HELL.



Read more FREE comics on [ReadComicOnline](#)

CHAPTER II THE ART OF THEFT



TO LEONARDO
DA VINCI'S
MASTERPIECE,
GENTLEMEN...

...AND TO THE EVEN
GREATER ART OF
THE PERFECT
THEFT.

TO ALL THE BUCKS
WE'LL GET WHEN WE
SELL THE CRACKED
AND FADED
SQUEEZE!

AND BY THE WAY, WHY IN
BLAZES IS SHE SMILIN'
LIKE THAT?

YEAH--WHAT'S
WITH THAT GINKY
GRIN ANYWAY? IT'S
CREEPY.

GENTLEMEN, AS
DA VINCI BIOGRAPHER
KENNETH CLARK SAID:
"THE PICTURE IS
FULL OF LEONARDO'S
DEMON."

AND: "IN ITS
ESSENCE,
MONA LISA'S
SMILE--

--IS A
GOTHIC
SMILE."

WHATEVER THAT MEANS--
BUT WHO'S SHE SPOSED TO BE,
LOFGREN, AND
WHAT'S SO FUNNY?

SPEAKING AS AN HISTORIAN,
GENTLEMEN, THE MONA LISA
--OR LA GIOCONDA-- IS ALLEGEDLY
THE SECOND WIFE OF AN OBSCURE
FLORENTINE CITIZEN NAMED
FRANCESCO DEL GIOCONDO
WHO LIVED AND DIED SOME
500 YEARS AGO.

BUT SPEAKING AS A
CONNOISSEUR OF ART...
HERE WE GO AGAIN--
ANOTHER SPEECH.

TO QUOTE WALTER PATER:
"SHE IS OLDER THAN THE
ROCKS AMONG WHICH SHE
SITS; LIKE THE VAMPIRE,
SHE HAS BEEN DEAD MANY
TIMES, AND LEARNED THE
SECRETS OF THE GRAVE;
AND HAS BEEN A DIVER IN
DEEP SEAS..."

"...AND
TRAFFICKED FOR
STRANGE WEBS WITH
EASTERN MERCHANTS, AND,
AS LEDA, WAS THE MOTHER
OF HELEN OF TROY,
AND, AS SAINT ANNE,
THE MOTHER OF
MARY..."

"...AND ALL THIS HAS BEEN
TO HER BUT THE SOUND OF
LYRES AND FLUTES."

HEY, EAT MY
GOTHIC SMILE,
LOFGREN.

YOU ASK ME,
THE OLD BAG
AIN'T EVEN A
LOOKER.

AS IF I
WOULD ASK A LOUT
WHOSE STANDARDS
OF BEAUTY WERE
SHAPED BY GIRLIE
SHOWS IN THE HUB.

AGAIN I QUOTE PATER:
"SET HER FOR A MOMENT
BESIDE ONE OF THOSE
WHITE GREEK GODDESSES,
OR BEAUTIFUL WOMEN
OF ANTIQUITY--

--AND HOW WOULD
THEY BE TROUBLED
BY THIS BEAUTY
INTO WHICH THE SOUL
WITH ALL ITS
MALADIES HAS PASSED."

"MALADIES"--THAT'S
LIKE SCABS AN' SORES,
AIN'T IT?

YOU
BOORISH
MAGGOT.
THE MONA LISA'S BEAUTY IS
INEFFABLE--AND YET A BEAUTY
OF THE FLESH, OF THE REAL WORLD
WITH ALL ITS IMPERFECTIONS, NOT
SOME FALSE AND ARTIFICIAL
IDEAL.

THAT'S WHY THE
MONA LISA IS ONE
OF HISTORY'S GREATEST
WORKS OF ART! THAT'S
WHY SHE IS SO
PRECIOUS!

THE LOUVRE--? AIN'T THAT THE
MUSEUM IN PARIS THAT OWNED
THE PORTRAIT-- THE ONES WHO
LOANED IT TO THE GOTHAM
MUSEUM-- AND BY THAT TOKEN,
THE ONES WE JUST STOLE IT
FROM?

AND THAT'S WHY
THE LOUVRE WILL
GLADLY PAY A FORTUNE
FOR THIS LARGELY
UNKNOWN WOMAN WITH
HER MYSTERIOUS AND
ETHEREAL SMILE!

OF COURSE,
YOU DOLT.

WHO ELSE BUT THE LOUVRE COULD AFFORD SUCH A PRICELESS WORK? AND OF THOSE WHO COULD, HOW MANY WOULD BE WILLING TO BUY SUCH A NOTORIOUS WOMAN--

--A PAINTING SO FAMOUS THEY COULD NEVER PUT IT ON DISPLAY WITHOUT FEAR OF INSTANT SEIZURE AND ARREST?

YEAH, CUZ IT'S TOO HOT... BUT WHAT IF THIS LOUVRE REFUSES TO PAY?

WE ARE SELLING NOTHING, YOU FOOLS! I DO NOT DABBLE IN THE MERE FENCING OF STOLEN GOODS!

THEN WHADDAYA CALL--

WE ARE HOLDING MONA LISA RANSOM, GENTLEMEN--
--FOR FIFTY MILLION DOLLARS!

A RANSOM
DEMAND WAS FAXED,
BELIEVE IT OR NOT,
TO THE LOUVRE ABOUT
THIRTY MINUTES
AGO...

FIFTY
MILLION BY
TUESDAY
MIDNIGHT--OR
"THE SMILE
WILL BE
SLASHED."

FELLOW NAMED
LOFGREN AT THE
GOTHAM MUSEUM
OF ART IS
RESPONSIBLE...

HATE TO BE IN HIS
SHOES WHEN THE
LOUVRE'S AMERICAN
REPRESENTATIVE GETS
HERE TO ARRANGE
PAYMENT
TOMORROW MORNING.

KLATCH

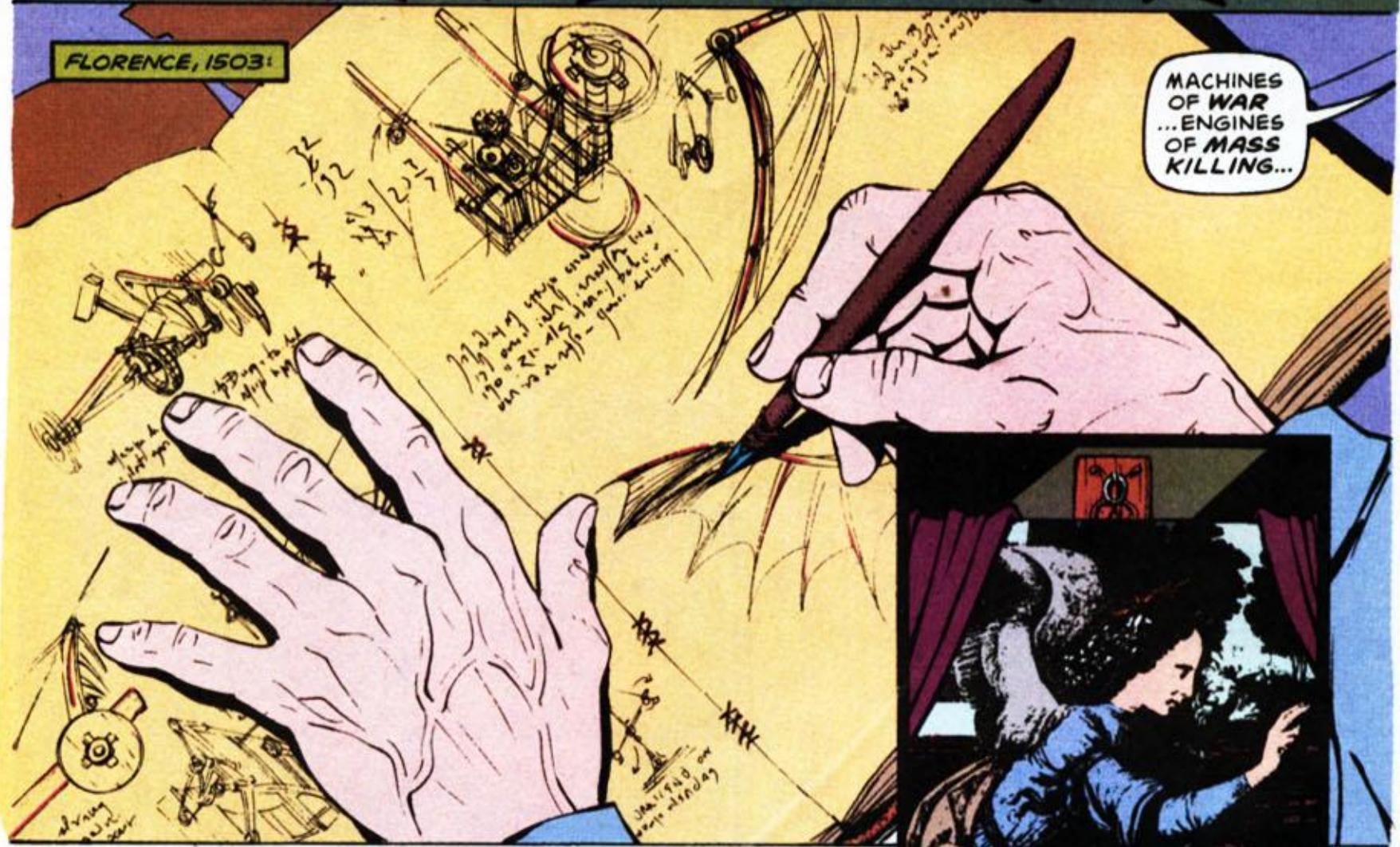
TELL LOFGREN
THE REP ARRIVED
EARLY AND WILL
MEET HIM AT THE
MUSEUM ENTRANCE
IN AN HOUR.

IF HE ASKS,
BLAME IT ON--

--AN
UNSCHEDULED
FLIGHT.

CHAPTER III PROFANE BUT SACRED

FLORENCE, 1503:



CHAPTER IV THE THEFT OF ART

GOTHAM, NOW:

IT WAS
DISPLAYED RIGHT
HERE, MR. DELACROIX
--THE MONA LISA
HERSELF...

...A TRAGIC LOSS OVER
WHICH I AM PROFOUNDLY
DISTRESSED, SINCE THE
PAINTING WAS FAR MORE
THAN MY RESPONSIBILITY
--IT WAS MY PERSONAL
FAVORITE.

IN MY OPINION,
THE MONA LISA'S
BEAUTY
TRANSCENDED
TIME ITSELF.

YES... "THE EYES HAD THAT
LUSTER AND WATERY SHEEN
WHICH IS ALWAYS SEEN IN
REAL LIFE BUT WHICH
CANNOT BE REPRESENTED
WITHOUT THE GREATEST
SUBTLETY..."

"THE MOUTH, UNITED BY THE
RED OF THE LIPS TO THE
FLESH TONES OF THE FACE,
SEEMED NOT TO BE COLORED
BUT TO BE LIVING FLESH."

I MAY BE
AMERICAN,
MR. LOFGREN, BUT
I DO WORK FOR
THE LOUVRE.

I... I BEG YOUR
PARDON?

I TOOK THE LIBERTY
OF RESEARCHING
YOUR BIOGRAPHY,
MR. LOFGREN...

THAT'S A
VERBATIM
QUOTE FROM
VASARI....!

A
CIRCUMSTANCE
WE SHARE IN
COMMON.

YOU ONCE HELD A CURATOR'S POSITION AT THE LOUVRE, I BELIEVE...?

YES-- AND ENCOUNTERED NOTHING BUT GALLIC CONTEMPT! IF YOU'RE NOT FRENCH OVER THERE, FORGET IT! I QUIT WITHIN SIX MONTHS!

ON THE OTHER HAND, I'VE ALWAYS FOUND THEM TO BE EXEMPLARY EMPLOYERS.

WELL, UH... YES, OF COURSE THEY WERE ...BUT...

BUT YOU SOUND BITTER TO THIS VERY DAY.

NO, NO, I ASSURE YOU... I'M SIMPLY UPSET... DISORIENTED BY WHAT HAS OCCURRED...

AND JUST WHAT DID OCCUR, MR. LOFGREN? HOW DID THE THIEVES GET IN HERE?

THEY PENETRATED NOTHING LESS THAN NINE STATE-OF-THE-ART ALARM STATIONS --WITH AN EQUAL NUMBER OF FAIL-SAFE BACKUPS.

IN THE FACE OF SUCH KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL, NO SECURITY SYSTEM WOULD HAVE BEEN ADEQUATE.

YOU MAKE IT SOUND LIKE SOME FANTASTIC CAPER COMMITTED BY THE WORLD'S MOST ACCOMPLISHED THIEVES, MR. LOFGREN.

WELL, UH...IT WAS.

NO, IT WASN'T.

IT WAS AN INSIDE JOB.

CHAPTER V ACCIDENTAL ART



APPRENTICE
AND PATRON,
LEONARDO?

HE IS TOMAS DE MEDICI,
WHOSE PARENTS WERE MY
PATRONS. WHEN THEY WERE
MURDERED BY AN AGENT OF
THE HOUSE OF PAZZI,
WITH WHOM THE MEDICIS
HAVE LONG HELD A
VENDETTA, TOMAS
TURNED TO ME.

HE WAS JUST
A CHILD, BUT MORE
INTENSE THAN ANY
MAN I HAVE
KNOWN.

HEIR TO HIS
PARENTS' FORTUNE,
HE MADE HIS
REQUEST SEEM
LIKE A DEMAND.

THE MEDICI PATRONAGE
WOULD *CONTINUE*,
HE SAID, BUT ONLY IF
I WOULD TEACH HIM
TO PAINT.

A REMARKABLE YOUTH...
TO FAVOR THE MODEST LOT
OF AN ARTIST WHEN HIS
TRUE STATION IS
LUXURY.

NEVER
UNDERESTIMATE
THE POWER OF
OBSESSION,
MONA LISA.

I HAVE ALREADY
LEARNED *NOT* TO,
LEONARDO...
...ON THE DAY
I FIRST *SAT*
FOR YOU.

AND WILL OUR
COLLABORATION
BE *FRUITFUL*,
DO YOU THINK?

IT ALREADY
HAS BEEN.

CHAPTER VI

THE MASK

Straight home from his **INSIDE JOB...**

...but he wouldn't be audacious enough to stash it right in his **PENTHOUSE...**

"...OR WOULD HE?"

We been thinkin', Lofgren -- what if this ain't the **REAL MONA LISA?**

Museums could do that, couldn't they...?

YEAH -- KEEP THE **REAL PAINTING** UNDER LOCK AN' KEY AN' SEND OUT A **FAKE**, THE WAY PRESIDENTS USE **LOOKALIKES** TO DECOY ASSASSINS...?

I... I NEVER EVEN... THOUGHT OF...

OH NO.



CHAPTER VII THE OBSESSION

ALL THIS TRAINING--AND I AM NOT A JOT CLOSER TO MY VISION OR MY DREAM!

AND YOUR DREAM IS, YOUNG TOMAS?

TO BE THE BEST ANY MAN CAN BE!

A GOAL SO HIGH IS A GOOD THING ... BUT AN OBSESSION SO DEEP...

PRUTCH

I WILL NEVER BE AS GOOD AS LEONARDO!

THERE ARE THOSE WHO SAY NO ONE WILL BE THAT GOOD.

LEONARDO, AFTER ALL, IS THE MASTER.

AND I AM SCARCELY FIT TO CLEAN HIS BRUSHES! PERHAPS MY FATHER WAS RIGHT...

PERHAPS MINE IS A DIFFERENT DESTINY, EVEN A HIGHER ONE... IF NOT THE ONE OF MERE BIRTH HE ADVOCATED!

I AM MORE THAN A HIGHBORN ARISTOCRAT-- I MUST BE MORE!

HAVE A CARE, TOMAS... LEST YOUR OBSESSION DRIVE YOU MAD.

CHAPTER VIII

THE TOWER

LOFGREN'S AT THE VERY TOP--IN THE PENTHOUSE...

... AND HIS HIGHRISE IS ISOLATED, TOWERING OVER ALL THE SURROUNDING BUILDINGS.

TOO FAR FOR MY LINE TO REACH...

A GREAT VIEW FOR HIM... HUGE PROBLEM FOR ME.

... AND TOO HIGH FOR ANYTHING BUT WINGS.

CHAPTER IX THE SCANDAL



CHAPTER X THE PUNISHMENT

THE WORLD IS
LARGER THAN WE
DREAMED, AS COLUMBUS
HAS PROVED, AND I NO
LONGER ASPIRE TO SOAR
LIKE AN ANGEL...



PAZZI AGAIN...
AND THEIR EVIL
KNOWS NO REST.

NOR, NOW,
DOES MY MIND,
TOMAS... OR MY
HEART.

YOU...
LOVE HER?

SHE IS
ANOTHER
MAN'S
WIFE.

AND
YET...?

MY FEELINGS
TRANSCEND THE
ORDINARY
RESPONSE TO
BEAUTY, FOR HER
SENSUALITY IS
MYSTERIOUS
TO ME... EVEN
FRIGHTENING.

SHE IS NOT MY IDEAL, YET I
SHIVER IN HER PRESENCE... A
BREATH OF COLD AIR SWEEEPING
THROUGH MY SOUL...

... AS HER SOUL KEEPS ITS
SECRET EVEN FROM ME... A SECRET
I HAVE CAPTURED, BUT CANNOT
KNOW, IN HER SMILE.

YOU HAVE ALWAYS LOVED
MYSTERY, LEONARDO.

BUT THERE
IS NO MYSTERY
HERE, TOMAS... FOR
HER ABDUCTION
IS CLEARLY MY
FAULT.

WHY
YOURS?

BECAUSE I DID
LOVE HER... IN MORE
THAN MY HEART...
IN ACTION AND
DEED.

IF THEY HAD NOT LEARNED
OF THIS, THEIR SCHEME TO
TURN SCANDAL INTO PROFIT
WOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN
BORN.

AND WHAT
IS THEIR
SCHEME?

THIS MESSAGE,
TOMAS... SLIPPED
UNDER THE
DOOR...

MONA LISA IS
BEING HELD... FOR A
FORTUNE'S RANSOM.

BUT... SURELY
THEY KNOW THAT
WITHOUT A PATRON,
YOU COULD NOT
EVEN PURCHASE
PAINT.

THE RANSOM
DEMAND IS MEANT TO
BE MET... BY MY PATRON
... BY THE HOUSE OF
MEDICI.

BY... ME.

IF IT IS NOT PAID BY
MIDNIGHT THREE
DAYS HENCE... THEY
WILL TAKE DAGGER
TO HER FACE.



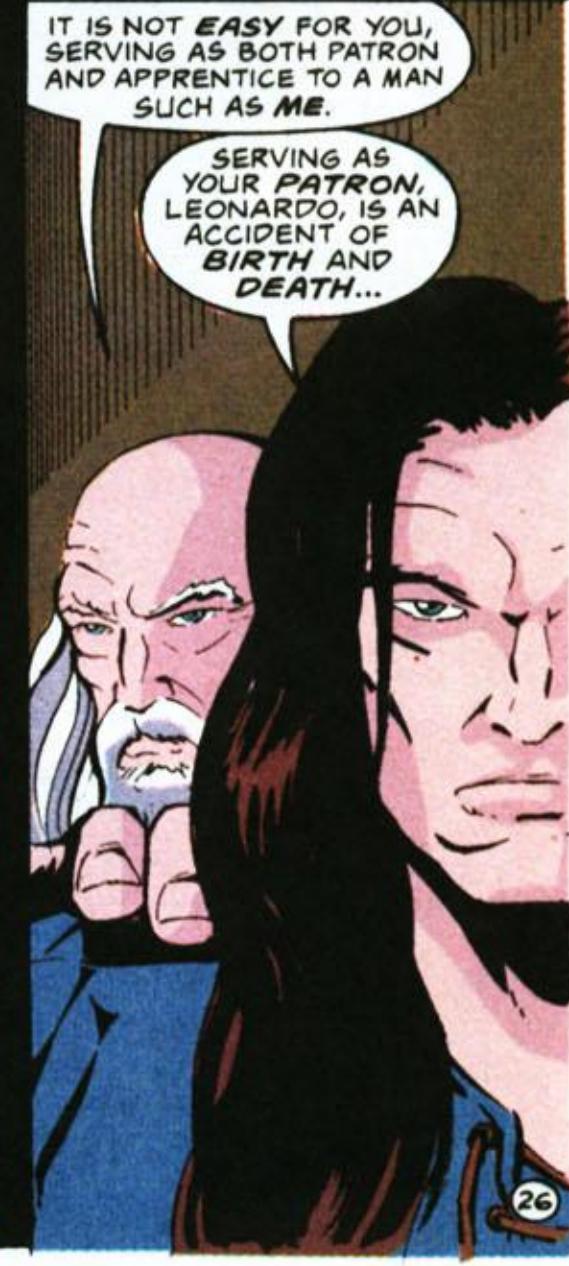
I WOULD GLADLY PAY THE
RANSOM FOR YOU, LEONARDO,
IF IT COMES TO THAT-- BUT I
WOULD RATHER SEE THE
ABDUCTORS FALL.

PUNISH
RATHER THAN
PAY?

THEY ARE OF THE
SAME HOUSE WHICH
ASSASSINATED
MY MOTHER AND
FATHER.

IT IS NOT EASY FOR YOU,
SERVING AS BOTH PATRON
AND APPRENTICE TO A MAN
SUCH AS ME.

SERVING AS
YOUR PATRON,
LEONARDO, IS AN
ACCIDENT OF
BIRTH AND
DEATH...



LEONARDO'S ANGEL

PLEASE,
LEONARDO!
YOU MUST TAKE
ME IN! MY PARENTS
ARE GONE! THERE
IS NOTHING LEFT
IN THE HOUSE OF
MEDICI!

BUT YOU
ARE THE
MEDICI HEIR,
YOUNG
TOMAS...

I DON'T
CARE! I WANT
TO STAY WITH YOU!
I WANT TO CREATE
ANGELS!

I WILL
HELP YOU, LEONARDO,
I SWEAR I WILL! I
WILL GIVE UP MY VERY
LIFE FOR YOU--!

I WILL
EVEN BE YOUR
ANGEL!

CHAPTER
XII

THE VENDETTA



CHAPTER
XIII

LEONARDO'S DEMON

ROBERTO
DE PAZZI OWNS
A JEWELRY SHOP
IN THE PONTE
VECCIO.

IF INDEED
THE HOUSE OF
PAZZI HOLDS YOUR
MONA LISA,
HE WILL KNOW
WHERE.

YOUR
DESIGN FOR HIS
ATTIRE IS MOST
EFFECTIVE,
LEONARDO...

TOMAS HAS
BEEN TRANSFIGURED
TO A CREATURE OF
THE NIGHT WHICH
SCARES EVEN ME.

AND WHILE YOU CONDUCT
YOUR DARK MISSION, TOMAS...
ALFREDO AND I WILL ENDEAVOR
TO COMPLETE MY
INVENTION.

FAREWELL,
TOMAS--AND MAY
GOD FAVOR US
ALL.

THE PONTE VECCHIO,
SPANNING THE RIVER ARNO:



BUY OR DO NOT
BUY! SOON IT WILL
NOT MATTER WHAT
BAUBLES I SELL OR
DO NOT SELL!

SOON, THE
HOUSE OF
PAZZI--



-- WILL BE
VISITED BY
A GREAT
BLESSING."

KRASHOOM

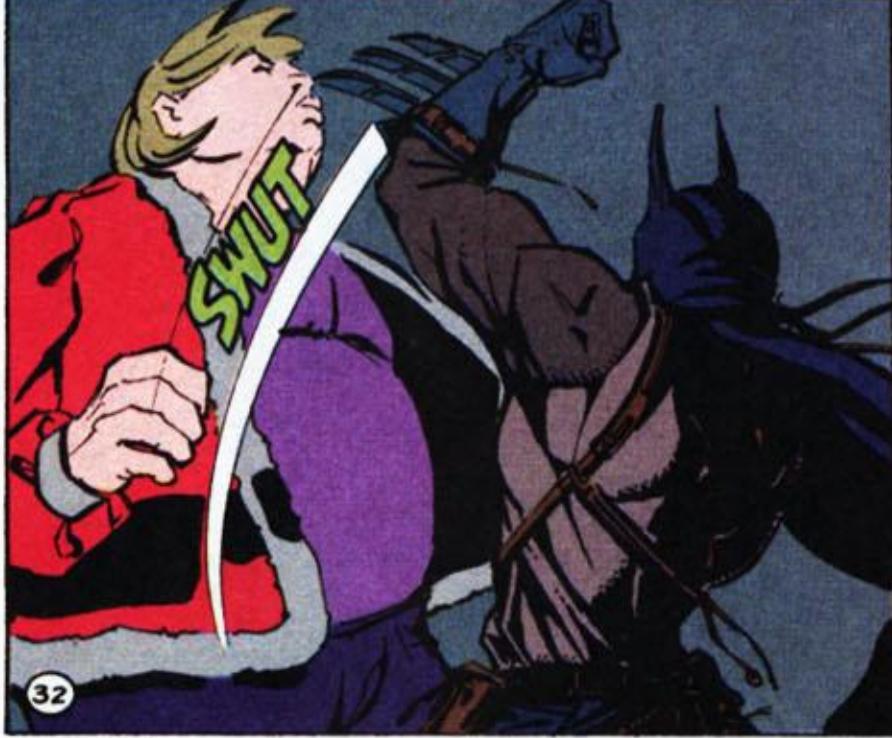
WHAT
--?

ROBERTO
DE PAZZI--
WHERE IS THE
LADY MONA
LISA DEL
GIOCONDA?!

A
DEMON
--!







CHAPTER
XIV

UNMASKING THE VILLAIN

YOU ARE GUILTY, MONA LISA,
OF INFIDELITY AND
FAITHLESSNESS. HOW--?
WHY?!

AS MY
HUSBAND, YOU
WERE NEVER
FAITHFUL...

AS YOUR WIFE,
WHY SHOULD I BE
DIFFERENT?

BECAUSE
YOU WERE
MINE!!

I TURNED AWAY ONLY AFTER
YOU SPURNED ME... AND I LEFT
YOU FOR LOVE, NOT MERE
CARNAL APPEASEMENT
AND--

I SAID
YOU WERE
MINE!!

SHAKK

YOU DIDN'T
WANT ME!
YOU DON'T
WANT ME!

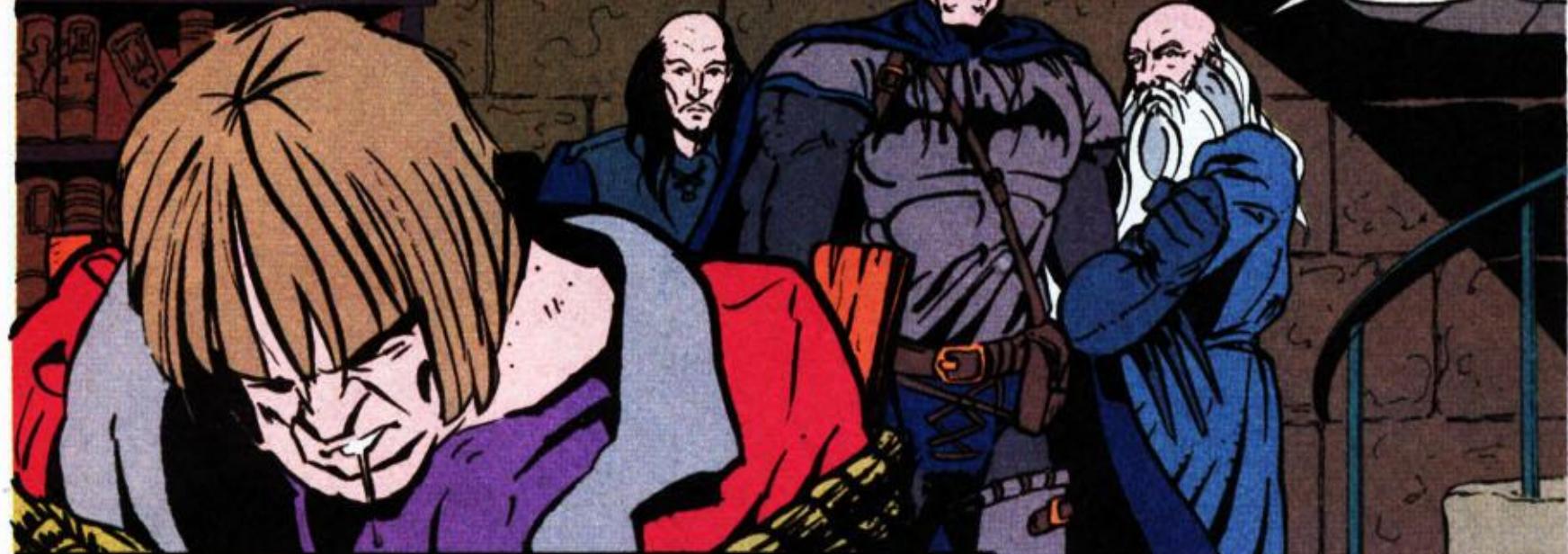
AND IF LEONARDO DOES, HE CAN
GET HIS PATRON TO BUY YOU-- AS
DAMAGED GOODS!

SLAM

CHAPTER
XV THE VISION
AND THE PLAN

WE MUST WORK SWIFTLY NOW,
LEONARDO--BEFORE ROBERTO
DE PAZZI IS MISSED FROM
THE PONTE VECCHIO.

YES! BUT
MONA
LISA--?



SHE IS HELD IN THE
TOWER OF THE FOUR
WINDS...

WHAT?! BUT SHE TOLD
ME THAT TOWER IS A
HOLDING OF FRANCESCO
DEL GIOCONDO--HER
OWN HUSBAND!

THEN HE IS IN LEAGUE
WITH THE HOUSE OF
PAZZI--USING HIS OWN
WIFE TO PLUNDER THE
MEDICI FORTUNE...



MY INVENTION
COULD PROVE USEFUL...
BUT MONA LISA SAID
THE TOWER IS HIGH...
AND TO REACH HER AT
THE TOP, YOU WOULD
NEED AT LEAST
TEN MEN...

OR WINGS,
LEONARDO! REAL
WINGS--FROM YOUR
NOTEBOOKS! WE
MUST TURN YOUR
DESIGNS INTO
REALITY!

NO, TOMAS... I AM AFRAID THAT
INVENTION IS IMPOSSIBLE...

WITH ENOUGH WILL,
LEONARDO, NOTHING
IS IMPOSSIBLE-- I
KNOW THAT NOW!



THESE PLANS WERE INTENDED FOR THE REAL WORLD, BUT THEY ARE AS UNATTAINABLE AS THE DREAMS PORTRAYED IN MY PAINTINGS.

THEY CAN BE BUILT, BUT THEY WILL NOT WORK.

I HAVE MADE A STUDY OF THE HUMAN ANATOMY.

MAN IS TOO LARGE AND HEAVY, TOMAS, HIS BONES TOO DENSE...

HIS MUSCULATURE IS INSUFFICIENT TO POWER WINGS LARGE ENOUGH TO BEAR HIS WEIGHT.

THEN I WILL NOT BEAT MY WINGS, LEONARDO...

I WILL SIMPLY... SOAR.

TWO NIGHTS LATER:

IF IT CARRIES
FAR ENOUGH,
MASTER LEONARDO,
DO WE NOT RISK
DAMAGING THE TOP
OF THE TOWER--?

I HAVE
CALCULATED
THE TRAJECTORY
TEN TIMES,
ALFREDO...

...AND NOW WE SHALL SEE
JUST HOW MUCH THE
SCIENTIST I AM.

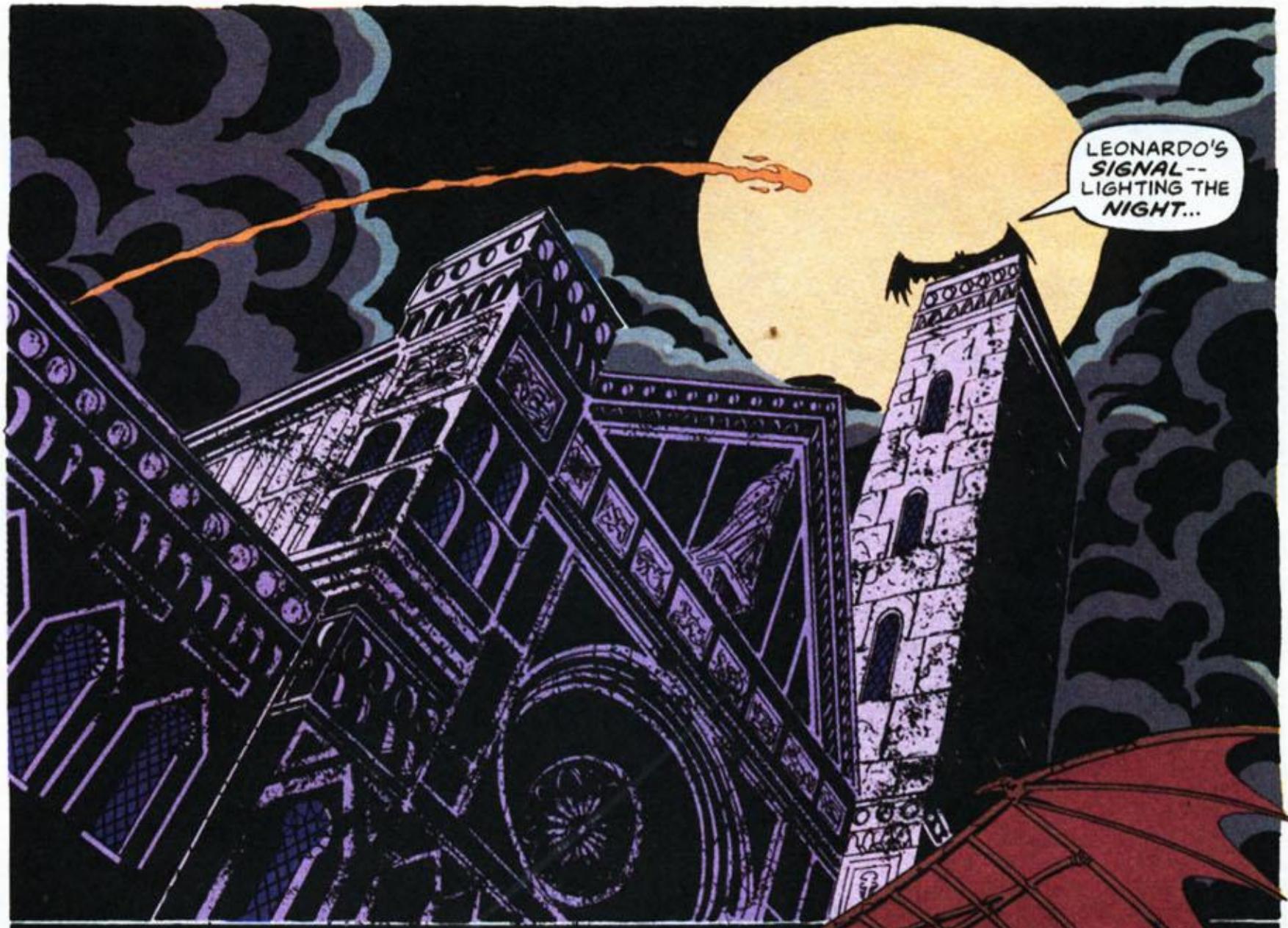
NOW!!

TWUNGG

SHOOFFFFF



LEONARDO'S
SIGNAL--
LIGHTING THE
NIGHT...



...SUMMONING
MY DESTINY.



THE DISTANCE
LOOKED RIGHT TO
REACH THE TOWER,
LEONARDO...

IT WAS PERFECT,
ALFREDO-- AND THE REST
REMAINS FOR TOMAS...
TO STRIKE IN THE
CONFUSION.

YES...



"...IF THE WINGS,
LEONARDO, WILL
BUT BEAR THE
WEIGHT OF HIS
MISSION."



FIRE!!

A DIVERSION--
NOTHING MORE. — FRANCESCO -- CALL THE
REST OF YOUR MEN AND
PUT OUT THE FIRE...

BERNARDO--
VOLNIUS! COME
WITH ME--TO THE
TOP OF THE
TOWER!



ALMOST
TIME FOR--

YOUR BOMB, LEONARDO...
WHAT IF IT FAILS?

PHYSICAL LAWS
DO NOT CHANGE,
ALFREDO.

IF ONE
PROPERLY MADE
BOMB EXPLODES...

"...EVERY SUCH BOMB
WILL DO THE SAME."

BWHOOOM!

C-CANNON
FIRE--?

TREACHERY
SUCH AS YOURS,
LADY DEL GIOCONDA,
SHOULD HAVE BEEN
PUNISHED LONG
AGO--

--AT THE
POINT OF A
DAGGER!

YAAAAAHHH

AAAIIEEEEEE



CHAPTER XVII WINGS

ONE-IN-FOUR CHANCE--
BUT I'VE LUCKED OUT...



HEY--WHADDAYA THINK YOU'RE DOIN', LOFGREN?

I'M GOING TO PENETRATE
THE MYSTERY, GENTLEMEN--
REMOVE THE OVERPAINTING...

LOFGREN'S
HIGHRISE
--RIGHT ON
TARGET...

BUT
THAT'LL RUIN IT--
MUTILATE IT...
JUST AS MUCH AS
SLASHIN' THE
CANVAS!

THE
PENTIMENTO
EXISTS ONLY
OVER THE BACK-
GROUND.

THE
MONA LISA
HERSELF
WILL NOT BE
TOUCHED...

WELL BEFORE THE RANSOM
DEADLINE -- EVEN BEFORE
THE ARRIVAL OF THE LOUVRE'S
REAL AMERICAN REP...

NOTHIN'S GONNA BE
TOLICED, LOFGREN!

NO WAY
YOU BLOW OUR
FIFTY MILLION
BUCKS!

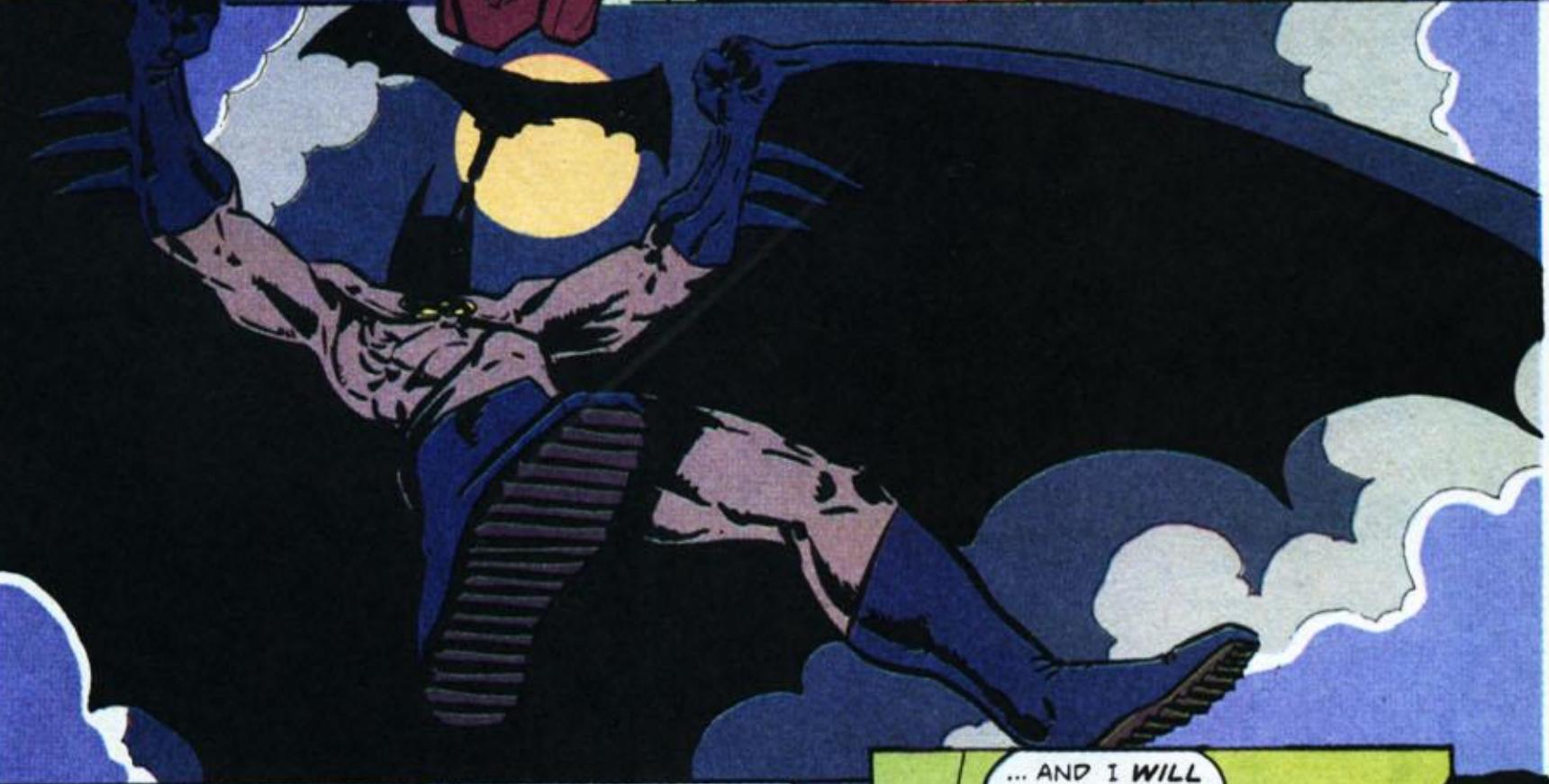
UNHAND
ME, YOU
CLUELESS
APE!

STPT

NOW!



KNUDT



THE MONA LISA IS MINE,
GENTLEMEN--OBTAINED
BY MY GENIUS--MY
ACCESS TO THE MUSEUM'S
ALARM SYSTEMS...

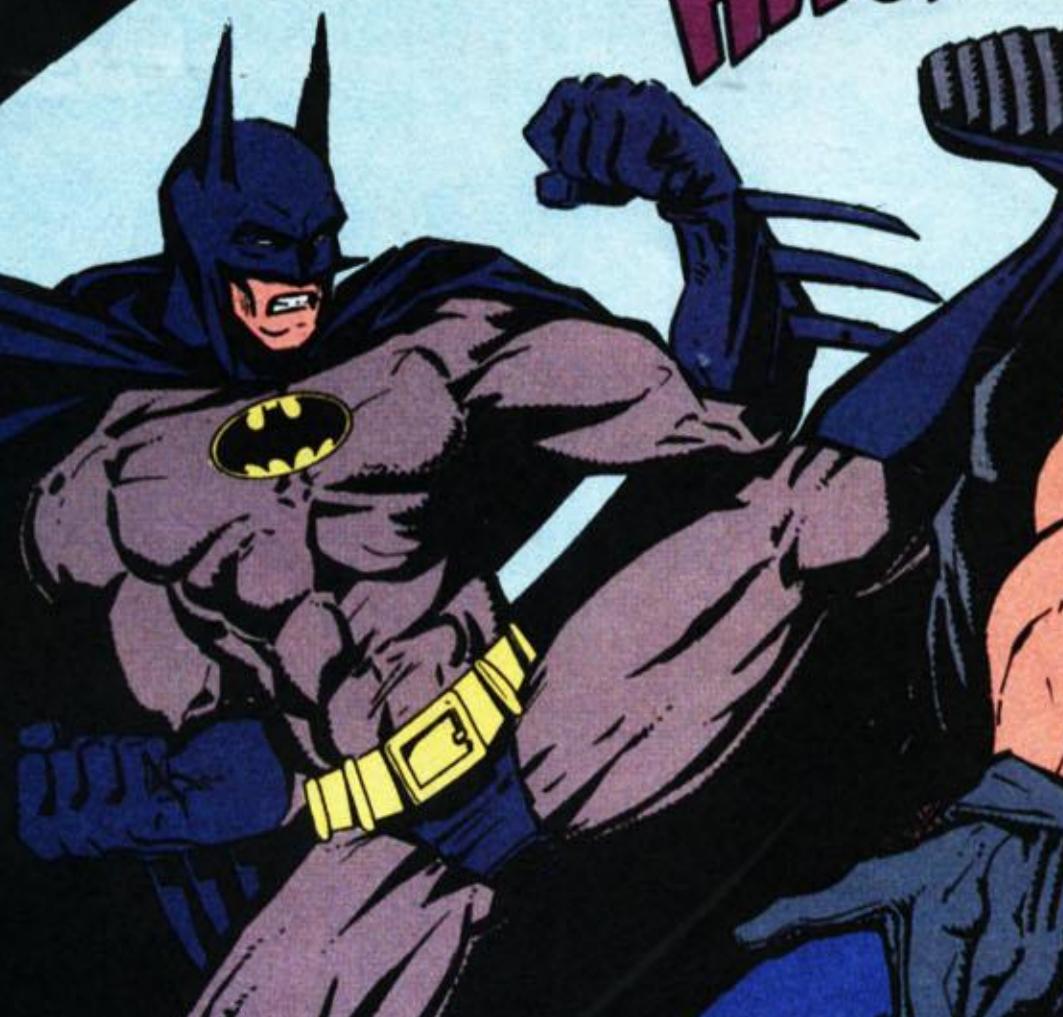
...AND I WILL
HAVE MY WAY
WITH HER!





Read more FREE comics on [ReadComicOnline](#)

HWOKK



THE
MONA LISA---!
KOFF A-HUKE!

SHE'S MINE,
I TELL YOU
--MINE!



CHAPTER XVIII THE HIGH STRUGGLE

THE WOMAN
DOES NOT
BELONG
TO YOU!

SHE IS FREE
TO LIVE,
ASSASSIN...

AHN--!

...AND FREE
TO CHOOSE
HER LOVE!

KUNCH

HE'S JUST
A MAN--!

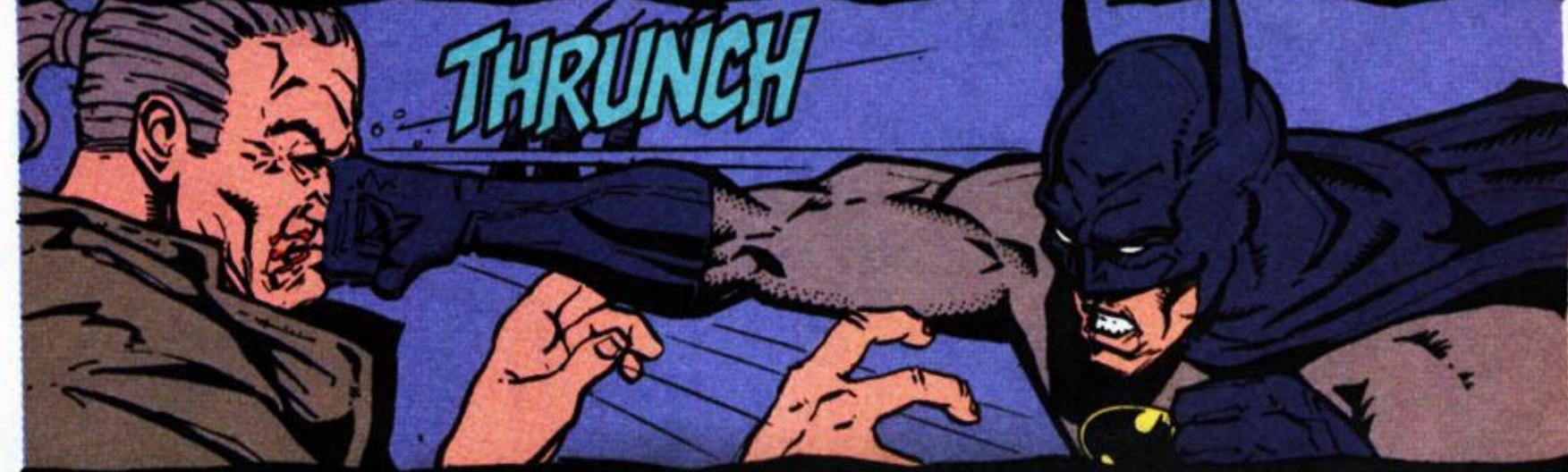
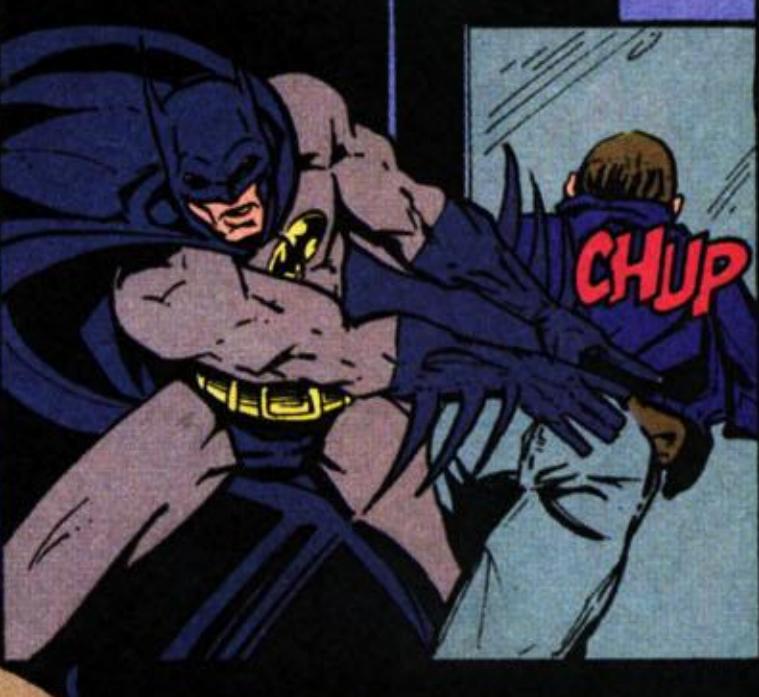
KILL
HIM!!

WUMPF

UFF--!







YOU'RE
DEAD.

AGH-K!



CHUT



DEAD!!

AHRRRRR!



LONG AGO, YOU TOOK THIS DAGGER TO THE MOTHER AND FATHER OF AN INNOCENT BOY-- A BOY WHO KNEW NOTHING OF VENDETTAS.

YOU DESTROYED THAT BOY'S WORLD... EVEN AS YOU GAVE HIM A TERRIBLE KNOWLEDGE.

SHALL WE NOW FUEL THE VENDETTA --PROLONG IT WITH YOUR BLOOD?

N-NO... PLEASE...

AND WHY NOT, DEMON--?

BECAUSE YOU ARE ALREADY DAMNED TO LIVE IN TERROR OF A GREATER DEMON?

WH-WHO... WHO ARE YOU?!

I AM HE WHO WILL HAUNT YOUR EVERY NIGHT--AND SUCH MAY BE ENOUGH--BUT IF IT IS NOT...

...AT LEAST THIS HAND--

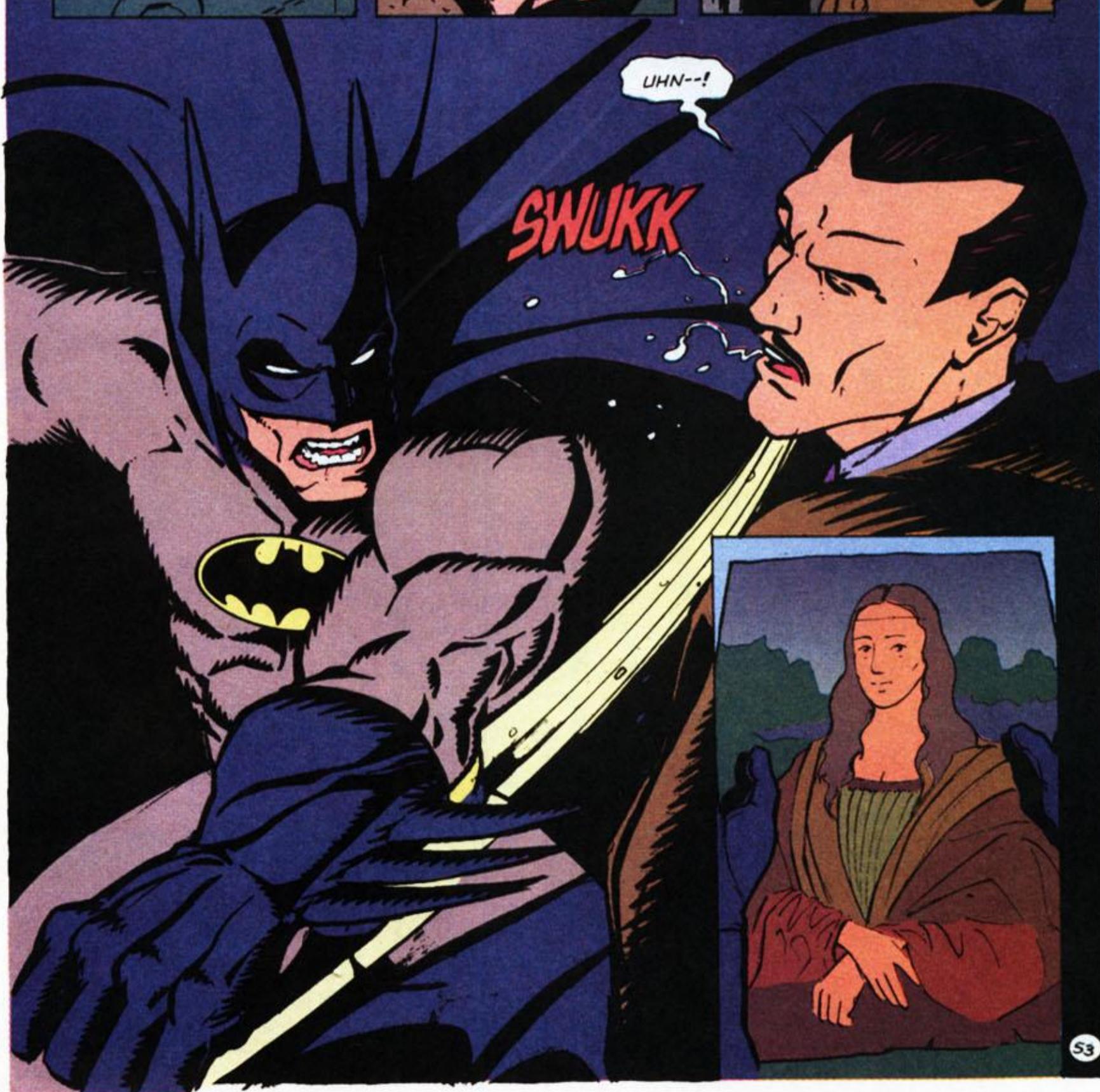
SHRREP

AHRRR!
--WILL NEVER AGAIN WIELD THIS DAGGER.

LADY MONA LISA, IT IS OVER...

YOU ARE RESCUED.

CHAPTER
XX THE RESCUE



IT SHOULD BE ENOUGH, MONA LISA, THAT THE PLOT HAS BEEN FOILED AND YOU ARE FREE... BUT THE SECRET OF YOUR SMILE--

--CAN NOW BE SHARED... THOUGH ONLY BETWEEN US.

WHAT ARE--

I AM WITH CHILD, LEONARDO...

WE ARE WITH CHILD.

MASKING THE MASTERPIECE



AND THIS IS THE MONA LISA SAVED... THE SECRET OF HER SMILE PRESERVED--TO THE GREAT RELIEF OF THE LOUVRE.

THERE MAY BE ANOTHER SECRET IN THAT PAINTING, GORDON.

LOFGREN TALKED IN HIS "SLEEP"-- SOMETHING ABOUT PENTIMENTO...

THAT MEANS THERE'S SOMETHING UNDERNEATH, DOESN'T IT? --ONE PAINTING COVERED OVER BY ANOTHER?

YES--MAYBE EVEN ANOTHER DA VINCI.

AN UNKNOWN LEONARDO... WHICH SHOULD SORELTY TEMPT THE LOUVRE CURATORS... ALTHOUGH I DOUBT THEY'LL OBLITERATE THIS FACE.

EH--? GONE AGAIN... LIKE THE SHADOW I SOMETIMES SWEAR HE IS.

IT MIGHT UNMASK--

BUT AS I WAS SAYING...

"IT MIGHT UNMASK AN OLDER MASTERPIECE..."

"...BUT THERE'S NOTHING LIKE THE REAL THING."

Raynor
Nir
Guardian of Asgard



www.8ung.at/comicasgard