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YEAR ONE BATMAN



MOENCH
BLEVINS
MANLEY



YEAR ONE: SCARECROW MASTERS OF FEAR

The Joker, Catwoman, Two-Face,
Hugo Strange, and dozens of
others less surreal.

I've faced and survived
them all.

I'm on my way to
becoming a legend.

As dark as the night itself,
and as mysterious as the
moon.

DOUG MOENCH BRET BLEVINS & MIKE MANLEY

WRITER

ALBERT DE GUZMAN

LETTERER

ARTISTS

JORDAN B. GORFINKEL

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

STU CHAIFETZ

COMPUTER COLORIST

DENNIS O'NEIL

EDITOR

BATMAN
Created by
BOB KANE

They're whispering about the bat in all the city's dark corners, and in some of the bright ones, too.

But I'm still now, still learning.

The physical prowess and fighting skills...

...the detective methods and the tools in my belt, gloves, and boots.

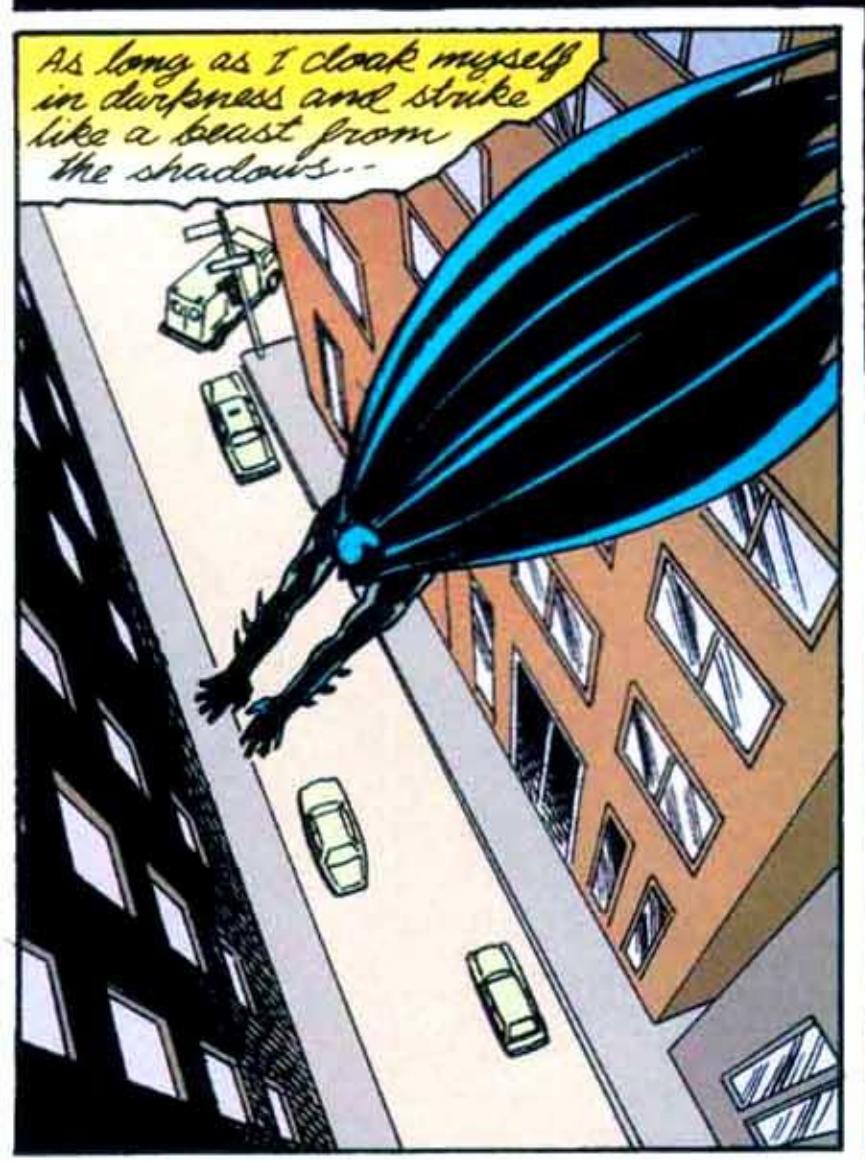
Claws
Talons

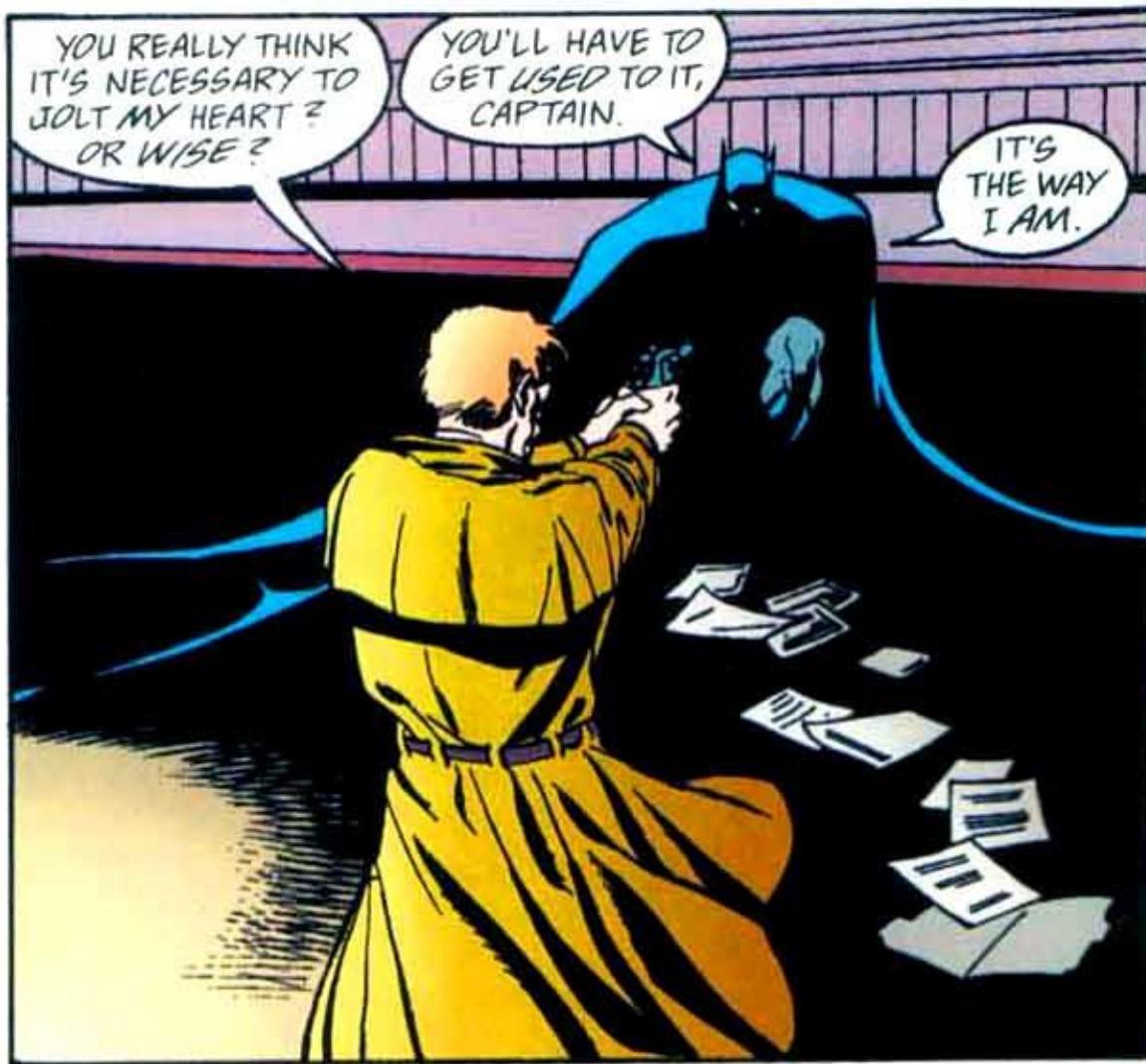
They're all important...

...but the single most important factor, and the defining difference to date...

...is the one element no one can touch, and the one thing they can never fight.

Not even the mad ones.





WITH NO SIGNS OF PHYSICAL VIOLENCE, SURE LOOKS THAT WAY -- AND ESTIMATED TIME OF DEATH IS THE SAME FOR ALL FIVE.

MURDER?

YOU TELL ME...

WE'VE AGREED TO HELP EACH OTHER ON THE WEIRD ONES, AND IN ALL MY YEARS AS A COP-- INCLUDING CHICAGO-- I'VE SEEN NOTHING WEIRDER.

ANYTHING ELSE?

JUST THIS.

A STRAW?

LEFT OR DROPPED ON THE CENTER OF THE MEETING TABLE -- BETWEEN FIVE HEART ATTACKS.

I'LL GET ON IT, CAPTAIN...

...SEE WHAT I CAN SCARE UP.



I WASN'T AFRAID OF THAT.



FIFTEEN
YEARS
AGO:

WE FEAR SOMETHING
BEFORE WE HATE IT; A
CHILD WHO FEARS
NOISES BECOMES A
MAN WHO HATES NOISE.
—Cyril Connolly

"I WAS
ALWAYS
LANKY AND
GANGLY.
EVEN AS A
YOUTH..."

"...WITH A HERKY-JERKY GAIT
WHICH NEVER FAILED TO DRAW
DERISION AND SCORN."

YEAH--YOU SURE
LOOK LIKE A
SCARECROW!

HEY,
CRANE--
GOT A DATE
WITH SOME
CROWS?

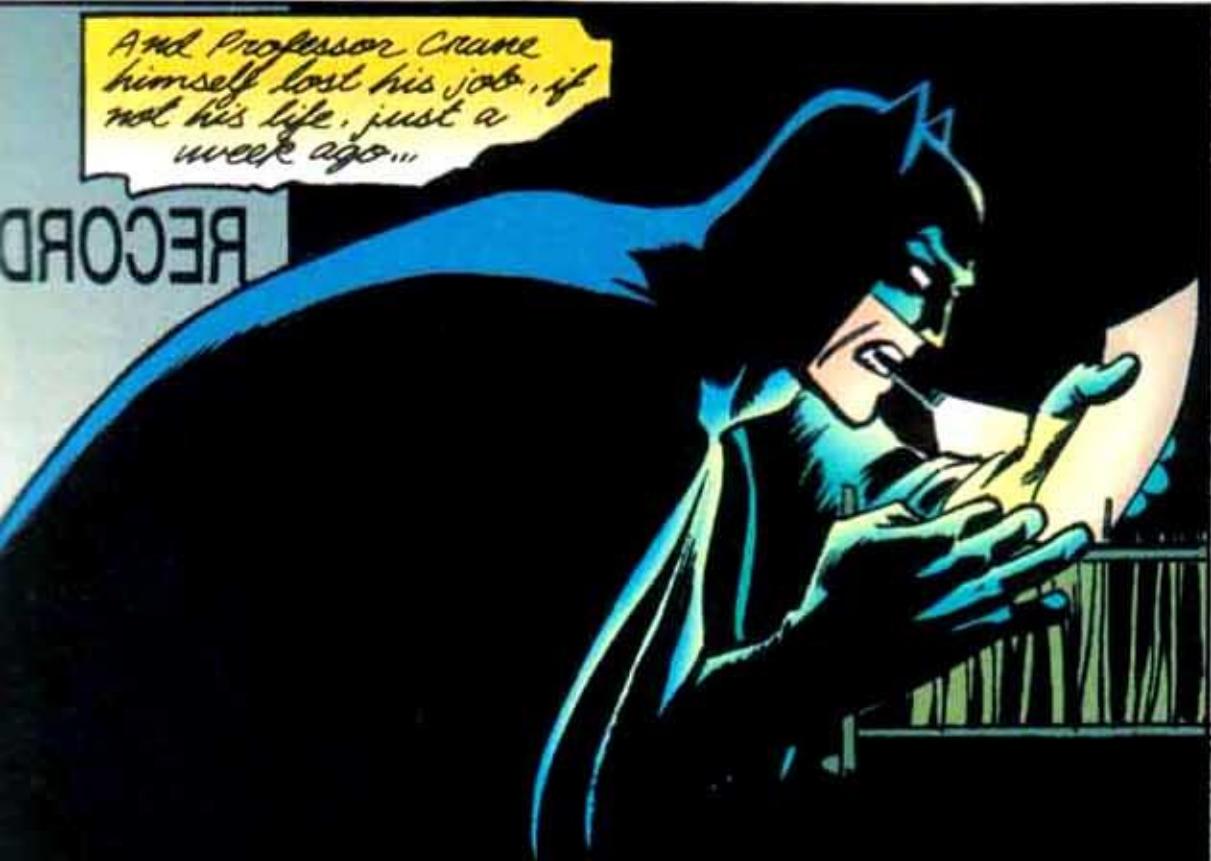
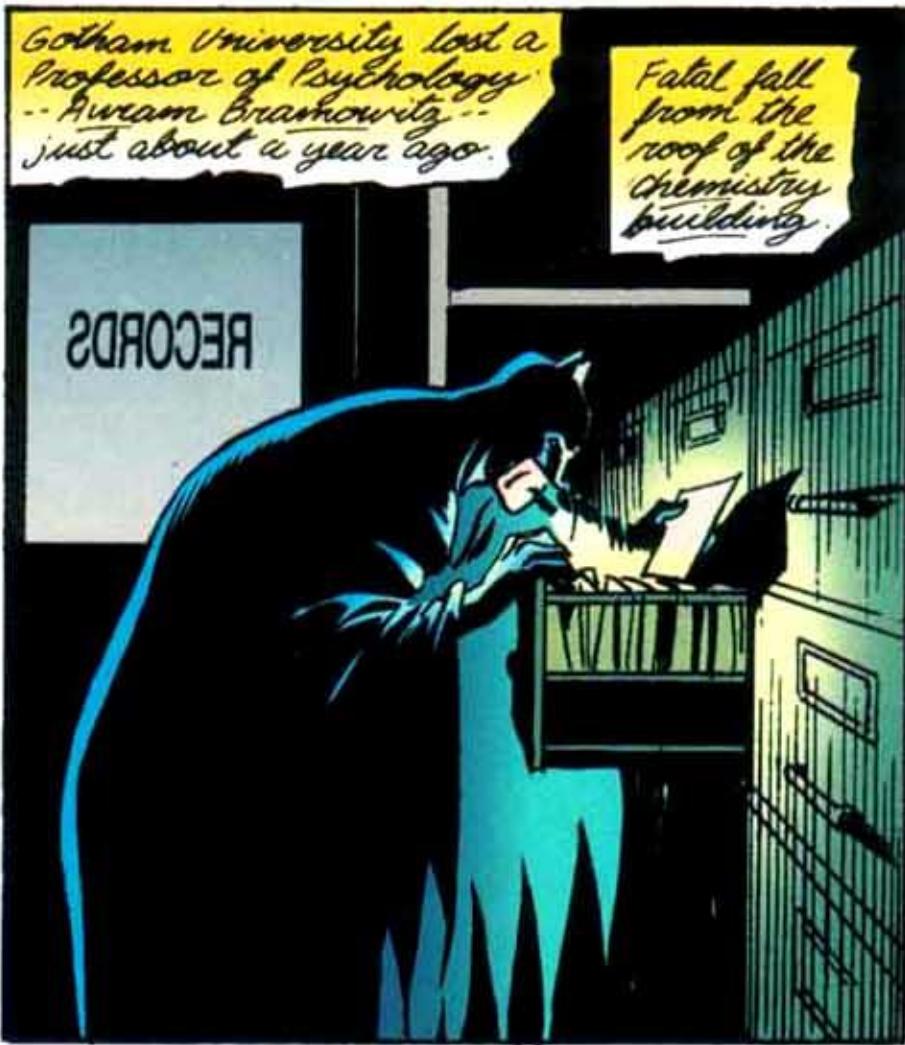
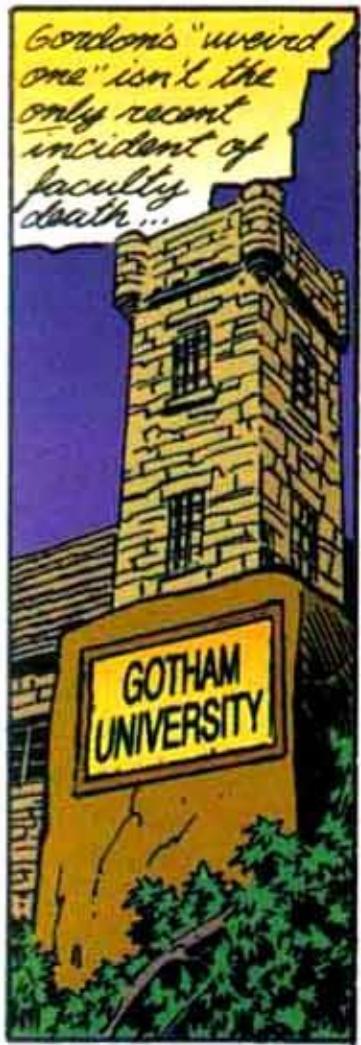
HE ALSO LOOKS
LIKE A DIFFERENT
CRANE--ICHABOD
CRANE!

YOU ASK ME,
HIS HEAD'S A
SLEEPY HOLLOW!

"BUT HOWEVER ILL-COORDINATED
I APPEARED...

RUN
SCARECROW--
RUN!

"...SPEED, OF
NECESSITY, WAS
MINE."



Dismissed for
"unorthodox
and recklessly
endangering
classroom
behavior..."

...in a
unanimous
vote by the
Dean and his
four regents.



TEN YEARS
AGO:

"EVERY SCARECROW HAS A
SECRET AMBITION TO TERRORIZE."
—Stanislaus J. Lec

"AS A LONER MY PURSUITS WERE
LIMITED, AND I WAS ALMOST
FORCED TO BECOME A
BIBLIOPHILE."

GET A LOAD
O' FREAKY-GEEK
BOOKWORM
CRANE!

"BOOKS COULDN'T SNEER AND
JEER LIKE MY NEMESIS BO
GRIGGS -- OR WORSE, GIGGLE
LIKE HIS GIRLFRIEND SHERRY."

"I PRETENDED
TO BE OBLIVIOUS
-- EVEN SUPERIOR --
BUT OH, HOW I
HURT INSIDE...
AND OH, HOW
I RAGED."

"I WAS SEARED AND
SCARRED BY SUCH FEELINGS
EVERY DAY OF MY LIFE --
COMPLEX, CONFLICTING
EMOTIONS WHICH I FIERCELY
SUPPRESSED..."

"...UNTIL THAT ONE DAY WHEN
EVERYTHING BOTTLED INSIDE
ME --

HRAAAHHH!

"ALTHOUGH SUCH RELEASES WOULD
SOON BECOME A SECRET THRILL
REPEATED AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY,
THAT FIRST INCIDENT LEFT NOTHING
BUT SHAME AND LOATHING..."

I... I AM NOTHING BUT A
SCARECROW... AND THE ONLY
THINGS I CAN SCARE ARE
SMALL, WEAK THINGS...

NOTHING
BUT BIRDS!

--SIMPLY
EXPLODED.

"THAT DAY WAS DOUBLY SIGNIFICANT - FOR, HAVING AVOIDED IRVING'S TALE EVER SINCE I'D EARNED THE DERISIVE NICKNAME 'ICHABOD,' I FINALLY SUCUMBED TO CURIOSITY ABOUT MY FICTIONAL NAMESAKE."

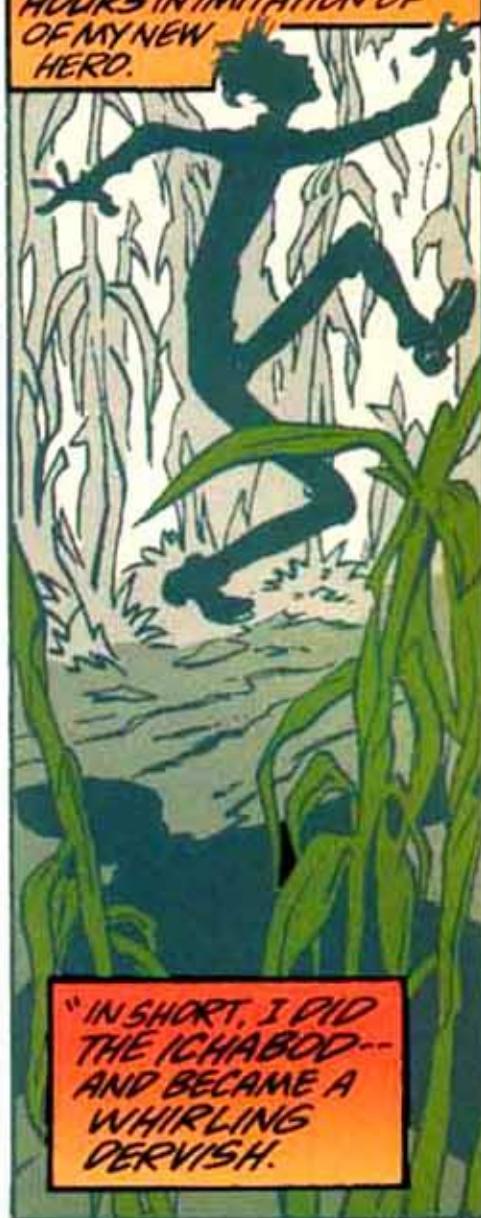
"I WAS INITIALLY DISAPPOINTED TO LEARN THAT Ichabod Crane was a bookish loner just like me..."



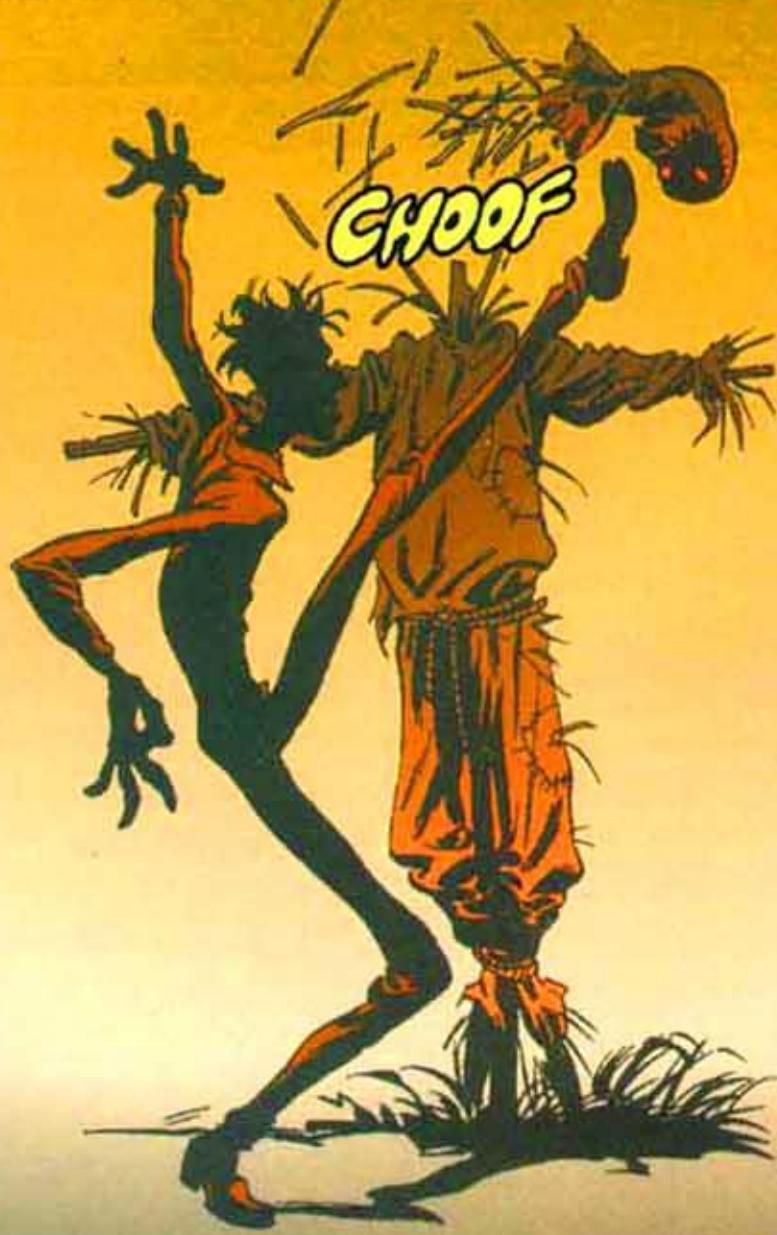
"...BUT I WAS SOON ENTHRALLED BY THE SCENE IN WHICH HE AMAZED THE OTHER CHARACTERS WITH HIS WILD DANCING SKILLS. HIS LONG LIMBS AND SPINDLY PHYSIQUE AT LAST ADMIRE FOR THE ASSETS THEY TRULY WERE!"



"INSPIRED, I IMMEDIATELY RACED TO A CORNFIELD NEAR MY HOME, WHERE NO ONE COULD SEE ME AMONGST THE TALL STALKS - AND WHERE I SPENT DIZZYING HOURS IN IMITATION OF OF MY NEW HERO."



"TRANSPORTED AND ENERGIZED BY THE DANCE, MY FRENZIED GYRATIONS FILLED ME WITH A SUPREME CONFIDENCE I HAD NEVER KNOWN--"



"IN SHORT, I DID THE Ichabod -- AND BECAME A WHIRLING DERVISH."



"GIVEN THE EXHILARATION OF THAT AFTERNOON, IT WAS INEVITABLE THAT I WOULD EXTEND MY UNIQUE FORM OF 'VIOLENT DANCING' INTO A SERIOUS STUDY OF THE MARTIAL ARTS, MASTERING ONE PARTICULARLY APT TECHNIQUE..."

"THE CRANE STYLE OF KUNG FU, OF COURSE."

"...FOR I READ WITH MOUNTING HORROR AS ICABOD CRANE FLED DOWN THAT LONELY HAUNTED ROAD IN FULL-ТИLT TERROR..."

"...WITH THE LEGENDARY HEADLESS HORSEMAN IN RELENTLESS PURSUIT.

"BUT THAT NIGHT, I COULDN'T WAIT TO RETURN TO SLEEPY HOLLOW."

"WOULD THAT I HAD NEVER FINISHED THE ACCURSED BOOK, HOWEVER..."

"I ACTUALLY GASPED, FULLY SHARING ICABOD'S FEAR, WHEN THAT DARK DEMON REARED UP AND HURLED HIS SEVERED HEAD..."

"TRUE, I WANTED MY NEW HERO TO TURN AND FACE THE HORSEMAN, BUT I COULDN'T REALLY FAULT ICHABOD FOR FLEEING SUCH A SUPERNATURAL THREAT."

"IMAGINE, THEN, MY FURIOUS DISBELIEF--THE SENSE OF BITTER DISAPPOINTMENT AND SHEER BETRAYAL I FELT..."

"AFTER ALL, I WOULD HAVE DONE PRECISELY THE SAME."

"...WHEN THE HORSEMAN'S TRUE AND ALL TOO HUMAN HEAD WAS REVEALED TO BE THAT OF ICHABOD'S JEERING NEMESIS."

"MY HERO--MY NAMESAKE--HAD FLED IN CRAVEN TERROR AND COWARDICE FROM NOTHING BUT A HARMLESS GOURD."

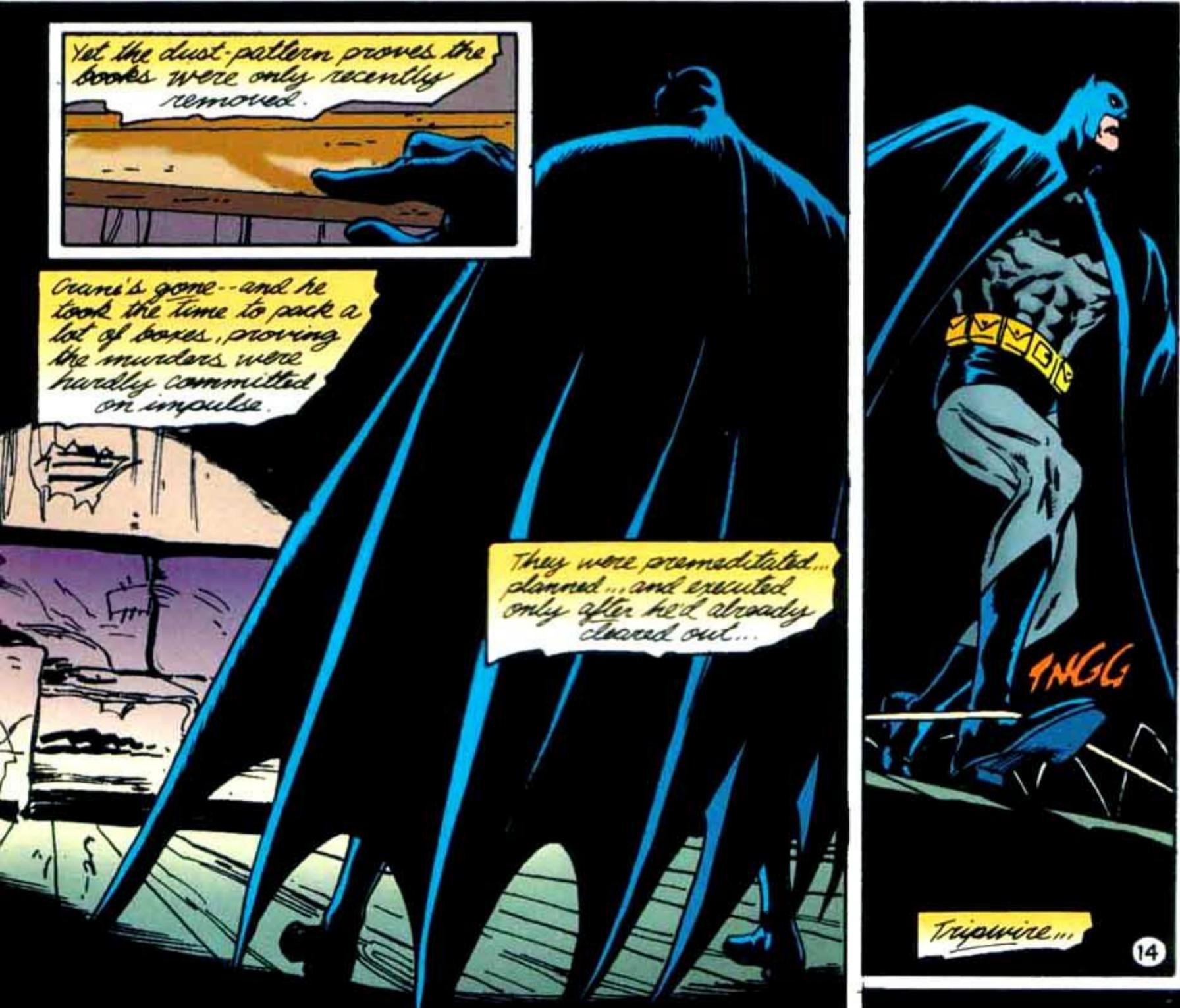
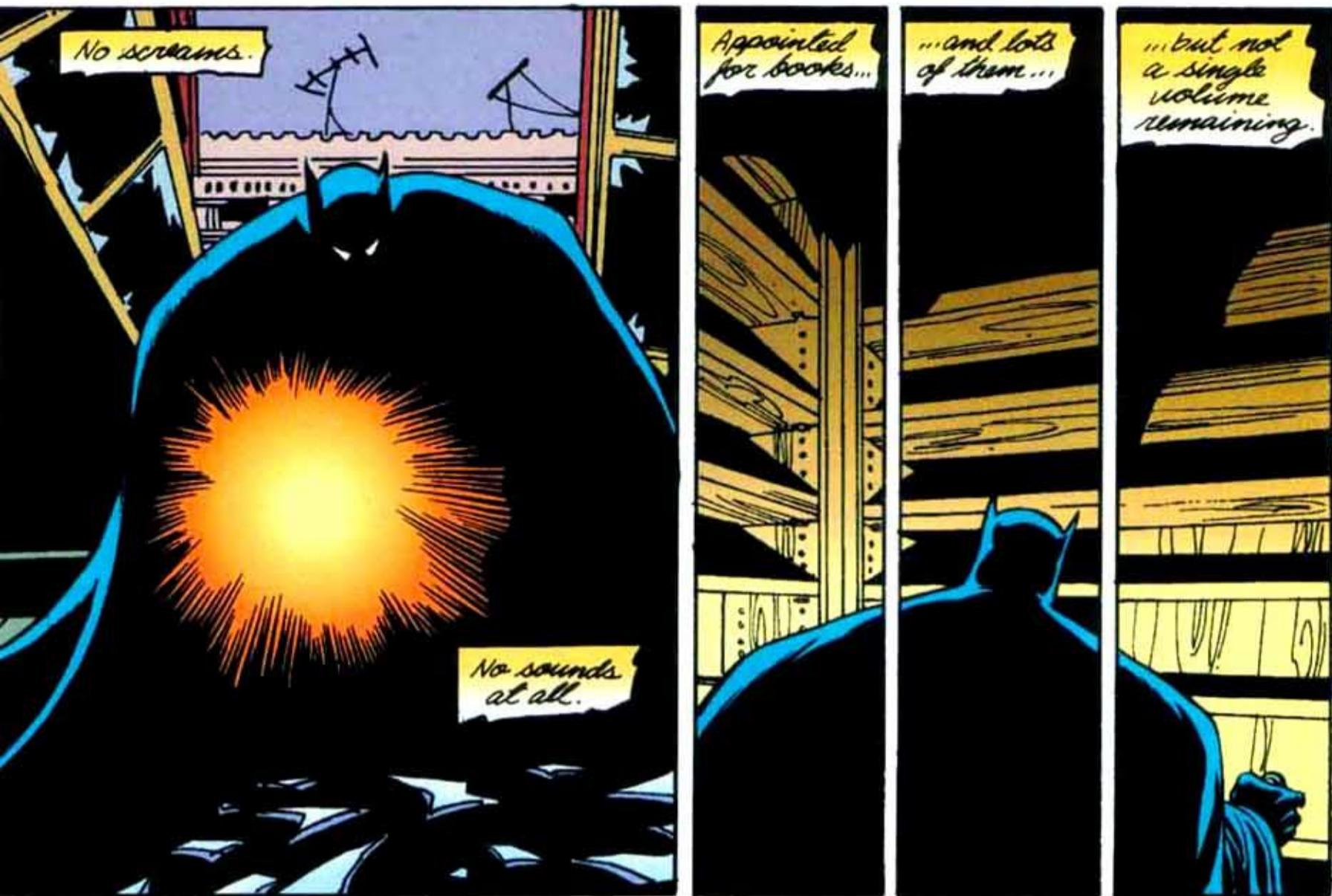
"I COULDN'T BEAR THE SHAME..."

"AND THAT'S WHEN I FINALLY ASSERTED MYSELF--IN DEFiance OF CRUEL DESTINY--AND UTTERED MY FATEFUL VOW..."

IN THE STORY OF MY LIFE, THE SCRAPPY SCARECROW WILL WIN IN THE END--AND THE LAST LAUGH, I SWEAR, WILL BE MINE!!

Crane's apartment
is on the third
floor.









Did he leave some sort of taunting message or...







SIX YEARS AGO:

"YOU CAN DISCOVER WHAT YOUR ENEMY FEARS MOST BY OBSERVING THE MEANS HE USES TO FRIGHTEN YOU." — Eric Hoffer

"BY THE AGE OF SEVENTEEN I HAD DEVELOPED A HUGE CRUSH ON SHERRY SQUIRES—WHO, WOULDNT YOU KNOW IT, HAD BEEN GOING STEADY WITH MY HATED TORMENTOR BO GRIGGS FOR FOUR YEARS.



"EVEN AFTER WORD OF THEIR BREAKUP HAD SPREAD, IT TOOK ME A WEEK TO BUILD UP THE NECESSARY COURAGE...

SH-SHERRY, I...UH... J-JASON GREENE'S HAVING A H-HALLOWEEN PARTY AND I, UH... THAT IS, I WAS WONDERING IF M-MAYBE Y-YOU...

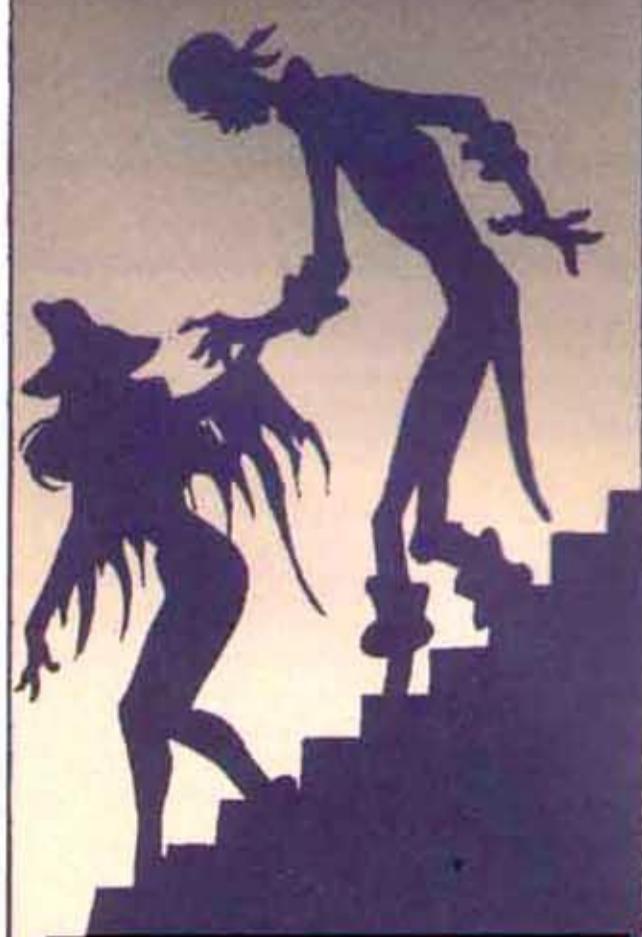
WHY,
JONATHAN,
I'D LOVE TO
GO WITH
YOU!



"IF HER ACCEPTANCE WAS SHEER JOY, THE PARTY ITSELF WAS NIRVANA—ESPECIALLY WHEN SHERRY SAID SHE WANTED TO BE ALONE WITH ME..."



"THE DARK JOURNEY DOWN THOSE STAIRS WAS BOTH FRIGHTENING AND DELICIOUSLY THRILLING.



"I FELT ALMOST AS BIG AS I HAD WHEN I'D KICKED THE SCARECROW'S HEAD FROM ITS BODY."

"I SUPPOSE IT WAS THE FURNACE WHICH MADE IT SEEM SO WARM DOWN THERE, BUT IT WAS THE CHEMISTRY OF SHERRY'S PERFUME WHICH SENT MY MIND REELING..."

N-NOW
WH-WHAT?

NOW, SILLY...
YOU KISS
ME.



"I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT."

"IT WAS ALL I'D EVER
WANTED, AND MORE."

"IT WAS HEAVEN
ITSELF..."



HOOOOAAH

"...UNTIL, WITH THE ABRUPTNESS
OF A BLOODCURDLING SHRIEK,
IT ALL TURNED TO HELL."





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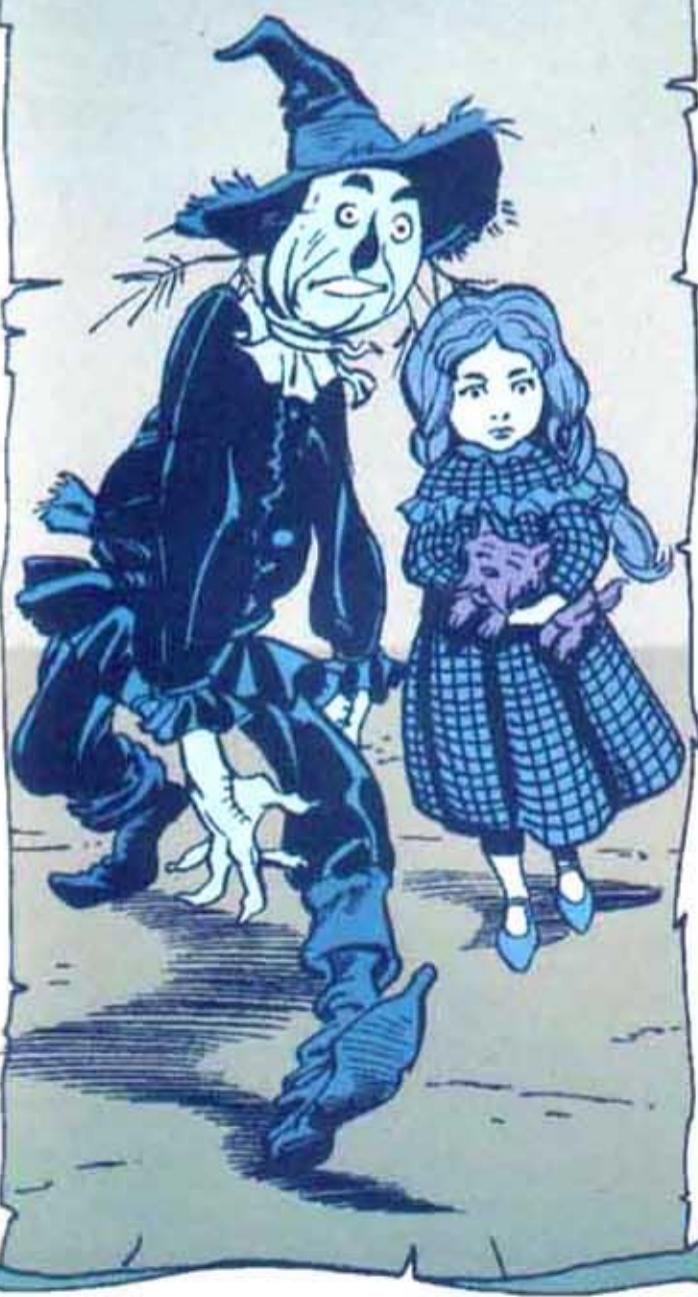
"THERE AND THEN
I MADE A NEW VOW--
TO REDOUBLE MY
EFFORTS AND FINALLY
CONQUER THE BANE
OF MY MISERABLE
EXISTENCE..."



"ONCE AGAIN A LONER, I RETREATED TO THE
SANCTUARY OF MY ROOM AND THE SAFETY
OF MY BOOKS.



"...BUT I WAS DIFFERENT FROM
HIS SCARECROW, BECAUSE I DID
HAVE A BRAIN, AND I SUDDENLY
SAW THE FULFILLMENT OF MY
VOW IN ITS CONCENTRATED USE.



"THENCEFORTH MY READING BECAME MUCH
HEAVIER--AS I EMBARKED ON A FEVERISH
STUDY OF TERROR.

NO FEAR...

...ONCE YOU
KNOW FEAR.

PHENOMENA
OF FEAR
THE PSYCHOLOGY
OF FEAR
FEAR AND ITS EFFECTS
ON THE BRAIN
ANXIETY, PANIC,
AND THE MIND

"ON THE NIGHT OF THE SENIOR
PROM I WAS DATELESS AS USUAL,
BUT I WAS ALSO READY...
READY AT LAST.

ENJOY YOUR
DANCE, BO GRIGGS,
WHILE YOU STILL
CAN--AND DITTO
TO YOU, SHERRY
SQUIRES...



"NO ONE NOTICED WHEN I LEFT THE PROM EARLY--BUT BY THE TIME THE OTHERS GOT TO THE TRADITIONAL PARKING SPOT, EVERYTHING WAS IN PLACE."



"I GAVE THEM TEN MINUTES--"



"THE SMOKE BOMB WAS NEXT, RIGHT IN FRONT OF BO GRIGGS' CAR, TURNING SHERRY'S JEERS TO FEARS."



"IT WAS ONLY A WATER PISTOL, BUT IN THE DARK IT BECAME THE FIRST INSTRUMENT OF TRUE FEAR I EVER HELD."

"THEY SCATTERED IN PANIC, SCREAMING AND SPINNING THEIR WHEELS--BIG STRONG HANDSOME BULLIES NO MORE, AND LITTLE MORE THAN BIRDS."

HROOOAAA

SKREEEEEEE

"AS GOETHE SAID,
'SUPERSTITION IS ROOTED
IN A MUCH DEEPER LAYER
OF THE PSYCHE THAN
SKEPTICISM.'

HA HA HOO HYAH HA

"AND THE POWER
OF SUPERSTITION WAS
NOW MINE, BOUND IN
TATTERS AND STRAW
AND ANIMATED BY
AUDACITY.

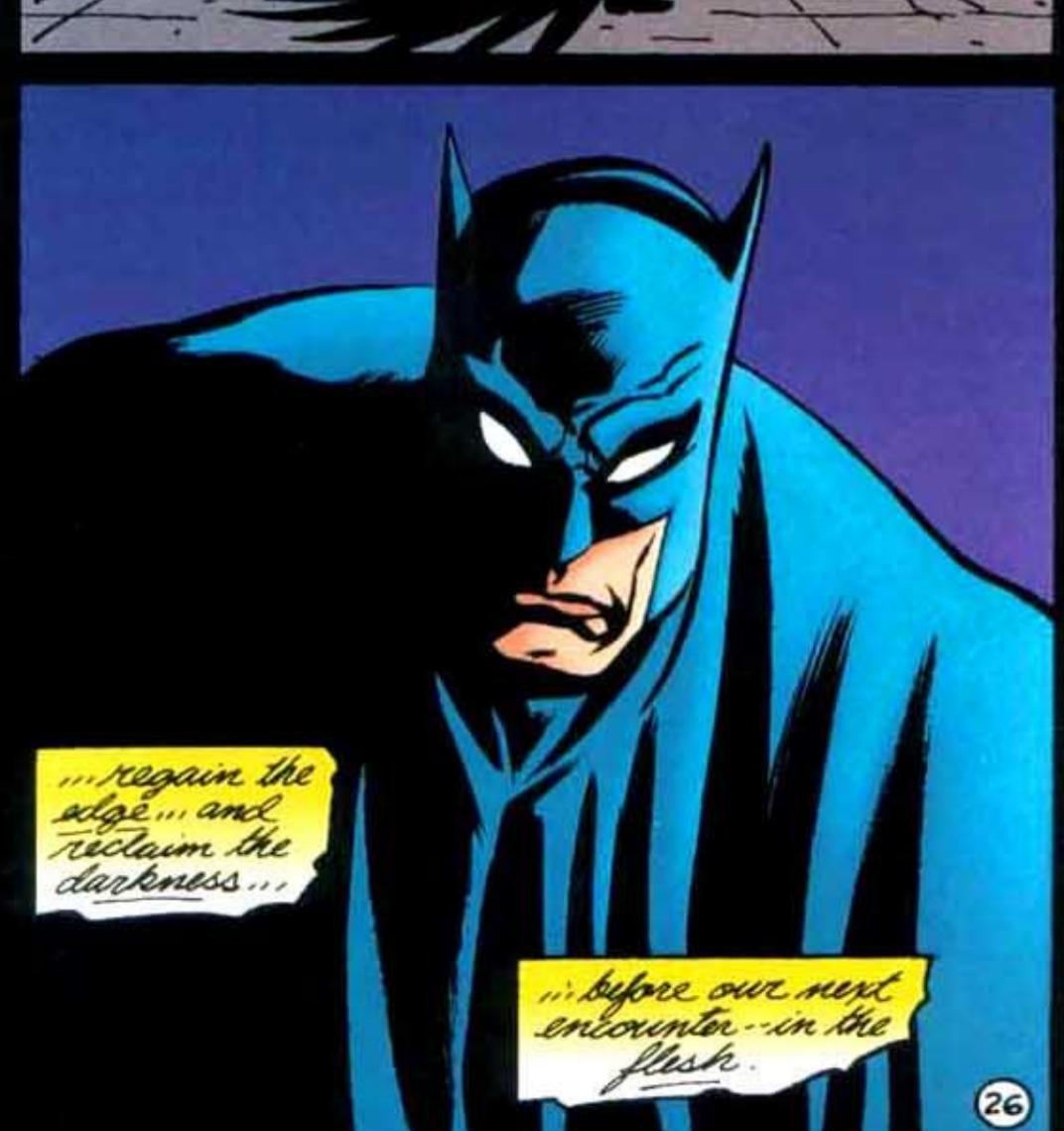
"I LATER LEARNED THAT ONE CAR EVEN SWERVED RIGHT OFF THE ROAD."

"AS FOR ME, I WAS READY FOR COLLEGE..."

"FOOTBALL STUD BO GRIGGS
WAS PARALYZED FROM THE
WAIST DOWN FOR THE REST OF
HIS LIFE--WHILE SHERRY
SQUIRES, WEDGED HALFWAY
THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD,
DIED BEFORE DAWN."

"BUCKLE UP, BABE!"

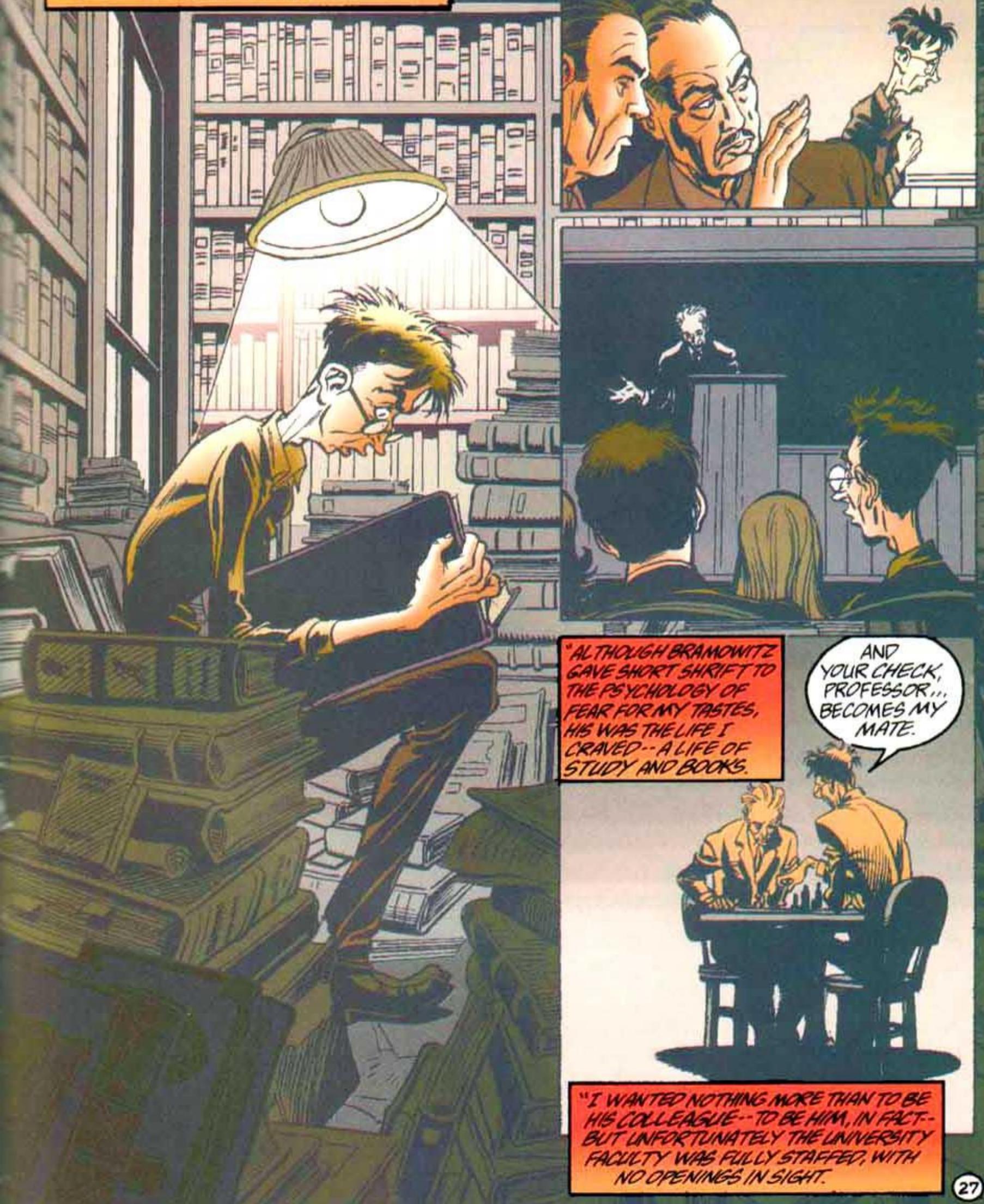
"... WHERE I PLANNED
TO FURTHER MY STUDIES
IN FEAR."



ONE YEAR AGO:

"FOR WORLDLY SUCCESS, WE NEED VIRTUES THAT MAKE US LOVED AND FAULTS THAT MAKE US FEARED." —Joseph Joubert

"MY FOUR YEARS AT GOTHAM UNIVERSITY WERE SPENT IN A CONCENTRATED STUDY OF PSYCHOLOGY, CHEMISTRY, THE BRAIN'S BIOCHEMICAL PROCESSES--AND FEAR IN ITS EVERY ASPECT."



"SINCE I DID NOT CARE FOR MY ONLY OTHER OPTION--MOVING AWAY FROM GOTHAM TO SEEK MY FUTURE ELSEWHERE--I SOUGHT A SOLUTION BY IMMERSING MYSELF IN MY LIFE'S ONE OTHER GREAT OBSESSION..."

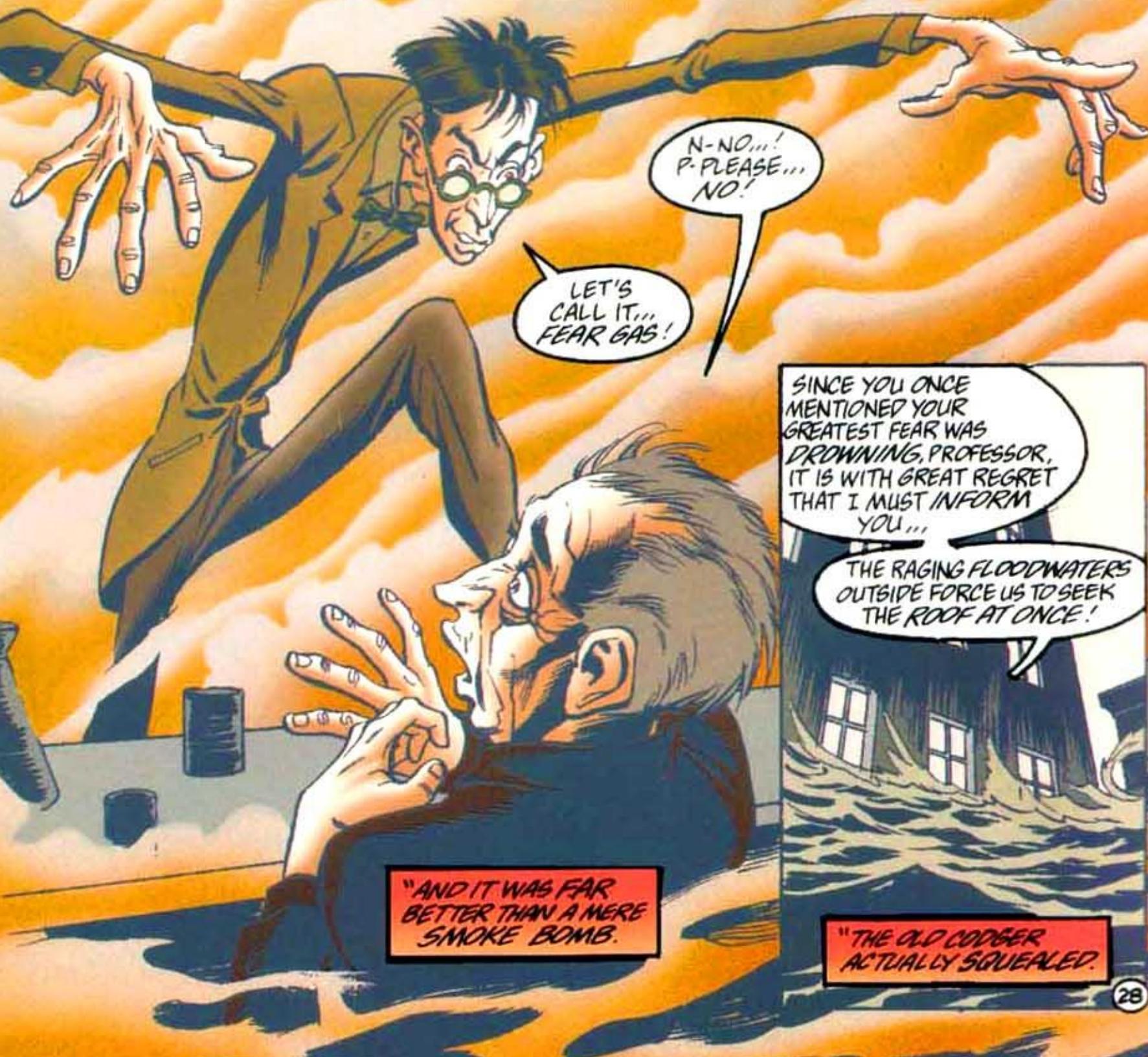


"WHEN I WAS DONE, IT WAS TIME FOR THE INEVITABLE--AND I INVITED PROFESSOR BRAMOWITZ OVER TO THE CHEM LAB TO SAY GOODBYE..."



;KOFF A-HUK!
WH-WHAT...?

A CONCOCTION OF MY OWN CREATION, PROFESSOR...



"PLAYING HIS FEARS LIKE A MAESTRO, I URGED BRAMOWITZ HIGHER AND EVER HIGHER..."

IT'S LAPPING AT YOUR FEET, PROFESSOR--AT YOUR ANKLES--TRYING TO DROWN YOU! GET AWAY FROM IT, PROFESSOR--GET AWAY!"

QUICKLY, PROFESSOR--THE WATERS ARE STILL RISING!"

"PLEASE, CRANE--YOU MUST HELP ME!"

"N-NO...! NO!"

"NYAAAAAH"



"THERE WAS NOW AN OPENING FOR PRECISELY THE POSITION I DESIRED."

"I WAS THE VERY FIRST APPLICANT, WAITING ONLY LONG ENOUGH TO RENT A NEW SUIT..."

"AS THE LATE PROFESSOR BRAMOWITZ'S PROTEGE, CRANE, YOU'RE THE PERFECT CANDIDATE FOR THE JOB."

"THANK YOU, DEAN."

"GOODBYE, PROFESSOR."

"...TEE HEE HEE."



ONE MONTH AGO:

"WE MAKE TRIFLES OF TERRORS."
-William Shakespeare

WITH INCREASED BLOOD PRESSURE AND PULSE, FEAR RELEASES GLANDULAR SECRETIONS OF ADRENALIN, FACILITATING FLIGHT--

YET IT ALSO RELEASES OTHER BIOCHEMICALS WHICH INTERFERE WITH NEUROMUSCULAR RESPONSE...

...RESULTING IN TREMBLING STUTTERING, DRYNESS OF THE THROAT, NAUSEA, SPASMS, INCONTINENCE, VISUAL DISTORTION, CARDIAC ARRHYTHMIA, AND--

I THOUGHT THIS WAS A PSYCHOLOGY COURSE--AND PRESUMABLY THERE ARE STATES OF MIND OTHER THAN FEAR.

WHERE THE PSYCHE IS CONCERNED, FEAR IS EVERYTHING! IT PROVIDES OUR EVERY MOTIVE AND GOVERNS OUR EVERY RESPONSE!

THE VERY ACT OF LIVING IS NOTHING BUT A CONDITIONED RESPONSE TO THE FEAR OF DEATH!

AND HERE, FOR EXAMPLE, ARE THREE TYPES OF FEAR...

ONE-- FEAR OF MY UNKNOWN INTENTIONS!

TWO-- FEAR OF AN OBJECT INVESTED WITH ALMOST SUPERNATURAL POWER--THE GUN!

"AND THREE--THE SIMPLE, PRIMAL FEAR OF AN ABRUPT, LOUD NOISE!"

B-BLEEDING.

"EVEN AFTER A YEAR OF TRYING TO TEACH THE GOATS, I COULDNT BELIEVE THEIR SLOWNESS..."

"BUT CONSIDERING THE SWIFTNESS OF WHAT FOLLOWED THAT EPISODE, THE DEAN AND HIS FOUR TOADIES MUST HAVE CONVENED AT ONCE."

-- NO MORE THAN AN INCH FROM THE YOUNG WOMAN'S EYE.

OUTRAGEOUS CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR!

NOT ONLY THAT, BUT HE'S LEFT US WIDE OPEN TO A JUSTIFIABLE LAWSUIT.

THEN WE'RE UNANIMOUS?

WE HAVE NO CHOICE. JONATHAN CRANE IS HEREBY--

--DISMISSED? FOR NOTHING MORE THAN PERFORMING A SIMPLE BUT HIGHLY EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM DEMONSTRATION?"

VERY WELL... IF I AM PROFESSOR CRANE NO LONGER, THEN I MUST BECOME SOMETHING ELSE-- THE VERY ICON OF MY LIFELONG FEAR AND FRUSTRATION...

...THE VERY THING ALL THE BIG HANDSOME BULLIES HAVE FORCED ON ME-- THE THING I WAS CURSED AND DESTINED TO BE!

Crane's parents are both dead, leaving him with no past.

CRANE NO MORE--A FRIGHTENED BIRD NEVER AGAIN--BUT NOW THE SINISTER SCARECROW, MASTER OF FEAR!

Don't know how to find him, but when I do...

...I'll be ready.

LAST NIGHT:

"THERE IS NOTHING
THAT FEAR DOES NOT
MAKE MEN BELIEVE."
--Marquis de Vauvenargues

WE HAVE SEVEN
APPLICANTS FOR THE
POSITION VACATED
BY JONATHAN CR--

FEEEEE

THAT
NOISE...

GAS--COMING
IN THROUGH THE
AIR VENT... BUT
WHO--?

SCHRECK

THE SCARECROW--A
SYMBOL OF POVERTY AND
FEAR!

SINCE YOU INSIST
ON DEPRIVING ME OF
MY LIVELIHOOD AND
PREVENTING ME FROM
PASSING ON MY
HARD-WON KNOWLEDGE
OF FEAR...

...LET ME
TEACH YOU,
"GENTLEMEN,"
MY FAREWELL
LESSON.

EEEKAAAAAAH

AS SCHILLER SAID,
"THE DELIGHT OF REVENGE...
IS MURDER."

"AND SO MY PAST WAS
DONE... AND I NEEDED
A NEW JOB."

Here.

In the charred
rubble of Crane's
desk...

And Crane's predecessor--
Professor Auram Bramonity--
"fell" to his death from the
roof of Gotham University's
chemistry building.

Business Section C
TOO MANY
CHEM COS?

But what does
it mean...?

Until three other chemical
companies moved into
the area, Fontana Chemcorp
enjoyed a monopoly in
Gotham.

Now, with orders split
four ways, it's a simple
case of too many players
for a limited market
to bear...

...with one or more of the
competing companies
destined to go under--but
Crane never worked for
any of them.

So what's the
connection?

TONIGHT:

"EXTREME TERROR GIVES US BACK
THE GESTURES OF OUR CHILDHOOD."
--Malcolm de Chazal

SOMEONE WHO'S MADE A
STUDY OF YOUR FEAR, MR.
FONTANA... BEING DRIVEN OUT
OF BUSINESS AFTER ALL YOUR
HARD WORK BY UNSCRUPULOUS
COMPETITION MOVING INTO
GOTHAM... COMPETITORS I CAN
SCARE OFF FOR
YOU.



SEE IF YOU CAN LAUGH,
FONTANA...

N-NO! PLEASE-- IT'S GETTING
TOO SMALL... TOO TIGHT!

L-LET ME OUT
OF HERE!

...INDUCED BY A DILUTED
MIX OF MY FEAR GAS... BUT
SAY THE WORD, AND YOUR
RIVALS RECEIVE DOSES OF
FULL POTENCY.

EASY,
FONTANA, IT'S
JUST A TEMPORARY
HALLU^CINATION...

...WHEN THIS
ROOM STARTS
SHRINKING!

AS I
PROMISED,
FOOL!

--AND THE
BEGINNING, CRAW,
OF MY NEW AND
GAINFULLY
EMPLOYED
FUTURE...

IT... IT'S GOING
AWAY... R-ROOM
...GETTING BIGGER
AGAIN...

Y-YOU...
YOU'RE
H-HIRED.

"AND THERE YOU HAVE
IT. THE STORY OF MY
LIFE UP TO THIS VERY
NIGHT--"

...MARKED BY THE END OF
RAYMOND COWPER'S LIFE!

--SINGLE STALK OF STRAW, JUST LIKE THE FIRST ONE.

IT WAS ON THE NIGHT TABLE IN RAYMOND COWPER'S BEDROOM, NEXT TO HIS DEAD BODY.

YES--SCARED TO DEATH--JUST LIKE THE DEAN AND HIS FOUR REGENTS...

HEART ATTACK AGAIN?

AND WE'RE DEALING WITH ANOTHER PROMINENT VICTIM... SINCE RAYMOND COWPER WAS--

THE OWNER OF ALCHEMCORP.

Got to move fast with three potential victims remaining...

...make sure Crane has committed his last murder.

HOW IN BLAZES DID YOU KNOW TH--

EH--? GONE AGAIN?

NOW:

"FEAR GIVES SUDDEN
INSTINCTS OF SKILL."
--Samuel Taylor Coleridge

News of a competitor's
death travels fast...

Didn't take much to scare
Shaines, Fontana, and Banion
out of town for a week...

Add the deep, grating voice
of an anonymous phone
call and they couldn't
wait to pack.

Fontana seemed
especially terrified--
probably safe to
ignore his house...

And first or second,
sooner or later, Crane
will come here.

SNAKES,
BANION... YOUR
GREATEST
FEAR.

YOU SEE, I
MAKE A STUDY
OF MY VICTIMS...
THE BETTER TO
PREY ON THEIR
SPECIFIC
PHOBIAS...

AWAKEN, BANION... TO MY
WRITHING SACK OF COBRAS
AND--

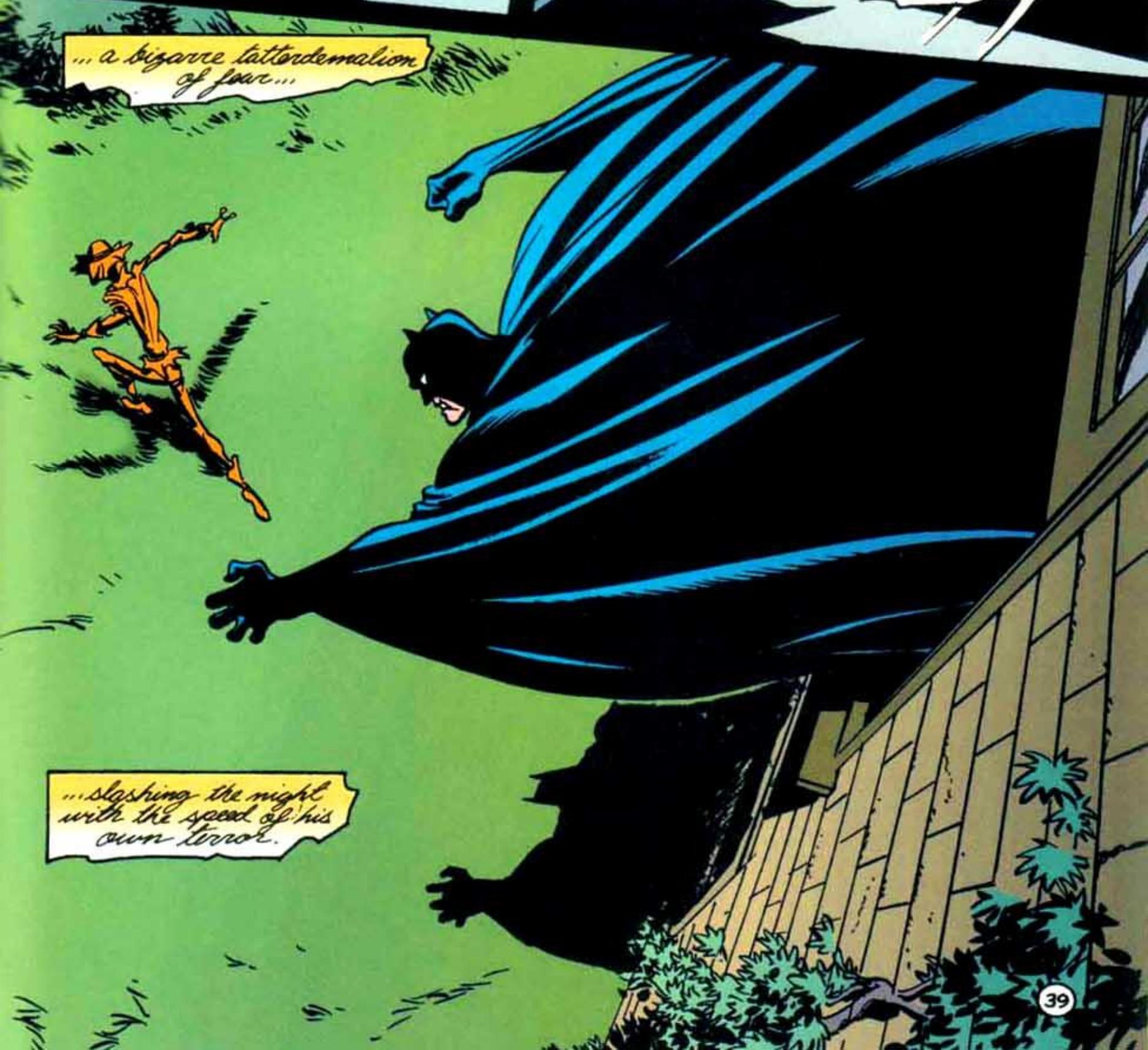
:HSSSSS:

WHA--?





...a bizarre tattered emblem
of fear...



...slashing the night
with the speed of his
own terror.

Those long legs
make him deceptively
fast...

Every time I gain on
him, he darts or melts
into the shadows, forcing
me to higher ground--

--and by the time I
pick him up again,
he's pulled farther
ahead, running me
ragged.

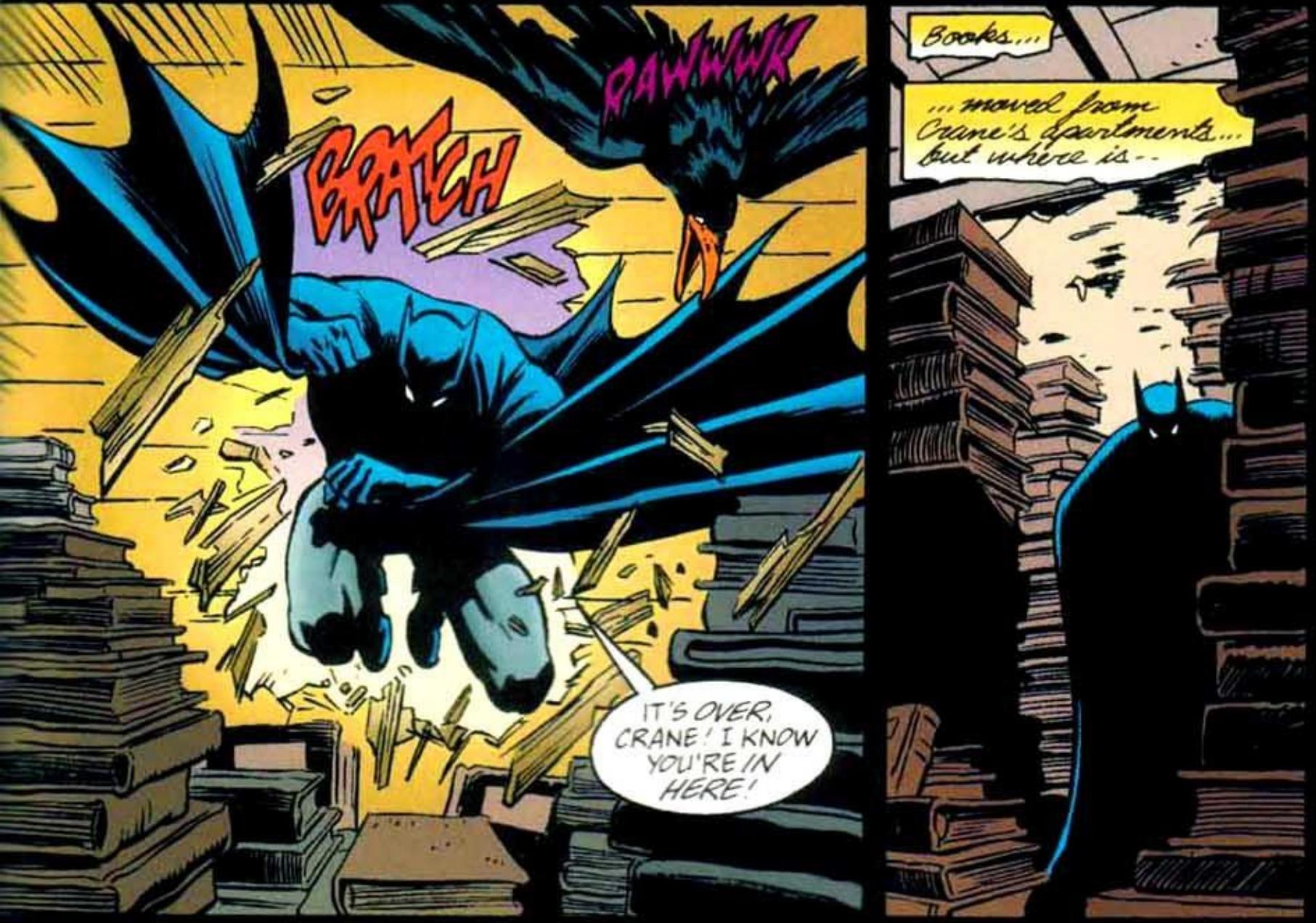
More than five miles now...
the outskirts of the city...
and I've lost him again.

Did he double back
after ducking into
that last alley or--

No...

There.

A cornfield.









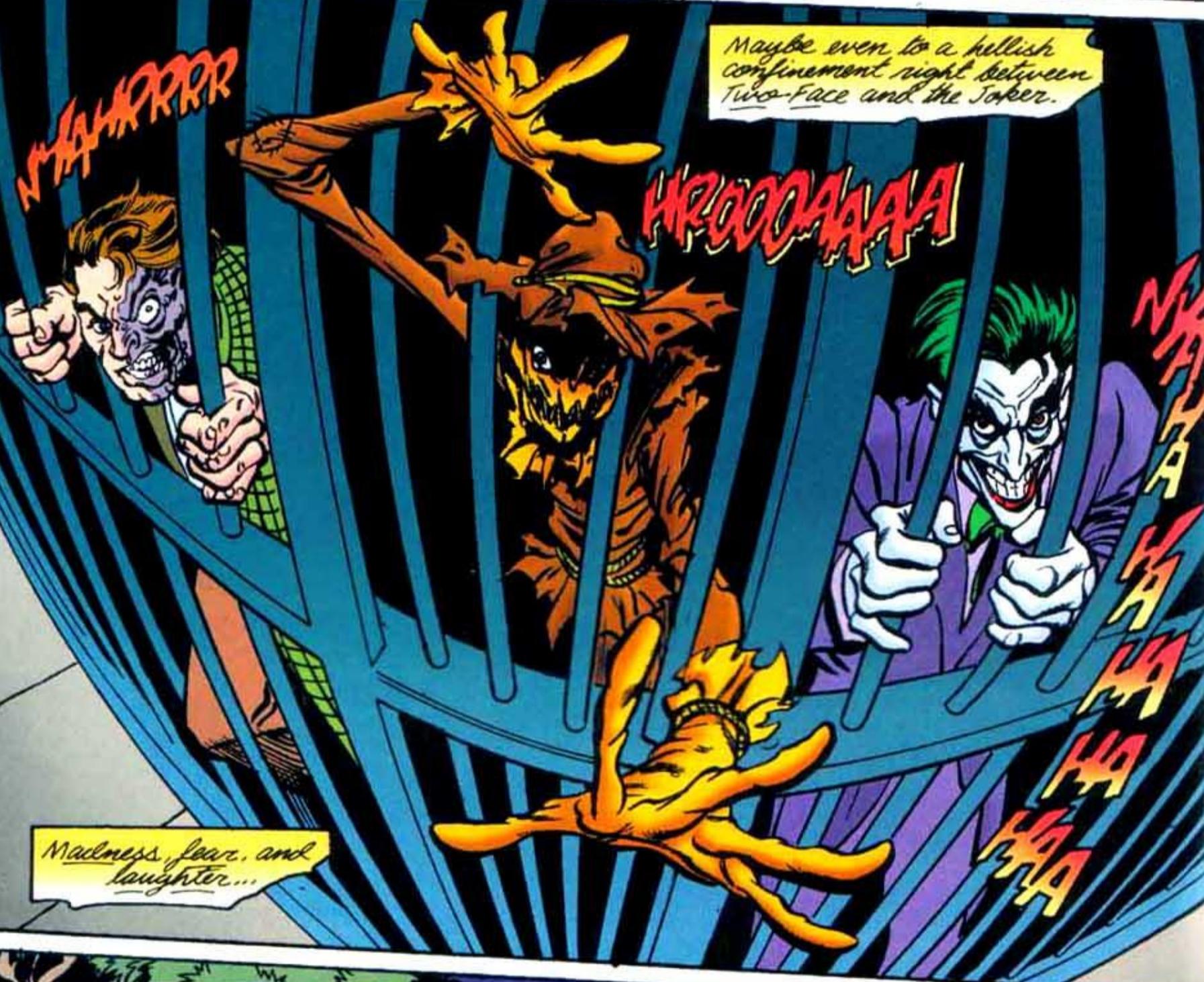


*...to a darkness he
can forever haunt...*

*...and hopefully
never escape.*

ARKHAM ASYLUM FOR THE INSANE

*Maybe even to a hellish
confinement right between
Two-Face and the Joker.*



*Arkham is shaping
up as quite a place...*

ARKHAM ASYLUM FOR THE INSANE

It scares me.

END