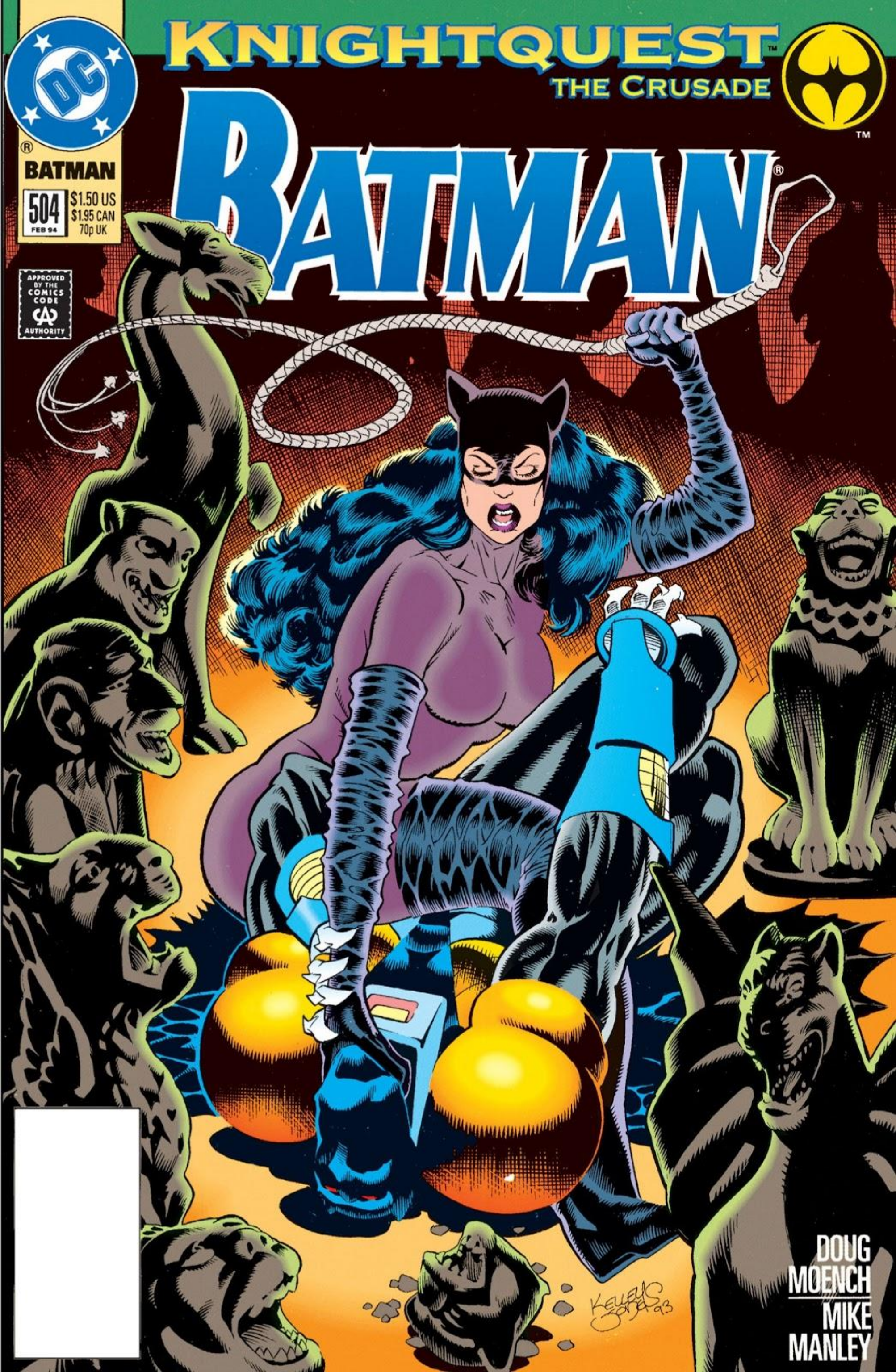
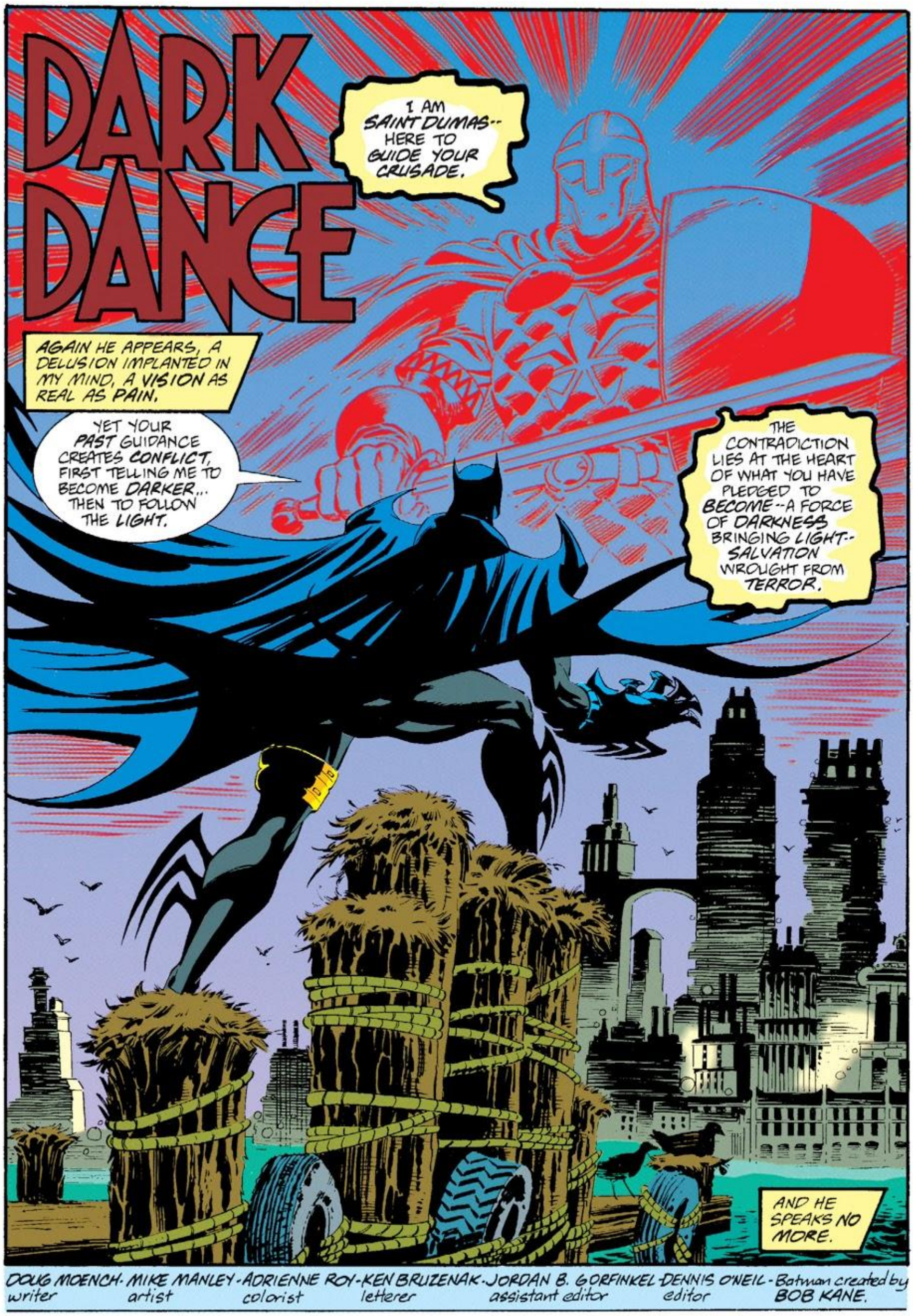
KNIGHTQUEST™ THE CRUSADE





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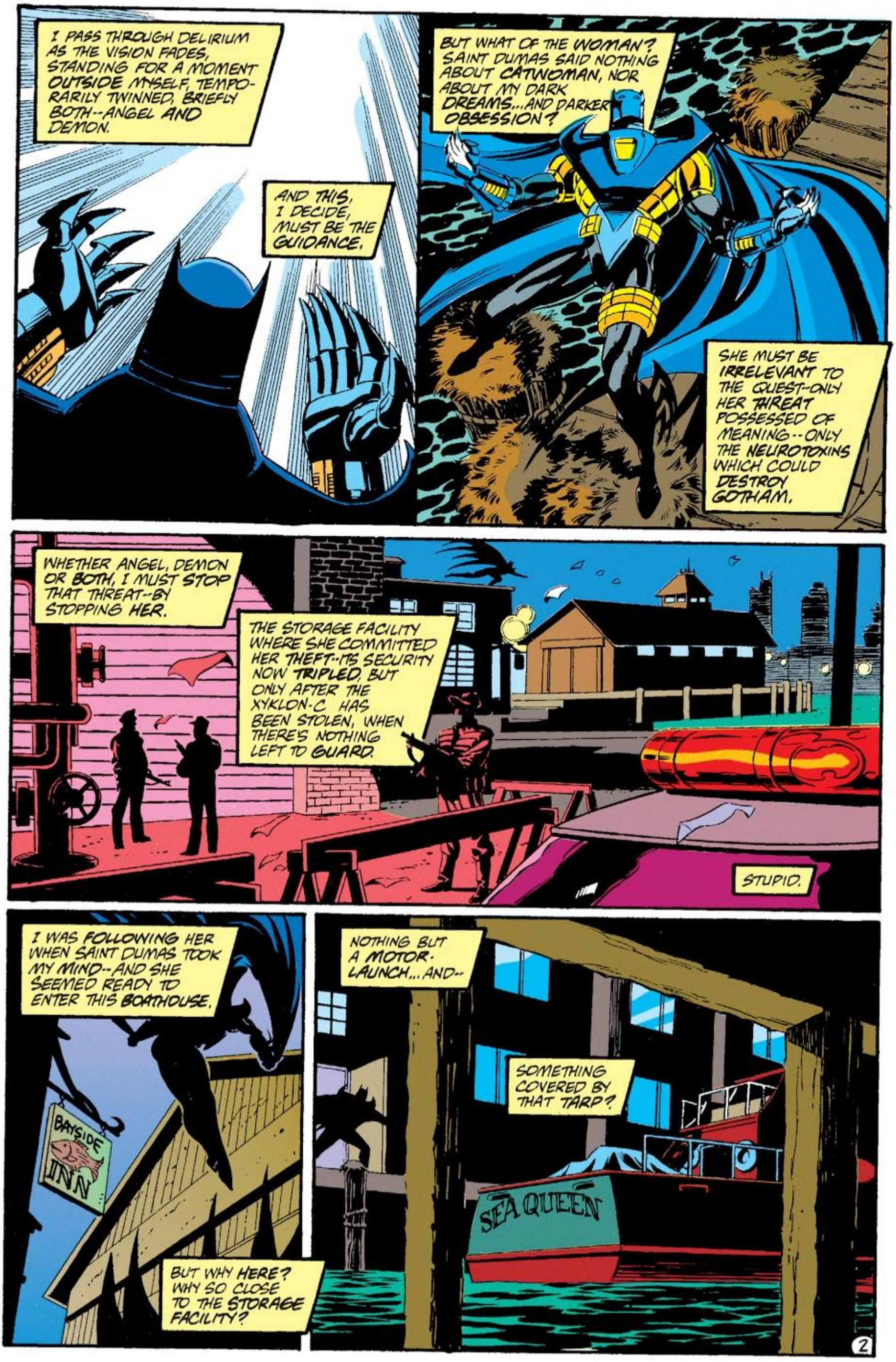
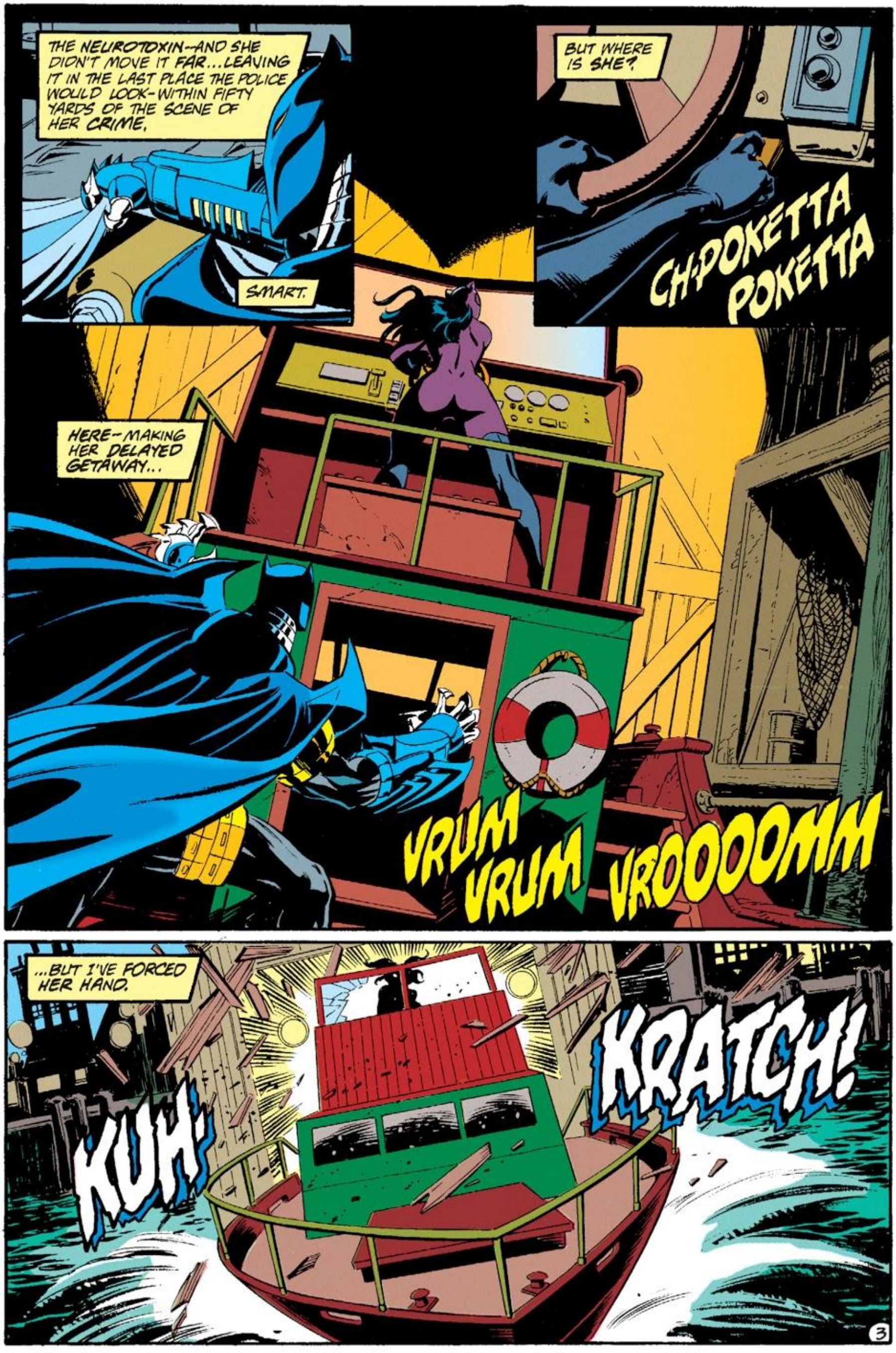

I PASS THROUGH DELIRIUM AS THE VISION FADES, STANDING FOR A MOMENT OUTSIDE MYSELF, TEMPORARILY TWINNED, BRIEFLY BOTH--ANGEL AND DEMON.
AND THIS, I DECIDE, MUST BE THE GUIDANCE.
BUT WHAT OF THE WOMAN? SAINT DUMAS SAID NOTHING ABOUT CATWOMAN, NOR ABOUT MY DARK DREAMS...AND DARKER OBSESSION?
SHE MUST BE IRRELEVANT TO THE QUEST--ONLY HER THREAT POSSESSED OF MEANING--ONLY THE NEUROTOXINS WHICH COULD DESTROY GOTHAM.
WHETHER ANGEL, DEMON OR BOTH, I MUST STOP THAT THREAT--BY STOPPING HER.
THE STORAGE FACILITY WHERE SHE COMMITTED HER THEFT--ITS SECURITY NOW TRIPLED, BUT ONLY AFTER THE XYKLON-C HAS BEEN STOLEN, WHEN THERE'S NOTHING LEFT TO GUARD.
STUPID.
I WAS FOLLOWING HER WHEN SAINT DUMAS TOOK MY MIND--AND SHE SEEMED READY TO ENTER THIS BOATHOUSE.
BAYSIDE INN
BUT WHY HERE? WHY SO CLOSE TO THE STORAGE FACILITY?
NOTHING BUT A MOTOR-LAUNCH...AND--
SOMETHING COVERED BY THAT TARP?
SEA QUEEN
2


THE NEUROTOXIN--AND SHE DIDN'T MOVE IT FAR...LEAVING IT IN THE LAST PLACE THE POLICE WOULD LOOK-WITHIN FIFTY YARDS OF THE SCENE OF HER CRIME.
SMART.
BUT WHERE IS SHE?
CH-POKETTA POKETTA
HERE-MAKING HER DELAYED GETAWAY...
VRUM VRUM
VROOOOMM
...BUT I'VE FORCED HER HAND.
KUH!
KRATCH!
3

SHE CUTS THE BOAT HARD, TRYING TO SHAKE ME OFF.
IT WON'T WORK-- BUT SHE'S MAGNIFICENT.
I MOVE TOWARD HER, KEEPING MY EYES ON HER HEAD AND HANDS...
...IGNORING THE TAUT SLEEKNESS OF HER BACK.
SHE ENTERS THE RIVER, SLASHING THE BOAT DEEPER INTO THE HEART OF THE CITY.
YOU'RE TAKING THE NERVE GAS TO YOUR TERRORIST BUYERS...
I'M GETTING RID OF IT--KEEPING IT OUT OF THE WRONG HANDS--
SHE KNOWS I'M CLOSE ENOUGH TO STRIKE NOW-- BUT DOESN'T KNOW I WON'T, AS LONG AS SHE'S STILL CUTTING THE WHEEL.
--OUT OF ALL HANDS!
SHE RELEASES IT, TURNING TO DEFEND HERSELF.
NOW.
4

SHUMP
A GOOD KICK--
--BUT NOT ENOUGH TO STOP ME...

I SLAM DOWN, DRIVING HER INTO THE WHEEL.
IT SPINS...
WUMP

SEA QUEEN
...AND THE BOAT SLUE SHARPLY TOWARD THE PIER.

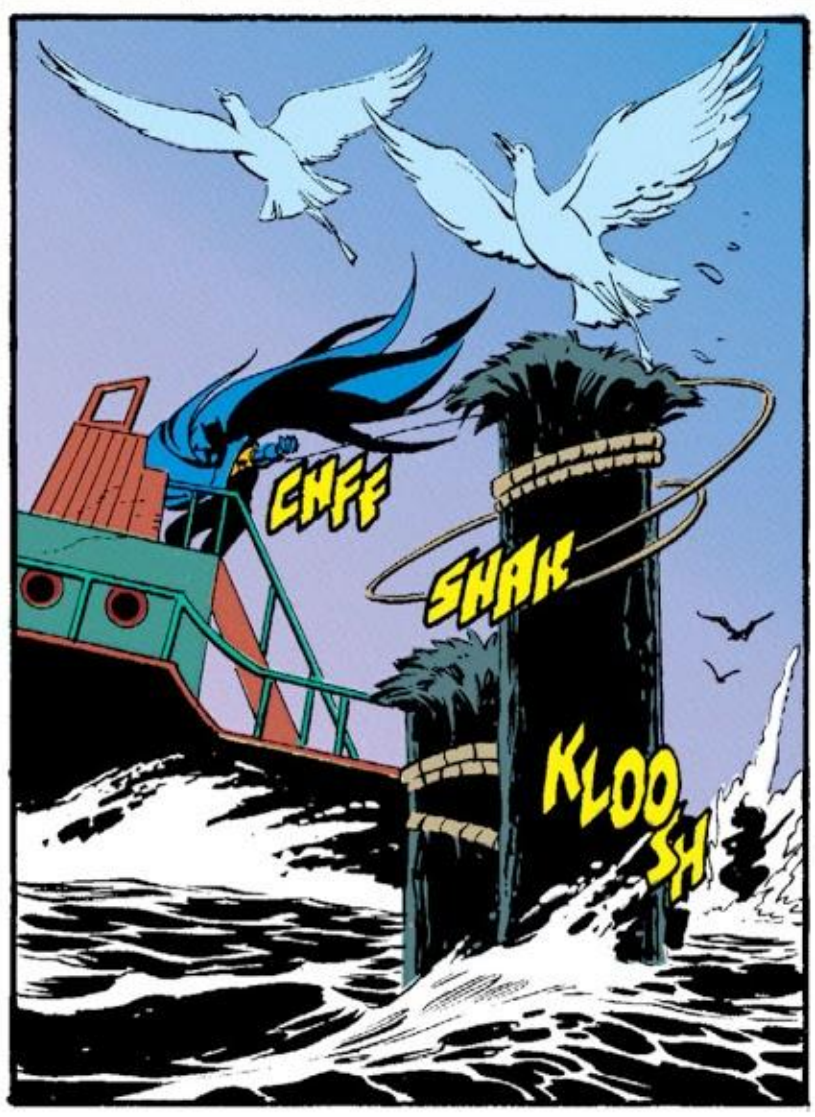
WE'RE GOING TO CRASH.
YOU AND I ALREADY HAVE.
BUT NEITHER ONE OF US WILL LET GO...

...UNTIL--
WUNK
5

...SHE CATCHES ME BY SURPRISE,

...AND NOW YOU CAN CRASH...

...WITHOUT ME.

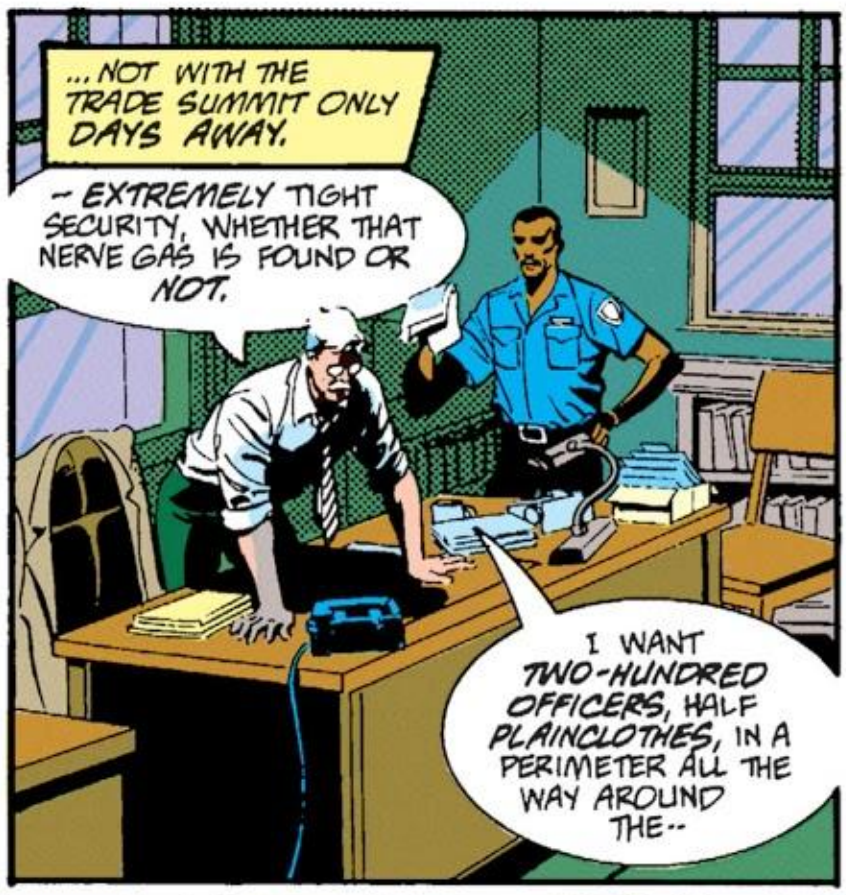

CHFF
SHAK
KLOO
SH

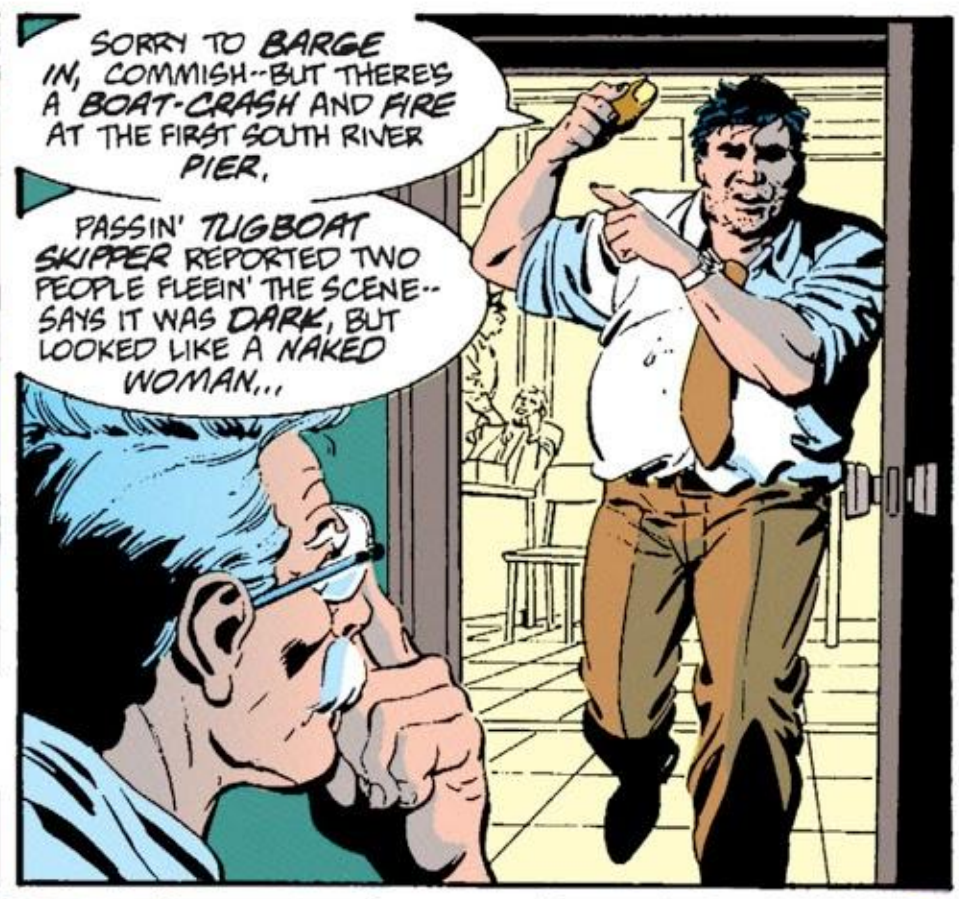
SHRRRRRRR
6

NO FISHING
KRASHWHOOM

SHE'S GOT THE NERVE GAS-- AND SHE'S FREE.
BUT WHERE DID SHE--

THERE.
AND I CAN'T LOSE HER-- NOT NOW...
7


...NOT WITH THE TRADE SUMMIT ONLY DAYS AWAY.
- EXTREMELY TIGHT SECURITY, WHETHER THAT NERVE GAS IS FOUND OR NOT.
I WANT TWO-HUNDRED OFFICERS, HALF PLAINCLOTHES, IN A PERIMETER ALL THE WAY AROUND THE--


SORRY TO BARGE IN, COMMISH--BUT THERE'S A BOAT-CRASH AND FIRE AT THE FIRST SOUTH RIVER PIER.
PASSIN' TUGBOAT SKIPPER REPORTED TWO PEOPLE FLEEIN' THE SCENE-- SAYS IT WAS DARK, BUT LOOKED LIKE A NAKED WOMAN...

...AN' THE OTHER HAD A CAPE.
LET'S ROLL, SERGEANT BULLOCK.
MONTOYA'S ALREADY BRINGIN' A CAR 'ROUND FRONT.

THE QUEST IS TWOFOLD.
SPALDING DUTCHMAN
AT BOOKSTORES NOW!
ON THE SURFACE, GOTHAM MUST BE PROTECTED.
BUT THE REAL CRUSADE IS INTERNAL...

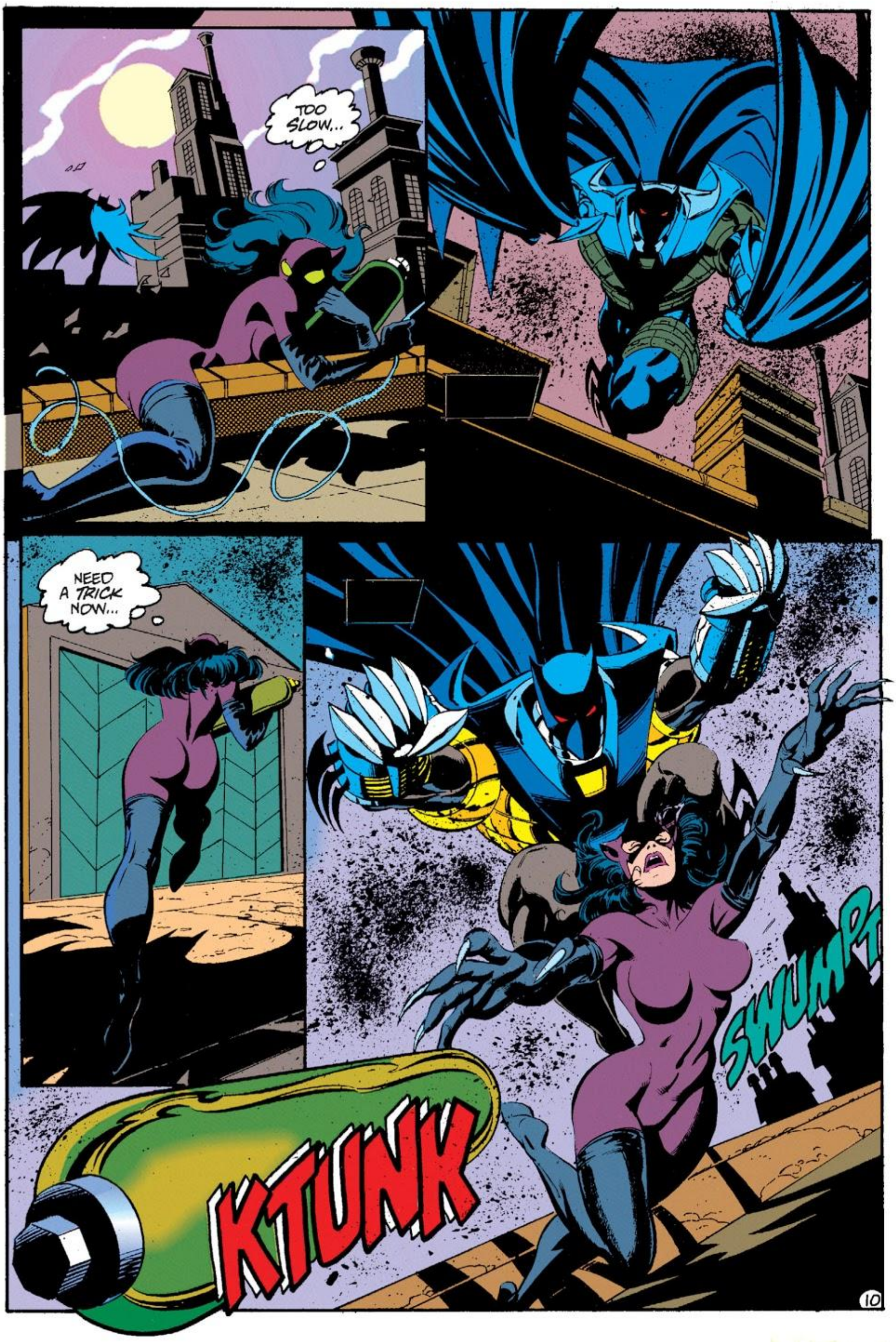
GOT TO OVERCOME MY DANGEROUS OBSESSION WITH CATWOMAN--FORGET HER FACE AND FORM--AND TAKE HER DOWN.
PROVE MYSELF AS GOOD AS THE FIRST BATMAN.
NO--EVEN BETTER THAN HIM.
8

CANISTER'S WEIGHING ME DOWN.
HE'S GAINING.
GOT TO FIND A WAY TO LOSE HIM...
THERE-- SKYLIGHT ON THE TUSCANY BUILDING.
ARTISAN'S TUSCANY OF GOTHAM
SHE'S HEADING FOR THAT GARGOYLE BUILDING-- PROBABLY HOPES TO LOSE ME INSIDE--BUT I'VE ALREADY CLOSED ENOUGH DISTANCE TO CUT HER OFF.

TUGBOAT SKIPPER SAID THE TWO FIGURES WERE "FLEEIN" NORTH, COMMISH--YOU WANT MONTOYA TO KEEP CRUISIN' IN THAT DIRECTION?
I DON'T HAVE A BETTER SUGGESTION, SERGEANT BULLOCK, AND THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO TO HELP HERE.

YOU THINK BATMAN'S RIGHT ABOUT CATWOMAN, COMMISH?
SURE SOUNDS LIKE IT'S HER HE'S CHASING.
YEAH, BUT IT STILL DON'T RING TRUE-- BAD AS SHE IS-- FOR HER TO BE MIXED UP IN TERRORISM.

A LOT OF THINGS AREN'T RINGING TRUE LATELY--AS IF GOTHAM'S BEEN TURNED UPSIDE-DOWN EVER SINCE BANE-- AND IF THE BATMAN CAN CHANGE THE WAY HE HAS, MAYBE CATWOMAN HAS, TOO.
WELL, IF WE'RE LUCKY TONIGHT, MAYBE WE'LL FIND OUT.
9


TOO SLOW...
NEED A TRICK NOW...
KTUNK
SWUMP!
10

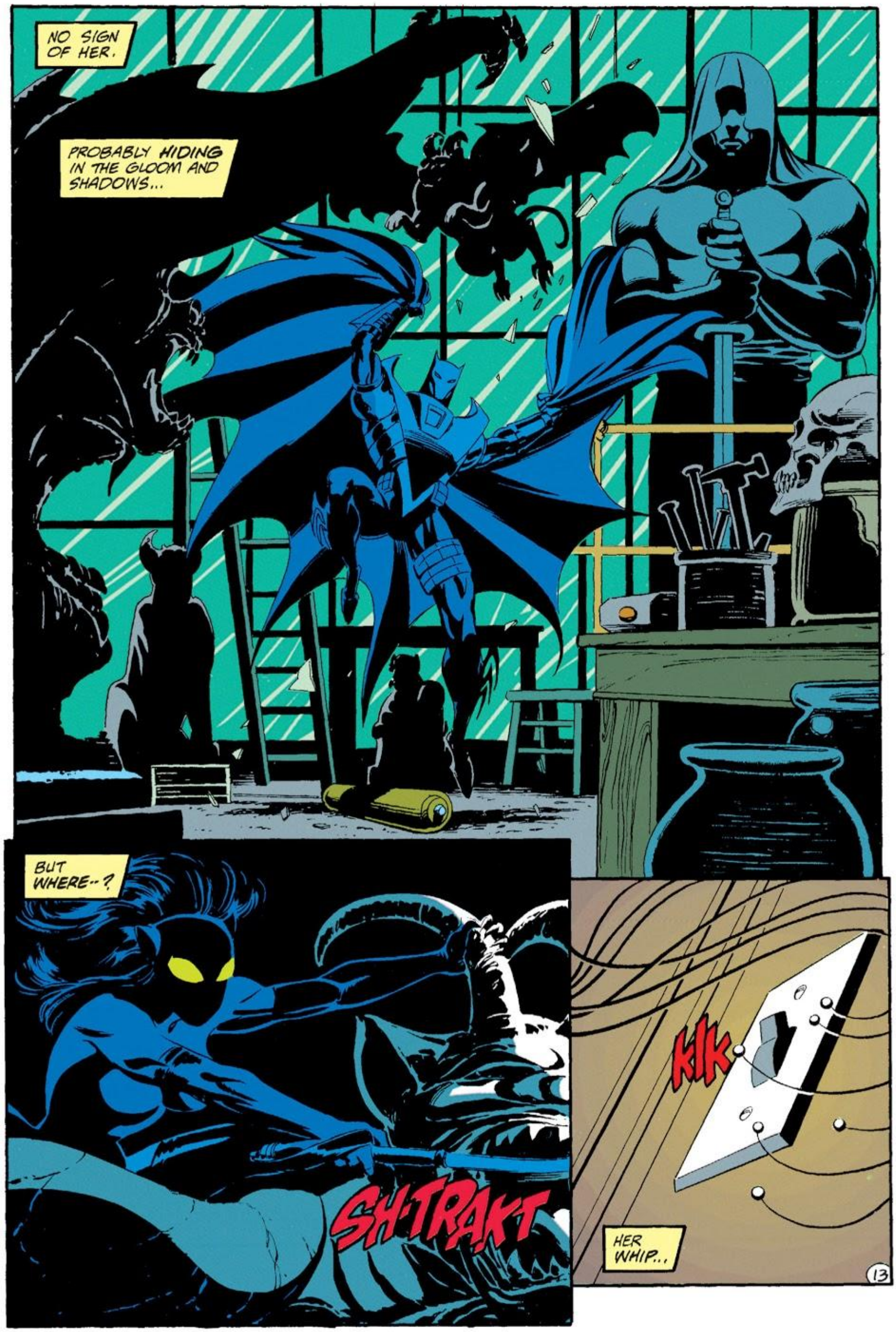
SHEK
TUP
SKARKT
SWFFFFF
:NNFFF:
FWPT
BREESH
TSH
KSH
KTANKT
PSH

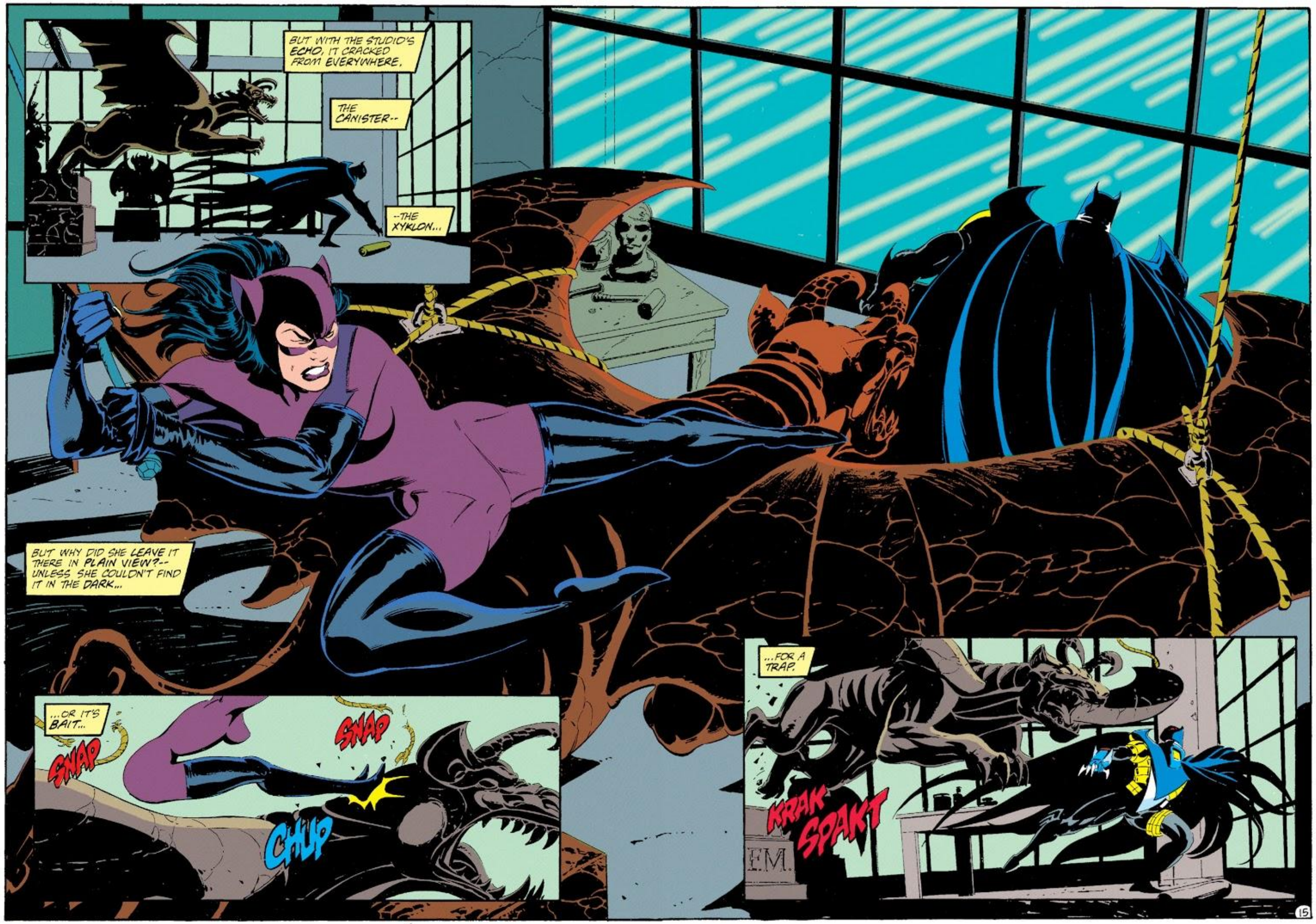
SKRRRUNKRRRRRRRUNKRRRRUNK

SHE'S TRYING TO CATCH ME BY SURPRISE AGAIN.
BUT NOT THIS--

NO--SHE KNEW I'D DUCK.
SHE WAS COUNTING ON IT.
SHE'S SUPERB.

BUT SHE'S FINISHED.
KRK
SPEK
KRSHH
12


NO SIGN OF HER.
PROBABLY HIDING IN THE GLOOM AND SHADOWS...
BUT WHERE--?
SH-TRAKT
KIK
HER WHIP...
13


BUT WITH THE STUDIO'S ECHO, IT CRACKED FROM EVERYWHERE.
THE CANISTER--
--THE XYKLON...
BUT WHY DID SHE LEAVE IT THERE IN PLAIN VIEW?-- UNLESS SHE COULDN'T FIND IT IN THE DARK...
...OR IT'S BAIT...
SNAP
SNAP
CHUP
...FOR A TRAP.
KRAK SPAKT
15

CHRASH

HWUKK

CHUPT
16

LOOKS LIKE WE LOST 'EM, COMMISH...

MONTOYA COULD CRUISE TILL DAWN AND WE'D PROB'LY NEVER--

SKRASHOOOOM
BROKT

SKREEEETCH
KRUMP

WHAT THE--?!
GARGOYLE.
17

LIKE I WAS SAYIN', COMMISH, MONTOYA KNOWS HOW TO CRUISE...
...AND SOMETHIN' BIG, WEIRD AN HEADLESS TELLS ME WE JUST GOT LUCKY.

GET ON THE RADIO, SERGEANT, AND CALL IN A TACTICAL SQUAD.
YEAH... MAYBE EVEN SOME AIR SUPPORT.

WE FACE EACH OTHER FROM BEHIND OUR MASKS...
YOUR MOVE.
YOU LEAD-- I'LL FOLLOW.
...READY TO BEGIN A DARK DANCE OF VIOLENCE FOR A MUTE AUDIENCE OF MONSTERS.

SHE STRIKES AND I COUNTER.
SHUFT
TUD
WE BOTH DODGE BLOWS THAT ARE MERELY GLANCING.
18

WE PASS, PIVOT, AND LEAP...
...EACH REALIZING, TOO LATE--
--ALREADY LAUNCHED IN THE AIR--THAT THE OTHER HAS MIRRORED THE MOVE.
WE IMPROVISE...
THAP
SHAK
...NEITHER EFFECTIVELY.
NEW STEPS ARE CALLED FOR...
...BUT I STILL CAN'T BRING MYSELF TO USE BLADES ON HER.
SHE'D PROBABLY DODGE THEM ANYWAY...
SWFFFFFFF
...HER REFLEXES EVERY BIT THE EQUAL OF MINE.
SHFFFFFFF
19

NEITHER OF US WILL END THIS WITHOUT GOING ALL-OUT--FOR THE KILL.
TUMP
YOU'RE THE NIGHT HERSELF--AND A DEVIL FOR MAKING ME WANT YOU!
WUPT
AND YOU'RE A FOOL FOR THINKING YOU CAN TAKE ME!
SKREKT
YOU WILL GO DOWN!
NEVER--NOT FOR YOU!
STUP
BUT I CAN'T GO FOR THE KILL--AND SHE DOESN'T.
BUT I DID EXPECT BETTER MOVES.
NO, YOU DIDN'T--
--AND NOR DID I.
SO WE CROUCH IN STALEMATE, NEITHER WILLING TO SUBMIT, BOTH PREPARED TO DANCE TILL DAWN...
...OR UNTIL THE DANCE ENDS.
WHAT--?
SEARCHLIGHT.
20

POLICE
THIS IS THE POLICE! HALT WHAT YOURE DOING-- AND PUT YOUR HANDS BEHIND YOUR HEADS!

NOW LOOK WHAT YOUR INTERFERENCE HAS DONE!
I DIDN'T LAUNCH THAT STONE BEAST'S MAIDEN FLIGHT! IF YOU'D--

FREEZE!
SWAT
BRATCH
BWAK

YOU COULDN'T BELIEVE CATWOMAN WAS INVOLVED IN THE NERVE-GAS THEFT, COMMISSIONER.
YOU NEEDED PROOF...

BENZO
HAZARDOUS
...AND THERE'S THE EVIDENCE-- RIGHT AT YOUR FEET.
21

I CAN'T HAVE HER. I COULDN'T TAKE HER DOWN. I LEAVE HER.
USE THE EVIDENCE TO REMOVE HER FROM THE NIGHT...
NO! HOLD YOUR FIRE!
FOR GOOD.
SHE DESERVES WHATEVER NIGHTMARE SHE GETS... BECAUSE SHE'LL STILL HAUNT MY DREAMS.
NEVER WOULDA BELIEVED IT- THE CATWOMAN TURNED TERRORIST...
FOOLS!
ALL OF YOU.
CONCLUDED IN CATWOMAN #7!