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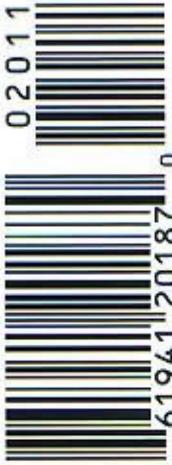
# BATMAN®

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MOENCH  
GIARRANO

LEGENDS OF THE  
DEAD EARTH

# FABLES OF THE BATMAN

## LEGENDS OF THE DEAD EARTH

Earth is dead.

Those who once might have called it home are long scattered to the endless stars. But in that scattering, on a thousand different worlds, by a thousand different ways...

Earth's greatest legends still live on.

"KNOW THAT IN THE NAKED, DOMELESS CITY OF OLD GOTHAM, BEFORE THE EARTH DIED, A LEGEND HELD SWAY IN A VAST SKY ABOVE SHADOWED STREETS..."

"...AND THE LEGEND WAS A DARK BAT, FIERCE AND VIGILANT, WHO PREYED NIGHTLY ON CRIME AND EVIL."

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"KNOW, TOO, THAT THIS LEGENDARY GUARDIAN OF THE NIGHT CONDUCTED HIS ACTIVITIES FROM A HIGH HAUNT WHICH REACHED FAR ABOVE OLD GOTHAM'S TALLEST TOWER..."

YOU CAN TURN OFF THE BEACON, WARDEN -- I'VE STOPPED THE OGRE.

HERE HE COMES!

GOTHAM CRIME CONTROL

"AND IT WAS WITHIN THIS CAVERNOUS HAUNT THAT THE BAT-MAN WOULD GATHER HIS VARIOUS ASSISTANTS..."

"THEN THERE WAS THE BAT-MAN'S YOUNGER PARTNER IN PERIL -- DARBIRD.

AND I JUST RETURNED WITH HENCHMAN, BAT-MAN -- SEIZED BEFORE HE COULD KILL NINE HELPLESS VICTIMS.

GOOD WORK, DARBIRD -- AND EVEN BETTER TIMING, WHICH SAVES ALFRED A DESCENT.

"FINALLY, THERE WAS ALFRED THE GREAT, FAITHFUL ATTENDANT TO ALL."

TWO MORE, ALFRED, FOR CONSIGNMENT TO THE NETHER REALM.

IT SHALL BE MY DISTINCT PLEASURE, SIR.

"CRIME WAS SHOCKING AND SUDDEN IN OLD GOTHAM..."

I SHALL RETURN FORTHWITH, SIRS.



"... BUT ITS PUNISHMENT WAS SWIFTER BY FAR."

ANYTHING ELSE, WARDEN?

WELL, THE MAD JESTER IS STILL ON THE LOOSE...

WE'LL GET HIM.



"DOWN, DOWN, DOWN FROM THE HIGH HAUNT OF THE BAT..."

"... DOWN THROUGH THE ENTIRE LENGTH OF THE MIGHTY CRIME CONTROL MOUNTAIN..."

"... ALL THE WAY DOWN TO THE UNDERWORLD CALLED ARKHAM."

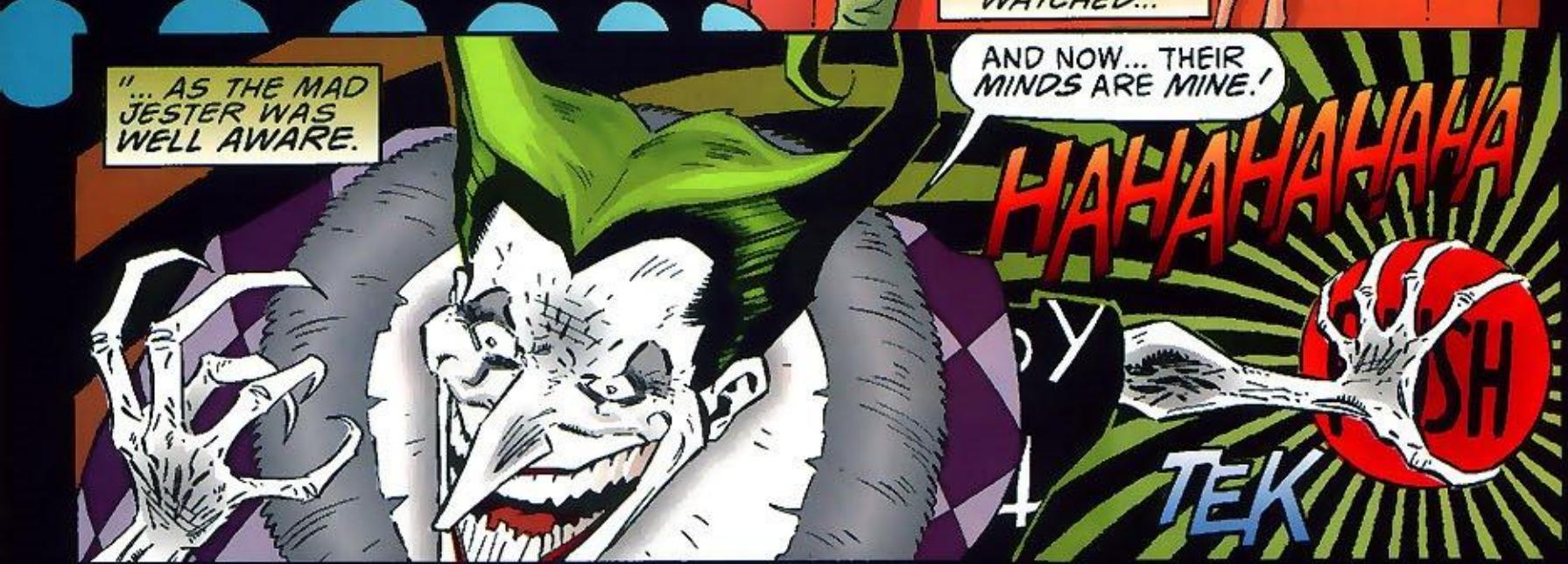
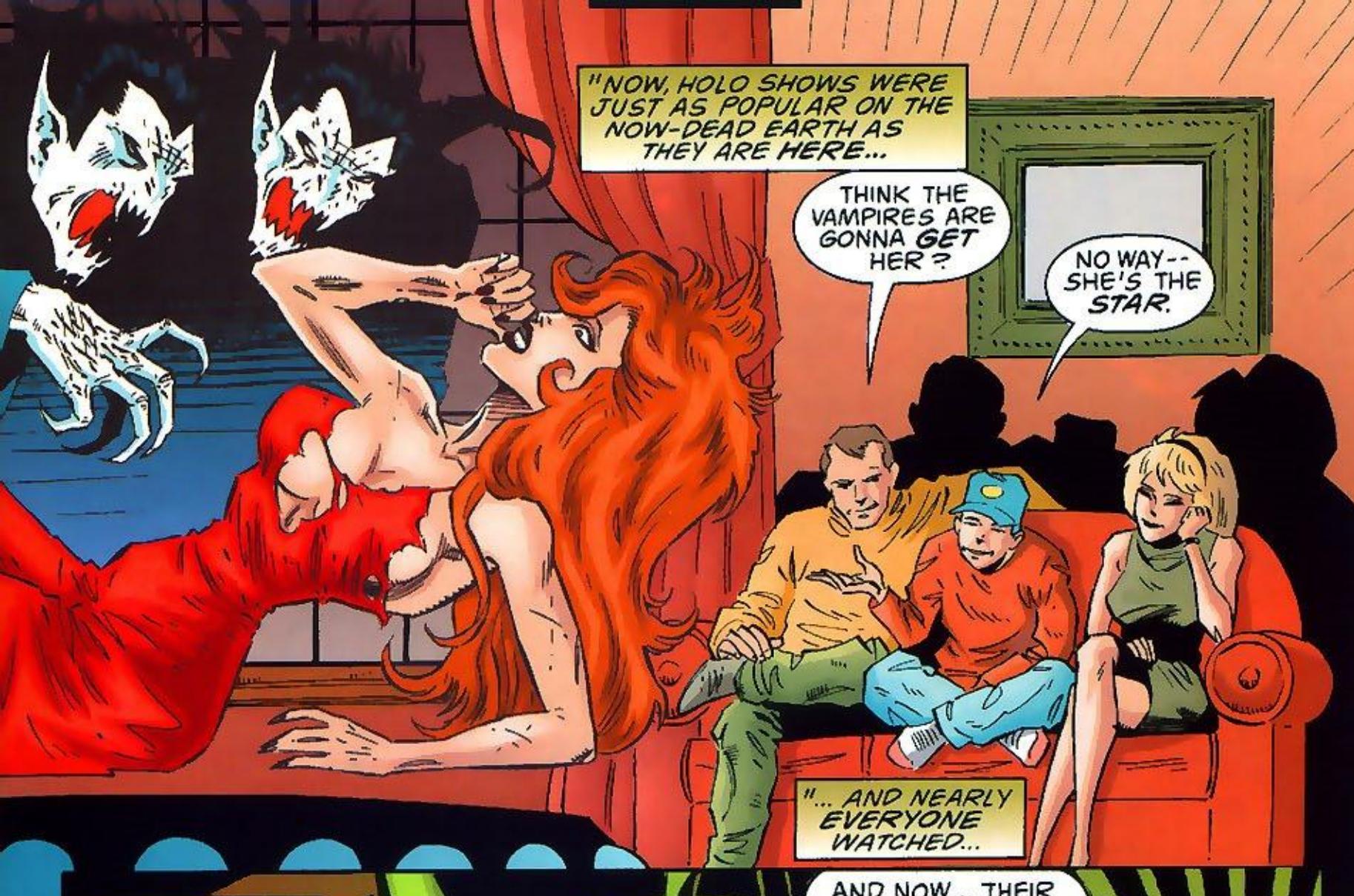


LAST STOP, WICKED ONES!

ENJOY YOUR STAYS IN HELL!







"THE ALTERED TRANSMISSION SWIFTLY WORKED ITS MAGIC, AND EVERY HOLO WATCHER IN THE ENTIRE CITY ENTERED A COLLECTIVE AND CONTROLLED TRANCE..."

STARE DEEPLY INTO OUR EYES...

SURRENDER ALL THOUGHT...

LET YOUR MINDS DRIFT...



NOW... LAUGH!

"...OF INSANE JESTER-LIKE HYSTERIA.



"WITH MUCH OF THE CITY THUS HELPLESS, THE MAD JESTER'S MANY HENCHMEN HAD MERELY TO FOLLOW THE TELLTALE SOUNDS OF RAUCOUS LAUGHTER..."

HA HAHA HAAA

HERE'S  
ANOTHER  
HOUSE,  
heh, heh.  
heh.

"... STRAIGHT  
TO RIPE  
PLUCKINGS.

INDEED...

HE WHO  
LAUGHS  
LAST--

--PROBABLY  
DIED  
LAUGHING.

HAHAHA!  
GO AHEAD--  
TAKE WHATEVER  
YOU WANT!  
HEE HEE  
HYAHHAHA!

HO  
HO HA  
HA HEE!  
YOU GUYS  
KILL ME!  
HYEE HA  
HA H--

ZEET  
ZEET  
ZEET

"AND THE HELLISH HILARITY RESUMED BACK AT  
THE MAD JESTER'S SECRET HIDEOUT AS THE  
PLENTIFUL PLUNDER PILED UP..."

MORE  
MONEY!

MONEY, MONEY,  
MONEY!!!

HAHAHA

"BUT KNOW THAT THE EARS  
OF BAT AND BIRD ARE  
KEENER BY FAR THAN  
THOSE OF JOKING  
LOOTERS..."

HA HAHAHAA

"... AND OLD GOTHAM'S PREDATORY  
PAIR ALSO FOLLOWED THE SOUND  
OF HELPLESS LAUGHTER...

"IN THIS MANNER, YOU SEE,  
DID THE BAT-MAN AND  
DARKBIRD SUCCEED IN  
LOCATING SOME OF THE  
MAD JESTER'S HENCHMEN..."

"...WHOM THEY FOLLOWED, IN TURN,  
STRAIGHT TO THE SECRET LAIR  
OF THE INSANE JESTER HIMSELF."

MORE MONEY, MY  
LAUGHING LOOTERS?  
ADD IT TO THE PILE  
FOR LATER  
COUNTING!

HERE  
THEY COME,  
DARKBIRD.

BUT RIGHT NOW, YOU'RE  
JUST IN TIME FOR MY  
FAVORITE COMEDY...

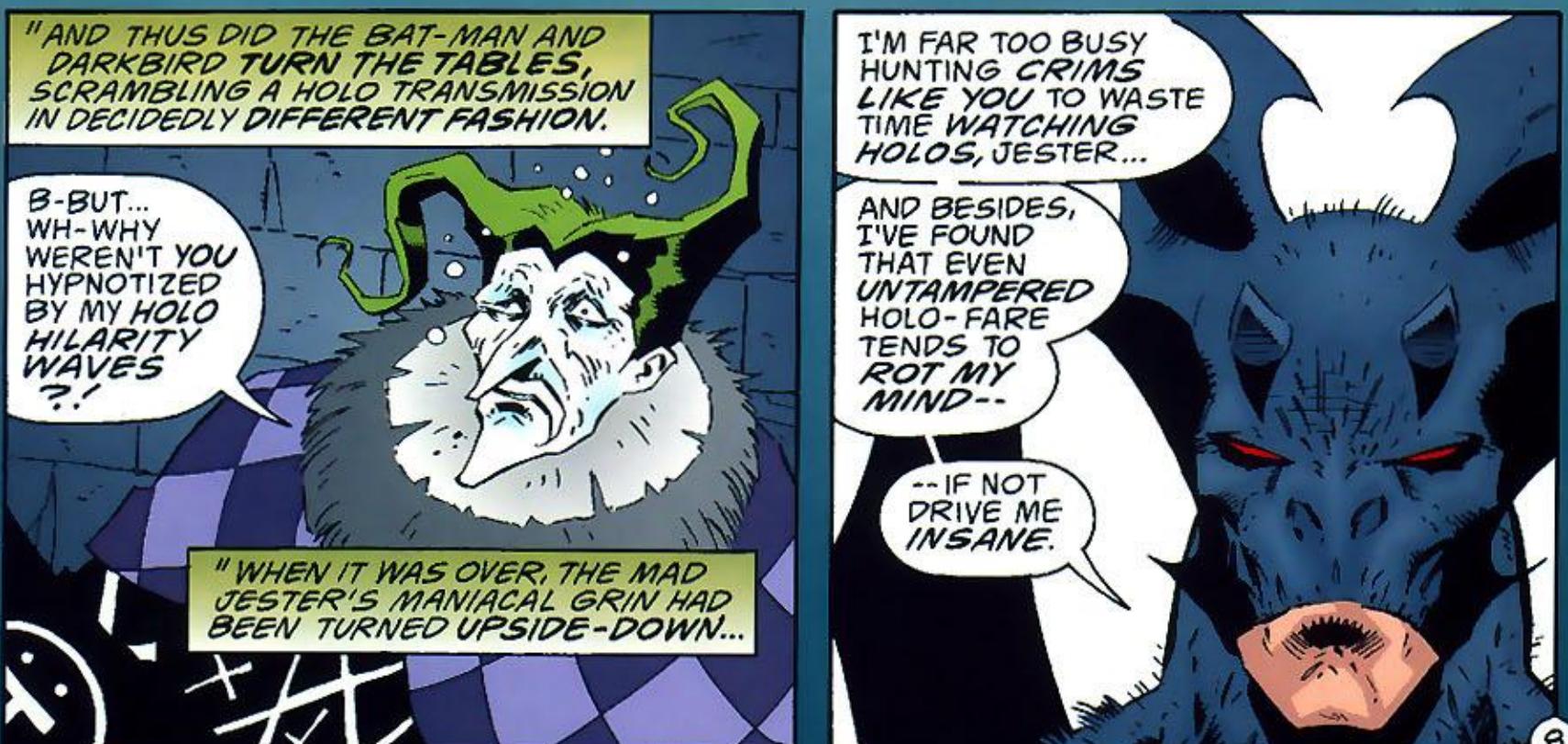
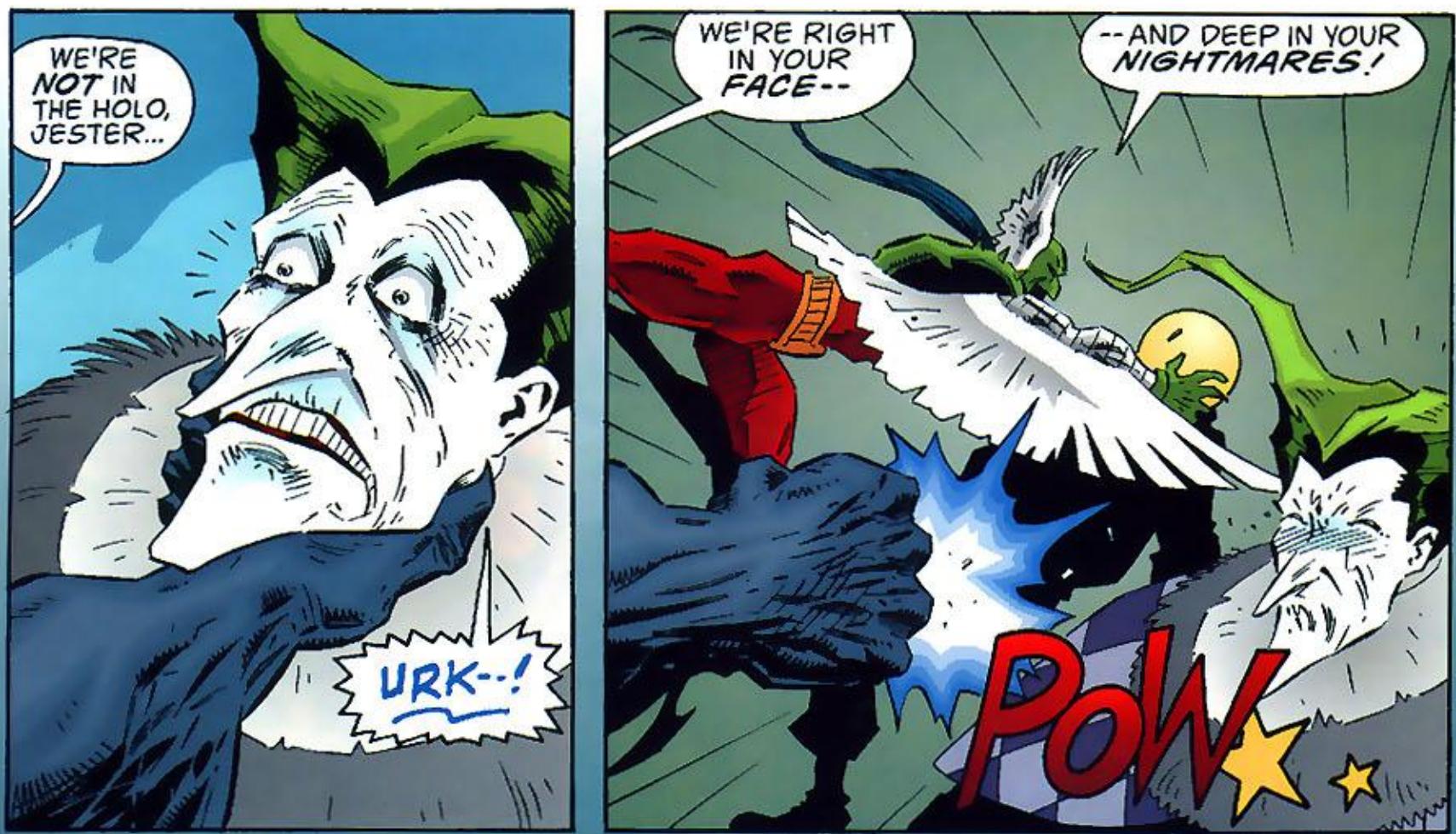
COME, COME,  
BOYS-- TO  
THE HOLO-  
DEN!

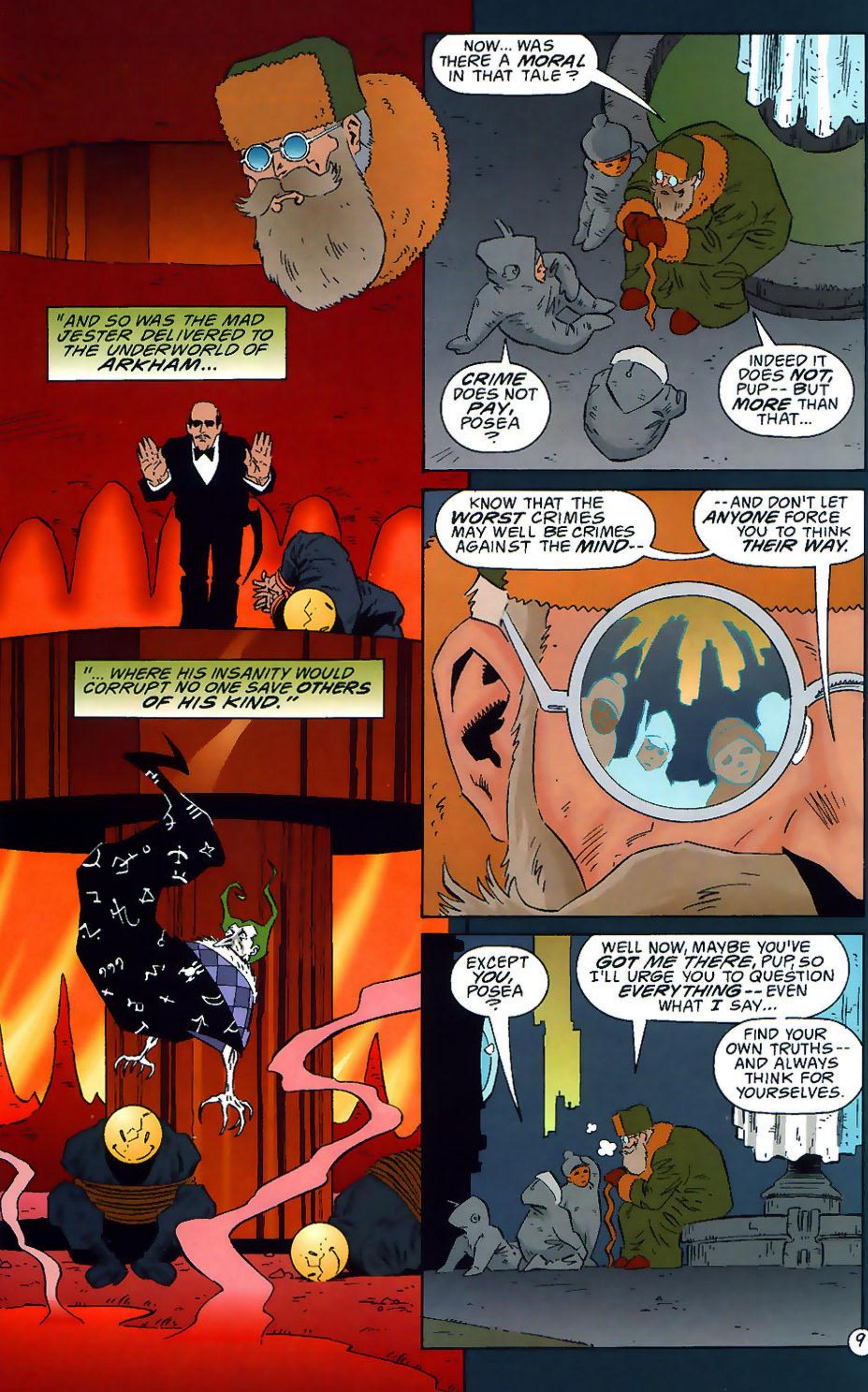
COME ON, DARKBIRD--  
TIME TO SPOIL  
THE JOKE.

RIGHT, BAT-MAN--  
WITH SOME WELL-DESERVED  
PUNCH LINES OF  
OUR OWN.

EH--?!

WHAT'S THE  
MEANING OF  
THIS? WHAT'S  
HAPPENED TO  
MY FAVORITE  
COMEDY--  
?!





TELL US  
ANOTHER  
TALE, POSEA...  
PLEASE?

WELL NOW, SINCE  
THERE'S TIME FOR  
ONE MORE BEFORE  
CURFEW... HAVE I  
RELATED THE TALE  
OF CAT-FEM?

NO--  
TELL  
US, POSEA,  
TELL  
US!

"KNOW THAT SELINA KANE WAS ONE  
OF THE SCIENTISTS WHO FIRST  
SOLVED THE GENETIC CODE  
BACK ON THE NOW-DEAD EARTH...

"NOW, THE MIXING OF BEAST AND  
HUMAN GENES WAS QUICKLY  
AND STRICTLY FORBIDDEN,  
BUT SELINA SIMPLY COULD  
NOT RESIST.

"UNABLE TO OVERCOME HER  
CURIOSITY, SHE USED HER-  
SELF AS A SUBJECT...

"...AND, HAVING INJECTED HER  
HUMAN BODY WITH THE FELINE  
DNA OF A LYNX, SHE BECAME--

"...AND WHO PIONEERED  
IN THE NEW PROCESS  
OF 'GENETRIX'--  
THE ARTIFICIAL CREATION  
OF NEWBEASTS.

MIAOWWW

CAT-FEM.

"SELINA'S RECOMBINED AND MERGED DNA RESULTED IN TWO SIDE EFFECTS, MAKING HER AS LITHE AND GRACEFUL AS THE FELINES SHE NOW RESEMBLED--

--EVEN AS SHE SUCCUMBED TO THE PREDATORY INSTINCTS OF A CAT.

"CRIME PAID EVERY NIGHT FOR MONTHS--

"BUT THEN CAME THE NIGHT OF CAT-FEM'S BOLDEST CRIME OF ALL, WHEN SHE SET HER EYES ON THE HOME OF THE CITY'S WEALTHIEST CITIZEN BY FAR...

"...A HOME BUILT RIGHT INTO THE BASE OF CRIME CONTROL MOUNTAIN ITSELF.

"ONCE INSIDE, SHE WAS CAUGHT RED-HANDED BY THE MANSION'S OWNER, BRYCE GAWAIN...

"THERE WAS A STRUGGLE, BUT GAWAIN WAS APPARENTLY NO MATCH FOR CAT-FEM'S SUPERIOR SPEED AND AGILITY...

A CAT-BURGLAR, OF COURSE.

"... NOT TO MENTION FEROCITY.

"GAWAIN WAS QUICKLY SUBDUED, BOUND, AND LOCKED IN A CLOSET WHILE CAT-FEM LOOTED THE REST OF THE MANSION..."

"...LITTLE SUSPECTING THAT BRYCE GAWAIN HAD MERELY PRETENDED TO BE WEAK AND HELPLESS..."



"THE BAT-MAN HIMSELF."



"CAT-FEM DID NOT EVEN TRY TO ESCAPE..."

I'VE SEEN YOU, FROM AFAR, SWEEPING OVER THE CITY LIKE SOME DARK ANGEL.

"INSTEAD, SHE WAS DRAWN TO HIM-- AND SHE ATTEMPTED TO WIN HIM... TO HER SIDE, THE DARK SIDE.

THE BAT AND THE CAT... PERFECT.

AS PARTNERS IN CRIME, WE WOULD BE UNSTOPPABLE.

"FOR HIS PART, THE BAT-MAN FELT A HEAT HE HAD NEVER KNOWN..."

UP CLOSE... YOU'RE EVEN MORE IMPRESSIVE.

TOGETHER, WE COULD DO ANYTHING.

THIS CITY AND EVERYTHING IN IT... ALL ITS WEALTH AND MAGIC... WOULD BE OURS.

"HE FELT HIMSELF DANGEROUSLY ATTRACTED TO THIS OTHER CREATURE OF THE NIGHT, SO MUCH LIKE HIMSELF..."

PRRRRR

YOU SEE? NOW, SMALL WE... GET TOGETHER?

N-NOT... NOT AT MY PLACE... IT WOULDN'T DO.

MY LAIR, THEN...

"AND WHEN CAT-FEM HAD TOLD HIM WHERE TO COME, HE WATCHED AS SHE SLIPPED INTO THE NIGHT'S MYSTERY..."

I'LL BE WAITING.

"... YET SO CRUCIALLY DIFFERENT.

"... STILL SORELY TEMPTED BY THE SCENT OF HER, LINGERING IN HIS MIND.





IT'S TOMORROW  
POSEA -- AND YOU  
PROMISED TO TELL  
US ABOUT SPLIT-  
FACE!

WAS HE AX-  
MURDERED BY  
SOME OLD GOTHAM  
EVILDOER?

INDEED NOT, PUPS,  
FOR SPLIT-FACE  
HIMSELF WAS  
THE EVILDOER...  
AND YET HE WAS  
ALSO A MAN  
OF GOOD.

BUT HOW  
CAN THAT BE,  
POSEA?

"FOR THE ANSWER TO THAT,  
PUPS, KNOW THAT THERE  
ONCE LIVED A MAN, IN OLD  
GOTHAM, NAMED HARVEY  
BENT..."

WHERE  
THE DEVIL  
IS HE?

WHAT'S  
TAKING  
HIM SO  
LONG?

"AND BENT WAS THE CITY'S OFFICIAL CRIMEFIGHTER BEFORE WARDEN."

HERE I AM,  
BENT.

IT'S ABOUT  
TIME-- WHAT  
DID THIS ONE  
DO?

MURDER.

THEN JUSTICE  
DEMANDS THAT  
WE EXECUTE HIM  
HERE IN THE HIGH  
HAUNT.

I'VE TOLD YOU BEFORE,  
BENT-- IF JUSTICE IS TO  
REMAIN ABOVE CRIME, IT  
MUST NEVER DESCEND  
TO CRIME'S LEVEL.

BUT IF HE  
KILLED  
SOMEONE,  
THEN HE  
DESERVES--

HE DESERVES TO  
BE REMOVED FROM INNOCENT  
CITIZENS AND ISOLATED  
AMONG HIS OWN KIND  
IN ARKHAM--

--PRECISELY WHAT  
WE WOULD DESERVE  
WERE WE TO COMMIT  
MURDER BY  
EXECUTING  
HIM.

HERE,  
ALFRED,  
ANOTHER  
ONE FOR--

Bah!

THIS IS NOT JUSTICE--  
NOT TRUE JUSTICE!

I QUIT-- TO PURSUE  
AND PUNISH CRIME  
THE RIGHT WAY!

MY  
WAY  
!!

"THE PROBLEM WAS, BENT'S WAY  
WAS ALWAYS TWO WAYS -- A  
BASICALLY GOOD MAN WILLING  
TO DO WRONG."

"THE BAT-MAN HAD OFTEN  
WARNED BENT ABOUT HIS  
SPLIT PERSONALITY..."

CRIME  
MUST BE  
STOPPED...

...NO  
MATTER  
WHAT  
MUST BE  
DONE TO  
STOP  
IT.

RIGHT.

GOOD.

WRONG.

EVIL.



"AND DEEP INSIDE, BENT  
WAS WELL AWARE OF  
THE CONFLICT..."

NO! THE  
BAT-MAN IS  
RIGHT--I'M A  
CRIMEFIGHTER,  
NOT A CRIMINAL!

I CAN'T  
GO ON LIKE  
THIS!

"AND SO HE  
ATTEMPTED  
TO PURGE  
HIMSELF...

"... TO LITERALLY BURN  
AWAY HIS EVIL SIDE.

HALF-BENT...

...HALF-RUINED.

"BUT HE ONLY SUCCEEDED IN  
TURNING HIMSELF INTO SPLIT-  
FACE -- HIS INTERNAL CONFLICT  
NOW EXTERNAL, FOR ALL  
OF OLD GOTHAM TO SEE.

AND IT'S  
ALL THE  
BAT-MAN'S  
FAULT!

"HIS EVIL SIDE NOW LOOKED  
EVIL--AND EVEN THOUGH HE  
REMAINED HALF GOOD, HE HAD  
DESTROYED ALL OF WHAT HE  
WAS..."

"NOW ON HIS OWN, HE CONTINUED TO PURSUE CRIME -- EVEN AS HIS METHODS BECAME INCREASINGLY CRIMINAL."

"HIS SHORTCUTS TO JUSTICE INCLUDED THINGS CALLED ENTRAPMENT, ILLEGAL SURVEILLANCE, EVIDENCE-PLANTING, PERJURY, BURGLARY..."



"SOON, HE KNEW, THE ODDS WERE GOOD THAT THE BAT-MAN WOULD JUDGE HIM A CRIMINAL -- AND STOP HIS CRIMEFIGHTING FOREVER."

THE  
TWO-FACED  
TRAITOR!

"AND SO HE DECIDED TO EMPLOY THE ODDS HIMSELF, CONDUCTING A PERVERSE TRIAL OF THE BAT-MAN WITH NO EVIDENCE, NO JUDGE, AND NO JURY--

INNOCENT...  
OR GUILTY?



-- NOTHING BUT A HANDFUL OF FORTUNE-TELLING COINS.

"THUS DID SPLIT-FACE EVADE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF CHOICE."

GUILTY!

"THUS WAS REVENGE SEEN AS RIGHTEOUS PUNISHMENT AND NECESSARY EVIL."

"THUS WAS WRONG CHARTED AS THE ONLY PATH TO RIGHT."

"BUT THE BAT-MAN WAS READY FOR HIM--"

"AND THUS WAS THE ATTEMPTED MURDER OF THE BAT-MAN FALSELY JUSTIFIED."

WHM  
?!  
YOU HAVE TWO FACES, BENT...

... WHILE I HAVE TWO MASKS.

"READY TO STOP ANOTHER EVILDOER BY STRIKING BLOWS--"

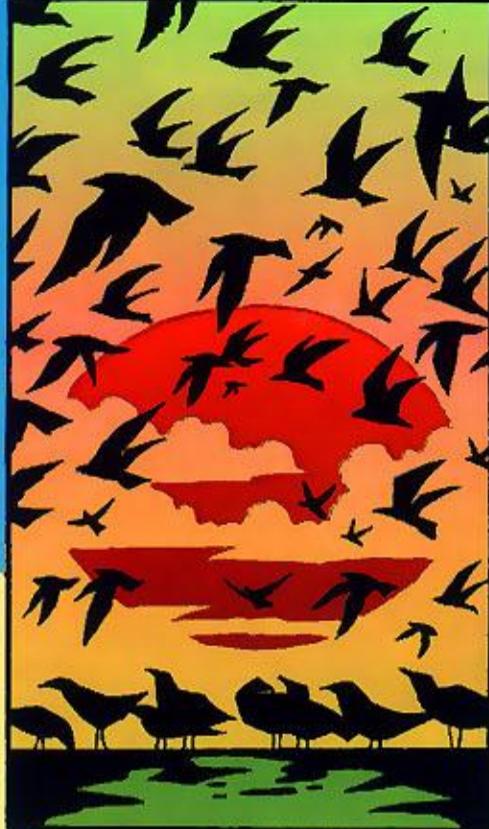
SWAK

SWOKK

-- AGAINST BOTH SIDES OF THE BENT MAN WHO HAD BECOME SPLIT-FACE."



"NOW REMEMBER, THIS  
WAS UNDER A DOMELESS  
WORLD WHERE BIRDS  
WERE FREE TO FLY  
AND FREE TO EAT."



"FOR THIS REASON, THE  
FOOD CONTROLLERS OF  
THAT TIME WERE  
TERRIFIED THAT THE  
BIRDS WOULD STEAL  
ALL THE FOOD--



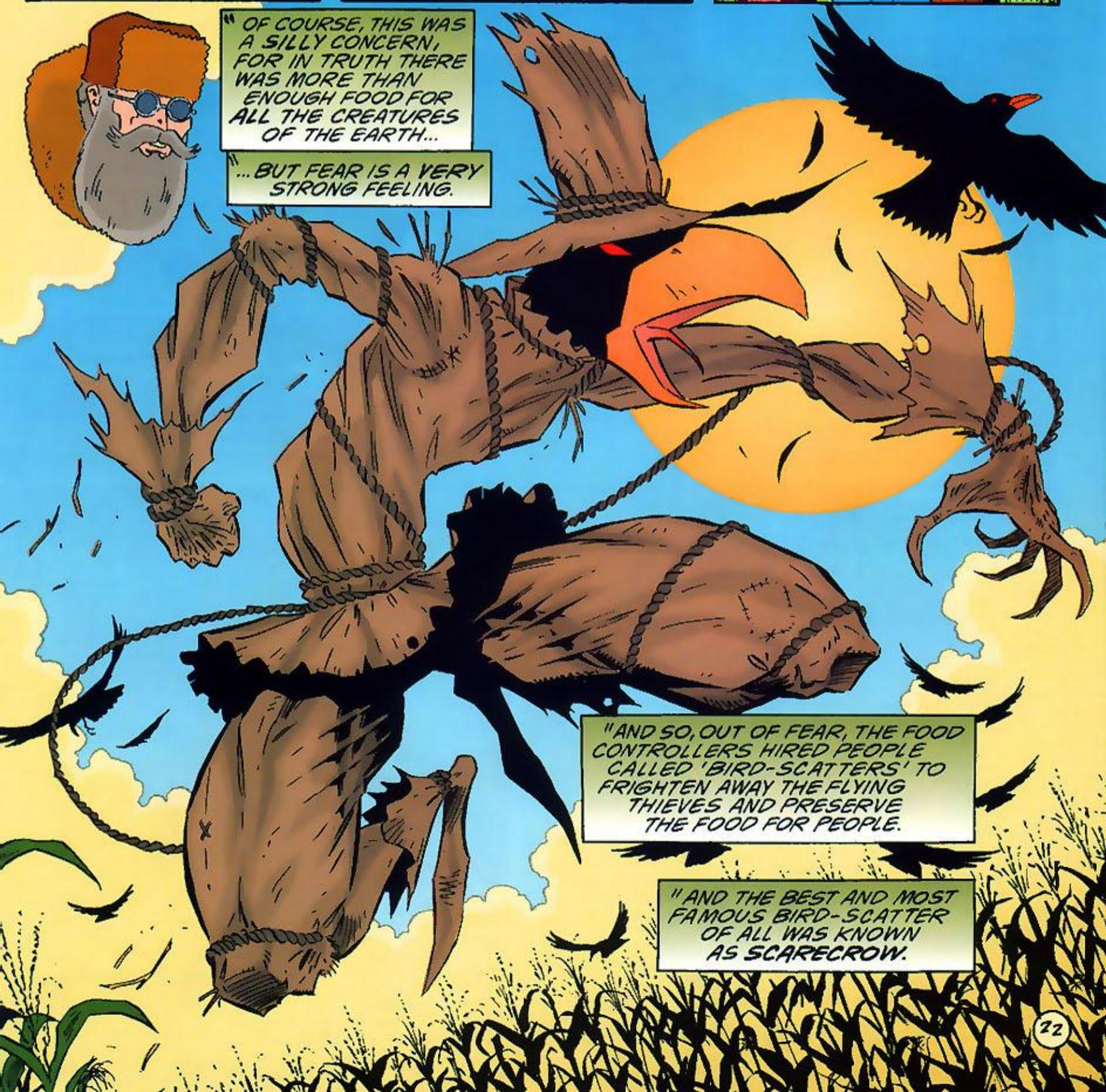
"EVENTUALLY, THEY FEARED,  
THE EARTH WOULD BECOME  
A WORLD OF SKY-  
BLACKENING BIRDS...

"... AND NOTHING  
ELSE."



"OF COURSE, THIS WAS  
A SILLY CONCERN,  
FOR IN TRUTH THERE  
WAS MORE THAN  
ENOUGH FOOD FOR  
ALL THE CREATURES  
OF THE EARTH..."

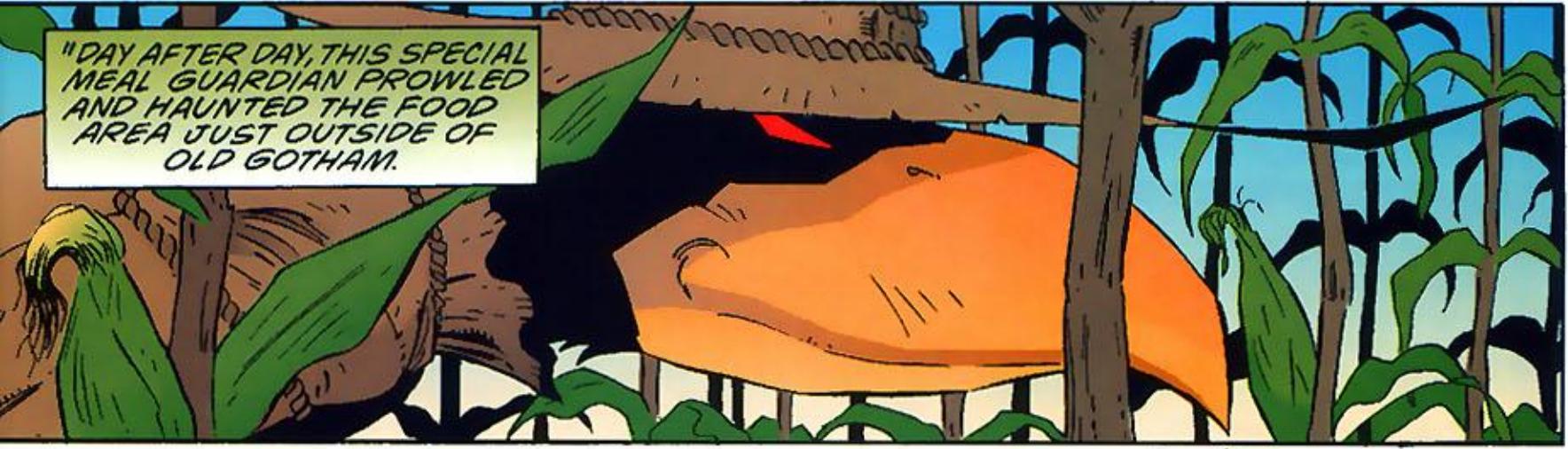
"...BUT FEAR IS A VERY  
STRONG FEELING."



"AND SO, OUT OF FEAR, THE FOOD  
CONTROLLERS HIRED PEOPLE  
CALLED 'BIRD-SCATTERS' TO  
FRIGHTEN AWAY THE FLYING  
THIEVES AND PRESERVE  
THE FOOD FOR PEOPLE."

"AND THE BEST AND MOST  
FAMOUS BIRD-SCATTER  
OF ALL WAS KNOWN  
AS SCARECROW."

"DAY AFTER DAY, THIS SPECIAL MEAL GUARDIAN PROWLED AND HAUNTED THE FOOD AREA JUST OUTSIDE OF OLD GOTHAM."



"AND HE SPECIALIZED IN CROWS, FOR THEY WERE SEEN AS THE DARKEST AND MOST DANGEROUS OF ALL FLYING FOOD-THIEVES."



"... SO IT WAS ONLY NATURAL THAT THE SCARECROW WOULD TAKE GREAT PRIDE IN FRIGHTENING THEM AWAY."



"INDEED, NO CROW EVER TOOK MORE THAN A NIBBLE ON HIS WATCH--"

--AND SCARECROW RIGHTFULLY BECAME THE LORD AND MASTER OF OLD GOTHAM'S FOOD AREA.



"IT WAS ONLY AT NIGHT,  
WHEN BIRDS RARELY  
FEED, THAT THE  
SCARECROW FELT  
FEAR HIMSELF..."

"...FEAR OF THE DARK,  
AND FEAR THAT HE  
HAD SCARED ALL THE  
BIRDS AWAY FOREVER  
AND HE WOULD BE  
USELESS WITH NOTHING  
MORE TO DO."

"OFTEN, DURING THESE NIGHTS  
OF FEAR AND DOUBT, HE  
WOULD LOOK TOWARD THE  
CITY..."

"...AND CATCH A GLIMPSE  
OF THE DARKEST AND  
LARGEST BIRDS OF ALL."

"NOW, THE BAT-MAN AND  
DARKBIRD WERE NOT  
REAL BIRDS AT ALL, OF  
COURSE, BUT TO THE  
SCARECROW THIS DID  
NOT MATTER."

"IT WAS ENOUGH FOR HIM  
THAT THEY SWOOPED  
DOWN ON HUGE WINGS  
WHICH DARKENED EVEN  
THE NIGHT SKY."

"AND STANDING THERE IN  
THE DARK, FIGHTING HIS  
OWN FEARS, HE  
WOULD WONDER IF HE  
WAS GOOD ENOUGH  
TO SCARE THEM."

GULP!

"BUT WITH THE LIGHT OF EACH NEW MORNING THE REAL BIRDS WOULD RETURN AND HIS FEARS WOULD VANISH AS HE SCARED THEM AWAY.

BOO!!

"YES, HE WOULD DECIDE IN THE BRIGHT LIGHT, HE WAS STILL LORD AND MASTER OF THE CITY'S FOOD AREA.

Hah! THIS IS ALMOST TOO EASY! THESE BIRDS ARE NO CHALLENGE AT ALL!

"TRULY, HE WAS ONE SCARY SCARECROW.

"BUT THEN, BORED WITH IT ALL, HE WOULD LOOK TO THE SHINING SPIRES OF OLD GOTHAM AND IMAGINE HOW FINE IT WOULD BE WERE HE LORD AND MASTER OF THE CITY RATHER THAN ITS FOOD...

:sigh:

"YET AT NIGHT HIS FEARS WOULD RETURN ALONG WITH A DEPRESSING REALIZATION...

"ONE NIGHT HE WAS STARTLED BY A TERRIBLE THRASHING AND CRASHING FROM THE GROWING FOOD IT WAS HIS BUSINESS TO GUARD...

"HE ADDED SHAME TO FEAR AND HID IN THE FOOD...

"... WAITING AND WATCHING AND SHIVERING AS THE SOUNDS GREW LOUDER AND CLOSER.

"THE CITY ALREADY HAD TWO LORDS AND MASTERS.

SHRSH  
KRSHH

KRNTH  
SHRESH

"BURSTING INTO VIEW WAS THE WEIRDEST BIRD HE HAD EVER SEEN-- BLUNDERING THROUGH THE CROPS IN ABJECT TERROR.

"AND THE SCARECROW SOON SAW WHY...

:WAAAK:

S  
H  
R  
E  
SH

MURDER'S  
NOT NICE,  
ICE BIRD-- AND  
DON'T THINK YOU  
CAN ESCAPE  
WHAT YOU'VE DONE,  
NOT EVEN OUT  
HERE!

THEN I'LL JUST  
HAVE TO MURDER  
AGAIN, WON'T--



I-YI-YIII!



"AND WHAT THE SCARECROW  
SAW SHIVERED HIS SPINE  
AND RATTLED HIS SOUL.

WOO!





"AND IT WAS THEN THAT HE KNEW THERE WAS ONLY ONE WAY TO CONQUER HIS FEAR AND HAVE EVERYTHING HE WANTED..."

"IT TOOK HIM MORE THAN HALF THE NIGHT TO SCALE THE MIGHTY CRIME CONTROL MOUNTAIN..."

"...BUT WHEN HE REACHED THE TOP AND ENTERED THE HIGH HAUNT, HE SWELLED WITH PRIDE AND ISSUED HIS CHALLENGE."

=HUFF!

=PUFF!



--AND BECOME THE NEW LORD AND MASTER OF YOUR CITY!

SOUNDS LIKE WE HAVE COMPANY, DARKBIRD.



SHALL WE GIVE HIM A DOSE OF HIS OWN SCARE-MEDICINE?

A DOUBLE DOSE.

COMPANY OF THE CRIMINAL KIND, BAT-MAN.



YOU HEAR  
ME, WINGED  
ONES?!

SHOW  
YOURSELVES--  
AND BEHOLD THE  
ONE TRUE MASTER  
OF FEAR!

BOO!

YAH!

KLATCH

N-NO...!

WHO'S AFRAID NOW,  
SCARECROW?

YEEEEEK!



THE FEAR OF FEAR ITSELF,  
YOU SEE, IS THE GREATEST  
WEAKNESS ANY MIND  
CAN SUFFER.

IT LEADS TO THE  
CONVICTION THAT  
EVERYONE SUFFERS  
FROM FEAR--AND THE  
POSSIBILITY THAT ANY  
ATTEMPT TO EXPLOIT  
FEAR WILL BACKFIRE.

BUT DIDN'T THE  
BAT-MAN OF OLD  
GOTHAM ALSO  
USE FEAR?

AS I HAVE  
JUST RELATED,  
YES, AND IT OFTEN  
WORKED FOR HIM--  
BUT ONLY BECAUSE HE  
DID NOT SUFFER FROM  
FEAR.

YES--EXCELLENT--FOR YOU WILL  
ONLY DEFEAT YOURSELF.

GOOD  
TALE, POSEA,  
BUT IT FEELS  
LIKE CURFEW  
IS--

NO NEED TO  
WORRY ABOUT  
CURFEW TONIGHT  
CHILDREN...

...FOR YOU HAVE ATTAINED  
THE DECREED AGE, AND  
ON THIS VERY NIGHT YOU  
WILL PASS ON TO  
ADULTHOOD--

--AND SERVICE  
TO YOUR CITY.

NOW--OFF  
YOU GO WITH THE  
CITY CHAPERONES.

IS IT TRUE,  
POSEA? MUST  
WE LEAVE YOU...  
FOREVER?

I'M AFRAID  
YOUR FUTURE,  
PUP CANNOT  
BE DENIED.

WE SHALL... M-MISS  
YOUR TALES, POSEA...

REMEMBER  
THEM WELL.

REMEMBER  
THEIR MORALS.

W-WE...  
WE COULD  
NEVER  
FORGET.

G-GOODBYE,  
POSEA...

FARE  
WELL,  
PUPS.

ALWAYS SAD  
TO SEE THEM  
PASS ON,  
eh POSEA?

YES, CITY  
CONTROLLER.

BUT NECESSARY--  
AND TAKE CONSOLATION  
THAT OTHER TUTORS AND  
OTHER CONTROLLERS GO  
THROUGH THIS SAME  
SCENE SOMEWHERE  
IN OUR CITY EVERY NIGHT.

YOU YOURSELF HAVE BROUGHT  
DOZENS TO THE FINAL  
PREPARATION IN YOUR  
MANY YEARS AS A TUTOR.

INDEED  
I HAVE,  
CONTROLLER.

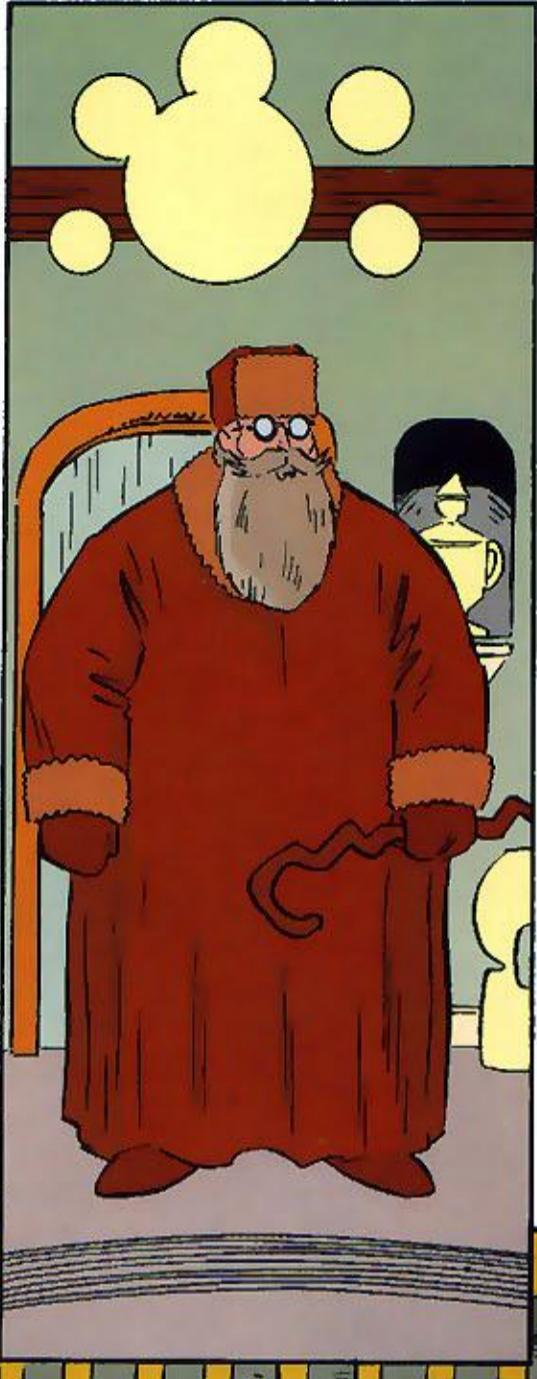
AND  
TOMORROW,  
OLD POSEA,  
YOU SHALL  
RECEIVE  
A NEW  
AUDIENCE  
OF YOUNG  
MINDS  
EAGER FOR  
PREPARATION.

I'M SURE YOU  
WILL SEE TO IT,  
CONTROLLER.

BY THE WAY,  
POSEA, WHAT IS  
IT THAT YOU FILL  
THEIR HEADS  
WITH?

NOTHING,  
CONTROLLER...  
MYTHS FROM  
ANOTHER TIME...  
ABOUT A PAST  
LONG DEAD...

JUST...  
NONSENSE.



## INSTITUTE OF FINAL PREPARATIONS

WELCOME TO  
YOUR FINAL  
PREPARATIONS,  
WHICH WILL BEGIN  
WITH A MINOR  
SURGICAL  
PROCEDURE...

WH-WHAT...  
KIND OF  
SURGERY,  
CONTROLLER  
?

WHAT KIND? WELL,  
THE QUICK AND PAINLESS  
KIND, OF COURSE.

ON OLD EARTH,  
IT WAS CALLED  
MICROCHIP INSERTION--  
MIND-CONTROL...

...BUT HERE IN  
THE CONTROLLERS'  
SUFFOCATING  
BLISTER-  
DOME...

HIM  
AGAIN!

...IT'S WHAT  
HAPPENS WHEN THE  
FINAL CURFEW STEALS  
YOUR SOULS.

IS THAT... THE  
BAT-MAN?

Y-YOU... YOU MEAN  
THE CONTROLLERS  
ARE... EVILDOERS?

NOT IN THEIR HEARTS--  
BUT WHAT THEY ARE  
DOING IS WRONG...

...AND SOMEWHERE  
IN THIS DARKENED CITY  
IT HAPPENS EVERY  
NIGHT.

BUT... DON'T THE  
CITY CONTROLLERS  
KNOW WHAT'S GOOD  
FOR US?

PUT ALL  
FEAR FROM  
YOUR MINDS  
AND THINK FOR  
YOURSELVES!  
WHAT DO THEY  
PLAN TO DO?

PREPARE  
US... FOR THE  
FUTURE.

ANY FUTURE WHICH  
CANNOT BE FACED BY  
YOUR TRUE MINDS  
IS INSANE.

Y-YES... WHY  
MUST THEY CHANGE  
OUR MINDS?

LOOK THROUGH THEM--  
THROUGH THE SEDUCTION OF  
THEIR APPEARANCE -- TO  
SEE THE TRUTH!

HE'S RIGHT!  
HOW CAN THEY  
BE GOOD BY  
CHOOSING TO  
DO WRONG?

THEY WANT TO  
PROGRAM US--  
JUST LIKE THE MAD  
JESTER DID-- TO  
MAKE US HELPLESS  
PUPPETS FOR  
WHATEVER THEY  
WANT!

CAN YOU CONQUER  
YOUR FEAR OF THE  
UNKNOWN? CAN YOU  
FACE A FREE  
FUTURE?

Y-YES!

THEN YOUR  
COURSE IS  
CLEAR...



# BAOUMM

BUT THE  
AIR,  
BAT-MAN--!

THERE IS  
NOTHING WRONG  
WITH IT...

IN FACT, THE  
OUTSIDE AIR IS CLEANER  
THAN THAT WITHIN THE  
BLISTER-DOME...

... AND YOU  
MAY NOW  
BREATHE  
DEEPLY FOR  
THE FIRST TIME  
IN YOUR  
LIVES.

I CANNOT STAY -- BUT  
YOU ARE FREE NOW.

THE LAND IS  
ABUNDANT AND THERE  
ARE OTHERS JUST  
AHEAD, BY THE  
LIGHT...

JOIN THEIR RANKS,  
RETURNING TO NEW  
GOTHAM ONLY WHEN  
YOUR NUMBERS ARE  
LARGE ENOUGH.

I SHALL BE  
WAITING  
FOR YOU.

WELL, WELL, THREE MORE  
FRIENDS OF THE BAT!  
WAS HE DAMAGED?

YOU MEAN... WAS  
THE BAT-MAN HURT?  
I... I DON'T THINK  
SO...

"BUT I DON'T KNOW WHY NOT, EITHER  
-- SINCE HE TOOK A PARBEAM HIT  
RIGHT TO HIS HEAD."

SINCE YOU SEEM  
TO KNOW HIM...  
CAN YOU TELL US  
HOW HE ESCAPED  
PROGRAMMING?

HE DIDN'T-- HE JUST  
HAD A DIFFERENT  
PROGRAMMER.

STATUS  
REPORT FOR  
INTERNAL DATA:  
DAMAGE  
SUPERFICIAL--  
NO CIRCUITS  
IMPAIRED.

WH-WHAT  
DO YOU--?

SOME  
OTHER  
TIME,  
PUPS...

"FOR NOW... LET'S JUST SAY  
THAT SOME LEGENDS ARE  
MADE, NOT BORN."

NEWSKIN  
FUSED TO AREA--  
DAMAGE REPAIRED  
AND CONCEALED.

TZHZHZ

THEN HE IS THE  
LEGEND OF WHOM  
OLD POSEA TOLD US  
SO MANY TALES! BUT  
IF HE'S FROM OLD  
EARTH, WHY IS HE  
NOT DEAD?

AS LONG AS  
STORYTELLERS  
LIKE POSEA  
LIVE...

"... LEGENDS LIKE  
THE BAT-MAN  
WILL NEVER DIE."

END