

B O O K F O U R



THE DARK KNIGHT FALLS

THAT'S RIGHT, CAPTAIN--
THE COMMISSIONER GOT
TIRED OF WAITING. TOOK
A SQUAD IN HERSELF.

--GOT THE OTHER
END SEALED--
NO WAY THEY'LL
GET PAST US--

YOU LIKE
THAT BITCH,
DON'T YOU,
MERKEL?

--WITNESSES
SAY THEY
BOTH GOT
GUNS--

--KEEP AN
EYE OUT--

TUNNEL OF
LOVE

...SHOWDOWN AT THE
COUNTY FAIR, WHERE THE
JOKER IS SAID TO HAVE
MURDERED AT LEAST
TWENTY. SIGHTED WAS
THE BATMAN, IN HOT
PURSUIT OF THE JOKER...

--GET SOME
BODY BAGS--
GOT TWO
COLD ONES--

...LED BY COMMISSIONER
YIMPEL, POLICE WERE LAST
SEEN CONVERGING ON
THE TUNNEL OF LOVE,
WITH ARREST ORDERS FOR
BOTH THE JOKER--AND
FOR GOTHAM'S VIGILANTE...

SO DARK,
MAN...

CAREFUL,
NOW...
QUIET...

--CAN'T SEE
A DAMN
THING--

--SO
DARK--

TAKE
IT SLOW...

THE INVENTORIES...
ARE IN PLACE...

THE ENEMY... IS
SECONDS AWAY...

I WASTE ONE
SECOND... WITH
A GOOD-BYE...

PTUI

SPLIT

COMMISSIONER--
OVER HERE--

IT'S THE
JOKER--

--IT'S NO
SUICIDE--

SERGEANT
--DON'T
TOUCH IT--

I SAID
DON'T
TOUCH--

--LIEUTENANT--
GET HIM
COVERED--

JESUS--

RIGGED
THE BODY--

--SON OF
A BITCH
RIGGED THE
BODY--

AAAAA

NOW...
WHILE THEY'RE
SCARED...

WHILE MY GUNS
ARE STILL...
WHERE THEY
BELONG...



CHRIST
IT'S--

SPREADING
--IT'S--

FIRE'S
SPREADING--

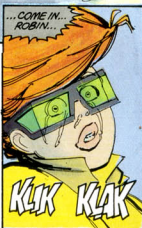
HOLY--

POOM



POOM
POOM

ROBIN...



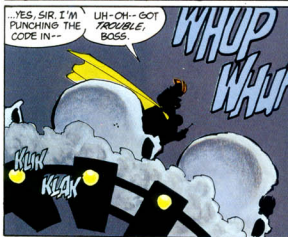
...COME IN...
ROBIN...

KLIK KLIK



SUMMON... THE
COPTER...

FOLLOW...
MY SIGNAL...



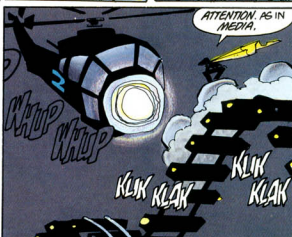
...YES, SIR, I'M
PUNCHING THE
CODE IN--

UH-OH-- GOT
TROUBLE,
BOSS.

WHUP
WHUP

CLOSER-- MOVE IN CLOSER--
LOLA-- CAN YOU SEE
IT?-- LIVE FROM THE
NEWS TWO COPTER--
IT'S ROBIN-- THE
BOY WONDER!

HE'S YOUNG-- CAN'T
BE OLDER THAN
THIRTEEN-- HE'S
RIDING THE ROLLER
COASTER-- HE'S
WAIT-- HE'S--



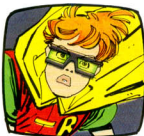
ATTENTION. AS IN
MEDIA.

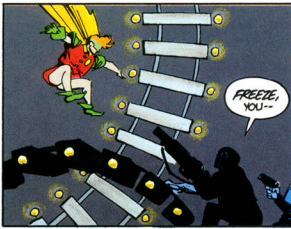


KLIK KLIK



MFF



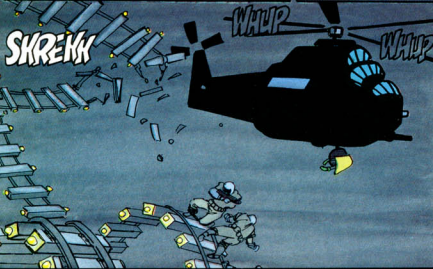
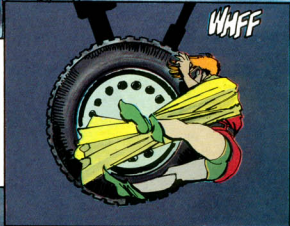
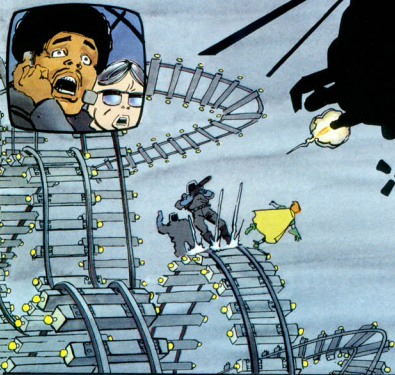


...HE SEEMS CONFIDENT
--WHAT THE-- THAT'S
NOT ONE OF OURS--
COMING RIGHT AT US--
BANK, YOU IDIOT--
BANK--

WHUP WHUP WHUP

BRABRABRABRAB

WHUP WHUP WHUP





JESUS WHAT A MESS...

CAN'T SEE A DAMN THING...

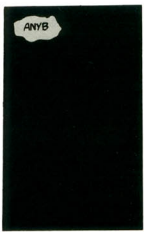
HE'S IN HERE SOMEWHERE--
LOOK SHARP...

MY FINGER...
FITS...



PLASTIQUE
...ALL SET...

...EASY
SHOT.
ANYBODY
COULD
HIT IT...



ANYB



ODY...
BLAM



SPAKK

CLUMSY... STUPID...
SENILE...

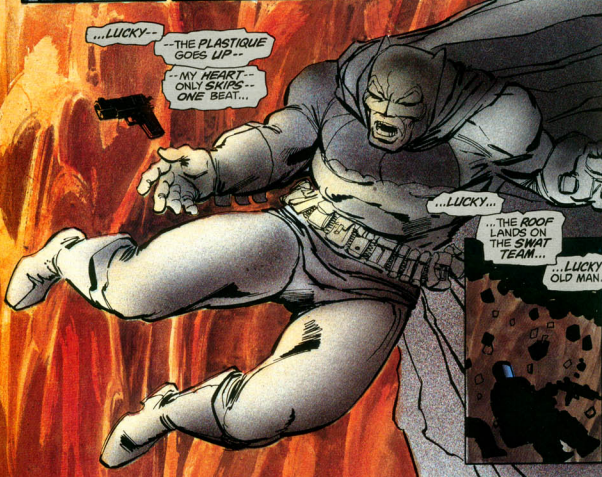


THERE--
SHOOT
TO
KILL--

DODDERING...
HELPLESS...



BLAM



...LUCKY--

--THE PLASTIQUE
GOES UP--

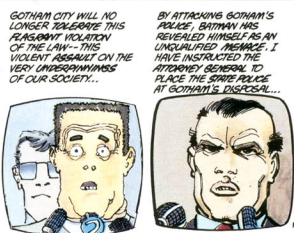
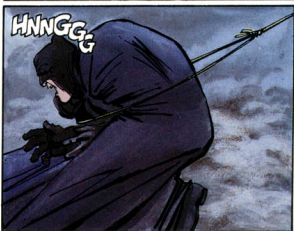
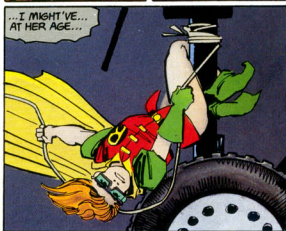
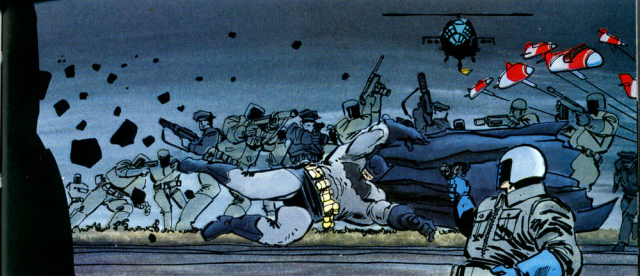
--MY HEART--
ONLY SKIPS--
ONE BEAT...

...LUCKY...

...THE ROOF
LANDS ON
THE SWAT
TEAM...

...LUCKY
OLD MAN...





...THE JOKER'S BODY FOUND MUTILATED AND BURNED...MURDER IS ADDED TO THE CHARGES AGAINST THE BATMAN...



BRUCE. IT'S OVER.

YOU LOOK TIRED, KENT.



WELL, YOU'VE EARNED A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP.

HECK OF A POLICE ACTION, IF YOU ASK ME...

I DIDN'T...



YOU CAN SAY WHAT YOU WANT. YOU CAN CALL HIM WHAT YOU WANT. YOU DON'T HAVE TO WALK DOWN AVENUE D AT NIGHT.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO HEAR THE SUCKING SOUNDS THEY MAKE EVERY TIME YOU WALK BY. THIS ONE, HE'D BEEN WORKING THE NERVE UP FOR WEEKS BEFORE HE WAS HORRY ENOUGH...



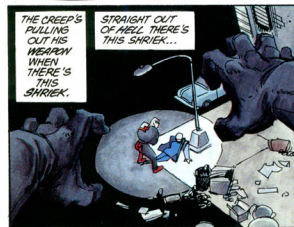
...NO, HORNY HE WASN'T. HE WAS JUST LOOKING TO HURT SOMEBODY AND HE'S THE KIND WHO HURTS WOMEN. I WISH THEY WERE RARE. HE GAVE HIMSELF AN EXCUSE...

SO NOW HE'S BIGGLING LIKE HE'S TURNED ON! I FIGURE HE'S SERIOUS ENOUGH TO RUN AFTER ME. I GO FOR THE MACE.



THE CREEP'S PULLING OUT HIS WEAPON WHEN THERE'S THIS SHRIEK.

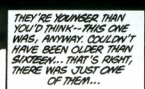
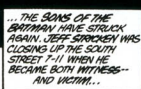
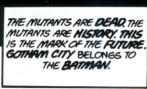
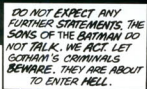
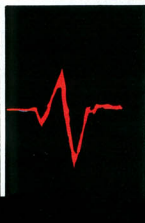
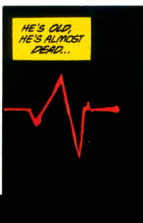
STRAIGHT OUT OF HELL THERE'S THIS SHRIEK...



...IT TURNS INTO A GROVE-- FLAPPING OF WINGS--BIG WINGS--

-- SOMETHING WET HAPPENS TO THE CREEP--





...BUT I'M GETTING AHEAD OF MYSELF. IT ALL STARTED WHEN THREE NIXONS CAME INTO THE STORE. WHAT?... NO, I DID NOT GO FOR THE ALARM. THEY DON'T FEAR ME ENOUGH FOR SUICIDE.



I'D HAVE LOVED TO HAVE WARNED HIM.



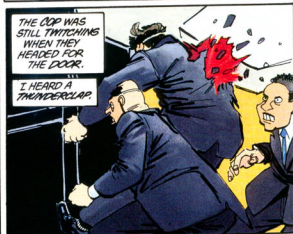
THE TALL NIXON WENT FOR HIS PIECE.

MORE THUNDER.



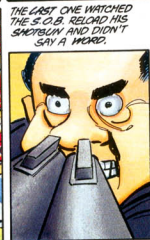
I WAS CLEARING OUT THE REGISTER WHEN THAT OFF-DUTY COP CAME UP FROM THE BACK.

HE ONLY SAW TWO OF THE NIXONS.



THE COP WAS STILL TWITCHING WHEN THEY HEADED FOR THE DOOR.

I HEARD A THUNDERCLAP.



THE LAST ONE WATCHED THE S.O.B. RELOAD HIS SHOTGUN AND DIDN'T SAY A WORD.



THEN THE S.O.B., HE TOLD ME I SHOULD'VE PUT UP A FIGHT WITH THE NIXONS. SAID I DIDN'T DESERVE TO RUN A CRASH REGISTER. HE GRABBED A PAIR OF WIRE CUTTERS --

THE NIXONS ARE THE NEWEST SPLINTER GROUP OF THE MILITANT ARMY, WHICH EXPERTS BELIEVE DISBANDED WHEN THE BATMAN DEFEATED THEIR LEADER. TOM?



THANK YOU, LOLA. STILL HELD AT BOTHAM JAIL ARE EIGHTY-SEVEN MEMBERS OF THE MUTANT GANG, WHO WERE CAPTURED BY BATMAN.

COMMISSIONER YINDEL HAS REQUESTED THAT THEY BE MOVED TO THE STATE PENITENTIARY, WHILE THEY AWAIT TRIAL...

NO--NO TROUBLE, COMMISSIONER...THEY'RE STILL JUST WATCHING TV...



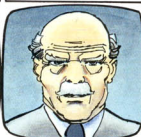
YINDEL'S REQUEST WAS CUT SHORT BY A COURT ORDER, ACQUIRED BY THE MUTANTS' ATTORNEY...

MY CLIENTS ARE YOUNG PEOPLE--MINORS, MOST OF THEM. IF THERE ISN'T ROOM IN THE JAIL, THEY SHOULD BE RETURNED TO THE CARE OF THEIR PARENTS.

FOLLOWING THE ATTORNEY'S STATEMENT, A PETITION SIGNED BY SEVENTY-ONE OF THE MUTANTS' PARENTS, URGED THE MAYOR NOT TO RELEASE--

WE INTERRUPT THIS BROADCAST FOR A NEWS TWO SPECIAL REPORT

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

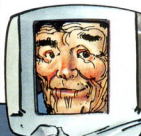


WELL, FOLKS, I'VE GOT SOME GOOD NEWS-- AND SOME BAD NEWS... HEH... THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE WITHDRAWN THEIR FORCES FROM THE ISLAND OF CORD MALTESE...

SOMETHING WRONGS, KENT?

...AND THE BAD NEWS, WELL... IT LOOKS LIKE THOSE SOVIETS ARE PRETTY BAD LOSERS, YES, THEY ARE...

K





TWENTY
MILLION
DIE BY
FIRE...

...IF I
AM WEAK...



I COULD BE SITTING AT HOME
CATCHING UP ON MY READING--
YES, SOME OF US STILL READ--
IF NOT FOR SARAH AND THE ONE
MORE THING SHE ALWAYS NEEDS
FROM THE GROCERY STORE.

THIS TIME IT'S BEANS.
VEGETARIAN BEANS. TOOK
ME TEN MINUTES TO FIGURE
OUT THAT IT ISN'T IN THE
HEALTH FOOD SECTION. IT'S
JUST BEANS WITHOUT MEAT.

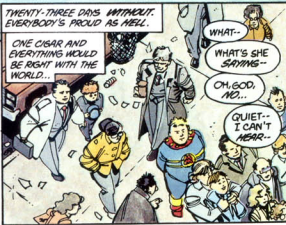
TEN MINUTES
OF MY LIFE.



I NEED A
CISAR.

TWENTY-THREE DAYS WITHOUT.
EVERYBODY'S PROUD AS HELL.

ONE CISAR AND
EVERYTHING WOULD
BE RIGHT WITH THE
WORLD...

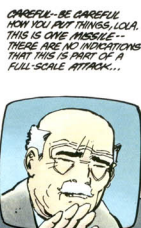
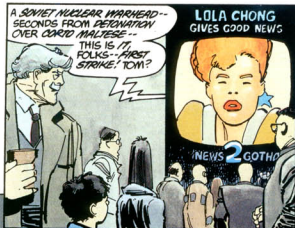


WHAT--

WHAT'S SHE
SAYING--

OH, GOD,
NO...

QUIET--
I CAN'T
HEAR--



HOLD IT... WE'VE JUST
GOTTEN WORD THAT IT'S
NOT A CONVENTIONAL
NUCLEAR WARHEAD--WE
SWITCH YOU NOW TO DAN
MUSK, ABOARD THE NEWS
TWO SHUTTLE. WHAT'S
THE WORD, DAN?

STILL COLLATING, LOLA--
BUT IT'S A BIG ONE--
HEAVY MEGATONNAGE--
WITH UNUSUAL COMPUTER
ACTIVITY--WE CAN'T BE
CERTAIN OF ITS CAPABIL-
ITIES...

...AT THE VERY LEAST,
CARDI WILL BE LEVELED--
THE FIRES MIGHT
SPREAD TO MAINLAND
SOUTH AMERICA--
SHOULD IT GENERATE A
SUFFICIENT MAGNETIC
PULSE, THERE MIGHT--

THANKS FOR THE DATA,
DAN, BUT WE'LL ALL
KNOW SOON ENOUGH
WHAT IT CAN DO. RIGHT
NOW, WE'VE GOT
AUTHOR HARLAN
ELLISON IN THE STUDIO...





...BE EATING OUR OWN BABIES FOR BREAKFAST.

THANK YOU, MR. ELLISON... YES, DAN...

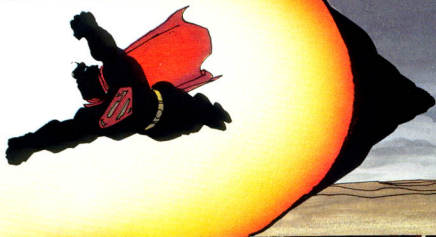
LOLA--IF IT GENERATES A PULSE OF SUFFICIENT INTENSITY, IT COULD--

DAN-- WE'VE FINISHED OUR TECHNICAL SEGMENT...

--IT COULD DISRUPT THE MAGNETIC FIELD CAUSING--

COMING UP-- VIEWER OPINIONS ...

LOLA-- THIS IS INCREDIBLE--TRAJECTORY CHANGE-- TWENTY DEGREES DUE EAST--THE WARHEAD HAS CHANGED COURSE--



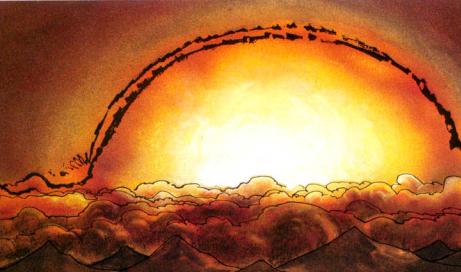
YOU HEARD IT HERE FIRST-- THE WARHEAD HAS SOMEHOW BEEN DIVERTED-- IT WILL EXPLODE HARMLESSLY IN-- WHAT'S THE NAME OF THAT DESERT?...

IT MIGHT NOT BE HARMLESS, LOLA--IF THAT PULSE IS STRONG ENOUGH, IT COULD DISRUPT ALL ELECTRICAL

SPARK







MAYBE DURING A BREAK BETWEEN POLICE ACTIONS, ONE OF YOUR MILITARY FRIENDS TOLD YOU WHAT AN ELECTROMAGNETIC PULSE IS, AND MAYBE YOU LISTENED, CLARK.

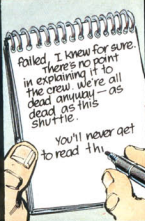
ALL YOU NEED TO GENERATE THE PULSE IS THE ORGANIZED DETONATION OF A FEW DOZEN NUCLEAR WARHEADS.

THAT, OR A SPECIAL KIND OF Nuke THAT BOTH SIDES HAVE BEEN TRYING TO DEVELOP...

Sweetheart, the last of the readings gave a hint of what would happen.



When the computer failed, I knew for sure.



Failed. I knew for sure. There's no point in explaining it to the crew. We're all dead anyway—as dead as this shuttle.

You'll never get to read this.

You'll never get to read this letter. It'll burn up with me when our orbit deteriorates. Still, my last thoughts will be a prayer for you, for humanity...



...and for planet Earth.

Nothing could stop the Russians from emptying their silos at us now. We'd have no defense, no way to retaliate.



The one hope we have is that the decision to murder billions has to be made by a human being.

...YES, CLARK. BOTH SIDES.

THE AMERICAN NAME FOR IT IS COLDBRINGER. IT'S DESIGNED TO CAUSE MAXIMUM DAMAGE TO THE ENVIRONMENT... ALL THE WHILE SPARKING THE INDUSTRIAL SITES YOUR FRIENDS REGARD SO HIGHLY.

SINCE MY OWN ARMS AREN'T BOUNCING AROUND THE STRATOSPHERE--



--SINCE GOTHAM CITY SQUATS LIKE A GREAT BLACK GRAVEYARD--



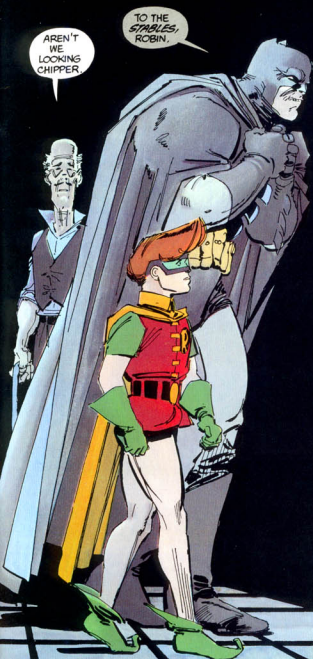
--SINCE WAYNE MANOR'S EMERGENCY GENERATOR HASN'T KICKED IN-- AND ROBIN'S WATCH HAS SHIPPED.



--I'LL ASSUME RUSSIA HAS TAKEN THE LEAD IN THE ARMS RACE.



I KEEP TRACK OF THESE THINGS, CLARK. ONE OF US HAS TO.



AREN'T
WE
LOOKING
CHIPPER

TO THE
STABLES,
ROBIN.

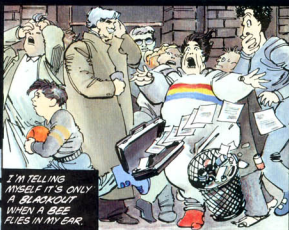


MURRAY--THEY'RE
CHANTING--GET
DOWN THERE--



EVER RIDE
A HORSE,
ROBIN?

NEVER
EVEN
SAW
ONE...



I'M TELLING
MYSELF IT'S ONLY
A BLACKOUT
WHEN A BEE
FLIES IN MY EAR.



NO--NOT A BEE--

--IT'S THAT
SOUND--







THE
DUMP.

IT'S A BREEDING
GROUND FOR
INSECTS AND
RODENTS.

SOME
RODENTS
FLY.



THE WIND PICKS UP,
SPREADING THE FLAMES
ACROSS THE WEST
SIDE-- TOWARD MY
HOME--TOWARD--



--TOWARD SARAH

JESUS CHRIST
ALMIGHTY SARAH--



PSY NGGAA



KKKREEEEEE



NO--
NO--

--IF I HAVE
A HEART ATTACK
I'M NO USE TO
ANYBODY--



--NO. I'M ALL
RIGHT.

I'M ALL
RIGHT.



ONLY FEELS LIKE THERE'S
A STORM COMING.

IT'S JUST
HIS VOICE...

THIS
LOUD, CLUMSY,
STUPID
THING--



THIS IS THE
WEAPON OF
THE ENEMY.
WE DO NOT
NEED IT. WE WILL
NOT USE IT.



OUR WEAPONS ARE
QUIET-- PRECISE. IN TIME,
I WILL TEACH THEM TO
YOU. TONIGHT, YOU WILL
RELY ON YOUR FISTS--
AND YOUR BRAINS.



TONIGHT,
WE ARE
THE LAW.

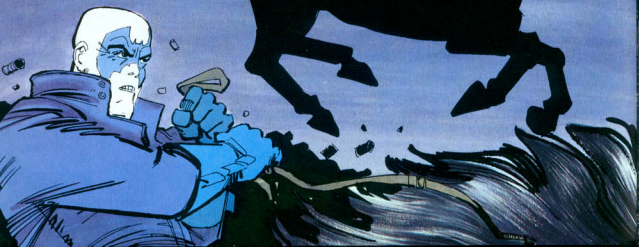
TONIGHT,
I' AM THE
LAW.



LET'S
RIDE.

JUST HIS
VOICE.

JUST
HIM.



EEEEKKRRKKKK



ALL RUNNING AWAY--LOOKS
BAD-- --I'M CRYING
BUT IT'S JUST
THE SMOKE--



--SMOKE--
DOESN'T IT
FIGURE--

KK



DOWN
THERE--

COPS--

AIN'T
FAN--

DON'T
SHIV--

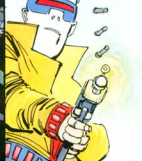
SOMETHING
EXPLODES--



--RIGHT ON
MY BLOCK--

--A GAS
MAIN--

BUDDA





--GOD ANYTHING
IN THERE IS AS
GOOD AS--

--DAMN THAT
SMOKE--

--CAN'T SEE HER-- CAN'T
TELL IF SHE'S ALIVE OR--

--I'M RUNNING AROUND WITH
ALL THE OTHER HEADLESS
CHICKENS-- THAT'S NO DAMN
GOOD--



--I START YELLING
ORDERS--

--SOME OLD WOMAN
LAUGHS AT ME--



WHOLE CITY
BLACKED
OUT--

RAD

BALLS
RAD--

IT'S
OUR
NIGHT--

SLICE AN
DICE MAN--

SLICE
AN DICE--



YOU HEAR
HORSES?

YOU KNOW
--LIKE IN A
WESTERN--

EYES
SLIDEWAYS,
SPUD--
THERE--

NOBODY LISTENS--
GONE CRAZY--
FIGHTING FOR
FOOD LIKE IT'S
THE END OF THE
WORLD--

MAYBE IT IS--
BUT WE'RE BETTER
THAN THIS--

--OF COURSE
I STILL
CARRY IT--



--THEY
START
LISTENING--



THUNK
A
A
A



THUNK
O
W
W



THUNK
THUNK
THUNK



COMMISSIONER--
QUIET,
MERKEL.



BOYS,
GIRLS...

...I'M HERE
TO APPEAL
TO YOUR
COMMUNITY
SPIRIT.



I'M SURE YOU'RE
ALL EASIER
TO HELP.



COMMISSIONER,
WE--

NO. NO.

HE'S...
TOO
BIG...



THE SPIRIT
SPREADS AS
FAST AS
THE FIRE.

TWO NURSES SHOW UP
OUT OF NOWHERE--
THEY DON'T HAVE A
DAMN THING TO WORK
WITH...

THE ONES
THEY CAN'T
COMFORT THEY
GET DRUNK.



A HARDHAT GRABS
A LUGSWRENCH FROM
THE BACK OF HIS
DEAD TRUCK AND
SMASHES OPEN A
FIRE HYDRANT.

THE MAN AT THE
HARDWARE
STORE PUTS HIS
SHOTGUN AWAY
AND EMPTIES
PRINT
BUCKETS
ALL OVER HIS
NEW TILE
FLOOR.

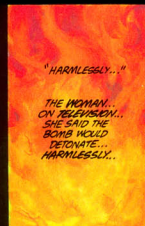


A LINE
FORMS.



PULSE
IS STEADY,
NO
PROBLEM.

NO
SIGN
OF
SARAH.



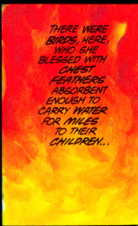
"HARMLESSLY..."

THE WOMAN...
ON TELEVISION...
SHE SAID THE
BOMB WOULD
DETONATE...
HARMLESSLY...



YOU CANNOT
TOUCH MY
PLANET WITHOUT
DESTROYING
SOMETHING
PRECIOUS.

EVEN HER
DESERTS
ARE
ABUNDANT.



THERE WERE
BIRDS, HERE,
WHO SHE
BLESSED WITH
ONEST
FEATHERS
ABSORBENT
ENOUGH TO
CARRY WATER
FOR MILES
TO THEIR
CHILDREN...

... BULLFROG,
WHO SLEPT
FOR YEARS IN
DRIED-OUT
RIVERBEDS...
THEN DUG
THEIR WAY
TO THE
SURFACE
WHEN THE
RAINS
CAME...

NOW...
THERE IS
ONLY
BLACKENED
GLASS...

...ENDLESS
FLAME...

OUR
PEOPLE,
BRUCE,
YOU
LAUGH
AT
THEM.

THEY
CAN DO
THIS...
AND YOU
LAUGH...

... THEY CAN SPILT
THE VERY FABRIC
OF REALITY...
BLAST A HUNDRED
THOUSAND TONS
OF SAND INTO
THE SKY...

... BLOTTING OUT
THE SOURCE OF
ALL MY POWER...
THE HOPE
FOR SCREAMING
MILLIONS...

MAGNETIC STORM
... YOU HAVE
EVERY REASON
TO BE OUTRAGED,
MOTHER EARTH...
YOU HAVE GIVEN
THEM...
EVERYTHING...

THEY ARE TINY AND
STUPID AND VICIOUS
... BUT PLEASE...
LISTEN TO THEM...

PLEASE... I AM
SLOW AND
DYING...

I NEED
ONLY...
REACH
THE SUN...



THOUGH I WAS BORN A GALAXY AWAY...



THE SAME POWER... THE SUN'S POWER...



YOU HOLD IT... HERE... YOU STORE IT...



MOTHER...



MOTHER...





YOU ARE...SO
GENEROUS...



YOU GIVE ME...
YOUR BEAUTIFUL
JUNGLE...

I
SWEAR...



...YOUR
ADOPTED
SON WILL
HONOR YOU!



FROM MY
BUILDING...

...SHE
SCREAMS...



SARAH'S
HEIGHT--

--SARAH'S
HAIR--



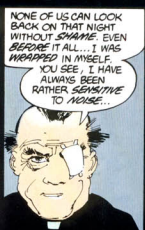
A SKIRT--

--THAT COULD
BE SARAH'S--



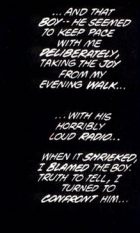
TRY NOT TO JUDGE THEM
TOO HARSHLY. IT WAS
A CRUEL TEST, FOR
ALL OF US...

...AND, WE
CAN HOPE, A
LESSON...



NONE OF US CAN LOOK
BACK ON THAT NIGHT
WITHOUT SHAME. EVEN
BEFORE IT ALL... I WAS
WRAPPED IN MYSELF.

YOU SEE, I HAVE
ALWAYS BEEN
RATHER SENSITIVE
TO NOISE...



...AND THAT
BOY-- HE SEEMED
TO KEEP PACE
WITH ME
LIBERATELY,
TAKING THE JOY
FROM MY
EVENING WALK...

...WITH HIS
HORRIBLY
LOUD RADIO...

WHEN IT SHRIEKED,
I BLAMED THE BOY.
TRUTH TO TELL, I
TURNED TO
CONFRONT HIM...

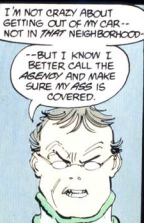


...THEN I NOTICED HIS
OWN CONFUSION-- AND
THE DARKNESS THAT
SEEMED TO FALL ACROSS
THE ENTIRE CITY.
I HEARD
SHOUTS...



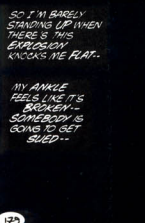
YES, I WAS SHOUTING.
WHAT DO YOU EXPECT?
I HAPPENED TO BE UP
AGAINST A BITCH OF
A DEADLINE. WHAT?...

...YES, OF COURSE
I'D HEARD ABOUT
THE BOMB. BUT I'VE
GOT PROBLEMS OF
MY OWN.



I'M NOT CRAZY ABOUT
GETTING OUT OF MY CAR--
NOT IN THAT NEIGHBORHOOD--

--BUT I KNOW I
BETTER CALL THE
AGENCY AND MAKE
SURE MY ASS IS
COVERED.



SO I'M BARELY
STANDING UP WHEN
THERE'S THIS
EXPLOSION
KNOCKS ME FLAT.

MY ANKLE
FEELS LIKE IT'S
BROKEN--
SOMEBODY IS
GOING TO GET
SUED--

I'M BARELY
ON MY FEET
WHEN THAT GIRL
IS ALL OVER
ME, TALKING
ABOUT WORLD
WAR THREE.

I DON'T LIKE
BEING TOUCHED
--AND LIKE I
SAID, I'VE GOT
MY OWN
PROBLEMS--

--BUT SHE
WON'T SHUT
UP--



GUESS I JUST LOST
CONTROL. I...I'D BEEN
HAVING NIGHTMARES
ABOUT THE BOMB...
READ UP ON IT A LOT...

...AND WHEN THE
LIGHTS WENT OUT...



...WELL, I KNEW IT HAD TO
BE THE ELECTROMAGNETIC
PULSE... AND ALL THE
BOOKS SAY THAT'D
ONLY HAPPEN DURING
A FULL-SCALE EXCHANGE...

...AND WHEN I
HEARD THAT
EXPLOSION...



...I MEAN, LATER I
FOUND OUT IT WAS A
JET, CRASHING INTO
THE BRISNAN BUILDING...

... I GUESS WE
WERE LUCKY IT
WAS THE ONLY
PLANE TO FALL
ON GOTHAM...



... BUT JUST THEN, I... I
MEAN NOT KNOWING...
BUT... IT WAS DUMB,
BUT WHEN I HEARD
THE EXPLOSION, I
THOUGHT...

... AND WHEN
THE CARS STARTED
GOING UP...



NOBODY TOLD ME ABOUT
ANY AIRPLANE. THE CARS
WERE POPPING OFF LIKE
FIRECRACKERS--
EVERYBODY SCREAMING--

--IT WAS EVERY
MAN FOR
HIMSELF.



OH, RIGHT, THE CAR.
LISTEN, I'VE NEVER
BROKEN THE LAW-- NOT
IN ANY WAY THAT COUNTS.

AND IT WASN'T ME WHO
TOLD HIM TO TRY TO
HELP THAT CAT BITCH
OUT OF HER
VOLKSWAGEN.



GROW UP, SOMEBODY
WAS GOING TO GET HIS
GUN. HE SURE DIDN'T
HAVE ANY USE FOR IT.

THAT PRIEST,
HE DIDN'T SEE
IT MY WAY...



HE WOULDN'T LET GO.
WOULDN'T LISTEN TO
REASON. I'VE BEEN TO
CHURCH EVERY SUNDAY
SINCE I WAS A KID.
BUT WHEN PUSH COMES
TO SHOVE...



HEY--YOU WEREN'T *THERE*.
COULD BARELY *SEE*
THROUGH ALL THE *SMOKE*
--WAS *SURE* I HEARD
SHELLINGS.

IT WAS THE END OF
THE *WORLD*-- AND
I HAD A *SON*--



WOULDN'T TAKE A
GENIUS TO REALIZE THAT
THE ONLY OTHER THING
WORTH A *DAMN* WAS
FOOD.

I WASN'T
ALONE,
EITHER.



THERE'S NO EXCUSE FOR
WHAT WE DID. WE WEREN'T
CRAZY. WE WERE JUST
AN UGLY BUNCH OF STUPID,
SELFISH *BASTARDS*.

THERE WAS THE
PRESS, A BLOODY
MESS. I DIDN'T
CARE...



...NO EXCUSE... I WAS IN
WITH THE *REST* OF THEM,
SHOVING, YELLING ABOUT
FOOD AND GUNS...

THERE WAS NO *PLAN*,
NOBODY FIGHTING
THE *FIRE*...



FIRES ARE FOR THE
FIRE DEPARTMENT. THAT'S
WHY I PAY MY *TAXES*. WE
HAD *OURSELVES* TO LOOK
AFTER.

WE WERE HEADING
EAST ON *CHELSEA*--
HIT THE *GRAND*
UNION PARKING
LOT...



...WHEN WE RAN INTO
ANOTHER CROWD THAT'D
GOTTEN THE SAME *IDEA*.
LOOKED LIKE THEY
CLEANED THE WHOLE
STORE OUT--

--AND WANTED IT ALL
FOR *THEMSELVES*.



ONE OF THEM MADE A
MOVE FOR THE *SON*. HE
WAS *BLACK*-- I'M NO
RACIST, BUT I THOUGHT
HE MIGHT HAVE A *KNIFE*.

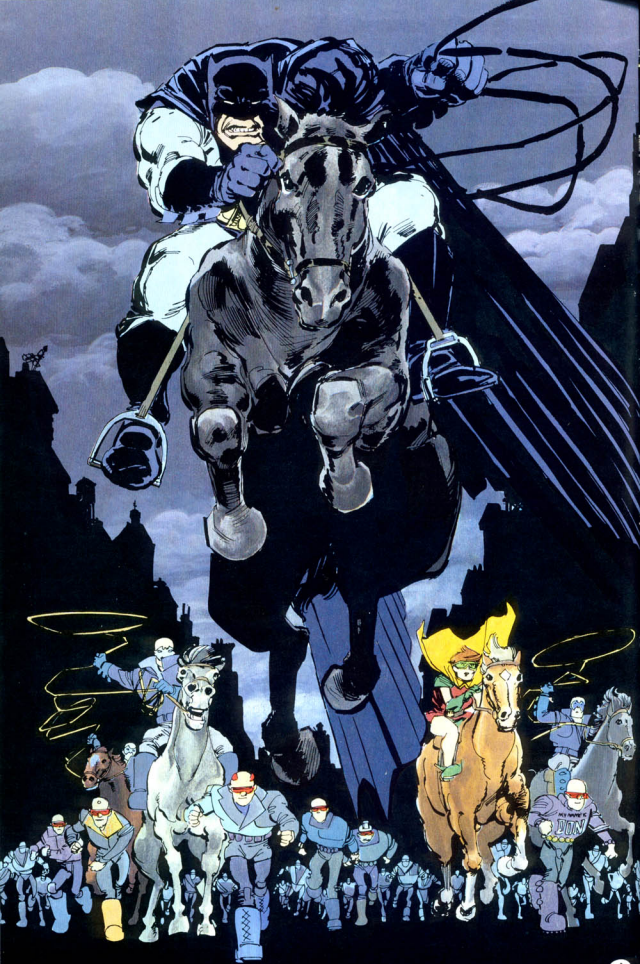
I DID WHAT
ANYBODY
WOULD'VE.

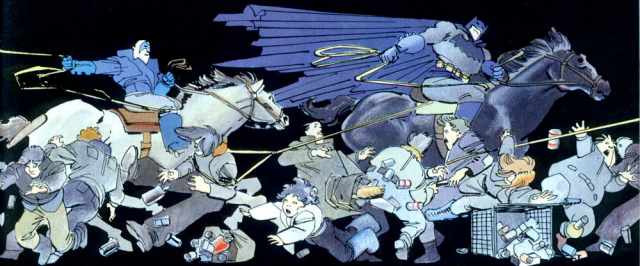


I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE IT
GOT AS BAD AS IT DID.
YOU'D NEVER HAVE
KNOWED THAT JUST A FEW
MINUTES *EARLIER* WE'D
BEEN...

...I WAS *STRAINING*
SOMEBODY WHEN I
HEARD THE *HORSES*...







LIKE THE GESTARD, THEY
MOVED IN ON US--BATMAN
AND THAT BRAT ARMY OF
HIS-- YOU'D HAVE THOUGHT
WE WERE CRIMINALS.

I TRIED TO DEFEND
MYSELF--HE SINGLED
ME OUT--



BROKE THREE RIBS-- AND
THIS BRACE ISN'T FOR
LAUSHS. WHENEVER THEY
CATCH THAT LUNATIC, HE'LL
HEAR FROM MY ATTORNEY.

WHO GAVE HIM
THE RIGHT?



WHEN HE TALKED--
BATMAN, I MEAN-- IT
WAS... IT'S HARD TO
DESCRIBE... THERE WAS
SOMETHING IN HIS VOICE...

... ANYWAY, HE
TOLD US WE COULD
SPEND THE NIGHT
TIED UP-- OR HELP
FIGHT THE FIRE...



SHE
ONLY GOT TO SCREAM
ONCE. IT WAS
TOO LATE
TO HELP
HER.



SHE ISN'T
SARAH.
I DON'T
KNOW
HER.



IT'S ONLY ONCE...
IN THE WHOLE
NIGHT... THAT IT
SHOWS...

HE'S GIVEN
CRIPERS AND
ALL THE MUTANTS
AND S.O.B.'S
AND EVERYBODY
ARE GONE FOR
A MINUTE...

... HE JUST SAGS
IN HIS SADDLE
LIKE AN OLD MAN...

...THEN HE STRAIGHTENS UP AND GRINS AT ME LIKE IT'S FUNNY.

HE CAN'T DYE...



TURNS OUT SARAH HAD GONE TO THE GROCERY STORE.

TURNS OUT SARAH FORGOT TO TELL ME SHE NEEDED MILK.

ONE MORE THING.



AFTER THE MOB LEFT, THE EXPLOSIONS CONTINUED. THE FIRES WERE EVERYWHERE...

...I WAS BARELY CONSCIOUS...IF NOT FOR THE BOY, I...



THAT'S RIGHT. THE BOY WITH THE RADIO. HE PULLED ME CLEAR. SAVED MY LIFE. WHEN BATMAN DROPPED OFF THE MEDICAL SUPPLIES, THE BOY PASSED THEM AROUND...

...HE WAS AT MY SIDE TILL MORNING, HELPING THE BURNED.



BUT, OF COURSE, THERE WASN'T ANY MORNING ...



...ONE WEEK LATER, IT'S STILL DARK AT HIGH NOON IN GOTHAM CITY. IT'S STILL WINTER IN AUGUST. HERE'S CHARLA SHRIEK TO EXPLAIN...



LOLA, THE SOVIET COLDBRINGER WAS DESIGNED TO INDUCE THE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF FULL-SCALE NUCLEAR WAR. FIRST, IT GENERATED THE PULSE THAT BLACKED OUT--

ON THAT PULSE-- DON'T MISS OUR SPECIAL TONIGHT-- YOUR FAVORITE STARS ARE ASKED "WHERE WERE YOU WHEN THE LIGHTS WENT OUT?" CARLA?

LOLA, THE PULSE WAS ONLY THE BEGINNING. WEATHER PATTERNS ACROSS THE HEMISPHERE HAVE BEEN COMPLETELY DISRUPTED--

THEY SURE HAVE, CARLA. AND SO HAS MY WARDROBE. THIS IS THE COLDEST DAY OF THE YEAR. I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO WEAR THESE DAYS...



STARVING
CIVIL WAR IN THE MID-WEST
CUBANS WON'T BUDGE
RIOTS
MEDIA PUSH
CREDIBILITY DISASTER

...NO, MR. PRESIDENT. I'M AFRAID HE'LL NEVER LET ME BRING HIM IN ALIVE...

THE COLDEST, LOLA-- UNTIL TOMORROW. THE BOMB'S BLAST THRUST HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF TONS OF SOOT INTO THE STRATOSPHERE--

--CREATING A BLACK CLOUD THAT COVERS THE AMERICAS, BLOTTING OUT THE SUN-- DEPRIVING US OF LIGHT AND HEAT...



...PEOPLE ARE FREEZING TO DEATH BY THE THOUSANDS... THE DAMAGE TO CROPS COULD WELL BRING ON A FAMINE...

I'M SURPRISED HE TOOK THE CHANCE OF COMING TO AMERICA-- WITH CLARK IN THE COUNTRY--

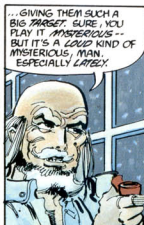


-- BUT OLIVER HAS ALWAYS LIVED BY HIS IMPULSES.



THIS PARTICULAR IMPULSE I CAN UNDERSTAND...

YOU'VE ALWAYS HAD IT WRONG, BRUCE...



...GIVING THEM SUCH A BIG TARGET. SURE, YOU PLAY IT MYSTERIOUS-- BUT IT'S A LOUD KIND OF MYSTERIOUS, MAN. ESPECIALLY LATELY.

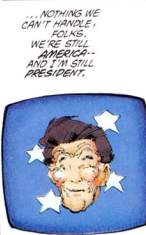


YOU GOT TO LEARN HOW TO MAKE THOSE SONS OF BITCHES WORK FOR YOU. LOOK-- IT'S BEEN FIVE YEARS SINCE I BLEW OUT OF PRISON--

-- AND YOU KNOW I'VE KEPT BUSY--

... COMPUTER FAILURE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SINKING OF THE U.S. NUCLEAR SUBMARINE VALIANT; PENTAGON SOURCES DISCLOSED TODAY... NO HANDS WERE LOST...





RIGHT THERE-- IN THAT SADDLE-- IS ALL THE REASON I NEED...

SHE HAS DECADES-- DECADES, LEFT TO HER...

...NEW YORK, CHICAGO, METROPOLIS-- EVERY CITY IN AMERICA IS CAUGHT IN THE GRIP OF A NATIONAL PANIC-- WITH ONE EXCEPTION. RIGHT, TOM?...

...THEN-- A BLAST OF HEAT--

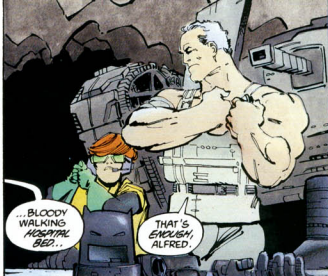


--FROM THE SKY--

WHERE?

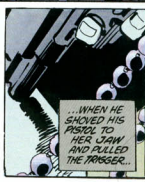
--AND IT BEGINS...





...IN THE PAST WEEK,
SEVENTY THREE VIOLENT
ATTACKS ON WOULD-BE
LOOTERS HAVE BEEN
ATTRIBUTED BY WITNESSES
TO THE BATMAN AND HIS
GANGS...

...WHEN YOU CAME FOR
ME... IN THE CAVE... I
WAS JUST SIX YEARS
OLD...



NO... IT WAS... TWO YEARS
LATER... WHEN HER
NECKLACE CAUGHT ON
HIS WRIST...

...AND EVERYTHING
MY MOTHER WAS
STRUCK THE PAVEMENT
AS A BLOODY MAD...



...COMMISSIONER YINDEL
REFUSED TO COMMENT
ON THE CHARGE THAT
GOTHAM'S POLICE HAVE
BEEN LAM IN PURSUING
THE MURDER CHARGE
AGAINST THE BATMAN...

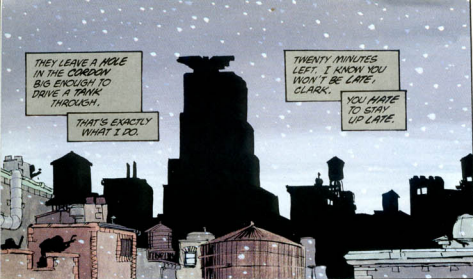
SOMEWHERE IN
THE ENDLESS
NIGHT... LIKE A
BELLOW FROM
A WOUNDED
BEAR...

...ARMY TROOPS HAVE
EVACUATED THE SLUM
KNOWN AS CRIME
ALLEY... NO EXPLANATION
IS GIVEN--NEWS
COVERAGE HAS BEEN
FLATLY DENIED--



...THE ANSWER
COMES...





THEY LEAVE A HOLE
IN THE CORDON
BIG ENOUGH TO
DRIVE A TRUCK
THROUGH.

THAT'S EXACTLY
WHAT I DO.

TWENTY MINUTES
LEFT. I KNOW YOU
WON'T BE LATE,
CLARK.

YOU HATE
TO STAY
UP LATE.



...EVERYTHING'S IN POSITION,
BOSS. LIKE MAYBE IT'S
TIME YOU TOLD ME THE
PLAN... I MEAN...

...YOU GOING TO
DIE OR WHAT?



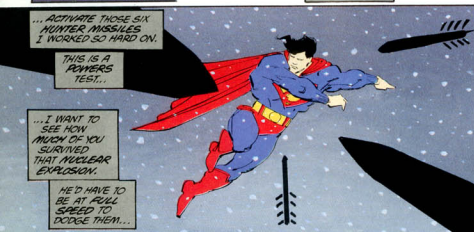
FIGURE
I
WILL.

THE WIND
PICKS UP...

...SOMETHING
SCRAMBLING
OUR SENSORS,
KENT.
IT'S UP TO
YOU TO
FIND HIM...

THAT'S
RIGHT, CLARK...
SCARY THE
AREA...

...BATHE
IT WITH
X-RAYS...



...ACTIVATE THOSE SIX
HUNTER MISSILES
I WORKED SO HARD ON.

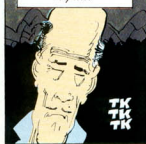
THIS IS A
POWERS
TEST...

...I WANT TO
SEE HOW
MUCH OF YOU
SURVIVED
THAT NUCLEAR
EXPLOSION.

HE'D HAVE TO
BE AT FULL
SPEED TO
DODGE THEM...

Strange to think of that
particular evening, more
than forty years past.

Master Bruce was
but NINE years old,
but restless, as
he always was, at
night...

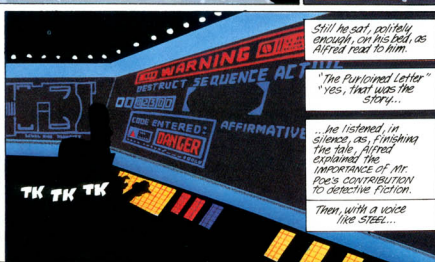


TK
TK
TK



HE ISN'T.
I WATCH
THEM KICK
HIM AROUND
FOR A
MINUTE.

I'VE HAD
HORSE TIMES.



Still he sat, politely
enough, on his bed, as
Alfred read to him.

"The Purloined Letter"
"yes, that was the
story..."

...he listened, in
silence, as, finishing
the tale, Alfred
explained the
importance of Mr.
Poe's contribution
to detective fiction.

Then, with a voice
like STEEL...

...so frightfully formal...
his dark eyes FLASHING...

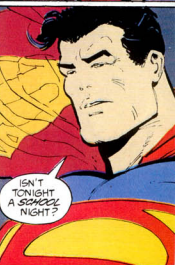
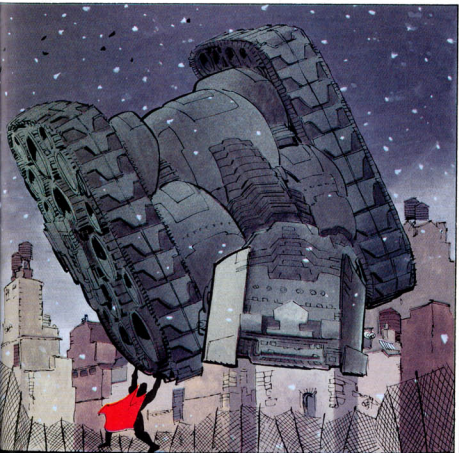
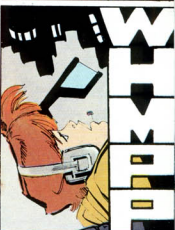
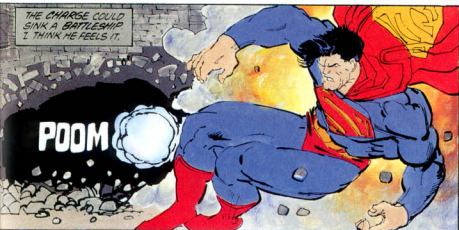
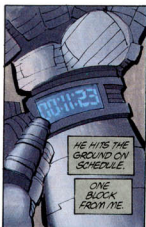
Alfred assured him
that the villain had
met Justice.

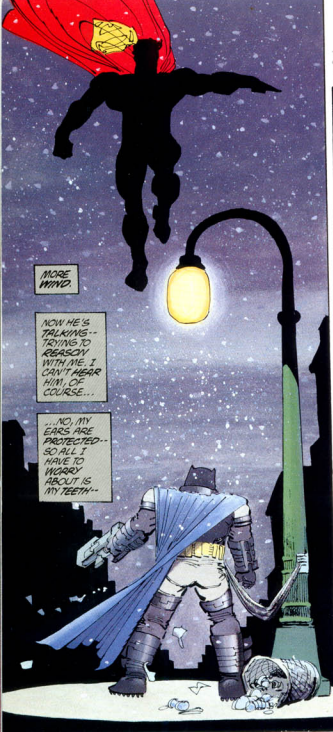
"Master Bruce
asked -- NO.
DEMANDED...
"The killer was
caught, and
punished."

Bruce slept.
Like a boy.

**DETONATION
T MINUS**

00:11:24





--RATTLING FROM MY JAW--OR SHATTERING, LIKE EVERY WINDOW ON THE BLOCK--

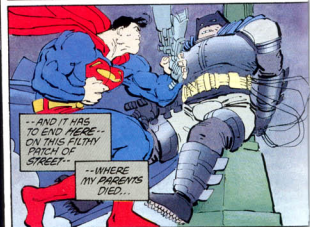


--WHEN I HIT HIM WITH THE SONIC.

A NOSEBLEED -- SO SOON, CLARK--

DON'T DROP NOW-- THE NIGHT IS YOUNG--

AND I HAVE--SO MUCH PLANNED--



--AND IT HAS TO END HERE-- ON THIS FILTHY PATCH OF STREET--

--WHERE MY PARENTS DIED--



...WHERE I CAN USE THE CITY'S POWER.



--EVERY WATT OF IT--



--TO FRY YOUR BRAIN--

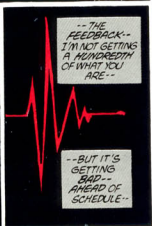
--STILL TALKING-- KEEP TALKING, CLARK...

...YOU'VE ALWAYS KNOWN JUST WHAT TO SAY.



"YES"-- YOU ALWAYS SAY YES-- TO ANYONE WITH A BADGE-- OR A FLAG--

--NO GOOD--



--THE FEEDBACK-- I'M NOT GETTING A HUNDREDTH OF WHAT YOU ARE--

--BUT IT'S GETTING BAD-- AHEAD OF SCHEDULE--

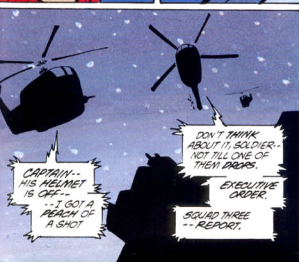
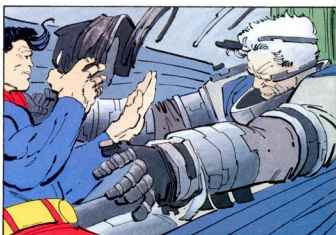
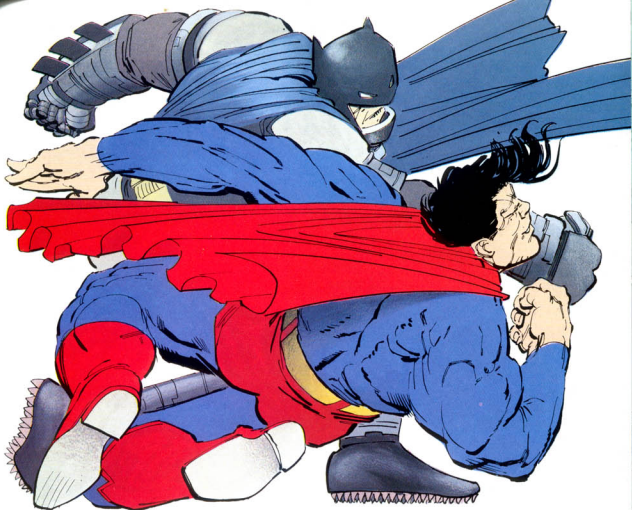


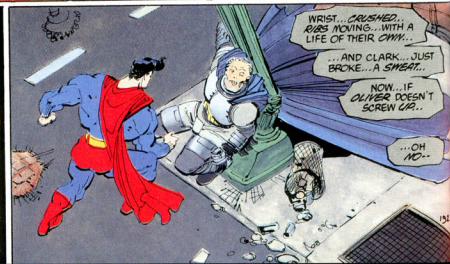
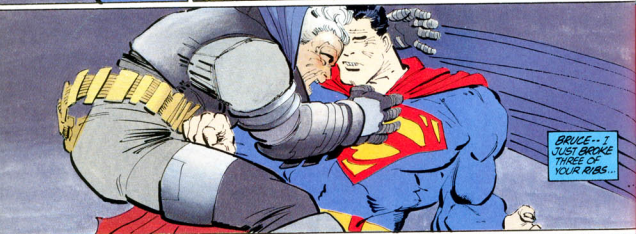
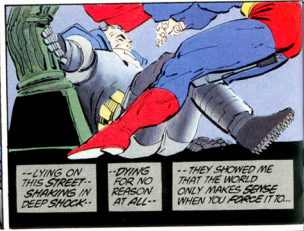
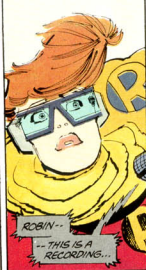
--WHAT DIDN'T HIT YOU-- AND ME-- FED THIS SUIT, CLARK--

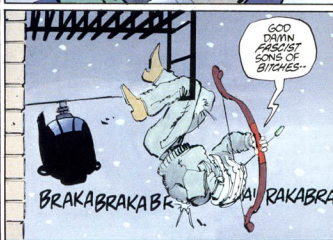
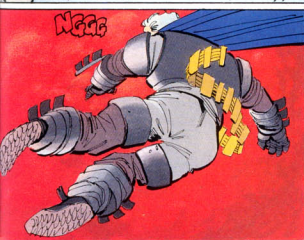
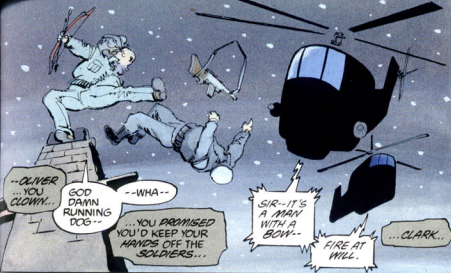


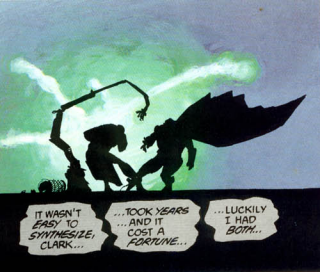
--IT'S WAY PAST TIME YOU LEARNED-- WHAT IT MEANS--

--TO BE A MAN--









IT WASN'T
EASY TO
SYNTHESIZE,
CLARK...

...TOOK YEARS
...AND IT
COST A
FORTUNE...

...LUCKILY
I HAD
BOTH...



COME
AND GET
ME YOU
SONS OF--
--WHA--

EYES
DOWNSIDE,
SPUD.



FIGURE
WE GOT
ALL
WEEK...



HIYO
GOD DAMN
SILVER.



KOOF
BRUCE--
YOUR
HEART--



YOU'RE
BEGINNING TO
GET THE /IDEA,
CLARK...

...THIS...IS THE
END...
...FOR BOTH
OF US...



--TANK'S BREAKING
AWAY--
--GOT THEM--
WHOLE AREA'S
SURROUNDED--

--HEADING ACROSS
THE PARKING LOT--



--WHAT--FELL
THROUGH--
--WHAT THE
HELL--



OH, CHRIST--
WATER MAIN--
WE LOST THEM--
--CHRIST
WE LOST
THEM--



WE COULD
HAVE CHANGED
THE WORLD...

...NOW... LOOK
AT US...



I'VE BECOME...
A POLITICAL
LIABILITY...
...AND
YOU...



...YOU'RE
A JOKE...



... I WANT YOU...
TO REMEMBER,
CLARK...

... IN ALL THE
YEARS TO COME...

... IN YOUR
MOST PRIVATE
MOMENTS...

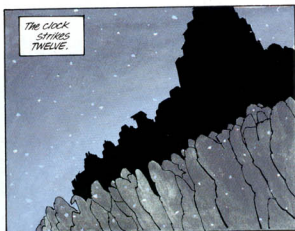
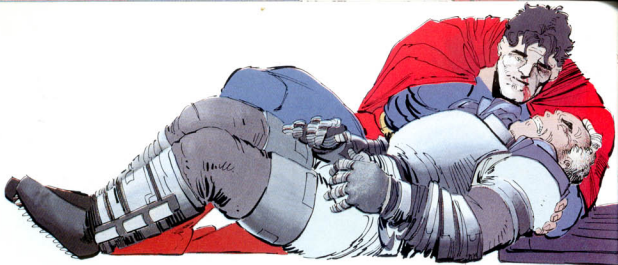
I WANT YOU TO REMEMBER
... MY HAND... AT YOUR
THROAT...

... I WANT... YOU
TO REMEMBER...



... THE ONE
MAN WHO
BEAT YOU...





The clock
strikes
twelve.



The ancient
moor trembles,
beneath Alfred's
feet.

Deep underground,
computers, holding
every precious secret
of the Batman,
burst, and burn...

Mrs. Wayne's priceless
collection of porcelain
shatters, musically...

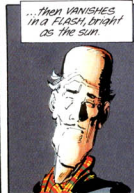
...the central mass of
Wayne Manor shudders,
as if alive...

The world turns ruby
red. The manor roof
rises, madly, into
the sky, riding a
pillar of flame.

A joint travels the
length of Alfred's
spine. Of course, he
thinks, as his head
goes light.



...empty stables
fly apart like
toothpick models...



...then vanishes
in a flash, bright
as the sun.



How utterly
proper.



DON'T
TOUCH
HIM--

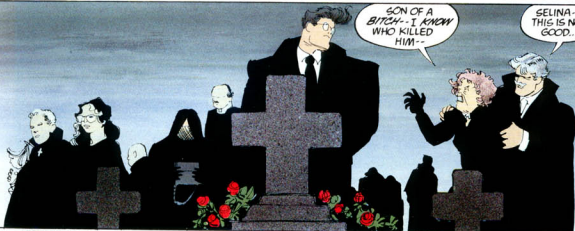
... COMMEND
HIS SOUL...

... CLOUD HAS ALMOST
COMPLETELY CLEARED IN
THE PAST SEVENTY-TWO
HOURS. THE PRESIDENT
HAS DECLARED A STATE
OF STABILIZED
EMERGENCY...

REPEATING THE WEEK'S
TOP STORIES-- THE
SPECTACULAR CAREER
OF THE BATMAN
CAME TO A TRAGIC
CONCLUSION...

... AS THE CRIMEFIGHTER
SUFFERED A HEART
ATTACK WHILE
BATTLING GOVERNMENT
TROOPS.

HE HAS BEEN
IDENTIFIED AS
FIFTY-FIVE YEAR OLD
BILLIONAIRE BRUCE
WAYNE-- AND HIS
DEATH HAS PROVEN
AS MYSTERIOUS AS
HIS LIFE...



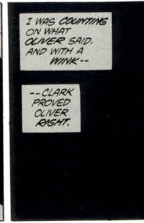
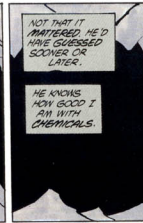
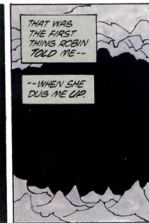
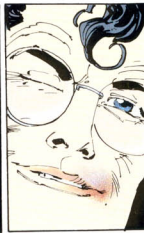
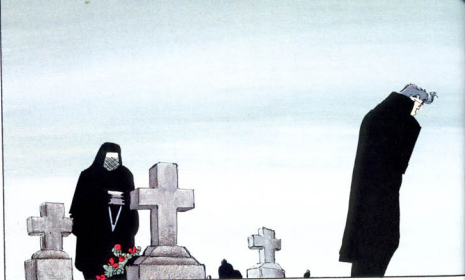
WAYNE MANOR WAS
LEVELLED BY A SERIES
OF EXPLOSIONS, SET
APPARENTLY, BY WAYNE'S
BUTLER, FOUND DEAD
FROM A STROKE AT
THE SCENE...

... FLAMES DESTROYED
WHATEVER EVIDENCE
MAY HAVE EXISTED AS
TO BATMAN'S METHODS.
ALSO MISSING, IT
SEEMS, IS THE WAYNE
FORTUNE...

INTERNAL REVENUE
AGENTS INVESTIGATED
WAYNE'S RECORDS,
FINDING HIS EVERY
BANK ACCOUNT
EMPTY. EVERY STOCK
SOLD...



...WHERE THE MONEY
WENT IS ONE MORE
SECRET WAYNE HAS
TAKEN TO HIS GRAVE...
HIS BODY WAS CLAIMED
BY HIS ONLY LIVING
RELATIVE, A DISTANT
COUSIN...



THAT WAS
THE FIRST
THING ROBIN
TOLD ME--

--WHEN SHE
DUG ME UP.

NOT THAT IT
MATTERED, HE'D
HAVE GUESSED
SOONER OR
LATER.

HE KNOWS
HOW GOOD I
AM WITH
CHEMICALS.

I WAS COUNTING
ON WHAT
OLIVER SAID.
AND WITH A
WINK--

--CLARK
PROVED
OLIVER
RIGHT.

MY TIMING
WASN'T QUITE
PRECISE
ENOUGH.

CLARK
HEARD.

HE'LL LEAVE ME ALONE, NOW. IN RETURN, I'LL STAY QUIET.

SO WILL ROBIN-- AND THE REST...

THERE-- SEE THAT LEDGE? GET A LAMP UP THERE.

RIGHT, BOSS.

CAREFUL WITH THAT--

RIGHT, ALL SET, BOSS.

GOOD. NOW GATHER ROUND.

WE HAVEN'T GOT ALL NIGHT, BOY.

THAT'S NOT TRUE...

...WE HAVE YEARS-- AS MANY AS WE NEED...

FIRST WE GET A STEADY SUPPLY OF WATER. THERE'S A SPRING RIGHT BENEATH--

--ROBIN! SIT UP STRAIGHT.

YES, SIR.

YEARS-- TO TRAIN AND STUDY AND PLAY...

... HERE, IN THE ENDLESS CAVE, FAR PAST THE BURNT REMAINS OF A CRIMEFIGHTER WHOSE TIME HAS PASSED...

IT BEGINS HERE-- AN ARMY-- TO BRING SENSE TO A WORLD PLAGUED BY WORSE THAN THIEVES AND MURDERERS...

THIS WILL BE A GOOD LIFE...

...GOOD ENOUGH.