

# BATMAN <sup>IN</sup> CHALLENGE <sup>OF</sup> THE MAN-BAT

STORY:  
FRANK  
ROBBINS--

ART:  
NEAL ADAMS &  
DICK  
GIORDANO

GOTHAM MUSEUM OF  
NATURAL HISTORY...  
AFTER HOURS...

THAT YOU UP  
THERE, LANGSTROM?  
COULD HARDLY MAKE  
YOU OUT AMONG  
THOSE OVER-SIZED  
PAPIER-MÂCHÉ  
BATS!

YUP, CURATOR  
WILKINS--  
IT'S ME,  
BURNING THE  
MIDNIGHT OIL  
AGAIN...



TO GET THIS  
NIGHT-CREATURE  
HABITAT EXHIBIT  
COMPLETED FOR  
NEXT MONTH'S  
OPENING!

AND I  
GUARANTEE  
THIS LARGER-  
THAN-LIFE RE-  
CREATION IS  
GOING TO BE AN  
EYE-OPENER!

BUT AS SOON AS THE DOOR OF THE GREAT  
EXHIBIT HALL CLANGS SHUT...



HE COULDN'T  
LEAVE SOON  
ENOUGH FOR  
ME!

NOW I CAN  
GET BACK TO  
MY REAL  
WORK WITH  
LIVE  
COUNTER-  
PARTS!

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THE BRIGHT LIGHT HURTS  
YOUR WEAK EYES, DOES  
IT? SOON YOU'LL SLEEP,  
LITTLE FURRED  
FRIEND...



AND SOON I WILL HAVE A  
NATURAL ABILITY EVEN THE  
GREAT **BATMAN**  
DOESN'T POSSESS!

WHILE UNDERGROUND IN ANOTHER  
PART OF GOTHAM CITY... OTHER  
MEN HAVE COME UP WITH A  
WAY TO COMBAT **BATMAN'S**  
NIGHT-FIGHTING ABILITY!...

FROM NOW ON OUR VAULT-  
HEISTS WILL BE CARRIED OUT  
**UNDETECTED!** NO ONE--NOT  
EVEN THE **MASKED MAN-  
HUNTER--** WILL BE ABLE TO  
SPOT US!

BECAUSE  
UNLIKE US--  
**BATMAN CAN'T**  
SEE IN PITCH-  
BLACKNESS!

WITH OUR "**LIGHT-  
INTENSIFIER**"  
GOGGLES, THE  
DARKEST OBJECTS  
LOOK BRIGHT  
AS DAY!

AND WITH  
THESE **FOAM-  
SOLED SHOES,**  
NOT EVEN A  
**MOUSE** COULD  
HEAR US!



THE WALL TO THE GEM-VAULT  
ROOM SHOULD BE RIGHT HERE,  
ACCORDING TO THIS UNDER-  
GROUND PLAN! READS JUST  
LIKE I HAD A **SPOTLIGHT**  
ON IT!

HAND ME  
THE **ULTRA-  
SONIC CUTTING**  
TOOL--NOBODY  
CAN HEAR  
THAT EITHER!



HERE,  
BOSS...

WHAT WAS THAT?  
THOUGHT I  
HEARD SOME-  
THING...





INSTANTLY REGRETTING HIS RASHNESS, HIS PREY PULLS AWAY... BECOMING A MOVING TARGET!...



DARN! COULDN'T CONNECT SOLID!

BOK

RIP

MOMENTS LATER, LEFT ALONE WITH AN EMPTY SLEEVE...



OUT-MANEUVRED BY... SHADOWS! MUST'VE BEEN USING SOME SOPHISTICATED ELECTRONIC SEEING-AID...

THIS MONKEY HAD TO SEE WHAT HE WAS AIMING AT--ME!



NO RISK NOW IN THROWING LIGHT ON THE SITUATION! MAY FIND SOME CLUE...

THERE'S SOMETHING... PROBABLY WHAT CAUSED THE RACKET THAT ALERTED ME!



AN ULTRA-SONIC CUTTING TOOL! CAN ZIP THROUGH CONCRETE AND METAL LIKE CHEESE...

...WITHOUT EMITTING A SOUND THE HUMAN-EAR CAN DETECT!



WHILE EXITING IN A REMOTE, DESERTED AREA...

ONE STUPID SLIP-UP IN A PERFECT SET-UP ALMOST FINISHED US! FROM NOW ON... ALL TOOLS ARE PADDED, DIG?

TOUGH WE HAD TO LOSE THAT ULTRA-SONIC TOOL!



IT'S MORE THAN TOUGH... 'CAUSE BY NOW BATMAN'S FOUND IT! IF WE USE ANOTHER ONE, HE MIGHT BE ABLE TO TRACK US DOWN...

...BY USING A DETECTOR TUNED TO ITS OPERATING-FREQUENCY!

THEN HE'S GOT US STYMIED, BOSS! WE CAN'T PULL ANOTHER "BLACKOUT" JOB WITHOUT THAT SILENT GIZMO!

NOT UNLESS WE USE IT AS A WEAPON AGAINST THAT SNOOPER! WHICH WE WILL... TO LURE HIM INTO A TRAP... WHERE WE'LL BE READY FOR ANY COUNTER-MOVE HE MAKES!

LIKE WHEN? WHERE?

TOMORROW NIGHT... THERE! THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM... ITS GEM COLLECTION IS IN A WINDOWLESS HALL! AND WHEN THE LIGHTS ARE SWITCHED OFF...

...PITCH-BLACKNESS! THEN WE SWITCH ON BATMAN'S HOMING SIGNAL, OUR ULTRA-S CUTTER, AND...

WHILE IN THE DEPTHS OF THE OUTWARDLY BLACKED-OUT MUSEUM...

THAT DOES IT... THE LAST OF A SERIES OF EVER-INCREASING DOSES OF GLAND-EXTRACT! AND NOW, MY LEATHERY-WINGED FRIEND, WE WAIT THE FIRST SIGNS OF INCREASED SENSITIVITY TO MINUTE SOUNDS...

...THE FIRST NECESSITY FOR NATURAL SONAR-DETECTION...

ARGHH-H! THAT NOISE-- UNBEARABLE!

PLIP  
PLIP  
PLIP  
PLIP  
PLIP

AND... MY EYES! CAN'T STAND THAT BLAZING LIGHT!

SWITCHING OFF THE OFFENDING LIGHT, LANGSTROM HEADS UNERRINGLY ACROSS THE CLUTTERED LAB TO THE CLOSET!...

SUNGLASSES IN MY JACKET... MUST GET THEM!

THEN, A SUDDEN DAWNING REALIZATION...



GOOD LORD! I NAVIGATED IN UTTER BLACKNESS WITHOUT BUMPING INTO ANYTHING!

MY VOCAL-CORDS MUST'VE BEEN EMITTING SUPER-SONIC SIGNALS!



MY ULTRA-SENSITIVE HEARING PICKED UP THE BOUNCE-BACK ECHOES, GUIDING ME TO MY TARGET LIKE A HOMING MISSILE!

I'VE DONE IT! I NOW POSSESS A BAT'S NATURAL SONAR!



BUT... NORMAL SOUNDS CAN DRIVE ME CRAZY! HAVE TO DULL THEM...

THESE WAX EAR-PLUGS WILL DO TILL I CAN GET BETTER ONES!

WHILE IN HIS SECRET LAB ATOP THE WAYNE FOUNDATION, BATMAN WORKS FEVERISHLY TO INCREASE HIS HEARING SENSITIVITY...



SINCE I'M A BATMAN IN NAME ONLY, I NEED AN ARTIFICIAL AID TO FIND MY TARGETS QUICKLY IN THE DARK!

THESE STEREO-LOCATOR EAR-PLUGS SHOULD DO THE JOB, ALFRED!

WORKING DEEP INTO THE NIGHT, THE CAPED CRUSADER FINALLY REACHES THE TEST STAGE...



WILL THIS OUTFIT DO, SIR?

FINE! TAKE OFF YOUR SHOES...

AND MOVE AS SILENTLY AS POSSIBLE INTO THE DARK, CARPETED LIVING ROOM!



AND NOW, AS I PLUNGE EVERYTHING INTO DARKNESS... WE PLAY HIDE-AND-SEEK!

IN A BRIEF BATTLE OF WITS, BOTH MEN MAKE NO MOVEMENT TO BETRAY THEIR LOCATION... UNTIL LIKE A POUNCING CAT...



I SAY, SIR... HOW DID YOU EVER? I EVEN HELD MY BREATH...

AS THE LIGHTS ARE PUT ON AGAIN...

BUT ONE THING YOU COULDN'T DO! STOP YOUR...  
...HEARTBEATS! MINE, LOUDER... AND YOURS, FAINTER!



NOW I'M SET TO COPE WITH THIS "BLACKOUT" GANG... SOON AS I ANALYZE THE OPERATING FREQUENCY OF THIS ULTRA-SONIC CUTTER, AND RIG UP A LOCATION-FINDER!

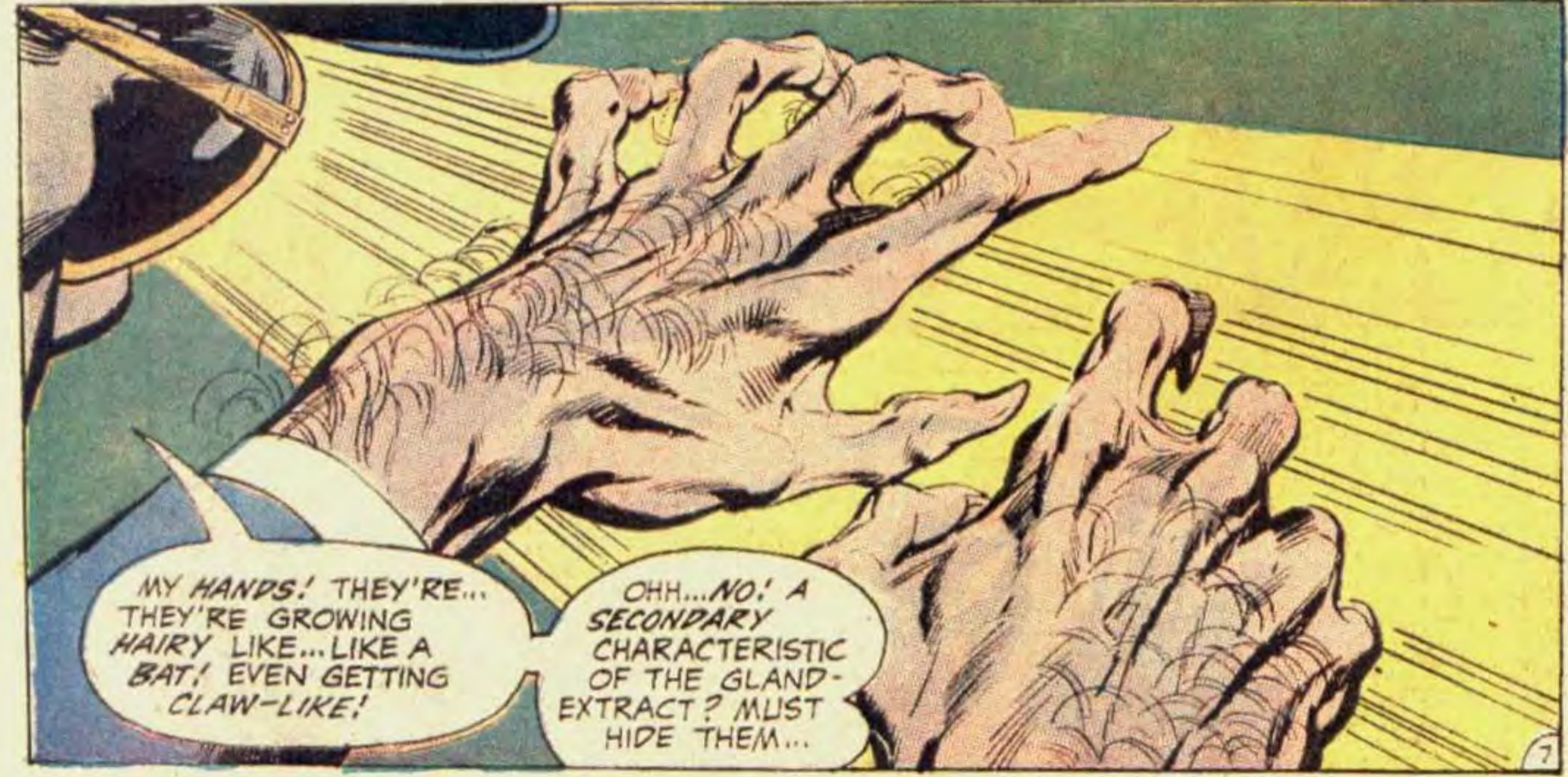


WHILE AT THE MUSEUM, A MAN FLUSHED WITH SUCCESS BUT WEARIED BY HIS TRYING BREAK-THROUGH...



ENOUGH FOR NOW! I MUST GET HOME TO BED...

W-WHAT'S-- THIS?!



MY HANDS! THEY'RE... THEY'RE GROWING HAIRY LIKE... LIKE A BAT! EVEN GETTING CLAW-LIKE!

OHH...NO! A SECONDARY CHARACTERISTIC OF THE GLAND-EXTRACT? MUST HIDE THEM...



IT'S ONLY TEMPORARY... HAS TO BE!



MY--MY HAT! WHAT PUSHED IT OFF?



IN SILENT, GNAWING ANGUISH, THE DELVER INTO THE UNKNOWN RUSHES WILDLY ACROSS THE ROOM...



AND THEN, IN ONE REELING MOMENT OF HORROR-STRUCK REALIZATION... THE IMMENSITY OF HIS "ACHIEVEMENT" IS REVEALED TO HIM!

I'M... GAHRRR ... BECOMING A...

...MAN-BAT!



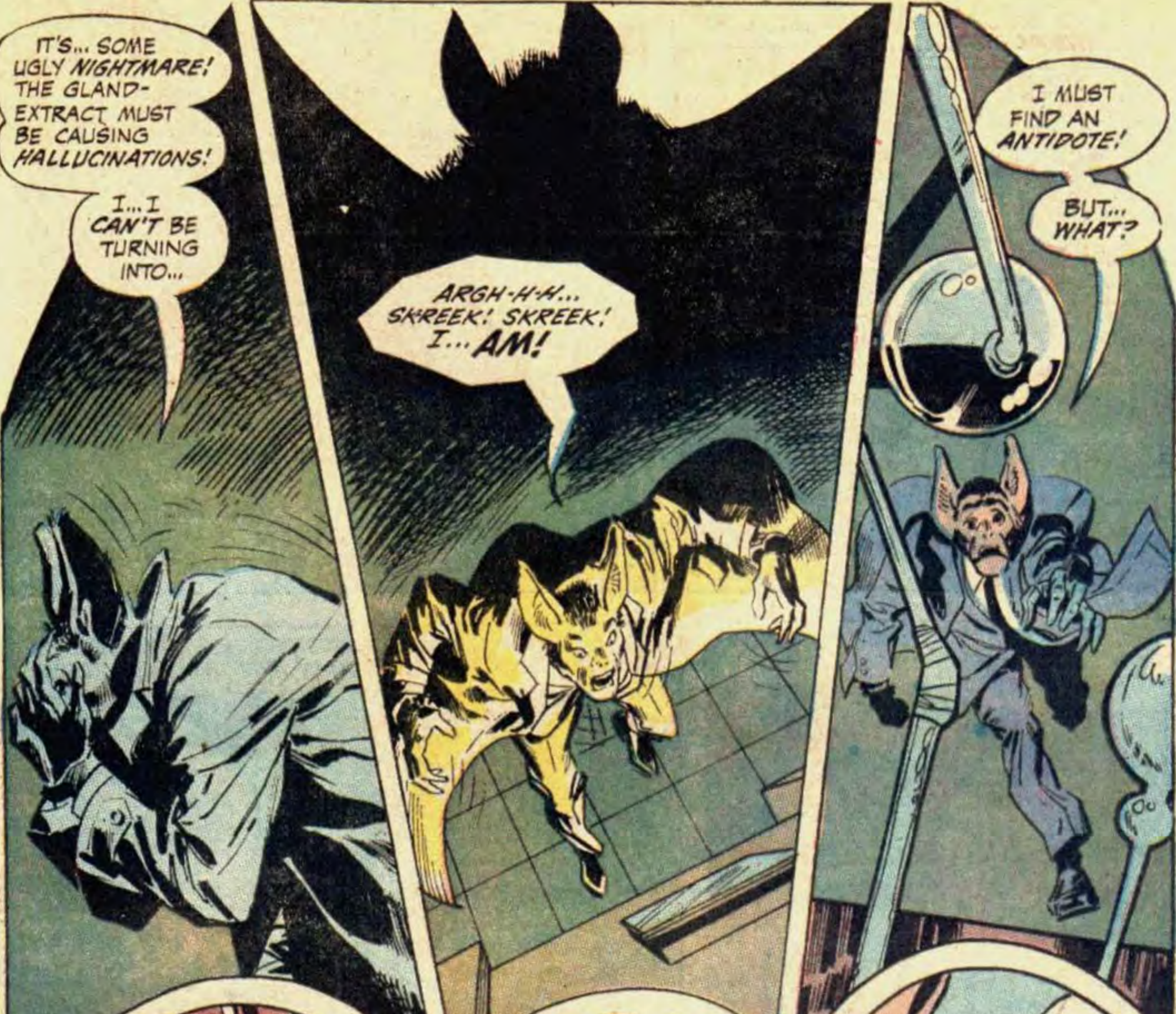
IT'S... SOME UGLY NIGHTMARE! THE GLAND-EXTRACT MUST BE CAUSING HALLUCINATIONS!

I... I CAN'T BE TURNING INTO...

ARGH-H-H... SKREEK! SKREEK! I... AM!

I MUST FIND AN ANTIDOTE!

BUT... WHAT?



STAY AWAY FROM ME... YOU FURRY LITTLE MONSTER! I... I'M NOT ONE OF YOU!

SHREEEK  
SHREEEK

CAN'T LEAVE HERE... LIKE THIS! MUST GO INTO HIDING 'TIL I CAN CHANGE THE COURSE OF THIS EVIL MUTATION!

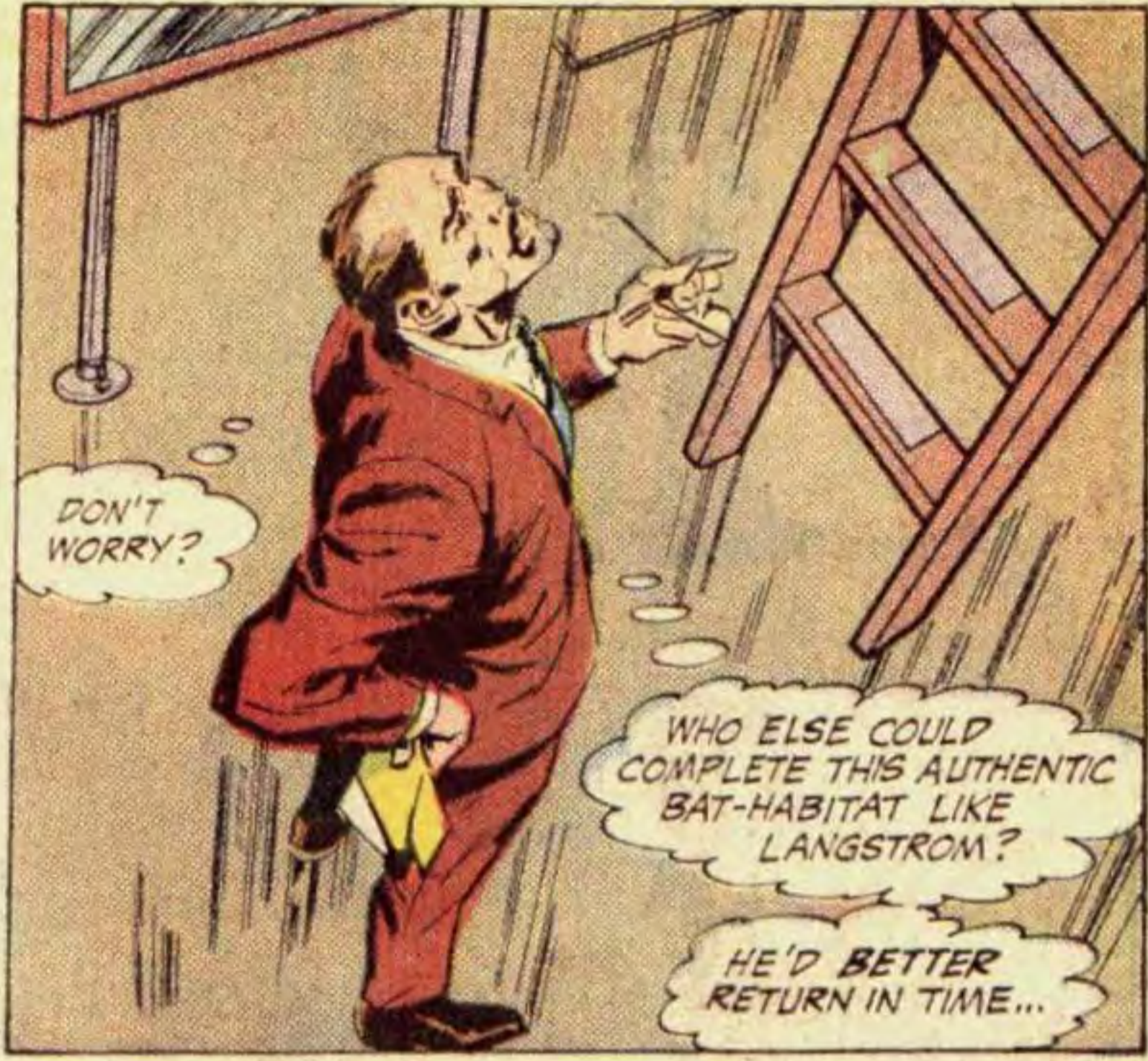
NO ONE MUST SEARCH FOR ME... NO ONE!



**NEXT MORNING, A TELEGRAM DELIVERY TO THE CURATOR OF THE GOTHAM MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY...**



"MOTHER SERIOUSLY ILL... STOP... MUST FLY TO CHICAGO... STOP... DON'T WORRY... EXHIBIT WILL BE FINISHED TIME FOR OPENING... LANGSTROM!"



DON'T WORRY?

WHO ELSE COULD COMPLETE THIS AUTHENTIC BAT-HABITAT LIKE LANGSTROM?

HE'D BETTER RETURN IN TIME...

**WHILE UNNOTICED ABOVE, AMONG NIGHT-CREATURES WHO SLEEP BY DAY... AND HUNT BY NIGHT...**



**AS THE LONG DAY PASSES AND THE MUSEUM SLEEPS AGAIN, AN EMOTIONALLY EXHAUSTED MAN-BAT WAKES, UNREFRESHED...**



SKREEK... YAWN! DREAMED SUCH GRUESOME TORTURED THINGS-- THAT I WAS REALLY A... UGH... BAT! AND SLEEPING HANGING UPSIDE-DOWN...



NO DREAM... GASP... NO DREAM! I AM UP HERE... AMONG THEM! AND... AND THE FANTASTIC STRENGTH MY HANDS NOW POSSESS...!



I'M HUNGRY...RAVENOUSLY HUNGRY! THE MUSEUM CAFETERIA...THROUGH THE GEM-COLLECTION!

WHILE IN THE TOTALLY BLACKED-OUT GEM HALL...



IDEAL, EH, BOYS? THE PERFECT CONDITIONS TO FINALLY END THE CAREER OF THAT PHONEY MASTER OF DARKNESS--BATMAN!

NOW--SWITCH ON THE ULTRA-S CUTTER AND BEAM HIM IN!

THE BLACKOUT GANG'S BACK IN OPERATION! ONLY THIS TIME I ZERO IN AND CATCH THEM FLAT-FOOTED!



HE'S COMING--FREEZE! NOT A PEEP OUT OF ANYONE--WANT TO TEST IF HE DEVELOPED A COUNTER-ATTACK!

DIG THIS EXPERIMENTAL CAR AN ADVANCED-THINKING MANUFACTURER OFFERED TO BATMAN FOR TESTING!



WITH THE SURENESS OF A NIGHT-CREATURE, THE MASKED CRIME-CRUSADER LEAPS INTO THE VELVETY BLACKNESS!

I CAN'T SEE YOU... BUT I KNOW YOU'RE HERE! SURRENDER... BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!



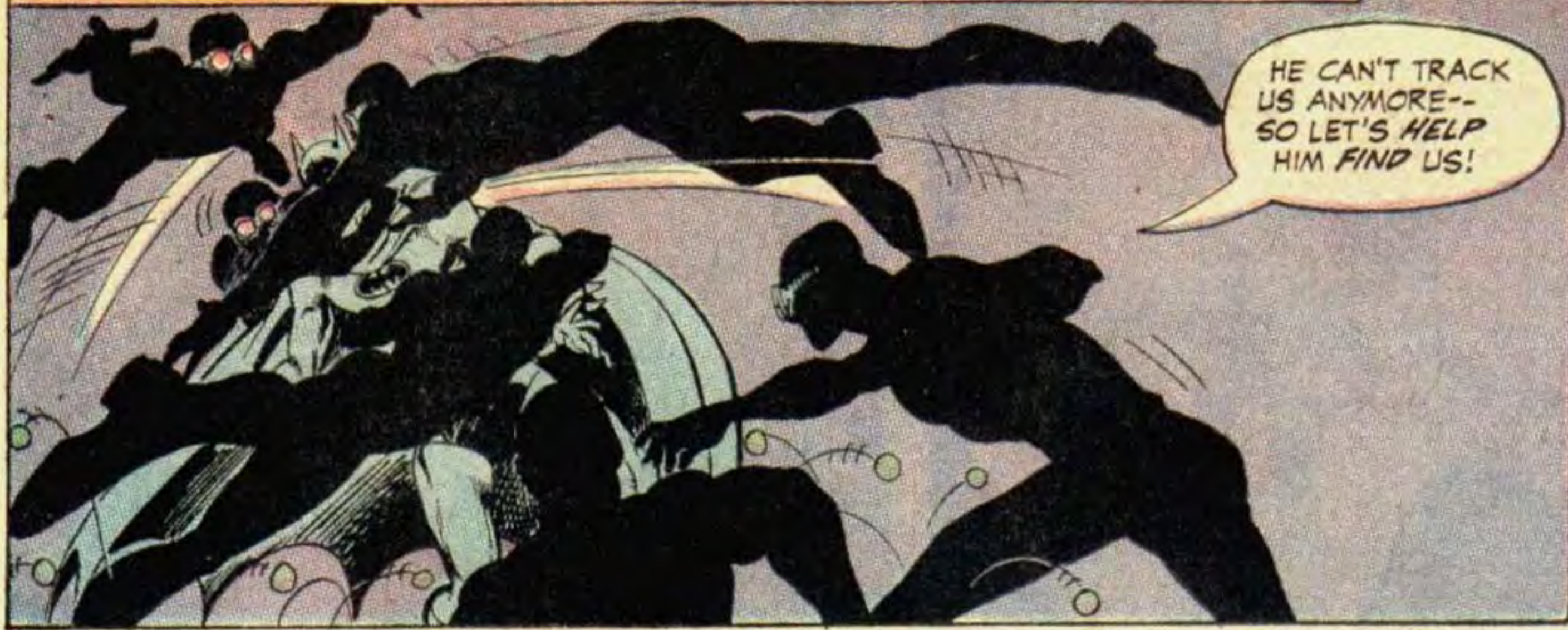
NEXT MOMENT, THE BLACKOUT-GANG LEADER SPRINGS HIS COUNTERATTACK...



AMPLIFIED BY HIS OVER-SENSITIVE HEARING-AIDS, THE CASCADING BALLS ECHO AND RE-ECHO DEAFENINGLY IN THE BATMAN'S HEAD--MASKING ALL OTHER SOUNDS!...



AS THE BOUNCING, CAROMING PING-PONG BALLS CONTINUE THEIR BEWILDERING CACOPHONY...



HE CAN'T TRACK US ANYMORE-- SO LET'S HELP HIM FIND US!



I'LL TAKE IT ON THESE BLIND TERMS, ANYTHING THAT HITS ME--I CAN HIT!

BUT EVEN FOR THE MIGHTY BATMAN THESE ODDS PROVE TOO GREAT!

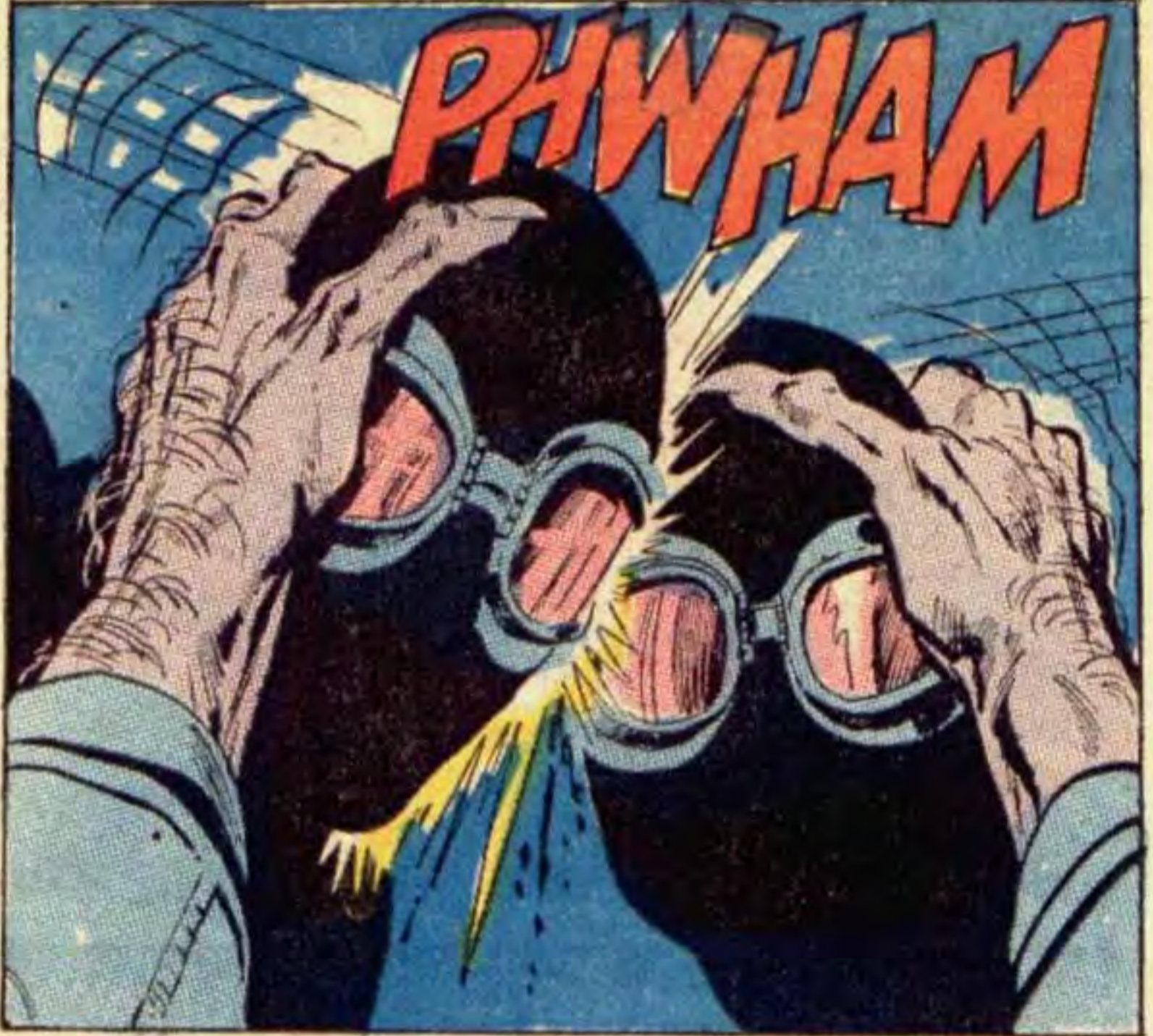


NOW THAT HE'S HELPLESS... I'LL FINISH HIM!



BUT SUDDENLY, FROM OUT OF THE BLACKNESS OF THE HUSHED HALL...

WHA--? ARGH-H-- IT'S... THE MOST HORRIBLE THING I'VE EVER SEEN!



THEN, JOINING HIS STRANGE COUNTERPART--BOTH BROTHERS--  
UNDER-THE-SKIN FINISH OFF THEIR ENEMIES... TOGETHER!

GLAD TO HAVE  
YOU ON THE  
TEAM, FELLA...

IT'S... SKREEK...  
WHAT I'VE ALWAYS  
DREAMED OF,  
BATMAN!

A  
BATMAN  
WHO NEEDED  
A BREATHER!  
AND NOW  
THAT I'VE  
HAD IT...  
YOU'VE  
HAD IT!

AND WHEN THE THUGS ARE BATTED DOWN...

SKREEK...  
YOU ALL  
RIGHT,  
BATMAN?

SURE, STRANGER...  
THANKS TO YOU!

THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS!  
SKREEK... I MUST GO NOW!

WHAT'S YOUR  
HURRY? FOR A GUY  
I OWE SO MUCH TO...  
YOU'RE AN AWFULLY  
MODEST HERO!

AT LEAST  
LET ME SEE  
WHO I OWE  
MY THANKS  
TO...

SKREEK! YOU DON'T WANT  
TO SEE... NO ONE SHOULD!

IT WAS YOUR INSPIRATION  
... YOUR GREAT FIGHT  
AGAINST CRIMINALS OF  
THE NIGHT-- THAT BROUGHT  
THIS ON ME!

THEN IF I WAS  
YOUR HERO...  
WHY HIDE  
FROM ME--?

ALL  
RIGHT...  
**SEE!!**



MAN--! YOU'RE EVEN MORE A "BAT" THAN I EVER WAS!

AND WITH YOUR ADDED ABILITY TO "SEE" IN THE DARK-- YOU'VE TOPPED ME! WHAT AN AWESOME DISGUISE!

SKREEK...

DISGUISE?

DISGUISE...?



SOB! I ONLY WISH IT WERE!



I--SKREEK-- I'VE SUCCEEDED ONLY TOO WELL!

OBVIOUSLY HE DOESN'T WANT ME TO FOLLOW HIM... AND I OWE HIM AT LEAST THAT!

BUT HE WOULD MAKE A FORMIDABLE FRIEND!...

OR... FOE?

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WHICH WILL IT BE?  
IN WHICH ROLE WILL THE  
MAN-BAT RE-ENTER THE  
BATMAN'S LIFE?

BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR THE MAN-BAT IN A FORTHCOMING ISSUE OF  
**DETECTIVE COMICS!**