

NOW AT LAST...
IN HIS OWN MAGAZINE...

THE



oker

AREN'T YOU
GOING TO LET
ME OUT, TOO?

ALAS... NO! I HAVE
NEED OF A TRULY
MASTER CRIMINAL--AND
TWO-FACE QUALIFIES
MORE THAN YOU,
SEÑOR JOKER!

YOU'VE JUST ENTERED THE ARKHAM ASYLUM
FOR THE CRIMINALLY INSANE-- IN THE MIST OF
AN ESCAPE! THEREFORE... YOU'RE IN ON THE
BEGINNING OF ONE OF THE STRANGEST EPISODES
IN THE ANNALS OF CRIME! LOOK... LISTEN...

STOP
JABBERING,
ALVAREZ--
AND LET'S
GO!

WEIRD, HUH?
WELL, IT GETS
A LOT WEIRDER
IN THIS TALE OF...

"The JOKER'S DOUBLE JEOPARDY!"

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MOMENTS LATER...

TWO-FACE HAS
ESCAPED--
AGAIN!

--WHILE
WE WERE
GASSED!
SOMEONE
SLIPPED
IT INTO
THE
VENTILATION
SYSTEM--

--THEN SPIRITED
HARVEY DENT--
ALIAS TWO-
FACE--OUT!



PRATTLING
POPPINJAYS--MOUTHING
MEANINGLESS MUTTERINGS
AS I SUFFER AN
INTOLERABLE
INSULT!

HE SAID TWO-FACE--THE
DOUBLE-DEALING DOLT--IS
A GREATER CRIMINAL THAN
I AM! ABSURD!

IT'S ENOUGH
TO MAKE YOU
CRY... EH,
JOKER?

"THAT WOULD
BE GROTESQUE--
TEARS TRICKLING
DOWN..."

HUH--?!

I WAS
QUOTING ROSTAND'S
CYRANO DE BERGERAC,
ILLITERATE IMBECILE!

FORTUNATELY, I'LL
SOON BE FREE OF
SUCH TRASH AS THEM!

I'VE ALREADY
ARRANGED MY
OWN LITTLE
BYE-BYE
BID!



AND DURING THE NEXT MORNING'S
EXERCISE PERIOD...



LOOK AT THE CLOWN
PLAYING WITH THOSE
TOY BALLOONS
THAT CHARITY
OUTFIT DONATED!

YEAH... JUST
LIKE A LITTLE
KID!





U
SHORTLY, IN THE
HIDEOUT OF THE
CLOWN PRINCE OF
CRIME...



GREETINGS...
FAITHFUL
FOLLOWERS!

I COMMEND
YOU FOR HELPING ME
FLEE MY
CONFINEMENT!

GLAD TA,
BOSS... 'CAUSE
YER THE
GREATEST!



HOW
APPEALING
TO BE
APPRECIATED!

BUT NOW,
DOWN TO
BUSINESS--

--SPECIFICALLY, THE BUSINESS
OF PROVING I'M A MUCH
FINER FELON THAN
THAT SECOND-RATER,
TWO-FACE!

WE GOT A TIP
HE'S DOUBLED
UP WITH A
SPANISH
DUDE NAME
OF SENOR
ALVAREZ!



AIN'T NO WAY
OF GETTIN'
TO 'EM,
THOUGH!

THEY RENTED THE
WHOLE TOP TWO
FLOORS OF A HOTEL
AN' THEY GOT GUNS
POSTED AT ALL THE
DOORS!

THAT
SUITS ME
FINE...



... I LOVE
A CHALLENGE!
HA, HA, HA,
HA, HA!

SO, AT A SLIGHTLY SEEDY
MIDTOWN HOSTELRY...

I SUGGEST YOU COME
TO THE POINT, SEÑOR
ALVAREZ!

EXACTLY
WHY DID YOU
SPRING ME?

TO COMMIT A
ROBBERY!

RECENTLY, A
GREAT TREASURE
WAS TRANSFERRED
FROM MY
COUNTRY TO
YOURS!

I WISH
YOU TO
RECOVER IT!

I CONSIDER
THIS A MATTER
OF NATIONAL
HONOR!

NO DICE!
I'M NO COMMON
HEIST ARTIST!

AH, BUT YOU
HAVEN'T HEARD
WHAT THE TREASURE
IS... TEN RARE
GOLD COINS--
DOUBLOONS!

--DOUBLOONS
WITH DOUBLE
FACES!

I'LL LET IT
DECIDE WHETHER
OR NOT TO
ACCEPT YOUR
PROPOSITION!

THE EVIL
SIDE WINS!

ALVAREZ,
YOU HAVE
A DEAL!

NOW YOU INTEREST
ME! I HAVE A DOUBLE-
HEADED COIN OF MY
OWN... ONE SIDE
UNBLEMISHED... THE
OTHER SCARRED-- LIKE ME!







DON'T BANK ON IT!



I SEEM TO HAVE PLAYED THIS SCENE BEFORE, JOKER!

ME, TOO... WITH THE BATMAN!

BUT NOW IT'S YOU AND I-- AND I HAVE A PISTOL-- A DOUBLE-BARRELED ONE!

THIS IS A GIMMICK YOU SHOULD HAVE THOUGHT OF! HA, HA!



I DON'T NEED 'EM!

KLUNK!

WITHIN MOMENTS...



HE'S ESCAPED, JOKER... THROUGH THEM DOUBLE DOORS!

FUNNY... I NEVER FIGURED HE'D DO ANYTHING AS ORDINARY AS KLUNK YOU WITH A PLAIN BOWL!



NOT A PLAIN BOWL, WITLING...


...A BOWL OF FEARS--

--AS IN PAIRS--

--AS IN TWOS!







IT MAY INTEREST YOU
TO KNOW WE'RE IN A
*SUB-BASEMENT--A SECOND
BASEMENT--* WHERE THEY
STORE TOOLS AND SUCH!

AND NO DOUBT
YOU'VE NOTICED
YOU'RE LASHED TO
AN OLD-FASHIONED
BUZZ-SAW!

UGGH...
NOT THAT
COIN
AGAIN?

BUT OF COURSE!
THE COIN WILL
DECIDE YOUR
FATE!



YOUR LUCK
HAS DESERTED
YOU, JOKER--

YOU LOSE!
ISN'T THAT A
LAUGH?

YOU'RE CHEATING!--
YOU ALWAYS USE A
PAIR OF SOMETHING
IN YOUR JOBS!

WHERE'S
THE *DOUBLE*
IN THIS
SET-UP?

WHIRRR!

DON'T YOU SEE?
THE SAW WILL
BISECT YOU...
AND WHEN IT
REACHES YOUR
CHIN--

--YOU'LL BE
LIKE ME--
A TWO-
FACE!

WHIRRRRRR

BUT... BUT... THIS
GAG WENT OUT WITH
SILENT FILMS!

WHERE'S YOUR
ORIGINALITY?
WHERE'S YOUR
GOOD SIDE?

THAT PART OF ME
WANTED TO SPARE
YOU! BUT ONCE THE
COIN DECIDES, IT'S
FINAL!

WHIRRRR-

NOW GO AHEAD
AND LAUGH, JOKER...
LAUGH TILL YOU
SPLIT! HA, HA!

I GIVE WITH
THE GAGS, MISTER
STRAIGHT MAN!

STILL... HA,
HA, HA! CAN'T
HELP LAUGHING
AT THAT JOKE...

EVEN
THOUGH
IT'S ON
ME!

BUT THIS IS NO TIME
FOR LEVITY! I
HAVE TO CUT
OUT... ER...
ESCAPE!

MUCH AS I
HATE TO ADMIT
IT, THE BATMAN
HAS TAUGHT
ME A FEW
TRICKS...

... SUCH AS--
BE PREPARED!

OR WAS
THAT THE BOY
SCOUTS? HA, HA!
NEVER MIND... I
AM PREPARED!

I FILLED MY
SQUIRTING FLOWER
WITH THE SAME
ACID I USED ON
SEÑOR ALVAREZ!

A BIT OF
PRESSURE
ON THE BULB
IN MY POCKET
AND... AH!

GLAD THE
FLOWER
AND BULB
ARE MADE
OF AN
ACID-PROOF
PLASTIC!



BUT THE ROPES
AREN'T! THE
ACID BETTER
WORK A
LITTLE FASTER
OR ELSE!



AT LAST... AND IN THIS
CASE, THE PARTING IS
DEFINITELY NOT
SWEET SORROW!

I REALLY
SHOULDN'T
USE THOSE
OLD SAWS
UNDER THE
CIRCUMSTANCES--

--BUT WHAT
GAGSTER
CAN RESIST
A GOOD...
OR BAD...
PUN?



AND THAT IS
TRULY A BAD PUN...
A HIDEOUS JEST--

--ALMOST
AS HIDEOUS
AS WHAT I'LL DO
TO THAT DOUBLE-
COUNTENANCED
MADMAN!



MEANWHILE, IN THE MUSEUM'S MAIN HALL...

FRANKLY,
COMMISSIONER
GORDON, I'M
WORRIED!

WE REALIZE
THE DOUBLOONS' GREAT
WORTH AND WE'VE
TAKEN EVERY
PRECAUTION!

YOU NEEDN'T
BE, MR. KEMP!


SPANISH DOUBLOONS




MY TOP MEN ARE
GUARDING THE
DISPLAY CASE!

NEXT TO
THE BATMAN,
THEY'RE THE
BEST!

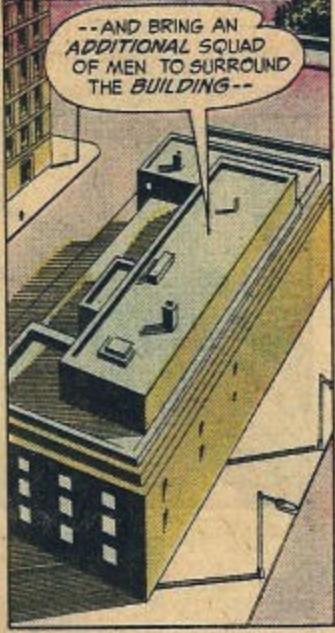
IS
THAT
ALL--?




NO! IN ADDITION,
THE CASE IS
WIRED WITH
AN ALARM--



--WHICH WILL
AUTOMATICALLY
CLOSE THE
EXITS--




--AND BRING AN
ADDITIONAL SQUAD
OF MEN TO SURROUND
THE BUILDING--



--UNTIL EVERYONE
CAN BE SEARCHED!

BELIEVE ME,
MR. KEMP...YOUR
TREASURES ARE
GUARANTEED
SAFE!

SUDDENLY--




THE LIGHTS!
THEY'VE GONE
OUT!

ON
THE
ALERT!


NÓBODY GOES
NEAR THE
DISPLAY--
NOBODY!

RIGHT,
COMMISSIONER!



I-I'M
AFRAID--

DON'T BE, MAN!
THE DOORS ARE
SEALED!



EVEN IF IT
IS A ROBBERY
ATTEMPT, IT'S
BOUND TO FAIL!

A MINUTE
TICKS BY...
TWO-- AND...



SEE-- I TOLD
YOU NOT TO WORRY,
KEMP! THE LIGHTS
ARE BACK ON AND
THE COINS ARE
UNTOUCHED!

WHEN THE
GOTHAM POLICE
PROMISE TO PROTECT
SOMETHING, BY
HEAVEN, IT GETS
PROTECTED!

HOWEVER, THE
COMMISSIONER
WOULDN'T
SOUND SO
CONFIDENT
IF HE COULD
SEE WHAT IS
HAPPENING
IN THE
STOREROOM
ABOVE...



A CINCH! THE
DUMMIES DON'T
EVEN KNOW THE
LOOT IS
GONE!

THE EASIEST
CAPER I'VE
EVER
PULLED--

"I SIMPLY SHORTED THE
ELECTRICAL SYSTEM AND
LOWERED A POWERFUL
MAGNET THROUGH THIS
TRAPDOOR ALVAREZ TOLD
ME ABOUT--!"



"IN THE DARK, THEY DIDN'T
SEE THE MAGNET PULL THE
STEEL-RIMMED CASE UP
TO WHERE I'M HIDING..."



"...THEN I SIMPLY SUBSTITUTED
A DUPLICATE CASE! NOW
THEY HAVE THE PHONEY DIS-
PLAY, WHILE I HAVE THE
REAL ARTICLE!"





I SIMPLY STAY
PLAT TILL IT
QUIETS DOWN... THEN
SLIP AWAY TO
FREEDOM!

THE WAIT
WILL PASS
SWIFTLY WITH
SUCH BEAUTY TO
CONTEMPLATE!

AND, BEFORE LONG... THE LARGE
BUILDING IS QUIET AND EMPTY
AS A TOMB...



... AND THE TORTURED FIGURE
PREPARES TO VANISH! AS HE
QUIETLY LIFTS A WINDOW, A
VOICE LIKE *BROKEN GLASS*
DEMANDS--

DON'T
LEAVE
YET!



I'M
PLANNING
A FUN
EVENING...
WITH YOU!

YOU...
SURVIVED?!

AND HOW'D
YOU KNOW WHERE
I--?



I OUTGUESSED YOU, BUDDY
BOY! I DEDUCED YOU'D
COMMIT YOUR ROBBERY FROM
THE SECOND FLOOR!

AND THIS TIME,
I WAS RIGHT!

IT
WON'T DO
YOU ANY
GOOD!





NEXT DAY AS GUARDS ROUTINELY CHECK THE AREA...



WELL, WELL! A COUPLE OF ARKHAM ALUMNI--

--READY FOR A RIDE BACK TO THE LAUGHING ACADEMY!

ON YOUR FEET, KIDDOS!

YOU'RE HEADING HOME--

--TO YOUR NICE, COZY PADDED CELLS!



YOU'RE LEAVING THOSE LOVELY COINS LYING THERE?

YOU HAVEN'T HEARD? THOSE THINGS AREN'T WORTH A PACK OF GUM-WRAPPERS!

THEY'RE COUNTERFEIT--



--THE BATMAN DISCOVERED A SEÑOR ALVAREZ SWIPED THE GENUINE DOUBLOONS BEFORE THEY LEFT HIS COUNTRY!

HE WANTED YOU TO STEAL THE COUNTERFEITS-- TO COVER HIS TRACKS!

ANYWAY, ALVAREZ IS IN JAIL! THEY FOUND HIM IN A HOSPITAL, RECOVERING FROM ACID BURNS!



HA-HA-HA... WHY AREN'T YOU LAUGHING, TWO-FACE? DON'T YOU REALIZE--

--YOU-- THE SUPREME DOUBLE-DEALER-- HAVE BEEN DOUBLE-CROSSED!



End

NEXT ISSUE ON SALE DURING THE FIRST WEEK IN APRIL



The WILDEST card

The creation of a memorable hero is always satisfying. But to create a memorable villain to pit against him is doubly satisfying. **Sherlock Holmes** is the best-known of all fictional sleuths—and although **Prof. Moriarty** is mentioned in only three of the sixty Holmes stories, that infamous **Napoleon of Crime** is one of the best-known villains of all time.

It was in 1939 that **The Batman** made his debut. The early stories matched him against such criminal masterminds as **Dr. Death** and **Prof. Hugo Strange**. Then, in 1940, the greatest of the **Masked Manhunter's** foes made his debut.

It began when **Bill Finger**, chief writer of **Batman**, received a call from **Jerry Robinson**, who was then assisting **Bob Kane** on the **Batman** art. Jerry wanted to tell him of a new idea for a villain—a grinning ghoul to be called **The Joker**. The character caught **Bill's** fancy, but he didn't like the initial drawings of **The Joker**. They were too clownish. He found the perfect model in a movie edition of **Victor Hugo's** novel **The Man Who Laughs**. The stills showed **Conrad Veidt** as **Gwynplaine**, son of a British lord who had been kidnapped in infancy and transformed into a carnival freak by having a perpetual grin carved on his face. **Veidt's** makeup for the picture gave him the perfect grin for **The Joker**, and this was the model for the villain who made his debut in **Batman #1** (Spring, 1960).

It was the first magazine devoted entirely to the **Caped Crime-fighter**. Included in this issue were two stories of the criminal destined to become the chief nemesis of **Batman** and **Robin**. **The Joker** was introduced as a laughing murderer who left a hideous grin like his own on the faces of his victims.

There was, however, no origin given for **The Joker** in that first issue. It was not until eleven years later, in **Detective Comics #186** (Feb., 1951) that the facts behind his green hair, red lips and dead-white skin were finally revealed.

In it, **Batman** goes back to a case he never solved. He says it was ten years earlier, which, if true, would place the story ("The Man Behind the Red Hood") in 1949, two years before the publication date. **Batman** challenges a group of criminology students to solve the case that stumped him—but the mysterious **Red Hood** returns. Ultimately, the **Cowled Crusader** unmasks him as **The Joker**, and we learn his early history.

Originally, his coloring was normal, and he was a lab worker. But he had dreams of wealth and decided to steal a million dollars. To make sure he could not be identified, he wore a red metal hood with no visible eyeholes. Actually, the eyeholes were camouflaged—they were two-way mirrors—clear glass to the wearer, but mirrors to those on the other side. The shiny mirrors blended with the shiny metal, creating the illusion that there were no eyes.

He finally reached his million-dollar goal by robbing the **Monarch Playing Card Company**. But, pursued by **The Batman**, he escaped by diving into a catch basin for waste chemicals. The basin emptied into the river (pollution controls had not been set up then). Since the hood could be used as a gas-mask or diving helmet, it supplied the criminal with oxygen until he reached safety. And, since he had his million, his career might have ended there—but for one circumstance.

When he arrived home, the **Red Hood** looked in the mirror to find his skin turned chalk-white, his lips red and his hair green—the consequence of the swim through the chemical wastes. At first, he reacted with horror; but then it occurred to him that his new features could terrify potential victims. Since it was a playing card company that provided his new face, he took the name of the card with the face of a clown—**The Joker**.

But what was the real name of the **Clown Prince of Crime**? That is a very good question for which no one seems to have a very good answer. Although **The Joker** has used many aliases (including such painfully obvious ones as **Joe Kerswag**), his true name has never been revealed. And the villain who now stars in his own magazine is still a man without a name!

Next issue—how **The Joker** has changed through the years.

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Beginning with issue #3, this space will be taken by a letter column. So send in your comments on this issue—and suggestions for a title to give the letter page—to: THE JOKER, National Periodical Publications, 75 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10019.