BEYOND THE CLOCK is published by Pleiades, Inc., Post office Box 542, Asheville, North Carolina 28801. Entire contents, except where noted are copyrighted by Pleiades, Inc. The Batman and related characters are copyrighted by DC Comics, Inc. 1980.

******************************************************************************

STAFF:  J.R. Sams, Publisher and Editor
        Rich Morrissey, Co-Editor and Trustee
        Butch Guice, Art Director

******************************************************************************

We welcome all contributions of material, be it art or articles. We hope to become a showcase for new talents and would like to encourage you to become a participating member of this fanzine. Afterall, your support makes this idea possible, so we want to bring you what you are interested in. Send all contributions to:

Pleiades, Inc. or Rich Morrissey
P.O. Box 542, Dept. BTC 55 Claudette Circle
Asheville, N.C. 28801 Framingham, Mass.

All letters of comment are to be sent directly to Rich.

******************************************************************************

Subscription Rates: Six months--$6.00
Twelve months--$10.00
Single issue--$1.25 (single issues are not considered subscriptions, and are therefore not eligible for the free classified ad offer)

******************************************************************************

Advertising Rates: Full page--$45.00 (submit in proportion to 14"x16"--printed size is 8½"x11")
Half-page--$24.00 (submit in proportion to 14"x8"--printed size is 7"x4")
Quarter-page--$14.00 (Submit in proportion to 7"x8"
Classified--$2.50 for first 100 words, 2¢ each additional word. Classifieds are free to all subscribers.

******************************************************************************

Release date is the first Wednesday of each month. Deadline for all material will be the 20th of the preceding month (or the next mailing day if the 20th falls on a holiday or Sunday).
From the "White House of Comics" came forth the first issue of Batmania. The time was July, 1964; and the collector-in-residence was Bill B. White. His tenure as publisher continued up to and including issue #17 (the Batmania Annual).

For reasons unknown to me (Uncle Sam had decided to occupy my time), Bat-fans became silent in 1967. This silence continued for seven years. Suddenly, a young upstart had broken the stillness; and in 1974, Rich Norrissey published Batmania #28. The standard had been lifted again.

Rich's struggle to produce this second "wave" of issues was indeed difficult; but this was not his fault. The quality of Rich Norrissey's work in issues #18 thru #27 was of high standing. The polished, rallying point of Batmania fans was there; unfortunately, the interest was not.

Perhaps the loss of interest was due in part to a "saturating" fandom. In the early days, collectors like Jerry Bails, Phil Seuling, G.B. Love, and our own Bill B. White were "the force." They gave us a sense of respect which allowed us to look others in the eye when we told them we "collected comic books."

With a growth in numbers, new "advisers" appeared and the fun of collecting was slowly overtaken by the "learning" process. Dealerships became big-time business; investors inflated prices; and a myriad of other forces (or lack of forces as I see it) has destroyed the innocence of those early days. I don't mean to infer that publications like The Buyer's Guide were not hurt for fandom. In the contrary, Alan Light has done more for fandom's benefit than anyone in recent times. Let us offer now an analogy to better express what I mean.

F20 is the energy of fandom. The Price Guide is the technical manual, and we are the engineers. We can either make the "bump" to destroy what has been built, or we can build the generator to ride fandom of the dark spots that still exist. Then others who have lost interest will return, and those collectors not already enlightened (several million if you believe the ads) will turn to comics.

Therefore all things considered, Rich did an excellent job. Those who remain faithful will attribute to this. NOW IT IS TIME FOR ME.

Unless you're blind, you may have noticed this thing isn't called Batmania -- it's called BEYOND THE CLOCK!!! What kind of rip-off is this?

For those of you who were expecting to see "Batmania" on the cover, we share your "surprise." I shall attempt to explain this situation as simply and as fully as I can.

When Rich decided to turn Batmania over to me in June, I was delighted for it afforded me an avenue to pursue my favorite character in greater detail. Since it had been several years since the last issue had been sent out, I wrote to Rich in January of 1974. The title was still usable by their understanding of "fair use" under the U.S. Code. In the meantime, Rich and I had discussed the idea of "Bumping" the title in order to work with the belief that if the issue were good enough, we could continue to use the title. This was not to be.

A week after placing the ad in the Guide, I received notice from Paul Leventhal that I could not use the title because the legal department (not Mr. Leventhal as I read the letter) determined that it would
ANNOUNCING A NEW WSA SERVICE

The WSA DIRECTORY Committee, under the auspices of the WSA PROGRAM, in consideration of the success of the WSA Directory, announces the forthcoming publication of a SECOND directory broader in scope than the WSA Directory. This second directory will be known as the...

FANDOM DIRECTORY

... and will list FREE OF CHARGE, ANY MEMBER OF FANDOM!!!

IF YOU ARE A COLLECTOR, DEALER, COLLECTOR-DEALER, FAN, or just an interested party, whose interests include COMICS, PULPS, PAPERBACKS, HARDBACKS, ART WORK, SCIENCE FICTION, STAR TREK, STAR WARS, or related memorabilia, and allied materials, including FANZINES, ART-ZINES, etc., YOU are entitled to be listed in the FANDOM DIRECTORY FREE OF CHARGE.

IN ADDITION... you will be entered into a newly forming INTERNATIONAL FAN LOCATION SERVICE to consist of a COMPUTERIZED data bank for instant retrieval and cross reference. The WSA FAN LOCATION SERVICE will also be open to ALL OF FANDOM and once active (on or about December 1, 1978) will provide you with the opportunity to subscribe to the service at a very nominal charge. Through the Location Service you will be able to submit requests to the WSA Program for such information as "All fans in the state of New York who collect Marvel Comics", "All DC collectors in your city", "All film collectors in the U.S. and Canada", "All science fiction paperback collectors in Iowa", "All comic collectors in Europe", etc, and receive a computerized printout containing the NAMES, ADDRESSES, TELEPHONE NUMBERS AND OTHER INTERESTS OF ALL PERSONS WHO MEET THE QUALIFICATION CRITERIA WHICH YOU PRESCRIBE.

If you are interested in having your name listed FREE OF CHARGE in BOTH the FANDOM DIRECTORY and the WSA's newly forming FAN LOCATION SERVICE, simply fill out the data form below and send (with SASE)

TO

MICHAEL C. WAHL
DIRECTOR, WRB DIVISION
WSA PROGRAM & AFFILIATES
5250 CLEAR LAKE RD.
GRASS LAKE, MI 49240

OR

JOE W. STONER, ADMINISTRATOR
WSA PROGRAM & AFFILIATES
319 S. JACKSON ST.
ARLINGTON, VA 22204

The FANDOM DIRECTORY will be published on or about March 15, 1981.

DATA FORM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>INTERESTS (Limit... TEN)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FAN</td>
<td>Comics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLLECTOR</td>
<td>Pulps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEALER</td>
<td>BLBs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDITOR</td>
<td>Books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WRITER</td>
<td>Paperbacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARTIST</td>
<td>Art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUBLISHER</td>
<td>Posters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NAME ____________________________
ADDRESS __________________________
CITY _______ STATE _______ ZIP _______ TELEPHONE (____)
THE UNTOLED LEGEND OF THE BATMAN: A CRITIQUE

By H. L. Davis

(It's very poor form to begin an article with parentheticals, but in this case it's required. This is a critique, not a review. We hope to tell you not just whether the subject comics were worth reading, but also we hope to explain why they were good or bad examples of our favorite story-telling medium and how they could be better.)

The Untold Legend of the Batman #1, #2, #3. Three issues dated July, August, September, 1985. DC Comics, Inc. Cover by Garcia-Lopez, Gliorano. Edited by Paul Levits, written by Len Wein; art by John Byrne (part of #1) and Jim Aparo; colored by Glynis Wein; lettered by John Costanza (#1) and many hands (#2 and #3) which are uncredited. 

Because of its length... 64 pages in the three chapters... there is a temptation to consider the work to be a novella or short novel. It's not though. It is a short story with a great many flashbacks and asides. 

The short story which forms the bones of the work is a character-emphasizing piece. It's meager plot turns on someone destroying the Batman's treasured relics and personal equipment. 

The aforementioned flashbacks and asides are the real "raison d'être" for the work. Levits and Wein are to be congratulated for finding an interesting story to frame the myriad of "secret origin" bits which make up the BATMAN LEGEND. 

Issue #1 gives the origin of the Batman together with its Chill, Chilton, and Moxon aspects; the origin of the Batman costume; and the origin of the Robin costume. Number two serves up the origins of Robin, Alfred, Joker, and Two-Face. Issue #3 informs us of the origins of the recent (if not original) Batmobile and Batgirl, the basis of the Commissioner Gordon-Batman relationship, and the basis of the Lucius Fox-Bruce Wayne relationship. 

As you can see, that's an awful lot of information to pack into a short story. While this becomes the value of the work, it also spans the weakness of the work as story-telling art. 

Comics as we know them are a weaving of the verbal and the visual. The ultimate comic story will be one where the TEXT and the ART complement each other. The visual should not be described by the TEXT; the TEXT should not describe that which could be better shown. (The only exception to this that I can think of is where the TEXT AND ART duplicate each other to give greater emphasis to a point.) 

The specific weakness of the BATMAN LEGEND SERIES lies in its need to carry so much text. Because of this, the artists find themselves compelled to use many small panels and few large panels as they breakdown the work. The subject matter which is thematically quite dramatic is visually less dramatic than it could be because of the panel size limitation. 

(An editorial opportunity was missed in issue #3. Because of the price change, issue #3 had three extra pages. Levits chose to add a three page filler — "Secrets of the Batcave" by Joe Staton. The LEGEND story would have been stronger had it been reworked to be three pages longer with some larger, more dramatic, and revealing panels.) 

For Byrne in the early pages and Aparo throughout the rest of the story, praise must be granted in their narrative emphasis within the panels. (As a positive example of this, check out #2, page 21, panel 2... watch the note flutter down before Robin's eyes. The essence of the few negative examples, look at #2, page 9, panel 1... Dick's attitude is under discussion; foreground and middleground should be exchanged.)

The artists pace the story well within the limits of the information-laden script. Issue #1 does better than #2 and #3 in this respect with its page 2 splash, the tight forceful panels of pages 4 thru 7, the large symbolic panel of page 9, the tight moody form of page 12 played off against the one panel-page "Face of Evil" panorama opposite it... I'm tempted to praise Byrne who reportedly began the work a bit more than Aparo for this.

Both artists worked with a realistic stylized quality of drawing which is especially appropriate to the superhero work. Both used a greater than dynamic layout with the panels; but as we critiqued earlier, panel size was a problem. (Still, I think the work would have been more dramatic with more front-to-back superimposition and more foreshortening...)

We measure a critical aspect of comic story-telling when we speak of economy. In comics, as in plays, there's no room for the inclusion of random, purposeless elements; Gordon and Wayne won't discuss the paint used in redecorating Wayne's bathroom unless it later turns out to be important to the story. (Maybe hallucinatory paint colors...) Whatever... the creators must be allowed some misdirection or all stories become totally transparent from the start. This particular information-laden script allowed for this. Therefore, in using laudable economy, Wein also laid the key to the story under our noses; Issue #1, page 2, panel 5 (the headache explains the whole situation; issue #2, page 11, panel 1 (the explosion recap) lays it before us a second time. (Gordon's comment in #2, page 2, last panel, and Bruce Wayne's thoughts in #1, page 15, last two panels, bring the solution which many of us already realized to the Batman.)

To sum up this point; economy as an element of story-telling is especially well-handled in these three issues. 

The visual-textual balance is good. The works and art are appropriately complementary throughout. There seems to be a lot of words for a comicbook; but the material is always interesting, and the text almost never overloads the art. (Note in #1, page 7, panel 1; that the text does not speak of the weather while we critiqued to the visual mood of the panel... another example of how it should be done... note in #2, page 2, panel 3, that the Batman has taken command by snuffing one cigarette into the drink... something not included in the text.) 

Glynis Wein's coloring is well done though not great. John Costanza's lettering in #1 is excellent; however, the uncredited lettering of the last two issues is a bit erratic and not totally up to Costanza's lettering of the first issue. (None of it is: none of it isn't. That's why I see many hands in its production.)

If I were reviewing THE UNTOLED LEGEND OF THE BATMAN, I would simply say, "Iyay it... it's good reading... it tells you much of what you want to know about the Batman legend within the framework of a good story." 

But the purpose of a critique is to advise on righteousness/ wrongness in such a way that future comics can tell their stories even better... So that every future comic can be a bit closer to being a masterpiece every comic was. Minor mistakes like the mechanical T-lex being present in the Batcave the first time that Alfred entered it... or... like the Batman always having the yellow ellipse on his chest... doesn't really matter.

With that in mind, for Len Wein, I find myself without comment except to say "Well-done!" For Paul levits: If you must cover so much information in a future book (or books), please seek more pages (or more issues), so that the artists can work more drawn into the pacing." And finally for John Byrne and Jim Aparo: "Please try to squeeze a bit more graphic drama into your panels on an emotion packed story like this. Though we admire your work greatly, we think you could do even better.
RESULTS OF THE 1976 BATMANIA BALLOT

Best Batman Story

1. "There Is No Hope in Crime Alley"--Detective #457, 88 points.
2. "The Underworld Olympics '76"--Batman 272-75, 42 points.
4. "Riddler on the Rampage" (Batman #279) and "Murder Comes in Black Boxes"/"4 Doorways to Danger"/"Omega Bomb Target: Gotham City" (Batman #281-83) --tied at 30 points each.

Best Batman Team-up

2. "Small War of the Super Rifles (B&B #124) and "Streets of Poison" (B&B #125) --tied at 42 points each.
4. "Death By the Ounce"--B&B #128, 36 points.

Best Batman Reprint

1. "Track of the Hook" (Super-Team Family #2, from Brave & Bold #79)--67 pts.
3. "The Year 3000" (Batman Family #3, from Batman #26) and "Paint a Picture of Peril" (LCE #44, from Detective #397) --tied at 28 points each.
5. "The Secret Life of the Catwoman" (LCE #45, from Batman #62) --19 points.

Best "Batman Family" Story

1. "Beware the Eyes of Baron Tyme"--Man-Bat #1, 46 pts.
2. "Luthor--You're Driving Me Sane"--The Joker #7, 37 points.
4. "Isle of 1000 Thrills"--Batman Family #3, 26 points.
5. "Fugitive from Blind Justice," Man-Bat #2, 24 points.

Best Writer

1. Denny O'Neil--75 points
2. David V. Reed--62 points
3. Len Wein--50 points
4. Bob Rozakis--40 points
5. Bob Haney--30 points

Best Artist

1. Jim Aparo--100 points
2. Dick Giordano--74 points
3. Irv Novick--46 points
4. Curt Swan--30 points
5. Mike Grell--21 points

Best Editor

1. Julius Schwartz--87 points
2. Murray Boltinoff--47 points
3. Gerry Conway--44 points

Best Cover

1. Detective 457--75 points
2. LCE #44--31 points
3. Man-Bat #1--26 points
4. I & B 124--13 points
5. The Joker #9--12 points
OUT OF THE TANK BECK GUNC

(The portfolio entitled STRANGE by Marshall Rogers can be purchased from Pacific Comic, 3857 Pomona Court, Suite 5, San Diego, Calif 92111. Cost is $15.00 plus $1.75 postage and handling.)

It should be stated from the start that I'm not anti-Marshall Rogers, though I may tend to sound so on occasion. Reviewing his portfolio, in fact, was quite hard for me, for I had several longền to catch up with Marshall on art and comics in general, and as a fellow artist, empathy with what he has said. Heck, I even like the fellow to a great degree, and to find fault with something as tiny a thing as design, tends to run against the grain. Then there are areas in which Marshall and I see things totally differently. Worlds away, in fact. This portfolio, "Strange," is one of those instances.

"Strange" is a very aptly named portfolio, for it is quite unusual in itself; a paradox considering that this should have been Marshall's "tour de force" explosion, following so closely on the heels of his highly acclimated and deservedly so, series of Batman tales teamed with author Steve Englehart. Although the art is nicely executed, I found "Strange" highly unfulfilling. There is simply no "soul" to this series of illustrations. Marshall has chosen to display the scene, the area of action, rather than the characters themselves, and I believe, failed artistically in doing so, for, while the landscape simply does not carry this portfolio well, Marshall turns in what is best described as a vivid, unleashéd job of "artistic" drenched.

The illustration for the title folder is quite likely the second best illo in the entire portfolio. The simple reason upon examination is that this is one of the few pieces in which the characters in the portfolio are revealed to us. There are simply too few close-ups, or even semi-close-ups in this portfolio to hold adequate interest. In fact, save for this one drawing, all other plates either have the characters cloaked back to us, or have then reduced to near minuscule size.

The lack of faces, my major complaint for the readers who still haven't picked this up yet, is especially heartbreaking if one mentally reviews the year-long stint Marshall did on Batman. What scenes come to mind? How about the dramatic unveiling of Hugo Strange, the third St. Cloud's realization in the convention hall that Bruce is the Dark Knight Detective, or the cold, macabre glint of the Joker's eye as he attempts to copyright his "Joker Fish." All good solid shots that will live in many a comic fan's memory for years to come. Close-ups, hard-hitting, emotional, eye contact, drawing the reader into the story like an uneasy fly—and this portfolio does have a story; or at least a timed progression to the plates.

Reviewing the plates individually would serve little purpose without accompanying reproductions of the illustrations, so I have reserved my comments for the portfolio as a whole. There are several plates which could be singled out as superior works of art—plates four and five come to mind; but when digested as a whole, "Strange" is peculiarly empty. Far less than what one would expect from Marshall, and yet, still enough to whet the appetite for another Roger's portfolio, perhaps one with a detective/mystery slant with moody atmosphere and art deco surroundings. I feel as soon as Marshall makes his "Walt Simonson" idol-following sound more of himself and his experiences into the illustrations, a substantial improvement will be seen; and Marshall will finally shake the "amateur" professionalis approach his artwork sometimes assumes.

Until then, efforts such as "Strange" must suffice. This portfolio, while recommended, is done so cautiously. It's not for everyone. Collectors of science-fiction material will enjoy it's slant, as will less art-oriented fans simply looking for a nicely done, inexpensive portfolio. Die-hard Marshall fans may have trouble accepting this fare from their leader as well as fellow art-interested fans looking for inspiration.

In the final account, buy it... and keep praying for another from Rogers in the near future—and Marshall, I really would love to see that thirties detective portfolio. 'Til then... enjoy.

*******

SIGNED COVERLESS "Batman and Detectives" Desperate collector needs complete but coverless books of Batman numbers 25, 27, 28, 29, 31, 33, 39, 42, and 44. Need the following Detective comics #71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 81, 83, 85, 86, 91, 92, 93, 95, 97, 108, 110, 112, 119, 120, 131, 132, 134-137. Will pay $5 per book.

Ron Schwartz
6031 Paseo Olivos Ct
San Jose, California 95130

WHAT WERE THE BEST BATMAN STORIES YOU LIKED?

That's right, people, and we are behind the times. So rather than make up a lot of forms three years balloting (have you seen the price of publishing this thing? OUCH!!!!), grab the nearest piece of paper and pencil and make the following outline:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1977</th>
<th>1978</th>
<th>1979</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1977</th>
<th>1978</th>
<th>1979</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1977</th>
<th>1978</th>
<th>1979</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1977</th>
<th>1978</th>
<th>1979</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1977</th>
<th>1978</th>
<th>1979</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I realize that is a lot of work, pulling and reviewing all those comics; but look at it this way, think of the fun you'll have looking over all those adventures. Old friends are good friends. All ballots due October 1, 1980. Mail to Pleiades, Inc., P.O. Box 342, Asheville, N.C. 28802.

Those of you who have subscribed, this space should contain your classified ad! This space is free to you, so please use it and become active. You'll make new friends, obtain those books you need to fill those holes in your collection; or you can sell those items you have cluttering up your collection. (This service is only for subscribers; single issue purchases not included.)

All other ads following the ad rates at the front of this zine. Those using their VISA numbers can subtract 10% from cost. If you have any problems, or think you have a problem with any advertiser in this publication, contact us immediately.
NEW!
1980 SUMMER OLYMPICS JACKET

POLYSKIN
100% Spunbonded Olefin
Fabric by DUPONT
*Comfortable & Carefree
*LIGHTWEIGHT & STRONG
*Wind Resistant & Warm
*Sun-fast Super Colors
*Can be MACHINE WASHED & DRIED

- SUPPORT President Carter's call for a U.S. BOYCOTT of the 1980 SUMMER OLYMPIC GAMES IN MOSCOW. Order your SUMMER OLYMPICS JACKET with "BOYCOTT" printed across the Moscow Spire.
- These Children's Jackets were originally intended to go to Thousands of retail outlets across the USA. Because of the BOYCOTT THE ORDERS WERE CANCELLED.
- We NOW offer these 1980 SUMMER OLYMPIC JACKETS TO YOU THROUGH MAIL-ORDER ONLY...
- THIS IS A SPECIAL OFFER AT WHOLESALE PRICE
- NEVER BEFORE — NEVER AGAIN / ONCE IN A LIFETIME OFFER
- MAKES A GREAT GIFT... PERFECT FOR BACK-PACKS
- BUY ONE FOR A COLLECTORS ITEM
- GREAT FOR KEEPING THE KIDS WARM WHEN CAMPING OUT

One Jacket $7.50
Two Jackets $13.50
Three Jackets $19.50

PLEASE ADD $1.00 FOR SHIPPING & HANDLING.
Satisfaction Guaranteed or Money Back

MERIDETH DISTRIBUTING COMPANY
DEPT. S0J1
474 HAYWOOD ROAD
P.O. BOX 6441
ASHEVILLE, N.C. 28816

Please print Circle Size S. M. L. XL
Name ____________________________
Address ____________________________
City ____________________________ State __________ Zip __________
Enclosed is my check/money order for $ __________
Charge to my Master Charge VISA American Express
Card No ____________________________
THE BATMAN RETURNS! (Again)

(Here follows article is a bit old, but I thought it appropriate to use it anyway in this issue since it does contain a look at the art of Marshall Rogers, in general. It is unsigned so I can't give credit to the writer, but I can say that I agree with the contents.)

It emerged rather inconspicuously, coming on the heels of a non-Batman saga — the Calculator back-up which ran in Detective Comics #463-468. But, surprise! — writer Bob Rozakis decided to employ the wit of the Batman in a novel-length conclusion to this epic. The team of Marshall Rogers and Terry Austin who had handled the last two installments were assigned the art chores for this issue, an issue which was destined to bring about a new wave of Batman storytelling.

Rogers and Austin sought to break with current trends and presented Batman in a new light. Here was a mysterious manhunter — swinging through the night mist, lurking in the shadows, striking fear in the hearts of criminals — THE BATMAN! Readers were captivated by this Golden Ageish Batman. In fact, the response elicited by this issue was so heavy that editor Julius Schwartz decided to have Rogers and Austin implement a new phase of Golden-age styled Batman stories in Detective Comics.

The Batman has, of course, been revived before — the most loved reincarnation being that instituted by Neal Adams. Neal did give us a Grim Avenger of the Night, but Neal's roots were firmly implanted in the dynamic realism for which he is best known. However, the Golden Age Batman was not realistic — far from it! These early stories were characterized by stylization, EXTREME stylization. This is why the Rogers/Austin approach constitutes a real return of the Batman, for their Batman is stylized. Of course it is not the rustic simplicity of early Golden Age art, but therein lies the beauty of their work. They have managed to combine the simplistic stylization of the past with the maturity of modern graphics.

Rogers and Austin began their new series in Detective Comics #471. With even a casual glance at this issue it is clear that there has been a dynamic change in the Batman. There is an ominous macabre atmosphere which pervades the entire story. This is achieved as it was in the initial Batman adventures — through a heavy emphasis on shadows and night scenes. Backgrounds and colors are the darkest blue or black — a rarity in present day comics. The Batman roams mysteriously, engulfed in his swirling cape. His face is often completely masked, hidden by the dark shadows — an awesome sight!

To see the Batman presented so magnificently is truly heart-warming. Marshall Rogers and Terry Austin are to be commended, for they have produced the finest stories to grace pages of Batman or Detective Comics in years. These issues will soon become highly sought-after classics as the O'Neil/Adams stories of yesteryear are. What's really exciting is that it is happening now. (We wish — Jr) Followers of the Caped Crusader who have been enchanted by recent stories can once again rekindle their interest, for here is a Batman to announce to the world! Batman fans, stand up and be proud.

***************************************************************

EDITORIAL NOTE: Next issue, we will have a full page of art by Marshall. We think you will enjoy it. Now on the following page is the cover we were planning to run until the name change. Some day, I'll explain the double "N." Funny thing, only a few noticed.

***************************************************************

NEWS OF NOTE: Long-time Batamanian, Elwin Murray, has decided to stop the publication of Vertigo (the Official Organ of the Carolina Fan Federation). His reasons are his own. However, I do hope that he doesn't fall into the pattern of other "old-timers" and fade into the background of inactivity. Issue #43 brings to a close of over twelve years of publication and will be missed by those of us in the Carolinas. While others are still around, none will replace Vertigo.
Address all comments to: Rich Morrissey
55 Clauette Circle
Framingham, Mass. 01701

Dear Richard,

I did want to express my admiration of the latest BATMANIA. To me it's the finest issue you've produced. In content, art and layout. A splendid job. The Gardner Fox interview in particular was extremely well done.

I was distressed, however, to read the issue may be the final one. I hope that won't be so. There are too few "class" stores left in fandom these days, and I consider BATMANIA to be a class production.

Yet I well understand the problems of finance. Wish I could make a cash contribution--instead of just words of praise--but unfortunately, I'm not in a position to do so.

Tech Fagan
21 East Center Street
Rutland, Vermont 05701

(Begrettably, my financial situation has shown no signs of alleviating; but, thanks to J.R. Sams, BATMANIA lives on! I'm sure he'll do a fine job of continuing the tradition of BATMAN's best and myself, I pray, at least for this issue, I'll continue to answer the letters relating to my issue.) Rich will be staying with us in a capacity equal to myself as co-producer!!!

Dear Rich,

Thanks for BATMANIA #23. It was excellent! BATMANIA is the type of fanzine I love so much, unfortunately it is the type that isn't quite as popular with today's fans (you didn't have Howard the Duck or Red Sonja on the cover). Hence few fanzines are published that match BATMANIA's caliber. Most fanzines out today are poor efforts that last only a few issues as the older fans who used to put out the quality fanzines are now in apas or turned pro. It is really a shame that BATMANIA can't garner enough support to survive. Are all the younger fans totally given over to Marvel? Most of them seem at the established heroes of DC seem to think that DC is a lesser company. Superman, Batman, and the other don't command as much respect as Nova and Ka Harvel, but then there's no accounting for taste! I sincerely hope BATMANIA stays alive.

I've always had a desire to see a fanzine devoted to Superman, much like BATMANIA. He did start everything off and you hardly ever see him on the cover of a fanzine! A good title would be: (Are you ready?) SUPERMANIA!

Need I say that the Fox interview was superb? It was about time that someone interviewed Mr. Fox, one of the giants of the field.

It was one of the best interviews I've read lately. I absolutely love those Hawkman stories that Fox did with Kubert and Anderson. Hawkman is one of (if not the) my favorite series (right up there with Superman/Adam, Deadman/Adams, Flash/Infantino, etc.). I have a bunch of PLANET STORIES with Fox stories in them. Comics were a lot to space opera. It was sad to see Fox leave DC and his creations.

The BRAVE AND THE BOLD mostly sucked the top. I think one reason that the Adam's issues were so good was because Adams surely had something to do with the scripts. Otherwise Haney's efforts are usually incompotent. He pays no attention whatsoever to what has gone before in the guest star's own strip as far as characterization and motivation. He seems to have no interest in what any of the other writers at DC are doing, and he pays no attention to earth one and two bonnies. His scripts for WOOLF'S FINT CARRIS vacillate.

BRUCE TIMM mostly sucks the top. I haven't bought #7 for years until the dollar books. Haney is a washout as a super hero writer.

Speaking of the dollar comics, they've been a terrible disappointment to me. WOOLF'S FINT CARRIS has had some nice art but terrible scripting. I'd really like to read a book for Batman, Jayne, and Lois Lane stories that are so bad that even Irving Fishburn won't read them.

The Limited Collector's Edition with the Ra's al Ghul sort of let me down too. It just wasn't as good as I remembered it to be. They also didn't print the last page of the story. It was a misprint with the headlines PLAYBOY FOUND IN JUNGLE, or something like that.

Harshall Roger's Batman is terrific and a refreshing change from Chen. I really hate to see it end.

Roger Caldwell
1119 Hayflower Road
Kinston, TN 37765

(As I'm sure you know by now, there is a Superman zine recently founded by Kevin Gould, GREAT HYPNO! All interested parties should mail $2.00 to Mr. Gould at 2010 W. 32 st, Dallas, Texas 75219.

Neal Adams didn't really have much to do with the scripts in the second issue he really changes in interpretation (e.g. turning what was scripted as a downtown scene into a nighttime one) which wouldn't have worked if Haney hadn't had some excellent script ideas to begin with. It's interesting, though, that #186 and #187 (the Batman themed issue which I've often mentioned as the best story Haney ever wrote, was apparently his own #387 script that was heavily rewritten by Adams.

The #1 al Ghul Limited Collector's Edition was, of course, restricted by space limitations from including all the stories including #1's and/or Tallas, but it did include those most central to the first major struggle between Batman and Ra's. The stories reprinted in the LCE #14 instead leave the major scenes and Bruce's assumed disappearance, which was resolved in the following issue of Batman, #26. That story, "The Bruce Wayne Hunter Came," was chiefly concerned with how Batman stopped a crooked politician from framing his rival for Bruce's death, and I believe it to be the third Ra-Bat story from Detective #407 are the only two Batman stories drawn by Neal Adams that have never been reprinted. The last panel (the final half-page), however, was largely independent of the rest of the story, and it really should have been used in the LCE as the bottom half of the final page, rather than (very badly) attempting to expand the final half-page of Batman #264 (and also that of #265 to full page.)

******************************************************************************

Dear Rich,

Okay? BATMANIA #23 was so good that I devoured it in one big gulp! But I'd best dissect my comments...

SHDRO FROK THE BATMANS: I couldn't agree more with your views on fanzines. I buy BATMANIA (or any zine) for the information, not the art. It could be printed on loose leaf with no art at all, for all I care. It's a shame that the emphasis now seems to be on the slick approach. Fusion is losing sight of what fanzines are really about (here, here ---) However, less, from the issues of BATMANIA that I've read, this one seems to be the best yet --- in art and content. I hope it attracts a wider audience.

THE BATMAN ENCYCLOPEDIA: The two reviews gave a fairly balanced perspective of the encyclopedia, though more praise deserves to be given to this work. Michael Fleischer has done us a favor in preparing this volume! Tony Pagan is right in pointing out the mass of info this book omits. But let's face it, a really complete chronicle would be ten times this size. Fleischer had to limit himself, and given these restrictions he has still done a phenomenal job. (I did cover all the really important events. I must confess I have a few beasts myself, but like why would he mention that extra cape that Batman used to carry with him in the forties and fifties? And most importantly, I can't find Bob Kane's name anywhere in the book! Surely, he should've credited Batman's creator in the "Acknowledgements."

UPDATES: Jay L. Zilber's essay on the Ra's al Ghul Collectors Edition was quite thought-provoking, especially his discussion on the problematic timeline of events. However, I personally don't feel that this project was a success. In its original format this epic was a little masterpiece, but it just doesn't translate well into an oversized edition. Why? The main problem is continued next page.
the sketchiness of Neal Adams' art. This is okay in comic style, but
when blown up like this the lines become too indistinct, giving
the art an almost unfinished look. Also, the cover left much to be
desired. Showing the Batman in such a way is not only
evocative, but covers are supposed to attract and this was not a
very pleasant scene. Finally there is that open-ended conclusion
(as Jay points out) which is awkward in any format. No, I really
don't think this project will make any drastic changes in the status
of comics in tabloid format.

GARDNER FOX ADVENTURES: The issue's highpoint? Fox is one of
my favorite Batman creators and the best of comics writers, and he
(Adam Strange is unparalled). I was hoping you'd touch on characteri-
ization and you did! Lack of characterization is the only criticism I have
of Fox's old stories and Golden Age tales in general. But what he
lacked in characterisation was more than amply compensated with plot.
Few writers can tell us an interesting and entertaining story, as Fox
did. Most importantly, though, he never came back to use senseless
action and fisticuffs. Gardner Fox, above all other storytellers. Thanks for
this brief (considering the output) look at this great talent.

RICH: It's always interesting to read what these serious
actors have to say about the old Batman Show, and it's always nice
to hear that they enjoyed this intentionally silly series. Romero
was excellent, as were most of the characters. However, I still feel
that Burgess Meredith in his Penguin role was the best cast and most
successful actor on the show.

COLIC COUTURES: God bless Frank Frazetta for his tip on distingui-
shing Bob Kane's art. In indexing old reprints I'm always try-
ning to see whether or not Kane actually had anything to do with
those "Bob Kane" stories. This tip will prove most helpful!
The art this time was quite good all around. Al Smith's
piece was the perfect cover choice— it reached out and grabbed you.
His last single. Covers would never be cluttered. The finest piece,
though, was Arlen's Adam Strange/Infantino tribute. "Ole Carmine"
couldn't have done better himself (note that Adam is leaning).
Rich, your BATMANA may not be steady in frequency but at
least it is ever-improving. Quality over quantity is also always
refreshing. Keep up the great work!

Gerald Hunt
1719 St. Sadiard Blvd.
New Orleans, La 70114

(I still think Fleischer stopped a bit too early in his BATMAN
ENCYCLOPEDIA— maybe some day he, or someone else, will update them
at least a few months before the time of publication. On the
other hand, it wasn't really his purpose to discuss the creative
personnel— although that, too, could have made a good appendix to
this (and the other volumes, devoted to Wonder Woman and Superman).
Unfortunately, personal differences have led to Arlen Schumer's
departure from the BATMANA staff, but it's still grateful for
the many loyal and finished jobs he's left the site with.)

Dear Richard,
I no remamber the point of fact that bothered me in your Gardner
Fox. You said Firby's association with Captain America was the only
one that rivaled Fox's "super" attachment to Batman.
May I suggest also Bill Everett, who created Namor, the Sub-
mariner, who created the character in the thirties and worked on
it off and on until his death several years ago? Of course, he
is known mostly for his artwork, but he did a considerable amount
of scripting on Submariner throughout his career. Here, in fact, that
Kirby, who certainly wrote little, if any, of the Captain America
material in the 50's, 60's, and 70's.

Joe Himmelstal
1647 East 21st Street, Apt. C1
Brookln, N.Y. 11207

(kany thanks for the plug in your column for the Warren magazines,
Joe—and what's happened to that column lately? Are you not
 billing Everett, although I consider him largely an artist who
has a great deal of input on the scripting—and, with that in mind,
probably C.C. Beck's work on Captain Marvel between 1940 and 1979 also
qualifies, in my opinion, on the other hand, work on the other
Captains America America issues at least in part, and his last issues of
the character in the mid-70's he wrote by himself. And Fox still appears
to succeed in the comic book field as far as length of association
being a cartoongraphic writer and a character is concerned.)

WANTED: Detective #69, 79, 84, 146, 147, 148, 153, 154, 166, 165, 137
All my Overstreet Price Guide
Contact: Robert Gibson
211 NE 81st
Seattle, Wa

Dear Rich,
Sure am sorry #21 is gonna be your last issue of this title. Very, very,
very, enjoyable issue!!

As you mentioned... it's been a year since #22. Maybe
we would be able to get Bill to put out one issue in a year... The BATMAN
ANNUAL??

Oh well, what the hell.

The second "birth" of BAT-MAN was FUN while it
lasted.

Jim Jones
744 Pomelo Drive
Vista, Calif. 92017

(Glad to hear from you again, Jim. I
just hope this will get to you— my last
letter to you seems to have been forwarded
to someone called "Guyana," and then returned.

Seriously, I only wish Bill could do some writing and art for this
zine again—but he seems to have gaffe'd. I haven't heard from
him in quite a while. At least, despite my somewhat tasteless joke, some
of his best artes like yourself are still around.

Dear Rich,
Hello again, and thank you for the advance copy of BATMANA.
I see you have some doubts about whether you'll be able to go
on an editor's tour. I don't think... when you're doing your
touring (I've been to your house) and you've got some
editorial... but you'll be able to go
on an editor tour, which is certainly respectable, though under-
standable in your financial situation. I suppose I've no place
tolerating the lack of fan support, since I've never bought a copy
and subscribed myself, but it does seem a shame than even a new
establishment (and I would have thought) believed a character as the
Batman can't muster the backbone to keep a zine editor from impov-
erishing himself to keep the zine afloat. A Batman fan is an
interesting idea, especially since, as you point out, seems to
take over the communication factor of fanzine once belonging
to zines. The problem is, I'm afraid! that apaling can be an
extensive proposition for the individual fan, as I'm sure you're
aware.

But at any rate, this is an excellent issue of BATMANA.
The artwork and layouts are very well done, as you noted, the
only exception being some slightly sloppy paste-ups (which are a
small problem, none more), and the articles and such are also quite
good. (I had no idea Gardner Fox was a Lovercraft fan! My stars!
Or that he was involved in the fantasy-wargame field.)

Occasionally, yes there was some slightly sloppy layout
at the time I was buying both the original comics and the reprint
specials and annals and being fated to
at the higher quality of the older stories. (Not all of them—
"Batman Eye of Gotham City" comes to mind as one I thought
silly, if involving some clever detection from photos—but not.)

Very much enjoyed Jay's UPDATE on the '50s ch Gull book,
and Martin Lock's article. Interesting how much visual stress he
puts on the use of the batman's cape/look by various artists, and he's
quite right, it has made immense differences.

Paula O'Keefe
Chillico Apartments, #23
Fireside, VA 22101

Dear Rich,
I was very pleasantly surprised when the new BATMANA arrived
in the mail today. I had not but forgotten about it in the year
since I reviewed the last issue.

By then with comics are very much here. I was never a very active fan. I've had a handful of loc's published
and I've not an article for the Legion (out next year)
seems to me the wonderfully innovative period in the late sixties and early seventies (particularly at DC) how
comics began to lose their service. All of the late cutaneous
to fanzines, I've ever seen the best in the illustrators
have moved on to... I imagine... dreams and boy, or
nearly lost their muse.

Over the past two years, I've been buying comics in fewer
and fewer numbers and reading fewer still. Trying to read an
alone office Batman story became an endurance test I found I
could do without. And so I stopped reading Batman. I still bought
them but only for the sake of my collection. I buy only a low

(letters cont.)
percentage of the titles I once bought four or five years ago.

It seems that the comics have really missed their potential and are settling for their own brand of banality. Sturgeon's Law states that ninety percent of everything is crap which, as Marian Elliston points out, means ninety-nine percent of everything is crap. So, ninety percent of everything just zets by. And of course comics are no exception.

On the bright side (there is one?), Batman has been looking much better lately, particularly in Detective, and its pace again a faithful reader. The Legion of Super-Heroes knocked me out more and more each month and some of the other titles continue to hold my interest. So you see, I haven't given up ... YET.

Joe Ficicce
7671 Miller Ave
Gilroy, CA 95020

---

Dear Richard,

I'm sorry that BATMAN #29 and think you deserve the thanks and the praise of every true Gothamite. Best since this Ish was the Gardner Fox interview, match, andlatin Lock's look at brave and bold was also very good, mirroring my opinions almost exactly. Walter Langley contributed an interesting letter, accurately figuring the writers to know nothing about the subtleties of sex and providing Bruce Wayne with a succession of "improved lovelets" at the tennis clubs and dinner parties. Not to mention the ever-present "screaming stories", which occur with such alarming frequency in Gotham City they could almost provide the subject of a fascinating article. I'm afraid with ideas for BATMAN #29. How about an interview with the incredibly drawling hand of Carmine Infantino, literally sprinkled with examples of his mini-bouqing bat-arts?

Steve Barry
1514 Union Street
San Francisco, CA 94123

---

(Two these last letters, besides understating how unconsciously long it's been since the last letter, demonstrate how regrettably transient truly first-rate comics seem to be today. In the four years since then, the prevailing ALIEN ORIGINS has disappeared (with the much-discussed revistal still unscheduled), and the Legion has lost its promising writer and artists of 1976 and plunged into mediocrity. And, as for Batman himself!), I'm more than happy just to see Mr. Rogers back, even with Gorgoro locals. By the way, if you're wondering what's become anywhere near his usual suitably character, and although Kark Kolman is valiantly trying to re-capture Englehart's writing quality, I can't imagine Gerry Conway even coming close. Maybe our tastes are too high, but it's only because we've been literally spoiled — and, in the case of the Batman, we've been genuinely peered often enough to make it difficult to settle for less than we know is possible.)

---

Dear Rich,

I was shocked when you said, "I ret only 12 of the ballots that accompany each issue back, and receive fewer letters." (sum) I feel downright guilty when I don't get a fanzine. It does beat me why Billio White's fanzine should have been so much more popular. Sometimes I ask, but then, suggested what I think in a large part of the answer: emphasis today is on the creators, not the creations — Steve Englehart, not Bruce Wayne. On the face of it, it's inclined to regard that as a healthy development: as you know, I'm happy to see comics criticism develop along the lines of present-day film criticism — saturated with authorial doctrine. But... I admit that what has displaced the Batman-type fandom is not, for the most part, the kind of criticism I want. This issue's highlight, of course, was "Gardner Fox Adventures!"

I'm sorry you spent so much time in reference-type facts (like the naming of all the characters, significant or not, that he has written) instead of his views on concepts (all my friends would agree that captions, for example), rhetoric (e.g., his captions were more florid than brockum's, but less emotionally involved in the story than Langner's), characterization, artwork (what did he like or dislike in an artistic and stiff like that?

The two reviews of Fleisher's Encyclopedia were informative, but too much alike. (I mostly preferred Alan Fishman's, I mean: feet next to too much in love with his own rhetorical devices.) I was even planning to buy a copy of the Batman volume, until I read that creators are ignored. Shovel face, I should think that a book like those needs nothing more than it has a long index, lack of emotional cuite.

What are examples of all those different indices? How'd Jack Schiff come from?

Jay Zilber's "nate" was the worst I've ever seen from him. Goebbels — his explanation of what the serial's original concept meant was even incoherent. There was no evaluation (beyond somewhat-superslavative) of plot, artwork, characterization — anything. The "poster Addams and Bates Motel" was "on", though. I never had noticed the resemblance between "Norma Desmond" and Supremes' father, nor those little lines in Bob Kane's signature. The latter, however, are less helpful than I had hoped at first, for checking the BATMAN Annual number 3, I have down here, I see it's on every story. It's on every story.

Christopher Kechert
Center for Arabic Studies
American University in Cairo
P.O. Box 731
Cairo, A E Egypt

(My own belief is that Bob Kane did all the art credited to him but little or no drawing through late 1939 or early 1940. After that, the increased success and pay rates accruing to the Batman feature enabled Kane — even DC — to hire an increasing number of ghosts, and his actual work disappeared completely after 1947 or so. Like Gold has argued that Kane's job was mostly devoted even in the early first Batman stories, by Jack Cole and others, but I can't see any evidence of this — nor any way that an impoverished artist like the pre-Batman Kane could afford to make a living and have enough left to hire any other artists. Nor, for that matter, why any artist would want to work for Kane instead of settling his own job (as distinguished from a writer like Bill Finger, who had ideas but lacked the ability to turn them into pictures by himself) — until Kane had an established character and a regular schedule he could offer in return.

Over the years, Bob Kane became less and less interested in the Batman art — or, although the line under his name was supposed to be added by himself, other artists would sometimes copy "his" signature, line and all. The EC editors kept his name on the stories mostly as a courtesy, but the art was so bad. When "famine" Infantino refused to have it on the stories he drew and colored, the resulting stories were often so bad that Infantino became DC's editorial director in 1961. In recent years, Kane has been receiving a credit as creator of the character, a practice now followed on many DC featured since Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster were awarded the privilege on Superman stories, in 1992."

---

Dear Sir,

I have received your letter and I am interested in your opinion about the Batman comic book. I have been a fan of this comic for many years and I believe that it has a lot of potential for growth. I would like to suggest some changes that I believe could improve the quality of the comic. I believe that the current storyline is too predictable and that the characters are not well developed. I would like to see more depth and complexity in the characters to make them more relatable. I also believe that the artwork is too bland and that it needs more variation and creativity. I would like to see more artistic license in the artwork to make it more visually appealing.

I understand that the comic is a product of its time and that it is influenced by the social and political context of the era in which it was created. However, I believe that it is possible to create a comic that resonates with the values and beliefs of today's readers while also paying homage to the heritage of the past. I would love to see the creators of the comic work to incorporate elements that are relevant to contemporary society, such as issues related to diversity, social justice, and environmental concerns.

I am excited to see what the creators of the comic have in store for the future and I look forward to reading more about the characters and the storyline. Thank you for considering my suggestions and I hope that you will take them into account in your work on the comic.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]
It has taken over forty years (since March, 1937 to be exact), but a milestone will be reached with the release of Detective Comics issue number 500. Although, Action Comics reached the rare number sooner (though starting in June of ’38), and Superman is revered as the number one hero of the comics (but not around here), Detective Comics has the distinction of giving DC Comics its name.

The first issue of Detective Comics did not star the Batman as all of us know. However, it did have a guy by the name of Slam Bradley. Therefore, it is only fitting that he makes an appearance in #500. As a matter of fact, all the detectives who have appeared in this series are in this issue. Len Wein and Jim Aparo have teamed up to bring us “The Too Many Crooks Caper” featuring the above mentioned Slam Bradley as well as The Human Target, Jason Bard, Roy Raymond, Nypto, Captain Compass, and Pow-Wow Smith. As you can see, the years will be well represented by those characters that have come and gone; and yes, the character that has stayed all these decades is still proudly calling this comic “home.”

This milestone will cost a buck-and-a-half, but should be well worth it as it will contain eighty pages of good art and stories. The cover will be laid out by Joe Kubert, but will be finished by all the artists whose work will appear inside this issue. One story has the Dynamic Duo (Now I love that phrase!) in a creation by Alan Brennart and Dick Giordano entitled “To Kill a Legend.”

Other features will be a solo Batman story by Wein and Simonson; plus a Batman text story by Walter Gibson (creator of the Shadow— this should be worth the price by itself) and illustrated by Tom Yeates.

Edgar Allen Poe even makes an appearance in an Elongated Man story. Marking the 140th anniversary of the detective story concept, this story will be done by Mike Mazz and Jose Garcia Lopes. Sounds like a lot for this issue, but wait... there is more.

There will be a team-up of the Dynamic Duo and Deadman by Cary Bates, the returning Carline Infintino, and Bob Smith. Although not making an appearance, there will be a tie-in of the Martian Manhunter—the scientist who brought N.H. to Earth has Hawkman up in the air (Shades of Robin!) as Paul Levits and Joe Kubert bring us “The Strange Death of Dr. Erdel.” No ONE does Hawkman like Mr. Kubert.

Last, but certainly not least, there may be a Batman solo by Rozan Kliison. This plot reportedly has Batman caught in a riot in Chicago and may be in this issue if the story arrives on time. I understand that there will be special editorial consideration by Julius Schwartz on this issue.

Let us not forget to give thanks to Mr. Levits for this issue. The hard work being put into this landmark issue is permeating fandom with exciting anticipation. (After the dull of Action #500, this one will be better even if it only has a cover.)
WHISTLING BROOKS
BUDDING FLOWER TO
THE WIND... SEA GREEN
CURRENTS FLITTING WITH
THE SUN IN BRIGHT SILVER
FLECKED HIGHLIGHTS...

THE WEALTHY OF THIS RIM-
WORLD PAY NEATLY SUMS
TO COME VISIT THESE VAST
TIDAL POOLS AND SWIM
AMONG THE GILL-WOMEN
THAT INHABIT IT...

--AND OTHERS!!

THERE HE IS...
AND WITH ONLY
A THREE MAN
ESCORT LIKE
GUTTER-RAT
SAID...

--THOSE GOLDEN
DRAPED RUINS ARE
THE PLAYGROUND
FOR THE GALAXY'S
AFFLUENT-- THE
WEALTHY ORE TRADERS,
CORRUPT POLITICIANS,
ELITE ROYAL
BLOOD--

NO. THE TALL
ALIEN?

--HIS LORD-
SHIP KARNAL
THE MAGIC
AMBASSADOR,
ALSO KNOWN
AS THE
CORRUPTER,
THE MIESTER/
GENERAL'S
BODYGUARD
AND SECOND
IN COMMAND.

...YES, WE
LOVE IT!

YES, BUT WE'RE
TOO FAR TO STOP!!

Nervous?

--THEN IT'S OVER.
A COLD BLOODED
CORPSE AND A
MEMORY!!

WHO IS IT?

THERE IS A SHORT
GASTA-- A FITFUL
EPITAPH-- OR PER-
HAPS A FINAL CURSE
AGAINST UNHEARING
GODS...
THEY APPEAR SUDDENLY! THROST FROM THE SHADOWS INTO THE GOLDEN TWILIGHT OF EVENING---

ONE, AN AWE-INSPIRING FIGURE WITH THE COUNTENANCE OF THE GREAT CATS -- ROARING HIS RAGE, A STILL SMOLDERING BLASTER IN HIS IRON-SHEATHED HAND!!

THIS SERIES DEDICATED WITH LOVE TO SHARON.

SOMETIMES I PREFER LIES

BUTCH GUICE

-- WRITER/ARTIST/CREATOR

...THE OTHER, A FIGURE ETCHED IN IVORY. A LITTLE ORANGE-HAIRED ALBINO ARCHER CLAD IN BLUE SATIN. HIS NAME: PYTHIUS -- HERS: TEMPEST--

TOGETHER, THEY HAVE JUST DECLARED WAR ON A WORLD -- WITH A GALAXY AT STAKE!!
THE AMBER EPIKLES ARE THICK WITH DEFENSE AND THE TIDES OF BATTLE TURN QUICKLY LIKE SCELES OF FATE PECARIously BALANCED!

IF ONLY FOR A MOMENT... ONE VERY DEADLY MOMENT--

--RIPPING--

--SPRAWLING--

--CONSUMING--

--ALL!

--PITHIUS! THESE EXPLOSIONS! THEY BEGIN TO SEE THE FROM THE VERY TOWERS THEMSELVES!

YES... A MOST BEAUTIFUL EFFECT, IS IT NOT?

BEAUTIFUL! AND... YOU NEVER THOUGHT OF IT THAT WAY, BUT I GUESS IT IS!

MEN FALL! THEIR SHELLS BRIGHT SCARLET SPLASHES AGAINST A DEEP GOLDEN BACKDROP!

THE TIDE SHIFTS AGAIN...

"ESCAPE" WOULD BE NICE, TOO!

THERE ARE MEMORIES HERE -- WORDLESS, CHAOTIC, UNSEEN OF BONDS OF HERITAGE THAT HAVE CHANGED THE COURSES OF BOTH THEIR LIVES--

BEAUTIFUL-- AND DEADLY! QUITE A COMBINATION! IT'S SOMETHING YOU BOTH SHARE IN COMMON --

MEMORIES OF HARSH, VIOLENT CRIMSON TRUTHS

IT WOULD HAVE BEEN EASIER TO ACCEPT THE LIES!

--MUCH EASIER--!
AND MUCH SAFER!!

Quickly, you fool! stop them before they escape!

THE EMERALD-EYED DARK LORD SAYS NOTHING, BUT INSTEAD, LAUNCHES SILVER SPINES ACROSS THE BREATH OF THE COURTWARD WITH ONE SNIP OF HIS AWESOME, BOIL-COVERED ARM!!

WITH PRECISE EFFECT!!

UNNINNGH... TEMPEST... I...

PITHIUS!!

WITH GRIM DETERMINATION, SHE HAULS THE GREAT CAT'S BODY ONTO THE FOUL SCAL-FOLD -- CURSING THE FATES... THE FEDERATION...!

--But most of all, cursing the darkling Lord Karnal, the corruptor!

PITHIUS... oh my dear pithius...

YOUR SUPERIORS SHALL HEAR OF THIS! I SHALL--

NO, MIESTER/GENERAL-- MY SUPERIORS SHALL HEAR OF NOTHING. I'M AFRAID--

YOU RUMBLING MORONIC FOOL! You've lost them--!

That catwalk can take them anywhere in the city long before we can ever reach them!!

COMING SOON:

LUCIUS THORN

THE AMAZING HAVOCMASTER

--Save of your untimely death in a rebel attack today--

SO SORRY, GENERAL... GOODBYE...

Next: THE COMING OF HAVOCMASTER!