

SHADOW OF THE BAT

I: CAPES

102 - "The Bite Marked Heart, Pt. II"

Batman and related characters were created by Bob Kane & Bill Finger and are owned by DC Comics & Warner Brothers. This is a work of transformative fiction... aren't they all?

FADE IN:

EXT. GCPD ROOF - NIGHT

Gordon stands patiently atop the Gotham City Police Department Headquarters, smoking a cigarette. District Attorney HARVEY DENT (a tall, striking, chisel-jawed white man in his early thirties with jet black hair and a charcoal grey suit) stands next to him, waving away the smoke. They stare off into the dense Gothic cityscape.

The two converse lackadaisically, each allowing the other's previous remark to sink in before responding.

DENT

The wife come to her senses yet?

GORDON

No, but she will... We've been through this song and dance before, in Chicago.

DENT

You ever consider... not cheating?

Gordon grumbles and turns toward Dent, ready to give him a piece of his mind, when he is interrupted by a gravelly voice behind him.

BATMAN

Gentlemen.

There is a silence.

BATMAN (CONT'D)

Am I interrupting?

GORDON

No, no. Harvey and I were just waiting for you.

DENT

What's that smell?

BATMAN

I met with the man in the sewer.

GORDON

So he's not a rumor.

(CONTINUED)

BATMAN

Nor is he a cannibal.

DENT

Then it's back to square one.

BATMAN

The Asylum is the obvious next step. Unfortunately, Jeremiah Arkham has a better understanding of security than his father.

GORDON

I could go in the old fashioned way. It's my investigation, after all.

DENT

There's a new criminological therapist practicing there, what's his name... Strange something...

BATMAN

Hugo Strange. His work in dissociative identity disorder is unparalleled. I'd recommend reading a few of his papers before seeing him.

Batman winds up and throws his batarang-grapnel, which hooks off-screen. He tests it for his weight.

BATMAN (CONT'D)

Good luck with your wife, Jim.

Batman swings away.

OPENING TITLE CARD: SHADOW OF THE BAT

ACT ONE:

INT. GOTHAM PREP, CAFETERIA - MIDDAY

Students ranging in age from fourteen to eighteen, all in burgundy school uniforms, sit and eat in the lunchroom din.

SI: "The Bite Marked Heart, Part II"

BARBARA GORDON, a redheaded Freshman, sits down at an empty table, placing her brown paper lunchbag in front of her.

(CONTINUED)

Focus on the bag as she opens it; the yellow sticky-note attached reads, in Jim Gordon's handwriting, "**BABS, HAVE A GOOD DAY. - DAD**"

GEOFFRY (pronounced Joff-ree), a blonde preppy douche of a freshman, walks up to Babs' table and stands next to her, his demeanor conveying a practiced smugness.

GEOFFRY
Hello Babs.

Barbara, annoyed, removes her egg salad sandwich from the bag.

BARBARA
Geoffry.

GEOFFRY
My parents are wintering in Coast City this week. I was planning on having a bit of a soiree while they're away, and your presence would delight all involved.

BARBARA
(mocking Geoffry)
All but me, Geoffry. Tell your companions I shan't be attending.

GEOFFRY
We'll leave an open seat for you, should you change your mind.

Geoffry almost bows, then turns and leaves.

Barbara Takes a bite from her sandwich and chews. As she looks up she sees Dick, eating alone at the table in front of her.

BARBARA
Hey!--

She swallows.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Hey new kid!

Dick looks around.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Yeah, you! Side-part! Come over here!

Dick reluctantly stands up and grabs his tray. He carries it over to Barbara's table, sitting across from her.

Barbara extends her hand.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Barbara Gordon. But you can call me Babs.

Dick shakes her hand.

DICK

Hi.

BARBARA

And you are...

DICK

Oh. Dick Grayson. Hi.

BARBARA

Yeah, hi. So where you from, new kid?

DICK

I dunno.

BARBARA

You don't know where you're from? Come on, where were you born?

DICK

Bulgaria.

BARBARA

You're Bulgarian?

DICK

No, I... It's complicated.

Barbara considers Dick a moment.

BARBARA

Shy kid, huh? I like shy kids.

DICK

Uh, thanks... So are you waiting for your friends, or...

BARBARA

No. There's no one at this school worth being friends with.

DICK

That's encouraging.

BARBARA

Jesus Ivan, who died? Not everyone's bad, it's just that nobody's interesting.

EXT. ARKHAM ASYLUM - MIDDAY

Establishing shot. Snow blankets the antique gothic exterior of the mental hospital, even topping the iconic wrought iron gates.

INT. ARKHAM ASYLUM, STRANGE'S OFFICE

HUGO STRANGE, his jawline covered by a chinstrap beard that continues around his severely balding head, wearing a long double breasted labcoat and tinted Nazi John Lennon spectacles, sits at his desk in his very modern, immaculate office.

He pushes a button on the small intercom next to his computer, speaking into it softly. He has a slight German accent.

STRANGE

Send him in.

Strange leans back in his chair. After a few moments Gordon enters though the door.

STRANGE (CONT'D)

Mr. Gordon, please sit down.

GORDON

It's Commissioner now.

Gordon takes a seat across the desk from Strange.

GORDON (CONT'D)

Thank you for seeing me on such short notice, I hear you're a very busy man.

STRANGE

Since coming to Gotham a year ago I have met more emotionally disturbed individuals than in all my years in Star City. In a way it is a dream come true for someone of my profession.

(CONTINUED)

GORDON

And a nightmare for someone of mine.

STRANGE

Of course, how rude of me. You must be here on business. Tell me your troubles.

GORDON

Well, there have been a series of cannibal homicides over the last week. In each case the heart had been removed by human teeth.

STRANGE

And you wish me to profile the killer?

GORDON

Not quite. You're closer to the insane underbelly of Gotham than almost anyone I can think of. I was hoping you'd heard something about a heart-eater.

STRANGE

That disturbs me greatly, for there was a man I knew several months ago from my weekly sessions at Blackgate Prison.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BLACKGATE PRISON, COMMONS ROOM - FLASHBACK

The flashback is denoted by lower color saturation.

Strange leads a group therapy session. He and the convicts sit together on uncomfortable plastic chairs arranged in a large circle. The room is large and vaguely round, with various catwalks above manned by armed security guards.

Among the convicts is CORNELIUS STIRK, a small, skinny white man, mostly bald but with patches of fiery red hair. His mouth missing what might be most of his teeth; those that are left jut over his lip at odd angles. His wide, sallow eyes always seem to be wet and welling.

STRANGE (V.O.)

His name was Cornelius Stirk. He was a hypochondriac of a sort. The most peculiar of sorts.

(CONTINUED)

FLASHBACK STIRK

I am dying, sir! Wasting away!

FLASHBACK STRANGE

And what is the cause of your
malady, Mr. Stirk?

FLASHBACK STIRK

I require nourishment!

FLASHBACK STRANGE

Are they not feeding you here?

FLASHBACK STIRK

Their food is no good,
sir. Without human hearts I shall
die a starving, emaciated death!

Flashback Strange lifts an eyebrow above his glasses.

FLASHBACK STRANGE

You ate human hearts on the
outside?

FLASHBACK STIRK

No! Never sir! That is why I am
to die!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ARKHAM ASYLUM, STRANGE'S OFFICE - PRESENT DAY

STRANGE

I recommended him for treatment at
Arkham immediately, but Blackgate's
warden refused the transfer. He
was serving only a very short
sentence; it is very likely he is
out in your city now.

GORDON

Do you know where I can find this
Cornelius Stirk?

STRANGE

If he is no longer at Blackgate,
then I do not Mr. Gordon.

Gordon rises from the chair and extends his hand.

(CONTINUED)

GORDON
That's alright, Dr. Strange.

Strange accepts the shake.

GORDON (CONT'D)
You've been a tremendous help.

INT. GOTHAM PREP, HALLWAY - EARLY AFTERNOON

The last few stragglers get enter their classes as the bell sounds.

Dick mopes, eyes on the floor, still walking to his next class.

He almost bumps into Geoffry, who now obstructs his path.

Dick stops.

GEOFFRY
So you're the Wayne kid, huh? You
don't smell like money to me.

DICK
(calmly, quietly)
Leave me alone.

GEOFFRY
No, you know what? You leave
Barbara alone, then I'll leave you
alone.

Dick gracefully sidesteps Geoffry and start to walk past him, not looking back.

DICK
(aside)
Like Babs leaves you alone?

Geoffry turns and swings a huge right haymaker at the back of Dick's skull, but it hits air by the time it reaches what should have been its target

Dick falls to the back of his shoulders, then springs backward with both feet into Geoffry's chin, sending him flying back against a classroom door, after which he crumples to the ground.

Geoffry gets up. Dick is in his battle-stance.

(CONTINUED)

GEOFFRY
You're dead!

DICK
Too late.

Geoffry charges Dick, who back-spin kicks him in the face with a move so graceful it looks like it was executed by a lethal ballerina.

Geoffry pulls himself up yet again, this time with blood trickling from his nose.

GEOFFRY
Put your hands up, fight me like a man!

Dick spins low and backsweeps Geoffry's legs out from under him. Geoffry lands on his back.

Dick twirls over in a flash of motion, landing in full-mount on Geoffry and immediatley raining down fists onto his shocked and fearful face.

Geoffry starts screaming.

Class doors start to open. Dick gets in a few more punches as students look on from doorways, silent.

Dick lifts Geoffry head and shoulders a few inches off the ground by the collar of his shirt. After some consideration, he releases his grip, letting Geoffry's beaten, mangled head drop to the floor.

Barbara is among the students.

BARBARA
Holy shit.

INT. DENT'S OFFICE - DAY

Dent, sleeves rolled up, and Gordon, coat draped over his arm, stand in front of Dent's desk. Batman stands in what little shadow there is next to the window behind the desk, his presence betrayed only by the glint of his eye-lenses.

The curtains are drawn; the ceiling lights are off, but the small desk lamp is on.

GORDON
(continuing)
So at this point I feel Stirk is our strongest lead.

(CONTINUED)

DENT

What do you propose?

BATMAN

Jim goes to Blackgate to talk to warden Pickering, I comb the streets for Stirk.

DENT

Actually, Mark Pickering is a friend of mine from college. I could go talk to him.

GORDON

Agreed, we-

Gordon's cell-phone rings, interrupting him.

GORDON (CONT'D)

One second.

He flips it open and answers the cell-phone.

GORDON (CONT'D)

Hello?

DENT

(to Batman)

So you have to wait until nightfall? Batman?

In his dark corner, Batman has his finger to his ear. He appears to be listening intently, but not to Dent.

Gordon closes his cell and Batman takes his finger from his ear, almost simultaneously.

BATMAN

I have to go.

GORDON

I have to go.

INT. STIRK'S FILTHY SQUATTER'S DEN - DAY

Cornelius Stirk, in an ill fitting tattered shirt and ripped jeans, stands over a scavenged stove stirring a broth in a large pot. He hums gaily to himself.

Stirk leans over the pot, sips the red broth, and then smiles. Using both hands, he scoops up a human heart from next to the stove, dropping it in the pot. Still humming, he holds his hands over the pot, letting the excess blood drip into the mix.

(CONTINUED)

FADE TO BLACK:

ACT TWO:

FADE FROM BLACK:

INT. GOTHAM PREP, DEAN'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Bruce sits next to Dick on the left side of the office. Geoffry (his head wrapped in a large bandage) sits next to his snooty father FENNINGTON on the right side.

Barbara sits off in the corner behind them, arms crossed, rolling her eyes.

Dean OLIVIA KILGOUR sits at her desk, all parties before her.

FENNINGTON

That boy is a menace! I demand he be expelled this instant!

DICK

He started it.

BRUCE

Dick, be quiet.

DEAN KILGOUR

There are no witnesses at this time, Mr Wayne, Mr. Fennington. Without-

FENNINGTON

My son is a scholar! He is the captain of the wrestling team!

DICK

(snidely)

Really?

BRUCE

Dick.

FENNINGTON

He would never instigate an altercation, especially with someone so clearly beneath him.

BARBARA

Screw you moneybags!

(CONTINUED)

DEAN KILGOUR

Miss Gordon, ma'am, I suggest you sit quietly until your father arrives.

BARBARA

I don't even know why I'm here, I-

Gordon bursts through the door in a frenzy. Quickly clocking Barbara in the corner, he immediately walks to her side

GORDON

Babs, are you alright?

GEOFFRY

(through broken teeth)

Ah finally, the police are here.

Gordon gives Geoffry a look to kill, setting him straight.

BARBARA

I'm alright, I'm fine. I wasn't even involved in the fight.

GORDON

Then why are you here?

BARBARA

I don't know.

Gordon whips around toward Dean Kilgour.

GORDON

Why is she here?

DEAN KILGOUR

Your daughter may not have participated physically, Mr. Gordon, but according to Mr. Grayson and Mr. Fennington, she was at the very heart of the matter.

GORDON

Babs...

BARBARA

Daddy, I had nothing to do with it. Geoffry is just jealous that I'm showing the new kid around.

(CONTINUED)

GORDON

And who exactly is Geoffry?

BARBARA

Nobody important.

FENNINGTON

Now just a minute-

GORDON

Watch it moneybags.

DEAN KILGOUR

Okay, everyone. Let's lower our voices and try to get on the same page; move forward together.

FENNINGTON

I'd like to hear about punitive measures.

DEAN KILGOUR

Yes, let's do that. Geoffry Fennington, you are hereby suspended for the remainder of this week.

GEOFFRY

You've got to be joking...

DEAN KILGOUR

As for Mr. Grayson, seeing as you've managed to bring this much unwanted attention upon yourself in your very first day here at Gotham Prep, I find it rather difficult to believe that you will reach the standard to which we hold our students. It is my recommendation that you be transferred to Liberty High School.

BRUCE

Isn't that a bit rash? I don't want my ward to have to walk through metal detectors to get to class.

DEAN KILGOUR

Nonetheless I must insist.

There is a beat.

(CONTINUED)

BRUCE

I hear your science lab is in need
of a major overhaul.

DEAN KILGOUR

(interested)

You hear correctly.

GORDON

Nice going, Wayne. You can't
control your kid so you wipe his
ass with your money.

Gordon takes Barbara by the hand.

GORDON (CONT'D)

We're leaving Babs.

Gordon swings open the door and exits the office, dragging
Barbara behind him. Barbara glances back at Dick as the
door slowly swings shut.

DEAN KILGOUR

(to Bruce)

You were saying?

EXT. BLACKGATE PRISON - AFTERNOON

Establishing shot of the maximum security prison.

INT. BLACKGATE PRISON, WARDEN'S OFFICE -

The warden's office is well lit and very clean, but several
decades out of date. The room is very fuzzy-feeling and
brown, with a warm color palette informing shag carpet and
iron desk alike.

Warden MARK PICKERING stands at his drink cabinet, pouring
two glasses of neat scotch. Dent sits in a leather chair
behind him.

PICKERING

You still drink scotch?

DENT

On occasion.

PICKERING

I hope this is one such occasion.

(CONTINUED)

DENT

Why not.

Pickering turns around and hands Dent a drink. Harvey accepts it and Pickering continues over to his desk, drink in hand.

PICKERING

So Harv, how you doing?

DENT

Not bad, not bad. DA is a completely different beast, but I'm hangin' in there.

Pickering sits in his desk chair and lounges back, swirling his drink. The two continue to take sips throughout their conversation.

PICKERING

Yeah, I haven't seen you since your appointment party- what was that, a year ago?

DENT

Closer to two.

PICKERING

Damn time flies when you're on the job.

DENT

How's Bridget?

PICKERING

The same, the same. Once you're our age you don't change much.

DENT

I hate to do this to you Mark, but I came here today on business.

PICKERING

Nothing unusual around here. What can I help you with?

DENT

I'm looking for a former inmate, I was hoping you'd have some information.

(CONTINUED)

PICKERING

I can't promise anything. What's his name?

DENT

Cornelius Stirk.

Pickering jostles the mouse to wake up his computer screen. He begins typing.

PICKERING

Here we- yeah... from what I can tell he skipped out on his probation. Happens a lot, actually. They don't usually bother going after the small fish.

DENT

There was a transfer request from Arkham Asylum, but it was denied. Any idea why?

PICKERING

Of course. I have direct orders to keep as many inmates here as possible. Arkham confiscates too many of them as it is.

DENT

Orders? Orders from whom?

PICKERING

Queen Industries... this is a Queen Industries Prison Complex, afterall. More inmates means more money. Bridget wants to go to Greece, you understand.

DENT

Oh yeah Mark, I understand.

Dent quickly finishes the rest of his drink.

DENT (CONT'D)

Well, it's been great catching up with you. Thanks for the drink, but duty calls.

Dent places the glass onto Pickering's desk as he stands up.

PICKERING

Come back anytime, Harv.

INT. GCPD, MORGUE -

The latest cannibal victim is laid out on a slab in the cold room. The walls are lined with rows of large refrigerated drawers.

Detective Bullock stands to the side of the corpse. The CORONER stands by the corpse's head.

CORONER

Your hunch was correct Detective Bullock, no sign of struggle on the hands and arms.

The Coroner lifts back the sheet covering the corpse's torso.

CORONER (CONT'D)

As to the chest wound, though human teeth were involved, as with the others there are telltale signs of a small knife. The heart has been removed forcibly.

BULLOCK

Coulda told you that, Doc.

CORONER

One thing I noticed with this one, his norepinephrine levels were highly elevated. When I compared them to my notes for the previous victims, a pattern emerged.

BULLOCK

In English, Doc?

CORONER

Norepinephrine is released during a state of intense fear.

BULLOCK

Of course 'e was scared, he was gettin' himself murdered.

CORONER

This is more than that... the numbers here are... well they're dangerous. If the heart hadn't been harvested he might've died from trying to cope with that level of norepinephrine anyway.

(CONTINUED)

BULLOCK

I'm sorry Doc, did you just say
"harvested?"

CORONER

Some ancient cannibalistic tribes believed that the hearts of their enemies were best consumed when pumped full of terror. Before killing their victim they would purposefully raise their norepinephrine levels by inducing fear. The restorative power of the heart was said to be that much greater. Obviously I'm just a coroner and you're the detective, but...

The coroner trails off and the two stare at the mangled corpse before them.

BULLOCK

Jesus Christ.

INT. DOWNTOWN RESTAURANT - AFTERNOON

A beautiful, fit BRUNETTE woman walks along the sidewalk past the large window of the Downtown Restaurant. She reaches the door and enters.

A HOSTESS in black uniform greets her with a smile.

HOSTESS

Table for one?

Stirk appears in the window but neither of the ladies notice him. He peers in with both hands shading the light from his bulging eyes.

BRUNETTE

Yes, thank you.

The hostess takes the Brunette to her table.

Stirk enters the restaurant.

Another HOST greets him.

HOST

Table for one, sir?

(CONTINUED)

STIRK
Yes sir, yes. I require further
nourishment.

HOST
Right this way, sir.

The host leads him to a table.

Stirk sits down.

He stares distractedly at the brunette at the other end of
the restaurant.

HOST (CONT'D)
Can I start you off with anything?

Stirk continues to stare.

HOST (CONT'D)
Sir?

STIRK
No sir. No.

HOST
Would you like to order?

STIRK
I would not.

HOST
Sir, if you do not order anything
I'm going to have to ask you to
leave.

STIRK
A coffee then, sir. I shall have a
coffee.

HOST
Very good sir.

The host leaves.

Stirk continues staring at the Brunette.

Focus on the Brunette.

INT. GORDON'S CAR - LATE AFTERNOON

Gordon drives. Barbara sits in the passenger seat staring out the window.

They sit in silence.

GORDON
So have you and Geoffry been...

Gordon's voice cracks.

GORDON (CONT'D)
hitting it off?

BARBARA
God no. He's horrible.

GORDON
Good. I mean... boys are going to
be paying more attention to you...
now that you...

BARBARA
Daddy?

GORDON
Yes dear?

BARBARA
Please shut up.

Gordon lets out a sigh of relief.

GORDON
Thanks.

INT. DOWNTOWN RESTAURANT -

Stirk stares at the Brunette. His coffee sits untouched in front of him.

As he awkwardly stares the woman down, she looks up from her meal and barely catches his eyes shooting away from hers.

For a moment her eyes narrow, but she shakes it off and goes back to eating, unphased.

INT. ALFRED'S ROLLS ROYCE - LATE AFTERNOON

Bruce and Dick sit in the back seat. Alfred drives.

BRUCE

I understand if you don't want to go there. I can find somewhere else.

DICK

Don't bother.

BRUCE

And whatever the Dean says, I know you didn't start that fight. I know you wouldn't stoop to their level.

DICK

How do you know? You don't even know me.

There is a tense silence as Bruce looks on stoically.

Alfred looks in the rear-view mirror at Bruce. They make eye contact.

BRUCE

True. But I'd like to get to know you better... Alfred, I'm going to need your tailoring skills.

INT. DOWNTOWN RESTAURANT -

The Brunette retrieves her credit card from the small payment tray. She stands up, dropping a few bills on the table before strolling away.

Stirk watches as she heads to exit the restaurant and waits til her back is turned. When it is, he hops up and briskly follows her out.

EXT. STREET IN DOWNTOWN - CONTINUOUS

As Stirk emerges from the glass doors, he closes in behind the Brunette.

FADE TO BLACK:

ACT THREE:

FADE FROM BLACK:

EXT. STREET IN DOWNTOWN - LATE AFTERNOON

The Brunette walks down the sidewalk. Through peripheral vision, she notices her own reflection in the full store windows next to her. Her reflection appears morbidly obese and ugly to the point of being almost pig-like. Seeing herself, she shrieks in horror and covers her face.

As she looks up from weeping in her hands, she sees her father approaching with a scowl on his face.

BRUNETTE
(confused)
Daddy?

BRUNETTE'S FATHER
You fat pig. You'll never be like
your sister!

At a wider angle we can see it is Stirk who is harassing the still physically fit Brunette.

STIRK
You were right, I left because of
you.

BRUNETTE
No daddy! No, please! Listen--

Passersby stop to see what Stirk is doing to the woman.

As citizens start to gather on the other side of the street, they pull out their cell phones and begin to film the event.

Stirk notices the situation is getting out of his control.

STIRK
(clearing his throat)
Come along dear... Come along home
now...

Stirk reaches for the sobbing Brunette's hand to lead her away from the public eye. The Brunette jerks her hand away and screams.

Stirk looks back to the crowd. Even more are gathered.

A caucasian teen boy (wearing a black and gold jersey over a white tee, along with a flat-brimmed clean white baseball cap) films the scene with his smart phone. An ELDERLY BLACK MAN (in a button up and cardigan) is standing behind him.

The man puts his hand on the teen's shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

ELDERLY BLACK MAN

You gonna stand there with your thumb up your ass, or you gonna make use'a that fancy phone and call the police?

The teen gives the old man a sheepish look as he turns his smart phone upright.

INT. GCPD, BRIEFING ROOM - SUNSET

Commissioner Gordon stands at the front of a large group of seated police. Among the group are both detectives and beat police in their blues. Stirk's mugshot is projected onto the wall next to him.

Officer Montoya stands in the back next to officer Merkel.

Detective Bullock loudly enters the room, coffee in hand. He opens the lid of his coffee, blows on it, then sips as he takes his seat in the front row among the cops. After a moment he looks up at Gordon.

BULLOCK

Well, whataya' waitin' for?

Gordon looks over his glasses and down his nose at the lug as he clears his throat. He ends up coughing and taps his chest.

GORDON

Now that we're all here. Suspect number one in the cannibal homicides is now Cornelius Stirk. He was released from Blackgate two months ago and skipped parole shortly thereafter.

BULLOCK

Ugly lookin' bastard.

INT. GCPD, CALL CENTER - CONTINUOUS

In the deep background, Gordon conducts the meeting going on the other side of glass double doors. We can even hear him a little. In the foreground, we focus on a DISPATCH OFFICER sitting at his computer. She opens a "911 Distress Email".

Focus on the screen: The file is a shaky video of Stirk harassing the Brunette.

(CONTINUED)

GORDON (FROM THE OTHER ROOM)
Despite his possible involvement in
the homicides he has not been
considered particularly dangerous.

INT. GCPD, BRIEFING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gordon continues addressing the cops.

GORDON (CONT'D)
By all accounts he is timid and
frail. How he's managed to subdue
his victims is unknown so use
caution.

The Dispatch Officer bursts into the briefing room through
the glass double doors.

DISPATCH OFFICER
Sir! It's the heart-eater.

INT. WAYNE MANOR, STUDY - SUNSET

Dick stands on a very short wooden stool, arms out to the
side. Alfred measures him with tailor's measuring
tape. Bruce stands next to them, arms crossed, sizing up
Dick.

Alfred mumbles measurements off to himself.

DICK
Don't you need to write down all
those numbers?

ALFRED
I shall remember.

DICK
What's this about anyway?

BRUCE
Your new uniform.

Bruce walks to the grandfather clock at the wall.

DICK
Like a school uniform?

Bruce begins to mess with the face of the clock.

(CONTINUED)

BRUCE
Something like that. Everything
should make sense when-

Bruce's beeper goes off.

He turns to give Dick a look, then changes his focus to Alfred.

DICK
Your beeper.

BRUCE
Alfred?

ALFRED
Right away sir.

Alfred places the measuring tape and pins on the table next to Dick as Bruce exits the room. Alfred follows him hastily.

Dick stands there alone, arms still out to his sides.

Dick looks over his shoulder to the doorway they left through, then back ahead.

He stands there.

He looks back again, this time lowering his arms.

DICK
What the hell...

EXT. STREET IN DOWNTOWN - SUNSET

The sunlight diminishes, deep red and long long shadows frame downtown as a relaxing hellscape waiting to exhale. Several cop cars form a barricade in front of Stirk, who has resorted to holding a small knife to the Brunette's throat. Many uniformed police officers with guns drawn stand behind the squad cars' open doors, facing Stirk. Gordon stands a few yards behind the barricade, hands stuffed in the pockets of his overcoat.

He looks back and forth, from one side of the barricade to the other, as if waiting or looking for something.

A pebble skips by Gordon's shoes.

EXT. DOWNTOWN ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Batman stands against the wall in a shaded alley adjacent to Gordon. He sees Gordon notice the pebble, veer away from the barricade, past the crowd, and toward the alley.

Gordon enters the alley, glancing back to make certain he wasn't seen.

BATMAN

Stirk.

GORDON

Yes.

BATMAN

Why haven't you taken him in?

GORDON

Every time one of my men gets close they start losing their shit. Harris thought he was an alien. And Stone wouldn't go near the guy, thought he was a goddamn spider.

BATMAN

A spider?

GORDON

The effects seem to be temporary, they're fine now.

BATMAN

A weaponized hallucinogen?

GORDON

I don't think so. Seems to be an inherent skill.

BATMAN

What makes you say that?

GORDON

For starters there's no delivery system.

BATMAN

And it would need to be a precision attack to only affect one person at a time.

(CONTINUED)

GORDON

My thoughts exactly... I figured
we would-

BATMAN

Leave it to me.

INT. WAYNE MANOR, DICK'S ROOM - NIGHT

Dick sits in his bed.

There is a text alert sound.

He picks up a brand new smart phone from his
nightstand. The text is displayed **superimposed on the
screen.**

SI: BABS: thanx for standing up for me today

Dick types a response, the letters pop up on the screen one
at a time as he does so.

SI: thats not what happened.

Dick presses send, then puts the phone on his lap and sits
in silence.

Another text alert sounds. He checks the phone.

**SI: BABS: my dad told me what happened to your parents. do
you want to talk about it?**

Dick takes in the offer, staring into the fire in his huge
stone fireplace.

INT. GORDON HOUSEHOLD, BABS'S ROOM - NIGHT

Barbara lays on her stomach, chin in her hands, her smart
phone next to her on the bed. Barbara's phone bleeps with a
text alert and she snatches it up before the echo can die
down, immediately checking it.

**SI: GEOFFRY: No need to apologize, Babs. You've obviously
learned your lesson. My place is still free this week.**

She slams her phone down on the bed in a huff of
disappointment.

EXT. STREET IN DOWNTOWN - NIGHT

Batman walks up to the police line. Harold Bullock gets in front of him and blocks his path.

BULLOCK

You! Gimme one good reason I shouldn't arrest you right now.

BATMAN

You can't.

BULLOCK

Like hell! Where do you get off-

Renee Montoya approaches.

MONTOYA

(interrupting)

Let him through, Harold.

BULLOCK

Oh-ho-ho, you're testin' my last nerve, little lady. Either get out your bracelets and help me, or-

Montoya DECKS Bullock, knocking him to the ground, where he lays unconscious.

BATMAN

Thanks.

Montoya smirks as Batman walks past.

MONTOYA

My pleasure.

Batman breaches the police line and starts walking slowly toward Stirk. Stirk holds the knife a little tighter against his hostage's throat.

BATMAN

It's over, Stirk.

STIRK

No sir, I think not. Not with my abilities.

Batman continues approaching the uncharacteristically confident Stirk. His smile starts to droop.

(CONTINUED)

STIRK (CONT'D)
Your mind is very tidy sir. You
force me to guess.

From behind Batman we watch as Stirk throws the Brunette to
the side and morphs into a large snake.

STIRK (CONT'D)
(as the snake)
Snakessssss?

Batman continues his pace at Stirk.

BATMAN
No.

Stirk morphs into a giant, hideous bat.

STIRK
(as the man-bat)
Then Bats!

Batman remains unphased.

Frustrated, Stirk morphs into a clown reminiscent of
Pennywise from Stephen King's 'It.'

STIRK
(as the clown)
Clowns? It must be clowns!

BATMAN
Not even close.

Stirk turns into a dominatrix, complete with leather
boustier and thigh high heeled latex boots.

STIRK
(unsure)
Women?

Batman defeats Stirk with one hard punch to the jaw,
instantly knocking him unconscious. His emaciated frame
tumbles to the pavement.

The gathered citizens send up a CHEER.

The cheer starts to rouse Bullock. He makes a confused,
tired sound.

EXT. WAYNE MANOR - LATER THAT NIGHT

The moon casts a sharp light on the Wayne Manor estate.

INT. WAYNE MANOR, STUDY - CONTINUOUS

Bruce, wearing a black turtleneck and black slacks, enters the study. Alfred tends the fire in the fireplace. Dick sits on the settee, staring into the fire. The room is dark, save for the flickering glow provided by the flames.

Alfred pokes the fire a bit more before placing the rod on its holder. He rises up to stand at the right of the fireplace.

He locks eyes with Bruce, then walks off through the other door, further into the mansion.

Bruce walks toward the tall grandfather clock, making his presence known to Dick.

BRUCE

When I was young, much like
you, my life was torn asunder. I
needed... something to help pick up
the pieces.

Bruce turns to the clock and opens its face. He rotates the clock-hands counterclockwise with his finger until they reach "10:48". When the hands hit, the sound of a lock unlocking is heard and the face of the clock decompresses and swings open like the heavy door of a safe.

Dick stand up and walks toward the opening, staring down the whistling darkness in wonder.

INT. THE CAVE - CONTINUOUS

Bruce looks down at his young ward and extends his hand toward the darkness, gesturing for Dick to enter.

They walk through the entryway and the door clangs shut behind them. As the continue, small lights line a dark path to the cave.

An establishing shot reveals the CAVE in all its glory as flood lights switch on, illuminating platforms one by one all across the immense underground cavern. Vehicles, machines, equipment, training areas and more are lit up in quick succession.

(CONTINUED)

Bruce stands behind Dick, watching as the mystery of the Batman unfolds before his eyes.

DICK
Holy shit. You're... The Batman.

Dick turns and looks up at Bruce. Bruce nods, arms still crossed. They continue walking, the raised path lighting up as they advance.

DICK (CONT'D)
Because of your parents.

BRUCE
... Yes.

DICK
Why are you showing me this?

They continue their way down the path.

BRUCE
Because, in order for me to know
you, you must first know me.

Bruce leads the way to a large dark object in the shadows. Dick stands before the massive figure as Bruce pulls out a small remote from his pocket.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
And because...

He clicks the remote button, turning on the internal lights of the large cylindrical glass case, revealing inside a crimson, dark green, and black Robin suit.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
... I'd like you to be my partner.

Dick smiles for the first time in the series. Ear to ear.

EXT. ARKHAM ASYLUM - DAY

Establishing shot.

INT. ARKHAM ASYLUM, STIRK'S CELL - DAY

Stirk sits in the corner of his cell in a straitjacket. The sun pierces through a small window slit.

The heavy door to his cell opens and the backlight reveals the silhouette of a short, bald man.

(CONTINUED)

Hugo Strange slowly enters, approaching Stirk.

STRANGE

Mr. Stirk?

Stirk strains through the odd lighting to see who has entered his cell.

STIRK

Yes... sir?

The door closes behind Strange, leaving the window slit to partially illuminate him.

STRANGE

We've met before... I am Doctor Hugo Strange. I'd like to talk to you about your abilities...

EXT. ARKHAM ASYLUM - DAY

Sunlight glistens off the snowy structure.

FADE OUT: