

SHADOW OF THE BAT

I: CAPES

111 - "Impossible Things"

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

FADE IN:

EXT. ROBINSON PARK - AFTERNOON

Establishing, we loom above the huge, rust colored park before swooping down through mostly bare, autumnal trees into the asphalt parking lot. SUSAN stands next to the open side door of her minivan, arms crossed, eyebrows knitted. Her young daughter HOLLY sits behind and to the side of her on the floor of the van, her little legs swinging out the doorway.

A rumbling, creaking old sedan pulls up two spots away. MARK gets out quickly and starts walking toward them in a rush.

MARK

Sorry, sorry, I got here as fast as I could, the office just won't-

Susan approaches Mark and meets him halfway between the cars.

SUSAN

I don't give a crap Mark, we have an agreement.

Behind Susan, little Holly hops down from her perch in the van and wanders off into the park.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

I've got a job too y'know. I'm never late for the drop-offs.

They argue across from each other, like a soul-crushing tennis match; between them, in the deep background, Holly gets further and further away.

MARK

You're a cashier at Buddy's, it's not the same-

In the deep background, a now minuscule-looking Holly is approached by a tall thin man wearing a whimsical Edwardian suit and a comical top hat.

SUSAN

(interrupting)

I am *head cashier* at the busiest Buddy's in the city, Mark-

He leans down deep at the waist to hand her a flower, now face to face with the child.

(CONTINUED)

MARK

I'm only saying they don't keep you
late at Buddy's, Susan!

Holly and the tall man in the hat seem to exchange a few words. Holly takes the tall man's hand and they start to walk yet further away from the parents.

SUSAN

There are labor laws, Mark! Just
say no! You have a daughter now!

MARK

Holy shit, where is she?

SUSAN

Very funny.

MARK

I'm serious, where is she?

Susan finally looks behind her, startled by the lack of child.

SUSAN

Holly? Holly?!

MARK (CONT'D)

There!

Mark has spotted Holly and the tall man off in the distance, barely close enough to be made out.

SUSAN

Oh my God.

Susan and Mark both take off running toward their daughter, Mark very quickly far ahead of Susan.

They run.

And run.

They run until Mark hits the other side of the park just in time to see a dirty brown van that looks like it might be from the seventies speeding around a corner and out of sight on the streets.

He stands there, shocked.

Susan finally runs up, panting and huffing.

(CONTINUED)

SUSAN (CONT'D)
What happened?

Mark stares off into nothing, unable to process what just occurred.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
What happened?!

OPENING TITLE CARD: SHADOW OF THE BAT

ACT ONE:

INT. GCPD, INTERVIEW ROOM

Susan and Mark, eyes puffy, faces pale, sit next to each other in uncomfortable chairs under harsh fluorescent lights. Officer Renee Montoya sits across from them. A small writing desk is between Montoya and the parents, on which the officer has various papers.

SI: "Impossible Things"

MARK
Does this have to take so long? Shouldn't you be out finding my daughter?

SUSAN
So now she's *your* daughter? This wouldn't have happened if you were on time for the drop-off like the judge *ordered*-

MONTTOYA
Ma'am. Sir. This must be very emotionally taxing for you, but I need you to- Holly needs you to stay calm and work together right now, okay?

The parents look ashamed.

SUSAN
Of course. I'm sorry.

MARK
Yes, I- we want to help, but- well, I've already given you the license plate of the van, and... the hat, and...

(CONTINUED)

MONTROYA

You've both been very helpful so far. I just need to ask about a few more details.

SUSAN

We'll answer anything we can.

Susan and Mark grasp each other's hands.

EXT. GCPD ROOFTOP - DUSK

Gordon stands in the middle of the rooftop, equidistant from the stairwell door and the edge of the roof, gnashing a lit cigarette in his teeth as the crisp wind blows his coat and greying hair alike.

The stairwell door opens, startling Gordon. It's Montoya.

MONTROYA

Sir, I-

Gordon whips around to face her, furious. Maybe even a little scared, it's hard to tell.

GORDON

(interrupting)

Officer Montoya, *never* barge up here like that again, do you understand?

MONTROYA

Sir, I don't mind you smoking- I know I-

GORDON

(interrupting)

Do you understand?!

Montoya takes a moment, a quizzical look on her face. She quickly shakes it off.

MONTROYA

Yes sir.

They stand tensely for a moment, Montoya still half inside the doorway.

GORDON

Well, out with it. What was so goddamned important that you had to interrupt me on the roof?

(CONTINUED)

MONTOYA

It's the Holly Knightley case, sir. I was hoping to take point on this one. I already interviewed the parents, and-

GORDON

Detective Bullock will be leading the Knightley investigation.

MONTOYA

Bullock?! Sir... I mean... can we even trust him?

GORDON

Thank you for conducting the interview *officer*. That will be all.

Montoya pauses again.

MONTOYA

Of course.

She slowly, hesitantly, returns to the stairwell and shuts the door behind herself.

INT. GCPD, PRECINCT HOUSE - A LITTLE LATER

Bullock sits at his desk, staring at an amalgamation of used coffee cups, empty fast food wrappers and the occasional scrap of what appears to be paperwork.

His vision is suddenly obstructed as Montoya passes, angrily dropping the case file onto his desk.

MONTOYA

Here you go, asshole.

Bullock looks up from his thoughts and watches as Montoya leaves.

BULLOCK

Thanks!

The detective sitting behind Bullock (KASINSKY) leans back in his chair and laughs.

KASINSKY

Hey Bullock, how'd she know your nickname?

Bullock throws his hand back and responds without turning.

(CONTINUED)

BULLOCK
Yeah, blow me, Kasinsky.

Bullock picks up the folder and flips it open. He fingers through the paperwork, only half interested and half comprehending.

As if on cue, Merkel approaches Bullock's desk.

MERKEL
Uh, Detective?

BULLOCK
I'm busy, kid, get outta here.

MERKEL
I was instructed to give you everything on the Knightley case-

BULLOCK
Knightley? Why don't I have it already?

MERKEL
Well the traffic-cam confirmed the license pla-

Bullock snatches the papers from Merkel's hands.

BULLOCK
Gimme that! Like you even know what to do with these.

MERKEL
I ran them through the DMV database and found a reported carjacking from yesterday of-

Bullock points to the paper in his hand.

BULLOCK
I can read, Merkel.

Merkel leans down and pulls another paper from the stack and places it on top.

Bullock looks at the paper, then at Merkel and back to the paper.

Merkel leans in and points to a specific spot on the page.

Bullock mouths a few words as he reads.

(CONTINUED)

BULLOCK
Carjacking... Gunpoint... Wearing a
top hat... this is bullshit.

MERKEL
The top hat is corroborated by-

BULLOCK
(interrupting)
Right kid, the hat's real. But
look at this statement.

Merkel continues to look at Bullock.

BULLOCK (CONT'D)
Look at the freakin' statement.

Merkel looks at the paper.

BULLOCK (CONT'D)
It's one lousy paragraph.

Bullock rises from his chair, grabbing his coat from the
back fo his chair and his hat from the desk.

BULLOCK (CONT'D)
Some rookie mook probably wanted to
get off his shift on time and
half-assed it.

MERKEL
(realizing)
You have to talk to the owners of
the van...

BULLOCK (CONT'D)
Not bad, rookie.

Bullock grabs the papers off his desk and walks away.

MERKEL
(aside)
I teach at the academy.

EXT. GCPD ROOFTOP - EVENING

Gordon leans against the wall of the stairwell outcropping.

As he flicks away his spent cigarette with his right hand,
he reaches into his coat pocket with his left, producing a
pack of cigarettes and flipping it open with practiced ease
before it even reaches his eyeline.

(CONTINUED)

It is empty.

He sighs as he places the empty pack back into his pocket.

BATMAN (O.S.)

What is it?

Gordon whips around and looks upward, finding Batman squatted above him on the stairwell housing, like a gargoyle.

GORDON

Oh for the love of Christ. I've seen you eat Lo Mein, you can stop with the Stalker of the Night shit.

BATMAN

I don't have time for this.

GORDON

There's a little girl, six... she got kidnapped in broad daylight by a man wearing some old-timey suit and an oversized top hat.

BATMAN

What do you need me for?

GORDON

You like to be involved when it's a freak. I heard about the top hat, and I thought-

BATMAN

You thought I wanted to be bothered about every mugger and crook with peculiar sartorial habits?

GORDON

Well, a hat would be more haberdashery than-

BATMAN

I'm busy, Jim.

Batman stands up and starts to pull his batarang-cord grapnel. Gordon is taken aback.

GORDON

Busy with what?

(CONTINUED)

BATMAN

The Penguin. Taking him down has become a priority.

GORDON

And?

BATMAN

And I'm at a very important phase of the preparation.

GORDON

Batman, there is a six year old girl out there who's been taken by some madman we know nothing about. *If* she's alive, she's scared and she needs our help, and if she's not we need to find this bastard before he can do this again.

BATMAN

And I have every confidence in your ability to get it done.

Gordon is becoming angrier. He opens his mouth to continue his rebuttals, but Batman is already swinging away on his grapnel.

Gordon shakes his head, pulling his cigarette box from his coat, only to find again that it is still empty.

He throws the box to the ground in frustration.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE VAN OWNER'S HOUSE - EVENING

Bullock knocks on the door of a small home.

MRS. FUGATE, older than she is young, opens the door.

MRS. FUGATE

Can I help you?

Bullock produces his shield for Mrs. Fugate, holding it open long enough for her to finally stop squinting at it.

BULLOCK

Detective Harold Bullock
ma'am. I'd like to ask some more
questions about the car-jacking
yesterday.

(CONTINUED)

MRS. FUGATE

Of course. My husband was the one driving, would you like me to get him?

BULLOCK

Yes ma'am.

Mrs. Fugate leaves the doorway and disappears into the house.

Bullock stands on the porch, waiting

MR. FUGATE, slightly older than the woman, limps up to the door.

MR. FUGATE

Hello?

BULLOCK

Detective Bullock, sir. I'm wonderin' if you could just walk me through the car-jackin, moment by moment? Every detail.

MR. FUGATE

Again?

BULLOCK

(losing patience)

Yes. Again.

MR. FUGATE

Alright... I was at a stop light and a tall man in a pansy suit reached in the window and put a knife to my throat. He told me to get out and I did, and off he went with my van. Ten years ago you would've had to scrape that sissy off the pavement, but ever since my stroke...

BULLOCK

An' you're sure there ain't nothin' else that didn't make it into the report? Maybe somethin' didn't seem important at the time?

MR. FUGATE

Well.... No, it's silly.

(CONTINUED)

BULLOCK

With all due respect Mister Fugate,
don't you think I should be the
judge of that?

MR. FUGATE

It doesn't make any sense. But
when he put the knife to my throat
he said "Exit the automobile and
you'll be home by brillig."

BULLOCK

What's "brillig"?

VAN OWNER

That's the thing, it's nothing. I
even checked the dictionary when I
got home, it's not there.

INT. "WONDERLAND"

Holly slowly wakes up, coming to to find herself atop an
oversized mushroom prop, a couple feet from the floor.

Looking around herself, she sees a cobbled together,
dilapidated approximation of Lewis Carroll's wonderland;
streamers, beads, lawn ornaments, mirrors, large plastic
candy canes stuffed into the soil of plant-pots, all manner
of half-broken and appropriated decorations are strewn
about.

An over-friendly male voice seems to emanate from all around
her. There is a speaker-system built in to the
"Wonderland." The voice belongs to the tall man in hat; his
name is JERVIS TETCH.

TETCH (OVER COMM)

Hello Alice. Welcome to
Wonderland.

FADE TO BLACK:

ACT TWO:

FADE FROM BLACK:

INT. GCPD STAIRWELL

Bullock huffs down the precinct stairwell, reaching a floor labeled "B" on the wall. He exits the stairwell into a dingy, dimly lit hallway.

INT. GCPD BASEMENT HALLWAY

Bullock passes a mop bucket and a few doors, stopping at one to catch his breath. An old "**THE TRUTH IS OUT THERE**" X-Files poster is affixed to the door with scotch tape.

INT. GCPD, COMPUTER BANK

Bullock enters a stuffy room full of tables, each table topped with at least two different out-of-date computers, and every computer manned by an IT nerd. Most of them are white; most of them are overweight; most of them are scruffy; all of them are men.

One of the nerds, CHIP TWEDELL, sees Bullock and stands up excitedly.

CHIP
Detective Bullock! Just a
moment...

Chip leans down to his keyboard.

Focus on the screen, where we see what he is typing: "**smh my stupid mom just came home i have to log off**"

A reply dings into view: "**I'll talk to you soon baby girl :) Be sure to send me those pics after school tomorrow :P**"

Chip closes the program, rises from his desk, and crosses the room toward Bullock.

CHIP (CONT'D)
What can I help you with today?

BULLOCK
I need a list of the pervs yer
workin' on.

CHIP
Which ones?

(cont'd)
Alluv'um.

(CONTINUED)

CHIP

They're not- I mean... if we'd backtracked identities and had something prosecutable they'd already be arrested... we're still-

BULLOCK

I know I know, I just want the, uh... y'know, their... internet names.

CHIP

Oh, you want their handles.

BULLOCK

Sure, yeah.

Chip walks back to his computer.

CHIP

That we can do. Anything to narrow it down?

BULLOCK

Nah, just gimme the full list.

CHIP

Alright, but it's over 500 names.

BULLOCK

Jesus tap-dancing Christ...

CHIP

I know, right?

INT. "WONDERLAND"

Holly perches on the toadstool, peering off into the darkness.

HOLLY

I wanna go.

TETCH (OVER COMM)

My dear, here we must run as fast as we can, just to stay in place.

Holly looks out into the darkness so hard that her eyessquint. She shifts her weight.

Se settles back in place.

(CONTINUED)

HOLLY

I'm cold.

A metallic scraping zipping sound zings through the air as the familiar blue dress of fictional character "Alice" flies out of the darkness on a mechanized line, stopping just in front of Holly.

TETCH (OVER COMM)

You'll feel better once you're wearing your dress.

Holly stares at it.

TETCH (OVER COMM, CONT'D)

Go on Alice. Put it on.

INT. BULLOCK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Bullock sits hunched over an outdated desktop computer screen, a blue glow on his face emanating from a barebones chatroom.

Focus on the screen. The chatroom is named "**HeirsOfDupin**".

The listed participants are: **DirtyHarry74** (in brown) **MarpleMiss63** (in purple) **MovingTarget01** (in blue) **QNA2020** (in white) **TheGreenMallard13** (in red) **TheSphynxofGiza** (in green)

Bullock puts his meaty fingers to the keyboard and types clumsily. His entries appear superimposed in Brown.

SI: "DirtyHarry74: Im stuck"

Responses come, coded in the appropriate hue.

SI: "MovingTarget01: So what else is new?"

Each new response pushes the previous up our vision, older messages fading away quickly.

SI: "TheGreenMallard13: lol"

Bullock types.

SI: "DirtyHarry74: Its important"

SI: "DirtyHarry74: Theres a little girl"

INTERCUT WITH:

(CONTINUED)

- "MarpleMiss63" is Vicki Vale, on her familiar laptop at her office desk.

- "MovingTarget01" is a grizzled middle-aged white man with brown hair and gray temples, wearing a blue suit jacket over a partially unbuttoned white dress shirt. No tie is present. Over his shoulder, the only visible adornment in his otherwise sparse studio apartment is a glamor shot poster of Basil Karlo with the phrase "**Man of 1,001 Faces**" featured prominently. He sits at a clunky-looking but brand new and powerful desktop computer.

- "QNA2020" is a thin man with an angular face and a unkempt tussle of blazing red hair. His walls are an indecipherable mess of conspiracy boards. Multiple dog-eared copies of "We The Living," "Anthem," "The Fountainhead," and "Atlas Shrugged" litter the space around his sleek, efficient laptop.

- "TheGreenMallard13" sits at a chunky, slightly older laptop on an IKEA-style computer desk. He is a 13 year old boy, white, spiky black hair, wearing a red sweatshirt. His room is much like what you expect a 13 year old boy's to look like, save for a wall completely devoted to articles, drawings, notes, and interconnective red yarn about The Bat-Man.

- "TheSphynxofGiza" is Edward Nigma, in his Arkham jumpsuit, seated at one of the four painfully old computers in the asylum library. The library is otherwise empty, save for a seemingly sleeping guard in the corner, leaned back with his hat over his face.

SI: "QNA2020: *Let him talk*"

SI: "MarpleMiss63: *What about a little girl?*"

SI: "TheSphynxofGiza: *The clues. What are the clues.*"

SI: "DirtyHarry74: *brillig*"

SI: "TheGreenMallard13: *What about it?*"

SI: "MovingTarget01: *What is it?*"

SI: "QNA2020: *A time of day*"

SI: "TheSphynxofGiza: *It's the time when you begin broiling things for dinner.*"

SI: "DirtyHarry74: *help me out here*"

SI: "TheGreenMallard13: *It's a nonsense word from the Jabberwocky, a poem by Lewis Carroll.*"

SI: "MarpleMiss63: *Does that help?"*

SI: "DirtyHarry74: *maybe*"

SI: "DirtyHarry74: *i got this list of names*"

The participants all receive a downloading file and open it.

SI: "MovingTarget01: *You want us to find a name on here that correlates to The Jabberwocky somehow?"*

SI: "MarpleMiss63: *So many names. I'm sorry Harry but this could take hours.*"

SI: "TheSphynxofGiza: *BrunoSilvian is your man. A play on the title of "Sylvie and Bruno."*"

SI: "MarpleMiss63: *Holy crap he's right.*"

SI: "DirtyHarry74: *now i just gotta find the guy*"

SI: "DirtyHarry74: *basement geeks havent traced im yet*"

SI: "TheGreenMallard13: *Anybody know how to hack?"*

SI: "QNA2020: *I have located the individual in question.*"

INT. THE CAVE

Bruce (wearing a black long sleeve pullover shirt and black trousers) sits at the Supercomputer, opening and scanning file after file, running simulations, checking charts and graphs. Glimpses of titles and graphics show he is working on the Penguin problem.

Dick approaches from behind wearing comfortable civilian clothes.

DICK

It's Friday.

Bruce doesn't look away from his work.

BRUCE

I'm aware.

DICK

It's been a while since we've gone out patrolling... Friday means no school tomorrow...

(CONTINUED)

BRUCE

I'm busy.

DICK

(already aware)

Right, with the Penguin thing. But I thought Mr. Gordon beeped you earlier.

BRUCE

He did.

DICK

So you went to the rooftop?

BRUCE

I did.

Dick stands there a moment, flabbergasted.

DICK

And did he have a case for us?

BRUCE

For me, yes. It wasn't important.

DICK

What was it.

Bruce stops inputting and turns his chair around so that he's facing his young ward.

BRUCE

A kidnapping, broad daylight. A young girl. The perpetrator... wore a strange hat.

DICK

Who gives a shit about a hat, what about the girl?!

BRUCE

Dick, I understand the emotional pull of something like this, but terrible- truly awful horrendous things happen in this city every day. To do the most good you have to-

DICK

(interrupting)

Have to what, rationalize doing paperwork instead of saving a child's life?

(CONTINUED)

They stare at each other in silence. Dick turns on his heel.

DICK (CONT'D)
Fine, I'll go to Gordon myself.

BRUCE
Dick, wait.

DICK
(fed up)
What're you gonna do, take my tunic away again? I'm helping that little girl.

BRUCE
I know. And I agree. I have access to GCPD records through here.

Bruce turns back to the Supercomputer.

Dick relaxes.

DICK
Oh.

INT. TETCH'S HOME - MEANWHILE

The house is dark, quiet.

The doorhandle jiggles.

There is scraping at the doorhandle, light tapping, and then it stops.

It begins again, more forceful, then stops again. Bullock's voice can be heard faintly on the other side of the door.

BULLOCK (O.S.)
Aw for the love'a-

The scraping and tapping begins in earnest again, coming to a crescendo before stopping.

The house is silent.

The door shatters inward from the impact of Bullock's boot, and he enters, gun drawn.

The house is silent.

INT. THE CAVE - MEANWHILE

Dick sits next to Bruce on a small stool kept under the Multi-monitor desk.

DICK

This Fugate statement is worthless!

BRUCE

But here, the traffic camera.

Bruce points to a blurry black and white still image of the van speeding around. Dick looks closely. The side of Tetch's face can almost be seen.

DICK

What's... what's that in the hat?

BRUCE

It's a price tag.

DICK

Doesn't look like any price tag
I've ever seen

BRUCE

They don't make them like that any
more. If I had to guess I'd say
the price noted is 10 shillings and
sixpence.

DICK

Like the Mad Hatter? This guy
thinks he's in a Lewis Carroll
book?

BRUCE

Possible. If the girl is still
alive, he'll need a safe place to
keep her.

DICK

What if he left town?

BRUCE

Jim's blockades are very
good. There's virtually no chance
he got through them.

DICK

Right. Something abandoned...
there's lots of shelled out
factories in Old Gotham...

(CONTINUED)

BRUCE

He wouldn't use somewhere he didn't have control over. It would have to be his sanctum. Removed. Hidden away. Safe.

Dick looks around the darkness of the cave.

DICK

Uh-huh. So a place her owns. Or rents.

BRUCE

It's likely he'd acquire the space under a pseudonym.

Bruce begins inputting with purpose.

DICK

Something related to Lewis Carrol.

BRUCE

Lewis Carrol was a pseudonym. His real name was Charles Dodgson.

INT. TETCH'S HOME - MEANWHILE

Bullock sets his eyes on the bedroom hallway, walking toward it slowly, deliberately, past a bookshelf until he is out of frame.

Hold on the bookshelf.

Bullock walks back into frame, now looking at the bookcase.

He puts his pointer finger out, running it along the spines of the books, scanning the shelves. Finding something, he pulls the book.

He examines the cover. It is "**Phantasmagoria and Other Stories by Lewis Carroll**".

Bullock opens the book and finds a small compartment carved into the pages, inside which are three keys.

INT. THE CAVE - MEANWHILE

Bruce and Dick continue their investigation on the Supercomputer.

BRUCE

There. Two different warehousing business have leased to a man calling himself Charles Dodgson.

DICK

So she could be at either one of them.

BRUCE

Or neither.

DICK

We still need to check it out.

BRUCE

Agreed.

DICK

Which one?

A beat.

BRUCE

I don't know. Not enough data.

DICK

Well then which one do we hit first?

Bruce stands up and moves swiftly toward the stairs, Dick follows quick behind.

BRUCE

We split up. I've wasted too much time already.

INT. TETCH'S HOME - MEANWHILE

Bullock stares at the three keys intently.

Two of the keys are identical, the third is slightly different.

The two identical keys are embossed with "**STOR-O**".

The third key is embossed with "**Archie's**".

(CONTINUED)

Bullock stares at the keys even more intently.

He grasps the Archie's key, dropping the book and the two STOR-O keys, and hustles toward the door.

INT. "WONDERLAND"

Holly opens her eyes to the sound of the non-localized voice, finding herself still in the twisted Wonderland.

TETCH (OVER COMM)
Wakey wakey Alice, rise and shine.

On the ground in front of her is a silver tea tray. On the tea tray is a large plastic picnic cup and a muffin; each of them have a sticky note affixed. The sticky note on the cup reads "**DRINK ME**", and the sticky note on the muffin reads "**EAT ME**".

TETCH (OVER COMM, CONT'D)
You'd better have your
breakfast. For it might end you
know, in your going out altogether,
like a candle. I wonder what you
should be like then.

Holly is nervous. She is obviously hungry, but is wary of the tray.

TETCH (OVER COMM, CONT'D)
Go on Alice. It will make you
feel... better.

Holly reaches out for the muffin.

FADE TO BLACK:

ACT THREE:

FADE FROM BLACK:

INT. GCPD BREAK ROOM

Montoya and Merkel sit next to each other on a raggedy old couch. Montoya eats a foam cup of instant noodles with a plastic spoon. Merkel is trying to chew his way through a protein bar.

A small cathode ray tube television plays a fuzzy version of GNN. Marla Manning is on, sitting behind her desk as usual, yelling in her distinctive southern drawl.

(CONTINUED)

MANNING

(on TV)

-in *broad daylight*, folks! I'm tellin' you, this sort of thing is going to start happening more and more.

MERKEL

We don't have to watch this. Manning is...

MONTROYA

Terrible, I know. But I'm already mad. I like watching Marla Manning when I'm mad.

Merkel takes a beat and then scoots a little further down the couch, away from Montoya, before taking another bite of his bar.

MANNING

(on TV)

One source even disclosed that the kidnapper was wearing some sort of gimmicky costume, like a fairy tale character or something.

MONTROYA

(alost mumbling)

How the hell did she know that...

MANNING

(on TV)

And this is exactly what I have spent the last four years warnin' y'all about. Opinions have been mixed on the effects of the Bat-Man. Well, they need be mixed no longer.

INT. VICKI VALE'S PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - MEANWHILE

Vicki is draped in a silver silk slip, a wine glass in hand, free arm draped across her chest in frustration, standing barefoot on the carpet and watching Marla Manning on TV. Behind her, Jack Ryan sits up in the bed, half under the covers, his fit torso exposed.

VICKI

That bitch.

(CONTINUED)

JACK
 You broke the Bat-man story
 Vick. Everybody knows that.

Vicki doesn't take her eyes from the screen.

VICKI
 You're goddamn right I did.

MANNING
 (on TV)
 Gotham has always had a crime
 problem, but until recently it
 wasn't that different from any
 major city across the world;
 muggers, purse-snatchers, the
 usual.

JACK
 Come to bed.

VICKI
 No. I want to hate her a little
 longer.

MANNING
 (on TV)
 -and now there are killer clowns,
 and- and- and green game show
 freaks-

INT. QNA2020'S APARTMENT - MEANWHILE

"QNA2020" works frantically on his conspiracy walls, his
 hair tussled, papers flying. Marla Manning plays in the
 background.

MANNING
 -and now we have a *fairy* tale man
kidnapping little girls out of
 parks!

INT. MOVINGTARGET01'S ROOM - MEANWHILE

"MovingTarget01" is sprawled out on a small settee, asleep,
 short glass of brown alcohol barely staying in his fingers.

MANNING
 Gotham is in trouble. Something
 has to be done. But the solution
 to crime is never more crime. This
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MANNING (cont'd)
latest incident should be the
wake-up call that the people of
Gotham need.

The glass slips from his fingers and bounces harmlessly and quietly on the carpet, spilling its contents.

INT. THEGREENMALLARD13'S ROOM - MEANWHILE

"TheGreenMallard13" leans forward in his computer chair, streaming Marla Manning on his monitor. He is incensed.

MANNING
We need to make it clear that we
will not tolerate his presence and
the presence of the freaks he seems
to invite. We need to make it
clear to City Hall, we need to make
it clear to the GCPD, and we need
to make it clear to the Bat-Man
himself, wherever he is.

He shakes his head, closing the window angrily.

EXT. ROOFTOP OVERLOOKING ARCHIE'S WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Batman perches, assessing the layout. The lot is enormous; many of the warehouses are very large, and they stretch out in rows so far the eye strains to see the back.

EXT. INSIDE ARCHIE'S LOT - MEANWHILE

Bullock walks down one of the many dirt paths between warehouses, Archie's key in hand. He stops at a lock and tries the key but it doesn't work.

He zigs across and tries the lock on the opposite warehouse. It doesn't work. He holds back a curse, then continues quickly down the path, key in hand.

ELSEWHERE IN THE LOT:

Batman emerges from the darkness of an alley between two adjacent warehouses. A few feet out into the path, he kneels.

He examines a faint set of tire tracks, then stands, gliding down the path at a run, following the tracks.

Robin's voice crackles into Batman's earpiece.

(CONTINUED)

ROBIN (O.S.)
(over radio)
I found it.

INT. TETCH'S STOR-O UNIT - MEANWHILE

Robin stands in the center of the large storage unit. Racks of outlandish suits line one wall, another wall is dedicated entirely to even more outlandish top hats. A third wall is lined with broken and disused decorations, a pile of small blue dresses, and other bric-a-brac.

ROBIN
I'm positive this is the place but
he's not here. No one's here.

EXT. INSIDE ARCHIE'S LOT - MEANWHILE

Batman continues to follow the tire tracks.

BATMAN
I know. You did well. I've got it
on this end. Go home and I'll meet
you there soon.

The tracks lead into a warehouse roll-up door.

INT. TETCH'S "WONDERLAND" WAREHOUSE

Batman lifts the door just enough to duck under and in, letting it back down in an equally quick and silent manner.

The van is not there.

Batman rushes into the heavily decorated "Wonderland", pushing past obstructions until he sees her.

Holly is on the floor, not unconscious, but certainly in an altered state. It looks like she hardly knows where she is.

Batman leans down, then squats, then gets on his knees.

He speaks in the gentlest voice he can muster.

BATMAN
Holly? Are you okay?

Holly stirs, attempts to get up. She's tripping balls.

(CONTINUED)

HOLLY

Holly.

BATMAN

Yes. You're Holly aren't you?

HOLLY

Yes. Yes! I'm Holly!

She throws herself against Batman's chest, wrapping her arms around him in a hug.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

I'm Holly.

Batman hesitates, then half hugs her back, mustering all the comfort he can.

As Holly loosens her embrace and leans back, the focus of the shot changes to reveal Bullock in the background between them, standing at the edge of the large decorations, gun drawn but pointed at the floor.

Holly faints, easily caught in the nearby arms of Batman.

Bullock holds back rage for a moment, then steadies.

BULLOCK

Is she...?

BATMAN

Just drugged. High. We need to get her to your car.

EXT. INSIDE ARCHIE'S LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Batman and Bullock walk side by side, Holly draped across Batman's arms.

BULLOCK

This don't mean we're friends.

Batman leaves the comment in silence a moment, leaving it hanging in the air just long enough for us to think he might give Bullock the silent treatment.

BATMAN

That was never in consideration.

There is another pregnant pause in their conversation.

(CONTINUED)

BULLOCK

So what, so I'm supposed to think you're different from him just cuz he takes girls and you... you save 'em? I'm s'pose to think you're different *enough*, is that it?

BATMAN

You're free to think as you please.

BULLOCK

Well thank you for that permission Mister fuckin' *Lord and Savior* of Gotham. You're an outlaw. You ain't special for *why* you break it.

BATMAN

Did you have a warrant for Tetch's home tonight?

BULLOCK

I'm sorry?

BATMAN

The small shards of painted wood in your boots, the key you used to enter the warehouse... you knew a life could be saved if you acted.

Bullock opens the back door of his cruiser, then speechifies as Batman places the girl in on the back seat.

BULLOCK

Yer a goddamn nutcase pal... I stretch it, I step over sometimes. But I got a badge, I show my face, and if it comes down to it I'll end up answerin' to *somebody*.

Batman stands up out of the car. They stare at each other.

Bullock closes the car door.

BULLOCK (CONT'D)

Now get outa here. Anybody sees us together I'll shoot you.

EXT. GOTHAM BACKROADS, NIGHT

Tetch's van squeals around a T-bend and onto an even smaller, more abandoned road.

INT. TETCH'S VAN

Tetch is freaking out, not guilty or disturbed, but simply panicked in his flight.

He looks behind himself, grips the wheel even tighter, and then looks forward again, relaxing, almost slumping into his chair.

He is alone in the van.

TETCH
Have I gone mad?

DISEMBODIED GIRL'S VOICE
I'm afraid so.

Tetch finally seems disturbed. His face contorts, trying to find the correct emotion.

DISEMBODIED GIRL'S VOICE
But I'll tell you a secret... all
the best people are.

FADE OUT: