

A Cat-Tales Companion

The Companion is a diverse, and not especially well-organized collection of snippets, rantings, and extras connected to the Cat Tales series: The recipes for d'Annunzio's Shrimp Arrabiatta, the real life models for Nirvana the ocelot, how 'Pheromones' got his name, and what really happened at Clark Kent's bachelor party.

These items are divided roughly into the following categories:

Catverse: Cat-Tales continuity, shown in purple

DCU: DC continuity, shown in blue

Reality: From the real world, or the real world's history, pop culture, or literature

Heard the Latest

The tagline for this story read: *Bruce & Selina aren't the only Gothamites with private lives between the panels.* This gossip-driven installment would introduce the Catverse version of many characters, both "Rogues" and "Bat-Family," and would delve into the personal lives of two who readers had seen previously, but only in relation to Bruce & Selina: Dick Grayson/Nightwing and Harvey Dent/Two-Face.

DCU Two-Face

Harvey Dent is one of the most gloriously conflicted creations to ever be manhandled by professionals and amateurs writers alike. Too often Two-Face is presented as a coarse thug, ignoring both his education before the maiming, and the continued existence of his Harvey personality afterwards. One of those two faces IS Harvey Dent, and any writer who forgets that and offers up only a gangster with a coin-fetish should seriously reconsider what they're doing as a storyteller.

The other extreme is an ultra-idealized portrait of Harvey Dent. Yes, Harvey was a good guy, but let's not pretend he was Albert Schweitzer. He was a lawyer and a politician – two vocations not generally associated with white hats and halos.

Harvey's introduction in ***Heard the Latest*** references the creation of Two-Face as a result of a mob war between the Maroni and Falconi crime families as told in ***The Long Halloween***. Naturally, like any comic referenced in Cat-Tales, TLH should not be taken as gospel in every detail. In Cat-Tales continuity, for example, Bruce Wayne and Harvey Dent were much closer friends before the maiming than they are shown to be in TLH.

DCU

Oracle

Barbara Gordon's reflections include brief mention of her being shot by the Joker. This incident will be referenced in much more detail in ***Something Borrowed***, and is taken from ***The Killing Joke***.



This section also introduces the OraCom, the bat-family's communication network. Purists may wonder just how Barbara managed to wrest the team's nerve center away from a control freak like Bruce. It's really quite a remarkable story. At the conclusion of ***The Killing Joke*** Batman confronts Joker with a speech he's been rehearsing throughout

the ordeal. They are on a collision course, sooner or later one of them will wind up killing the other, can they possibly derail the train. Joker answers with (what else) a joke. A particularly insightful joke that amounts to: he's refusing Batman's help because what if Bats is just as insane as Joker himself. In spite of himself, Batman sees the humor, and possibly the wisdom, in it and the issue concludes with the two of them falling over each other laughing.

They were still laughing, it seems, when the police arrived. The first patrolman on the scene saw it, and word got back to Barbara. She asked Batman if they were laughing at her, a suggestion so shocking he was, literally, speechless.

Catverse Barbara managed to leverage Bruce's guilt from that moment into complete control of the Bat-nerve center, which she has redesigned and reinvented as the OraCom. The careful reader may also have noticed by now that Oracle works out of Barbara Gordon's apartment, not the Clocktower of comics and TV's Birds of Prey.

Oracle also mentions, briefly, a crush Azrael has developed on her, and Robin & Spoiler's rather silly overreaction to it. While it's not a major theme, one of the conventions of comicdom that Cat-Tales strives to flout is that any non-hostile relationship between unattached male & female must be a full-blown romance. Just as the tie between Harvey & Selina (and Eddie & Selina, for that matter) amounts to nothing more than platonic friendship, so here, between Barbara and Jean Paul, we have a phenomenon VERY COMMON in real life, exceptionally fun to work with in drama, but hitherto unknown in the comics world: It's called a flirtation.

DCU



"It wasn't like they'd had a tawdry one-night stand like some people who shall remain nameless, Mr. Grayson, you two-timing prick."

Nightwing had a fling with Huntress in a miniseries entitled (wait for it):

Nightwing/Huntress #1-4 (May 1998-August

1998)

Bruce & Selina have only minor roles in this installment, but there is a brief mention of the Cat Pins, the significance of which the reader will learn in **Catfight**.

Catverse “Hatter is never wrong about these things...”

One of the many new characters being introduced in this fic is Jervis Tetch, the Mad Hatter. Our introduction to him has nothing to do with his criminal activities. Rather we learn that he is the chief gossip of the rogue’s gallery, and he's never wrong. Why is never established. Those who know his criminal gimmick from the comics and cartoons may wonder if it has something to do with those mind-control chips sucking the information out of people's brains? or it could be that he's just that good.

“...the little shit.”

Whichever it is, Hatter’s eerie accuracy seems to be annoying Edward Nigma. By the end of the fic, readers will know why.

**Real
Life/
Pop
Culture**



The Jekyll and Hyde Club

Above which Two-Face/Harvey lives when we meet him. There actually is one in midtown Manhattan, on the Avenue of the Americas a half-block south of the park.

Selina’s meeting with Harvey will introduce two (of course) story arcs that will be with us for a while:

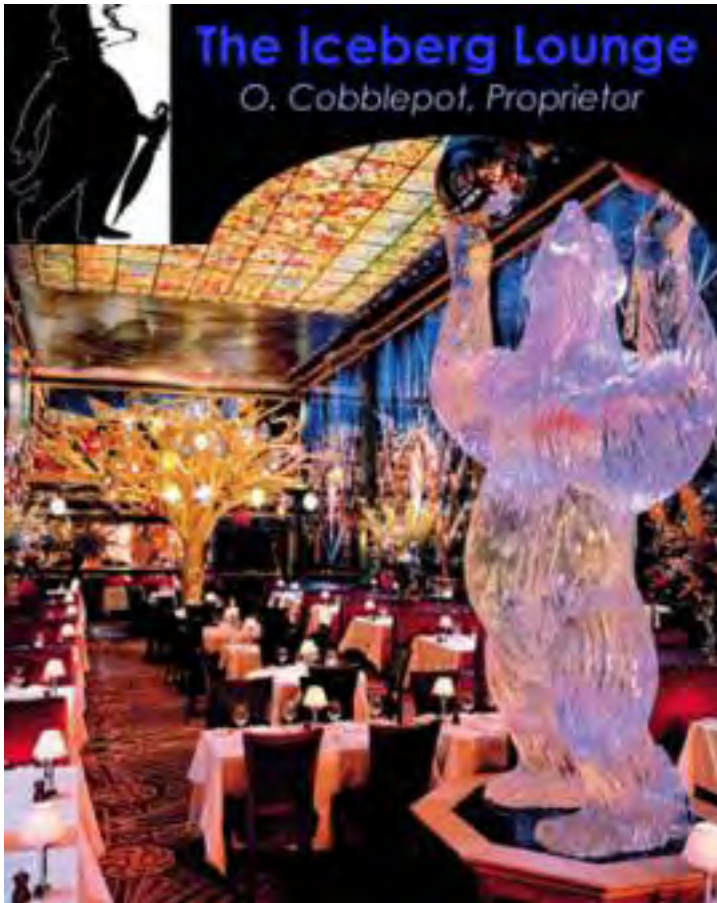
First, a rumored liaison between Black Canary and Ra’s Al Guhl (known to the cognoscenti as ‘The Cadaver’). This will be explored in more detail in ***Plan 9 from the Demon’s Head***

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And an affair – that neither party would want me to call a ‘love affair’ – between Harvey/Two-Face and Pamela Isley/Poison Ivy. The history, as told in Cat-Tales, is based largely on the Animated Series episode [Pretty Poison](#) as adapted in Lydia Hunter’s fanfic [Double Vision](#). In short, yes, Pamela Isley seduced the pre-Two-Face Harvey Dent in order to kill him... (which is where the cartoon series leaves off) ...but they restart the affair, post-Two-Face, and quite a kinky little pair they are.

Catverse The Iceberg Lounge



For the record, I didn't invent this. It began, as far as I know, in the comics. Penguin claimed to retire from crime and opened a nightclub, which was a front for various racketeering and fencing operations. During No Man's Land it became a black market for food, batteries, weapons, etc. The retirement/nightclub front was also played out in a later episode of the Animated Series (one of the late incarnations after it deteriorated).

I knew none of this. I learned of the Iceberg from an online role-playing game, where the players were young and knew the animated series almost exclusively. There, unlike in the comic or cartoon worlds, the Iceberg became a meeting place for rogues. This evolved naturally and out of necessity, when one character wanted a rendezvous or to leave a message it was a natural hub. And it is that version, which evolved so naturally from Gotham nightlife, that is represented in the Catverse.

Catverse No Man's Land:

It's mentioned twice – once with respect to Ivy's lair in Central Park, and once in reference to Penguin's conduct towards Selina. Long story short: both the earthquake that rocked Gotham in the endless Cataclysm crossover and the period known as No Man's Land where the city was kicked out of the union did take place in the Catverse. However, as in all things, the media, and especially the tabloids exaggerated them ridiculously.

Penguin's behavior? We're not told exactly what he did. But he crossed a line. And so we are introduced to Selina's Statute of Limitations – another concept borrowed from the E.F. Benson Lucia novels, where the bickering social set of Tilling quarrel, then make up since if they don't, nobody would be speaking to anybody and there could be no fresh quarrels.

In her conversation with Penguin, Selina refers to Joker and Harley as “psychos in love... sweet in a disturbing, Kafkaesque sort of way” – Oswald doesn't know what it means, but in addition to not being a great reader, he's quite drunk. Franz Kafka was a German writer who's masterwork, *The Metamorphosis*, is a nightmarish tale in which the hero wakes one morning to find he's turned into a giant insect.

Catverse Bat E-mail

The e-mails exchanged between Dick Grayson <D.Grayson@oraclesecure.bludhaven.net> and Tim Drake <Drakester@oraclesecure.gothamheightshigh.org> both contain the comforting assurance in the address lines that these communications are “oraclesecure”.

Just as the gang all have special encryption settings on their phones so calls cannot be intercepted, all their e-mail is directed through Oracle's encryption matrix. Tim once made the mistake of asking how this worked. Bruce started to explain about constantly self-mutating numeric keys linked to the readings at the precise nanosecond of decryption off a weather satellite and synced on all the batfamily's desktops and laptops through the atomic clock in Greenwich. But then Barbara said that wasn't technically accurate and started to give a more precise explanation... and poor Tim damn near fell into a coma. So now we all just trust that @oraclesecure.whatever means it's secure, and we leave it at that.

bludhaven.net – Anyone who knows anything about the Batverse knows “Batman and Robin” and if they're not aware there's been more than one, Dick Grayson IS Robin, the Boy Wonder, and that's all she wrote.

The rest of the story is, of course, that Dick was the first Robin. When Joker got lucky one night and shot him, Batman benched him. Hard feelings all around, and Dick reinvented himself as Nightwing, taking up residence in a city called Bludhaven. 'Haven is Newark to Gotham's New York – that is, it is not as far from Gotham as many comic readers assume. It will be explored in great detail in ***Loose Ends***, but for now, the vital info is that it's Nightwing's town. In the comics, he went there originally because Batman sent him (***Nightwing #1-3, 1996***). Finding it utterly corrupt, 'Wing determined that the only way to fight crime there was to get inside the police department. He joined the force around ***Nightwing Issue #31, 1999***.

gothamheightshigh.org – at this point Tim Drake is still attending Gotham Heights High. Gotham Heights is a very affluent neighborhood and as such the public schools are excellent. Very soon, however, his father will send him to Brentwood Academy, a private boarding school. How this came to be will be discussed in the companion for ***Plan 9 from the Demon's Head***.

Catverse The Task Force

The Multi-Jurisdictional Task Force on Organized Crime and Detective Porpora will play no serious role in Cat-Tales until ***Loose Ends***, but this brief meeting still introduces several points of interest:

Dick certainly has the fascinating collection of Poison Ivy trivia, doesn't he?

So she dyes her hair (although Pammy insists that a henna rinse is natural and therefore doesn't count as dye). And her moodring pheromones that smell like lemon pledge when she's angry – they aren't exactly a running gag, but the detail will crop up from time to time.

Finally we learn, once and for all, that the men of the Catverse, like the rest of us, have noticed and wondered about that curious friendship between Harley and Ivy.

Of course all that is background to the real point of the meeting, where Porpora reveals something strange going on with the FBI wiretaps. The FBI does monitor telephone calls and conversation in known centers of Mafia activity, and we find out that those

wiretaps, along with everything else electronic in the vicinity of the Maroni family are going haywire – because of some mysterious moldy moss.

For the benefit of anyone who hasn't pieced it together, Harvey told Ivy about the videotape, and Ivy sent the moldy green shit to destroy everything electronic - including the tape and the Maroni's ability to copy it.

As a matter of interest, all the Maroni soldiers would soon break out in a vicious rash as well, from the waist down, but Popora and the FBI never found out about that, or the cause. Batman knows, of course, but - while he'd never admit it - he sees a certain justice in Ivy's attack. They inconvenienced her love life, so she short-circuited theirs.

Real Life

Alfred's adventures in Amateur Dramatics

Selina's show took place in the city, and Gotham is a great, if not the greatest, theatre city in the world. But one needn't travel any farther out of its center than Bruce's neighborhood, and one is able to find something as suburban as an ordinary community theatre, or what the English would call an Amateur Dramatic Society.

Community theatres are generally staffed by amateurs, lacking any formal training, who volunteer their time, putting on light plays and musicals for fun. Most are steeped in pretensions, egos, delusions of grandeur, an obsession with being professional, and the kind of petty squabbles we see played out in the brief conversation among the actresses about a real English actor that responded to their flyer.

Alfred was, indeed, an actor in his former life before going into service. **The Untold Legend of the Batman**^{[1][1]} offers a marvelous account of Alfred returning to his 'one true love' after the war – that love being the stage, and playing Hamlet. Called to his father's sickbed, Pennyworth Sr. extracts a pledge as he is dying. There has always been a Pennyworth in domestic service, until now. He begs Alfred to continue this grand old tradition.

This close to a major city, there is a more interesting mix of trained actors and directors working alongside amateurs, and the director with whom Alfred auditions is indeed a seasoned pro. That romance might have worked if I'd ever bothered to give her a name, but alas, she remained 'that director from the community theatre taking Shakespeare around to the schools,' which was just too unwieldy for light conversation. Sorry, Alfred.

DCU

The Redbird

This is the name of Robin's car. Dick's Robin never got a car. Jason's Robin never got a car. Tim did. How did he swing it? Dick's been trying to work that out for years. If he ever comes up with the answer, You, Dear Cat-Tales Readers, be the first to know.

Catverse

Dick's meditation

Dick meditating instead of sleeping, and the parallel to Bruce not eating when he's on a paperchase, teases a theme I never got around to fully exploring. Dick comes to realize this avoidance of food and rest is essentially denying the NEED to eat and sleep, and in effect denying their mortality.

It's been said this is why slapstick is funny. You see someone slip on a banana peel, and at the primal core your brain reasons: oh look, gravity, physical law we are all subject to, like death, ACK! And that tension releases in a laugh.

What I never touched on is there might be a bit of that same denial in Batman's marathon refusal to acknowledge his feelings for Catwoman. Attraction between man and woman is a perfectly natural thing, a perfectly *human* thing - and human beings die. ACK! I'm not hungry, Alfred, just leave the sandwich on the table.
