

Chat on Cat-Tale #51: Riddle Me-Tropolis

May 15, 2007 in the Cat-Tales Lobby

Guest Speaker: chris dee

Attendees: The Thundering Monkey, ClockworkSeer, smegabyte2001, fangirl1001, breezygal, Kessie, Nathan Perry, Abaddon8780, UnclePat1313, fett one

The Thundering Monkey: Oooh!!! She's here everybody!!!

chris dee: So much for sneaking in quietly

ClockworkSeer: Heh

...

chris dee: Okay, five after, that gives latecomers enough time

chris dee: You can all hash out the caption contest later when I'm kicking back with a scotch

UnclePat1313: Hurrah!

UnclePat1313: Heh.

chris dee: So

chris dee: Riddle Me-Tropolis

fangirl1001: it rocked!

chris dee: *slips fangirl \$5

fangirl1001: thank you *pockets cash

Abaddon8780: Loved it. Really showed the difference between Bruce and Clark without doing the cliché "Bruce = Smart, Clark = Dumb" shtick.

chris dee: I really tried not to make Clark flat out dumb. He's not as smart as Bruce, but then few people are

fangirl1001: It's not that Clark is dumb, it's just that he's... like a dog - loyal, open, honest, jumps in without all that much thinking

Nathan Perry: Loved the Eddie developments. Had you had something like this in mind when he first learned Bruce's identity?

Clockwork Seer: He isn't dumb. He just thinks differently

Abaddon8780: I think the Scoreboard clue really showed that. He was breaking it down, but he was breaking it down into what he's used to.

After all, what most of his rogues do? Throw kryptonite at him, try to rob him of his powers, mind control him, etc.

chris dee: I agree definitely. As Bruce and others have noted, Supes is the best at what /he/ does

That doesn't necessarily translate into being good at what, say, Bruce or Eddie do

chris dee: Ok, we had a question up there about when Eddie first earned the secret

I don't plan anything 2 years ahead, so I never envisioned anything quite like this at that time, however I did always have two things in mind complicating the situation for him: there was the Selina angle, which brought him into the wonderful hell Batman and Catwoman have known all along, "how do I do the job and not make this personal when it is personal?"

and the Bruce factor. Riddler always considered Batman on par with himself, now all of a sudden he's a person with a face and a name and a girlfriend

There had to be lots of circles coming out of that dropped pebble for a long time

And I do think Bruce was right that he had some hostility towards Selina for a time, which could have played a part in déjà vu when he played/used her

but it's not like this is a master plan I had 5 stories out, there are vague ideas that develop in certain ways

Abaddon8780: It seems he's also got a bit of that "she was my friend first" jealousy.

Clockwork Seer: To be honest, I always liked one of the other aspects of the fallout of his learning it. the "Ok, I've solved the biggest riddle of all. Umm.. what now? Whats bigger than this? Is this is?"

chris dee: Yep. Good call.

Orson Welles made Citizen Kane at 26 or something like that

"Now what" indeed

fangirl1001: hey - can you tell us anything about Supes and New Zealand?

chris dee: Sure. The good news is he burned off those extra calories from Alfred's cookies

fett one: whats the bad news

UnclePat1313: Tough crowd...

UnclePat1313: lol

chris dee: Yeah, typing here. Sheesh.

chris dee: The bad news is the Taranaki bank robber was a 15 year old girl that two accomplices were using. It wasn't a very spectacular case and the New Zealand authorities are confused as all hell as to why Superman involved himself in it

Abaddon8780: Well it's not like he gave them a lot to go on when he said "Don't ask. Just....don't ask."

chris dee: In other words, if it was interesting or funny, I would have put it in the story. But what might be interesting is that I took this from a real news story, and that is pretty much what happened. Teenage girl, toy gun, small payout, fairly quick capture.

Nathan Perry: Poor Wacko Twin

fangirl1001: why do i get the feeling the Post could make it worse?

chris dee: the Post could always make it worse, fangirl, it's their raison d'atre, however that's spelled

fangirl1001: also they exist to annoy Catwoman - which is bad for Bruce but amusing for the rest of us

Abaddon8780: *grunt* They'd be a lot more amusing if they weren't ruining my comics but anyways....

smegabyte2001: d'etre

chris dee: Thanks

chris dee: Lois and I have that spelling thing in common

Kessie: that is why spell checkers and reverse dictionaries were invented :)

chris dee: I've explained the spell checker situation once, in the text, that's all you get.

chris dee: One more question here in the room and then we'll take one from one of the email people

fangirl1001: out of curiosity - did anything in particular inspire you to write up those background details of Metropolis?

chris dee: Since Metropolis was in the title, I really wanted to show off the city a little, get a little bit of that travelogue quality into the story. I always loved the older novels that did that, so it's a persona bias The specific details were largely Chicago's doing. Since I based Metropolis on the windy city... had to have the Stadium in there for example, I think it's a state law

Abaddon8780: Chicagoans do love their sports.

Nathan Perry: I still have a Cubs pennant I got at the very first game I went to at Wrigley, age 4.

chris dee: And before all the Chicago people pounce on me again, I know I didn't pick the best place for pizza but I liked the angle that it's a landmark because of a gangland shooting

Nathan Perry: And heck, it's not like a Gothamite would KNOW where to get the best pizza :)

chris dee: Point

chris dee: I think Allaine pointed out, it's cute and rather sad the way he is trying to sell himself on the city in that scene

Clockwork Seer: A choice you're not even sure is the right one

chris dee: Oh speaking of the landmarks, Nathan did a great rundown of what is what in the first few chapters. If you haven't seen that in the message boards, it's worth looking up

Nathan Perry: It's almost like a person trying to convince themselves a doomed relationship is "the one", while everyone around him/her just shakes their heads

chris dee: I couldn't have put it better

Clockwork Seer: Considering the, well, for want of a better word, relationship, the characters have with Gotham, it's pretty much the literal truth.

chris dee: That's very true.

chris dee: VERY true

The Thundering Monkey: Arrrrggghhhh!!! Computer so sluggish

chris dee: okay let me go to the email for a few...

Q: 1) Doris has become an important recurring character for Riddler, as mentioned in the latest Cat-Tales. When you first created Doris, did you intend for her to have such an influential role in Eddie's life?

chris dee: Not at all. Doris began life on the page like so many original characters, setting up a situation: one of the rogues hooks up with a "Normal" and looks to Selina and Bruce as a model that it could work. (And Wiki workers take note, her first mention was in What's New Pussycat.) The key to Eddie and Doris at the beginning was the couple in the Robert Altman film The Player.

Movie producer Griffin Mill is surrounded by "intelligent educated people" who live and breathe the movie business to the point where they can't have a conversation about anything else.

He meets the girlfriend of a screenwriter and is astonished to learn she doesn't go to the movies, at all, never, nada. She knows nothing at all of his world, and he's completely captivated by this amazingly foreign creature.

At first, Eddie would have felt that same fascination. "Well this is interesting, she really has no idea who I am."

It takes a while for the implication to sink in. If she's not drawn to "Riddler" what is she drawn to?

Eddie is a big shot in the rogue world. He's had plenty of henchwenches and groupies, who are interested in his money and fame, but not the real man. Doris would have been Eddie's first taste making the click with someone romantically who had absolutely no interest in Riddler's position in the rogue world. It was all him.

But the relationship with Doris was also Eddie's first taste of something else that has only taken shape since he lost her, sort of "what I didn't miss until it was gone," and that's when she really emerged as an important character.

As a breed, the wenches are not the brightest of God's creatures, nor do they rank very high in the self respect department.

Think about it, sublimating your entire identity to match him and his theme. (Think Playboy Bunnies in the heyday of Playboy clubs, then substitute Ted Kaczynski or Kenneth Lay for Hugh Hefner.)

Eddie has thought back to and pined for the woman "who could keep up" but the fact that she also never put on a costume resonates with him in ways he hasn't realized.

Doris was her own woman, to borrow Dick's phrase, and never gave up her identity to become a Riddler-accessory. She's an equal, the way Bruce and Selina or Harvey and Pam are equals. A man of Eddie's character needs that in a mate.

Pre-Doris, the wenches didn't used to bother him that much, he made do with what he could get. But we saw in Gotham Post, he now finds them pretty hard to take.

Nathan Perry: Probably a good thing Bruce never told him the truth about the motivations behind the socialite cab-switchers.

chris dee: Yeah, no guy needs that

fangirl1001: I got a bad feeling about any possible future relationship when Riddler ran into Doris during a crime and she lectured him about how he was wasting his time. I got the impression she doesn't accept him as he is.

Abaddon8780: I don't think it's that, I think she just sees that he has more potential in her eyes than crime.

breezygal: That sounds familiar...

fangirl1001: Perhaps a case of "I love, you're perfect, now change" ?

chris dee: (Love that show)

fett one: it sounds like eddie is finding himself in selina position
give up crime to be with the person you love or keep being and a criminal
and lose the person

i know it's more complex than that but thats the gitz of it

Nathan Perry: I don't think Doris is that manipulative. Like Fett says, she's basically the Bruce here. She's not as fierce or Batty about it, it's just that while she likes Eddie, she's not willing to accept Riddler.

Abaddon8780: I think she understands him, but in every relationship, there's something about the significant other that totally defies the logic of the other person.

chris dee: That's very true, Abaddon

chris dee: it's what separates a person from a cipher

chris dee: Real 3-dimensional people, if one of them isn't Harley damaged, there's going to be some point of conflict, or at least something you need to overlook given all their good qualities. It's completely unrealistic and somewhat simpleminded to think there isn't going to be stuff you don't have to adapt to or overlook on both sides.

Abaddon8780: Indeed. Be it having to absolutely watch every Gotham Knights game, bar night with the guys on absolutely every Thursday night, or matching wits with Batman, there's always something that your sig other will always be mystified by.

Nathan Perry: cf. Felinity...

Clockwork Seer: I think that if there was something truly intellectually stimulating, something legal, but completely able to challenge and occupy that might, I'd be wondering how long the Riddler would actually stay a rogue. Okay, so he doesn't really fit into a "rules and boundaries" approach, but i've always seen him as a lot more interested in the game than the setting, as it were.

chris dee: Seer, that's a good point about "the game." If there isn't that aspect in an activity, I don't think he could ever be happy with it

chris dee: One of my clients got his wife into the movies on a child's ticket

chris dee: she's Asian, very petite, very slight, it was plausible

chris dee: It's not that he couldn't afford the extra \$2, and it's not that he's naturally criminally minded, he likes beating the system

Abaddon8780: While we're at it, it could be argued that there's three types of rogues; the thrillers (ones that are in it for the adrenalin or for just beating the system), the psychos (nuff said), and the tragics (you didn't want it to be this way, but this is how it is).

chris dee: I think that's exactly right

chris dee: Victor Frieze, what else is he going to do in that suit
Nathan Perry: I can think of a 4th group, albeit that group's entire membership is Catwoman.
chris dee: Like Eddie said, there's no explaining (or classifying) a cat
fett one: what would some one like Lex Luthor be considered?
He's not really a thriller, he's not really psycho, and he's not really tragic either
Abaddon8780: Ah good point. A fourth group would be the mad geniuses.
chris dee: I don't think anyone really considers Lex a rogue. Least of all Lex. He has no patience with those freaks.
fangirl1001: I'd put Lex in a the same category as Shakespeare's Richard III - evil for the sake of being evil and for power
Kessie: villian rather than rogue
chris dee: Well said fangirl and Kess
Clockwork Seer: I see them as having aspects of all three, though. Whats not tragic about going insane? and some of the insane ones have more than a little of the thrill-seeker about them
fett one: my point was that not every villian falls uner those 3 categories
chris dee: sigh. I think you're missing the nature of generalizations, fett. There are always exceptions and shades of meaning. Doesn't make the general principle unsound. Seagulls eat XY and Z and fly at x mph, not every one has eaten all three and flies at that speed all the time.
Nathan Perry: I think we're classifying rogue not so much as "enemy of Batman/the good guys" as the sort of enemy who'd go drink at the Iceberg.
Abaddon8780: Point. You'd never see Ra's or Vandal Savage at the berg.
fangirl1001: So - rogue is the new Klingon? Good drinking buddies?
The Thundering Monkey: Well, I wouldn't say never
chris dee: You'll never see Ra's there again, that's for damn sure
Ubu still hasn't recovered
Abaddon8780: Heh. Was his tab ever covered btw?
fangirl1001: Maybe Bruce paid it
chris dee: No but Oswald has a policy to put any unpaid tab on the tab of someone incarcerated
"mistake" if they notice, they usually don't
Nathan Perry: Poor Jervis.
chris dee: That's a phrase we don't hear very often
fangirl1001: And poor Ozzie now - watching his work literally go up in smoke
Abaddon8780: Jervis keeps thinking he's still paying penance for putting one of his microchips in Ozzy's top hat. That was four years ago.
The Thundering Monkey: Taloo Talee , someone drank free said the Jabberwock
chris dee: Let's take another question from email
chris dee: This one will be a shorter answer, I promise
Q: 2) The beginning of Riddle Me-Tropolis had two interesting sub-plots: Penguin's "Mr. Clean" fixation and Tim's punishment for certain extra-curricular activities. Those sub-plots seemed to get pushed to the side as the story developed, only to be addressed in the epilogue. Did you intend to touch on these sub-plots throughout the story, only to change your mind as the story progressed?
chris dee: I do frequently change and adapt little things mid-story, but in this case no. It was always my intention to "fade out" the subplots in Gotham when Bruce and Selina left the city, and to have them return to the kind of "it all blew up" chaos we've seen so many times before.
I omitted a lot of the blow-by-blow of that chaos, which is something I often do when it's something we've seen before either in comics or in the Tales. The first Ra's appearance in Gotham had a phrase like "80 minions later" to bypass a long, pointless fight sequence that wouldn't have advanced the story or illuminated character, and that's my internal label

for glossing over that which isn't important enough for a detailed narrative.

fangirl1001: I'm glad - I don't think fight scenes work on paper - I always skip battle scenes in books

chris dee: In prose they're pretty hard to make interesting IMO, unless Talia's knee and Blake's adam's apple are involved

Abaddon8780: Sometimes, but I think that's what sets Chris' stories apart: it's all about the characters, not about the body count.

chris dee: Joker says give him time

Nathan Perry: Whether it's catching the bad guy or working off Hell Month/Be My Own Man Protocol/Dumb Boys frustrations the fights themselves are never the ends, just the means to those ends.

fangirl1001: at least the dead don't rise and sleep with Talia in Cat Tales *cough* Jason Todd *cough*

Abaddon8780: *growls* Let's not talk about Jason Todd. He doesn't draw breath in my happy little corner of the world.

chris dee: Or mine. Okay next question from those who aren't with us in a happier sense

Q: 3) I was very excited in the early scene on Wayne One when Bruce thought this case was like the old Bat/Cat team-ups. Were you thinking of Hush ? Follow up question Did the scenes that followed live up to your expectations?

chris dee: I was really thinking of a category of stories rather than any particular one, Bat/Cat team ups are pretty common in the days when they were technically enemies. Hush was naturally apart from the pack since this team up was taking them to Metropolis, and I winked at it with Selina's "Summer in Helsinki" line, but that's all it was, just a wink. There's no particular story this is based on.

chris dee: Oh wait, no, full disclosure, the bat/cat team up wasn't based on anything in particular, but... the oft-reference time Catwoman broke into LexCorp at Luthor's behest that came up in Red Cape, Big City, Napoleon's Plan, here in Riddle-Metropolis and maybe a few other occasions, is taken from World's Finest Year Eight. Writer is Paul Kesel, for which Kesel Park in this story is named. All of the Metropolis locations and expressways named for people were Superman or World's Finest writers or artists

chris dee: Now, did the team up live up to my expectations? That's a really hard question. There's always a desire to get the full mileage out of any set up. There's always the need not to go to far and drag down the story. I think I struck a good balance here, although I realize there was more Bat/Cat/Superman than Bat/Cat alone than some readers hoped for.

breezygal: Different dynamic is good, though. More Clark meant more different aspect of Bruce and Selina.

chris dee: I really liked them as a trio personally, I thought there was a lot of interesting stuff there, more than when Clark has come to Gotham

chris dee: any more questions here or should I go back into the grab bag?

Nathan Perry: I have one

chris dee: Shoot

Nathan Perry: A serious problem

Nathan Perry: Ravage far men

Nathan Perry: *cough* scuse me. Anagram fever

Nathan Perry: How does one turn this off? I'm annoying people in other chat rooms :(

chris dee: I don't know what you're asking, nathan

chris dee: OH, wait I get it, You have anagram fever and you need a cure?

Nathan Perry: I look at the title and see MILD SLIDE TROOPER now :P
chris dee: I think the best way to stop anagramming is Johnny Walker Black Label
Kessie: you start punning, Nathan ;)
chris dee: Have a nice rocks glass full, and you won't be fit to jumble letters
chris dee: Kessie's idea will probably work too
chris dee: not as tasty though
Nathan Perry: SCOOT SKY CROTCH...dammit! Sly, scotch on the rocks!
The Thundering Monkey: What was Lois take on Superflirt?
chris dee: I suspect she'll hold her tongue at the party and open up negotiations with Clark later
"You realize one day you're going to push Bruce too far, and I get the byline"
Uncle Pat: Playing catch up. I've been rather here and there tonight.
Uncle Pat: As Abaddon already mentioned, I think Cat-Tales' biggest draw is that it isn't about long, repetitive fight scenes. You can only kick, punch, and claw so often before it gets old. Rather, we get a "behind the scenes" look at the characters and their dealings with each other and their surroundings. You won't find any other fanfic that gives an in-depth look at these interactions [i]and[/i] manages to do them well.
chris dee: *slips Pat \$5
Uncle Pat: I thought bringing Superman into the story as a third wheel was a welcome change from the typical Cat/Bat situations.
And Chris knows how much I dislike the boyscout.
chris dee: I do indeed. ;)
chris dee: Let's just say that Superman has the potential for Super-oopses to equal his Super-everything else
That can make him a very attractive character to have around, from a storytelling point of view, especially in a comedy
fangirl1001: The speculation of marriage often comes up in the message boards.
Is Selina's aversion to marriage at all influenced by the Catwoman comic where some European prince who was kidnapped her and tried to force her into marriage so he could have his very own "pet thief" ? Is that storyline part of the Cat Tales 'verse?
chris dee: I wouldn't say Selina has an aversion to marriage, she jumped that hurdle in Identity Element (probably before but she realized it in IE) and in Deja Vu she actually told Bruce she wanted it
Early on she did have a fear of the relationship generally, of it developing too fast, and becoming too intimate. That's a realistic human dynamic, not "was frightened by a wedding ring when she was a child" if you know what I mean.
Plus I think there is a definite "extend the claws" reaction when someone shoves something at her that is assumed to be a female priority
There was a review at ffnet (that was probably either a joke or a drunk) but which was asking about when Selina's overwhelming need to have a child would kick in because women have these hormones
Abaddon8780:Oh that poor bastard.
chris dee: Selina is the kind of woman who will always reject that kind of ignorance
fangirl1001: which is why we love her
chris dee: and the assumption that "oh we have to get married and have babies" is simply something she will always hiss at
fangirl1001: but I am curious if that prince is part of Selina's background in cat tales
chris dee: I haven't thought about it one way or another, fangirl, but you can pretty much assume Volume I had the spirit of Selina's pre-CT adventures, if not the actual facts

There is still some Post distortion, she'd never have a room mate sidekick for example. One of the Ask Catwomans illustrates the way the Post got the spirit but messed up the facts on Morland McShane. and some of that Chuck Dixon stuff was pretty much in the "mindless fighting shit" we were just talking about but the spirit of her early adventures is definitely in there How's that for a non-answer ;)

Uncle Pat: Wonderfully vague.

chris dee: I do my best

Nathan Perry: This story is responsible for two separate trips I had to make to the place in Berkeley (about 15 miles away) that has decent Chicago-style pizza

chris dee: I get blamed for more people going off their diets that way

chris dee: Selina bitching about the desserts last chapter set someone off. Those are taken from www.cafeglace.com btw (and it is not my fault if you max out your credit cards!)

fangirl1001: well, how a hint about Vault then? *bambi eyes of pleading*

chris dee: I can tell you that Chapter 1 will mostly be told in flashback, as Selina is on a plane to Switzerland when it begins Oswald is in Arkham He lived above the Iceberg, remember, so he lost his home and his business in one -kwak- fowl swoop and he reacted who wouldn't, but well, they sent him to Arkham

Nathan Perry: Not like it's that much of a stretch to think Oswald might be coo-coo (That pun is totally Kessie's fault)

Kessie: :P

chris dee: You scored two, I said fowl swoop.

Abaddon8780: What about Tim and Cassie?

Nathan Perry: And you've explained how these problems have been nesting.

Kessie: groan

chris dee: gosh, do we really want to go out on that joke?

fangirl1001: how about another anagram?

Kessie: any hints about what the Rogues will do for a watering hole?

chris dee: I've been thinking about that, because they faced a similar situation in the Reap What You Sow AU

Abaddon8780: Buffalo Wild Wings will never be the same.

chris dee: It's a problem. They can't really pick a Starbuck's or a Mickey's Bar and say this will be our new home

fangirl1001: but Joker does like Starbucks...

chris dee: Big reason Starbucks doesn't want them

Nathan Perry: How about the restaurant that opened in Wayne Tower?

chris dee: Brucie's place, HAHAHAAAA!

Nathan Perry: Jack would love it.

chris dee: Any other suggestions? I obviously haven't reached any decisions yet

Nathan Perry: I suppose Bludhaven's a little too Jersey

fangirl1001: what about that Thai place two face went to?

chris dee: Could work, pad noodles for everyone

fangirl1001: maybe Warrior's could /heavily/ stretch their clientele basis

Abaddon8780: Call me nuts but I have an image of the rogues showing up at Harvey's doorstep during a date because they have no hang out.

fangirl1001: I could see Harley Quinn thinking of some "bright idea" like that

Ab

chris dee: So do I

Nathan Perry: I could see Harley thinking of Chuck E. Cheese

fangirl1001: Its scary when Harley is the brians of the operation.

breezygal: Maybe Jervis will re-open The Rabbit Hole
chris dee: There we go
breezygal: It had great potential!
chris dee: Who wouldn't want to go to a place called the... uh, okay, rogues
don't seem eager to trust Jervis that far
fangirl1001: Please tell me I'm not the only one who's head goes straight to the
gutter with that name!
chris dee: You're not. I had to rewrite the above comment about 3 times
fangirl1001: hehehe
Clockwork Seer: Well, he does seem to have been unfortunately indiscriminate
with his hattings and assorted mind shennaningans every time we've seen
him/
chris dee: But we're not as bad as Gail
Abaddon8780:*shudders*
chris dee: All I had him do with his hat was cure a hangover. she...eh....
chris dee: yeah
chris dee: brain brillos for everybody!
Nathan Perry: Although Gail did make Harley Jervis' replacement in that little
crew.
Although she seems to have given him a disturbing interest in Blake...
chris dee: Ew
chris dee: Just... ew
Nathan Perry: Post-makeover Blake to be sure, but yeah, it's eerie.
Clockwork Seer: get your mind bleach here. Guaranteed to kill all known mental
images.
Nathan Perry: Although given the other men on that team (Deadshot and
Ragdoll)...no, it's still freakish.
chris dee: Again I say Johnny Walker, lots of it
chris dee: speaking of which, a bottle awaits
chris dee: Thanks everybody for coming out tonight
Abaddon8780: Patron Tequila. My Drug of choice.
Abaddon8780: Thanks for having us, Chris.
chris dee: I'll try to get a transcript up by Friday
Uncle Pat: Always a pleasure, Chris.
chris dee: Goodnight all