

Chat on Cat-Tale #55: I Believe In Harvey Dent

June 2, 2008 in the Cat-Tales Lobby

Attendees: chris dee , Coralskipper, Kessie, Random Equinox, The Thundering Monkey, The Wilder, vernon fields, ussentinel

chris dee: We'll be starting in a few minutes. Like to give everyone a chance to arrive and get settled.

The Wilder: hello :)

The Wilder: I guess I'm a little early?

chris dee: You're right on time. The world is late, or they decided to skip this one.

Monday night is something of an experiment for these chats. Couldn't pass up the chance to have it on the 2nd though

The Wilder: how very appropriate

chris dee: Gotta do what I can to keep the inner-Harvey happy

Kessie: indeed

chris dee: Okay, a quick round of "What is everybody drinking" and we'll get started.

Latecomers can catch up.

Coralskipper: Pepsi, here

Kessie: put the kettle on for some tea - going to get it in a minute

The Wilder: same here

The Wilder: hey

chris dee: And I have my usual mineral water, with a little something special to sip later.

To celebrate the end of the Vault arc, I have that walnut liqueur mentioned in that story,

chris dee: Evening, sentinel!

ussentinel: Greetings, author and everyone!

chris dee: sentinel, we just finished the traditional icebreaker: "what are you drinking?" Is there a cold beverage on your desk?

ussentinel: A tumbler of fruit punch is on my left

chris dee: Tasty. All right then, let's get started. We're a small group tonight, so we'll be very informal. Who wants to toss out the first question?

The Wilder: I'll have at it

chris dee: Hit me

The Wilder: With IBIHD coming right in the middle of all of the TDK viral campaigns and games, how influenced or inspired were you by the movie to write IBIHD?

chris dee: Good question. The viral was a huge factor determining the timing of the story.

chris dee: It was always a possibility that Two-Face might return.

chris dee: But as I said many times, I wanted to make sure I had exhausted healed-Harvey before I considered changing him back.

chris dee: The movie using the creation of Two-Face was a huge temptation, but that alone would not have been enough. Not on its own...

chris dee: The key turned when I saw how it wouldn't be "turning Harvey back into Two-Face" like toggling him back.

chris dee: The same way Harvey Fullface wasn't the Harvey Dent who had never been scarred, this is not the Two-Face who had never been healed.

chris dee: The idea for our alternate reality game came first, before the idea for the fic

chris dee: And Vernon Fields, who was such a centerpiece of that, just sort of presented himself as a wonderful character.

chris dee: I got to love him as I wrote the ARG, and the PIC (partner in crime, for non blog-readers) suggested he could come into Cat-Tales.

chris dee: Spark-sizzle-ping. The idea pretty much came together in one lightning strike at that point.

The Wilder: so was there collaboration with TravisBickle on this one or was this all you?

chris dee: This is all me.

chris dee: There was a collaborator on the ARG but not the fic. Any time I have a co-author, it's credited.

Kessie: This brings up the question - how much affect do your betas have on your writing?

Kessie: and its direction

chris dee: As a rule, the betas have about as much influence as the message boards. Sometimes, someone will say something there that clarifies something I have only a vague sense of. And two or three chapters down the line, out it comes.

chris dee: On this chapter, a beta made two suggestions that made it into the final.

They're essentially details:

chris dee: In TF's rundown of the cities, he initially didn't mention hiring any in Metropolis. Later, he says he had to go to Central City because otherwise it would have been an odd number of cities he recruited from - but beta saw him mention only Star and Keystone.

chris dee: Now, I never said that TF was only in the cities mentioned in the text, or for that matter I didn't explicitly say that he didn't hire any in Metropolis, but I can see how the assumption was made. It didn't detract to add a bit more, quite the reverse. It was an opportunity to go back into Metropolis and flesh it out.

chris dee: Enter Conduit and Neutron

The Thundering Monkey: Hello all

chris dee: Welcome TM!

The Wilder: hello

ussentinel: (hi)

The Wilder: so did you have an overall plan for Harvey before IBIHD, as he was receiving less face time (no pun intended) and Selina/Bruce made less visits

chris dee: One of the mailed in questions asked something similar

The Wilder: or was there simply not enough room for him in the last few stories

chris dee: I'd have to say the latter

chris dee: I seldom plan more than 2 stories ahead, and even that's a rarity

chris dee: Harvey was sort of adrift without the rogue identity. No longer part of their circles but unable to resume the life he'd had before except for little bits of it.

chris dee: He appeared at some social gatherings like in The Gotham Post, but he didn't fit easily into rogue-centric tales

chris dee: Essentially I used that in writing the character. He too would have been experiencing that man without a country feeling and searching for places to rebuild his life

The Wilder: so you always had in the back of your mind to address his magical healing?

chris dee: I was always aware that the story could go that way, which is why I put in the trapdoor about a coin flip breaking the spell.

chris dee: I knew I had to have something better than the comic's methods, which have all been pretty transparent as "Hey, y'know what, we changed our mind."

chris dee: Pre-crisis, I think he got splashed with acid a second time, which is making extreme demands on the suspension of disbelief, IMO.

The Thundering Monkey: I'll bet Harvey's reaction speed around open jars of acid would make the Flash green with envy.

chris dee: And as for the more recent effort, what can you say but EW.

chris dee: But I was never 100% sure the trapdoor would ever be used. It was only there in case, to give me the option down the line.

Coralskipper: I really liked Ivy's role in IBHD. Was that the plan when you started it, or did it evolve as you wrote?

chris dee: And good question, Coral. That also echoes one of the mail-in questions

chris dee: Ivy's role was always part of the plan.

chris dee: There's a reason PsychoBat made an appearance in Chapter 1. The duality in Bruce's nature was an important part of this story, even though it was understated. It was the relationship with Selina that blew on the spark of Bruce's humanity until it grew into the healthy fire we see today.

chris dee: And for better or worse, Pammy is the woman in Harvey's life. They were physically intimate before the acid, but more important to my mind is the relationship after.

chris dee: There was a lot more honesty in Two-Face and Ivy than there ever was with Harv and Pam, so that's where we can speak of intimacy beyond what happens between the sheets.

The Wilder: it looks like this was doing some good for Pammy as well

chris dee: Neither is a bare-their-soul type, but there's still a definite connection.

chris dee: You know the old joke "how to porcupines make love?" Forget the punchline and look at the number of baby porcupines in the world. Whatever they do, it obviously works for them.

The Thundering Monkey: It's sort of a "bed of nails " thing. Pressure per square inch and all. I wouldn't recoment it.

The Wilder: this is at least healthier than her involvement with Joker and Harley

chris dee: Good point. The interesting thing there - there are SO MANY interesting things with ivy - but with Harley and Joker, Ivy blames Joker.

chris dee: Whereas if she stopped to think about it for 5 minutes, it's *Harley* who is nicely attentive when Ivy is the best friend available, but inclined to be forget Pammy exists whenever Mistah J snaps his fingers.

chris dee: Unfortunately, as one of the betas pointed out, "stopping to think about it for 5 minutes" is something Pammy avoids.

chris dee: That's a big reason she is so terribly interesting. She is much brighter and more aware than pre-Greg Talia, for example, to whom she is sometimes compared.

Denial doesn't come easily to her, she's got to work at keeping those blinders on.

The Wilder: and hopefully she won't have to keep those on in the future with Harvey trying to make a legitimate recovery

chris dee: Down deep, she knows she's the common denominator in all these failed relationships. So her seeming egotism isn't really as deluded or oblivious as most characters. It's more of a defense mechanism.

The Wilder: will we see Pam/Harvey in the next one or will they be sitting on the sidelines for now?

chris dee: Harv is in Seattle for a while, so it is unlikely he will make an appearance in the next story.

The Thundering Monkey: Dear Bisected in Seattle...I heard you on the radio, and was moved to tears...if you're in Gotham....

The Wilder: off-topic question: any thoughts or comments on the latest "Final Crisis" and the end of the Catwoman book?

chris dee: I don't read comics anymore, sorry. No idea what's going on, and I try to keep it that way.

chris dee: Let's take one from the mailbag

chris dee: How much of this story was drawn from The Long Halloween and does this mean it's now in Cat-Tales continuity?

chris dee: A: There were a lot of nods to The Long Halloween, largely because I consider that the ultimate depiction of Gotham in the early days of Batman's career. I mentioned the Gordon/Dent/Batman triumvirate way back in Such an Idiot.

chris dee: This story shares the same opening line as TLH "I believe in Gotham City". It uses the anecdote about Catwoman giving Batman a heads up about the warehouse of Falcone cash, and the reason Roman has to stockpile his cash is because Bruce has shut down the bank he'd been using to launder it.

chris dee: And 99% of the flashback to Harvey's scaring is taking straight from TLH.

chris dee: However, the remaining 1%, like the mention of John Torterucci, as well as the name of the mob bank becoming Gotham National Bank, the inclusion of Gotham General Hospital and the Gotham Intercontinental Hotel are all from the alternate reality game promoting The Dark Knight. So you could just as easily ask if Batman Begins and The Dark Knight are going to be in Cat-Tales continuity now, and the answer is no.

chris dee: I'll often use pieces of something, either because I find them particularly good, or as a nod of respect, or both. But that doesn't mean everything about a sourced work is automatically sucked into CT continuity.

Random Equinox: Hi, everyone!

chris dee: Hi Random!

The Wilder: hello

Coralskipper: Hey

The Thundering Monkey: Salutations

ussentinel: Hello

Coralskipper: On a different note, how long have you known what Selina was going to do with the Vault money, and were there any serious ideas you considered before settling on a new Batmobile?

The Wilder: much appreciation on the batmobile blueprints, btw

chris dee: That idea has been with me since Chapter 1. I was talking over the possibilities with a brainstorm buddy

chris dee: Who is my go-to guy for Bruce's POV if ever I am stuck for an XY take on things

chris dee: And we had gone round and round on the Foundation and Bruce's multi-leveled objections to the notion of using crime proceeds

chris dee: The thought came to me as a hysterically funny epilogue if Bruce and Selina had just had a similar conversation and then

chris dee: Okay jackass... CAR!

chris dee: It was a very funny visual, but it really began as just a "wouldn't it be funny" moment, a private joke

chris dee: I didn't see it being viable, but with the patents and Alfred, viola

Random Equinox: CAR! *Tim Taylor grunt*

Random Equinox: When I read about Selina's gift, I flashed back to that scene in Hush that depicted the racks of Batmobiles in the Batcave. Time for Bruce to make more room (if he hasn't already)!

chris dee: LOL, quite

Coralskipper: Just so long as Jim Lee doesn't get the idea to do a full issue spread of the Batcave, since apparently a simple two page spread isn't enough anymore

Random Equinox: Don't know if this has been asked yet, but was there any reason why Two-Face had different opinions on the quality of henchmen in different DC cities?

Random Equinox: Oops, should be "DCU cities".

chris dee: Mostly because I do. Cities have such different personalities, and I figured that would translate.

chris dee: It was a way to peek into his mind since TF returned, and also to show how he'd been spending the time

Random Equinox: Well at least he was using his time productively. :p

chris dee: Rogue Charters. 10 cities in 6 days.

The Wilder: haha

Random Equinox: With prices so low, it's (almost) criminal!

chris dee: *rimshot

The Thundering Monkey: I figure there's a science to determining where to find a good henchmen. The economy comes into play, Unemployment, number of exmilitary types, Crime organizations in place ect.

Coralskipper: I loved Two-Faces take on Metropolis. Actually shared it with people who have only a passing interest in the characters

chris dee: Praise indeed. Thanks

Random Equinox: An unanticipated side-effect of Supes' "holding back" may be encouraging a specific and desired type of henchmen for him to regularly face.

The Wilder: speaking of passing interest, what do you think of how they're handling TDK right now with the trailers and the rumored change in the TF origin?

chris dee: I've liked a lot of what I've seen, as far as the trailers and the viral game.

Personal preference, I think the Harvey side is more interesting than the Joker. When the viral was "dress up like joker and deface a landmark" I can't say I was bowled over

chris dee: But the latter half that has been so election-focused was quite entertaining

chris dee: That said, I'll repeat what I've said in the blog: there is such a thing as over exposure

Random Equinox: Re: trailer exposure--yep, there is too much of a good thing.

Random Equinox: Overdo it and/or spoil too much, and one wonders if there's any point in actually going to see the movie.

Coralskipper: My main worry about the movie is that it looks like Bruce and Batman won't have the sort of relationship with Harvey that they do in Cat-Tales and the Comics

The Wilder: perhaps they will echo the Bruce/Harvey playboy days with the new Rachel love triangle

Random Equinox: That does seem to be suggested in one of the trailers.

chris dee: Let us all bow our heads and give thanks that Katie is gone

The Wilder: Amen

Coralskipper: Done

Coralskipper: And let us also be thankful that there's a 95% chance that Rachel dies

chris dee: Amen

Random Equinox: Personally, I don't have anything against her portrayal. I just thought that, of all the characters, she was the most disposable.

The Wilder: should they have used a canon character from the start or was it better to have a disposable love interest early on?

Random Equinox: I don't know how much of a difference a canon love interest would've had versus an OC one. I do know that I'd hate for any Batman movie to be focused on Bruce's latest girl.

Coralskipper: I don't think it was necessary to have a love interest, which is why I have an intense dislike for her.

chris dee: And I thought the idea of a contemporary chewing Bruce's ass was inappropriate. Someone older, like canon Leslie Thompkins, fine.

The Wilder: that crossed my mind as well

The Thundering Monkey: Action movies usually require an intermediary character whose jeopardy is more moving to us than some random citizen.

Coralskipper: If they ever need to arbitrarily endanger someone, there's always Alfred

The Thundering Monkey: I don't really care about the bank employees joker gasses.

The Thundering Monkey: Hence the inclusion of the girl. Without the girl action movies are just a couple of guys kicking each others asses.

chris dee: That interminable car chase would have been just as interminable no matter whose neck was on the line, IMO

The Thundering Monkey: Also, you need a character that the hero can scoop up and carry in a manly fashion.

The Thundering Monkey: Especially while wearing a 60 lb rubber suit.

Random Equinox: Which makes you wonder who to feel more sorry for: the rescuer sweating away in the rubber suit, or the rescued person who has to sniff the bad BO.

The Thundering Monkey: Which is why Danny Glover was never completely incapacitated in the lethal weapon movies.

The Wilder: you think they could work in a TLH Catwoman for a third movie? She wouldn't exactly be the damsel in distress love interest.

Coralskipper: Does anyone hope that the Catwoman movie was so bad that no one will touch her again in the movies? She's been in the movies twice, and both were atrocious

The Wilder: good point

chris dee: Technically she's been seen times, if we count Lee Merriwether

Random Equinox: I just hope that they exercise some restraint in the number of characters in the third movie. IMO, that was a major, if not the major, problem with movies like X3 and Spidey 3. Spread the focus and development too thin.

The Thundering Monkey: Yeah, it's very rare that Hollywood gets it right. And there's too much effed up source material now for them to refer to

Coralskipper: The thing is, I don't think getting Catwoman right is that hard. Batman: TAS did it well, but for some reason Hollywood insists that she have cat powers

The Wilder: well, that point could be disputed as well

Random Equinox: Maybe it's best not to tempt The Powers That Be.

The Wilder: did the Catwoman short film collaboration ever get off the ground, chris?

chris dee: No. I think it was shot, but editing was never completed.

ussentinel: Fic question: Was the last chapter more difficult to write this time in more recent arcs? If so, why?

chris dee: It was tricky because TF's unveiling was such a climax. It was impossible not to have a drop off

ussentinel: I ask because this ending REALLY clicked and resonated

chris dee: Thank you. I debated trying to have something a little "bigger" in terms of action over character. A big BOOM! (speaking of Hollywood) but that would have blown up a perfectly good theatre for no reason.

chris dee: One advantage to my *not* being Hollywood, I don't have to blow anything up to justify the length of the thing.

Random Equinox: Or satisfy studio execs who want to "appeal to a broader audience".

chris dee: Right. "broader" meaning 12-year old boys that like to see things blow up

The Thundering Monkey: For some reason I can't picture any Theater of two faces, without the two old muppet hecklers in the balcony.

ussentinel: (Statler and Waldorf???)

The Wilder: so was this Ivy's initiation among the more recurring and personal rogue ranks like Riddler and TF?

chris dee: I don't see her being invited to the manor for tea any time soon.

Coralskipper: Were there any scenes that you particularly enjoyed writing in IBHD?

chris dee: First part, I really liked the "I believe in Gotham City" opening, and the first Two-Face appearance where Batman encountered him.

chris dee: In the later chapters, I especially liked Ivy's roaming around Gotham looking for Harvey, because those were written in a day in response to a location the DK viral had introduced. It was just what I needed to break up the main story for that chapter, and I was so thrilled to get it out there asap.

Random Equinox: It's amazing how one little thing can inspire a flurry of material.

chris dee: Absolutely. When it starts flowing, it's all I can do to make my fingers keep up.

chris dee: Finally, to do the scarring flashbacks, I got to reread those scenes in TLH, and it's just incredibly wonderful to draw on material that is so rich. Really a rush writing those.

The Wilder: if given the opportunity to work on the DC comics, would you want to given the direction they have been going in lately?

chris dee: As I said, I haven't read a new comic in more than a year, nor have I set foot in a comic shop or a comics-related message board. So I have no idea what direction they're going in. I go to some lengths to avoid finding out too.

chris dee: If you read my blog, I mentioned something from The Last Lecture today: When people stop telling you you're screwing up, it's bad. It means they've given up on you.

chris dee: Well, I seem to have brought down the room. Everybody, let me use this moment of silence to introduce Vernon Fields, for those of you who don't know him.

vernon fields: Hiya

chris dee: Vernon is an insider on the Friends of Harvey Dent campaign, and if any of you have questions for him... there we go. I'll let him take it from here.

Random Equinox: How's work treating you, Vernon? Or do you prefer Mr. Fields?

vernon fields: Vernon is just fine, sir. Thank you.

vernon fields: I've had a very busy time of it, getting a few last campaign documents taken care of. You wouldn't believe the amount of paperwork generated by political fundraising.

The Wilder: I can imagine

Random Equinox: You wouldn't believe the amount of paperwork generated by just about anything.

vernon fields: Ha, that's very true.

Random Equinox: And this is supposed to be the dawn of a new environmentally conscious world, too.

The Wilder: so what kind of hurdles did you go through in working on the campaign?

vernon fields: Well, my biggest hurdle was being the youngest guy in Mr. Daniel's line of sight when the first internet job came along. Somehow I got tagged as the web guy

ussentinel: Oh oh

vernon fields: My very first week on the job, I was sent to the web designers and okayed what they had mocked up. Only then did I find out it was the **wrongred**

Coralskipper: Ah, the minutia of web design

vernon fields: Yeah. Who knew we had an official shade of red.

vernon fields: The one piece of advice I did try to give, they didn't listen. They put up a MySpace page. "Like all the kids do these days" I told them, Harvey's comments will just fill up with a lot of glitter reading **helloblueeyes** but they didn't listen.

vernon fields: Don't get the wrong idea, it was a thrill working on the campaign, and Harvey is a brilliant man. I learned a lot. For example, there was this one really funny incident choosing music for whenever he went to the podium. Don't ask me why, but he wanted to use the Charlie Kane song from Citizen Kane.

vernon fields: Harvey said the lyrics were written for the movie but the melody is taken from something else. **apocono** or something like that. Who knew? I sure didn't. Really smart guy.

vernon fields: Anyway, you guys didn't come to hear me babble on about that.

vernon fields: I'll be in the Harvey Dent Campaign HQ if anyone has any more questions that I can answer.

chris dee: Thanks, Vernon. You're a sweetie

vernon fields: *blush*

chris dee: Nice guy. Hope I didn't embarrass him.

ussentinel: nah, I think you're good

The Wilder: He seemed like a nice guy

chris dee: If any of you have been involved with friendsofharveydent.org and related material, I'm sure he can help you out with anything you still have to find.

ussentinel: Noted, thanks!

Random Equinox: Sweet!

Coralskipper: Hmm, I think Wilder was asking if we will see more of the Bat Family in the next chapter, and I'm also curious.

chris dee: Ah yes

chris dee: I thought I might be asked to tease the next story a little, and I prepared the following: Armchair Detective will involve the famed Barcalounger of Hamahotep. It's rumored to be upholstered with the fabled Fabric of Ka scraps left over after Catman made his cape

chris dee: :|

chris dee: Not buying it, are you?

The Wilder: Hmm...

Coralskipper: Not really, but it did bring a smile to my face

ussentinel: welllllll ...

The Thundering Monkey: This sounds like a job for....The Tick!!

The Thundering Monkey: What with his experience on the worlds most comfortable recliner case.

Random Equinox: Well, I guess it could be a "training exercise".

Random Equinox: You know, something that's a little more low-priority, so you can afford to use it for "practise" purposes.

chris dee: Random, funny you mention that

chris dee: Thundering Monkey and I were coming up with something along those lines the other night

chris dee: Training Cassie, wasn't it?

The Thundering Monkey: Yes.

The Thundering Monkey: Robin explaining to her that the term "Armchair Detective" like "backseat Driver" were not to be taken literally or put into practice.

The Thundering Monkey: Yes...technically Barbara could be called a wheelchair detective, but she probably wouldn't like it..

Coralskipper: I think she'd find a way to horribly maim you if you called her that

Random Equinox: Nah, Barbara would make your life a virtual hell first (online, computers, etc.). *Then*, she'd move on to the maiming.

Random Equinox: Did Robin say that to pre-empt any literal interpretation or because he's still recovering from Cassie's latest misunderstanding?

The Thundering Monkey: Okay, Yes, Its true Metron works out of a TimeChair, but he's not really a detective.

The Thundering Monkey: No! Hitting the bad guy with a chair does not make Hulk Hogan a...

The Thundering Monkey: For Christ sakes just sit down and let me explain!!!

chris dee: (this won't end well)

The Wilder: uh oh

Random Equinox: Funny how often "This won't end well" is used.

Kessie: (the waiting for the other shoe to drop)

chris dee: Yeah, Rob started it. And became CT's very own "I have a very bad feeling about this"

The Wilder: it often rings true

The Thundering Monkey: **Case in Point. This is a chair. An Armchair in fact**

The Thundering Monkey: **You are a detective.**

The Thundering Monkey: **You will solve the case of the missing Double Dipped Double Fudge cookies by the clues I give you**

Random Equinox: Or, by Alfred, there will be a reckoning!

The Thundering Monkey: **without leaving that chair, visiting a crime scene or interviewing witnesses.**

Coralskipper: <<Is officially scared

The Thundering Monkey: **Was Tim.**

Kessie: no, they evaporated

The Thundering Monkey: **Now hold on! i haven't started yet!**

The Thundering Monkey: **Have chocolate on hands and anyways is always Tim when cookies involved**

The Thundering Monkey: ***Sigh* Okay, we'll call this the case of "The rest of the missing double dipped double fudge cookies."**

The Thundering Monkey: **Okay, for starters, its Thursday, and what happens on Thursday?**

Random Equinox: Joker starts getting twitchy?

chris dee: (ROFL)

The Thundering Monkey: **Nightwing is in Bludhaven. Was Tim.**

The Thundering Monkey: **Right. But, its also the 23rd. Nightwing is in Bludhaven on thursday the 23rd, which falls after wednesday the 22nd and Friday the 24th**

The Thundering Monkey: **Is Natures special time for Babs. Was Babs.**

The Thundering Monkey: **Bingo!**

The Thundering Monkey: **and Tim**

The Thundering Monkey: ***Facesmack***

Random Equinox: My sympathies go out to Dick, and anyone else who has to deal with Babs during this "special" time.

Coralskipper: Hahaha, that was good

chris dee: *applauds

chris dee: TM, you're a wonder.

The Wilder: I felt like I was witnessing a great performance

Random Equinox: And an improv one, to boot.

Random Equinox: At least, I assume so.

chris dee: If you haven't heard TM do Cassie, you haven't seen Shakespeare as it was meant to be played.

Random Equinox: Oh? Do tell.

chris dee: I should rephrase that

The Thundering Monkey: If you've seen TM do Cassie, for gods sake, don't tell Batman.

Coralskipper: Probably

The Wilder: haha

chris dee: And on that note, I'm ready to pull my foot out of my mouth and call it a night

The Thundering Monkey: ;) Good Night

Coralskipper: G'night

Random Equinox: Ciao!

ussentinel: good night, take care everyone

The Wilder: it was fun

chris dee: Thanks for coming out, everybody.