

## 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

A Girls' Gotta Protect Her Reputation

### Catverse Cat Tails or Cat Tales

Cats have tails, and tales are stories, so when Selina mounted her one-woman show, she thought *Cat Tales* was a cute play on words. Thus began her first flirtation with the legitimate world, where it turned out, the mass of people aren't nearly as quick-witted as Batman.

Fearing that the unwashed masses would not get the pun, the geniuses in the marketing office had the first run of programs made up as Cat Tales (no hyphen), while the ticket stock was printed Cat-Tales, the press release read Cat Tails, and the souvenir sweatshirts had Cattails.

The 9-to-5ers responsible for this tangle all brought their issues to Selina, who didn't care one way or the other. By this time the posters and window cards had arrived, reading Cat-Tails.

When the mass of publicists, marketing directors, box office staffers, & business managers presented themselves at her dressing room door, Selina informed them that the tip of a cracked bullwhip accelerates to 1100 feet per second.

Hence, the Gothamite collector with some time to spend on Ebay can find any number of variations on any number of items.

## Pop Culture

### Karaoke Night

*You Don't Bring me Flowers Anymore* – A duet recorded by Barbara Streisand and Neil Diamond in the 80's, high on treacle.

*Don't Cry for Me Argentina* – is the signature show-stopper from the musical *Evita*

## Catverse

### The Gotham Post

The tabloid scandal sheet known as The Gotham Post is the Big Bang of the Cat-Tales Universe. It spouts the version of events you and I read in DC Comics. Just like our tabloids, it's a journalistic joke to the inhabitants of the real Gotham City. Only the mentally infirm could actually believe the nonsense it spouts, but it's good for a laugh.

Very occasionally the Post reports stories from other sources, from fan fiction or message board discussions, or my own demented imagination. But 99% of the time, when someone from the Catverse references the Gotham Post, it's DC's latest debacle that's being discussed.

## DCU

**“...the time I helped the JLA with Prometheus...”**

**JLA #17.** This incident will be referenced again in more detail in ***Dearly Beloved, Awkward Pauses, Splitzville*** and ***Fool***.



Catwoman was, as Batman points out in ***Catfight***, at the Watchtower to steal the Storm Opals.

We can only assume the tabloids came up with that Zero-Gravity Three-Way idea as a freakish reaction to an episode of Will & Grace, a rerun of Moonraker, and one of those particularly implausible fanfics that pairs Batman with Black Canary. (Down Ollie, they're silly twits and they don't know what they're doing.)

DCU

**“The last time Jack spoke to me, he threatened to paste one of those deathsmiles on every cat in the city. He had just found out I had not really killed Batman as I told him when I dropped him at Arkham last year.”**

**Catwoman #65** Yep. Joker got it into his head, I can't think how, that Batman and Catwoman had some kind of a thing going.



He used her as bait to get under Bat's skin, killing everyone she came in contact with, then telling him "I didn't murder anyone. She did, your girlfriend, Batman's girlfriend on a killing rampage." Needless to say, neither Bat nor Cat took the news of his theory too well... zany hijinx ensued. When Batman woke up, his belt and cape were missing. Catty had taken them, along with Joker, who she deposited in Arkham (it's not that hard to break *into*, it's getting *out* that's the trick). She told Joker he was right, she did obsess about Batman too much, but not nearly as much as Joker did himself – so now they were free, she'd killed him! "All gone. No more Dark Knight. No more need to scheme. Bye-Bye." She left belt and cape as proof that Batman was indeed dead.



Ah, Devin Grayson. The last best hope at DC.... at the time

anyway.

## “Catwoman Captured”

Bronwyn Carlton’s asinine storyarc began in **Catwoman #79**. The continuity comic has never recovered.

### History/Literature Butler/Valet

To be scrupulously correct, a *butler* is the head of the domestic staff associated with the dining room. The word is said to be derived from “bottler,” denoting his position as master of the wine cellar.

As the sole servant in the Wayne household, Alfred would more properly be called a houseboy or manservant. But butler is the term we all understand for the job Alfred does.

A butler that also tends to his employer’s clothes and personal needs (or valets for him) would be referred to as (d’uh) a butler/valet.

Incidentally, Alfred’s literary hero Jeeves was also a valet, and only a valet, a “gentleman’s personal gentleman”. Yes, the most famous butler of them all was, in fact, not a butler at all. (shrug)

A great deal more will be learned about life “below stairs” at Wayne Manor in Book 4’s ***Polishing Silver: The Journal of Alfred Pennyworth***

### Real world Hijinx Playhouse

When you say “theatre,” people who never go to the theatre think of one very particular type of performance space: Plush velvet seats, gilded pilasters, big proscenium arch carved with scrolls and cherubs. Those venues do exist, and thank god for them, but there’s another kind too. It’s called a black box. Most have 99-seats – it’s a union designation. Few are plush in any way. Some have prosceniums and raised stages. Some are just big empty spaces with folding chairs. You won’t see big musicals with an orchestra and lavish special effects in such places, but you will see some extraordinary entertainment.

As a theatre-center, Gotham City would have dozens of these deliberate or improvised performance venues. The Hijinx has a history, dating back to the 60s, a tremendous time for experimental theatre.

## From Catwoman's Cat-Tales Monologue

### History

Stanford White

Stanford White was an architect who designed many of the most important buildings and mansions of the gilded age, including Madison Square Garden, the Washington Arch and the Metropolitan Club. His murder at the hands of Pittsburgh Industrialist Harry Thaw because of a scandalous liaison with Thaw's Wife, Evelyn Nesbit, "the Girl on the Red Velvet Swing", was once one the most famous murder trial in America and is outlined in the novel and musical *Ragtime*.

### Literature

Brunhilda

Heroine of two operas in Wagner's Ring Cycle, Brunhilda was a Valkrye who became the wife of Siegfried. She's also most likely the role being depicted in the stereotypical image of an opera-singer, i.e. a large, loud woman in a Viking hat with the horns. Selina's designation of the woman sleeping in the penthouse as Brunhilda would indicate nasal snoring at an impressive volume.

Cujo

A big rabid St. Bernard in a Stephen King novel. That Selina uses this term to describe a schnauzer – a yapping little dog with an exaggerated sense of its fierceness, is a minor indicator of just how spirited and funny the story she's concluding has been.

**"I don't think those jewels belong to you."**

I did take this line from a fanfic. An otherwise good fanfic from an otherwise good author. But it's a damn stupid thing for a smart guy like B to have said, hence Selina's rejoinder.

DCU



**“he supposedly used her feelings for him to manipulate and humiliate her”**

That would be a particularly clueless fanboy reading of an “I need you” followed by a kiss during No Man’s Land (**Catwoman #72**), when Bats asked Selina to steal some computer disks.

This distinction between ‘using’ someone and ‘asking for help’ will be explored further in ***Such an Idiot***.

Real Life

**“Dear Penthouse”**

A-hem, Penthouse is a men’s magazine. They print letters from readers in which the letter-writers tell (read: brag), in erotic detail, about fantastic sexual exploits of doubtful veracity.

DCU

**“And I’m supposed to be getting it on with this guy.”**

**Nightwing #52** Perfectly ludicrous Nightwing-Catwoman encounter, which Catwoman dismissed more effectively than I ever could: “Why Mrs. Robinson, Are you trying to seduce me?” - The quote is from *The Graduate*, a very young Dustin Hoffman to his girlfriend’s mother Anne Bancroft.

## Chapter 3

DCU Dick Grayson, Bludhaven

Dick Grayson, the first Robin, was shot by the Joker, inciting Batman to remove him from active duty. Dick set out on his own as Nightwing, making his home the nearby city of Bludhaven, as it had no crimefighter to protect it.

Bludhaven is closer to Gotham than many readers realize. It is located right across the river, Jersey to Gotham’s Manhattan.

Bludhaven will be visited in greater detail in ***Loose Ends***.

Real World: Lucas Arts games

The Monkey Island series, Grim Fandango, Loom, several others... Lucas Arts decided adventure games should be fun. You can't die, and the dialogue choices and the responses they bring are witty and inventive.

## Chapter 4

Real World: "**This was the choice**"

The choice being to continue Cat Tales, represented by the Industry Trade paper of show business: Daily Variety, or get back to being Catwoman, who finds her targets in the News and Lifestyle sections of the Gotham Times. I've always liked this short little scene where Selina flips back and forth between the two directions she's being pulled in.

History Egyptian Cat Gods – will be discussed in more detail later in the text.

Most of us know the Egyptians worshipped cats but few know the whys. Egypt was the breadbasket of the Ancient World. The Nile gave them an agricultural empire in the heart of a desert. Their wealth, power, and survival all hinged on the storage of grain. Rats and mice *eat* grain. Cats *kill* mice and rats. Q.E.D. We really like cats!

Egyptian cat relics have always been prized targets for Catwoman, and will be specially featured in her origin story: **Cattitude**.

Feline jade statuettes at AsiAntiques Gallery – Catwoman appreciates as few others can the uniquely conflicted attitude Asian artists have towards Cats. There is a year of the cat in the Chinese Zodiac... but then there is the story of Buddha's cat. Buddha gathered all the animals together when he was about to transcend to Nirvana. In some tales his own cat is the only animal not to show. In other versions, the cat is present and takes advantage of the gathering to kill a mouse. Moral of both versions – cats don't follow any code but their own. Buddhists view this as a negative. Selina, obviously, does not.

Maya Jaguar God – Many pre-Columbian peoples revered the Jaguar. All nocturnal animals were seen to be connected to death



and the afterlife. Hunters as large and deadly as the jaguar were particularly to be respected. And the sheer grace and beauty of the animal was seen as unquestionably divine.

Canary Diamonds – are a kind of “fancy” diamonds, fancy denoting color. All fancy diamonds are rare, and therefore more valuable than clear ones. There are many colors, pinks, blues, and even reds. Yellow ones are called Canary.

### **“Andrew Lloyd Webber's original working score of the musical CATS”**

The big auction houses like Sotheby’s and Christie’s periodically have sales of entertainment memorabilia, so this is the sort of item that might come up for sale. Webber wrote the musical *CATS* based on *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* by T.S. Eliot.

Incidentally, Paul Kupperberg had Catwoman stealing the original manuscript for *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* in “Creatures of Habit” in *The Further Adventures of Batman Volume 3*

Kupperberg’s Selina liked the musical. Mine, clearly, does not, for she goes on to think:

“ ... with a capital C and that rhymes with D and that stands for Dull”

a paraphrase of a line from another musical, *The Music Man*, as lampooned by *Forbidden Broadway*. Selina was in a particularly whimsical mood that day, so it seems.

### **“write the forward for a 'Cat Who' mystery”**

A delightful series of novels (The Cat Who Knew Shakespeare, The Cat Who Ate Danish Modern, etc.) by Lilian Jackson Braun, in which amateur detective Jim Qwilleran is often led to the solution by the actions of his cats Koko and Yum Yum.

### **“Co-host the People's Choice Awards with David Boreanaz”**

David Boreanaz plays Angel, a show with more than a few homages to the Batverse. It only seemed polite to return the favor. In fact, the dark and brooding Angel has so many batlike qualities, its easy to see why the PCA-producers thought he’d make a good co-star for Catwoman ... in stark contrast to say, Chuck Dixon, who wrote that Nightwing 52 idiocy or Ed Brubaker who kept trying to pair her with old men.

### **"Live from Gotham City, It's Saturday Night."**

Even Bruce, who nobody ever called Mr. Pop Culture, recognized this as the tagline from Saturday Night Live. Clearly Selina had received an invitation to guest host.

### Heather Hermoine's gossip column

Long before People Magazine came around, serious newspapers had gossip columns detailing the goings on among high society and show biz figures. Before Hedda Hopper and Walter Winchell, those columns were written under pseudonyms. I named the Gotham Times columnist for just such a figure - Hermoine, the pseudonym of Stephen Merriall in E.F. Benson's *Lucia in London*.

### Catverse **"The JLA sent flowers"**

I could never hope to describe who signed what on that card as well as Myklarcure did in ***JLAin't: The Other Side***. But full credit must be given too to the FanFiction.net reviewer who pointed out that "*We enjoyed the show, Thank you very much,*" unimaginative but scrupulously correct, straight out of an etiquette book, and could be no one other than Mama Kent's baby boy. And that "*So glad to see you embrace the path of righteousness!*" was most certainly Diana, goddess of mouth, er, I mean truth, oh hell, I mean posturing, okay, I've said it: Diana, goddess of posturing.

## Chapter 5

### History **"Impression Sunrise was stolen"**



The very word Impressionism is taken from this painting by Claude Monet. It was first shown at an exhibition in April of 1874, the first of several independent exhibits by artists like Monet who rejected the highly linear, realistic style of the formal salon in favor of their own experiments with color and light. The critic Louis Leroy called his scathing review of their show "Exhibition of the Impressionists". This name, though intended as an insult, was accepted by the group. *Impression Sunrise* was stolen from the Musée Marmottan in Paris in 1985, and is now listed by Interpol as one of the "ten most wanted artworks missing". This painting and its theft is also the inspiration for the remake of *The Thomas Crown Affair*.

**“Gotham Museum has a complete mock-up of a pyramid, a full-size Roman temple, and a loading dock that has to be able to receive monstrously large and heavy antiquities.”**

As does the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Again see *The Thomas Crown Affair* for a perfectly delightful art-thief’s view of the facility.

Bastet & Sekhmet

And their place in Egyptian mythology are described in the text. Exactly where Bast Sekhmet ends and Sekhmet or one of her other incarnations begins is very nebulous territory. But Sekhmet is the dark one, and Bast is really quite friendly – as long as you don’t cross her.

DCU **“I think the audience would've felt pretty shortchanged if I'd dodged so central an issue”**

That central issue being the “whatever it is” (as they both refer to it) between Batman and Catwoman. And that audience that felt short-changed would be us in the extended period DC tried to play down the relationship to the point of extinction.

**“Is that a batarang in your pocket or are you happy to see me?”**

Paraphrasing Mae West, one of the original bad girls.