

Monday, November 16th 2015

That night

Central Gotham

"Hey, Detective. You miss me?"

"I did – the place has been kind of quiet without you!"

I smiled at the outrageous lie.

"Batman?" Detective Gordon asked as he looked at Batman/Bruce Wayne.

"Catchy," Batman growled.

"Those voices are . . . interesting!"

"We must protect ourselves..."

Detective Gordon looked down at the ground for a moment.

"I suppose you must..."

As he looked up, he found that he was alone.

"I hope they're not going to get in the habit of vanishing like that."

Beneath Wayne Manor

"A good evening, was it?"

"Yes, Alfred, it was – eventful too," I replied as I climbed off my motorcycle and removed my helmet.

"Painful, too!" Cat added as she did the same.

"Any injuries?" Alfred asked casually.

"Bruises, only..."

..._...

We both returned our weapons to the armoury and then headed for our bedrooms to remove the body armour.

"Bruce, I'm sorry – I went too far."

"Yes, you did – but I can't fault you for that, nevertheless, we're both still alive and Penguin is going to be slightly pissed!"

"Thanks – I enjoyed tonight and I enjoyed spending the time with you."

"It was good, Catwoman – I enjoyed spending tonight with you, too."

Later that night

Somewhere across Gotham

“Gentlemen, ladies, others – what happened?”

There was general muttering around the table.

“So none of you know anything?” Penguin said savagely. “I find that hard to believe!”

More muttering, but much less than before.

“Someone knows – and I will find them...”

There was an almost audible muttering from one reprobate down the table.

“Care to speak louder!” Penguin screamed.

“Vigilantes.”

“Vigilantes!”

“Yes, Boss – they wore black – they attacked the counting house and...”

“I thought they left Gotham – that Hit Girl, she left with her people when Fish died. No Vigilantes have been sighted for weeks!”

“They just appeared, Boss, and they’re good...”

“Good! *Good!*”

Penguin paused for a moment and he settled his emotions.

“I want them found, I want to know who they are, I want them dead, I want them buried.”

“Yes, Boss...”

“I want it *NOW!*”

Three weeks later

Saturday, December 5th 2015

That night

We were out in the City again just as we were several times a week.

Things were different though. There were rumours about us – mostly they were wildly wrong but even the *wrong* rumours suited our purposes. We were made out to be much worse than we actually were; we liked that!

We were, it seemed, making a difference.

Forty stories up

The wind was chilly on the dark roof top.

Something clanged nearby.

“What was that?” Eddie asked as he tensed up. “Let’s beat it, man. I don’t like being up here.”

“What, scared of heights?” Nick enquired. “It’s nothing, Eddie.”

"I dunno, man. After what happened to Johnny Gobs..."

"Look, Johnny Gobs got ripped and walked off a roof top, all right? No big loss."

"That ain't what I heard. That ain't what I heard at all..." Eddie replied. "I heard the bat got him."

"Gimme a break, will you? Shut up..."

"Five stories, straight down. There was no blood in the body."

"No shit. It was all over the pavement."

Eddie was worried. His gut worried him and something tingled at the base of his spine.

"There was *no* blood, man. My brother says... All the bad things you done... They come back and haunt you..."

"Listen to this," Nick replied, exasperated. "How old are you? There ain't no bat."

"My brother's a priest, man."

"No wonder you're such a chickenshit. Now shut up! There – ain't – no – bat!"

"You shouldn'ta turned the gun on that kid, man. You shouldn'ta..."

"Do you want this money or don't you? Now shut up! *Shut up...*"

Both men froze at the sound of boots on gravel. A shadow fell over them and they both shuddered at the sight. Neither wanted to turn around as the shadow grew behind them. Something then *flew* over them before it touched down and faced them. It was hideous and it was black, the cloak flared out momentarily and blocked out the moon.

Nick instinctively grabbed for his gun and he sent two slugs into the menacing figure; it went down hard.

"I'm getting' outta here!" Nick exclaimed as he turned away.

"Holy, fuck!" Eddie breathed.

"Huh?" Nick turned back and then he froze.

It arose from the roof, nightmarish as it rose steadily – the black spectre lived.

"That was not very nice!" A voice growled from behind them both.

They span around to find yet another black spectre facing them, then they only saw blackness as a boot and then a gauntlet knocked them unconscious.

"You went and got yourself shot again!" Catwoman groused as she shook her head.

"Quit your moaning, woman!" Batman groaned but he rubbed his chest just the same.

Uptown

Schiller Street and Hicks Avenue

"Jesus Christ!"

“Evening, Detective!”

“You are going to be the death of me, Batman; can’t you err knock or maybe we should put a bell on you two!”

“Two men, top of 149, they collapsed on the roof...”

I looked in the direction of 149 and then back...

At nothing...

I just shook my head and climbed into my car.

“What was that?” Bullock asked as he took another bite out of his very greasy looking burrito.

“Just the delivery boy...”

An hour later

We had just crossed over Webb Bridge from Uptown to Downtown when Fox called.

“Continue down Montgomery and then take a right onto Gate Boulevard.”

I looked over at Catwoman who just shrugged.

“On our way!”

“Take a left onto 5th and then a hard right into the parking lot.”

We obeyed.

Wayne Tower

As we entered the subterranean parking lot, all the lights went out and that included the emergency lights. Our helmet visors instantly went to the combined FLIR/NV setting and we were able to see where we were going as we descended six levels.

“Keep it coming...,” The voice in my ear prompted. “Head for that large number ‘6’ on the wall – keep your speed up...”

As we approached the wall, it moved smartly to the side and we found ourselves descending a tight, circular ramp, in my rear view mirror I saw the wall return to its proper place and then lights clicked on which illuminated the ramp.

Seconds later, we found ourselves in a large underground space that seemed to go on forever. I saw a man wave us over and then indicate a place for us both to park.

Below Wayne Tower

We were met by Fox and escorted through his ‘layer’.

I stopped beside a table that had a combat suit arranged on it. The combat suit was red and blue.

“Whose is that?” Cat asked.

“It’s for a new member of Mindy’s team...”

“A young girl?” Cat persisted as she took in the skirt which was attached to the trousers. “A very *short*, young girl!”

“Mindy places the orders; I build ‘em.”

We followed Fox and we took in everything around us. There was a lot of fancy kit all over the place.

“Wow – nice wheels!” Cat exclaimed as we approached three brand new motorcycles.

“New machines, almost ready for Chicago,” Fox explained.

The three machines were each very different. Firstly, there was a Suzuki V-Strom 1000 ABS machine in Navy Blue. The licence plate read, ‘**SHADOW**’. Next, there was a Yamaha Super Tenere in Black and Light Blue, with the licence plate ‘**MIST**’. Finally, there was a large machine in Tan with the licence plate ‘**JACKAL**’. That last machine was a Triumph Tiger 800 ABS and was obviously a British machine. All three motorcycles were fitted with Continental TKC-80 Twinduro tyres.

“Very nice!” I commented.

..._...

We moved on and Fox stopped beside a work bench. However, something caught my eye. It was a black device and there was a cable leading from it to a plastic box. The plastic box had a red button.

I knew I shouldn’t, but...

A burst of automatic gunfire ripped out across the room.

Catwoman screamed and jumped back from the device that was obviously some sort of machine gun. Fox chuckled and he walked over to the shocked vigilante.

“Maybe you should read the instructions first?” Fox commented.

“Yeah, err sorry...”

“Can’t you control yourself?” I laughed. “I can’t take you anywhere!”

“I said I was sorry!”

“Anyway!” Fox interrupted. “I called you both down here to see how you are getting on. Everything working correctly?”

“Perfectly, thanks...” I replied.

Catwoman nodded her agreement.

“I have some new equipment in the works but nothing ready right now. I understand you’ve been shot, young man – let me see the suit.”

Fox took a moment to examine where the bullets had hit my suit.

“Looking good; no damage – I am good at what I do...! I notice that while *he* has been shot several times over the past month; you, young lady, have not.”

“I move too fast! Besides, the criminals think that Batman cannot die and bullets just bounce off of him.”

“Good to a point, but they will just keep using bigger rounds until they find something that *will* kill him...!”

Catwoman grimaced at that.

“Point taken...!”

“Gotham is a bad place and escalation is expected but we must keep in control of it... That way we control the criminals. You have both done well over the past month – forty-seven behind bars; Gordon must be pleased!”

“Nine dead, though...” I conceded.

“It happens, young man; I know you don’t like that side of being a vigilante but sometimes you have to break a few eggs...”

“Yeah, yeah, I know; Alfred says the same thing.”

“Anyway, you two had better be heading, and you both have fun out there!”

The following day
Sunday

After a leisurely breakfast and a short sparring session, we lazed in the pool.

The warm water eased our aching muscles and our bruised bodies. We were closer than we ever were... It was amazing to look back to when I was just a simple street rat and then forward to the present where I was living in a billionaire’s mansion and running around what had to be the country’s most dangerous city, putting down criminal scum!

I drifted around in the water and watched as Bruce climbed out and walked over to the diving board. His body had changed; it was no longer thin and boring – he had muscle structure and his abs... Okay, I fancied the pants off him – who wouldn’t; he was a billionaire... We spent almost every minute of every day together, and some nights – not in *that* way, either!

My life was perfect: I had friends, I had a home, I also kind of had a job too.

“You just going to stare at me?” Bruce called out with a smirk and I felt myself blushing.

I had to admit that despite my limited knowledge about girls, she was perfect.

Her body was well toned, thanks to her acrobatic nature. Cat tended not to show herself off and she was wearing a one-piece swimsuit – she refused to wear a bikini! I loved spending time with her; I had spent so many years as an only child, but now, I had a friend and not just a friend, a true companion.

I dived off the board into the water and came up beside Cat.

“You two having fun?”

I looked up to see a grinning Alfred.

“Always, Alfred!” Cat replied for us both.

“Will you be going *out*, tonight, Master Bruce?”

“I think we might...” I replied as I looked over at Cat and she nodded.

“Yes, eight o’clock departure, I think, Alfred.”

“Of course, Master Bruce.”

That night

The two motorcycle engines roared to life.

I nodded towards Alfred as he stood a short distance away, looking just as anxious as he usually did when we were headed out into danger.

“Here we go again!” Catwoman commented with a grin as she kicked her machine into gear.

“Yes, we do!” I replied as I dropped my own motorcycle into gear and we both accelerated into the tunnel.

The outer door opened and we thundered out into the dark night. We sped towards the distant Gotham skyline and the cesspit of criminal scum that operated within it.