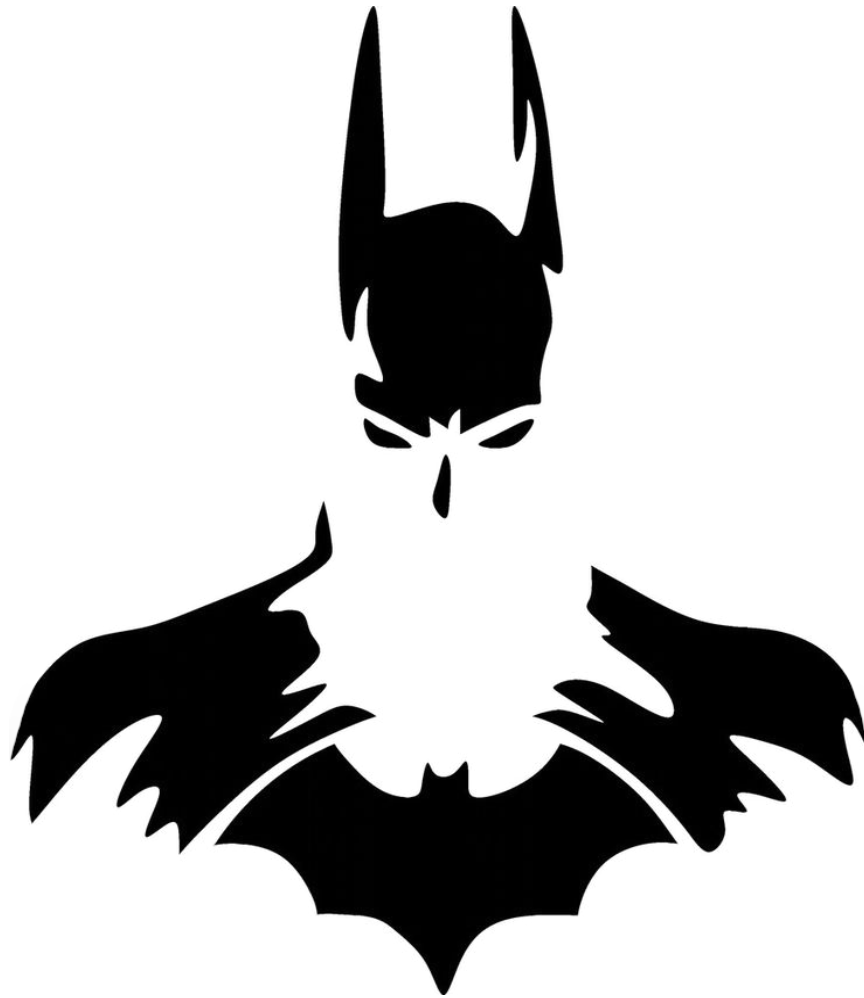




BATMAN: CREATURE OF GOTHAM

"Smile"

Written by:
Kevin Georges

"SMILE"

ACT ONE:

FADE IN:

EXT. WAYNE ENTERPRISES TOWER - DOWNTOWN GOTHAM - DAY

A gleaming skyscraper. Glass and steel. The WAYNE ENTERPRISES logo is prominent.

The sun shines-a rare sighting for Gotham. The view looks hopeful, seldom for a city like Gotham.

INT. WAYNE ENTERPRISES - LOBBY - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Marble floors, modern design. EMPLOYEES in business attire move through the space.

BRUCE WAYNE (30s, tailored suit, confident) enters through the revolving doors.

A RECEPTIONIST (20s, professional) looks up to him. She recognizes him immediately.

RECEPTIONIST
(polite)
Good morning, Mr. Wayne!

BRUCE
(charming, easygoing)
Morning, Clara. Beautiful day isn't it?

RECEPTIONIST
It really is. Mr. Fox is expecting you in R&D.

BRUCE
Perfect. Thank you.

Bruce walks toward a PRIVATE ELEVATOR. He swipes a keycard, opening the doors.

INT. WAYNE ENTERPRISES - ELEVATOR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

He steps inside. The doors close. The elevator DESCENDS.

INT. WAYNE ENTERPRISES - R&D LAB - DAY - CONTINUOUS

High-tech laboratory. Workbenches covered in PROTOTYPE GADGETS. Computer monitors, 3D printers, specialized freezers, laser cutters, and more advanced technology can be spotted in the lab.

LUCIUS FOX (60s, sharp suit, glasses, brilliant engineer) stands at a workbench examining a small ELECTRONIC DEVICE.

The elevator doors open. Bruce steps out.

LUCIUS
(not looking up)
Mr. Wayne. You're right on time.
Unlike the board meetings.

BRUCE
(grinning)
Board meetings are boring, Lucius.
This is the fun part.

Lucius looks up, smiling.

LUCIUS
Well then. You're going to like
what I've been putting together.

He picks up a device, roughly the size of a pistol. Sleek. Black casing. Small screen.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
I call it the Cryptographic
Sequencer.

He hands it over to Bruce. Bruce examines it.

BRUCE
Fascinating. Tell me more.

LUCIUS
It has the ability to bypass
electronic locks and hack encrypted
systems. In other words, it opens
the unopenable.

Bruce taps the screen. A HOLOGRAPHIC INTERFACE appears.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
Point it at any security panel,
keypad, or digital lock.
(MORE)

LUCIUS (CONT'D)

It runs through thousands of algorithms per second until it finds the right combination. No password is too strong for it.

BRUCE

(impressed)

How long does it take?

LUCIUS

Depends on the encryption. Standard commercial locks? No more than ten seconds. Military-grade? Maybe thirty.

Bruce nods. Pockets the device.

BRUCE

Hm. This could be very useful.

LUCIUS

(cautionary)

I will however warn you that the interface may be stable, but I haven't stress-tested it in the field yet. It might glitch under pressure.

BRUCE

Thanks for letting me know, Lucius.

Beat. Lucius studies him.

LUCIUS

You attending the gala tonight?

BRUCE

(casual)

Can't miss it. It's good PR.

LUCIUS

(playful)

And by "good PR," you mean you'll smile for cameras and charm Vicki Vale?

BRUCE

(grinning)

Something like that.

LUCIUS

Well, enjoy yourself. But not too much. Some of those crooks could be out on a night like that.

BRUCE
(nods)
I'm always aware.

Bruce heads toward the elevator. Pauses at the doors.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
Appreciate you, Lucius. For
everything.

Lucius nods. Genuine friendship.

LUCIUS
Take care of yourself, Bruce.

Bruce steps into the elevator. Doors close.

EXT. GOTHAM CITY HALL - NIGHT

TITLE CARD: "THAT EVENING"

Grand. Gothic architecture. Stone columns. Red carpet leading
into the entrance.

SPOTLIGHTS sweep the sky. PAPARAZZI line both sides of the
carpet. CAMERAS FLASH.

A BANNER above the entrance: "MAYOR HILL'S RE-ELECTION PARTY"

Expensive cars pull up. GOTHAM'S ELITE step out in tuxedos
and evening gowns.

VICKI VALE (30s, elegant dress, microphone) stands with her
CAMERAMAN reporting live.

VICKI
(into camera,
professional)
Vicki Vale of the Gotham Gazette
reporting live from Gotham City
Hall, where tonight Mayor Hill
celebrates his landslide re-
election victory. The mayor has
promised a night of elegance and
optimism-something this city
desperately needs.

A BLACK LIMOUSINE pull up. The door opens.

Bruce Wayne steps out. Tuxedo. Confident. Effortless charm.

CAMERAS FLASH. Paparazzi SHOUT.

PAPARAZZI #1
Bruce! Over here!

PAPARAZZI #2
Mr. Wayne! You bringing anyone with
you tonight?

Bruce waves with a smile on his face. The perfect public
persona.

He approaches Vicki.

VICKI
Mr. Wayne! A quick word?

BRUCE
(charming)
Ask away, Vicki.

She signals the cameraman. ON AIR. She fires questions at him
in quick succession.

VICKI
Bruce Wayne, Gotham's favorite son.
How's the company holding up?

BRUCE
20 billion and counting.

VICKI
What brings you to tonight's gala?

BRUCE
Celebrating the city I love and
give everything to improve.

VICKI
Beautifully said. And are you
attending solo tonight?

Bruce grins. He is about to answer until another LIMOUSINE
pulls up behind him.

The door opens.

SELINA KYLE steps out. Stunning. Black evening gown. Elegant.
Confident. Her dark hair falls in waves. Green eyes sharp and
playful.

CAMERAS GO WILD. Paparazzi SCRAMBLE.

PAPARAZZI #3
Who is THAT?!

Bruce turns, seeing her.

Their eyes lock.

Selina SMIRKS, walking past him slowly.

SELINA
(low, just to him)
Evening, Mr. Wayne.

She glides up the red carpet confidently.

Bruce watches.

Vicki notices, raising an eyebrow.

VICKI
(amused)
I think I just got my answer.

Bruce recovers, smiling at the camera again.

BRUCE
Excuse me, Vicki. Duty calls.

He follows Selina inside the ballroom.

INT. GOTHAM CITY HALL - GRAND BALLROOM - NIGHT

Opulent. Crystal chandeliers. Live ORCHESTRA playing elegant music. HUNDREDS OF GUESTS mingling.

SERVERS roam with champagne and hors d'oeuvres.

The room buzzes with wealth and power.

COMMISSIONER GORDON (50s, uncomfortable in formal wear) stands near the bar with DETECTIVE BULLOCK (suit, whiskey) and DETECTIVE RENEE MONTTOYA (evening gown, scanning room like a cop)

BULLOCK
(to Gordon)
Two of these in a row, huh? You gonna get on the dance floor?

GORDON
(not enjoying himself)
I'm not so fun at parties.

BULLOCK
With that grumpy attitude, ya sure ain't.

MAYOR HAMILTON HILL (50s, slick politician) lights up the room, shaking hands.

VERONICA VREELAND (20s, dripping in jewelry) holds court with socialites.

Near the center of the party stands KATHERINE KANE (30s, sharp red hair, elegant red gown, confident) speaking with SAPPHIRE STAGG (30s, diamonds, old money, haughty expression)

KATHERINE

Gotham's endured worse than a cataclysm, Sapphire. The question is whether Hill can endure another term.

SAPPHIRE

(dismissive)

Darling, Gotham will survive. It always does. I don't think WE will, though.

They both laugh, each taking a sip of champagne.

Across the room, Bruce enters, scanning the crowd. He spots Selina at the bar, ordering a drink.

He approaches.

BRUCE

Selina. You look amazing.

SELINA

(unimpressed)

Flattery. But predictable.

BRUCE

You haven't been going on heists as of late have you?

SELINA

Not since I served my time.

BRUCE

How was Blackgate?

SELINA

Had a cell next to the Ratcatcher. Never again.

BRUCE

(smiling)

Makes you wonder how the Batman could deal with them so easily.

SELINA

I know. I can't even stand next to a guy like that. And don't even get me started on the Cavalier.

Bruce chuckles. She smiles. They have strong chemistry.

BRUCE

Can I get you another drink?

SELINA

I'm fine with this one. But you can keep me company.

BRUCE

My pleasure.

They walk together toward the edge of the room. Away from the crowd. They link arms.

SELINA

So tell me, Mr. Wayne. What does Gotham's favorite son do when he's not hosting fundraisers and crashing galas?

BRUCE

(deflecting smoothly)
I wouldn't say I "crash" galas. I just light them up.

SELINA

Prince Charming over here. How about we sneak into a more "private" room in here?

BRUCE

(professional)
Well, I don't think that would be ethical.

SELINA

And what do you know about ethics, billionaire boy?

Before Bruce can respond, MAYOR HILL takes the stage at the front of the ballroom, tapping the microphone.

MAYOR HILL

Ladies and gentlemen! If I could have your attention!

The crowd quiets. Turns toward the stage.

MAYOR HILL (CONT'D)

Thank you all for being here
tonight. Your votes have spoken.
Together, we have sent a message-
Gotham will NOT bow down to crime!
We will NOT surrender to chaos!

APPLAUSE. Some genuine, others not so much.

MAYOR HILL (CONT'D)

Under my leadership, we will build
a safer, brighter Gotham. One that
brings criminals to justice without
the need for vigilantism.

More APPLAUSE. Bruce does not clap.

Gordon, standing near the bar, claps but keeps a skeptical
expression.

BULLOCK

(to Gordon, quiet)
You buy any of this?

GORDON

(flat)
I believe he believes it.

BULLOCK

That's not the same thing.

MAYOR HILL

This victory is not mine alone-it
belongs to every citizen who
believes in a better Gotham!
Together, we will-

His expression changes. Confusion.

Outside the ballroom. The faint sound of an ICE CREAM TRUCK
jingle. Distant. Eerie. Completely out of place.

Bruce hears it, sharpening his expression. He knows that
something is wrong.

BRUCE

(to Selina, polite)
Excuse me for a moment.

He moves toward the ballroom doors.

Selina watches him go, curious.

Gordon tenses. Hand instinctively moving to his concealed sidearm. Bullock holds the same suspicions.

BULLOCK
(to Gordon, low)
Is that a frickin' ice cream truck?

GORDON
(to Bullock, low)
Something's wrong. I know it.

EXT. GOTHAM CITY HALL - FRONT ENTRANCE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The ice cream truck sits IDLING. Music still playing.

SECURITY GUARDS patrolling the outskirts approach cautiously.

SECURITY GUARD #1
Sir, you can't park here. This is
a-

The truck's BACK DOORS BURST OPEN.

JOKER (40s, pale skin, green hair, purple suit, manic grin)
LEAPS out, holding a MILITARY-GRADE ASSAULT RIFLE.

JOKER
HIYA, BOYS! Who wants some ICE
CREAM?!

He OPENS FIRE. The guards dive for cover.

HARLEY QUINN (20s, pigtails, red and black jester outfit)
follows, wielding a Mallet and a pistol.

HARLEY
Make way, boys! We got a party to
crash!

She SWINGS her mallet. SMASHES a black SUV's windshield.

INT. GOTHAM CITY HALL - GRAND BALLROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

GUNFIRE ECHOES from outside.

The ballroom ERUPTS in panic. Guests SCREAM, scrambling for exits.

Selina swiftly exits the room, unsure of Bruce's whereabouts.

Gordon draws his PISTOL.

GORDON
(shouting)
Everyone GET DOWN!

THE MAIN DOORS EXPLODE INWARD.

Joker and Harley BURST into the ballroom.

Joker FIRES into the ceiling. The chandelier SHATTERS, glass raining down.

JOKER
(theatrical, gleeful)
GOOD EVENING, GOTHAM! Sorry to
crash the party, but I simply
COULDN'T resist!

He SPINS, arms wide, taking in the terrified crowd.

JOKER (CONT'D)
Mr. Mayor! Congratulations on your
re-election! I didn't vote for you,
but hey-democracy, am I right?

Hill backs away, terrified.

MAYOR HILL
(stammering)
Security! SOMEONE-

Harley FIRES her pistol into the air. More screaming.

HARLEY
Everybody take a seat! This'll only
take a minute!

Gordon aims at Joker.

GORDON
Drop the weapon, Joker!

Joker turns to him, GRINNING wider.

JOKER
Commissioner! How NICE it is to see
you! You do look uncomfortable in
THAT attire, though!

He pulls out a CANISTER. Green gas swirls inside.

JOKER (CONT'D)
Now, in honor of the Mayor's re-
election, I brought him a little
gift!

He TOSSES the canister toward Hill.

It LANDS at his feet, HISSING. GREEN GAS billows out.

Hill INHALES. His eyes widen. He begins to LAUGH-uncontrollably, painfully.

MAYOR HILL
(laughing, gasping)
No-please-I can't-HAHAHAHA-

He collapses to the ground. Still laughing. Convulsing.

JOKER
(delighted)
THAT'S the spirit!

Gordon FIRES. Joker ducks behind a table. He FIRES his rifle at the officers.

Gordon, Bullock, Montoya, and the other cops take cover. Returning fire.

Joker RELOADS. Cackling.

JOKER (CONT'D)
This is FUN! Why don't we do this more often?!

Suddenly, THE SKYLIGHT ABOVE SHATTERS.

BATMAN drops through. Cape billowing. LANDS in a crouch. SERIOUS.

The room FREEZES. Joker's grin WIDENS.

JOKER (CONT'D)
(ecstatic)
BATSY! JUST in time for the climax!

BATMAN
(cold)
Surrender, Joker. It's over.

JOKER
No fun!

He FIRES. Batman ROLLS behind a pillar.

He THROWS BATARANGS, disarming two of Joker's THUGS (four total with them)

Harley CHARGES Batman with her mallet.

HARLEY
Come on, B-man! Let's dance!

She SWINGS. Batman DOGDGES. He grabs the mallet mid-swing.
TWISTING.

Harley loses her grip.

Batman SWEEPS her legs. She hits the ground.

HARLEY (CONT'D)
(dazed)
Ow...

Joker LAUGHS, firing wildly.

- Batman GRAPPLES to the top of the room. SWINGS to THUG #1,
knocking him down.

- He SWEEPS THUG #2's legs. Knockout punch.

- THUG #3 swings his rifle like club. Batman CATCHES it.
Headbutt.

- THUG #4 runs. Batman fires his GRAPPLING HOOK, yanking him
back.

Joker, alone now, backs toward the exit.

JOKER
(grinning)
You know, Bats, this was lovely.
But I really must be heading-

Batman TACKLES him. They crash through a TABLE.

Joker LAUGHS even as Batman pins him.

BATMAN
(fierce)
Where did you get those weapons?

JOKER
(still laughing)
Wouldn't YOU like to know!

Batman TIGHTENS his grip.

BATMAN
Tell me.

JOKER
(manic)
They were a GIFT!
(MORE)

JOKER (CONT'D)
No return address! Just a sweet
little note telling me to "use them
well". Hehehehe!

Gordon approaches, HANDCUFFS ready.

GORDON
We've got him covered from here.

Batman releases Joker. Gordon cuffs him.

Joker, still grinning, looks up at Batman.

JOKER
You may have got me this time, but
at least the Mayor got to watch
with a SMILE.

He LAUGHS. Loud. Unhinged.

PARAMEDICS load Mayor Hill onto a stretcher, rushing him out.
Montoya also cuffs Harley, with the other cops cuffing the
remaining thugs.

Batman watches. Grim.

Gordon stands beside him.

GORDON
You think he'll make it?

BATMAN
Keep the faith.

A beat.

BATMAN (CONT'D)
Someone's arming Gotham's
criminals. This isn't random.

GORDON
You think it's connected to
Penguin?

BATMAN
Both received the exact same
weapons under an anonymous
supplier. There's definitely a
connection.

Gordon looks at Joker, being led away by officers.

GORDON
We'll hold an interrogation at
Arkham. You should probably come.

BATMAN
I'll be there.

ACT TWO:

EXT. ARKHAM ASYLUM - NIGHT

Gotham's mental institution. A house for the criminally insane. Ominous. Gothic. Sits on an island off Gotham's coast.

Lightning flashes. Rain pours.

The building looms like a monument to pure madness.

INT. ARKHAM ASYLUM - MAIN CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Cold. Sterile. Fluorescent lights FLICKER.

Batman and Gordon walk down a long hallway. ARMED GUARDS escort Joker (in handcuffs) and Harley (separate, screaming)

HARLEY
(being dragged away)
PUDDIN'! Don't let them take me!
PUDDIN'!

JOKER
(cheerful)
See you soon, Harley-girl!

She's pulled away into a separate wing in the Asylum.

JOKER (CONT'D)
(relieved)
Finally. I do need a break from her
sometimes.
(to Batman)
You ever feel like that sometimes,
Batman?

Batman does not respond.

JOKER (CONT'D)
(chuckles)
I'll take that as a yes.

Joker walks calmly. Taking in his surroundings.

JOKER (CONT'D)
(sighing, content)
Home sweet home.

They pass cell after cell. Each holding a different villain.

CELL #1: HARVEY DENT / TWO-FACE

TWO-FACE (30s, orange jumpsuit, half of his face scarred) sits on his bunk. Scarred face half in shadow. Flipping a COIN obsessively.

TWO-FACE
(muttering)
Heads... tails... heads... tails...

He looks up as Joker passes. They make eye contact.

Two-Face SNEERS.

TWO-FACE (CONT'D)
Batman.

BATMAN
(low)
Harvey.

CELL #2: PAMELA ISLEY / POISON IVY

Lush with PLANTS. Vines crawling up the walls.

IVY (30s, red hair, green skin tone, orange jumpsuit, seductive) lounges among her flora.

IVY
(sultry)
Well, well. The clown returns.

JOKER
Looking lovely as ever, Red!

She rolls her eyes, turning back to her plants.

CELL #3: WAYLON JONES / KILLER CROC

CROC (massive, reptilian skin, filed teeth, orange pants) sits in the shadows. Eating RAW MEAT.

He GROWLS as Joker passes.

JOKER (CONT'D)
 (cheerful)
 Evening, Croc ol' boy! Save some
 for me, won't you?!

Croc SNARLS.

CELL #4: JERVIS TETCH / MAD HATTER

MAD HATTER (small, British, delusional, orange jumpsuit) sits
 at a tiny tea table, talking to imaginary guests.

MAD HATTER
 (reciting)
 "We're all mad here. I'm mad.
 You're mad."

He looks up. Sees Joker. GIGGLES.

MAD HATTER (CONT'D)
 Joker! Will you join us for some
 tea?

JOKER
 Rain check, Jervis!

CELL #5: VICTOR ZSASZ

ZSASZ (gaunt, covered in TALLY MARK SCARS, orange pants)
 stands facing the wall. Counting his scars quietly.

ZSASZ
 (monotone)
 ...forty-seven... forty-eight...
 forty-nine...

He doesn't acknowledge Joker. Lost in his count.

JOKER
 (disgusted, mutters to
 Batman)
 Besides me, I really think you
 should kill that one.

Batman remains silent.

JOKER (CONT'D)
 (crude)
 Well there's always Robin. I'm
 talking about the latest one, not
 the one I killed! Hehehehe!

They reach an INTERROGATION ROOM.

Guards open the door.

INT. ARKHAM ASYLUM - INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Small. Cold. Metal table. Two chairs.

Joker is SHOVED into a chair. Hands cuffed to the table.

Batman and Gordon enter. The door LOCKS behind him.

Gordon stands. Batman sits across from the Joker.

Silence. Joker GRINS.

JOKER

So. What'll it be, gentlemen? Good
cop, bad cop? Or just... Bat?

BATMAN

Tell me everything you know about
the weapons.

JOKER

(sing-song)
I told you. Anonymous!

GORDON

We think you're being used.

JOKER

(mock offense)
Commissioner, I'm HURT! That
implies I'm a TOOL. I prefer to
think of myself as an ARTIST. And
someone just gave me the world's
best canvas!

GORDON

People are hurt. The mayor's dying.

JOKER

(shrugging)
Then I did my job!

Gordon's fists CLENCH. Batman remains calm.

BATMAN

First Penguin. Then Thorne. Now
you. We wanna know what's going on.

JOKER
Then I'm not the guy to ask.
Whoever's behind this, it's someone
out there even YOU can't predict.

Beat. Batman studies him.

Joker's grin never wavers.

JOKER (CONT'D)
(whisper)
Gotham's got so many secrets, Bats.
The chaos is just getting started.

Batman stands. Turns to leave.

JOKER (CONT'D)
(calling after him)
Say hi to the mayor for me! Unless
he's already dead-HAHAHAHA!

Batman and Gordon exit.

The door slams.

Joker sits alone. Still laughing.

EXT. GOTHAM ROOFTOPS - NIGHT

Batman GRAPPLES across the city. Swinging between buildings.

Rain pours. Lightning strikes.

Batman lands on a gargoyle statue. Pauses. Catches his
breath.

He watches from below. Sirens wail. Police cruisers
everywhere. A normal night in Gotham.

ORACLE (V.O.)
(filtered, in his
earpiece)
Bruce, I'm picking up a thermal
signature near Chinatown. Be
careful.

BATMAN
On my way.

He changes direction. Grappling towards Chinatown.

ON A NEARBY ROOFTOP, a MYSTERIOUS FIGURE watches from the
shadows.

Female silhouette. Long dark hair. Green cloak billowing in the wind. We do not see her face. Only her shadow.

She watches Batman. Silent. Patient.

EXT. CHINATOWN - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Ornate, neon-lit district. Ancient pagodas. Thick smoke and heavy mist.

Batman lands on a roof. Looks down at criminals.

Below, FIREFLY (30s, armored suit, jetpack, flamethrower) stands with FOUR ARMED THUGS carrying the same military-grade weapons.

The thugs load CRATES onto a TRUCK. Each crate marked with a SYMBOL-a stylized flame.

Firefly tests his flamethrower. A jet of FIRE shoots across the town, SCORCHING a nearby dragon statue.

FIREFLY
(laughing)
Beautiful! Who needs bullets when
you can BURN it all to the ground?!

THUG #1
So what about us? Do we get
flamethrowers?

FIREFLY
(dismissive)
You got guns. Be grateful.

Batman's eyes narrow. He taps his comm.

BATMAN
(quiet, to Oracle)
Firefly. One of yours.

ORACLE (V.O.)
Good times. Those seem like the
same weapons from earlier. But
watch out for the flamethrower and
the jetpack. Robin's tracking your
signal from the Batcave. ETA two
minutes.

BATMAN
Tell him to stay on standby.

He drops to the ground, landing in a crouch. His cape spreads.

Firefly and his thugs SPIN around.

FIREFLY
(grinning)
Well, if it isn't the Bat himself.
Right on schedule.

He aims his flamethrower.

FIREFLY (CONT'D)
Hope you like Chinese food... EXTRA
CRISPY!

He FIRES. A massive jet of flame scorches Batman.

Batman ROLLS behind a stack of WOODEN CRATES. Fire SCORCHES them. They start BURNING.

Civilians in the area start running away.

The thugs OPEN FIRE with their rifles.

Batman throws a SMOKE PELLETT. Dynamic fight sequence begins.

- Batman ENERGES from the shadows. Ready to fight.

- Batman FIRES a batarang at THUG #1's head, knocking him out to the ground.

- THUG #2 swings his rifle like a club. Batman DODGES, the rifle SMASHES a pagoda window. Batman delivers a BRUTAL uppercut, flying the thug backwards into a GONG. It RINGS loudly.

- THUG #3 tries to run away, but Batman fires his GRAPPLING HOOK, wrapping around his ankle. He YANKS him back, SLAMMING him through a PAPER SCREEN WALL. The thug hits the floor, unconscious.

- THUG #4 pulls out a GRENADE from the weapons cache. But before he can pull the pin, Batman throws a BATARANG, knocking it from his hand. The grenade ROLLS across the floor toward the burning crates. Batman TACKLES the thug, both dive behind a STONE DRAGON STATUE. The grenade EXPLODES, causing debris everywhere. Flames spreading fast.

Firefly IGNITES his JETPACK, lifting into the air.

FIREFLY (CONT'D)
Such a shame. But fire doesn't
discriminate!

He aims his flamethrower at Batman.

Batman dodges. A stream of fire GRAZES his cape. He rips off his cape, tossing it into the flames.

Firefly LAUGHS, circling overhead.

FIREFLY (CONT'D)
First time I've seen you without a
cape.

Batman spots a massive IRON CHAIN used for lifting cargo.

He throws a batarang at it, perfectly aimed. It SEVERES the chain's anchor, SWINGING the chain across the district like a PENDULUM.

The chain SLAMS into Firefly mid-flight.

FIREFLY (CONT'D)
(screaming)
AHHH!!!

His jetpack SPUTTERS. Sparks fly.

He CRASHES through a stack of CRATES, landing hard on the floor.

Batman approaches through the smoke and flames. He grabs Firefly by the collar, lifting him up.

BATMAN
(fierce)
Your men had military-grade
weapons? Let me guess, unknown
supplier?

FIREFLY
No name, no return address. Just a
note: "Burn Gotham." That's ALL I
know!

Batman studies him, looking for deception, but ultimately comes to the conclusion that he is telling the truth.

Before Batman can drop him, Firefly SOARS up with his jetpack. Batman still holding his collar.

FIREFLY (CONT'D)
Let... GO of me!

Firefly, struggling, WANDERS rapidly around the sky, attempting to lose Batman's grip.

EXT. GOTHAM CITY SKIES - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Firefly ZOOMS across the Gotham skies with Batman holding a tight grip.

BATMAN
I... will... stop... you...

FIREFLY
(frustrated)
GET... OFF!!!

Batman LOSES his grip, falling great heights. Firefly LAUGHS.

FIREFLY (CONT'D)
BURN in hell, Batman! HAHAAAAHA!

However, Batman pulls out his GRAPPLING HOOK, GRAPPLING onto the back of Firefly's jetpack.

Firefly looks behind him, confused.

BATMAN
You can't run forever, Garfield.

Firefly SPEEDS up, flying around the city in unprecedented levels of speed.

Batman remains calm, holding a tight grip on his grappling hook.

FIREFLY
You're not making any progress,
Batman!

BATMAN
(focused)
Wrong.

Batman DROPS down, falling once again.

But suddenly, the BATWING (high tech bat-shaped aerial vehicle), with an open cockpit, SWEEPS Batman in. Saving him.

INT. BATWING - COCKPIT - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Cramped command center dominated by a plexiglass canopy, intuitive controls, glowing targeting monitors, and more advanced technology.

ROBIN (20s, red and green suit, domino mask) pilots the vehicle, saving Batman.

Batman sits right behind Robin, with a short sense of relief, but maintaining focus on the mission.

ROBIN
(lighthearted, to Batman)
You okay?

BATMAN
(focused)
I'm fine. Get Firefly. Now.

Robin presses a button, ready to apprehend Firefly.

EXT. GOTHAM CITY SKIES - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Firefly SPEEDS through the air, laughing.

FIREFLY
You'll never catch me, Bat!

The Batwing ROARS up behind him. Robin at the controls.

ROBIN
(to Batman)
Targeting locked.

BATMAN
Do it.

Robin fires. A NET LAUNCHER deploys—WHOOSH.

The NET wraps around Firefly. His jetpack SPUTTERS. Sparks.

FIREFLY
(screaming)
NO!

He PLUMMETS.

Batman leans out of the Batwing. Fires his GRAPPLING HOOK.

It catches Firefly mid-fall.

The Batwing reels him in. Firefly dangles beneath, defeated.

FIREFLY (CONT'D)
(bitter)
This isn't over, Batman.

BATMAN
(cold)
Back to Blackgate you go.

ACT THREE:

INT. BATCAVE - NIGHT

The Batwing LANDS on a platform.

The engine powers down.

Bruce emerges, removing his cowl. Slight bruises from his fights with Joker and Firefly.

Tim steps out as well, removing his domino mask. No injuries were sustained.

Alfred waits nearby with a MEDICAL TRAY-bandages antiseptics, sutures.

ALFRED

A difficult evening, I take it?

BRUCE

(weary)

Joker and Firefly are locked up.
But Hill's critical. And we're no
closer to finding the supplier.

Alfred dabs antiseptic on a cut above Bruce's eye. Bruce WINCES but doesn't complain.

ALFRED

Whoever it may be, you must keep
searching, Master Bruce.

A VOICE from the shadows. Female. Calm. Elegant.

TALIA (O.S.)

I think I can help you with that.

Bruce's head turns toward he voice.

Alfred tenses. Steps back.

From the darkness near the trophy room, TALIA AL GHUL (30s, dark hair, green and gold outfit, intelligent, beautiful) steps into the light.

Bruce stands.

BRUCE

(sharp)

Talia? How did you get in here?

Talia smiles. Not threatening but fond.

TALIA
Your security is impressive,
beloved. But not impenetrable. Not
to someone with my background.

Bruce's eyes narrow. He doesn't relax.

TIM
(confused)
How did she-?

BRUCE
What do you want, Talia?

TALIA
Your help. My father sent me.

BRUCE
I don't work for Ra's.

TALIA
That's not what I'm asking. I'm
asking you to work WITH him. Just
this once.

Bruce crosses his arms, skeptical.

TIM
(whispering, to Bruce)
That's the daughter of one of your
greatest enemies! I would never
work with someone like that!

TALIA
(serious)
I'm not here to fight. There's
something important you should know
about.

Tim stays near the entrance. Wary. Hand near a BATARANG on
the console.

Talia is not threatened. She addresses Bruce directly.

TALIA (CONT'D)
The military grade weapons. All
bare the same mark-the mark of
Asmodeus. We think they belong to a
man named Qayin.

Bruce narrows his eyes.

TIM

Qayin? I've never heard of him before.

TALIA

He's never been captured or photographed before. But we believe the weapons link to him. He's formed a partnership with Red Claw. One that will fulfill both of their demands.

Bruce tenses. Recognition.

BRUCE

I know her.

TALIA

She's the one distributing Qayin's weapons.

BRUCE

(grim)

That was her the whole time?

TALIA

Indeed. Let me show you.

Talia approaches the Batcomputer. Taps the screen.

A HOLOGRAPHIC MAP appears—Gotham covered in red dots.

TALIA (CONT'D)

Every location. Every weapons cache.
Red Claw has armed two dozen criminals
in three weeks.

She pulls up SURVEILLANCE FOOTAGE—Red Claw overseeing a shipment.

TALIA (CONT'D)

She's working with a man named Qayin.
A terrorist my father once wronged.

Close-up on QAYIN in the footage—shadowy, menacing.

TALIA (CONT'D)

He wants revenge. She wants Gotham.
Together, they're unstoppable.

Bruce studies the screen. Processing.

TALIA (CONT'D)

Red Claw has been arming Gotham's criminals for weeks. Creating chaos. Weakening your police force. By the time she makes her move, Gotham will be destabilized, making it too fractured to resist.

BRUCE

She's softening the target before the real attack.

TALIA

Precisely.

TIM

So what is Qayin trying to do then?

TALIA

He plans to gain revenge over his past traumas, many of which have involved my father.

BRUCE

(skeptical)

That's my concern. How do I know this isn't one of Ra's's schemes?

TALIA

(meeting his gaze)

Because it involves a global catastrophe. My father has all the information, but Qayin is planning something big, and we could use your help.

Bruce studies her. Searching for deception.

BRUCE

Why come to me? Ra's has the entire League with him. He doesn't need my help.

Talia steps closer. Her voice drops. Sincere.

TALIA

My father respects you, Bruce. He's studied you for so long and has come a long way from the man he was. He believes that together, you and him can stop Qayin and Red Claw before Gotham burns.

Bruce and Talia lock eyes.

A long BEAT.

Suddenly, the Batcomputer RINGS.

A call from Oracle.

Bruce answers. She APPEARS on the screen.

Talia and Tim watch.

BRUCE
Oracle. What happened?

ORACLE (V.O.)
It's Mayor Hill. He's dead.
Murdered in his hospital room.

Bruce's face goes COLD. Tim, Talia, and Alfred gasp.

TIM
How?

ORACLE (V.O.)
Sources are saying gunshot. Cameras
were disabled so there were no
witnesses. Whoever did this knew
exactly what they were doing.

Bruce's fists CLENCH.

BRUCE
I need to meet with Gordon. Now.

He hands up.

Looks at Talia.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
(firm, to Talia)
I'll consider the offer.

Talia nods. Understanding.

Bruce grabs his cowl, putting it back on, becoming the BATMAN again.

END OF EPISODE.