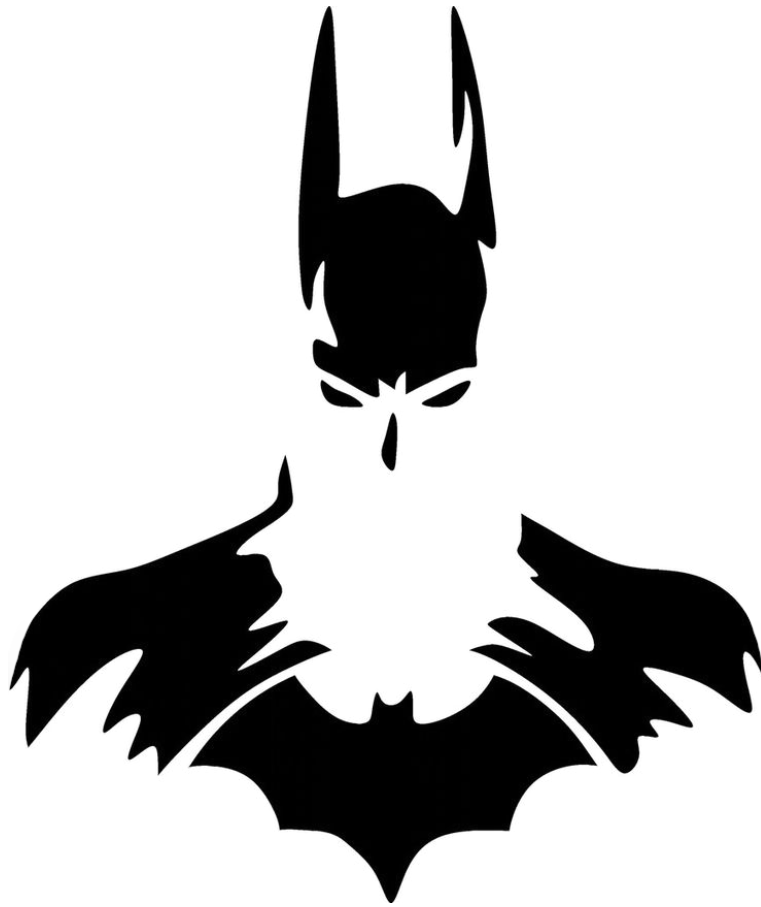




BATMAN: CREATURE OF GOTHAM

"Trading Darkness"

Written by:
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"TRADING DARKNESS"

ACT ONE:

FADE IN:

INT. BATCAVE - NIGHT

BATMAN enters from the Batmobile bay. His suit is TORN.
BLOODIED.

He MOVES toward the main console where the monitors display
CHAOS.

ROBIN is already there, his face is PALE.

ROBIN
Bad guys everywhere. The whole
city's gone to hell.

Batman stares at the monitors. Thermal imaging of the burning
asylum. Inmates SCATTERED across Gotham's streets.

But Batman isn't listening. He's CALCULATING.

He TYPES commands into the console. Pulling up satellite
feeds. Energy signatures.

BATMAN
Get me Oracle. Now.

Robin TRIES the comms.

ROBIN
She won't be available. She said
she's relocating after the mass
breakout.

Batman's jaw CLENCHES. But he shows nothing.

Suddenly, RA'S AL GHUL APPEARS out of nowhere. No smile on
his face.

RA'S
A sanctuary made manifest. The
detective's inner sanctum.

Batman and Robin FREEZE.

Batman moves toward him. Robin steps beside him.

BATMAN
Get out.

Ra's IGNORES his command. He walks to the center of the cave.

RA'S
The Asylum has been cleansed. As
was necessary.

Ra's activates a HOLOGRAPHIC DISPLAY system.

It PROJECTS a MAP OF GOTHAM.

On the map: multiple GLOWING POINTS spread throughout the city.

Each point represents a LOCATION.

RA'S (CONT'D)
Every dangerous element that your
compassion has allowed to fester is
now MOBILE. Coordinated and united.

The hologram ZOOMS on specific points.

JOKER is shown in the streets of the city. POISON IVY in an apartment with mutated vines. TWO-FACE at a gym. SCARECROW at a farm. KILLER CROC in the sewers.

And dozens more. EVERY major Batman villain is accounted for.

Batman's expression HARDENS.

BATMAN
You wanted me to kill them. Why are
you freeing them?

Ra's DEACTIVATES his holographic display system.

RA'S
(grim)
Don't worry, detective. We're gonna
kill them together. After they do
me a couple favors.

He WALKS toward Batman with his hands clasped behind his back.

RA'S (CONT'D)
Ten million dollars distributed
among them, Detective. For
whichever one succeeds in ending
your life.

Tim STEPS forward.

ROBIN
You're a murderer.

Ra's GLANCES at Tim. A flicker of pity.

RA'S
I'm a liberator. After recent events I highly suggest you view the matter from my perspective.

BATMAN
And what perspective is that, Ra's? Your old dreams of ruling the world? I thought you put that behind you.

RA'S
I did. Then the world put it right in front of me again.

ROBIN
Lies. Your men were killing people behind the scenes. Hill, Thorne, Arkham. All of them.

RA'S
Wrong. I've been saving people from your pathetic acts of mercy.
(to Batman)
Look at your world, Detective. Your life. Filled with chaos and violence. Conditions to which I would put to a swift end.

BATMAN
By trammeling the spirits of everyone alive. The good right along with the bad!

RA'S
And perhaps such is the price of harmony.

BATMAN
Harmony of the oppressed. Of zombies. Of spirits broken and caged in a madman's fantasy!

RA'S
Would you prefer to walk at my side through the wild jungle... or an orderly zoo?

BATMAN

I'll never walk by your side, Ra's.
Not after this.

RA'S

I feared your attitude would be
such, but I shall make my
proposition nevertheless...

BATMAN

(furious, low)

Then make it good and make it fast.

RA'S

It is simple. Join me in reshaping
the world, Detective, and I will
help you recapture your foes...

(pause)

...or, should you prefer, even
eliminate them forever.

Batman SNAPS.

BATMAN

You freed every last one of my
arch-enemies... just so you could
offer to KILL them?

RA'S

(calm)

Once they are eliminated, your
obligation to Gotham would cease.

(pause)

Freeing you to join me in the rest
of the world.

BATMAN

You want me to be a puppet. The
same way you used Talia. Where is
she?

RA'S

Back to her father. Where she
belongs.

A pause. Batman's eyes narrow. A slight feeling of betrayal.

RA'S (CONT'D)

I'm giving you a choice, Detective.
Choose your world and I will simply
fade away. Leaving you to drown in
the unleashed evil. Alone.

Robin TIGHTENS his jaw.

ROBIN
What's stopping me from-

RA'S
Quiet, young one. You've done
nothing but suspect. Your deceased
descendent has proven more useful
in this mission than you.

Robin GASPS. Offended.

Batman TIGHTENS his jaw.

BATMAN
You're an evil man, Ra's.

RA'S
Or perhaps a rational one,
Detective. Come to think, your
reluctance to kill has likely been
a factor in the killing of your
former companion. Wouldn't you
agree?

Batman begins to ponder. Doesn't respond.

RA'S (CONT'D)
I am the only man in the world who
knows what your enemies plan to do.
Indeed, they are enacting a plan I
gave them.
(pause)
And should you fail to stop them, I
am the only man in the world... who
can avenge your death.
(pause)
And for my gift... a clue. Although
not a question... but an answer,
Detective.

BATMAN
Which is?

RA'S
Your deck is quite stacked. Use it.

Robin THROWS his BO STAFF at Ra's. Pure anger.

Ra's GRABS it. BREAKS IT IN TWO.

RA'S (CONT'D)
Not wise, boy wonder.

Ra's PULLS out his SWORD. THROWS it at the GIANT COIN in the Batcave.

The coin COLLAPSES. DESTROYING the Batcomputer and creating debris.

Batman and Robin DODGE the coin in time.

They run towards Ra's, but they see nobody.

Ra's Al Ghul is gone. Vanished.

INT. GCPD - HALLWAY - NIGHT

RENEE MONTOYA walks down the corridor with several UNIFORMED OFFICERS.

OFFICER MARTINEZ carries a memo.

MARTINEZ
Commissioner called an all-hands
meeting. Says it's urgent.

They approach Gordon's office.

The door is OPEN. But something feels WRONG.

Montoya's hand goes to her HOLSTER instinctively.

MONTOYA
Stay sharp.

They enter.

INT. GCPD - GORDON'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

COMMISSIONER GORDON sits at his desk. A radio next to him, playing the news.

SUMMER GLEESON broadcasts the news.

SUMMER GLEESON (V.O.)
(filtered, over the radio)
Breaking news out of Arkham Asylum,
where a devastating strike has
completely destroyed the facility.
Ballistics experts confirm the
coordinates originated from the
same American weather satellite
deployed in the recent offensive
against the Soviet Union.

(MORE)

SUMMER GLEESON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
In light of this development,
Kremlin officials now concede the
U.S. government may not be the
aggressor, suggesting instead that
the strategic asset has been
hijacked by a rogue third party.

Gordon looks up as Montoya and the officers enter.

He turns off the radio.

GORDON
What's this? It's not my birthday,
is it?

MONTOYA
You called a meeting, Commissioner.

GORDON
Did I? I thought Batman told me to
come here-

Before Gordon can finish responding, the door SLAMS shut
behind them.

LOCKS ENGAGE with a MECHANICAL CLICK.

Montoya DRAWS her weapon immediately.

MONTOYA
What's going on?

But there's nowhere to go. The office is SEALED.

From the corner, WESKER emerges. His hand RESTS on his wooden
VENTRILQUIST DUMMY. SCARFACE.

Behind Wesker, FOUR ARMED THUGS block the windows and exit.

And in the corner stands AMYGDALA. Seven feet tall. PINK-
SKINNED. Massive.

The creature SNARLS. Not quite sane. Not quite
animal.

Montoya KEEPS her weapon trained on Wesker.

MONTOYA (CONT'D)
GCPD. Hands where I can see them.

Now.

Wesker SMILES. But doesn't move.

He ADJUSTS Scarface's wooden arm.

Scarface's mouth OPENS and closes.

SCARFACE

Officers. How lovely to see you.
Though I must confess, I brought
you all here tonight.

Gordon STANDS slowly. His hand near the phone.

GORDON

Wesker. This is federal kidnapping.
You won't-

Scarface's head SNAPS toward him.

SCARFACE

COMMISSIONER! How rude to interrupt
your guests!

Wesker's lips don't move. Only Scarface's wooden mouth
opens and closes.

The psychological effect is DISTURBING.

WESKER

The dummy speaks. I merely...
facilitate.

He GESTURES to Amygdala.

The creature ROARS. A sound that's INHUMAN.

The GCPD officers FLINCH. Hands on weapons but too
terrified to act.

Amygdala's eyes are WILD. Drooling. Unstable.

SCARFACE

Now then. We have a simple request.

Wesker keeps Scarface FACING Gordon.

SCARFACE (CONT'D)

The Batman. Here. Within three
hours.

GORDON

I don't have the signal. Even if I
did-

SCARFACE
Then I suggest you make a CALL,
Commissioner.

Wesker adjusts the dummy's arm to POINT at Gordon.

SCARFACE (CONT'D)
Because if he doesn't arrive in
exactly three hours, Amygdala gets
to EAT.

The creature SNARLS again. Closer to the officers.

Montoya STEADIES her aim.

MONTOYA
Who hired you?

Scarface giggles.

SCARFACE
Oh, Detective. That's not for you
to know.

Wesker OPENS Scarface's wooden palm.

A SMALL DEVICE sits in it. A DETONATOR.

SCARFACE (CONT'D)
This building is rigged. Six
charges. Structural points. If you
attempt anything HEROIC, this
entire floor becomes a tomb.

He TUCKS the dummy under his arm casually. Like it's not a
threat. Like Scarface is just a doll.

But the VOICE continues.

SCARFACE (CONT'D)
So. The phone, Commissioner. Call
your Dark Detective. Tell him we're
waiting.

Gordon STARES at Wesker. At the dummy. At Amygdala.

Gordon slowly REACHES for his phone. His hand TREMBLES
slightly.

The call goes to voicemail.

Ventriloquist GRINS.

GORDON
Batman. Listen carefully. We're at
the GCPD...
(pause, catching his
breath)
...my office. The Ventriloquist has
us.

Scarface INTERRUPTS.

SCARFACE
It's SCARFACE, dummy!

Gordon flinches.

GORDON
S-Scarface has us... he threatens
to blow up the place if you don't
appear within three hours.
(desperate)
Please get here in time.

Gordon puts down the phone.

He anxiously waits for a response.

Ventriloquist GRINS.

Amygdala PACES in the corner. Agitated. HUNGRY.

The officers are PRESSED against the walls. Weapons
drawn but useless.

Montoya WATCHES Wesker carefully. Looking for patterns.
For weakness.

The man's eyes are FOCUSED entirely on Scarface. Even when
he's not moving the dummy, his gaze FOLLOWS it.

Gordon CATCHES Montoya's eye. A subtle nod.

ACT TWO:

EXT. WINDMILL - ARKHAM ISLAND - NIGHT

Ra's stands on the upper platform. ALONE. In his traditional
villain attire.

The blades CREAK.

TALIA emerges from the stairs, FURIOUS. She directly
CONFRONTS him.

TALIA
Murderer. Deceiver.

Ra's does not respond. He just observes her.

TALIA (CONT'D)
You used me to manipulate Bruce.
you killed those men to prove a
point and reinstate your corrupt
philosophy!

She STEPS closer.

TALIA (CONT'D)
Even after the death of my child,
you still believe it is the answer
to the world's problems.

Ra's finally SPEAKS.

RA'S
Mercy allowed Qayin to live. Mercy
allowed my wife to die. Mercy
allowed my grandchild to die. Mercy
is INEFFICIENT.

TALIA
You've become obsessed with death.
Just like Qayin. How do you not see
this?

Ra's reaches for her.

RA'S
You don't understand, beloved. In
time, you will see that—

TALIA
I understand perfectly.

Her voice is COLD now.

TALIA (CONT'D)
I've known Bruce for years.
Learning his way. His patience. His
belief that people can change. That
redemption is possible.

She TURNS away.

TALIA (CONT'D)
He was right. You used me for your
corrupt schemes.
(MORE)

TALIA (CONT'D)
Qayin took my child but you do not
present any sufficient solution.
Just more death.

RA'S
If you leave, you are no longer my
daughter.

Talia STOPS. Turns back one final time.

TALIA
I stopped being your daughter the
moment you chose death over life.

She DESCENDS the stairs.

Ra's stands alone. The windmill blades SPINNING.

For a MOMENT, his hand trembles. Then he CLENCHES it into a
fist.

His communicator ACTIVATES.

RA'S
All units. Get the hostages ready.
I want Batman BROKEN by sunrise.

He CLOSES his eyes.

INT. BATCAVE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Back in the Batcave, ALFRED, wearing an apron, washes
numerous dishes, cleaning multiple plates in a soap-filled
sink. Alone. Calm and unbothered. He HUMS.

Until suddenly, the ALARM blares.

ALFRED
(muttering)
Eh?

Alfred wipes his hands with a towel and walks towards the
alarm board.

He examines the blaring alarm.

ALFRED (CONT'D)
My word, someone has entered the
manor...

His eyes narrow.

ALFRED (CONT'D)
But through which room? Seems like
the-

He RUNS towards the door, attempting to leave the kitchen.

But before he can walk out the door... he sees KILLER CROC.
STANDING RIGHT IN FRONT OF HIM. A GROWL ON HIS FACE.

Alfred DROPS his plate and towel. The plate SHATTERS. He
completely PANICS. No Batman, no Robin, just him.

CROC
Your flesh looks nice.

Croc GRABS Alfred's head with just one hand, lifting him
above the ground. Alfred tries to resist but is not strong
enough.

CROC (CONT'D)
Quite a kicker, aren't you?

Croc PRESSES on Alfred's face, BLOCKING his ability to
breathe. Alfred suffocates and is UNCONSCIOUS. Still in Croc's
grip.

CROC (CONT'D)
That's much better. Now... relax
and enjoy the darkness.

Croc SMILES. MENACINGLY.

CROC (CONT'D)
Sure beats me how a scrawny old guy
like you could mean anything to the
Batman...

Croc CARRIES Alfred's body, walking out of the Manor.

CROC (CONT'D)
But orders is orders. Payment
awaits.

EXT. GOTHAM CITY STREETS - NIGHT

The Batmobile ZOOMS across the streets at an unprecedented
speed.

Batman steers while Robin sits next to him, shocked at the
speed he's going in.

INT. BATMOBILE - CONTINUOUS

ROBIN

Batman, you're going too fast.

BATMAN

Ra's doesn't take his time, Robin.
You don't know him like I do.

ROBIN

I knew he was a killer.

BATMAN

We're not going to talk about this
now.

ROBIN

You haven't even told me where
we're going.

BATMAN

Ra's's clue was telling me I have a
deck that's stacked. The clue was
in reverse. I first thought of it
as a Casino, where each player has
a stacked deck of cards.

A pause.

BATMAN (CONT'D)

But that was before I realized it's
a play on words. "The Stacked
Deck".

EXT. STACKED DECK - NIGHT

The Batmobile PARKS in front of the building.

A small lit-up bar with neon lights. The words "THE STACKED
DECK BAR" underneath "GOTHAM CASINOS"

Batman and Robin exit the Batmobile swiftly.

ROBIN

Is this the place?

BATMAN

I've been here plenty of times. Not
for gambling, but as a disguise.

ROBIN

Are we going to be in disguise?

BATMAN

No.

ROBIN

But you realize that we may walking
right into the jaws of a trap?

A beat. Batman faces Robin.

BATMAN

Tim, I know it's a trap.

INT. STACKED DECK - NIGHT

The bar is EMPTY except for three figures at a card table in
the center.

Scarecrow. POISON IVY. TWO-FACE. All playing cards. Arguing.

Scattered around the table: STACKS OF CASH. Million-dollar
bills.

Two-Face flips his scarred coin over a hand of cards.

TWO-FACE

I won. The coin decides. You both
owe me a cut.

Scarecrow leans back, analyzing the hand.

SCARECROW

The coin is rigged. Your
probability calculations are off.

TWO-FACE

My coin doesn't lie.
(shows scarred side of the
coin)
Look. Tails. I won.

Ivy says nothing, just staring at the money.

IVY

The boss promised ten million to
whoever kills the Batman. I've done
more work than both of you
combined.

SCARECROW

Your plants may be effective, but
one dose of my fear toxin has the
power to make forty men
simultaneously lose all sanity.

TWO-FACE

You both forget who controls the
underworld. I have the resources
and the reach. Batman is mine.

SCARECROW

(scoffs)

Rupert Thorne in his grave has more
power than you.

Two-Face gets mad. Standing up and PULLING out a pistol,
pointing it at Scarecrow.

TWO-FACE

Heads you live, tails you die.

SCARECROW

Bring it on.

IVY

(annoyed)

Will you two idiots stop acting
like children?!

Two-Face FLIPS his coin.

But before it lands...

BATMAN AND ROBIN BURST THROUGH THE DOORS. Entering like
PREDATORS.

The three villains FREEZE.

SCARECROW

(smiles)

Batman. Just in time.

Scarecrow MOVES. Throwing a vial of FEAR TOXIN directly at
Batman's face.

Batman DODGES the attack. The toxin SHATTERS on impact.
Batman is unaffected.

Robin then CHARGES at Scarecrow.

They CLASH. Robin is FAST but Scarecrow is TRAINED.

Scarecrow KICKS at Robin's knee. Robin SIDESTEPS.

Poison Ivy's vines LASH toward Robin.

Robin DUCKS and THROWS a BIRDARANG, CUTTING the vines in
half.

Two-Face OPENS FIRE. Bullets SPRAY across the bar.

Batman THROWS a batarang at Two-Face, disarming him and running forward toward him. MENACINGLY He PUNCHES Two-Face who DROPS to the ground.

Robin FIGHTS Ivy. Vines against agility. But then Ivy WRAPS a vine around his wrist. She PULLS him away.

However, Scarecrow JUMPS behind Batman and INJECTS a dose of fear toxin into him through the syringes on his fingers.

Batman FIGHTS through it, still conscious and not fully affected.

Scarecrow TAUNTS him.

SCARECROW (CONT'D)

One thing you should know, Batman, is that our, ah, associates are holding three hostages in a location you'll never find. And right about now, a fourth captive should be arriving there in the custody of Killer Croc.

Batman FIGHTS through the dose.

BATMAN

What hostages, Scarecrow?

SCARECROW

I am not sure why, but according to Ra's Al Ghul, all four of them are important to you.

BATMAN

(raising his voice)
Their NAMES, Scarecrow!

SCARECROW

Their names... ah, yes, their names... Harvey Bullock... Lucius Fox... Vicki Vale... and Alfred Pennyworth.

Batman is FURIOUS.

BATMAN

Get out. All three of you. NOW.

Ivy THROWS Robin to the ground with her vines.

Robin DROPS to the ground next to Batman, who still suffers from the fear toxin dose.

Scarecrow FACES Batman in eerie fashion. TAUNTING him.

SCARECROW

And what? Lose my ten million to someone else? Face it, Batman. Fear is consuming you... all the people you love are at stake... and I have a role to play in that.

Scarecrow notices Batman falling unconscious.

SCARECROW (CONT'D)

How about another dose?

Scarecrow APPROACHES Batman. GRABS him by the cape and INJECTS another FULL DOSE of fear toxin into Batman. Once again using his syringed fingers to inject the toxin.

Batman's vision is BLURRING. The fear toxin begins to work.

BATMAN

Leave. Now.

SCARECROW

What's the matter, Batman. Scared?

Batman once again FIGHTS through the toxin. Slowly being driven insane. Now THREATENING SCARECROW.

BATMAN

(menacing, dark)

If all three of you don't leave at this very second... I will hunt you all to the ends of the Earth... and I will crush all your bones and turn your appendix into my dessert...

Scarecrow is visibly threatened by Batman's resilience, and takes the threat very seriously.

Batman APPROACHES Scarecrow and GRABS him by the collar.

Scarecrow is TERRIFIED.

SCARECROW

(terrified)

You need another one!

He INJECTS a FINAL DOSE onto Batman, sending Batman FALLING to the ground, unable to fight through being injected three times.

Robin WATCHES from a distance. Still in Ivy's possession.

ROBIN

Batman!

Scarecrow looks down at Batman on the ground.

Batman grabs his head. Struggling to maintain his sanity.

SCARECROW

I'll accept your offer, Batman.
Provided you don't follow us
either. Because starting now, if we
don't return within the hour, Croc
has orders to snap four necks.

Scarecrow LEAVES and grabs Two-Face's unconscious body.

Ivy's vines THROW Robin to the ground, right next to Batman.

The three villains ESCAPE.

Robin tries to help Batman, holding him on the ground, but he notices it's not going well for him.

ROBIN

Batman, don't lose me!

But Batman is COLLAPSING.

His eyes are ROLLING BACK.

The constant injection of fear toxin is OVERWHELMING him.

ROBIN (CONT'D)

BATMAN!

Batman's eyes SHUT.

INT. THE VOID - BLACK

Batman's eyes OPEN.

He walks around through INFINITE DARKNESS. No ground. No walls. No sky. Just BLACK in every direction.

He RUNS around looking for a way out.

Then ahead, he sees a woman SOBBING. It's TALIA. Tears streaming down her face.

Batman RUNS toward her.

BATMAN

Talia!

She LOOKS at him. Her eyes HOLLOW with grief.

TALIA

You failed me.

BATMAN

Talia, I tried-

TALIA

You FAILED our child! You chose
your selfish code over saving him!
Over saving US!

Her voice ECHOES through the void.

BATMAN

The miscarriage-

TALIA

Was YOUR fault! Your weakness!
Refusal to kill! Our baby died
because you wouldn't kill for him!

She SCREAMS at him. Anguished. Accusatory.

TALIA (CONT'D)

I HATE YOU!

She continues to SOB.

Batman REACHES for her, but she DISAPPEARS. The void SWALLOWS her.

Then, Ra's appears. His face is FURY.

RA'S

She was right, Detective. Your
child... my grandchild... gone
because of your failures.

BATMAN

No-

RA'S

I have done your work for you,
Detective.

(MORE)

RA'S (CONT'D)
Every villain you refused to kill.
ALL in the blood of my hands.

He GESTURES. The void SHIFTS.

BATMAN
What have you done?

RA'S
All of your enemies are dead.
Gotham has been cleansed. By ME.

BATMAN
You're lying.

RA'S
I'm showing you the future,
Detective. The world I'm building.
A world without chaos and certainly
a world without your pathetic sense
of mercy.

He STEPS closer.

RA'S (CONT'D)
A perfect world.

Batman LUNGES at him, SWINGING with all his rage.

But his fist hits GLASS.

It SHATTERS around him.

Batman PLUMMETS through darkness.

The void CRACKS like fractured glass.

He FALLS through the cracks.

EXT. GOTHAM CEMETERY - NIGHT

Batman CRASHES onto wet grass, GASPING for air.

Around him, the Gotham City Cemetery is ENGULFED IN FLAMES.

Every headstone is VISIBLE in the firelight.

Gotham BURNS behind the cemetery. The entire city is an
INFERNO.

Batman STANDS on shaking legs, LOOKING AROUND.

Graves. EVERYWHERE.

Grave after grave after grave.

In the foreground, he recognizes every stone:

THOMAS WAYNE. MARTHA WAYNE. ALFRED PENNYWORTH. TALIA AL GHUL.
DICK GRAYSON. TIM DRAKE. BARBARA GORDON. JIM GORDON. SELINA
KYLE. JASON TODD. LUCIUS FOX. LESLIE THOMPkins.

And behind them... DOZENS and DOZENS more. Rows of graves
stretching into darkness:

ANDREA BEAUMONT. KATHERINE KANE. VICKI VALE. VERONICA
VREELAND. HARVEY BULLOCK. RENEE MONTOYA. AARON CASH. CLARK
KENT. DIANA PRINCE. ZATANNA ZATARA. JASON BLOOD.

And his ROGUES GALLERY carved in stone:

JOKER. HARLEEN QUINZEL. EDWARD NYGMA. VICTOR FRIES. PAMELA
ISLEY. HARVEY DENT. OSWALD COBBLEPOT. KIRK LANGSTROM. ARNOLD
WESKER. GARFIELD LYNNS. WAYLON JONES. BASIL KARLO. JERVIS
TETCH. VICTOR ZSASZ. RED CLAW. QAYIN.

Row after row after row.

EVERY PERSON. EVERY LIFE.

ALL DEAD.

Batman STAGGERS forward. His mind REELING.

Then... directly in front of him... ONE STONE that's
DIFFERENT.

UNMARKED. UNNAMED. UNKNOWN.

Batman is slightly confused but walks towards it slowly.

But before he can approach the grave...

A HAND EMERGES FROM THE GRAVE.

Pale. Thin. CHILD-SIZED.

Then, a HEAD pulls itself up.

A BOY. TWELVE YEARS OLD. PALE SKINNED. DARK HAIR.

ZOMBIFIED BUT ALIVE.

He wears a RED ASSASSIN'S OUTFIT. Familiar hand-to-hand
posture.

The boy's eyes LOCK on Batman.

He CLIMBS from the grave.

ZOMBIFIED CHILD
You failed me.

Batman's breath CATCHES.

He KNOWS this child.

He RECOGNIZES the movement. The stance.

The child's voice. It has an accent. Arabic mixed
with English.

ZOMBIFIED CHILD (CONT'D)
You couldn't save me. Grandfather
was right. You're weak.

BATMAN
No-

ZOMBIFIED CHILD
He promised me strength. He
promised me purpose. And you took
that from me.

The child MOVES with SPEED and PRECISION.

He DRAWS TWO SWORDS.

They GLEAM in the firelight.

BATMAN
My son. I don't want to fight you.

ZOMBIFIED CHILD
Too bad.

He ATTACKS.

The child is IMPOSSIBLY skilled. His swords are SHARP and
FAST. He moves like someone trained since birth.

Batman DEFENDS. Hand-to-hand against blades.

The child is QUICK. Almost too quick.

Batman blocks one strike. Dodges another.

The child PRESSES forward. Relentless. He's GOOD. Genuinely
good.

Batman realizes that this child is trained by Ra's.
CONDITIONED by Ra's.

The child CUTS at Batman's face.

Batman BLOCKS. The blade scrapes his gauntlet.

The child FOLLOWS UP with a spinning strike.

Batman DUCKS under it. He RETALIATES with a precise strike to the child's wrist.

The child GASPS but doesn't release his sword.

He ATTACKS again. Faster. Angrier.

Batman is IMPRESSED despite the horror.

This child fights like Batman himself. Technical. Efficient. Trained.

Batman finds an opening. He STRIKES the child's sword arm.

The child RELEASES the first sword.

Batman GRABS his wrist. Holds him.

BATMAN
(mortified)
I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

ZOMBIFIED CHILD
Grandfather was right. You're a
failure.

The child USES the second sword to CUT toward
Batman's throat.

Batman BLOCKS with his other hand.

He WRENCHES the sword from the child's grip.

Both swords CLATTER to the ground.

Batman BREAKS them against the gravestone.

They SHATTER in half.

The child SCREAMS.

Then... all of a sudden...

RA'S APPEARS beside the broken grave. Ancient eyes BLAZING.

RA'S
(to the child)
Come to me, my child.

The zombified child runs to Ra's, who comforts him.

Ra's faces Batman.

RA'S (CONT'D)
You have broken your son,
Detective.

BATMAN
That's not-

RA'S
Yes. Your biological child. Born of
you and my daughter. Raised by the
League. Trained by the League.
Designed to surpass you.

He STEPS forward.

RA'S (CONT'D)
And you destroyed him.

The zombified child FADES away.

It's just Batman against Ra's now.

Ra's ATTACKS with his sword.

Batman DEFENDS with bare hands.

They CLASH violently.

Ra's is ANCIENT but POWERFUL. His sword cuts the air with
precision.

Batman MOVES between strikes. Defensive.

RA'S (CONT'D)
Join me, Detective. Accept my way.
We'll be an unstoppable force.

BATMAN
You KILLED everyone I love. I'll
NEVER join you.

RA'S
Every war has it's casualties. The
old world will pass. And a new one
will form.

They CONTINUE fighting.

Batman BLOCKS a strike aimed at his head.

RA'S (CONT'D)
Your son understands. Your child
recognizes that killing is
necessary.

BATMAN
My child recognizes what you forced
him to believe.

Ra's's sword CLASHES with Batman's gauntlet.

BATMAN (CONT'D)
I won't become you. I won't accept
killing as enlightenment.

RA'S
Then you will ALWAYS fail.

He STRIKES with renewed fury.

Batman READS his patterns. Years of fighting Ra's. He
ANTICIPATES.

Ra's SWINGS. Batman MOVES INSIDE his defense.

He DISARMS the sword.

Ra's tries to COUNTER but Batman is FASTER.

Batman STRIKES Ra's with controlled precision.

Ra's CRASHES backward.

RA'S (CONT'D)
I am many centuries old, Detective.
I have seen centuries of failure.
Your way DOES NOT WORK.

BATMAN
I am many decades old, Ra's. In
that significantly shorter span of
time I have seen that YOUR way DOES
NOT WORK.

He APPROACHES Ra's.

Ra's tries to RISE but Batman is THERE.

He STRIKES again. Precise. Final.

Ra's goes DOWN.

TRANSITION:

The cemetery begins to CRACK.

The graves COLLAPSE.

The fire FADES.

Everything DISSOLVES.

The black void RETURNS and SHATTERS.

ACT THREE:

INT. STACKED DECK - NIGHT

Batman's eyes SNAP OPEN. He GASPS.

Robin is beside him, trying to keep him steady.

ROBIN

Bruce! Bruce! Talk to me!

Batman is BREATHING hard. His suit is DRENCHED in sweat.

He looks at Robin. Really looks at him.

ROBIN IS ALIVE.

ROBIN (CONT'D)

They all got away. I tried to fight them off. What happened to you? You were-

BATMAN

(hoarse)

I'm fine.

ROBIN

You're not fine. You were under multiple doses of Scarecrow's fear toxin. It was-

BATMAN

I said I'm fine, Tim.

He STANDS. Unsteady but DETERMINED.

Robin watches him with genuine concern.

ROBIN

We need to get you medical
attention. Leslie needs to—

BATMAN

We need to find Alfred. That's what
we need to do.

ROBIN

He's being held at the same
location as the others. Let's get
back to the Batcave and think of a
plan.

Batman WALKS toward the exit.

Robin FOLLOWS, but his face shows WORRY.

He understands. Batman is FRACTURING.

And there's nothing Robin can do to stop it.

EXT. STACKED DECK - NIGHT

The Batmobile SPEEDS away, fading into the distance.

CATWOMAN crouches on a nearby rooftop. Watching.

Below, the Stacked Deck's back exit OPENS.

Scarecrow, Poison Ivy, and Two-Face EMERGE. They move
quickly. Coordinated. ESCAPING.

Catwoman's eyes NARROW. She WAITS. Watching.

Then Batman and Robin EXIT the front entrance. They don't
pursue the villains.

Batman just STANDS there. Staring after them.

Robin speaks but Batman doesn't respond.

He's FROZEN.

Catwoman tilts her head. Analyzing.

Something is WRONG with Batman. He moves like a BROKEN MAN.

She STANDS and FOLLOWS the three villains into the darkness.
Silently tracking them across the rooftops.

INT. WAYNE MANOR - KITCHEN - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Batman and Robin RUSH to find Alfred.

He's not there.

Only a broken plate on the floor.

And massive SCRATCHES all over the kitchen.

BATMAN
(saddened)
He's gone...

Batman's jaw CLENCHES.

ROBIN
Looks like he put up a good fight,
at least...

BATMAN
It's no use. Knowing who I am, Ra's
can instruct my other foes to
strike at my greatest
vulnerability... the people closest
to me.

ROBIN
(trying to make Batman
feel better)
At least he hasn't told the other
creeps why Alfred and the others
are so important to you.

BATMAN
No... and he never will.
(pause)
Keeping my identity secret is
Ra's's way of demonstrating
"honor"... damn him.

They both walk toward the Batcave.

INT. BATCAVE - CONTINUOUS

Batman and Robin move toward the Batcomputer.

ROBIN
Come on, Batman. I know things are
rough now, but we have to keep
searching.

As they get closer toward the Batcomputer, they notice the BATCOMPUTER RINGING constantly.

It's the GCPD calling.

ROBIN (CONT'D)
We can start by answering Gordon's call... maybe it's some good news for a change.

Robin CLICKS on the Batcomputer keyboard, answering the call.

BATMAN
Gordon?

GORDON (V.O.) on the other end. TENSE.

GORDON (V.O.)
Batman? This is Gordon. I'm at my office. I've been instructed to inform you that I am being held hostage. Along with some thirty-five of my men. Ventriloquist and some other foes have us locked down.

A new voice interrupts. SCARFACE's wooden voice.

SCARFACE (V.O.)
Time's up, Detective. You have THREE HOURS to meet the demands. Ten million dollars. Or I start executing officers.

GORDON (V.O.)
(terrified)
These guys are insane. There's that giant monster here, too. And-and-

The phone HANGS UP. ABRUPTLY.

Batman stares at nothing. Hands shaking slightly.

BATMAN
Too many. Can't save them all.

Robin STOPS.

ROBIN
Wh--what do you mean?

BATMAN
Alfred, Bullock, Vicki, Gordon, Lucius...
(MORE)

BATMAN (CONT'D)
too many victims to save, too many
foes to fight. All of my fears are
coming true... and it doesn't take
a hallucination to see that.

Batman stares at the ground. Shaking.

BATMAN (CONT'D)
He meant to show me how hopeless it
all is... how futile... and perhaps
he's finally succeeded... perhaps
he's right about me and my
methods... about my world.

Robin tries to uplift him.

ROBIN
NO! You can't give up, Batman! You
can't!!

Suddenly, a familiar voice is heard near them.

TALIA (O.S.)
The boy is right, beloved.

Talia EMERGES.

She's dressed in TACTICAL GEAR. Ready for war.

Batman and Robin FREEZE.

BATMAN
Talía? But- Ra's told me you joined
him?

TALIA
I confess that I had a great
loyalty to my father... but I was
not aware of his plans, and I have
come now, to help you, beloved.

BATMAN
You're recovering from a
miscarriage. You're in no condition
to-

TALIA
I'm the one person who can help you
on this mission, beloved. I know
where my father is hiding your
butler and the others.

She steps CLOSER.

TALIA (CONT'D)

You blame yourself for our child's death. For Alfred's capture. For everyone you couldn't save. But you're not alone anymore.

She places her hand on his chest.

TALIA (CONT'D)

Ra's is not just trying to win you over to his side... he's trying to destroy you as a man. He wants your spirit shattered. Simply so he can smile and smirk.

BATMAN

And would you help me avoid such a fate?

TALIA

To the death, beloved. A better end than quitting.

BATMAN

Why do you choose our path, Talia?

Talia approaches him. KISSES him.

TALIA

It's more than just my love for you, beloved. I would rather die in your world than live in his!

Batman nods. Accepting Talia's offer.

TALIA (CONT'D)

Your endless struggle is not futile, beloved.

Robin approaches. Adding to the conversation.

ROBIN

(to Batman)

Time after time, we have faced every obstacle in our way and overcome them all, Bruce. But we never really stop their evil. Yet what is the alternative? Doing nothing? Losing Alfred and the others? Ignoring the sacrifice offered by Ra's's own daughter? Quitting?

Batman is filled with a sense of hope. He doesn't have to

BATMAN

You're right, Robin. You two take the Batmobile and head to the GCPD while I free the other hostages.

He looks at Talia.

BATMAN (CONT'D)

Where's Ivy and the others, Talia?

TALIA

Where she usually is. At her Botanical Gardens. All the hostages should be there according to my father's blueprint.

BATMAN

Perfect. I'll contact you both on the comms.

They both nod.

BATMAN (CONT'D)

Let's get to work.

INT. GOTHAM BOTANICAL GARDENS - NIGHT

A massive greenhouse. OVERGROWN. WILD.

Vines hang from every surface. Plants EVERYWHERE.

Scarecrow, Two-Face, and Killer Croc guard the other hostages.

LUCIUS FOX. VICKI VALE. ALFRED PENNYWORTH. All tied up by Ivy's vines. Scared for their lives.

CROC

(to the hostages)

You all look tasty.

TWO-FACE

We're not gonna eat them, Croc.

Croc gets mad.

CROC

YOU'RE not gonna eat them.

SCARECROW

They're supposed to be bait, Croc. Not breakfast.

CROC
I eat bait for breakfast.

Scarecrow and Two-Face look at each other. Slightly concerned.

Poison Ivy stands with HARVEY BULLOCK. Tied up by vines.

Her vines CARESS his face. Almost seductive.

IVY
You arrested me seven times,
Detective. Did you ever think
about that? About me?

Bullock STRUGGLES but the vines hold him.

BULLOCK
Untie me, you freak.

Ivy SMILES. Unbothered.

IVY
Such hostility. My plants can help
with that. Make you more...
compliant.

Her vines RELEASE SPORES. Glowing pollen that fills
the air.

Bullock COUGHS.

IVY (CONT'D)
(seductive)
Now what would you do with your
hands if they were freed?

Bullock releases another cough.

IVY (CONT'D)
I hope you won't grab me... and
force me to submit to arrest.

SCARECROW watches with clinical interest.

Then... movement in the shadows above, Catwoman perches on a
VINE-COVERED BEAM.

She's been following the villains, observing them from above.
She sees Bullock being held. Sees Ivy's manipulation.

Her jaw CLENCHES.

She LANDS abruptly between Ivy and Bullock. Whip drawn.

Her whip CRACKS.

Ivy's vines RECOIL.

IVY (CONT'D)

Well, well. If it isn't Catwoman herself. Here to beg for your share of my ten million?

CATWOMAN

Quite the opposite, Ivy.

Ivy smirks.

IVY

You always had a soft spot for him. That pathetic plant-killer.

Catwoman doesn't respond. She ATTACKS.

Her whip is a BLUR. Precise strikes.

Ivy's vines are FAST but Catwoman is FASTER.

She CUTS through vine after vine.

But Ivy is ADAPTING. Her plants are LEARNING Catwoman's patterns.

Vines come from EVERYWHERE. Ceiling. Floor. Walls.

Catwoman DODGES and WEAVES.

But there are TOO MANY vines. They WRAP around her leg.

She CUTS through it but another GRABS her wrist.

She PULLS her wrist free with raw strength.

But the vines are MULTIPLYING.

They're EVERYWHERE now.

Ivy is CALM. Not panicked. Confident.

IVY (CONT'D)

You are no match for my plants.

More vines ENTANGLE Catwoman's torso.

She STRUGGLES but they're TIGHT.

Another vine wraps her OTHER wrist.

Catwoman is TRAPPED.

IVY (CONT'D)
Pathetic human. You defend a man
who's caused nothing but plagues to
the poor environment.

Ivy GESTURES.

Vines LIFT Catwoman off the ground.

Catwoman THRASHES but she's SUSPENDED.

Then Ivy's vines RELEASE CONCENTRATED SPORES directly into
Catwoman's face. Thick. Potent. HYPNOTIC.

Catwoman's eyes go WIDE. She tries to HOLD her breath but
it's too thick.

The spores FILL her lungs.

Her vision BLURS.

Her body GOES LIMP.

Ivy LOWERS her gently to the ground.

Catwoman COLLAPSES. Her eyes are GLASSY. VACANT.

IVY (CONT'D)
Welcome to my garden, sweetheart.

Vines WRAP around Catwoman's wrist. Not restraining. Just
CONNECTED.

Catwoman SMIRKS.

CATWOMAN
(glassy eyes, emotionless)
I serve the green.

Ivy SMILES.

She's TRANSFORMED Catwoman into one of her
henchwomen.

FADE OUT.

END OF EPISODE.