

GRAYSON

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REVISED OCTOBER 2010

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

A BUM hobbles through a dark alley, the RAIN pouring down. He approaches a garbage can and rummages through it as a church bell marks the hour.

BANG - a gunshot rings out.

There's no one in any direction - until a SHADOW overtakes him. The bum looks up to see a MAN falling toward him.

CUT TO:

Water pours from a sink faucet. We are in...

INT. JIM GORDON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

JIM GORDON (76) stands at his kitchen sink and cleans up after dinner. His hair is white, his glasses thick - a shell of the man he once was. To his surprise...

The RED GLOW OF A ROTARY PHONE illuminates from the study.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Gordon arrives in a modest sedan, a red light clamped to the roof of his car.

COP #1
Commissioner, right this way.

Gordon pulls the collar up on his raincoat and makes his way into the alley. Cops swarm the area, when--

POOF - blue smoke sends a group of officers to their knees.

O'HARA
Get back!

Hollering over the scene is CLANCY O'HARA (59), the Chief of Police. He's an imposing man wearing dress blues and thin glasses, a thick Irish accent curling every word.

Gordon steps closer, covering his mouth from the fumes. The smoke clears to reveal...

BATMAN lying in a pool of blood. Gordon stares, slack-jawed. CRIME SCENE PHOTOGRAPHERS do their job, snapping dozens of photos. We only catch glimpses of Batman's body, his costume - navy against gray, with a metallic, mustard-colored belt.

GORDON

Is he...

O'HARA

Dead? Who knows...

A CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATOR tries to collect a GREEN HAIR from Batman's fist when - ZAP! He receives an electrical shock.

O'HARA

We can't get close enough to find out.

Gordon removes his badge. Tucked into the leather backing is a COIN embossed with the BAT SYMBOL. In kneeling closer, a magnetic force pulls the coin from Gordon's fingers and into a slot on Batman's belt. The buckle unlatches, his defenses disarmed.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT - DAY

A COMMUNICATOR glows red. It's sewn into the belt of an iconic hero who needs no introduction. Despite the silver that graces his hair, SUPERMAN, aka CLARK KENT (56), is still an awesome sight to behold. With childlike ease, he wrestles a tank to its side, his costume awash in sand and oil.

Amid the chaos of exploding missiles and burning corpses, he switches off the comm and launches skyward.

BACK TO:

EXT. ALLEY - SAME

A cop taps Batman with his billy club.

COP #1

He's good. All clear.

One of the cops reaches for his cowl.

COP #2

Let's get a look...

GORDON

Get back!

Gordon draws his gun. He doesn't point it at anyone in particular, but the message is clear.

O'HARA

Jim-

GORDON

I SAID GET BACK!

The surrounding cops do as he says. A wave of emotion washes over Gordon as he searches Batman for a pulse.

GORDON

(to a Paramedic)

Bring the cart.

MEDIC

(to O'Hara)

He's been lying there for twenty minutes...

GORDON

BRING THE GOD DAMN CART!

The medics bring over a defibrillator. They try to resuscitate Batman, with no results. Eventually the medics stop; however, Gordon keeps trying, performing manual CPR.

GORDON

Get up... get up....

There's no fighting it - the Batman is dead. A mix of anger and sadness overcome Gordon and he collapses to the pavement. He weeps like a child as SUPERMAN descends into the alley.

CUT TO:

An elaborate building constructed of white marble and blue glass sits at the heart of a bustling city. This is...

EXT. HALL OF JUSTICE - NIGHT

A soothing fountain trickles out front. All is peaceful, until a COMPUTER CONSOLE comes flying out the window.

MAN (O.S.)

Nice try, hot pants...

INSIDE THE BUILDING

A MAN dressed in a crimson unitard snickers while admiring the damage. Seen here without his mask on, the slick blond hair and shit-eating grin belong to BARRY ALLEN (41), or as he's more commonly known - THE FLASH.

FLASH

...but you still throw like a girl.

Fashioned in knee-high boots and a patriotic bustier, DIANA PRINCE (49), aka WONDER WOMAN, isn't one to piss off. She grabs a decorative statue from the corner of the room and tears it from its base.

FLASH

Oh, now that's impressive.

Wonder Woman brings the statue down for a crushing blow; however, the Flash dodges, his movements immeasurably fast. The statue hammers into the floor, shattering to pieces.

FLASH

Especially for someone your age.

She prowls after him, knocking over everything in her way.

WONDER WOMAN

You're gonna learn some respect.

FLASH

This coming from a grown woman in a bikini three sizes too small.

Seething, Wonder Woman rips a gigantic, iron globe from the wall and hurls it toward him. To her surprise, it's intercepted by a spectral GREEN GORILLA.

This is the work of HAL JORDAN (58), aka the GREEN LANTERN. He's decked in a green body suit and armed with an emerald RING, the source of his power.

GREEN LANTERN

That's enough.

FLASH

Nice monkey.

The Flash zips across the room, stopping inches away from Green Lantern's face.

FLASH

You're pretty tough with that ring on your finger, aren't ya?

The gorilla leans closer, snarling, when the communicators on everyone's belts glow in unison.

FLASH

Wonderful.

The Flash switches off his comm and makes for the building's main computer - an enormous wall of new-wave technology.

Rising from a dark pool at the back of the room is ARTHUR CURRY (63), aka AQUAMAN, the king of the seas. Long, matted hair drapes down in front of his eyes, his beard unkempt. A jacket of sleek, bronze armor clings to his torso. He shuts off his comm, adding...

AQUAMAN

This better be good.

The Flash switches on the computer, powering the building's external cameras. Silence fills the room as the monitor gives view to Superman in mid-flight. He descends from the night sky, holding Batman in his arms.

EXT. SUBURBS - MORNING

Gordon parks his car in front of a quaint, brick house. He takes a drink from a small flask before exiting his vehicle.

INSIDE THE HOUSE

BARBARA GRAYSON (37), an attractive redhead, readies herself for a meeting. She's all smiles and warmth.

BARBARA

Should I wear pearls or silver?

In the background, DICK GRAYSON (35) makes breakfast for their daughter, BETHANY (2). Dick's more average than he is handsome, with a thick beard, a receding hairline, and a heavy pair of glasses.

DICK

What do you think? Should Mommy wear pearls or silver?

BETHANY

Banana.

DICK

Of course, banana.

Barbara pokes her head out from the bathroom.

BARBARA
Pearls? Or... silver?

DICK
Silver.

She plucks a breakfast sausage from the table and kisses him.

DICK
You got your cell phone?

She grabs her cell off the counter.

BARBARA
I forget this thing everywhere.

DING-DONG. Barbara and Dick share a look.

BARBARA
Ha. See what happens when you ask nicely?

She strides toward the door.

DICK
So now every morning he's gonna hand-deliver it?

BARBARA
Maybe he wants to apologize for leaving it in the bushes, and in the street, and everywhere but the front door.

She opens the door to see GORDON.

BARBARA
Dad! What a nice surprise.

She greets him with a hug - and then sees...

BARBARA

I swear...

(marches outside)

That kid's gonna turn me into the
old lady on the block who complains
about everything.

She marches into the neighbor's yard and bends down to get
the newspaper, her back clearly causing her discomfort.

BARBARA

You want some breakfast? Dick's
making his famous pancakes.

Gordon doesn't respond.

BARBARA

What's wrong?

BACK IN THE KITCHEN

Dick slides a pancake onto a plate.

DICK

How 'bout a little syrup...

Dick dots the pancake with a syrup happy face and looks
toward the entryway to see Barbara with tear-filled eyes.

EXT. HALL OF JUSTICE - DAY

Dick drives up to the building and squeals to a stop. He
hops to the pavement and storms past a dozen police cars
already parked out front.

Gordon arrives shortly after him.

GORDON

Dick, wait!

Dick enters the building behind one of the policemen.

INSIDE

O'Hara and a group of cops mill about. Dick brushes past them.

COP #1

Hey, this building's off limits-

Dick folds back the cop's wrist and sends him to the floor. The other cops react; however, Dick's not in the mood for games. He starts dishing out blows and sends five officers to their backs before--

A blur of RED catches him in the jaw, knocking him off his feet.

FLASH

That had to hurt.

The cops cuff Dick as Gordon enters the room.

GORDON

Stop! All of you! Take those cuffs off him...

O'HARA

Now wait a minute, that man just-

GORDON

That man is Dick Grayson!

O'HARA

Dick?

(to the cops)

Help him up.

The cops lift Dick to his feet, his lip now bleeding. O'Hara hands him a handkerchief.

O'HARA

Didn't recognize you. Not that it matters. You just assaulted six officers.

GORDON

And he got what he deserved. Now let's remember why we're here.

O'Hara steps closer, invading Gordon's personal space.

O'HARA

Yes, and why is he here? It's rather an inopportune time to allow your son-in-law to tag along, wouldn't you say?

WONDER WOMAN and a PATHOLOGIST enter the room.

WONDER WOMAN

Gunshot wound to the chest.

The cops mumble in disbelief.

GORDON

He's been shot before...

PATHOLOGIST

This was point blank. Forty-four caliber. No signs of struggle, no scratches, bruises or broken bones that can't be attributed to the fall.

The Pathologist gets a signature from O'Hara.

PATHOLOGIST

If it makes you feel any better, Jim, he probably never saw it comin'.

DICK

I want to see him.

O'Hara eyes Dick curiously - *why would he want to see him?*

SUPERMAN (O.S.)

No.

Superman enters the room. Without his trademark smile he's an intimidating force, a living god dressed in primary colors.

SUPERMAN

No one sees him. That was his request and we all will honor it.

CUT TO:

ROLL CREDITS OVER

A mason chisels stone. The onyx sculpture stands thirty feet tall - its features undefined.

INT. CITY HALL - DAY

Chief O'Hara storms down the hall with a throng of reporters in his wake, pictures flashing.

REPORTER

Is it true the Joker was at the crime scene?

O'HARA

We will find Batman's killer and bring him to justice. That is all.

CLARK KENT is among the reporters. He turns to see Dick watching from afar.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Rain comes down as a crippled old man, ALFRED PENNYWORTH (87), exits a vehicle with the use of a WHEELCHAIR LIFT.

He joins a procession of mourners, all following a casket bearing the Bat Symbol.

The pallbearers include, on one side, Commissioner Gordon, Aquaman, and the Flash; on the other side are Wonder Woman, Green Lantern, and Superman.

As the funeral plays out, Dick and Barbara stand among a privileged group of five hundred policemen and politicians. Thousands of others line the fence, their umbrellas entwined into an endless canopy that encircles the cemetery.

Among the crowd Barbara spots SELINA KYLE (41), a stunning brunette with wicked curves. She leans closer to Dick, whispering...

BARBARA

*Selina... she's got no business
here.*

Their attention shifts at the SOUND OF A MAN SOBBING. It's Gordon, his emotions send him to his knees. Barbara goes to his side, leaving Dick in the crowd. His expression doesn't blend with the sullen faces around him. There's an anger brewing...

And O'Hara notices. He watches in curiosity as Dick looks up at the GRAVESTONE towering over them. It's an astounding monument, both beautiful and frightening. Lifting from its center are two massive wings, forming an ominous, black shape resembling neither man nor bat, but something in between. Along its base, reads, "Whatever evils come this way, we will be here to stop them - The Batman, Justice League of America." Dick gazes at the monument, a fire in his eyes.

INT. GORDON'S HOUSE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Friends gather to reminisce, O'Hara among them. At the opposite end of the room, Dick sits by himself and polishes off a bottle of Scotch.

GORDON

Whoa, slow down on that stuff while you still have the sense to.

DICK

You see the headlines?

Gordon exhales a sigh and sits next to him.

GORDON

I read them this morning.

DICK

And?

GORDON

And... I suppose we should have suspected...

Dick beams him with a look. Gordon leans closer, attempting to keep the conversation private.

GORDON

Let's think it through. He escapes Arkham the same night - they find traces of his hair on Bruce's body, and forensics confirmed that the weapon used was his gun of choice, a Smith & Wesson large-frame revolver with a forty-four caliber round. Hell, an inch from his chest... even the strongest Kevlar can't compete with that.

DICK

You don't get it...

GORDON

Dick, I know how close you were, and maybe, I don't know... you're feeling guilty for having left things the way you did...

DICK

The Joker was the exception to the rule. With him, we had a strike-first policy. That means no warning, no chance to surrender, just--

(smacks his fist)

--bring him down. Hell, Bruce would never let that lunatic get right up on him - and put a god damn gun up against his chest?!

GORDON

Shhh...

DICK

I don't care who hears...

The room quiets to a hush.

GORDON

Dick, why don't we go for a walk-

Dick stands and stumbles into Gordon.

DICK

I know there's more to this.

He exits, slamming the door behind him.

BARBARA

Dick, honey...

Barbara hurries after him but he's already started the car and pulled away from the house.

BARBARA

Dick! Wait! You've had too much to drink!

O'HARA

Not to worry. We'll get him before he hurts himself.

O'Hara motions for a few other cops to leave with him. They get in separate cars and follow after Dick.

EXT. WAYNE MANOR - LATER THAT NIGHT

Dick stands outside the gates of Wayne Manor and stares at the mansion, the rain hammering down. Car headlights pass, only to turn back around. It's O'Hara. He eyes Dick curiously before grabbing his umbrella and joining him.

O'HARA

What is it they say? "You can't go home again". *Hmff...* you were, what, eight years old when Bruce took you in?

Dick doesn't respond. O'Hara prods further...

O'HARA

Where is Mr. Wayne, anyway? I would've figured he'd show up at the funeral, what with the media attention and all. Of course, Bruce never really approved of the Batman's methods, did he? In fact, when you think about it, he was rather outspoken against him. You, on the other hand...

Dick turns and heads back to his vehicle.

O'HARA

Where you goin', Dick? Or should I call you *Robin*?

Dick stops and tries to play it off.

DICK

What?

O'HARA

Oh, please... you waded through half a dozen of my finest like they were little girls. *And why?* To get to the Batman, as if he was your own father.

DICK

I don't know what you're talking about.

O'HARA

Bullshit. You're the circus boy in the yellow cape. It's hard to see with that beard of yours, but I'm as sure of it as I am my own name. What I'm wondering is, who else knows?

(look to the Manor)

Did you keep it from Bruce?

Dick doesn't answer.

O'HARA

No, you couldn't lie to him, could ya? He treated you like a son...

O'Hara's face turns white as he makes the realization.

O'HARA

Sure and Begorrah... the father and the son. Bruce Wayne and Dick Grayson, the Dynamic Duo.

Dick grabs him by the collar and throws him against the gate.

DICK

You start spreading nonsense like that and you're gonna wish the Batman was around to save you.

O'HARA

(grins)

Laddy, I'm the Chief of Police.
And while I have no interest in
announcing your little secret...

Like a pit bull, he turns on Dick with surprising strength,
freeing himself from his grip.

O'HARA

I'll not be threatened!

O'Hara picks up his umbrella.

O'HARA

Oh and a bit of advice. You've
been out of that silly costume, for
what now, twelve years? I suggest
you keep it that way.

He returns his car and drives off, leaving Dick in the rain.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Dick enters the lobby and heads for the stairs; however, he
catches the eye of Desk Sergeant LAWRENCE JOHNSON, an elderly
black officer with a pencil-thin mustache.

LAWRENCE

Can I help you?

Dick walks over to the desk and shakes his hand.

DICK

Dick Grayson, how do you do.

LAWRENCE

Grayson... Bruce Wayne's nephew?

DICK

No, but I get that a lot.
Technically, he was my legal
guardian.

LAWRENCE

Well, on behalf of the precinct, I
want you to thank him for us. Mr.
Wayne swooped in and bankrolled our
pension fund when the Mayor said
otherwise.

DICK

That sounds like Bruce.

LAWRENCE

A great man...

DICK

I'll make sure to pass that along.

LAWRENCE

Now what can I do for you, Mr.
Grayson?

DICK

Oh, I was just gonna get some files
out of the Chief's office.

LAWRENCE

Files?

DICK

The Chief's back at the house, we
were planning to roll up our
sleeves, burn a little midnight oil
on this whole Batman thing, but
Linda had a little too much to
drink, *though you didn't hear that
from me.*

LAWRENCE

Hear what?

The two men laugh.

LAWRENCE

Okay then...

Dick heads for the stairs.

LAWRENCE

Let me just get the Chief on the
line, to verify.

Lawrence picks up the phone and starts dialing.

DICK

Right, sure...

Dick pulls out his keys.

DICK

Sorry, he gave me the keys to his
office, I wasn't even thinking.

LAWRENCE

Gave ya the keys, eh?

Lawrence hesitates, then continues dialing.

LAWRENCE

Just to be sure...

Six policemen enter the station with a MOB OF PEOPLE to book,
all shouting and shoving. Lawrence hangs up, waves Dick
through and turns his attention to the crisis at hand.

IN THE UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

Dick nears an office door that reads CHIEF OF POLICE across
the glass. He pockets his keys and, with the aid of a credit
card, picks the lock.

INSIDE O'HARA'S OFFICE

Dick enters, only to discover--

A HOODED THIEF rummaging through the files. With cat-like agility the thief escapes out the window. Dick hurries to the ledge - it's a long way down, but he pursues.

ROOFTOPS

Dick's out of shape but manages to stay in the chase. This is the ultimate in rooftop rundowns - pure adrenaline, with more than a few near-fatal mishaps. It weaves its way through a few apartments and builds to an astounding LEAP between buildings. The thief displays a level of acrobatics not found in most crooks.

Dick follows--

And comes up short, barely clearing the distance. He catches the fire escape, which BREAKS, leaving him dangling over the street, five stories up.

DICK

Selina!

Dick gets the reaction he was expecting, causing the thief to stop in her tracks, when - CLINK! A portion of the fire escape breaks and sends Dick falling.

WHAAAAAAM - he lands on a parked car, the windows exploding outward.

SMASH CUT TO:

MONTAGE:

1) A wire snaps and THREE ACROBATS go falling. An eight-year-old Dick Grayson grabs hold of the trapeze-platform and watches in horror as his parents fall to their death.

2) Bruce Wayne's hand comes down on Dick's shoulder. They stare at a pair of HEADSTONES marked Grayson.

3) Dick and Bruce share dinner. Without explanation, Bruce gets up from the table and leaves the room in a hurry. Dick turns to see Alfred closing the curtains, a glimpse of a SIGNAL in the night sky.

4) Dick triggers a hidden switch, causing a wall of bookshelves to rotate out of the way, revealing the BATCAVE. Alfred and Batman are there to greet him.

5) Dick trains for combat. Bruce teaches him everything: Jujitsu, forensic science...

6) Batman and Robin swing into action, waging battle against a team of gunmen. Superman, Flash, Wonder Woman, Aquaman and Green Lantern join the fight.

7) A purple motorcycle screeches to a stop. Red hair flows from beneath the mask. This is BATGIRL and Robin is wowed.

8) Alfred tailors the Robin vest while Dick, who's now much older, reads a newspaper about Batman's "child sidekick". Disgruntled, he marches into the Armory, a chamber filled with capes and cowls. A pair of black gauntlets draw his attention.

9) A team of burglars fall under attack from a man dressed in a black body suit - it's NIGHTWING, Dick's new alias. He puts a stop to the crooks, all except for one, who readies a machine gun. Dick throws a Batarang. It stabs into the robber's arm, forcing the gun up. A woman in a window overlooking the alley is hit and killed.

10) Dick throws his black costume into a roaring fireplace. Barbara wraps her arms around him, their days of crime fighting behind them.

11) *BANG!* Batman is shot in the chest.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Dick wakes in a cold sweat. He turns to see Barbara sitting beside him, asleep. She awakens...

BARBARA

Dick? Oh thank god...

He tries to talk, his voice not responding.

BARBARA

It's okay. Everything's okay.

For a moment, Barbara just feels his face, overjoyed that he's alright.

DICK

(just a whisper)

Se... Selina...

BARBARA

Shh, it's okay...

Barbara pushes the nurse button as Dick grows restless.

DICK

The files...

BARBARA

Dick, calm down.

Dick reaches for the phone, but Barbara pulls it out of his reach.

BARBARA

Listen to me--

DICK

We need to... find Selina...

BARBARA

The Joker killed Bruce.

The news hits Dick like a lead weight.

BARBARA

He confessed to the murder and is
serving an additional life sentence
because of it.

Dick starts shaking his head no.

BARBARA

It's done, Dick.

Dick pulls the IV out of his arm and tries to get up.

BARBARA

God damn it... Nurse!
(to Dick)
Stop! Listen to me. You almost
died!

Dick struggles to sit up but doesn't have the strength.

BARBARA

Think about your daughter. Think
about what you almost gave up.

The NURSE comes in.

NURSE #1

Relax, Mr. Grayson. Everything's
gonna be alright.

DICK

No...

BARBARA

Don't fight it, Dick.

NURSE #1

Listen to your wife, Mr. Grayson.
She's a smart woman - been by your
side this whole time.

Dick stops. He looks around the room, at the numerous crayon drawings taped to the wall, and spots a photograph of his daughter, now much older.

A tear slips from Barbara's eye.

BARBARA

You've been in this bed two years,
six months and three days.

Dick collapses, his mind whirling.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HALL OF JUSTICE - NIGHT

Superman stands alone at the main computer and stares up at the big screen. He cycles through live satellite imagery, one horror show after another. Wars, famine, deforestation - the world at its worst. A voice crackles over his comm...

GREEN LANTERN (O.S.)

Clark, you there?

SUPERMAN

What do you need?

GREEN LANTERN (O.S.)

Did you forget about the race?

Superman grimaces. He pushes a button on the console and a portion of the ceiling opens. *ZOOM* - he takes flight.

EXT. STADIUM - DAY

An Olympic-size stadium is packed to capacity. Wonder Woman, Aquaman and Green Lantern stand on the track.

WONDER WOMAN

What'd he say?

GREEN LANTERN

Nothing.

Flash zips into their conversation.

FLASH

Well, is he coming or not?

Aquaman scowls at a crowd of photographers snapping his picture.

AQUAMAN

Relax, Barry. We've all got more important things to do.

FLASH

Important, my ass. He probably just doesn't want to embarrass himself among all his fans.

The crowd ROARS with applause at the sight of Superman flying overhead. He descends to the track.

SUPERMAN

Let's get this over with.

FLASH

'Bout time.

Superman and Flash step up to the starting line. A Race Official raises a STARTING PISTOL in the air. The Flash crouches, while Superman doesn't bother with a stance. A dozen high-speed cameras come to life as the Official pulls the trigger. The hammer meets with the back of the round and-

Time seems to stop.

A BLUR OF RED AND BLUE tear around the track. The smoke hasn't even cleared the barrel of the gun before they cross the finish line - way too fast to see with the human eye.

At a second glance, the high-speed cameras reveal both men shoulder to shoulder, trading the lead with every step. Frame by frame, they get closer to the string, and we...

CUT TO:

A CRAYON DRAWING of Superman and the Flash is taped to the wall. We are at...

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Dick stares out the window while Barbara tapes yet another drawing to the wall - a picture of a little girl on a swing. The hospital TV flickers in the corner.

BARBARA

Last month she got her hands on a toy stethoscope. This, of course, meant that if you needed a band-aid, you'd have to steal one from Brown Bear. But once the swing set went in... well, so much for having a doctor in the family. I swear, the way she jumps around, she's your daughter alright.

Barbara sits beside him, curling her fingers around his.

BARBARA

She wants to know why she can't come visit you. It's been weeks, Dick. You're not listening to your doctors, you're hardly eating... I know you're upset, but why can't you talk to me?

Dick pulls his hand away from hers and grabs the TV remote. He turns up the volume. Barbara gets up and heads for the door.

BARBARA

Most women would've moved on.
Don't give me a reason to now.

She exits.

NEWSCASTER

Chinese officials are calling the
President's use of force excessive
and without provocation.

On the TV we see - a Chinese SUBMARINE rise out of the North
Atlantic ice.

NEWSCASTER

In response, the U.S. Secretary of
Defense issued a statement
reaffirming the President's
position, citing that any
subterranean exercises without U.S.
approval would be viewed as a
threat to national security.

Muscling the submarine out of the water is SUPERMAN. Dick
stares at the TV, a look of determination in his eyes.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Dick works hard at strengthening his legs. Weeks pass.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Drenched in sweat, Dick struggles to walk without his
crutches. He collapses into a chair and spots O'HARA
watching from the corner.

DICK

Commissioner.

O'HARA

Only took twenty-eight years and cost me my marriage, but I guess that was to be expected.

DICK

I guess.

There's an awkward silence...

O'HARA

Is that all you have to say? You break into my office, steal my files-

DICK

I did NOT steal those files.

O'HARA

Oh, right. Selina did.

DICK

Probably three crooks in the world that move like that.

O'HARA

But you didn't see her face.

DICK

Didn't need to.

O'Hara spots a stubby MEXICAN WOMAN mopping in the corner.

O'HARA

Selina!

While it's clearly not her name, she turns, startled. O'Hara exchanges a look with Dick. Too angry for words, Dick gets his crutches in order and heads for the door.

O'HARA

No more antics. From here on out, you leave the police work to us policemen. And if ever we need help, we call on the League, an affiliation of which you're no longer a part of.

DICK

I think my gym membership expired too, but thanks for reminding me.

EXT. GRAYSON HOUSE - DAY

Dick comes home from the hospital. He walks with the aid of a cane. Barbara and Bethany walk beside him. His daughter has grown quite a bit. She's almost five.

INT. GRAYSON HOUSE - NIGHT

They sit at the dining room table and eat dinner, laughing and carrying about like a loving family.

BETHANY

...and its tail went WOOSH,
knocking it over and SPLAM!

DICK

It didn't...

BETHANY

Mayonnaise everywhere!

DICK

No!

BETHANY

(laughing)
Yup!

BARBARA

(jokingly)

Now we're definitely not getting a dog...

BETHANY

Come on, *pleeeeee*! What if we get a little one, with a tiny tail?

There's a KNOCK at the door. It can be heard opening.

GORDON (O.S.)

Hello?

Barbara gets up from the table. Concerned.

BETHANY

Grandpa!

GORDON

There's my sack of potatoes...

They hug. Then, Gordon falls into a shelf - he's drunk.

BARBARA

Damn it, Dad...

BETHANY

Oooh, Mommy swore.

BARBARA

Bed time, let's go.

BETHANY

But I wasn't done with my corn.

BARBARA

Go on - go brush your teeth.

BETHANY

Awww, Mom...

Dick sits there, completely taken aback by the haggard condition of Gordon.

BARBARA

Dick?!

Dick gets up and leads Bethany out of the room.

DICK

Come on. Show me where your bedroom is, I think I forgot.

INT. GRAYSON HOUSE - BETHANY'S ROOM

Bethany's in her pajamas, her teddy bear still covered in band-aids. She sits up in bed and points to a ribbon on the wall.

BETHANY

For this one, I had to spell fireman.

DICK

Fireman. That's a tough one. I know it starts with an O.

BETHANY

O?

DICK

OH my goodness! Look what time it is!

He smothers her in tickles and closes with a kiss.

BETHANY

Dad, don't get hurt again. Okay?

Something about the way she says it knocks the wind right out of him.

DICK

Okay.

INT. GRAYSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Dick comes downstairs to find the dining room empty. The SOUND of VOMITING can be heard down the hall.

IN THE BATHROOM

Dick peeks in the doorway to see Barbara caring for Gordon.

DICK

Why don't you take a break?

Barbara eagerly exits the room, adding...

BARBARA

Don't feel sorry for him.

Gordon wipes the slop from his chin.

GORDON

Welcome home, Dick.

INT. GRAYSON HOUSE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Barbara places a pile of blankets on the couch.

BARBARA

You're all set. But I mean it,
this is the last time.

She heads to bed.

GORDON

She's a good girl, that one. Tried
to get me help... went to the
meetings and all that.

(MORE)

GORDON (cont'd)
I try to stay away from it - went a
whole month once without a sip...
but with Bruce gone and, well,
you...

Dick pats Gordon on the shoulder and hands him a cup of tea.
A comforting silence holds the room, when Dick asks...

DICK
Do you still believe it?

GORDON
Believe what?

Dick beams him with a look. Gordon hangs his head, he knows
what he's asking.

GORDON
Doesn't matter what I believe. The
case has been over for what now...

DICK
That's O'Hara talking.

GORDON
Yeah, well, you should listen.
Times have changed, Dick. Sounds
cliche, but god damn if it isn't
the truth. O'Hara's got the reins
to the city. He's a political
powerhouse with connections that
run to the top of the food chain,
and I mean to the very top.

DICK
The hell with O'Hara, we go
straight to the League.

GORDON
Go straight to them with what?
What do ya got?

DICK

Right now, nothin', but I know who
might.

INT. MUSEUM - NIGHT

A stunning BLONDE strolls through a posh crowd. She struts past a trio of POLICE OFFICERS and the DISPLAY CASE OF DIAMONDS they're guarding. Her shapely hips don't go unnoticed as she enters...

THE WOMAN'S BATHROOM

She ducks into a bathroom stall and removes her skirt. On the flipside of the fabric is a detailed BLUEPRINT of the museum. It belongs to...

SELINA KYLE (44), aka CATWOMAN. She makes corrections to the blueprint and kicks the flusher. As she exits the stall, a HANDCUFF slaps down on her wrist and yanks her against the wall. Her assailant is--

DICK

Don't move--

WHACK! She knees him in the stomach.

Selina pulls off her earring, straddles his arm, and instantly picks the lock. She steps toward the door when Dick grabs her by the ankle. The exchange continues, each dishing out blows at an alarming speed, until finally Dick slams her against the wall. It's then she realizes...

SELINA

Dick?

DICK

Nice wig.

SELINA

*Oh my god, Dick... that night on
the roof - I never meant for you to
get hurt.*

DICK

Explain that to the cops.

He pulls down on a FIRE ALARM. A siren bellows.

SELINA

God damn it...

She pulls him into a bathroom stall as a PAIR OF COPS enter the room.

COP #1

Let's go, everybody out.

IN THE STALL

They lower their voices to a whisper...

SELINA

What do you want?

DICK

*I wanna know what you were doing
that night.*

SELINA

Same as you - looking for answers.

DICK

Then show me what you found.

A COP kicks in the stall door to find--

Selina and Dick in an impassioned embrace, her top pulled down, her chest pressed against his.

COP

I said let's go. Outside.

She fixes her blouse.

SELINA

He's relentless.

EXT. MUSEUM - NIGHT

Selina and Dick walk arm in arm down the museum steps, past a gathering of police cars and fire trucks.

SELINA

I've been casing this exhibit for months. If they find my gear, they'll up and ship those diamonds to Metropolis.

DICK

Gee, I'll feel real lousy about that.

EXT. TENEMENT BUILDING - LATER THAT NIGHT

Selina pulls the wig from her head, letting her long, black hair unfurl. They walk toward a rundown apartment complex in a bad part of town. A few locals eye them as they pass.

SELINA

Relax.

DICK

Do I look worried?

SELINA

Most of the time.

DICK

Just curious. You don't exactly blend in.

SELINA

I keep to myself...

TWO THUGS lean out from an alley and block their way.

THUG

Pretty necklace-

WHACK - WHACK - she lays them both out.

SELINA

...for the most part.

INT. TENEMENT BUILDING

Deep shadows run the length of the hall, obscuring most of the graffiti.

SELINA

How's Barbara?

DICK

Fine.

SELINA

I hear she made a full recovery.

DICK

Not full.

SELINA

I can't imagine. Tell her I said hello.

DICK

Sure... *"Honey, how was your day? Catwoman says hello."*

They round a corner and approach an apartment door. She slides a board aside and reaches in, pushing a release. The door opens opposite its hinges.

INSIDE HER HIDEAWAY

The room is filled with drills, grappling hooks, glass-cutters, everything a professional thief could ever want.

DICK

Looks like you're keeping busy.

Selina struts across the room and retrieves a file.

SELINA

Here. First forty-eight hours of the investigation.

DICK

Anything stand out?

Selina pulls off her coat and sinks into a comfy chair.

SELINA

I'm the thief. You're the detective.

(reflecting)

I loved him, you know. He pulled me off the streets, right out of the gutter. I owe Bruce everything.

DICK

(sarcastic)

Yeah, well, I'm sure you made him real proud.

Dick makes for the door.

SELINA

There's something else.

Her tone has changed, her eyes saddled with guilt.

SELINA

I don't usually do breakouts but...
at that price...

DICK

Who did you break out?

SELINA

I was in over my head with other
debts that had to get paid.

DICK

WHO?

CUT TO:

INT. BOILER ROOM - NIGHT

Nothing moves down here. Until...

A DRILL whirls through a sewage pipe. It cuts a wide circle,
spilling excrement. Lifting from the filth is CATWOMAN.
Steam rises from her wet suit, her face completely covered by
a protective mask with re-breather. We are in...

INT. ARKHAM ASYLUM - MAIN PRISON

Polished black loafers walk down the hall. Selina now wears
a prison security outfit.

She enters the SECURITY BOOTH and incapacitates the guards.
Her attention turns to the main control panel. She runs her
finger down a line of numbered switches, stopping at #42.
With the push of a button...

ELSEWHERE IN THE PRISON

Cell door #42 unlocks and creaks open.

BACK TO:

INT. SELINA'S APARTMENT

SELINA

I tried to look at it like any
other job, but-

Dick pushes over a table full of gear, angry beyond words.
Selina hangs her head in shame.

DICK

How much were you paid?

SELINA

Twelve, up front.

DICK

Twelve million?
(she nods "yes")
Who was your contact?

SELINA

I don't know.

DICK

What do you mean, you don't know?

SELINA

The whole thing was odd. Even the
breakout. When I got to his cell,
it was like he had no idea I was
coming.

DICK

How was it arranged?

SELINA

It was all done in code. Want ads.
Gotham Times.

Dick takes off his coat and grabs a newspaper off the floor.

DICK

Show me.

INT. GRAYSON HOUSE - 3:10 A.M.

Dick enters his house with the file tucked under his arm.

BARBARA (O.S.)

Are those O'Hara's files?

He turns to see Barbara sitting at the dining room table. Judging by her expression, she's been waiting here all night.

DICK

Yes.

BARBARA

How did you find her?

DICK

That's what I do.

BARBARA

Not anymore.

DICK

Listen, I need to do this.

BARBARA

I loved him too, Dick. But nothing you do is gonna bring him back.

DICK

Then what's the harm? If what they say is true, then-

BARBARA

Every minute you work on this case, you put our daughter's life further at risk.

DICK

And if we don't know the truth, how much less is she at risk?

BARBARA

Oh don't give me that bullshit about fighting for what's right. Who do you think you're talking to?

DICK

What do you expect me to do, just walk away?

BARBARA

Yes, and you better. Learning the truth about Bruce's death won't make the world a better place for our daughter if it gets her father killed in the process.

She marches past him and up the stairs.

IN THE STUDY

Dick turns the light on at his desk and opens the file. He stares at it for only a second before closing it.

IN THEIR BEDROOM

Dick crawls in bed and puts his arms around his wife.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GRAYSON HOUSE - BEDROOM - MORNING

Sun peeks through the curtains. Barbara awakens to discover that her bed is empty.

DOWN IN THE BASEMENT

Dick does pull-ups.

MONTAGE:

-Dick visits the crime scene, taking pictures.

-Dick works out with rusted weights.

-Barbara watches as Dick goes over the case files.

-Dick jogs in the rain. He's clearly getting fit.

EXT. GRAYSON HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Dick returns home from his jog to find O'Hara's car parked out front.

INSIDE

Barbara shares coffee with O'Hara in the living room.

O'HARA

Dick.

DICK

Don't let me interrupt.

Dick heads for the kitchen. Barbara doesn't hold back...

BARBARA

Have you been to the crime scene?

DICK

It's not a crime scene anymore,
it's just an alley. More coffee?

Dick exits the living room and storms into...

THE KITCHEN

Barbara follows in after him. Her voice hushed.

BARBARA

That was rude.

DICK

That was me being nice.

BARBARA

What's gotten into you? He's here because he cares.

DICK

That's endearing.

BARBARA

Don't think I don't know what you're doing. The running every morning, that rusted old weight bench... it's like you're training for a war.

O'HARA (O.S.)

I appreciate the hospitality, but I really should get going.

Dick empties the coffee pot into the sink.

DICK

Just as well, we were out of coffee anyway.

Barbara storms out of the kitchen. Dick listens as she apologizes to O'Hara and he opts for a different approach.

IN THE FOYER

O'Hara has one foot out the door, when...

DICK
What's the rush?

Dick closes the door and steers O'Hara into the living room.

DICK
Sit down, have a second cup.

O'HARA
I really don't have the time--

DICK
Make the time.

They lock eyes. O'Hara reluctantly takes a seat. Dick hands Barbara a coffee cup and she heads back into the kitchen.

O'HARA
You've got two minutes.

DICK
You need to tell me what you know.

O'HARA
About?

DICK
That night in the alley. Tell me
what you saw.

O'HARA
I thought I made myself perfectly
clear...

DICK
I need to hear it from you.

O'HARA
I am the Commissioner of Gotham and
you are a stay-at-home dad.

DICK

You have access to every source of information--

O'HARA

Information not privy to people outside of the department.

Dick pounds his fist against the table.

DICK

God damn it, tell me!

Barbara reenters the living room - *is everything alright?*
O'Hara calms her with a wave and she goes back into the kitchen. He swallows his pride and sits up in his seat.

O'HARA

I arrived in the alley at 11:37 PM. We found strands of green hair on the roof as well as on the victim's body. Three days later we caught the Joker, whose DNA matched the hair found at the crime scene and who later confessed to the crime.

DICK

He claims to have shot Batman in the chest and watched him fall off the roof, landing, and I quote, "Flat on his back like a wingless bat."

O'HARA

And?

DICK

And the autopsy report says he shattered both ankles.

O'HARA

So?

DICK

So he didn't land on his back, he landed feet first and fell forward, accounting for the contusion to his skull.

CUT TO:

INT. ALLEY - NIGHT

WHAM - Batman meets with the pavement, shattering his ankles and cracking his skull.

BACK TO:

INT. GRAYSON HOUSE

O'HARA

I don't give a shit what he says...

DICK

Good, because his confession is nothing but a ploy to gain him status at the asylum.

O'HARA

Forensics can put the Joker on the roof at the time of the murder. And if that's not enough, the gun used to commit the crime was the same make and model he used to shoot your wife.

CUT TO:

INT. BARBARA'S APARTMENT - FRONT DOOR

The Joker levels his gun at Barbara's abdomen and pulls back on the trigger - *BANG!*

BACK TO:

INT. GRAYSON HOUSE

DICK

How do you account for the powder burns on his chest?

O'HARA

The gun was fired point-blank.

DICK

Right, except Bruce would never allow the Joker within arm's length of him. Never.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUILDING ROOFTOP - NIGHT

The barrel of the gun goes off an inch from Batman's chest.

BACK TO:

INT. GRAYSON HOUSE

O'HARA

We all get old, Dick, and we all slip up.

DICK

There's a witness who hears--

O'HARA
(dismissive)
A drunk in the alley.

DICK
He hears a single gunshot followed by Bruce nearly landing on top of him. But there's no mention of hearing any laughter after the impact.

O'HARA
What does that even mean?

DICK
You've seen the Joker in his cell. That maniac laughs at everything. He laughs at the god damn walls.

O'HARA
Christ, Dick, is that all you got?

DICK
I'm telling you, he didn't pull the trigger.

O'HARA
Well, a jury disagreed with you. And your two minutes are up.

O'Hara stands and heads for the door.

DICK
At the very least, reopen the case.

O'HARA
Please thank your wife for the coffee.

DICK
If you reopen the case, we can--

O'HARA

Let it go, Dick. Your crime-
fighting days are over.

O'Hara exits. Barbara comes out of the kitchen with two fresh cups of coffee. She and Dick exchange a look, neither pleased.

INT. GRAYSON HOUSE - STUDY - NIGHT

Dick sits at his desk, trying to unravel the mystery behind the want ads and who hired Selina. A picture of a PUDDLE OF BLOOD sends his mind reeling--

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

NIGHTWING sends a Batarang whirling - it connects, forcing the gunman's hand up. Above, a woman overlooking the alley is hit and killed.

BACK TO:

STUDY - SAME

Dick shakes the memory from his thoughts and HEARS Bethany giggling down the hall.

UPSTAIRS IN THE BATHROOM

Dick watches from the hall as his wife scrubs Bethany in the tub.

BARBARA

Did you get your elbows?

BETHANY

When can we go back to the market?

BARBARA

That's on Thursdays.

BETHANY

I wanna buy Daddy some flowers.

BARBARA

What color?

BETHANY

Red and yellow. And orange. And purple...

Dick takes it all in, considering...

BACK AT HIS DESK

The crime scene reports are boxed up and thrown in the closet.

EXT. GRAYSON HOUSE - BACK YARD - DAY

Bethany plays on a swing set.

BETHANY

Dad, watch this.

Dick breaks from raking the leaves to watch his daughter hang from her legs. Barbara gazes from...

THE KITCHEN WINDOW

She smiles at the sight of her husband and daughter playing. Before she finishes making lunch, the doorbell rings.

AT THE FRONT DOOR

Barbara is greeted by...

BARBARA

Alfred!

She bends down to his wheelchair and gives him a hug.

ALFRED

How good to see you, Miss Barbara.

BARBARA

What brings you out this way?

INT. GRAYSON HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

Alfred sets a KEY on the table in front of Dick. Barbara sits next to him.

ALFRED

Master Bruce wanted you to have this. He expressed a hope that you would continue to donate a portion of his earnings to the charities he supported. However, it is entirely up to your discretion. Wayne Enterprises, the estate... everything now belongs to you.

Dick exchanges a look with Barbara before reaching for the key. As he picks it up, her hand comes down on top of his.

BARBARA

We don't want it.

DICK / ALFRED

What?

BARBARA

We don't need this. A garage full of cars, a stable full of horses - you can't even ride a horse.

DICK

Barb...

BARBARA

Besides, I have a good job and we're paying down your medical bills-

DICK

Bethany's college fund, what about that? We dipped into that account to keep up the mortgage.

BARBARA

I know...

DICK

Where's that money gonna come from?

BARBARA

She'll have to work towards a scholarship.

DICK

Barb, by this time tomorrow we could afford to have your back looked at by the best doctors in the country.

BARBARA

Give the money to Clark.

DICK

Clark...

BARBARA

He'll do something good with it.

DICK

Clark turned his back on us a long time ago.

BARBARA

I don't care, I don't want it!

ALFRED

Please, please...

Alfred takes hold of Barbara's hand.

ALFRED

Miss Barbara, with all due respect,
this inheritance is not meant for
Clark Kent.

(to Dick)

And you... you should know that
despite their falling out, Master
Bruce held Mr. Kent in high regard.
And rightfully so, when you
consider the complexity of his
obligations. It's not every man
who can handle the weight of the
world on his shoulders.

DICK

No offense, Alfred, but we all have
burdens to carry.

ALFRED

Yes, and you should be thankful you
are not required to carry his.

CUT TO:

Polished RED BOOTS walk across a field of HUMAN BONES. We
are in...

EXT. AFRICA - THE CONGO - DAY

The boots belong to SUPERMAN, who wanders through a valley
LITTERED WITH CORPSES. An emptiness consumes his eyes, as if
he's walked through a thousand of these fields. When...

A blood-curdling SCREAM spins Superman on his heels. There,
springing from the tree line, is a WOMAN COVERED IN BLOOD,
her dark skin lacquered red.

GUNSHOTS ring out and a bullet tears into her shoulder, sending her headlong into Superman's arms. He pivots to protect her as more gunfire erupts from the brush, the bullets ricocheting off his back - not that it will matter. The woman's last breath trickles from her lungs.

Superman gently sets her down and turns to face the culprits. A dozen machine guns blaze from the safety of the trees.

The Man of Steel lifts back his arms and CLAPS HIS HANDS. A SONIC BOOM fills the air and a SHOCK WAVE shakes the jungle.

An eight-year-old BOY stumbles from the tree line. He drops his rifle and falls to the ground, his ears bleeding. Superman watches in horror as a dozen other gunmen topple out from hiding, all of them children.

INT. WAYNE MANOR - DAY

The front door opens and Dick steps inside. Sheets cover everything. He makes his way to the library and reaches for a book on the shelf. When pulled, a portion of the floor slides back - revealing a HIDDEN STAIRWELL.

Descending through darkened hallways, he enters...

THE BATCAVE

With his first step, Dick sinks into a foot of water. A portion of the cave is flooded. He continues farther into the cavern. His fingers follow the contours of one in a series of ten Batmobiles, all gathering dust. Relics of the past consume every corner: a giant Joker card, an oversized penny, a rack of umbrellas...

And that's when he sees it - the ROBIN COSTUME, hanging in a glass display case.

ALFRED (O.S.)

A bit colorful, I admit.

Dick turns to see Alfred sitting in a motorized wheelchair at the far end of the cave.

ALFRED

Still, a fine suit of armor.

Alfred wheels himself over to a tool bench and continues his work, re-wiring some sort of handheld, electronic GIZMO.

DICK

Haven't you ever heard of pinochle?

ALFRED

Ha, that's a game best played with friends. These days I'm very much alone. However, I do enjoy tinkering with these things. Helps keep the mind sharp.

DICK

What's this one do?

ALFRED

Oh, just another toy. Similar in function to an E.M.P., only, instead of emitting a frequency that overloads circuitry, it radiates a subsonic modulation that can rupture steel.

(off Dick's look)

Ha ha... I forget. You never had a love for science. No, your area of expertise was in leaping off heights with never a care as to where you might land. Always the acrobat, eh, Master Dick?

DICK

In my youth, Alfred. In my youth.

Dick spots a table overrun with UTILITY BELTS.

DICK

Did you ever get around to putting those audio devices into the belts, like Bruce always talked about?

ALFRED

Oh yes. Several versions, in fact.

DICK

Would he have had one on him that night?

ALFRED

I would assume so.

Alfred wheels closer to the table, grabs a belt and disconnects a MICRO PROCESSOR from the back.

ALFRED

Should look something like this.

He tosses it to Dick. It's no bigger than a dime.

ALFRED

Of course, you'll need to retrieve the right belt.

DICK

It can't really be that easy, can it?

ALFRED

Hmff, nothing ever is.

Alfred wheels himself to the cave elevator.

ALFRED

It's good to have you home, sir. Now if you'll excuse me, I'll leave the two of you alone.

DICK

Wait, what?

The elevator door closes. Dick looks around. There's no one else in the cave. That's when he notices...

A blinking RED LIGHT.

Dick steps closer. He brushes away the cobwebs and lays his hand on a scanner. There's a *CLUNK* as power floods into a hulking machine - this is the BAT COMPUTER.

Dick removes the KEY given to him by Alfred, its distinct shape matches a tumbler on the Bat computer. He slides the key into the console and gives it a twist, not expecting to hear...

BRUCE WAYNE (V.O.)

Hello, Dick. If you're listening to this, it means I'm dead.

The sound of Bruce's voice echoes through the cave.

BRUCE WAYNE (V.O.)

Let me start by saying that the day you left, I was filled with such... relief. Just to know that you would get the chance to live a normal life. I know you feel guilty for having gone, but it takes courage to begin again and for that, I've never been more proud of you.

A VAULT automatically unlocks across the room.

BRUCE WAYNE (V.O.)

This vault, the one you always wanted to see the inside of as a boy, well... I'm afraid it's not filled with any of those exciting things you once imagined. Inside it is paperwork - the documentation you'll need to bring all of this, the house, the stocks, my entire worth, into your name.

(MORE)

BRUCE WAYNE (V.O.) (cont'd)
As for Bruce Wayne, well, for now
he's very much alive. You'll even
hear accounts of him popping up
from time to time. In fact, he'll
live for several more years until
he tragically dies in a plane crash
North of the Himalayas. A fitting
death for a billionaire, I suppose.
All that I do ask is that you
continue with my contributions to
the companies in this city that are
still out to do good. They're
listed on the second shelf, red
folder.

A RED FOLDER sits in the vault.

BRUCE WAYNE (V.O.)
And while I know I don't need to
say this, it was an honor to have
fought beside you. You're a smart
detective, an honest man, and a
great son.

EXT. GOTHAM COURTHOUSE - DAY

A black sedan pulls up to the curb and O'Hara gets out, rain
falling. He's quickly swarmed by REPORTERS.

REPORTER #1
Is it true Superman will now be
patrolling the streets of Gotham?

O'HARA
Yes and we are lucky to have him.

REPORTER #2
Who in Washington commands the
authority over where Superman-

O'HARA
The decision was that of the
Attorney General.

REPORTER #3

Should the citizens of Gotham be worried that Superman now answers to you?

O'HARA

Superman does what's best for the good of this country. And no, the people of Gotham should never fear his presence. Not unless they're criminals.

The reporters all laugh. Looking past them, O'Hara thinks he sees Dick across the street. However, at a second glance, Dick is nowhere to be seen.

FROM INSIDE A NEARBY BANK

Dick stares at O'Hara through the window, using the bank as cover.

BANK TELLER

Can I help you?

DICK

No, thank you.

Before exiting, Dick spots GORDON at the teller window.

DICK

Jim...

GORDON

Dick - you bank here?

DICK

No.

Gordon collects his things.

GORDON

What's wrong?

DICK

Nothing the League can't answer.

INT. HALL OF JUSTICE - OBSERVATION DECK - DAY

A TOUR GROUP is paraded through a section of the facility overlooking the main council room. WONDER WOMAN strides into the main room, garnering elated chatter from the tourists.

TOUR GUIDE

Now there's a woman who needs no introduction. Standing five feet eleven inches tall and capable of lifting over twelve thousand tons, she's one of the team's founding members, though you'd never know it to look at her.

Wonder Woman presses a button, fogging the glass along the observation deck.

TOUR GUIDE

Sorry folks, but not even we get to see what goes on behind the curtain. Now if you'll follow me, you'll get a glimpse of what an invisible jet *really* looks like.

As they walk out of the viewing area, one of the tourists lingers behind and admires a heavy BUST OF THE FLASH. With the force of his shoulder, he muscles it over. The bust topples into the viewing window, shattering the glass. Alarms bellow as the tourist leaps through the window frame and lands in--

THE MAIN COUNCIL ROOM

Before he can take a step, he's surrounded by a towering circle of GREEN FIRE. GREEN LANTERN eyes his captive. It's none other than...

DICK
Got a minute?

INT. HALL OF JUSTICE - HALLWAY

Green Lantern escorts Dick down the hall.

GREEN LANTERN
Quite the dramatic entrance.

DICK
Maybe next time you'll try
returning my calls.

GREEN LANTERN
We get a little busy around here,
in case you've forgotten.

DICK
Well, then I won't waste any of
your time.

Dick stops outside of THE MORGUE.

DICK
I need to see Bruce's body.

GREEN LANTERN
What? We... buried him.

DICK
The casket we buried was empty.
Don't talk to me like I'm some
outsider.

GREEN LANTERN
I'm sorry.

DICK
I want to see him.

Green Lantern puts his palm on a scanner. An ELEVATOR opens and they both get in.

GREEN LANTERN

I'm afraid you're gonna be disappointed.

The doors close.

INSIDE THE ELEVATOR

They ride the elevator down.

GREEN LANTERN

There's nothing to see. Clark took care of it.

DICK

Took care of it how?

GREEN LANTERN

Per Bruce's wishes - he torched it.

CUT TO:

INT. HALL OF JUSTICE - THREE YEARS AGO

Superman engulfs Batman's body in HEAT VISION.

BACK TO:

INT. HALL OF JUSTICE - ELEVATOR

The elevator doors open and Green Lantern points.

GREEN LANTERN

That's all that's left.

Dick steps off the elevator and enters...

AN UNDERGROUND WAREHOUSE

The room is overflowing with antiquated Bat-gadgets and vehicles. At the far corner of the room sits Batman's UTILITY BELT. Dick looks it over, it's a charred mess.

GREEN LANTERN

Haven't been down here in a while.
Look at that...

Green Lantern grins at the sight of a 1966 BATMOBILE with stylish tail fins.

GREEN LANTERN

Voice recognition, atomic battery -
don't make 'em like this anymore.

DICK

Yeah, fancy car. You remember the
man who drove it?

Green Lantern's comm suddenly crackles with the VOICE of...

FLASH (O.S.)

Hal, you better have a serious talk
with *Wonder Bra* before I'm made to
teach her a lesson.

DICK

How is Barry these days?

FLASH (O.S.)

I'm telling you, I'm one-tenth of a
second away from taking that lasso
of hers and-

Green Lantern shuts off his comm.

GREEN LANTERN

Should've kicked him out years ago.

DICK

And Clark?

GREEN LANTERN

Spends most his time on the front lines, cleaning up the President's mess.

DICK

Clark's a pawn, just like Diana.

GREEN LANTERN

We're all pawns in some way or another.

DICK

That's a great motto.

GREEN LANTERN

We're a different League now, Dick.

DICK

That's what happens when you sit O'Hara at the head of the table.

Green Lantern takes the Utility Belt from Dick's hands.

GREEN LANTERN

I don't like what you're insinuating.

DICK

What happened to this place? This building used to stand for something - WE used to stand together.

Again, Green Lantern's comm signals and we hear...

WONDER WOMAN (O.S.)

O'Hara's asking to speak with you.

DICK
I'll let myself out.

Dick storms out of the room. Unbeknown to Green Lantern, Dick has pulled the MICRO PROCESSOR out of the Utility Belt.

INT. BATCAVE - NIGHT

Dick watches on intently as Alfred connects the micro-processor to the Bat computer.

ALFRED
That should do the trick...

Dick's cell phone rings. He checks the number and answers.

DICK
Perfect timing. You want to hear what happened that night?

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE LINE

Gordon listens from home.

GORDON
What night?

DICK (O.S.)
Listen...

Dick puts the phone on speaker and Alfred activates the recording. It begins with the JOKER LAUGHING.

Gordon sits wide-eyed, listening...

INT. BATCAVE

The JOKER'S LAUGHTER fills the cave, followed by...

BATMAN (O.S.)
Put down the gun.

The audio suddenly becomes indiscernible.

GORDON (O.S.)
What happened?

A WARNING illuminates on the Bat computer, indicating damage.

DICK
God damn heat vision...

GORDON (O.S.)
What are you talking about?

ALFRED
It seems the audio processor has
sustained some damage.

DICK
DAMN IT!

GORDON (O.S.)
Can it be fixed?

A RED LIGHT FLASHES on the security system.

ALFRED
It appears we have a visitor.

DICK
No visitors. Keep the gates
closed.

ALFRED
The gates are closed, sir, but it
won't make a bit of difference.

INT. WAYNE MANOR - THE FRONT DOOR

Dick opens the door to reveal SUPERMAN. Rain or no rain, Dick doesn't invite him in.

SUPERMAN

Richard.

DICK

Kent.

Superman pushes past Dick and begins looking around the foyer.

SUPERMAN

I don't enjoy this, but it seems you're upsetting a lot of people.

DICK

Well, you can tell those people they can go to hell.

SUPERMAN

Save the tough talk, I'm not the enemy.

DICK

No? You came here to warn me, didn't ya? Is that the sort of thing you do with your friends? Warn them not to step out of line? I got news for ya, I'm gonna tear this city apart until I find the truth.

SUPERMAN

You're in over your head.

DICK

I'm not interested in your opinion.

SUPERMAN

Bruce didn't want to hear it either
and it cost Jason his life.

DICK

GET OUT.

Superman makes for the door, stopping to add...

SUPERMAN

You can live in this house and play
with his toys, but you'll never be
him. Don't make me remind you.

He exits the house and lifts into the night sky.

MONTAGE:

-Alfred toils with the micro-processor, carefully pulling it
apart while Dick pounds away at a heavy bag.

-Dick studies dozens of newspaper clippings, still trying to
crack the code.

-Sprinting through the woods, Dick snaps out a Batarang and
hurls it toward the treetops. As it angles back, he flips
over a fallen tree and...

EXT. GRAYSON HOUSE - MORNING

Dick catches the PAPER thrown at him by the paperboy.

LATER THAT MORNING

The newspaper lies spread out across the kitchen table as
Dick studies the personals. An advertisement for the CIRCUS
catches his eye. Bethany sits across from him and struggles
with a word jumble on the back of her cereal box.

BETHANY

Dad, what's a...

(she counts the spaces)
seven-letter word for "scary"?

DICK

Umm... I don't know. Ask your
mother.

Bethany picks up the box and exits the room.

BETHANY (O.S.)

Mom, will you help me with this
riddle?

Dick looks up from the paper - *riddle*...

INT. BATCAVE

Dick enters a chamber filled with KEYS and removes a set
marked ARKHAM.

INT. BATCAVE - LATER

A BLUEPRINT of Arkham Asylum lies across a wide table. Dick
studies the schematic and places a key on each door it'll
open.

EXT. ARKHAM ASYLUM - NIGHT

The building looms like a weathered castle, overrun with
gables and wrapped in barbed wire. High atop the wall, Dick
scales the stonework. No ropes - he does it the hard way.
He disappears into a smokestack.

INT. ARKHAM ASYLUM - FURNACE ROOM

Dick exits out the furnace and disrobes.

INT. ARKHAM ASYLUM - HALLWAY

Now DRESSED AS A JANITOR, Dick unlocks a steel-plated door and enters a corridor. On either side of him are solitary confinement cells, numbered sequentially.

He passes door #42, hearing the faint SOUND OF LAUGHTER. A thin window is the only visual access into the room. Dick peers in the window. The cell appears empty, however...

INSIDE THE PADDED CELL

What Dick doesn't see is the JOKER (72) lying with his back against the door, his arms bound in a straightjacket, his mouth splayed wide and ROARING WITH LAUGHTER.

IN THE HALLWAY

Dick moves farther down the hall and comes to cell #63. A wall of glass separates Dick from a thin man facing the corner. Crossword puzzles cover the floor.

DICK

Riddler...

EDWARD NIGMA (78), aka THE RIDDLER, looks up from his puzzle, his green eyes sparkling.

INSIDE THE MAIN CONTROL ROOM

Dick can be seen standing outside the Riddler's cell on one of thirty monitors. Two SECURITY GUARDS take notice.

SECURITY GUARD #1

What's Darrel doing?

DARREL (O.S.)

You say somethin'?

The guards turn to see DARREL THE JANITOR wheel his cart into the room.

AT THE RIDDLER'S CELL

Dick holds the personals against the glass.

RIDDLER

Hmm... not a very clever code,
that's for sure.

AN ALARM bellows. Dick panics...

DICK

Who placed these ads?!

RIDDLER

And why would a janitor care to
know?

DICK

Can you read the code or can't you?

RIDDLER

The coveralls fit you a bit tight
and bear a softer yellow embroidery
in the patch - a subtle distinction
from the new uniforms, though an
adequate disguise nonetheless.

DICK

You can't read the code...

RIDDLER

You're left-handed, far-sighted,
and your accent makes it apparent
that you are not originally from
this city. Yet here you are,
determined to uncover the truth
about Gotham's greatest champion
with a fire in your eye as though
you knew him personally.

DICK
You're wasting my time!

RIDDLER
Oh come now, *DICK GRAYSON*, what's
the rush?

A pack of SECURITY GUARDS can be heard racing down the adjacent hallway. Dick turns to leave, when...

RIDDLER
What was the payout?

DICK
Twelve million.

RIDDLER
Ah... therein lies your answer.

DICK
I don't understand.

RIDDLER
Look about and sniff around, it's
someone rich within this town.

DICK
No riddles!

RIDDLER
For he who spends and pays out
millions, has himself some extra
billions.

The door to the hallway opens and EIGHT SECURITY GUARDS enter, guns out and pointed.

SECURITY GUARD
STEP AWAY FROM THE GLASS AND GET
DOWN ON THE GROUND! DO IT NOW!

Dick steps away from the glass and raises his hands above his head, his back facing the guards to keep them from getting a look at his face.

SECURITY GUARD
DOWN ON YOUR KNEES!

Dick does as ordered. Two security officers try to push him to his chest, but Dick counters, disabling both men.

Another guard aims a STUN GUN--

Dick swipes his legs out from underneath him. The stun gun fires its electrodes and clamps onto ONE OF THE CELL DOORS, setting off an array of sparks.

Another officer aims a shotgun, but Dick pushes it up--

BANG - it fractures an overhead pipe, adding a DOWNPOUR to the frenzy. Dick works his way through the guards, one by one, laying them all out. He rounds the hall, only to see--

MORE GUARDS arriving in riot gear.

Dick heads back the way he came, grabs the shotgun off the floor, empties three rounds into a wire-mesh window and DIVES THROUGH IT. Landing...

OUT ON THE ROOF

He tumbles across the tiles and rolls over the ledge. Luckily, he grabs the gutter and keeps from taking the fatal plunge. He pulls himself up on the roof, only to see--

Security guards at the window. They don't waste time with a warning and open fire - *BANG* - *BANG* - *BANG*!

Dick drops back down, only the gutter breaks and sends him swinging into the wall. He falls to the lower roof and rolls to the ground.

Out come the dogs - TWO DOBERMANS running full steam.

Dick gets up and heads for the police bus, the dogs snapping at his heels. He pushes through the passenger door and makes a quick exit out the driver's door, trapping the dogs in the vehicle.

He scales the perimeter fence and throws himself over the barbed wire. But he's not out of it yet. There's a second fence. He starts climbing, as--

A security guard steps out on a guard tower. He loads a SNIPER RIFLE and takes aim.

Dick clears the second fence, when--

BANG - a bullet tears through his shoulder and he collapses to the ground. Three POLICE CARS skid to a stop in front of him. Dick hangs his head in defeat. The cops rush in and twist his arms behind his back. Before he can muster a scream, the butt of a rifle knocks him cold and his MEMORIES flash before us...

CUT TO:

1) NIGHTWING sends a Batarang whirling. It stabs into a robber's arm, forcing the gun up. Above, a woman overlooking the alley is killed. Her six-year-old son, JASON TODD, witnesses it all.

2) Jason is brought through the halls of a foster home. Unbeknownst to him, Dick watches from a distance.

3) To Bruce's surprise, Dick leads Jason into the Batcave.

4) Dick trains Jason. Bruce watches, unsure.

5) The Joker levels his gun through a doorway and shoots Barbara in the abdomen.

6) Gordon arrives at Barbara's apartment to find her sprawled across the living room floor, blood everywhere.

7) Nightwing chases the Joker into a factory filled with Joker dolls. Batman and a new Robin arrive on the scene.

For a moment, they work as a team - Batman, Nightwing and Robin - all three fighting as one. That is...

Until Jason meets with a CROWBAR-WIELDING Joker. Steel cracks against bone, spraying blood. And to make matters worse - a BOMB ticks down the seconds...

BOOM - the building collapses. When the smoke settles, Batman rises from the rubble with Jason in his arms - DEAD.

8) The Robin costume is sealed in a glass case and hung in the Batcave.

9) Superman stands at the head of the Justice League table, surrounded by his peers. Batman stands opposite him. Though we can't hear their conversation, they're having the kind of argument that dissolves friendships. Batman walks out. Losing his cool, Superman throws the table across the room.

10) Dick tosses his Nightwing costume into a roaring fireplace. Barbara wraps her arms around him. She's confined to a WHEELCHAIR.

11) *BANG!* Batman is shot in the chest.

INT. ARKHAM ASYLUM - MEDIC WING

Dick awakens, handcuffed to the bed, his wound dressed. O'Hara enters.

O'HARA

I've taken the liberty of calling your wife. She's already at the station and she's not all that pleased.

DICK

You stay away from my family.

O'HARA

It'll be you who has to stay away. You're going to jail, Dick. This stunt was the last of it.

(MORE)

O'HARA (cont'd)
(to the guards)
Bring him to County and have him
booked. Eight-man surveillance at
all times.

INT. POLICE STATION - LATER

Dick goes through processing, undergoing mug shots and fingerprints. As a result of the gunshot to his shoulder, his left arm rests in a sling. Once he's booked, he's locked in a...

JAIL CELL

The door echoes as it closes.

FADE TO BLACK:

The darkness becomes a black robe belonging to a JUDGE. We are in...

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Dick stands beside a court-appointed DEFENSE ATTORNEY as the arraignment plays out.

JUDGE
Let the record show that the
defendant has entered a plea of
guilty on all sixteen counts
pending against him. This court
will reconvene three weeks from
today, on May seventh at eleven
o'clock, to carry out sentencing.
In agreement with the prosecution,
bail is set for five million
dollars.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY
Five million dollars?! Your Honor,
this is my client's first offense--

JUDGE

His first of *sixteen* offenses.
Bail is set for five million
dollars. Court is adjourned.

The gavel bangs.

INT. COURTHOUSE - HALLWAY - LATER

The defense attorney gathers his things when a man in a
wheelchair pulls up alongside him.

ALFRED

That was five million, was it?

INT. GRAYSON HOUSE - DAY

Barbara looks out the window to see a black sedan pull up to
the house. Dick exits the car.

BETHANY

I can't find my red sweater.

BARBARA

I have your green one. Let's go.

BETHANY

But I want my red-

BARBARA

NOW.

Bethany follows in her mother's lead and exits the house via
the side door.

IN THE DRIVEWAY

The two get in the car.

BARBARA

Seat belt.

Bethany buckles in, when-

BETHANY

Daddy!

Bethany undoes her seat belt and rolls down her window.

BARBARA

Put your seat belt back on.

BETHANY

Why?

BARBARA

PUT IT ON.

Dick notices the SUITCASES piled in the back seat.

DICK

Barb, wait...

BETHANY

Hi Daddy.

BARBARA

(to Bethany)

I will NOT tell you again!

Bethany buckles in as Barbara puts the car in reverse.

DICK

Barb, I need your help. I can't do this alone.

BARBARA

I won't be a part of it, Dick. Not again.

She pulls away, leaving him in the driveway.

INT. GRAYSON HOUSE - BATHROOM

A mirror swings back into place. Dick has shaved his beard.

INT. BATCAVE

Dick slaps a RED FILE to the table. It reads WAYNE ENTERPRISES, DONATIONS. He pours through it, searching. His finger comes to rest on a company called GOTHAM SECURITIES. Their allotted donation: twelve million.

ALFRED

Master Dick, Mr. Gordon is here, sir.

DICK

Any luck on that recording?

ALFRED.

Some. The computer has identified the damage, but it may take some time to reconstruct.

DICK

Stay on it.

ALFRED

Of course, sir. And Mr. Gordon?

DICK

Let him in.

Dick heads to the Bat computer and types in "Gotham Securities", generating very little information. Gordon enters the cave. Having never been down here, he's a bit overwhelmed.

GORDON

My god... he always called it a cave, but I thought he was kidding.

DICK

Gotham Securities, ever hear of it?

GORDON

Umm, should I have?

DICK

No address, no employees. Just an offshore account.

GORDON

Dick, I know you don't want to hear this right now, but I think you need to take a deep breath and just... slow down.

Dick isn't listening.

GORDON

Dick...

DICK

Son of a bitch did it right under our noses...

Gordon slams the file to the table.

GORDON

HEY. I've gone down this road. Lost it all... hell, I thought I lost my mind. Not a day goes by when I don't think of it. My daughter, lying in all that blood...

Gordon shakes off the memory.

GORDON

You listen to me. You need to think about Barbara now. Think about your marriage - of what this could do to Bethany. *Is it worth losing your family over?*

The phone rings. Alfred answers - a look of panic washes over him.

DICK

What?

ALFRED

He's escaped.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. ARKHAM ASYLUM

A security guard aims a STUN GUN--

Dick swipes his legs out from underneath him. The stun gun fires its electrodes and clamps onto ONE OF THE CELL DOORS, setting off an array of sparks. This is cell #42.

INSIDE CELL #42

The JOKER slowly turns, his eyes wide. With a resounding *CLANK*, the lock retracts and the DOOR CRACKS OPEN.

BACK TO:

INT. BATCAVE

GORDON

Oh my god.

DICK

Barbara.

Gordon picks up a phone and dials out...

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Barbara's cell phone rings, only she's forgotten it in the car. She and Bethany can be seen walking toward a bustling market.

INT. BATCAVE

GORDON

She's not answering.

Dick rips a covering off the BATCYCLE. He punches the ignition and the engine roars to life.

EXT. MARKET - DAY

Flower vendors, vegetable stands, juggling clowns - with so much excitement, Barbara doesn't notice the one CLOWN making his way toward them.

INTERCUT

-The Batcycle blasts to the street and tears down the road.

-The clown stalks closer...

-Dick steers through traffic at breakneck speed.

-Barbara turns for a split second and - Bethany's gone.

BARBARA

Bethany?

Dick zooms onto the scene and skids to a stop, the tires smoking. The sight of him on the Batcycle sends a chill through Barbara's veins.

BARBARA

Oh my god...

(yelling over the crowd)

BETHANY?!

Barbara weaves through the market and spots--

BARBARA

Her sweater!

Dick grabs it, not expecting--

DICK

AHH!

He recoils, revealing a DOLL'S HEAD with painted green hair and an elongated smile. Jutting from its face are dozens of NEEDLES.

Barbara covers her mouth in horror, her worst nightmare has come true - the Joker has her daughter.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

A Xerox machine copies Bethany's picture, adding to a stack of leaflets already printed. Dick sits with his shirt unbuttoned and two DOCTORS checking his vitals. He's sweating uncontrollably.

DICK

I need to get out of here.

DOCTOR #1

Sit still, Mr. Grayson, the police are doing everything they can.

DICK

I'm telling you, I can find him.

DOCTOR #2

Whatever was in that needle is sending your heart rate through the roof.

A third doctor joins them.

DOCTOR #3

The Toxicology report says it's something called Bolinium.

DOCTOR #2

Never heard of it. Is that like a-

DICK

It's a neurotoxin.

Dick stands and buttons his shirt.

DOCTOR #2

Mr. Grayson, please sit down. Identifying the compound is only the beginning. We need to get you to an ICU, start flushing your blood, and administer a vaccine.

DICK

You won't find one. Not around here.

DOCTOR #1

Please, further activity will only speed the toxin through your body faster.

DICK

Then I guess I better get going.

A heavysset cop, RUSS DAWSON, gets in Dick's way.

RUSS

Get some coffee and have a seat, 'cause you're not going anywhere.

Russ puts his hand on his nightstick. Dick wipes the sweat from his eyes and contemplates what it'll take to put Russ down, when Gordon enters the room and pulls him aside.

GORDON

I've made calls to everybody from the East River to Cathedral Square, nobody's seen or heard nothin'. If the Joker's still in Gotham, he's gone underground.

(sees the sweat)

How ya feeling?

DICK

I'm fine.

GORDON

You want me to check the harbor?

DICK

Sit tight. Alfred should be calling with the information we need.

GORDON

What? How?

CUT TO:

INT. BATCAVE - SAME

Alfred opens a chamber filled with dated electronic gadgetry. He pulls a RADAR-SCOPE from the shelf and throws in a new battery. It beeps to life and pinpoints the Joker's location.

BACK TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - SAME

GORDON

(astonished)

There's a tracer on the Joker?

DICK

It's implanted, just below his rib cage.

GORDON

When?

DICK

Years ago, after Barbara was shot. Bruce was determined to make sure the Joker would never hurt anyone again. With the tracer inside him, the minute he goes loose, Bruce is there.

Gordon is floored. *A tracer implanted in the Joker?*

Barbara exits from a room full of investigators, her face swollen from crying. She locks eyes with Dick and approaches.

SLAP - her hand comes across his face. She tries to hit him again but the cops intervene.

BARBARA

You bastard!

She goes hysterical, crying and screaming. It takes three men to restrain her. They usher her into another room and close the door.

The commotion draws O'Hara into the room. Dick lunges at him. He only gets a hand on O'Hara's shoulder before a swarm of cops tackle him against the nearest desk.

DICK

You did this! First Batman--

O'HARA

Get him out of here!

DICK

AND NOW MY DAUGHTER!

O'HARA

Put him somewhere to cool off!

Russ and three other officers drag Dick down the hall.

DOWN THE HALL - JAIL CELL

Dick is thrown into a cell, the door locked shut. He stares back at the men who put him there, his chest heaving.

RUSS

Let me get you that coffee.

The cops head back the way they came, chatting among themselves.

COP #1

You alright?

RUSS

Yeah, he clipped me good though.

COP #2

You see that motorcycle of his we impounded?

COP #3

Yeah, it's hard to believe that guy's Robin.

RUSS

I'll say, he didn't put up much of a fight.

Russ feels his pockets - *something's missing*. He races back down the hall and rounds the corner to see Dick's jail cell open, his KEYS in the door.

INT. POLICE STATION - ROOF - NIGHT

A POLICE HELICOPTER touches down on a landing pad. Dick kicks the pilot from his seat and takes the controls. Gordon, O'Hara and an army of cops race out onto the roof and watch as the helicopter takes flight.

Russ pulls his sidearm and opens fire--

GORDON

Stop!

Gordon barrels into Russ; however, not before he gets off a clean shot and punctures the fuselage - the chopper now leaking gas.

GORDON

What the hell is wrong with you guys?!

O'Hara turns to the nearest officer.

O'HARA

Put out a warrant for Dick Grayson's arrest and get a SWAT team over to Wayne Manor.

GORDON

What are you doing?

O'HARA

(ignoring Gordon)

Contact every precinct south of the river and get their pilots airborne. They should have ample time to secure the area and prohibit him from landing.

The officer hurries off to carry out the order.

GORDON
For god's sake, you're gonna get
Dick killed!

O'HARA
GET HIM OUT OF HERE!

GORDON
Oh, I'll leave...

Gordon unclasps his revolver, hands it to another officer,
and *WHACK* - punches O'Hara.

GORDON
Right after I kick your ass!

O'Hara quickly recovers, but the other officers intervene.
Desk Sergeant LAWRENCE JOHNSON races out onto the roof.

LAWRENCE
Commissioner!

Both Gordon and O'Hara turn.

GORDON / O'HARA
WHAT?

LAWRENCE
The phone's ringing.

O'HARA
So take a message!

LAWRENCE
No, sir - *thee* phone.

INT. POLICE STATION - O'HARA'S OFFICE

A RED ROTARY PHONE illuminates in the corner of the room.
O'Hara answers...

O'HARA
Commissioner.
(beat)
Who is this?

O'Hara writes down an address.

O'HARA
And you're certain he's there?

The phone goes dead. O'Hara hangs up and glares at Gordon.

O'HARA
Who the hell was that, Gordon?!
The Batman is supposed to be dead!

GORDON
Did he give you a location on the
Joker?

O'Hara passes the address to one of the officers.

O'HARA
Call in a second SWAT team and send
them to this address.

GORDON
What address?!

O'HARA
I THOUGHT I SAID, GET HIM OUT OF
HERE!

CUT TO:

EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Gordon is marched out of the building.

GORDON
Get your hands off me!

They push him to the pavement and go back inside. He barely has time to collect himself before a throng of POLICE CARS AND SWAT VANS exit the building. Gordon jumps in his car and follows after them.

INT. HELICOPTER - SAME

Dick sits at the controls, sweat pouring off his face, and dials out on his cell...

INT. BATCAVE - SAME

Alfred casually sips tea and answers the phone...

ALFRED

Wayne residence.

DICK (O.S.)

Alfred, prepare an antiserum for Bolinium, I'm coming in.

ALFRED

Right away, sir. But I'm afraid you'll need to take the back entrance. We have quite a few uninvited guests.

From a farther vantage we see that Alfred is seated in front of a dozen security monitors, each providing a different angle on the manor - a SWAT TEAM running from room to room. Exterior cameras display an army of helicopters and police cars surrounding the estate. They scour every inch of the grounds, police dogs sniffing.

INT. HELICOPTER - SAME

DICK

Way ahead of you, Alfred. I'm already on route to the Hall. The only question is...

EXT. NIGHT SKY - SAME

In the distance, the HALL OF JUSTICE shines like a beacon under the Metropolis skyline.

DICK (O.S.)
...do I still have any friends
there?

INT. HALL OF JUSTICE - NIGHT

The Flash sits at the League computer, his costume on, save for the mask. He reads a comic book and snacks on potato chips when a PRIORITY ALERT flashes across the screen.

FLASH
Get a load of this...

Aquaman nears the screen and reads it for himself.

AQUAMAN
The Joker's got Dick's daughter.

FLASH
Not that, this - there's a warrant
out for Dick's arrest.
(snickers)
Looks like he stole a--

A BLIP appears on their scope. Dick's voice crackles over the airwaves.

DICK (O.S.)
Zero, Gamma, Pelican, Twelve.
Repeat, Zero, Gamma, Pelican,
Twelve...

FLASH
What the hell is that?

AQUAMAN

An old distress signal. Open the hangar.

Aquaman grabs a headset...

INT. HELICOPTER - SAME

Dick nears the Hall of Justice - two hundred yards up ahead.

AQUAMAN (O.S.)

We hear you, Pelican, you have permission to land.

DICK

Roger that, I'm comin' in.

The FUEL LIGHT comes on and the engine sputters.

DICK

Holy shit...

INT. HALL OF JUSTICE - SAME

Aquaman watches on the monitor as the chopper starts to pitch.

AQUAMAN

Something's wrong.

EXT. HALL OF JUSTICE - SAME

The chopper drops from the sky. Dick straps on his seat belt as *KA-RAAAAAAAAAASH* - the helicopter collides with the earth, tearing up the League's front courtyard.

INT. HALL OF JUSTICE - SAME

FLASH

Guess we're due for a new fountain.

EXT. HALL OF JUSTICE - SAME

Dick stumbles from the wreck, a wicked cut across his left eye. Aquaman opens the main door and ushers him inside.

INT. HALL OF JUSTICE - SAME

Dick's hands twitch uncontrollably, the poison is taking its toll.

AQUAMAN

You don't look so good.

DICK

I need to get back to the cave.
Does the sled still work?

AQUAMAN

Your guess is as good as mine.
Come on.

In the blink of an eye, the Flash crosses the room, obstructing their path.

FLASH

What are you doing?

AQUAMAN

Get out of the way, Barry.

FLASH

What part of "warrant for his arrest" don't you understand?

AQUAMAN

Step aside.

FLASH

You're gonna have to do better than that, old man.

AQUAMAN

I said, *STEP ASIDE*.

Aquaman angles his stare.

FLASH

Ha... save that telepathy crap for the fish.

The Flash suddenly feels a dizzying sensation. His expression goes blank and he steps out of the way.

AQUAMAN

Works on whales too, asshole.

INT. HALL OF JUSTICE - UNDERGROUND WAREHOUSE

Aquaman and Dick enter the warehouse filled with old Batman equipment and approach THE SLED - a thin, rocket-shaped pod resting on a track.

AQUAMAN

Let's hope there's power.

Dick brushes away the cobwebs and pushes a button, but it doesn't power up.

AQUAMAN

Nothin'.

DICK

I can run a patch.
(to the Batmobile)
Atomic batteries to power.

The classic '66 BATMOBILE registers his VOICE COMMAND and the engine revs to life. Dick pops the hood and runs a cable from the motor to the sled console.

DICK

Try it again.

Aquaman flicks a switch and the sled hums with power. Dick opens the cockpit and shakes Aquaman's hand.

DICK

Thanks, Arthur.

AQUAMAN

Anytime-

WHACK - a whirl of red catches Aquaman in the jaw, knocking him cold.

WHAM - Dick is kicked to the floor. His assailant is...

FLASH

Hey there, Dick. Good to see ya.

BAM - he hits Dick with another lightning-fast punch.

DICK

Barry... my daughter...

FLASH

Well, you should have thought about her before you got yourself mixed up in all this.

He delivers six more punches that leave Dick gasping for air. His body starts to twitch, the poison taking effect.

DICK

Don't... make me... hurt you.

KRACK - the Flash wallops him again.

FLASH

There it is, that attitude.

Dick crawls toward the pod, his nose bleeding.

FLASH

Bruce had the same thing... always
made me want to set the record
straight - show you what it means
to have real power.

Dick tries to fight back, but he's no match. The Flash
pummels him to the ground.

FLASH

So much for that attitude, eh,
Dick? What's the matter? Nothin'
else to say?

What the Flash doesn't realize is--

Dick has lead him around to the tail of the BATMOBILE.
Through swollen lips, he utters...

DICK

Turbines to speed.

The Batmobile's engine ignites, engulfing the Flash in
FLAMES.

FLASH

AHHHHHHHH!

Dick grabs a nearby tarp and helps smother the flames. The
Flash will live; however, he'll be moving a lot slower.

Dick climbs into the pod, his body convulsing. He closes the
cockpit and, with the push of the button, sends the pod
whizzing down the track.

INT. JOKER'S HIDEAWAY - NIGHT

Mold and broken windows make up this one-story house. The Joker exits the bathroom, clutching his abdomen, his stark white hands covered in BLOOD. Bethany looks petrified.

JOKER

There, there, don't be frightened,
the fun's just getting started.

He looks out the window to see a line of POLICE CARS AND SWAT VANS converge on the house. GORDON parks alongside them. The SWAT TEAM prepare their assault and move in. They kick down the front door and--

Are greeted by a FIFTY-CALIBER MACHINE GUN. *RAT-A-TAT-TAT-TAT-TAT-TAT-TAT-TAT-TAT-TAT-TAT!* It tears them to shreds.

JOKER

HOOOOOOOO HA HA HA!

The Joker smiles from ear to ear and pulls back on a WOODEN LEVER. As a result, MISSILES fold out from the roof. They automatically lock onto targets and fire, obliterating every police vehicle in sight. Gordon runs for cover.

INT. BATCAVE - SAME

The SLED comes zipping into the cave. Dick lies without moving, his skin white, his lips blue. Alfred unlocks the canopy and injects the antiserum into Dick's neck. His eyes spring to life.

ALFRED

Welcome back, sir.

CUT TO:

BATCAVE - MINUTES LATER

The case enshrining the Robin uniform SHATTERS against the floor. Dick grabs the utility belt. His cell phone rings. He answers, only to hear--

GORDON (O.S.)
There's no getting inside!

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. JOKER'S HIDEAWAY - SAME

Sprinklers lift from the lawn and WOOOOOOOOSH - SPRAY FIRE in every direction.

GORDON
The whole place is rigged!

BACK TO:

INT. BATCAVE - SAME

Dick unlocks a chamber filled with BATMAN ATTIRE - boots, gloves, capes, etc.

DICK
Jim, listen to me...

GORDON (O.S.)
That insane son of a bitch. He's laughing at us right now.

DICK
Jim! It was all O'Hara's plan...

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

O'HARA steps from the shadows, his gun drawn and pointed at the Joker.

BACK TO:

INT. BATCAVE - SAME

Dick straps on a pair of Batman's thickest boots.

DICK

O'Hara hires Selina to free the Joker. Bruce takes the bait and when he's not expecting it...

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

BATMAN arrives on the scene. He nears O'Hara, who suddenly turns, and - *BANG* - the barrel goes off an inch from Batman's chest.

BACK TO:

EXT. JOKER'S HIDEAWAY - SAME

GORDON

What's his motive?

DICK (O.S.)

He's been second in command his whole career. Even with your retirement, if it's power he's after, then Batman has to die.

GORDON

Do you have any proof?

INT. BATCAVE - SAME

DICK

Gotham Securities, a dummy corporation set up to receive money from the Wayne Foundation. The same money O'Hara used to hire Selina. Link O'Hara to Gotham Securities...

Dick types on a keypad and a platform raises one batmobile above the others.

DICK

...and we catch our killer.

EXT. WAYNE MANOR - NIGHT

Policemen confer outside on the lawn.

COP #1

There's nothing in there but a lot of expensive rugs and fancy paintings.

The men are suddenly caught in the lights of an oncoming vehicle. Too bad for them, this is no car...

A secret passage gives way to a ferocious TANK. THE BEAST, as it's appropriately called, tramples everything in its path and takes to the street. Two POLICE HELICOPTERS give chase.

HELICOPTER PILOT

We've got him. Moving south by southeast towards Gotham Harbor.

The pilots aren't prepared for the Beast to drive off the pier and vanish beneath the Gotham River.

UNDERWATER

Fully suited in a mix of old and new armor, ROBIN steers the Beast along the bottom of the riverbed.

EXT. JOKER'S HIDEAWAY - NIGHT

The mayhem continues as GRENADES roll out of the mailbox.

GORDON

Get back!

BOOM - bodies and metal are thrown every which way, when--

THE BEAST roars onto the scene. It plows over the Joker's defenses and slams into the porch. Robin springs from the vehicle and dives into the window.

INSIDE THE JOKER'S HIDEAWAY

He rolls to his feet. However, before he can take a single step, the floor gives way, dropping him into--

THE BASEMENT

Wicked traps line the hall. Robin makes his way through a sinister maze, dodging darts and ducking axes. The traps keep coming, including blow torches, bullets and a twelve-ton EIGHT BALL that comes rolling toward him.

Robin survives it all and ends up falling into a--

WATER TANK

The lid to the tank seals shut, imprisoning Robin in an underwater tomb. The enclosure's made of solid steel, with no other points of entry. Robin's only hope...

The electronic GIZMO. He pulls it off his belt and activates the trigger.

OUTSIDE THE WATER TANK

The metal tank TEARS DOWN THE MIDDLE, spilling thousands of gallons of water into the basement, and Robin along with it. He's a mess, but at least he's still breathing. However, panic sets in at the sight of--

The TRACE implanted in the Joker now sitting on the floor. A message, painted in blood, is scrawled across the wall, it reads, "*FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY! THE AMAZING GRAYSONS TAKE FLIGHT! LET'S HOPE THIS BABY BIRD CAN FLY! HA HA HA!*"

Robin knows exactly what it means. He races outside...

EXT. JOKER'S HIDEAWAY - SAME

He bounds across an overturned SWAT van and flips onto a lamp post. Perched above the street, he spots a CIRCUS TENT looming in the distance.

EXT. CIRCUS - PARKING LOT

The Joker steers his white '73 Cadillac into a parked car, generating a hearty laugh.

JOKER

(singing)

The wheels on the bus go 'round and
'round...

He grabs Bethany by the hair and drags her toward the tent.

EXT. CITY STREETS - SAME

The Beast skids around a corner at an alarming speed.

Freed of her lasso, Robin looks to the Beast, surprised to see CATWOMAN at the helm. She bulldozes Wonder Woman into a building, knocking the amazon cold.

CATWOMAN

Republican bitch.

Catwoman hops to the street and helps Robin to his feet.

CATWOMAN

You can thank me later.

A HAND comes from out of nowhere and grabs Catwoman by the neck. IT'S SUPERMAN. He bangs her head against a block of cement and drops her to the sidewalk.

His eyes shift to Robin.

SUPERMAN

Easy, boy.

ROBIN

Stay out of this, Clark!

SUPERMAN

You're coming with me.

Robin musters all his strength and lays into Superman with a right hook. We hear BONES SNAP.

SUPERMAN

All that optimism just cost you
your wrist.

Out come the BATARANGS. Robin hurls four, one right after another. Superman catches the first three and lets the fourth one continue past.

SUPERMAN

Are we done playing?

ROBIN

Just about.

The fourth Batarang cuts through an ELECTRICAL CABLE and sends the wire swinging down. It strikes Superman - erupting sparks and forcing him to his knees. When the fireworks subside, the power's gone out across five city blocks and Superman lies in the street, smoldering.

Robin heads for the Beast. Only...

Superman recovers. He slams his FIST into the cement, cracking it like porcelain. The crevice zigzags up the pavement, caving in the street and dropping the Beast into a gaping fissure. Robin rolls to safety and tries to get away, however--

Superman grabs hold of him. His fingers curl around the emblem on Robin's vest, a grip no earthly power could pry free of, when--

WHAAAAAAAAAACK! A ghostly, GREEN WRECKING BALL wallops into Superman, tearing the "R" clean off Robin's vest and sending the Man of Steel into the nearest building.

GREEN LANTERN has arrived. He eyes Robin as he walks past him. Like a lone sheriff in an old western, he marches across the street, ready for a showdown.

Gordon squeezes through the crowd and hurries over to Robin.

ROBIN

The circus... he's taken her to the circus...

Superman lifts from the rubble.

ROBIN

Go!

Gordon heads off down the street as the two titans come face to face.

GREEN LANTERN

I see I got your attention.

SUPERMAN

And?

GREEN LANTERN

And the Joker's got Dick's daughter!

SUPERMAN

Do you know how many daughters are dying around the world right now? You don't seem too concerned about them. *Or is that just my job?*

GREEN LANTERN

I understand your frustration and I'm sorry if you ever felt like you had to go it alone...

Superman pushes Green Lantern aside, when - *ZUMMP* - a GREEN CAGE envelopes him.

GREEN LANTERN

...but either you get your priorities in line, or I line them up for you.

Superman grabs hold of the bars and bends them with ease.

SUPERMAN

Cute.

GREEN LANTERN

You don't want to do this.

Green Lantern's ring shimmers, spawning a GREEN CANNON, the barrel aimed straight down at Superman.

SUPERMAN

Most days, I don't want to do any of it...

ZIP - Superman is instantly behind him, locking Green Lantern in a CHOKE HOLD.

SUPERMAN

...but I still do it.

In a panic, Green Lantern triggers the cannon - *BOOM!* It misses Superman but tears through the street. The force of the blast knocks them both through a cement pillar, shattering the foundation of a twenty-story building.

Despite the damage, Superman maintains his grip around Green Lantern's throat. When--

WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAM! A gargantuan GREEN SLEDGEHAMMER slams into Superman, driving him beneath the pavement.

GREEN LANTERN

GO!

Robin pushes up to his feet and commandeers a HORSE from a city policeman.

ROBIN

Can't ride a horse, eh...

He jumps into the saddle. With a swift kick, the steed springs into an all-out sprint. Robin rides the horse through the bustling city-scape, leaving behind...

SUPERMAN, who punches up through the street. There's an unsettling look in his eye as he wipes the asphalt from his lips. However, before he can give chase--

A massive GREEN SNAKE wraps around his wrist. As more of it comes into view, we discover...

This is no snake. It's a colossal GREEN ELEPHANT - a fearsome creation of Green Lantern's ring. Pedestrians scurry for cover as the elephant's trunk tightens around Superman's arm and wields him like a mace, flattening cars as if they were made of tin.

INT. CIRCUS - SAME

The Joker steps into the center of the ring. He drags Bethany behind him, disrupting the show.

JOKER
 (to Bethany)
 Oh, how your father just LOVES this
 place!

The Joker heads for the trapeze, as...

Gordon enters the tent. He scans the crowd and spots the Joker dragging Bethany to the top of trapeze.

GORDON
Oh my god.

AT THE TOP OF THE TRAPEZE

The Joker SHOOTS an acrobat at the top of the platform and sends him falling. The audience panics.

Gordon climbs the spiraling stairwell. Before he can reach the platform, the Joker gives the high bar a push and grabs Bethany by the back of her shirt.

JOKER
 On three! One - two - six - eight -
 HA HA HA! THREE!

Gordon doesn't make it to the platform in time.

GORDON
 NOOOOOO!

The Joker hurls Bethany toward the high bar. Her fingers outstretch--

But don't grab hold. Luckily, a BAT CABLE winds around her leg. The other end of the cable ensnares the high bar and sends her rocking back and forth high above the circus floor.

The Joker looks down to see--

ROBIN mid-way up the spiraling staircase. He rips off his mask and calls to his daughter.

ROBIN

Hang on!

JOKER

THAT'S NOT FUNNY!

The Joker leans over the platform and opens fire. *BANG* - Robin takes a bullet in the thigh. *BANG* - he takes another in the arm.

GORDON

NO!

Gordon tackles the Joker. They wrestle for the gun--

BANG! The gun goes off, shattering the high bar. The two halves of the bar swing out wildly, causing the Bat cable to unravel, Bethany mere seconds away from falling to her death.

Crazed, Gordon tightens his grip around the Joker's throat.

GORDON

That bullet was meant for you!

THAT BULLET WAS MEANT FOR YOU!

Robin's face goes white as he makes the realization...

INT. BATCAVE

Alfred makes an adjustment to the MICRO-PROCESSOR and the Bat computer commences playback. FLASHBACKS follow...

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

It's not Chief O'Hara, but rather--

GORDON who steps out of the shadows and aims his gun at an unsuspecting Joker. To his disappointment--

BATMAN swings onto the scene. Before his cape can even settle, his heel meets with the Joker's chin. The force of the blow knocks the Joker into a SKYLIGHT. He shatters the glass and falls twenty feet to the floor below.

Gordon hurries to the skylight and sees the Joker lying face down in a pile of debris, his leg broken at the knee. Oblivious to the threat looming over him, the Joker cackles like a wounded hyena.

JOKER

HA HA HA...

Again, Gordon raises his gun.

BATMAN

Put down the gun.

GORDON

This has to end!

BATMAN

And it will. Just give me the gun.

GORDON

NO! He'll just escape again! And when he does, more families will be made to suffer!

Images of BARBARA LYING IN A MESS OF BLOOD flash through Gordon's mind.

GORDON

He needs to pay for all the blood
he's spilled! For all the pain
he's caused!

A church bell strikes the hour.

BATMAN

He'll pay, but not like that.

GORDON

He needs to die... HE NEEDS TO DIE!

BATMAN

Jim...

Tears cascade down Gordon's face and he lowers the gun.

GORDON

I... I...

Batman reaches for the gun, when--

A vision of BARBARA LYING IN A POOL OF BLOOD flashes through
Gordon's mind. He tenses...

BANG!

Both Gordon and Batman are equally horrified. Batman slips
backwards and falls off the roof. Gordon watches from the
ledge as Batman hits the pavement, nearly crushing a homeless
man beneath him.

Gordon pulls back from the ledge, so not to be seen. A surge
of fear and anger sweep over him and he hurries to the
skylight, only to discover--

The Joker is gone. Sirens can be heard in the distance.

CUT TO:

INT. GORDON'S HOUSE

The sink faucet turns on. Upon closer look, Gordon wasn't doing the dishes when he got the call about Batman's death - he was washing the BLOOD from his hands.

CUT TO:

INT. BANK

Dick spots Gordon managing his check book - at a closer look, the top of the check reads: GOTHAM SECURITIES.

BACK TO:

INT. CIRCUS

Robin and Gordon lock eyes.

GORDON

It was an accident. You have to believe me... AN ACCIDENT!

The Joker muscles the gun against Gordon's chest--

BANG! Gordon pulls away from the Joker, a circle of red widening across his shirt. His eyes beg for forgiveness as he steps off the platform and reaches for Bethany.

SNAP! Her cable gives way--

Gordon dives after her, the ground quickly making its way toward them. He catches her and pivots to his back, absorbing the impact.

JOKER

HA HA! TWO FOR THE PRICE OF ONE!

Gordon and Bethany lie without moving.

ROBIN

NO!

JOKER

OH YES! AND IT'S TIME YOU JOINED
THEM!

The Joker aims his gun at Robin's face when--

A BAT-SHAPED FIGURE swoops down and knocks the Joker off his feet. No, it's not Batman...

It's BATGIRL. Barbara's dressed in the uniform, her hair spilling out the back. She proceeds to beat the Joker senseless. Before she's through, she grabs him by the collar and leans him over the platform.

Lucky for him, Bethany lifts her head - she survived the fall. Batgirl opts for cuffing the Joker to the railing and rappels to the floor. She rips off her mask and engulfs Bethany in a hug.

BARBARA

Bethany...

Despite his wounds, Robin breathes a sigh of relief, when...

SUPERMAN DRIVES GREEN LANTERN THROUGH THE TENT AND INTO THE GROUND. The trapeze supports rupture, sending Robin and the platform to the floor.

The chaos of it all sends the Joker into a laughing craze.

JOKER

HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!

He roars in delirium, that is, until a trapeze WIRE snaps loose and--

SHLUNK - severs his head from his neck.

When the dust settles, Green Lantern lies unconscious. Superman proves the victor, though he doesn't look it.

Bruises pock his face and nothing is left of his cape. In his hand he holds Green Lantern's RING, which he throws to the dirt and steps toward Robin.

Beaten beyond all measure, Robin lies on the ground, incapable of moving. Barbara comes to his defense; however, Superman SLAPS her to the floor.

BETHANY

No!

Bethany gets between her father and Superman.

BETHANY

Please! Stop! *Pleeeeeeease...*

Superman pushes past her and grabs Robin by the throat. He lifts him off his feet, his eyes gleaming red, when--

Bethany wraps her arms around Superman's leg and lets out a bloodcurdling scream...

BETHANY

SOMEBODY HEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEELP!

Her voice echoes throughout the tent and awakens Superman from his frenzied state. His eyes return to their blue luster before welling up with tears. What's left of the crowd watches in silence as Superman sets Robin on the floor and slumps down beside him.

The two men sit without speaking.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

In the shadow of Batman's monument sits a conservative headstone. It bears the name JAMES GORDON. Dick replaces the wilted flowers with a fresh bundle and stands alone at the grave, his wounds nearly healed. He nods respectfully and heads for his car.

INT. GRAYSON HOUSE - DAY

Dick pulls into the driveway and parks. He walks up the stoop; however, before he has the chance to open the front door, a car pulls up to the curb. Smiling in the backseat is...

BETHANY

Daddy!

Bethany races out of the car and tackles him with a hug.

BETHANY

I missed you.

DICK

I missed you too.

BETHANY

And mommy?

Dick looks to the car and sees Barbara standing beside it. Their stare speaks volumes.

DICK

And mommy.

BETHANY

Does that mean we can come back home?

DICK

I don't know... I moved someone else into your room.

BETHANY

You what?!

DICK

Maybe the two of you can share it...

BETHANY

Share it?! With who?!

Dick opens the front door, giving way to a PUPPY. It races over to Bethany and licks her face wildly.

INT. GRAYSON HOUSE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Barbara and Dick clean up after supper while Bethany plays with the dog on the living room floor, the TV glowing in the background.

BARBARA

I almost forgot how well you cook.

Barbara goes in for a slow kiss.

BARBARA

Mmmmm... spicy.

BETHANY (O.S.)

Daddy, look! I made him roll over!

Dick exits the kitchen and gives Bethany an audience.

DICK

Let me see...

Bethany tries to command the puppy while her father watches, when something on the TV catches his eye.

It's an emergency news bulletin. The reporter runs for cover as a gray BEAST OF A MAN tears apart the city. His abnormally large fists pummel cars and buckle the pavement. Beneath an open-faced helmet, his red eyes emit a pulsating laser that lays waste to everything caught in its fury. This is DARKSEID, an alien invader hellbent on destruction.

SUPERMAN attempts to restrain him, but fails.

Dick watches from the comfort of his living room as Darkseid bares down on Superman and--

CLICK. Barbara shuts off the TV with the remote.

Dick looks at her, his eyes wide, his blood pumping through his veins. She stares back at him, her head tilted as if to say, "*I thought we settled this?*"

Oblivious, Bethany chimes in...

BETHANY

(regarding the dog)

He did it! Did you see it, Dad?

DICK

Umm...

BETHANY

Did you see him roll over?!

Dick exhales a cleansing breath and sits down on the couch.

DICK

Show me again, honey.

Bethany attempts to train the dog while her father watches. He offers a few suggestions, his attention focussed as best he can, when Barbara leans closer and whispers in his ear...

BARBARA

What are you waiting for?

Dick looks at her, in shock.

BARBARA

He's gonna need your help.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY - NIGHT

Superman and Darkseid tangle like a pair of feuding gods, reducing the city to ash.

Things go from bad to worse when GREEN LANTERN and WONDER WOMAN join the fight and are quickly subdued.

Darkseid appears unstoppable. He envelopes Superman in a laser blast that sears off his trademark curl and brings him to his knees. Superman screams in pain, the laser overpowering his senses, when--

KA-WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAM! The BATMOBILE barrels into Darkseid.

The awe-inspiring car screeches to a stop and a hatch swings open. Dick steps out of the driver seat, only he's not dressed as Robin...

He is now the new BATMAN.

SUPERMAN

He's too strong, Dick. Get clear or you're gonna get yourself killed.

BATMAN

I don't know what you're talking about. I'm just out for a drive.

SUPERMAN

This is no time for jokes. Get out of here.

BATMAN

Fine. I guess you don't need to know his weakness.

Batman turns to leave.

SUPERMAN

What weakness?!

Darkseid gets to his feet, knocking over a pair of fire trucks in the process.

BATMAN

No, no, you've got this. You're right, he's strong. Keen detective work there...

SUPERMAN

All right!

Batman stops and glares over his shoulder.

SUPERMAN

We work together.

Batman lets the words hang in the air before turning back around and stepping up to Superman.

BATMAN

Together.

Darkseid ROARS with the force of a thousand lions as our two heroes ready for a fight.

THE END