

A Cat-Tales Companion

The Companion is a diverse, and not especially well-organized collection of snippets, rantings, and extras connected to the Cat Tales series: The recipes for d'Annunzio's Shrimp Arrabiatta, the real life models for Nirvana the ocelot, how 'Pheromones' got his name, and what really happened at Clark Kent's bachelor party.

These items are divided roughly into the following categories:

Catverse: Cat-Tales continuity, shown in purple

DCU: DC continuity, shown in blue

Reality: From the real world, or the real world's history, pop culture, or literature

Catfight

At the opening of ***Catfight*** we learn it's been about four weeks since Batman revealed his identity at the end of ***Normal***, and it would seem that, in spite of himself, Bruce has been behaving like everyone else does in those early weeks of a romance: grabbing, petting, kissing, pinching and fondling the adored object as if one just learned how.

DCU Wayne Enterprises

We are introduced to Bruce's work, his other work: Wayne Enterprises, the company that bares his name. To clarify, WE has been the company name since time immemorial (read: Pre-Crisis). Wayne Tech, the company to which recent comics occasionally refer, is a wholly owned subsidiary of Wayne Enterprises.

The WE corporate headquarters is in the Wayne Building in Midtown Gotham – this building is actually owned, not by Bruce or WE, but by the Wayne Foundation, an independent, charitable not-for-profit institution, of which Bruce is also the head.

DCU

Lucius Fox is the Chief Operating Officer. Again, **The Untold Legend of the Batman** offers an excellent account of Lucius's introduction into Bruce's life. Lucius worked at WE in the Finance Division. He devised a plan for Portfolio Management to improve their cash flow, and presented himself at Bruce's office asking "who he might show it to."

Catverse

This story is usually presented at face value, but Lucius is actually quite savvier than people give him credit for. He wasn't going to the head of the company to ask what low-level beancounter he should talk to, he was asking to pitch his idea to Bruce directly. That Bruce was able to read between the lines and listened to his idea was Lucius's first indication that Bruce Wayne was not half as clueless as the grapevine implied. When he'd listened, Bruce remarked that nobody will ever understand a problem as well as the person who identifies it, so he put Lucius in charge of implementing the ideas. There is no better way to understand all that happens inside a company than seeing how they spend their money, and within a year Lucius had developed an understanding of the minute details of WE operations. Within 5 years he'd worked his way to COO, and apart from those days and events when he must play nursemaid for Bruce in Fop-mode, he enjoys his work very much.

DCU

Talia al Guhl

In the comics, Talia, the daughter of Ra's Al Guhl was indeed appointed head of LexCorp, Lex Luthor's company, when Luthor became President, despite having no qualifications whatsoever. Comics readers accepted this without question. The Catverse inhabitants do not.

The theories expressed as to what the hell Luthor was thinking include one mention of an actual corporate principle: The Poison Pill. The Poison Pill, essentially, is a strategy to defend against a hostile takeover by wrecking the company so nobody will want it. One might write into the bylaws a proviso that if anyone acquires 51% of the stock, a third party has an option to purchase valuable assets for \$1.

DCU

By **Plan 9 from the Demon's Head**, Talia will be using the name Talia Head, because that is what DC was calling her. Now, Ra's Al Guhl is "The Demon Head" so, yes, strictly speaking, Talia Al Guhl = Talia Head, same difference, right? <snarf> Yeah, sure. And they say **I'm** mean to the demonspawn.



"You remember that time you had her pinned and sent me off to 'find some evidence' in an EMPTY PARKING LOT!"

Bruce may not remember, but I do. The story is called Photo Finish by Devin Grayson in **Batman Chronicles #9**.

This departure leads to the Dick/Robin-Barbara/Batgirl first meeting Dick will reflect on in **Dearly Beloved**.

It is also the mall rooftop Dick remembers in **What's New Pussycat**.

Catverse **"What the hell's an E-Nig Partition?"**

Or, as one particularly savvy reader asked in the message board, "Wouldn't Batman know more about computers than Selina?"

Bruce certainly thinks he should know more about **EVERYTHING** than **EVERYBODY**, which is why he freaked during that argument when Selina threw a term at him he didn't recognize. Two things to keep in mind, however:

First and most importantly: Bruce was very hot at that moment. It was early in the relationship and he was caught in this totally unfamiliar role of being somewhere between Bruce and Batman - out of costume but in the cave - with Catwoman (or was that

Selina) screaming at him.

Once he calmed down, I'm sure he realized an E-nig partition is the same as a Cambridge partition, a series of security modifications made to a standard VMware partition. Most people believe these modifications originated at MIT, hence why they call it a Cambridge partition. In fact, MIT merely documented what they found on a laptop they were given to analyze by the FBI, a laptop confiscated by a Gotham rogue we all know and love. Which is why Selina refers to it by its proper name, that of its true creator: Edward Nigma.

DCU



Catvids

We actually see Bruce watching such surveillance tapes of Catwoman in “Desires”, **Batman 80 Page Giant #1**. Now I’m quite sure, despite the fact that each and every vignette in this silent tale depicts Gothamites with their secret

desire, I am quite sure he is JUST studying her technique as a crime-fighting exercise.

I’ve been known to look long and lovingly at the chocolate chip cheesecake in the case at Cheesecake Factory, but that in no way means I have anything but a detached and objective view of the delicious decadence, and it certainly doesn’t mean I’m considering ordering a piece.

Catverse **“Our intranet can’t be hacked. I set it up myself.”**

A reader once asked if Bruce’s boast at this meeting that he personally set up the WE Intranet contradicted the FOP persona.

The important thing to keep in mind is that this conversation occurred within a very small circle of Senior WE executives. In the Catverse, Bruce is not the idiot fop at all times whenever he's in public. Like everyone else, he tempers his act depending on the circumstances. Certainly he played the fop whenever he dated the bimbos, appeared at nightclub openings, and at society parties *unrelated to the Wayne Foundation*.

At Wayne Enterprises, he walked a much finer line. He is CEO and figurehead of a multi-million dollar, multi-national corporation. Batman's secret is important, but not more so in Bruce's mind than the thousands of jobs tied to WE. That's rent and food on the table for tens of thousands of families, an important part of Gotham's economy, + research and products meant to make people's lives better.

Bruce controlled his FOP-appearances at Wayne Enterprises with meticulous care. Shortly after a news story that he appeared at a nightclub or party with some bimbo, he would indulge in a little brainless banter with a new secretary - just enough for word to get around that he was at it again, the letch. And that would be it for six weeks, minimum. The rest of the time he conducted himself in meetings in such a way that serious business people felt they were contributing to (or doing business with) a strong and stable corporation with vision and leadership. Yes, they would say, one heard stories about Bruce Wayne, and no doubt most of them are true... but from what individual executives saw of him with their own eyes, they could be satisfied making deals with Wayne Enterprises without fear the place would collapse into a heap of incompetence before the week’s end.

With the Wayne Foundation, incidentally, he was always *extremely* well behaved. It's a simple matter of: this organization is set up to honor his parents, and its good works rely on the donations from the other guests attending those events. Even if Bruce gave an extraordinary exhibition of FOPism last night at a

dinner party attended by these same people, tonight he will walk and talk like a marginally civilized person - for the whole ten minutes he stays before slipping the leash and making Lucius concoct some new excuse to explain his disappearance.

Selina tells us of a particularly silly suggestion Foster and Forsythe came up with, of sneaking executives in an underground entrance. This suggestion is unacceptable, obviously, not only because, as Selina says, it sounds like a James Bond movie, but because the building of such an entrance could compromise the Satellite Batcave we learn of in *What'd New Pussycat*. The cave under the Wayne Building was also a staple of the Pre-Crisis Len Wein era.

Catverse Variations on Comedy & Tragedy

This chapter begins with a rapidfire (and slightly pretentious) introduction to the Greeks as architects of Western Civilization. The intention was to work up to Greek Theatre, and in particular, the two varieties: Comedy and Tragedy. This chapter will juxtapose elements of the two – Hubris, the most common tragic flaw, in relation to Talia – and just a little in relation to Bruce as well, nursing his ego after Selina's triumph penetrating his workstation - and later Comedy in the farsical antics at the Wayne Foundation party.

These early paragraphs are the core of understanding Talia. Her fanatical insistence that Batman returns her affections in the face of any evidence to the contrary goes beyond mere 'stubborn' and 'spoiled' labels her critics usually produce. To account for her behavior we have to explore actual obsessive psychosis. Talia's mind simply CANNOT PROCESS the idea that things are not be the way she wants them to be. B can tell her plainly: "No" and it's like asking a color-blind person to see red. He can go years without seeing her or contacting her, display nothing but abject contempt when he finally does, and none of it threatens her delusion.

This idea of trying to manufacture reality by **INSISTING** the desired thing is true will be discussed further in ***TIMES GONE BY***. It's a recurring motif in relation to Talia and Ra's, both within the canon *and* as fictional characters. Just as in the fictional world, Talia insists she is Bruce's destiny, so in the real world her creator Denny O'Neil tried to **INSIST** a relationship into being. When he became editor of the Bat titles he declared his creation, Talia, was Batman's true love and did everything possible to erase the relationship with Catwoman from the public imagination. Likewise he declared his other creation, Ra's al Ghul, was Batman's ultimate foe, and that other creation of Bob Kane's, the Joker, was yesterday's news.

Neither really took, because that's not how legends work. When a story survives over time – particularly decades of intense social change as Batman has in the 20th Century – it survives because it has something fundamental, something resonates deep in our collective social subconscious, we recognize a truth, we recognize we have something to learn from this, so we hold on to it.

No one person decides what stays in and what is forgotten. We decide that collectively. We remember certain characters, certain story arcs, we save those issues.

I remember an essay by someone who first “saw” Joker, Penguin, Catwoman, & Riddler in the 1960s TV series but knew of them before hand. He says this can't have been from the comicbooks, for the Wertherman era declared killer clowns and animal-themed criminals too disturbing. When this essayist was reading in the 1950s, the classic foes had been replaced by mad scientists with gadgets and the ubiquitous aliens from outerspace. He could only have known about these characters, he says, from his older sister. Who had read the Golden Era stories and told him about them.

That is folklore in action. What is “right” remains, or is brought back, in incarnation after incarnation. Joker and Catwoman, since Batman #1.

O'Neil's attempt to oust them from their place by authority of his own will, is indeed Hubris worthy of old man Ra's.

Wow, serious stuff.

And as it usually does, the serious, in this case the tragedy

section, also serves to counterpoint lighter fare: one of the most talked about scenes in Cat-Tales, the Farce at the Wayne Foundation Party.

I love this scene because, with the exception of 60's camp and an exceptional one-shot by Harlon Ellison, comedy has been missing from the Batverse. And it has, as Dick notes, all the traditional ingredients for really CLASSIC COMEDY.

The most amazingly wonderful (and short) explanation of comedy is in Neil Simon's Broadway Bound:

*"The key word is **wants**! In every comedy, even drama, somebody has to want something and want it bad. He wants money, he wants a girl, he wants to get to Philadelphia. When somebody tries to stop him from getting money or a girl or getting to Philadelphia, that's conflict. Wanting plus conflict equals what?
A job at CBS."*

Want + Conflict is ALL OVER THE BATVERSE. At any given moment, Bruce and everyone else knows exactly what his objective is: to get away from the party, to get to the Batcave, to take down the badguy.

And whatever his goal is at any given moment to say he "wants it bad" is an understatement. He's 100% focused on it with every iota of his exceptionally focused and formidable personality.

And god knows there's built in conflict at every step of the way: Bruce Wayne is on a date at this party, and he's disappeared on this girl six times already... there are people in the house that will see him go to the batcave... the bad guy doesn't want to be taken down.

Want + Conflict.

So why, someone please tell me, is comedy all but unknown in the batverse?

The party scene in **Catfight** is probably not the funniest bit in Cat-Tales – that award probably goes to Jervis's Aunt Maud, or possibly Joker & Harley's anniversary at the Iceberg. But since

this scene would announce the existence of comedy in the Catverse, the party scene does follow the conventions of classic farce as closely as I could manage. As we go on Farcical elements will blend with other comedic styles, but for now, it's pure frantic Scooby-gang running from room to room, covering the lie, trying to be two people at once.

Catverse Rooftop

Some may feel Batman's brooding on the rooftop, which began to look and sound more like sulking as soon as Catwoman arrived, was a little "off."

I know I thought so at first, and that was the first inkling I had that the Cat-Tales characters were not frozen into place. They were alive, and they would change in response to whatever went on in previous chapters. Batman wasn't 'off' – he was different from the Batman in Chapter 1 of **Reputation**, but he was still totally in character for the Batman in Chapter 3 of **Catfight**.

DCU

"I helped you stop a plague."

This refers to the CONTAGION cross-over. As always, take the Gotham Post's coverage with a grain of salt.

"I kicked Prometheus's ass when he'd taken out the entire JLA."

"you were at the WatchTower to steal the Storm-Opals"

JLA #17

"I let you use me as bait to catch the Joker"

"You didn't let me use you as bait, I had to trick you into it."

Catwoman #65

And for the record, she did get a "Thank You" after getting him the computer disks in No Man's Land, but Selina, like all women, has selective memory for such events.

Catverse Thomas and Martha

Batman, when written well, as in Grant Morrison's JLA run, is the epitome of what an 'ordinary' human being can achieve by developing his/her gifts. The scene in Catfight which introduces Thomas (and, through him, Martha) is quite special to me, since it acknowledges that the qualities Bruce possesses didn't just happen. They came from somewhere.

Martha was a strong, determined woman – which daughters of those old, founding families tend to be. Thus from her, Bruce got the obsessive drive, the determination to right wrongs, and the temper. From Thomas, patience and a knack for deduction, which brings us to...

Sherlock Holmes

Thomas Wayne was a doctor. And it is his 'ghost', or Bruce's inner-Thomas drawn from memory, imagination and insight, that first reveals Bruce's childhood love of Sherlock Holmes, which will be the driving force in ***Trick or Treat***.

DCU

This is drawn from the comics, an anniversary issue of Detective Comics in the '80s drawn by Alan Davis. In that story, Holmes is real, and Batman meets his boyhood hero. One reviewer tells of a classic panel where Batman tries to light Holmes's pipe and Sherlock tells him at his age, the pipe is merely for show.

In the Catverse, Sherlock Holmes is recognized as a fictional detective, and one which Bruce read and loved as a boy. The astute reader will realize from this scene, Bruce was a Holmes fan pre-Crime alley, and the especially insightful reader can deduce why.

Bruce is a Holmes fan because his father was. Thomas introduced Bruce to the Holmes stories. They discussed them.

Literature

And Thomas, most likely, enjoyed the stories because of what he says in ***Catfight***: Sir Arthur Conan Doyle studied medicine.

Holmes techniques of observation and deduction are based on processes of medical diagnoses, as taught by Doyle's mentor Dr. Joseph Bell.

"Son, it's passion"

Thomas and Martha will both voice a non-clichéd views of romance and fighting between couples. This isn't to say they themselves fought like cat and dog - or cat and bat. It's simply that they're adults, and it was a marriage. In the Catverse, as in life, those who inspire strong feelings in each other do not do so because they are 'two sides of the same person'

Reality

The Catfight

The move Selina uses to deflect Talia's flailing attack grabbing the wrists is an Aikido technique. Most Aikido comes down to redirecting an attacker's momentum, rather than pitting your strength against theirs in a block. It is the only way one of Catwoman's size and strength could hope to fight someone like Batman, who is so much stronger.

"I close my eyes (and ears) and summon thoughts of Yo Yo Ma, Bill Conti, and Bobby McFerrin."

Yo Yo Ma is a classical cellist, Bill Conti a jazz and movie composer, and Bobby McFerrin a jazz vocalist.

"You're just starring in your own little Euripides play over there, aren't you ?"

While almost any writer of Ancient Greece would convey the pretentious self-importance in Talia's speech, Euripides plays included Medea, Electra, and The Trojan Women, and between Clytemnestra, Iphigenia, and Medea, he probably has more chatter about fathers than any other dramatist put pen to parchment.

“Nathan Lane in drag”

Even if you didn't see *The Birdcage*, it's a vivid image, isn't it. Now Talia makes *Batman* look like *that* by comparison. Beginning to get the picture of just how humorless, puffed up, and full of herself the demonspawn is?

"one of those hissing-scratching-hairpulling sideshows where overdressed women with big hair knock each other into swimming pools"

The classic catfight described was in the quintessential 1980s nighttime soap opera: *Dynasty*. What else is there to say? They had big hair. They had shoulder pads. They went in the swimming pool.

Catverse “I’ve emptied the martini shaker twice.”

Selina's Martini Recipe:

In a shaker, pour 4 parts Stolichnaya Vodka and 1 part extra dry imported Vermouth over shaved ice

Shake well

Pour into chilled martini glass

Garnish with pickled ginger.

Catverse “Do you, Bruce Wayne and Selina Kyle promise to forsake all others and reserve your warped, angst-ridden, dysfunctional nincompoopery for each other, thereby saving at least two innocent people and providing untold hours of fascinated diversion to the rest of us who might otherwise think *WE* have screwed up relationships!”

There are about five quotes I can pull that capture the essence of the series. “you cannot sum up a human being’s existence in a sentence like a listing in the TV Guide” was one. This rant of Dick’s is another.

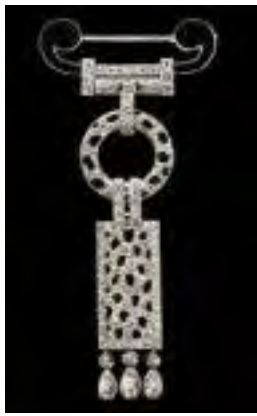
Reality The Catpins



When Selina first visited Raoul’s Coffee Cart in Reputation, she was wearing “A dramatic silk scarf with an image of a jewel encrusted panther – the hallmark of a famous Gotham jeweler.”

The real-world counterpart for that Jeweler is Cartier, founded in Paris in 1847 when Louis-François Cartier (1819-1904) took over the jewelry workshop of his teacher, Adolphe Picard, at 29 rue Montorgueil.

Generations later, in 1914, they evolved a signature motif of paved diamonds and onyx, used to decorate the bezel of a round woman’s wristwatch.



Cartier's inventive designs included many animals, most often the panther. The graceful lines of the cat being particularly well-suited to beautiful jewelry. The union of the large-cat motif with the diamond/onyx black and white to form a leopard was probably inevitable. It became world famous in 1948 when the Duke and Duchess of Windsor purchased a Panthere motif brooch made of platinum set upon a 152.35 carat sapphire

cabochron.



[Cartier's bought this item back at an auction at Sotheby's in Geneva in 1987 for an exhibition the Art of Cartier which is currently on tour]

The pave diamond and onyx leopard pin is indeed Cartier's signature piece. It takes a master jeweler one full year to make one pin.

Catverse

In the last chapter of ***Catfight***, the lines are beginning to blur between Bruce and Batman, within the context of the romance, and just possibly outside of it.

The internal monologues tease "Such an Idiot" the next installment.

In his, as Bruce gamely tries to convince himself of the bright side of Selina's criminal status, he says "Even Matches Malone would never see the star-players interact that way."

DCU

Matches Malone is a regular identity Batman assumes to go undercover in the netherworld of Gotham crime. As always, we should ignore recent idiocy at DC and look to pre-Crisis for a usable take on things:

The Matches identity first appeared in 1971 in BATMAN #242-#243. He was a real thug Batman attempted to recruit to join his war against Ra's al Ghul. In a magnificent feat of incompetence, Matches tried to run while shooting at Batman. One of the bullets ricocheted and killed him, and Batman adopted his identity as a cover. Later in this adventure Dick Grayson also made an appearance, using an inflatable body stocking to increase his build (?), to allow Batman and "Matches" to appear at the same time.

Despite this trick, one has to wonder why no one ever noticed that everyone who hires Matches for a job winds up getting caught.