

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.

Domestic Affairs

This episode begins with the results of the corporate strategy launched in ***Catfight***, LexCorp is pulling out of Gotham – small wonder considering the enormous sums Talia was spending chasing down the bogus leads Bruce was planting for her. Lex Luthor hears of it and orders her to stop, leaving no doubt who is really running his company.

An insignificant detail? Perhaps. But as the tales progress and Bruce, the businessman, will have more contact with Talia and will be seen making derogatory comments about her (Talia Twitterhead). Some readers thought this was indiscreet, telegraphing a distaste grounded in the Ra's connection, which should mean nothing to "Bruce Wayne, ordinary guy."

This section establishes for readers who are unaware, that the public Bruce Wayne has ample reason to distrust and dismiss Talia, a reason which has nothing to do with Daddy or with Batman. That reason is Luthor and Lex Corp. As far as the world is concerned, Lex and Bruce have been squaring off since before No Man's Land, and we see here that Talia's interest in Wayne Enterprises is assumed to be her following his lead.

Selina gets the inside scoop by going to a coffeeshop in the financial district to eavesdrop on the brokers.

Gotham Tidbit from the real world: New York has been a center of commerce since it was New Amsterdam. The financial district is in the southern tip of Manhattan and Wall Street is so named because it was originally *a wall*, built by the Dutch to protect the colony from invasion by the jealous English.

We know that the business world was agog when Lex appointed the notably unqualified Talia to run his company, so Wall Street insiders would be keeping an eye on LexCorp and not just for financial reasons. Sure they had to guard against a stock tumble that would devalue their portfolios, but there was an entertainment value as well: each fresh development of the pretentious neophyte's mishaps would be the titter of the day, and much talked about in such coffee shops and restaurants.

“How's your Father?”

There is a father motif running throughout this fic: Selina speculates that Talia isn't gone for good, only until she makes it up with Daddy: “and she will, let's not deceive ourselves about that”... the title of the play in which Alfred performs is How's Your Father – and we are reminded it was the deathbed promise to his own father that caused Alfred to abandon the stage and take up a career in domestic service... Dick and Bruce's troubled relationship is discussed which causes Dick to ask both Barbara and Tim about their relationships with their fathers... and finally the story resolves with the vaguely paternal Alfred-Bruce relationship.

“Chloroformed. Twice. Hangover.”

Selina, in the mood to celebrate, finds Bruce in no shape to party. He's nursing quite a hangover, due to Batman's activities. Alfred is off at rehearsals for the community theatre production he signed on for in ***Heard the Latest***, and the only takeout available was pizza or Chinese. In the city proper, where Selina's apartment is, there is a plethora of food choices and all of them deliver. But Wayne Manor is in the 'burbs. It's a gloriously affluent suburb, to be sure. But a suburb none the less. With the only options available marinara sauce or egg drop soup, Bruce choose the lesser of two evils.

Selina explains the delicate problem of eating in that hungover state, and most of her observations: the trial and error searches for one's own best cure... “everything from malted milk shakes... to steak tartar”... come from a delightful volume: ***First Things First: A Connoisseur's Companion to Breakfast*** by Ralph Pomeroy. The

aptly titled chapter on hangovers “The Mourning After” also contributes the cold yogurt soup Selina prepares for the invalid:

Take a large container of plain yogurt, sweeten with 1 or 2 tablespoons honey to taste, 2 teaspoons vanilla, a dollop of sour cream, and sprinkle with mint leaves. Everything is cold to start with, so it shouldn't require additional chilling, but another few hours will not do it any harm either.

The plain chicken with poached pear comes from a famous story of the great French chef Escoffier, before he was great or even a chef in his own right. He was a lowly staffer at a posh resort on the Riviera when a hotel guest, a young girl his age who seemed quiet and frail, called him over and made a special request: something too simple to put on a menu – a piece of plain chicken without skin and some fruit. Nothing else. He prepared it and – on a whim, picked a small flower and laid it across the pear on the plate. The girl thanked him and that was all – until her father called him to their suite. The thought of that flower nagged at Escoffier, but he went nonetheless. The girl had been ill and brought to the seaside to recover, but up until now the food was too rich for her, she had been unable to eat. The father thanked Escoffier and offered a handsome tip. – Escoffier refused, the idea of being slipped something extra to provide palatable food offended him. The father owned a restaurant in Paris and offered Escoffier a job there, and he was one step closer to becoming the famous *chef de cuisine*.

“Puce?”

Dick never says, but I'm sure we all realize that salesgirl who sold him the couch must have been a redhead.

Alfred's Scrambled Eggs:

Whisk together 2 fresh Jumbo Eggs or 3 Extra Large eggs + 1 tablespoon cream per person

In melt 1 lump butter for each 3 eggs in a large frying pan, season with dill and herbs de Provence until fragrant

Add eggs over medium flame, season with salt and lemon pepper.

Test with spatula until mixture begins to solidify to fluffy texture about half way up from flame, agitate and flip with spatula until tender.