

Bruce Wayne

Pilot

by
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TEASER

OVER BLACK:

ALFRED (V.O.)

"How did we get here? How did it
all come... to this?"

INT. A SMALL SIDE-CAVERN - NIGHT

An aged hand elegantly writes the above words, the first sentences in a leather-bound journal. REVEAL: an old man, ALFRED PENNYWORTH, in formal butler clothes, writes:

ALFRED

"Perhaps the answers are hidden,
here, in all this."

Dozens of boxes cover the floor, all piled with mysterious, intriguing items. Lining the walls of the small cavern are museum-like display cases... all empty. Waiting.

ALFRED (V.O.) (CONT'D)

"Now that I'm retired and near-
useless, my employer has graciously
granted me this long over-due task:
cataloging all these items and
mementoes from "The Early Years"."

Alfred reaches into a box, picks up and dusts off two items: a book "Business for Beginners", and a faded photo of young people, faces full of promise. He stares at it with great sadness and loss. He writes:

ALFRED (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And so, to aid future historians--
or more likely, future prosecutors--
I begin this narrative, my attempt
to explain, to understand the series
of events that finally led my
employer and I, two seemingly
intelligent, rational men, to our
current remarkable--some would say
alarming--state of affairs.

Alfred stares at the photo, it fills the frame, DISSOLVES:

INT. A LONDON POLICE STATION FRONT DESK - NIGHT

CHAOS, a busy London Police Station. UNIFORMED BOBBIES and assorted RIFF-RAFF crowd the front desk where an incredulous DESK SERGEANT bellows over the din:

(CONTINUED)

DESK SERGEANT

Bruce Wayne? The 18 year-old multimillionaire? Right! We got him here! In a cell with Prince Charles and the Beatles!

He speaks to: Alfred, late 30's, out-of-place and dapper in his butler uniform. Alfred looks stubborn, unamused.

ALFRED

He's only seventeen, sir. His 18th birthday is in four days.

(with distaste:)

I understand there was a fight. In a bar. Near "the docks"...

On the sergeant's now-alarmed face....

INT. JAIL HALLWAYS - MOVING - NIGHT

TRACKING: worried POLICE OFFICIALS practically curtsey to Alfred as they rush him through jail hallways.

POLICE SUPERINTENDANT

Mr. Pennyworth. Do you often "bail-out" your employer?

ALFRED

(darkly deadpan)

Master Bruce has... "issues".

POLICE SUPERINTENDANT

Bit of a handful, is he?

ALFRED

You have no idea...

Through a barred door, they're met by a NERVOUS JAILER.

JAILER

This way, sir. He's in: "The Tank".

Alfred raises an eyebrow. The cops look awkward.

POLICE SUPERINTENDANT

"The Tank" is for the belligerent drunks and thugs. There's just one bench, they all fight for it.

JAILER

The lads here thought to teach your young man a lesson, sir.

ALFRED

Oh, I wish you hadn't done that.

(CONTINUED)

JAILER

It's only been a few minutes, I'm sure Mr. Wayne is all right...

ALFRED

It's not Mr. Wayne I'm worried about....

They arrive: in a huge cell, a lone figure sits on a bench, while at his feet lie a dozen sprawled, GROANING THUGS. WARY THUGS line the cell walls, keeping their distance.

ALFRED (CONT'D)

Master Bruce. If you and your "friends" are quite finished....

The figure turns: BRUCE WAYNE. Very handsome in a dark, brooding way. He has only a few scratches, his expensive dark clothes (he generally wears black) somewhat ruffled. Graceful, athletic, he grins at Alfred with a rueful half-smile, and strides to the door.

BRUCE

So long fellas. My ride's here.

SEVERAL THUGS

See ya, Mr. Wayne.

Bruce exits the cell, where Alfred waits.

ALFRED

Master Bruce. I'm sorry to spoil your entertainment this evening, but your trustees telephoned. You are instructed to return as soon as possible. To Gotham City.

Bruce freezes, his dark eyes flash angrily, he snaps:

BRUCE

No! No. I'd rather stay in here.

ALFRED

Sir... we have no choice.

In Alfred's grim face, Bruce sees that it's true; he smolders, angry, but he nods. They turn and leave.

MAIN TITLES

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

DREAMLIKE - FLYING THROUGH A DARK CITYSCAPE - NIGHT

CREDITS. A nightmarish flight through city streets, a dark urban jungle, through narrow alleys cluttered with fire escapes and laundry lines, through haze and smoke from burning trash. An ominous city. Bleak. Forbidding.

The VIEW DESCENDS towards a neon-lit theater, its marquee: "The Mark of Zorro". MOVIEGOERS exit, an affluent couple with a small boy. The family walks away, toward a side-street where, in the shadows, a dark figure lurks....

INT. PRIVATE JET, IN FLIGHT - NIGHT

Bruce CRIES OUT, wakes with a start. He looks around: he's on a small private jet, Alfred sits beside him.

ALFRED

Nightmares again, Master Bruce?

Bruce, sweats, doesn't answer. He looks at Alfred's book: "TROUBLED TEENS". He gives Alfred a "give me a break" look.

ALFRED (CONT'D)

We'll be landing soon....

(reads his book:)

Ohhh, I see... Aa-ha! How true.

With a big yellow marker, Alfred highlights passages and TSK-TSK-TSKs. Bruce rolls his eyes, aims a TV remote at a TV. ON TV: a photo of Bruce fills the screen behind a NEWS ANCHOR.

TELEVISION (V.O.)

...returning to Gotham City for the first time in twelve years, since his parents' tragic deaths. Bruce Wayne, the sole heir of the Wayne Family fortune...

Bruce CLICKS, channel-surfs: all channels feature him:

TELEVISION (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(PSYCHOLOGIST on "Oprah")

...of course Bruce Wayne is traumatized: he was only six when his parents were murdered right in front of him! Bruce Wayne needs years of therapy. Years!

("Wall St. Week" ANALYST)

...prices down sharply due to concerns over the coming-of-age of

(MORE)

TELEVISION (V.O.) (CONT'D)

heir Bruce Wayne, WayneCorp major
shareholder...

(pink-haired MTV V.J.)

...this tattoo is Bruce Wayne, see,
and this tattoo is J.F.K. Jr...

CLICK! VICKY VALE, gorgeous, 18; a gossip show, "GOTCHA!"
Behind her looms a moody photo of a dark, brooding Bruce.

TV [VICKY VALE] (V.O.)

What is it about Bruce Wayne, Gotham
City's tragic Prince, our very own
Hamlet? OK, so he's rich, he's
handsome, and he's got these, like,
amazing eyes...

Alfred turns, stares at Bruce; Bruce colors, ignores him.

TV [VICKY VALE] (V.O.) (CONT'D)

But what really gets to us, girls?
Yes, Bruce Wayne is troubled. He's
lost, he's searching for something...
and deep down inside, we girls hope
what he's searching for is... us!

(with sultry heat)

And so, from every girl in Gotham
City... welcome home, Bruce.

(beat)

This is Vicky Vale, for Gotcha!

Bruce makes a face, TURNS IT OFF.

ALFRED

Master Bruce: you will find the
media here is far more offensive
than in Europe....

BRUCE

I know: "Stay out of trouble Bruce."

ALFRED

Sir, you/are a celebrity, entering
upon "The World Stage". Intense
curiosity surrounds you, millions
now scrutinize your every move....

BRUCE

They should get a life.

ALFRED

They envy you yours.

BRUCE

Yeah? Well, they can have it....

(CONTINUED)

Bruce broods, stares out the window. Alfred SIGHS.

PILOT OVER P.A. (V.O.)
Sir, we're landing at Gotham City.

Bruce looks out: orange haze hovers over dark, dreary streets.

BRUCE
Gotham City. Who in their right mind would want to live here?

ALFRED
Five generations of Waynes, sir. Not counting you, of course....

BRUCE
Not me. Tomorrow, I'm signing those papers as fast as I can. Then we can get the hell out of here.

ALFRED
Oh? And where will we be hurrying off to next, sir?
(Bruce glares)
Sir: at your age, "flailing about", "finding yourself" is only natural. But you possess great wealth and a fine family name. You have responsibilities.

BRUCE
"Bruce, get a 'respectable' career." Like what, Law, Business? Politics?

ALFRED
You could simply "be rich". Being "a Person of Great Wealth" is not a terrible career, nor a strenuous one. There's no "Heavy Lifting".

Bruce scowls, shakes his head. He looks out the window.

BRUCE
I'm supposed to do something. Who I am, what I can do, it's for a reason. But what...?

ALFRED
I wish I knew, sir. But soon, you will have to decide.

BRUCE
I'll tell you what I do know: my "destiny" is not to run some stupid company.

(MORE)

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Let my Trustees keep running
WayneCorp. As long as they keep
the checks coming in...

EXT. AIRPORT PRIVATE AVIATION TERMINAL - NIGHT

FLASH! FLASH! REPORTERS swarm Bruce and Alfred, as they
plunge through the crowd, to a beautiful Rolls Royce. VALETS
load baggage, hand Alfred keys.

At the car door, Bruce sees Vicky Vale, she smiles
alluringly... and shoves a microphone in his face.

VICKY VALE

Bruce Wayne! Your parents' killer
was never caught: any comments?

Bruce scowls darkly, disappears inside the Rolls, it pulls
away. Vicky smiles. FLASH! FLASH!

EXT. GATE TO WAYNE MANOR - NIGHT

FLASH! FLASH! The Rolls slides in through the ornate gate,
past swarming PHOTOGRAPHERS. The massive gate slowly closes,
nearly crushes over-aggressive photojournalists.

Past the gate, poised atop a rise, the vast, gothic Wayne
Manor looms, silhouetted against the night sky.

EXT. WAYNE MANOR - NIGHT

Bruce and Alfred alight. Bruce stares up at Wayne Manor
towering overhead: it's eerie, something from another time.

ALFRED

It's been twelve years, sir....

Bruce nods: his face is awash with conflicting emotions.

AT THE FRONT DOOR

Alfred fiddles with keys at the enormous door, unopened for
years, covered with cobwebs, ivy, vines. Bruce is restless.

BRUCE

I remember, Wayne Manor seemed
enormous. Like it was built for
giants. But I was only six.

Alfred opens the lock--CLUNK! The door opens, CREAK.

ALFRED

They say when an adult returns to
his childhood home it shrinks in
his absence, grows far smaller...

INT. WAYNE MANOR ENTRY - NIGHT

Two tiny silhouettes stand in the door, FOOTSTEPS ECHO in the immense entry. Enormous stairs wind far overhead. Towering windows throw huge rectangles of moonlight across a vast floor. Statues, tapestries, armor, huge fireplaces line the walls, all covered with dust. Bruce GASPS.

ALFRED (V.O.)

There, see? Not so big now. Quite cozy, in fact.

A tiny Bruce enters, his FOOTSTEPS ECHO.

ALFRED (V.O.) (CONT'D)

There was no time to bring anyone in to clean. Would a hotel be preferable? Master Bruce? I'll get the bags then, shall I? Sir...?

Bruce disappears. Alfred SIGHS, exits toward the car.

ANGLES - BRUCE EXPLORES WAYNE MANOR

Bruce wanders from room to room, searching for something. The abandoned house, drenched with shadows and darkness, is still breath-taking; it's incredibly sad: this house, once so grand, so alive, now sits dead, forgotten.

INT. WAYNE MANOR, THOMAS WAYNE'S STUDY - NIGHT

Two-story bookcases fill the study's walls. FOOTSTEPS ECHO. Bruce peers in, sees something, enters. Stops.

Bruce stares up at an enormous, somber family portrait: a big, capable man, his handsome wife, their beloved son. Bruce's parents, and Bruce as a child. His family.

Bruce stares, broods. His eyes water, he finally has to look away... and jumps: Alfred stands beside him.

BRUCE

Alfred! I've asked you: make some noise when you approach.

ALFRED

Habits of a lifetime, sir. Not easily broken.

Alfred joins Bruce. Both stare soberly up at the portrait.

ALFRED (CONT'D)

Your parents, sir, were the finest people I have ever known.

(CONTINUED)

BRUCE
I wish I'd known them.

ALFRED
So do I, sir... Dinner is served.

INT. WAYNE MANOR DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Alone, Bruce sits at one end of a fifty-foot long dining table. He looks (and feels) ridiculous. And restless. He pushes his food around, not hungry.

Suddenly, a PHONE RINGS. CLATTERS, CURSING. Bruce rushes to the kitchen door, looks in: Alfred, in fancy chef whites and tall chef hat, speaks into the phone, acidly:

ALFRED (into phone)
I will tell him, sir. Thank you.

BRUCE
What's wrong?

ALFRED
The telephone rang just as I was removing a soufflé. It's ruined!

Alfred glares at the corpse of a sunken soufflé.

BRUCE
Who was on the phone?

ALFRED
Your old schoolmate, Harvey Dent.
He's having a party tomorrow night.

BRUCE
We'll be gone by then. Are the keys still in the Rolls?

Alfred answers, distracted, dumping the soufflé.

ALFRED
Yes, I'll put it away momentarily...

BRUCE
Don't bother. I'm going out.

He closes the kitchen door on Alfred's look of alarm.

EXT. WAYNE MANOR - NIGHT

Bruce hurries out, freezes: Alfred waits there, now in his chauffeur's uniform, holding open the door of the Rolls. Bruce SIGHS, starts to get in, notes Alfred's uniform.

(CONTINUED)

BRUCE
Nice uniform.

ALFRED
Thank you, sir.

BRUCE
And you put it on so fast.

ALFRED
Ah. Cambridge, the Footlights Club.
I was a tenor, and played many parts.

BRUCE
I thought you were a medic, in the
British Commandos.

ALFRED
Indeed I was. Ready, sir?

Bruce gets in, looks thoughtful.

ANGLES - THE ROLLS CRUISES GOTHAM CITY STREETS - NIGHT

ANGLES: rhythmic, artful shots of The Rolls prowling Gotham City streets by night, set to MUSIC: a 90's *Taxi Driver*.

Bruce stares, appalled, at Gotham's "mean streets". XXX theaters, trash, gangs, graffiti, an urban jungle.

INT. ROLLS ON GOTHAM STREETS - NIGHT

ALFRED
Seen enough, sir? It seems to get
even worse in this direction.

BRUCE
Keep going. It's not far.

Suddenly, Alfred realizes where they're going.

ALFRED
Oh! Master Bruce! Not there!
It's not wise...! Sir!

EXT. CRIME ALLEY - NIGHT

The Rolls stops in the heart of the jungle: Crime Alley. It's deserted, darkly ominous, most buildings are boarded. Scattered, EERIE SOUNDS: a distant SCREAM. GUNSHOTS. It's not safe for anyone to be on this street.

Tense, eyes wide: Bruce steps out, looks around; it looks so familiar: a theater, boarded up now, a shadowy corner...

This is where Bruce's parents were killed.

Bruce stares, haunted. FLASHBACK: QUICK CUTS, surreal. The theater, a happy child, anxious parents. They turn a corner. A gunman leaps from the shadows. Aims a gun. FIRES. His parents crumple. His mother's pearl necklace breaks apart, pearls fly, fall, bounce, roll to a stop.

Bruce stares at where his parents fell. Alfred agonizes. Bruce, haunted, looks up at the now-dark theater marquee.

BRUCE

"The Mark of Zorro" played that night. My sixth birthday, it was only playing here, and I had to see it. I couldn't understand why my father wouldn't bring me here, to this part of town. I threw a tantrum, and he finally gave in.

ALFRED

You were a child, sir. It was not your fault.

BRUCE

I had to see Zorro. A silly movie about a "hero" who wears a costume and fights crime.

Bruce bows his head, overcome with grief.

ALFRED

Sir. You mustn't punish yourself...

Alfred sees SHADOWS down the street approaching: uh oh.

ALFRED (CONT'D)

...or me, for that matter. Sir...!

Bruce broods. Alfred sees three shadows, closer now.

ALFRED (CONT'D)

We should go, now. Master Bruce...!

Too late: three THUGS encircle Bruce: big, bad guys.

THUG #1

Hey! Who ya think ya are? Think ya own this street or what?

Bruce freezes... and smiles, a very cold smile.

BRUCE

No. But you do...?

(CONTINUED)

ALFRED

Begging your pardon, sir, but it appears you do own this street...
Look around: every building here is owned by a subsidiary of WayneCorp.

Bruce, surprised, looks around: every building has faded "condemned", "coming soon" signs; and in small print along the bottom, each reads: "A division of WayneCorp."

ALFRED (CONT'D)

And so, "gentlemen", in point of fact, he does own this street.
(gets vicious looks)
Sorry. Continue.

BRUCE

Why in the world would WayneCorp own this? Alfred...?

But Alfred is now yards away, dialing a payphone.

ALFRED

Sorry, sir? I didn't hear you, I was dialing the police...

THUG #2

Ha! Good luck!

Alfred gets a BUSY SIGNAL, frowns. The thugs surround Bruce, who stands relaxed, unafraid. Alfred dials: BUSY.

Thug #1 pulls a gun, aims it sideways, "gangsta" style.

THUG #1

Gimmie your wallet!

Bruce's eyes flare red with awesome fury. FLASHBACKS: his parents' killer with a gun. Bruce attacks, fast, a blur, he flows, amazing. The thug's gun flies high in the air, Bruce PUNCHES, throws the thug, high against a wall. SPLAT!

Alfred SIGHS, hangs up the phone.

The other thugs still stand there, stunned. Bruce reaches out, easily catches the falling gun, sneers at it.

BRUCE

A Glock 26.

Thug #1 GROANS, dazed. Bruce crouches over him, sneers:

BRUCE (CONT'D)

This the best gun you could steal?

(CONTINUED)

THUG #1

It works good.

BRUCE

The short plastic grip sure is tough to hold onto, huh? Especially when you hold it sideways, like those stupid gang-bangers on TV.

Bruce scornfully holds it "gangsta" style, "rubbing it in". Behind him, a thug GROWLS, rushes him... still crouched, without looking, Bruce kicks high behind him, SMASHES the thug full in the face, who YELPS, backflips.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Why, this gun hasn't been cleaned in years...

Bruce expertly field-strips the gun. Alfred SIGHS.

ALFRED

Sir: must you tease the psychopaths?

BRUCE

Barrel's leaded-up, no oil... Don't you don't know anything about guns?

THUG #1

Give it back!

BRUCE

Sure...

Bruce dumps a pile of a hundred gun-parts in his lap, grins arrogantly. Thug #1, furious, staggers to his feet.

THUG #1

Get him!

Thugs take out pipes, chains, knives, they rush Bruce... Bruce leaps, spins, a POWERHOUSE KICK throws Thug # 1 somersaulting through the air, SPLAT! It's amazing.

Alfred watches Bruce kick butt. Huge shadows of the epic fight play out over and behind Alfred, deadpan as always:

ALFRED

Master Bruce. May I point out that engaging ignorant hoodlums in violence is no substitute for qualified, professional therapy.

Bruce FLIPS, gracefully sends another thug flying.

BRUCE

Therapy takes years.

(CONTINUED)

ALFRED

So instead you spent twelve years studying martial arts all over the world... I appreciate your need to never feel weak and helpless again, but, sir: really! You're rich! Hire a bodyguard!

BRUCE

I like fighting. I'm good at it. You always tell me: "Find Yourself." Maybe, this is it.

ALFRED

Fine. We'll open a Karate school. You teach sullen adolescents how to kick, I'll hand out towels.

Bruce brutally K.O.s the last thug, adjusts his clothes.

ALFRED (CONT'D)

Well done, sir: you've rendered the hoodlums unconscious... Now what?

BRUCE

Call the cops...?

ALFRED

I've already tried that. You can't leave them lying here. Well...?

Bruce thinks, then grins, a grin that troubles Alfred.

INT. ROLLS - MOVING - NIGHT

Alfred drives, Bruce beside him, the unconscious thugs lie sprawled in the rear: SNORES, GROANS. Alfred frowns, raises the window between front and rear. Bruce grins.

ALFRED

You don't have to scrub the leather upholstery.

BRUCE

A small price to pay for the safety of our streets.

ALFRED

You've changed nothing, sir: Gotham City is still overrun with criminals and your parents are still dead.

(Bruce's smile fades)

We're lucky you weren't hurt.

BRUCE

Lucky? Taking those punks...?

(CONTINUED)

ALFRED

The element of surprise was in your favor. If word gets out that Bruce Wayne is a master at Martial Arts, next time they'll attack in greater numbers. Or shoot first.

Bruce looks stubborn, skeptical (he is a teenager).

ALFRED (CONT'D)

And consider this: liability! Now these thugs can easily sue you for "crippling" them and get millions... after all, you're a trained fighter, and rich. They'll get your money, I'll have to go to work for them.

BRUCE

But maybe they'd listen to you.

ALFRED

Sir, you are not a normal teenager, quit acting like one. You have the enormous burdens of celebrity and great wealth, and you must learn to deal with it. Master Bruce: it is time to grow up.

Bruce's face hardens, his eyes flare.

BRUCE

You know... other butlers all say "yes sir, no sir."

ALFRED

Other butlers' employers don't enjoy brawling with street criminals.

BRUCE

Everybody needs a hobby.

ALFRED

Sir: have you considered collecting stamps? Coins? Butterflies?

EXT. GOTHAM CITY MAIN POLICE STATION - NIGHT

The Rolls pulls up, Bruce can't believe his eyes: in front of Gotham's run-down police station, streetwalkers, thieves, and drug dealers openly work their trade. Bruce yanks the groggy thugs, tied with their belts, out of the car.

BRUCE

Think the car's safe here, in front of the police station...?

(CONTINUED)

Alfred shrugs, looks anxious. They go inside.

INT. GOTHAM CITY MAIN POLICE STATION - NIGHT

They enter: in stark contrast to every police station ever seen on TV, it's quiet. A DESK SERGEANT reads "Jugs". COPS nap, do crosswords. Bruce COUGHS to get their attention.

BRUCE

Hello Excuse me? These thugs here tried to rob us at gunpoint.

DESK SERGEANT

Yeah? So where's the gun?

Alfred empties a sack of springs and gun-parts onto the Sergeant's desk. The Sergeant pokes at the parts.

DESK SERGEANT (CONT'D)

That's it?

Alfred dumps out a big sack of chains, knives, and pipes.

DESK SERGEANT (CONT'D)

Yeah, OK. You wanna file charges, you gotta talk to the detectives.

BRUCE

Fine. Where do we go?

DESK SERGEANT

They went home at 4:30. They'll be back in the morning, around 9.

He goes back to "Jugs". Bruce and Alfred look stunned.

BRUCE

There's no detectives working now?
What do I do with these crooks,
take 'em home with me?

The Desk Sergeant shrugs, it's not his problem. But...

BARBARA GORDON (O.S.)

My dad's still working....

Bruce and Alfred turn: behind them a young girl, thirteen, grins up at them. BARBARA GORDON. Spiky, boyish red hair. A skateboard sticks out of her backpack.

DESK SERGEANT

Beat it, Barbara.

BARBARA GORDON

My dad's a detective.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BARBARA GORDON (CONT'D)
 The best cop in Gotham City. The
 papers say so.
 (with utter conviction)
 He's gonna be Commissioner someday.

The cops LAUGH, scornful. Barbara recognizes Bruce, GASPS.

BARBARA GORDON (CONT'D)
 You're Bruce Wayne! I see your
 pictures all the time in "Teen
 People" and "Tiger Beat"! I saved
 the articles if you wanna see 'em.

She bats her eyelashes up at Bruce, dazzled.

DESK SERGEANT
 Bruce Wayne? You're Bruce Wayne?!
WayneCorp Bruce Wayne? Sorry, didn't
 recognize you, Mr. Wayne!

Cops rush to take the thugs. The Sergeant DIALS his phone.

DESK SERGEANT (CONT'D)
 Mr. Wayne, I'm calling Lt. Flass,
 he'll come in and take your
 statement, personally.

BRUCE
 Forget it. I'm going upstairs and
 talk to Barbara's dad.

BARBARA GORDON
 All right!

ALFRED
 I'll go guard the Rolls, sir.

Alfred SNIFFS at the cops, exits. Bruce follows Barbara
 upstairs, she BABBLES non-stop:

BARBARA GORDON
 My mom died last year, cancer, the
 Big C, if I don't take Dad dinner,
 he won't eat. Men...! Wow! Bruce
Wayne! This is so cool!

The pissed Desk Sergeant speaks low, into the phone.

DESK SERGEANT
 Sir! Bruce Wayne, he's here...!
 Upstairs, talking to "you-know-who".

The receiver BUZZES angrily, the sergeant makes a face.

INT. GOTHAM CITY DETECTIVE SQUADROOM - NIGHT

A dark squadroom, a dozen desks but only one is occupied: a big cop, mid-thirties, struggles with an ancient typewriter. His desk is heaped with files, reports, evidence.

BARBARA GORDON

Hey Dad! Look who's here!

He raises a finger to "wait", as he two finger-TYPES a report. Bruce stares... that man looks familiar.

FLASHBACKS, QUICK CUTS: his parents' murder scene, young Bruce CRIES as COPS stand around, CRACKING JOKES. Only a young rookie cop comforts him: Bruce buries his face into the cop's shoulder, the cop's nametag says, "J.W. Gordon".

Bruce looks at the battered desk nameplate: SGT. JAMES W. GORDON. Gordon finishes, stands, sticks out a big hand.

JIM GORDON

Jim Gordon.

BRUCE

Bruce Wayne.

A dark shadow of recognition flies across Gordon's face.

JIM GORDON

Uh... Just a minute...

Gordon goes to a blackboard, covered by a complex diagram of people, places, crime scene photos... and all the lines and arrows lead to: "WayneCorp". Bruce looks shocked... Gordon lowers a map over the diagram, hides it.

JIM GORDON (CONT'D)

Sensitive information. An ongoing investigation....

Bruce's mind churns: what was that? What's going on?

JIM GORDON (CONT'D) /

What can I do for you, Mr. Wayne?

BRUCE

You were there. When my parents were murdered.

JIM GORDON

Yes. I was.

BRUCE

So. Who killed them?

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. GOTHAM CITY DETECTIVE SQUADROOM - NIGHT

Bruce looks at a very thin file: the Wayne Murder file. He sees, over and over again: "No suspects, no leads." Crime scene photos, which Bruce can't stomach. No details. Nothing. Angry, Bruce SLAPS the file onto Gordon's desk.

JIM GORDON

Not much there. I'm sorry.

Bruce nods, shrugs. Gordon TYPES arrest reports:

JIM GORDON (CONT'D)

These three robbers: you willing to testify at their trials?

BRUCE

I'm leaving Gotham City tomorrow, after some family business... Can we keep my name out of this, so the papers don't get ahold of it...? I gotta think about my reputation, liability, all that.

JIM GORDON

Yeah, no problem. They'll just plead out to a couple months anyway, and be right back on the streets.
(too casual)
Family business. WayneCorp, right?

Bruce nods. Both look at each other, poker faces.

JIM GORDON (CONT'D)

Big outfit. You get involved much, with the day-to-day stuff?

BRUCE

No. Trustees run everything, 'til I turn 18. In three days.

JIM GORDON

What then? You run WayneCorp?

BRUCE

Tomorrow I'm signing papers to let the Trustees keep running things. I don't want anything to do with Gotham City...

(nudges parents' file)

History. You know.

(CONTINUED)

JIM GORDON

Yeah. Gotham's always been a tough town, but it's gotten worse. Lots worse. I think about leaving.

Bruce sees Gordon's eyes focus on Barbara.

BRUCE

Why don't you get the hell out?

JIM GORDON

Beats me. Eight years to go for a pension, I guess... Somebody's gotta stick it out, try to turn things around here.

Bruce nods, touched. He stands, they shake hands.

BRUCE

Good meeting you. Again.

JIM GORDON

Same here.

BARBARA GORDON

Bye Bruce! Come by for dinner, I'm a great cook! Right Dad?

JIM GORDON

Uh, right....

Bruce sees Gordon struggles with that simple lie: he smiles, goes. Gordon hesitates, calls after Bruce.

JIM GORDON (CONT'D)

Who you meeting with at WayneCorp tomorrow? Charles Palantine?

(Bruce nods)

Take care.

Bruce wonders: were Gordon's parting words a warning...?

EXT. WAYNECORP TOWER - DAY

A giant WayneCorp logo, an impressive high-rise tower, busy EMPLOYEES scurry. Bruce and Alfred enter.

INT. PALANTINE'S OFFICE - DAY

PALANTINE

Bruce! Hello! My, you've grown!

A breathtaking penthouse office, a panoramic view. CHARLES WALKER PALANTINE III greets Bruce. Tall, ram-rod straight, aristocratic. A charming, gracious smile.

(CONTINUED)

BRUCE

Mr. Palantine.

PALANTINE

Call me Charles. Sit, please.

Alfred stands by the door. Bruce sits, takes in this overwhelming office that projects sheer power. Conspicuous on a table in front of Bruce sits a thick, ominous contract.

PALANTINE (CONT'D)

Congratulations on graduating. Finally! The Board and I, as your Guardians, were worried at the rate you were being expelled, we'd run out of suitable prep schools!

Palantine smiles. Bruce smiles thinly: "Give me a break."

PALANTINE (CONT'D)

So, enjoying your stay here? Seen any sights?

BRUCE

The Gotham City Police Station... How come the cops are investigating WayneCorp?

PALANTINE

(genuinely surprised)

That's ridiculous! WayneCorp has a excellent relationship with the Police! The Police Commissioner is a close personal friend of mine. Who's investigating WayneCorp? I'll look into it...

BRUCE

(changes subject)

These the papers you want me to sign? The ones where I hand over control of WayneCorp to you?

PALANTINE

Bruce, your father was a great man. He was devoted to his medical practice, and took little interest in the day to day operation of WayneCorp... that's why he put the Board in charge, and me as Chairman.

Palantine's convincing, caring: Bruce finds himself weakening.

BRUCE

But don't I, like, own WayneCorp...?

(CONTINUED)

PALANTINE

You hold a majority interest, not controlling interest. The Board runs WayneCorp, and represents all stockholders by direct ownership and proxies. Decisions are passed by a two-thirds majority...

Bruce looks confused. Palantine SIGHS sympathetically.

PALANTINE (CONT'D)

Business: it's boring. You're young. Go to college, chase girls, have fun, before you think about taking a place here at WayneCorp....

Bruce shrugs, nods; he pages through the thick contract: all dense legal language. Impenetrable.

PALANTINE (CONT'D)

Bruce, your father was my best friend. I only want what's best for you. If I thought you were remotely interested in a career in business... but you aren't, are you?

Bruce shrugs. Palantine is genuine, and persuasive.

PALANTINE (CONT'D)

Look: there's my desk. I've spent my life chained to it. Is that what you want, Bruce?

Bruce shakes his head: he hates the idea of that.

PALANTINE (CONT'D)

The Board and I have performed very well for you these past twelve years: the stock has tripled, you're a very rich young man.... This contract merely continues our current relationship, what has worked so well in the past: my representing your interests. The way your father wanted it.

BRUCE

Well... If it's what my father wanted...

Palantine smiles warmly, holds out an expensive pen. Bruce takes the pen. Slowly, Bruce puts pen to paper.

And, for an instant, Palantine's eyes shine, the smallest crack in his perfect demeanor. Bruce starts to sign...

(CONTINUED)

Alfred COUGHS, breaks the moment. All look up at him.

ALFRED

Sorry. The pollution here....
dreadful.

Thoughtful, Bruce stares at the unsigned papers... and leaps to a decision. He grabs the papers, jumps up.

BRUCE

I want to look over these papers tonight. Ready, Alfred?

They head for the door, Palantine pursues them.

PALANTINE

Bruce...! What's wrong? Do you want a lawyer to explain things...?

EXT. PALANTINE'S OUTER OFFICE/ELEVATORS - DAY

Palantine pursues Bruce and Alfred toward the elevators.

PALANTINE

We have a number of fine lawyers on staff! I'd be happy to...

LUCIUS FOX

Bruce!

Bruce sees a startled young black intern (LUCIUS FOX, 21) staring at him. Bruce blinks: he looks so familiar.

BRUCE

Do I know...? Lucius!

Bruce hugs Lucius warmly. Lucius sees Palantine staring.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Lucius Fox! It's been years!
(to Palantine)

Lucius and I played together as kids, his dad worked at Wayne Manor!
Lucius: how is your dad?

Great sadness washes over Lucius, alarming Bruce.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

What happened?

PALANTINE

A few years ago Lucius's father worked security at Wayne Chemical. There was an accident. A tragedy.

Palantine, comforting, puts his arm around Lucius.

(CONTINUED)

PALANTINE (CONT'D)

Lucius is a WayneCorp Intern. He gets a salary, work experience, we even pay for his college... He's heading for a bright future here at WayneCorp... right Lucius?

LUCIUS FOX

Yes sir, Mr. Palantine.
(avoids Bruce's eyes)
Nice seeing you, Mr. Wayne...

And he's gone. Bruce watches him go, troubled.

PALANTINE

Bruce, I need those papers signed, first thing in the morning. You turn 18 in two days...!

DING. The elevator arrives, Bruce and Alfred step on.

BRUCE

Great seeing you again, Charles...

INT. THE WAYNE TOWER ELEVATOR - DAY.

Bruce and Alfred ride in thoughtful silence. Beat.

BRUCE

You're worried what'll happen if I sign these papers.

ALFRED

And I'm worried what will happen if you don't.... Sir: what if you have an "accident"? Do you realize who inherits your estate if you are killed before you turn 18...? Your guardians. The Board. Palantine.

BRUCE

Alfred, you're joking! You're being all "droll" and "British" now, right?

ALFRED

If you won't sign, they can easily get what they want by killing you... as long as they kill you before you turn 18, in two days...

BRUCE

Palantine? He's so... banker-ish!

ALFRED

There are others on the Board sir.

(MORE)

ALFRED (CONT'D)

Powerful men, with interests to protect, interests worth hundreds of millions of dollars....

(thinks)

Now I understand why they insisted you come here to sign these papers: as they're under a tight deadline, they wanted you here, close at hand.

Bruce's blood runs cold at these dire implications. He pages through the thick contract: it's impenetrable.

BRUCE

I gotta find out what this thing says, fast.

ALFRED

We need a trustworthy lawyer, sir. Unfortunately, "trustworthy lawyer" is an oxymoron.

BRUCE

It's a good thing Harvey just finished First Year Law...

ALFRED

Harvey Dent? Sir! You're joking!

INT. HALLWAY, LUXURY APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Bruce KNOCKS on a door. MUSIC POUNDS. The door flies open: a big CLOWN, with green hair. MUSIC BLARES.

BRUCE

Is Harvey here...?

CLOWN

Buzz on in, dude!

INT. HARVEY DENT'S LUXURY APARTMENT - NIGHT

Bruce and Alfred enter, look around: the luxury apartment is crammed with PARTYGOERS, all in costume. MUSIC POUNDS.

HARVEY DENT (O.S.)

BRUCE! You MADE it!

HARVEY DENT embraces Bruce: handsome, charismatic, he's one of the Perfect People who seem to "have it all"... until you get to know him. He wears Hugh Hefner pajamas.

BRUCE

Harvey! You didn't say this was a costume party.

(CONTINUED)

HARVEY DENT

You wouldn't come, I know how you hate costumes... Everyone! This is my best friend, Bruce Wayne! We've been thrown out of all the best prep schools together!

CHEERS, the PARTY CONTINUES. All YELL to be heard:

BRUCE

I have some papers I need you to look at...

HARVEY DENT

Now? Are you nuts? I left two supermodels simmering in the hot tub! Oh, hey! Susan is here!

(Bruce GROANS)

Finally, I can get you two kids together! I'll go find her...!

BRUCE

Harvey, please. Look at this...

HARVEY DENT

Later. Where'd that demure little sister of mine go...? Don't move!

He disappears. Bruce SIGHS, looks at Alfred.

BRUCE

We're the only ones not in costume.

Alfred puts on his chauffeur hat, completing his "costume".

ALFRED

Speak for yourself, sir...

Alfred disappears, toward the bar. Bruce walks around, feels awkward, out of place. WILD DANCERS force him a step back, against a closed door. The door behind him opens, darkness beyond: two arms with long claws reach out of the shadows, grasp his shoulders. Bruce jumps, turns...

SELENA KYLE (O.S.)

Coming through. Watch the claws....

A stunning woman steps out: she wears a Tiger outfit, very revealing. She's dark, possibly Latina, olive skin, a mysterious slant to her eyes. SELENA KYLE, 20.

BRUCE

Oh! Didn't see you, in the dark...

(CONTINUED)

SELENA KYLE

I couldn't turn on the light in the bathroom with these. It's a good thing I can see really well in the dark... I'm Selena, Selena Kyle. And you're Bruce Wayne.

Bruce grins: his blood pressure races. Selena does that.

BRUCE

I bet you're a friend of Harvey's.

SELENA KYLE

Sort of. I live in the extremely expensive apartment next door.

BRUCE

Rich parents? Or a great job?

SELENA KYLE

I'm a consultant. I consult. I'm very good... Harvey wants you.

Across the room, Harvey waves at Bruce to come over.

BRUCE

Damn! He's been bugging me to meet his little sister, for years. When I ask what she looks like, he says she's a "good person", with a "great personality"....

SELENA KYLE

Makes all her own clothes? All the other girls love her?

BRUCE

Exactly. Here he comes. Watch...

HARVEY DENT

Susan's in the kitchen! Come on...!

BRUCE

Harvey! What's Susan look like?

HARVEY DENT

Bruce...! Don't you think society today places far too much emphasis on looks? Hi Selena! Bye Selena!

As he drags Bruce off, Selena WHISPERS to him...

SELENA KYLE

If I see you with Susan, I'll come rescue you.

(CONTINUED)

Bruce nods to her. Harvey drags Bruce off, grins.

HARVEY DENT

Watch out for Selena, Bruce. There's lots of rumors about her, and they're all true! Don't let her sink her claws into you.

Bruce smirks. Harvey pushes Bruce out onto a balcony.

EXT. HIGH RISE BALCONY OVERLOOKING GOTHAM CITY - NIGHT

HARVEY DENT

Now: stay here 'til I find Susan!

Harvey CLOSES, LOCKS the glass door, traps Bruce out on the huge, shadowy balcony. Bruce tries the door: LOCKED.

BRUCE

HARVEY...!

Harvey grins, disappears. Bruce SIGHS, turns: an amazing view overlooks Gotham. Breathtaking. Bruce takes it in.

AN ANGEL (O.S.)

From up here, it looks... peaceful.

BRUCE

I was just thinking that...

Bruce looks up: down the railing, he sees a vision: an angel... a beautiful, ethereal blonde dressed as an angel, gossamer wings, glitter make-up, porcelain skin. Bruce stares, enchanted. It's: "The Girl of His Dreams".

AN ANGEL

I had to get out of there...

BRUCE

Oh, yeah. Me too. I'm lousy at parties.

AN ANGEL

And costumes, I see...

BRUCE

Definitely costumes. I hate costumes... except yours! It's great! Really!

She blushes, but smiles. Bruce grins: so far, so good...

AN ANGEL

How do you know Harvey?

(CONTINUED)

BRUCE

Prep School. We got in lots of trouble together... and somehow I wound up getting all the blame.

AN ANGEL

Sounds like Harvey...

BRUCE

Now look at him: graduated Princeton at 20, starting Second Year Law...

AN ANGEL

So, what is it you do...?

BRUCE

Me? My life is kind of... complicated.

AN ANGEL

I'm listening....

She smiles. Suddenly, claws drape Bruce's shoulders...

SELENA KYLE

Bruce... I missed you!

Bruce is stunned: Selena is all over him. No, not now!

BRUCE

Whoa! Selena! Hi! What are you..?

SELENA KYLE

I'm bored. Show me Wayne Manor...!

She nibbles his ear. Bruce BABBLES, tries to peels her off. The Angel looks upset, disappointed.

AN ANGEL

I see... you're Bruce Wayne. "The Millionaire Playboy."

BRUCE

No, wait! The press makes all that up! Really! Selena...!

The Angel starts off; Bruce grabs Selena, furious.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

What the hell are you doing?

SELENA KYLE

RESCUING you, idiot!

Stunned, Bruce is rocked with the realization: Angel is...

(CONTINUED)

HARVEY DENT

Susan!

Harvey stops the Angel, SUSAN DENT, at the door inside.

HARVEY DENT (CONT'D)

Susan! So you finally met Bruce!

SUSAN DENT

Yes. Thanks a lot...

She disappears inside. Now Selena glares at Bruce coldly.

SELENA KYLE

Don't ask me for any more favors!

And she storms inside. Harvey can't believe it.

HARVEY DENT

In just four minutes you piss off
the two prettiest girls here...?

BRUCE

You didn't tell me Susan was
BEAUTIFUL!

HARVEY DENT

I knew you wouldn't believe me! My
sister looks like that? Right!

Bruce is forced to admit Harvey has a point.

BRUCE

I gotta find her! And explain!

He rushes to the door, but Alfred appears, stops him.

ALFRED

Master Bruce: there was an urgent
message at home from Sgt. Gordon.
He wants you to meet him. At Wayne
Chemical. Now.

Bruce CURSES, and thrusts the papers into Harvey's hands.

BRUCE

Read this! TONIGHT! It's
important. LIFE AND DEATH!

Stunned, Harvey watches Bruce and Alfred rush out.

CUT TO:

EXT. WAYNE CHEMICAL FRONT GATE/GUARD SHACK - NIGHT

The Rolls, at the front gate. A GUARD points the way. Beyond, an eerie, industrial factory looms. PIPES STEAM, HISS. Vent stacks BELLOW smoke.

EXT. OUTLET PIPES NEAR RIVERFRONT - NIGHT

The Rolls is parked behind a Gotham City police car. Bruce hurries away, leaving behind a very pissed Alfred...

ALFRED

Alone...? But sir! I insist...!

But Bruce runs off into the darkness. Alfred agonizes.

EXT. ACCESS HATCH - NIGHT

Bruce comes upon a large open access hatch, leading underground. Lights, FOOTSTEPS come from the opening.

BRUCE

Sgt. Gordon...?!

JIM GORDON

Yeah! Down here....

Bruce clammers down a metal ladder: THUNK THUNK THUNK.

INT. LARGE RUSTY UNDERGROUND PIPE/TUNNEL - NIGHT

JIM GORDON

Careful!

Gordon's flashlight shows a pool: eerie green iridescence.

BRUCE

What's is it?

JIM GORDON

Chemicals, hazardous wastes. These tunnels used to dump all kinds of stuff into the river... but that was all outlawed years ago.

BRUCE

WayneCorp's still dumping it?

JIM GORDON

Maybe. We pulled some bodies out of the river: radioactive, full of poisons and chemicals, even some weird biological stuff...

(CONTINUED)

BRUCE

This is why you called me to come
down here? To see this?

Gordon's head snaps up: wait a minute...!

JIM GORDON

I didn't call you...

Bruce and Gordon stare at each other, stunned. Then: CLUNK!
The access hatch overhead SLAMS CLOSED, LOCKS.

Then, Bruce and Gordon hear HUGE VALVES CREAK OPEN. Then, a
deafening ROAR: RUSHING WATER. They're trapped!

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. LARGE RUSTY UNDERGROUND PIPE/TUNNEL - NIGHT

ROAR: RUSHING WATER sounds CLOSE behind them.

JIM GORDON

RUN!

They run down the dark tunnel, away from the ROARING.

INT. DOWN THE TUNNEL - MOVING - NIGHT

Bruce and Gordon desperately run down the tunnel, lit by Gordon's flailing flashlight. Small pipes run along the ceiling overhead, no other openings...

OOOF! Bruce SPLATS into a wall: the tunnel ends. Gordon shines the light around, the only exit is a small tunnel overhead... twenty feet overhead. No way to reach it.

JIM GORDON

Climb on my shoulders!

BRUCE

It's too high!

Bruce runs at the tunnel sidewall, up the curved wall, then he springs backward, backflips, flies up and grabs the small pipes mounted high in the tunnel ceiling. He hand-over-hands to the small tunnel, swings up into it.

JIM GORDON

I can't do that!

Bruce lies on his stomach, reaches down for Gordon.

BRUCE

Run up the wall, jump for my hand!

Gordon runs up the wall, jumps off, just misses Bruce's outstretched hand. The ROARING sounds close now.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Hurry!

Gordon runs up the wall, Bruce sees a wall of glowing green racing toward them. Gordon leaps...

Bruce catches his hand, Gordon dangles, a dead weight. Bruce pulls, GROANS, finally Gordon grabs the lip of the high tunnel floor, Bruce pulls him up just as a WAVE of green goo SMASHES into the wall, inches to spare.

(CONTINUED)

Both rise to their hands-and-knees in the waist-high tunnel, look down: the eerie green goo rises swiftly toward them.

JIM GORDON

Go! GO!

Both crawl away as fast as they can.

INT. DOWN THE WAIST-HIGH ROUND TUNNEL - MOVING - NIGHT

Both crawl, frantic. Gordon looks down, sees green goo start to run along the bottom of the tunnel beneath him.

JIM GORDON

It's coming! Don't touch it!

BRUCE

I see lights, up ahead!

Bruce and Gordon crawl on, having to raise their hands and knees higher and higher up on the tunnel walls, as the green goo slowly rises up beneath them.

JIM GORDON

Move! Move!

BRUCE

Almost there!

CRASH! Bruce SMASHES into a heavy grill that closes off the end of the tunnel: through it, he sees city lights twinkle across the river. Bruce GRABS the grill, PUSHES: a big rusty padlock secures it, on the outside.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

DAMN! Locked!

By now the green goo fills the lowest third of the tunnel, SPILLING out the grill-opening... and it's still rising. They can't keep above it for long. Gordon pulls a pistol.

JIM GORDON

Watch out!

He aims at the lock. BLAM-BLAM-BLAM! Sparks FLY, bullets RICOCHET on the concrete walls, Bruce ducks.

BRUCE

Watch it!

BLAM-BLAM-BLAM! The lock POPS open, but the clasp is still in place, Bruce SLAMS the grill desperately, BAM, BAM, it finally POPS open, Bruce flies out into space...

Stunned, Gordon looks down, sees rocks far below, no body.

(CONTINUED)

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Over here!

To the side: Bruce dangles from the grill, hinged on the side of the tunnel. Both hear a LOUD RUMBLE, Gordon looks back: a wall of green goo RACES toward him.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

JUMP!

Gordon jumps, Bruce catches him, and Gordon dangles from Bruce's outstretched hand as iridescent green goo SHOOTs out of the tunnel beside them.

JIM GORDON

You OK?

BRUCE

How long do you think this thing
can hold our weight?

The rusty grill's hinges CREAK, start to sag.

JIM GORDON

Not long...

Not far to the side is a concrete embankment.

BRUCE

I'll swing you over there... one...
two.... three!

Bruce swings Gordon toward safety, as CREAK! PING! The last swing causes the grill to fly loose, Gordon grabs the embankment, Bruce springs off the now-falling grill, grabs Gordon at the waist ("OOOF!"), and Bruce hangs on.

Both hang there for a minute, out of breath.

JIM GORDON

Go ahead! Climb up!

BRUCE

You first...!

EXT. BY THE ROLLS - NIGHT

RED LIGHTS FLASH. COPS, WAYNECORP SECURITY rush around. Gordon angrily QUESTIONS Security Guards, all BABBLE excuses. Bruce sits in the Rolls; Alfred, upset, paces:

ALFRED

Sir! How could you? Showing off
your athletic skills to Gordon!

(CONTINUED)

BRUCE

Aren't you supposed to be saying,
"Sir, I'm happy you're not dead?"

ALFRED

No one must know what you can do!
No one!

BRUCE

But it's Gordon! I trust him!

ALFRED

He is a policeman! He is bound by
The Law, you are not! If he ever
learns the extent of your abilities,
every unexplained event in Gotham
City will point directly to you.
Every time a criminal is injured,
you will be his Number One suspect!
He will arrest you, he has to!

Bruce looks stubborn, his temper simmers.

ALFRED (CONT'D)

Just how spectacular were you, back
there with Gordon?

Bruce waggles his hand: so-so. Alfred relaxes slightly,
SIGHS expressively. Bruce shrugs, smiles.

Still YELLING with the Guards, Gordon finally throws up his
hands, turns, and storms toward Bruce and Alfred.

JIM GORDON

No shifts work tonight... so someone
broke in and released the toxic
waste. Vandals. It's a coincidence
that we were both down there at the
time, and that the access hatch
blew closed and locked behind us!

ALFRED

I'm so relieved! For a moment, I
thought someone was trying to kill
you both. I'm SO happy I've been
proven wrong!

JIM GORDON

He's sarcastic, for a butler.

BRUCE

Tell me about it.

(CONTINUED)

ALFRED

I presume, Sgt. Gordon, that it was not you that left the message for Master Bruce to meet you here?

(Gordon nods)

Why were you here this evening?

JIM GORDON

An anonymous phone call. Said I'd find some answers here. Tonight.

ALFRED

Someone wants both of you dead.

BRUCE

Palantine...!

ALFRED

Sir, you're leaping to conclusions.

BRUCE

No, I mean: here comes Palantine. Let's go.

(to Gordon)

Sergeant, I know where we can maybe find some answers and get the best breakfast in Gotham. Interested?

Gordon looks surprised. He listens.

NEARBY - PALANTINE'S CHAUFFEUR DRIVEN LIMO

Palantine alights from his car, sees Gordon by Bruce's Rolls. He starts toward it... but the Rolls SQUEALS off.

INT. DINING ROOM, FOX APARTMENT - DAY

MRS. FOX (O.S.)

Lucius! Guess who's here for breakfast!

Hotcakes, grits, bacon, pork chops, biscuits, gravy, eggs. A sleepy Lucius Fox appears, freezes, and stares, stunned:

Bruce and Gordon sit at the table, pound down the food. Lucius's mother, MRS. BILLIE FOX, an ample, charming woman, shovels out enough food for an army.

MRS. FOX (CONT'D)

It's Bruce, Bruce Wayne! And a nice policeman, Sgt. Gordon!

Bruce and Gordon wave, mouths full, savoring the food.

BRUCE

This is great, Mrs. Fox...

(CONTINUED)

Lucius sits, nervous: he knows why they're here. Mrs. Fox bustles off into the kitchen.

MRS. FOX
Y'all finish up, I got more coming!

BRUCE
Lucius. Something's going on at Wayne Chemical... Gordon and I were almost killed there last night.

Lucius looks stunned... but not surprised: troubled.

JIM GORDON
Your father died there two years ago, right? An accident?

LUCIUS FOX
Yeah. They say he fell into a vat.

BRUCE
You believe them?

Lucius looks at them; then, slowly, he shakes his head.

LUCIUS FOX
He was real nervous, his last few days... I think he saw something...

INT. KITCHEN, FOX APARTMENT - DAY

Mrs. Fox grins at Alfred, savoring every bite.

MRS. FOX
It's OK, Alfred? It's not that fancy French stuff you cook...

ALFRED
This gravy, is... miraculous.

INT. DINING ROOM, FOX APARTMENT - DAY

LUCIUS FOX
Dumping hazardous wastes? So what? If they get caught, it's a slap on the wrist and a fine. It's not worth murder to cover up.

Bruce and Gordon absorb that. Lucius thinks.

LUCIUS FOX (CONT'D)
No, the whole thing doesn't make sense!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LUCIUS FOX (CONT'D)

WayneCorp pays out millions to properly dispose of all kinds of wastes: chemicals, acids, radioactives, even biohazards. I see the invoices. Why pay to dispose of something if you're dumping it?

BRUCE

Maybe they're laundering money.

LUCIUS FOX

WayneCorp owns banks for that. No, there must be a lot more at stake, to risk killing you two.

The three puzzle over that.

JIM GORDON

Pass the pork chops...?

INT. KITCHEN, FOX APARTMENT - DAY

Alfred blissfully STUFFS himself. Finally...

ALFRED

Madam: every bite has such a... full, rich, flavor. I beg you, please, tell me, one chef to another... what's your secret?

Mrs. Fox smiles cagily, bends over, then THUMPS down a big 20 pound bucket/container labeled:

ALFRED (CONT'D)

...LARD...?

Alfred turns pale. Shocked, he stares at his plate... and weakens: it's so good. He shrugs, shovels it down.

INT. DOOR OF FOX APARTMENT - DAY

Finally, all say their goodbyes. Bruce hugs Mrs. Fox.

MRS. FOX

Bruce, don't be a stranger. That goes for you too, Sergeant.

JIM GORDON

Yes ma'am!

LUCIUS FOX

I'll dig around the Wayne Chemical files, see what I can find out.

(CONTINUED)

Bruce and Gordon nod. Alfred waddles up, stuffed. Bruce gives him a "let's go" look.

INT. HARVEY DENT'S LUXURY APARTMENT - DAY

In a robe, a hung-over Harvey waves the WayneCorp papers.

HARVEY DENT

Don't you DARE sign this thing!

Bruce and Alfred sit near Harvey; around them, his place is a post-party shambles. Occasionally, a scantily dressed SUPERMODEL wanders through. Beside Harvey sits two phones.

HARVEY DENT (CONT'D)

They get everything, you get nothing but a monthly check... you have no rights or protections, completely at their mercy. Don't sign this.

A phone RINGS, Harvey answers it, with great fake warmth:

HARVEY DENT (CONT'D)

Hello? Mother! No he hasn't called yet, what's he done now...? Oh, he can be so thoughtless, can't he... wait, I bet that's him...

The second phone RINGS. Harvey answers:

HARVEY DENT (CONT'D)

Father! Of course, she's on the other line! The woman's impossible! Just a sec, let me deal with her.

He covers both mouthpieces, makes a face to Bruce.

BRUCE

Your folks still aren't speaking?

HARVEY DENT

Nope. They live in separate wings of the house, and only communicate through me, their "loving son"...

(into one phone)

Go ahead, Mother, don't spare a single sordid detail....

(into second phone)

Father! What'd she do now?!

Harvey covers both mouthpieces, back to Bruce's business.

HARVEY DENT (CONT'D)

Where were we?

(CONTINUED)

BRUCE

I think my Guardians, The Board, are trying to kill me. I inherit WayneCorp at 18, tomorrow... unless I die first, then they inherit everything.

HARVEY DENT

Yikes! That stinks!
(into both phones)
Uh huh. Uh huh. Really!

BRUCE

So, either I sign this contract, or I die today: either way, they get it all. So, what happens if I live until tomorrow, and I turn 18?

HARVEY DENT

Then you're safe: the minute you turn 18, they won't dare kill you. Once you fully inherit WayneCorp, if you die without a will, your estate goes into probate for years, gets divvied up to distant relatives and lawyers, and the Board gets nothing. If you can stay alive until tomorrow, they won't touch you, believe me...

(into both phones)

Uh huh! No! I can't believe it!

(to Bruce)

So. My legal counsel is: stay alive until tomorrow.

ALFRED

Sound advice. Master Bruce: this reminds me of young Henry VIII. Crowned King at 18, his advisors tried to force him aside, saying he was too young. He refused, so they tried to kill him.

BRUCE

Really? What did Henry do?

ALFRED

He had everyone beheaded.

BRUCE

Good story Alfred: NOT useful here.

HARVEY DENT

Let me get off these phones...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HARVEY DENT (CONT'D)

(into both phones)

Listen, I've still got you-know-who on hold, I better go. Anything you'd like me to tell that horrible person you're married to...? Uh-uh... OK. I love you too. Bye!

BRUCE

You still have each of them thinking they're your only means of support? You still getting two allowances?

HARVEY DENT

Of course! How do you think I can afford this place?

BRUCE

Harvey, you are the most two-faced person I know.

HARVEY DENT

Thanks! Now here's my considered legal opinion: sign the papers.

BRUCE

What? You just said don't sign!

HARVEY DENT

They're trying to kill you! WayneCorp is very powerful, they own everything, including the cops. They do bad things. Even my father, a lawyer of only modest integrity, won't work for them. Take the money and run! You'll still be plenty rich... and alive.

BRUCE

But it's WayneCorp doing those things, in my name!

HARVEY DENT

Yesterday you said you couldn't wait to get out of Gotham City! You didn't want anything to do with WayneCorp and "business"...

BRUCE

It's my family's business! I should do something!

HARVEY DENT

What? Stay in Gotham? Go up against Palantine and The Board?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HARVEY DENT (CONT'D)
They're smart, powerful men! This
assumes you even live until tomorrow!

ALFRED
Sir, he makes some excellent points.

Bruce looks angry, stubborn. He stares at the papers,
hesitates, picks them up, stands to go. Then, too casual:

BRUCE
Uh, by the way... how's Susan?

HARVEY DENT
I see, she made an impression...
Susan's the only girl I know who
can "pull off" that Angel costume...

BRUCE
Does she, uh, work somewhere...?

Bruce blushes. Harvey smiles knowingly.

HARVEY DENT
Downtown, Fourth and Main.

Bruce grins, nods thanks, and goes.

INT. ROLLS - MOVING - DAY

Bruce pages through the papers, finally throws them down.
In the rear-view mirror, Alfred's eyes appear anxious.

ALFRED
Not to alarm you, sir, but... it
appears we're being followed.

Bruce looks back: two dark sedans bear down on them. Tense
seconds, as the sedans pull alongside. Windows lower, gun
barrels emerge, aim at the Rolls.

BRUCE
/ They're gonna shoot!

ALFRED
This is a Rolls-Royce! They wouldn't
dare!

BAM! BAM! A side window EXPLODES. Alfred GROANS:

ALFRED (CONT'D)
Is nothing SACRED?!

The Rolls ROCKETS away. BAM! BAM!

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. GOTHAM CITY STREETS - THE CHASE - DAY

Alfred drives with grace, the Rolls takes impossible turns. Alfred's good, expertly weaves through traffic, HORNS BLARE. But the sedans keep steady pace.

Alfred SCREECHES into an alley. The sedans follow.

EXT. GOTHAM CITY ALLEY - THE CHASE - DAY

Alfred threads the Rolls through a tight alley; the wider sedans have a tougher time, clip trash bins, SPARKS FLY.

Alfred jerks the wheel, his rear-bumper neatly CLIPS a stack of 55 gallon drums, the drums tumble in front of the sedans, SMASH, the drums' contents FLY, SPLATTER.

EXT. DEAD-END STREET - THE CHASE - DAY

Alfred turns down a street: a block ahead, the road ends with a barricade; tall brush hides what's beyond. Alfred ACCELERATES hard toward the barricade.

INT. ROLLS - MOVING - DAY

BRUCE

ALFRED! You're going through that barricade!

ALFRED

Certainly looks that way, sir....

The sedans pull alongside, here comes the barricade... in one graceful stroke, Alfred SLAMS his feet on the emergency brake and the accelerator, he cuts the wheel, hard left....

EXT. THE DEAD-END - DAY

The Rolls performs a perfect "boot-leg" turn, pivots on its locked front wheels, TIRES SQUEALING: in an instant the Rolls now heads the OPPOSITE DIRECTION.

The sedans ZOOM past, SMASH through the barricade, through the brush which disintegrates, revealing only sky... the sedans disappear over what's now revealed as a hilltop.

Alfred SCREECHES to a halt, they jump out, listen. SMASH! SMASH! TINKLE. Bruce looks stunned. Alfred takes out a handkerchief, proudly polishes the Rolls-Royce hood ornament:

ALFRED

Rolls-Royce. Accept no substitutes.

BRUCE

We should get bullet-proof glass.

ALFRED

Sir, sometimes you frighten me....

EXT. GOTHAM CITY YOUTH SHELTER - DAY

Bruce exits the Rolls, surprised to see where Susan works: "Gotham City Youth Shelter", a shabby municipal building, with colorful attempts at brightening it up. He goes in.

EXT. YOUTH SHELTER OUTDOOR PLAY AREA - DAY

Bruce enters an outdoor area. He sees Susan, starts toward her, stops: she's busy, comforting a crying TEEN. Bruce feels awkward, turns to go, freezes... he's now surrounded by TOUGH WARY KIDS, ages 8 to 14, watching him.

YOUNG BOY

What's your story...?

BRUCE

Excuse me?

OLDER BOY

Runaway? Orphan? Trouble with the cops?

BRUCE

Oh... Orphan.

OLDER BOY

That your Rolls Royce out front?

BRUCE

I'm here to see Susan. I'm a friend of hers...

OLDER BOY

Oh yeah...? Hey Susan! This guy a friend of yours?!

Susan looks up, sees Bruce, blinks, shakes her head. The kids now all glare suspiciously at Bruce. Bruce SIGHS.

BARBARA GORDON (O.S.)

Hey! What's up...?

BRUCE

Barbara...?

Barbara ROLLS up on her skateboard, expertly dismounts. She gives Bruce a meaningful, "play along" look.

(CONTINUED)

BARBARA GORDON

Name's Barb, mister, and I don't
know you! Get it?!

Bruce smiles, nods. Susan walks up and watches, slyly amused.

BRUCE

I just want to talk to Susan...
That OK with you guys?

LITTLE GIRL

Why do you want to talk to her...?

BRUCE

Well, I want to apologize....

OLDER BOY

Why? What'd you do?

All the kids give him expectant looks: "well...?" Pause.
Bruce SIGHS. Susan smiles. DISSOLVE TO:

MOMENTS LATER. An audience has now formed around still-
patient Bruce; all listen, spellbound, as he winds up:

BRUCE

...so, you see, I didn't ask or
even want to get "rescued" from
Susan... Any more questions?

LITTLE GIRL

So, how much do you like Miss Dent?
A lot? A whole lot? A bunch...?

BRUCE

We just met...! I don't...
(gets glares)
A whole lot. Maybe even a bunch.

The crowd OOHS and AAHS. Another hand shoots up.

LITTLE BOY

You ever go out with Madonna?

BRUCE

No! That's it, no more questions.
OK Miss Dent: what's it gonna be?

Bruce and the kids all look to Susan. She thinks: well,
Bruce has been a good sport.... Finally, she nods. The
kids scatter. Barbara sidles up to Bruce, WHISPERS:

BARBARA GORDON

Thanks for not blowing my cover.
(Bruce blinks)
Barb. I'm working undercover.

(CONTINUED)

BRUCE

Oh. Undercover. I see.

BARBARA GORDON

These kids hear all kinds of stuff out on the street. I'm helping my dad, but don't tell him! He doesn't know about my "secret identity"...

BRUCE

Your what? Your secret identity...?

But she's gone, leaving Bruce alone with Susan. She gives Bruce an amused, skeptical look: "well?"

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Great kids.

SUSAN DENT

"There, but for the Wayne millions..."

BRUCE

...I could have grown up here. I've thought of that, believe me.

Susan looks at Bruce: perhaps, she misjudged him.

SUSAN DENT

Well. Thanks for the apology.

She turns, starts away. Bruce calls after her, blurts:

BRUCE

Susan! You wanna go out some time?

Susan stops, turns back: she looks surprised.

SUSAN DENT

I thought you were leaving town...

BRUCE

I thought I was, too. But there's all these things going on....

SUSAN DENT

I know, Harvey told me. He's worried about you.

BRUCE

Harvey? Worried about somebody besides Harvey?

SUSAN DENT

I know. Weird, huh?

(CONTINUED)

BRUCE

Maybe he's right: I can't fight them. Who am I? A kid. I can't beat them.

Susan thinks: how can she explain...?

SUSAN DENT

You know... I get depressed, working here. It's hopeless, right? I mean, there's no way I'm going to stop cruelty to children in Gotham City. But... I like to think I help out, just a little.

Bruce nods: he understands.

SUSAN DENT (CONT'D)

Well... Back to work.

She turns to go, Bruce calls after her.

BRUCE

Susan! You wanna go out some time?

She turns back: this time Susan smiles.

SUSAN DENT

Sure.

Bruce and Susan smile, walk away in different directions.

EXT. A CORNER OF THE BUILDING - DAY

Barbara watches Bruce walk off. She SIGHS soulfully.

LITTLE GIRL

Barb: he's way old! Too old!

BARBARA GORDON

In 10 years, he'll 28, I'll be 23.

Little Girl shrugs, walks off. Barbara SIGHS, love-sick.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WAYNE MANOR, THOMAS WAYNE'S STUDY - NIGHT

Bruce stares up at the portrait of his parents, brooding, troubled. His mind churns: what should he do?

Rooms away, a TELEPHONE RINGS. FOOTSTEPS approach.

ALFRED

It's Charles Palantine. He's left numerous messages, now he insists...

(CONTINUED)

Bruce stares at the phone's hold light, blinking... He goes to a stereo, hits a switch: ROCK MUSIC BLARES.

BRUCE (into phone)
Hello...? Charles! Guess what! I met these two girls yesterday! Supermodels! What, can't hear you..! Oh right! The paperwork! I thought I sent it to you, I signed it...! It's gotta be here somewhere! We'll look for it, right girls...?!

He hangs up, SHUTS OFF the MUSIC. Alfred beams, proud:

ALFRED
Master Bruce! A fine performance! You might consider cultivating that image of an idiot millionaire playboy. It's an enormous asset, keeping your opponents underestimating your true abilities.

BRUCE
Like you, Alfred...? Like that gold medal for Fencing you hide deep in your bureau? It looked sort of Olympic, as I recall...?

ALFRED
You were always a nosy child, sir.

BRUCE
And then there's those rumors: in all the stories of "your youth", you never once mentioned the British Secret Service...

ALFRED
Sir, you should know better than to listen to idle gossip.... I am merely the Wayne family butler, sir. Like my father before me, and his father before him.

Bruce smiles. He stares up at his parents, and recalls:

BRUCE
I remember when your father died. I was what, five? The next day you arrived, unannounced, to take his place. I'm glad you did.

Alfred stands there, for once speechless, his eyes moist.

ALFRED
As am I, sir...

The telephone RINGS. Alfred picks it up.

ALFRED (CONT'D)
Wayne Residence... yes sir.
(hands phone to Bruce)
Sgt. Gordon.

BRUCE
Hello...?

EXT. PHONE BOOTH - NIGHT

JIM GORDON (into phone)
Bruce, you OK? I got reports of
two cars shooting at a Rolls Royce...

INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION. Bruce grins at Alfred.

BRUCE (into phone)
I'm fine. Any news?

JIM GORDON (into phone)
Your friend Lucius called. The
weekly shipment of hazardous wastes
goes out tonight. I'm taking some
cops I trust to check it out...

BRUCE (into phone)
I'll meet you there....

JIM GORDON
No! This is dangerous, you'd only
get in the way. Don't forget:
there's a price on your head until
tomorrow. I'll call you.

Gordon hangs up. Bruce grins an up-to-something, wicked
smile. Alfred is alarmed:

ALFRED
Master Bruce...? Surely, you're
not thinking... Master Bruce...!

EXT. WAYNE CHEMICAL FRONT GATE/GUARD SHACK - NIGHT

AIR BRAKES HISS: tanker trucks enter the gate, each labeled
with different alarming warnings: "BIOHAZARD", "TOXIC WASTE"
"RADIOACTIVE", "POISON". The trucks RUMBLE inside.

EXT. IN AN DARK ALLEY, DOWN THE STREET - NIGHT

On stakeout: Gordon watches with two uniformed cops: RUPERT
MONTROYA, 40, and HARVEY BULLOCK, 27, a big fleshy guy.

OFFICER RUPERT MONTROYA
That's six trucks so far.

(CONTINUED)

JIM GORDON

It doesn't make sense! Fox says they only generate a few thousand gallons of waste a week. Those are 4000 gallon tankers... six of 'em!

OFFICER HARVEY BULLOCK

There's four donuts left... you guys want any?

JIM GORDON

Bullock, you're gonna get fat.

OFFICER HARVEY BULLOCK

Naa. I got me one of them high metabolisms. I never put on weight.

JIM GORDON

Let's go.

They go... then, a dark figure DROPS to the ground: Bruce, all in black. He grins, starts after them... when an umbrella handle snags his arm: Alfred steps out of the shadows.

BRUCE

I told you: stay by the car!

ALFRED

Master Bruce! You were planning to join Sgt. Gordon and the others!

BRUCE

(stubborn)

He needs my help.

ALFRED

Once you reveal yourself, sir, you can never take it back!

BRUCE

I can trust Gordon.

ALFRED

You can trust no one. That is your lot in life! Your father trusted people... and now he is dead!

BRUCE

What are you saying? You saying somebody he trusted, somebody at WayneCorp killed my father?!

ALFRED

Why not? They're trying to kill YOU!

(CONTINUED)

Dizzy, Bruce's head spins... WayneCorp killed his parents?

ALFRED (CONT'D)

And I can not... I will not let them kill you as they killed him! I will not let that happen!

Bruce stares at Alfred with sudden realization:

BRUCE

Do you blame yourself? Alfred...!

ALFRED

(steels himself)

My issues are not important here! Sir, you are the newly crowned king, surrounded by a court full of intrigue and murder. You have to be smarter than they, you can never let them know what you're thinking or doing, never let them suspect what you are capable of. You can trust no one. No one!

(his eyes grow wet)

And while it breaks my heart, sir, you are destined to face your life alone.

Bruce stares at him, stunned, his world shaken. And finally, Bruce nods. For the first time, he understands.

BRUCE

You're right, Alfred, I see that now. But there's one thing you overlooked.

ALFRED

Sir...?

BRUCE

I'm not completely alone. There is one person I can trust...

(with great meaning)

Thank you, Alfred.

Alfred nods, SNIFFS, dabs his eyes with his handkerchief.

ALFRED

Thank you sir. So, we can go home now...?

BRUCE

No.

ALFRED

Sir...?

BRUCE

Gordon still needs my help. I just won't let him see me.

And with that, Bruce turns and sprints off.

ALFRED

Sir! Sir!

Bruce runs toward a car parked beside the tall security fence. Bruce runs up the hood, BOUNCES off the roof, FLIPS over the high fence, grabs a rain-gutter, BACKFLIPS up onto the roof.

ALFRED (CONT'D)

Sir! Come down before you get hurt!

Bruce grins down at Alfred, waves goodbye, disappears. Alfred GROANS, fit to be tied.

ALFRED (CONT'D)

It's a miracle I still have a full head of hair!

EXT. WAYNE CHEMICAL FRONT GATE/GUARD SHACK - NIGHT

The cops ARGUE with a GUARD, trying to gain entry.

OFFICER HARVEY BULLOCK

I don't care what your orders are!

Harvey SLUGS the guard, who drops, unconscious. Harvey storms inside. Gordon and Montoya shrug, follow.

Beat. Alfred strolls up, frowns down at the inert guard.

ALFRED

Well, now that is subtle....

INT. CHEMICAL WAREHOUSE/SHIPPING - NIGHT

A huge industrial complex: shadows loom among conveyors, pipes, catwalks. A NIGHT CREW in white hooded protective suits load the tanker trucks.

The white suits lower big 55 gallon drums down inside the tankers. Green waste is then poured into another truck, covering the rows of big drums crammed inside.

GORDON, THE COPS

OFFICER HARVEY BULLOCK

Man, what a sweet set-up for smugglers! No cop's gonna search a truck fulla that stuff! No drug dog's ever gonna sniff through that! It's perfect!

(CONTINUED)

JIM GORDON

Wonder what's in the barrels? Drugs?
Speed? This is a chemical plant....
 Be sure we get the head guy, the
 one in charge: see him, with the
 clipboard? We'll need him to finger
 the big fish.

All nod, sneak off. The CAMERA TILTS UP, REVEALS: Bruce on
 a ladder, just overhead. He peers at the Head Guy.

BRUCE

Guy with the clipboard. Got him.

Bruce grins, climbs swiftly.

THE TRUCKS, THE LOADING PLATFORM

JIM GORDON

POLICE! You're all under arrest!

The workers scatter, the cops chase after them. The HEAD
 BADGUY climbs a ladder, Gordon chases after him.

As Gordon reaches the ladder, the Badguy pulls the ladder
 up, out of reach, then runs down a catwalk toward an elevator;
 Gordon CURSES, chases after him.

Bullock SHOTS a GUARD aiming at him, then PUNCHES a white-
 suited guy, and CHORTLES. He and Montoya handcuff bad guys.

A CATWALK - BRUCE

A GUARD with a rifle runs to intercept Gordon... when a hand
 reaches up and grabs his foot as he passes. The guard SMACKS
 into the catwalk, lies still. Bruce flips up onto the
 catwalk, looks: he sees the Head Guy runs into an elevator.
 Gordon reaches the doors just as they close, too late.

BRUCE

Damn it! He's getting away!

Bruce sees the elevator rises up, five stories, to a guard
 station near the roof, beside a roof exit. Bruce looks
 around, sees a fast-moving chain powers a conveyor: the chain
 leads up, to gears high overhead.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Going up...?

Bruce leaps, grabs the chain. He flies up into the air.

A GUARD WITH A SNIPER RIFLE

A GUARD with a high-powered rifle sees Bruce hanging onto
 the chain, flying up toward the high catwalk. He aims....

(CONT'D)

An umbrella HOOKS the rifle barrel, jerks the rifle aside... Alfred swings his umbrella like a baseball bat: SMACK. The guard BACKFLIPS, is down. Alfred looks out, sees Bruce swing up onto a catwalk, run to the elevator near the roof.

ALFRED

Sir, you must learn to look up....
What are you doing now?

THE ELEVATOR PLATFORM - BRUCE

Bruce looks down, sees Gordon far below, climbing frantically.

BRUCE

Gordon, you'll never catch him! Do
I have to do everything around here?

Bruce looks up at the elevator's slow floor indicator, SIGHS impatiently. He bumps into a stool, a lunch box on top.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Lunch? Alfred! You've thought of
everything.

Bruce goes through the lunch box, a sandwich, a banana. He peels the banana, eats.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

All this crime-fighting sure works
up an appetite. Whoops....

The elevator opens, the Badguy runs out... Bruce SMASHES him with the stool, he crumples. Bruce stares down at him, thoughtfully MUNCHES on the banana.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Uh oh... This looks weird.

ALFRED - WATCHING BRUCE

ALFRED (V.O.)

(alarmed)

Now what? Gordon can't "find" that
person just lying there unconscious!
You must do something! And fast!

THE ELEVATOR PLATFORM - BRUCE

Still munching, Bruce looks down: Gordon is close now.

BRUCE

Come on Bruce: think! There must
be something here I can use...!

Bruce finishes the banana, starts to toss it away, then stares at it. Hmmm.

ALFRED - WATCHING BRUCE

ALFRED
 Master Bruce, what in the world...
 Aah, I see... Whimsical, perhaps
 even silly. But: good show, sir!

Below Bruce runs off, disappears. Alfred SIGHS happily, and grins, a big smile, just like a proud parent.

THE ELEVATOR PLATFORM

Gordon runs up, GASPING, and freezes: he stares at his quarry, the Badguy, just lying there. What happened?

Stunned, Gordon goes to him, kicks his foot: a banana peel, stuck to the bottom of his shoe, falls loose.

JIM GORDON
Slipped... on a banana peel?!

Gordon blinks, wonders, looks around, and finally shrugs... he pulls the limp Badguy toward the elevator.

EXT. THE ROLLS, PARKED ON A SIDE STREET - NIGHT

Alfred leans on the Rolls, trimming his nails, looks up: here comes Bruce, grinning, very pleased with himself.

BRUCE
 It went great! And you were worried!

ALFRED
 I'm happy, sir. I don't mean to be a "worry-wart".

BRUCE
 It's OK, Alfred. You just need to learn I can take care of myself.

ALFRED
 I will strive to remember that in the future, sir.

As Alfred opens the door, Bruce bounces, still charged up.

ALFRED (CONT'D)
 I'm guessing you enjoyed yourself this evening, sir?

BRUCE
 I did! Know what? I might have found something I'm really good at!

Alfred GROANS like he's been stomach-punched.

(CONTINUED)

ALFRED

Just shoot me now....

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM, POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Gordon, Bullock, and Montoya grill the Head Bad Guy...
 Gordon sees Bruce and Alfred enter, comes out to join them.

BRUCE

I got bored, just sitting at home.

The always-grim Gordon actually smiles.

JIM GORDON

It was drugs in the trucks! Speed,
 tons of it! The trucks were loaded
 up, then sent to different cities
 for "disposal". Smart! But we
 shut down the whole network!

BRUCE

Do they name anybody "big" at
 WayneCorp?

GORDON

The little guys don't know anything.
 But this guy is dropping hints about
 "the higher-ups" at WayneCorp, and
 wants to make a deal...

BRUCE

Great!

JIM GORDON

So then we grab his boss, get him
 talking... no telling how high up
 we can take this. We could finally
 blow the lid off WayneCorp!

Bruce grins happily... the Desk Sergeant walks up.

DESK SERGEANT

Gordon. The Lieutenant wants to
 see you... with your men. Now.

Gordon looks troubled. He hits an intercom button:

JIM GORDON

Lock him up, bring the key....
 Go home, Bruce. I'll call you later.

Bruce and Alfred go. With the badguy locked in a cell,
 Bullock and Montoya exit the room, lock the door behind them.
 Bullock grins knowingly at the Sergeant, pockets the key.

INT. LT. FLASS'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Lt. Flass stands as they enter: handsome, athletic, 30.

LT. FLASS

Gordon. I'm going to have to cut your prisoners loose.

JIM GORDON

Why?

LT. FLASS

You know why: illegal search and seizure! You should have gone through channels, gotten a warrant.

JIM GORDON

Every time I "go through channels" the bad guys disappear before we get there.

LT. FLASS

What are you saying?

JIM GORDON

I'm saying: "there's leaks".

LT. FLASS

You can't search without a warrant!

Gordon throws a stack of paperwork on Flass's desk.

JIM GORDON

Wayne Chemical's EPA permits. The EPA can inspect any time, at their discretion.

LT. FLASS

You're not the EPA. And I know all the local EPA boys...

Gordon shows Flass another sheet of paper.

JIM GORDON

This is from a friend of mine at the EPA in Washington. Since the Gotham City EPA office is rife with corruption--his words--this authorizes me to inspect Wayne Chemical as an EPA representative.

(with certainty)

The arrests will hold up.

Flass's face darkens. He nods... then, he smiles.

(CONTINUED)

LT. FLASS
You're right. Good job!

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM, POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Gordon and the cops enter, LAUGHING: they've won... and their LAUGHTER DIES AWAY:

In the cell: the badguy's legs dangle at eye level, he's been hung, dead. The interrogation room door is broken.

DESK SERGEANT
He hung himself. We broke down the door, tried to get to him... too late.

He shrugs, walks off. Bullock and Montoya look pale. Gordon SLAMS his fist into a wall.

EXT. WAYNE MANOR - NIGHT

Bruce, pissed, BITCHES as Alfred opens the door.

BRUCE (O.S.)
I can't believe you, getting us lost! We must have gone in circles for an hour! What time is it...?

The door CREAKS OPEN, Bruce steps inside, into darkness. Alfred looks at his watch... and smiles.

INT. WAYNE MANOR ENTRY - NIGHT

Bruce stops: he is surrounded by complete darkness.

Bruce hears a SCUFFLING NOISE, he freezes, alarmed. The lights come on, Bruce GASPS, jumps...

The room is full of people: Harvey Dent, Susan Dent, Selena Kyle, Lucius Fox, his mother Billie, Jim Gordon, Barbara Gordon, Bullock, Montoya... all his friends in Gotham.

ALL
SURPRISE!

HARVEY DENT
It's midnight! You're 18, and you're alive! Happy Birthday!

Bruce grins; all SLAP and hug him, everyone TALKS at once. Susan hugs him, they smile warmly at each other.

BARBARA GORDON
Bruce! Happy Birthday!

Barbara Gordon hugs him hard.

(CONTINUED)

JIM GORDON

She insisted on coming...

BRUCE

How'd everything turn out? That
guy name any bigwigs at WayneCorp...?

Gordon's face darkens, he shakes his head.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

What? We got nothing?

JIM GORDON

You're alive. That's something.

HARVEY DENT

Hey, everybody!

Harvey stands by the fireplace, with the WayneCorp papers.

HARVEY DENT (CONT'D)

Bruce owns WayneCorp now, we don't
need these!

He sets fire to the WayneCorp papers, drops it in the
fireplace. All CHEER. The DOORBELL RINGS.

Alfred opens the door: it's Palantine. The BABBLE dies.

PALANTINE

Bruce. I called, no answer. Did
you ever find our contract...?

(all look at fireplace)

Ah. Well, I thought so....

Palantine looks at Bruce, concerned.

PALANTINE (CONT'D)

I have some bad news, Bruce. It
turns out some unpleasant things
were going on at Wayne Chemical.
Illegal things. If I'd known, I
could have quietly put a stop to
it. But now, WayneCorp will take a
beating in the media, and our stock
price will tumble. Bruce, you and
I have lost a great deal of money
tonight.

Bruce nods, saddened, perhaps... chastised.

BRUCE

I'm very sorry to hear that, Charles.

(CONTINUED)

PALANTINE

Well, it can't be helped now. Bruce,
I brought you a present.

He hands Bruce a wrapped present. Bruce starts to unwrap it, Barbara GASPS, jumps back. All look nervous as Bruce unwraps it: it's a new textbook, "Business for Beginners".

PALANTINE (CONT'D)

I hope you'll let me be your advisor,
your mentor in the days ahead. You
have much to learn: let me help
you.

Thoughtful, Bruce nods. With a warm smile, Palantine goes. Everyone stares, wondering what to make of that.

HARVEY DENT

Speech! Speech!

All CHANT for Bruce to speak. Bruce shrugs.

BRUCE

I do have a lot to learn. I'm not
sure I can make any kind of
difference here in Gotham City.
But, I guess I'll stick around and
find out. Who knows? Anything
could happen!

(all LAUGH)

I know one thing: whatever happens,
it won't be dull.

CHEERS. Bruce grins at everyone, his friends... and lastly at Susan, who blushes, but smiles back at him. It's a nice moment. There's promise here, a possibility of Big Things.

Alfred takes out a camera.

ALFRED

Everyone, line up, please! This is
a very important occasion!

GRUMBLING, all group together to be photographed: as the CAMERA pans their smiling faces, it feels like a curtain call. All freeze, as Alfred takes the picture: FLASH!

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. A SMALL SIDE-CAVERN - NIGHT

The photo of the above, faded now. Every one of those once-strange faces now holds great meaning.

ALFRED (V.O.)

"And so... it began... "

(CONTINUED)

PULL BACK TO REVEAL: the aged Alfred. He finishes writing, stands, and places the photo in the first display case, beside the now-ancient textbook "Business for Beginners". There. The first two items are in place.

Alfred looks at all the boxes, full of memories, then at the long line of empty cases... waiting. He SIGHS, tired.

ALFRED (V.O.) (CONT'D)

"So much more to catalog, so much more to tell.... Years of struggle, deaths, loves, loss, heartbreak, victories, madness, redemption..."

He walks toward the exit of the small cavern, shadowy darkness beyond. The CAMERA FOLLOWS.

ALFRED (V.O.) (CONT'D)

"It's an enormous task, perhaps even a hopeless one...."

ON ALFRED as he enters a huge space, all in darkness.

ALFRED (CONT'D)

"...to attempt to explain why a man, this man, finally saw no recourse, no other way open to him but to finally put on... a mask."

Alfred pauses by another display that contains a dark costume, backlit... it's only a silhouette, but a familiar silhouette:

Batman.

Alfred stares at the costume, shakes his head, SIGHS.

ALFRED (V.O.) (CONT'D)

"Of all my life's challenges, perhaps this is the greatest. I pray I am up to the task."

LONG SHOT: THE BATCAVE

An enormous, shadowy cavern, in darkness, full of evocative, mysterious shapes. Alfred, a tiny figure, slowly ascends towering stairs. His footsteps ECHO.

FADE OUT.

THE END