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Batman: Chase Forever

by Amanda Hawkins

Batman Forever dramatized the Dark Knight's struggle to bring to justice those arch-villains of crime, Two-Face and the Riddler. In the film, Batman rescued both the woman he loved, Chase Meridian (ably portrayed by Nicole Kidman), and his young protégé, Robin, from the Riddler's deadly pit of doom. But the cinema is a funhouse mirror, one that distorts as much as it reflects, and in real life such tales do not always end happily. This is what really happened, after the curtain fell.

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Wayne Manor, at night, beneath the light of a crescent moon. The paintings that line an upstairs hallway depict a family history that is coming to an end. A shadow pauses under the most recent painting, of the current lord of the manor, then opens the door into a guest bedroom and enters. The door closes. It makes no sound.

The barest gleam of moonlight filters through storm clouds and frilly curtains. The room is intended for female guests, as demonstrated by the paisley wallpaper and a canopied bed dressed in sheets of French silk.

The shadow discards its clothing by the door and enters a walk-in closet, which is full of the sort of clothing a female visitor to a rich man's home might find useful. Indirect lamps come to life, illuminating a young man, clean shaven, with an athletic build and short dark hair. He moves to the back of the closet, passing a wide variety of elegant gowns and cocktail dresses, and finds a garment bag at the very end of the rack. From it, he extracts a mound of soft white fabric that resembles an animal pelt—but from a *human* animal—with an eyeless headpiece and a long blonde mane still attached.

He sits on a padded bench. He places his feet into the legs of the skin and pulls until the new, smoother skin is tight to his own. He stands, tucks his genitals into a pouch in the crotch, and pulls the skin up over his hips. A neatly trimmed triangle of blonde hair is all that remains of his manhood; everything else below his waist is luminous skin, curves and the kind of legs that cry out for high heels.

He places his arms into the sleeves and pulls until his hands pop into the gloves. He flexes his fingers and ten crimson fingernails click into place. He arches his back and draws the skin's torso up to his neck, rotating his arms one at a time to settle the skin over his shoulders. Female breasts slide into place on his chest. His fingers—clumsy with their unfamiliar nails—pluck at the zipper in the back and work the seam closed. With each upward tug, his waist narrows.



The zipper clears his shoulder blades. He sits down; the headpiece, with its thick mop of yellow hair, dangling over his chest. Without stopping he ducks his head, drawing the skin up over his hair, and pulls until its delicate neck becomes one with his own. His face is immersed in a sea of blonde hair.

Slowly, almost lovingly, he leans back and shakes his head. A female face, tipped with thick lashes and red lips, emerges blinking from the froth. This person is not male.

Her fingers reach behind her neck. She clears her hair out of the way and pulls the zipper the rest of the way up, then tucks it into place at the top of her spine.

She flares her hair and stands up, each movement as fluid as a ballet dancer. She doesn't feel the zipper melt into her body, nor does she notice the neckline fade from view.

The woman stands before the mirror set into one wall of the closet. She studies herself, the way one might a face that seems hauntingly familiar, then picks up a brush and tides her long blonde hair. It parts on the right and seems to want to fall across her face, but she keeps brushing until the thick tresses fall into place.

She pauses, gazing at her image at the mirror. Finally, her lips part and a female whisper emerges. "I am... I'm a woman." She puts the brush down, hesitates and touches her face. "Chase... My name is Chase."

She shakes her head and sighs. "Holy forget-me-not, Batman," she says. "Who else *could* I be?"



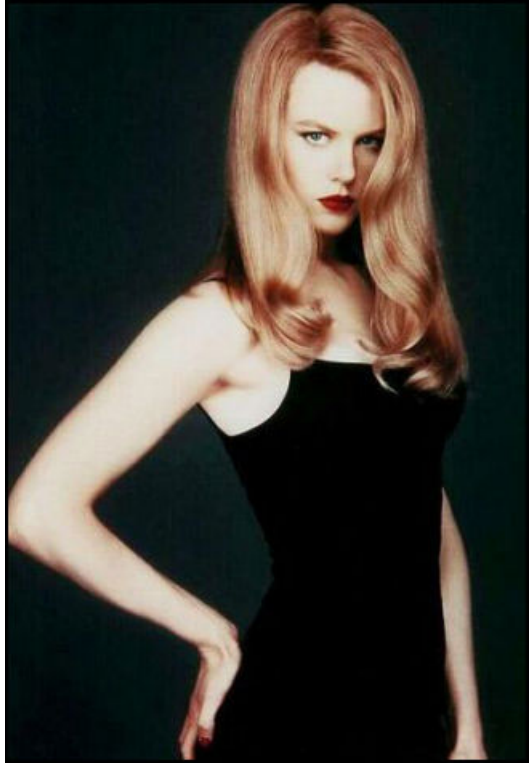
From a drawer, she picks out a strapless black brassiere. Her breasts drop into the cups and she smoothly fastens the clasp in the back. She sits and quickly slips into sheer pantyhose, black panties and a half-slip made of dusky silk.

She paces the length of the closet, her fingers trailing over the hangers, until they settle on a velvet cocktail dress. She puts no thought into it; the dress simply *feels* right. She pours herself inside, eases the thin straps over her shoulders and in one smooth motion closes the zipper.

The shoe rack yields a pair of three-inch patent leather pumps. She steps from the closet, her narrow heels clattering on the hardwood floor, and stops in front of a full-length mirror. One hand flutters to her hip as she stares, entranced...

Her face is half-hidden in a wash of pale blonde hair. She is a beautiful woman and she knows it.

But will it be enough to stir the famously cool passion of the Caped Crusader of Gotham City?



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Chase Meridian steps down the curved stairway that descends into the opulent entrance hall of Wayne Manor, her fingers lightly riding the bannister. An elderly man awaits her arrival. “Hello, Alfred,” she says.

“Good evening, madam. You do look lovely tonight, if I may say.”

“You may.” She smiles shyly, as she does in the company of older men.

“Your car is waiting. Allow me to fetch your coat.” He opens the closet.

“How did you know I was going out?” She moves toward him, her footfalls ricocheting off the walls like machine-gun bullets.

“The master told me to expect you.”

Alfred holds up a mid-length coat in black sable and Chase allows the fur to find her shoulders. “Will Mr. Wayne be joining the party?” She flicks her hands clear of the cuffs and lifts her hair over the collar.

“I’m afraid he was called back to the office.” He hands her a black handbag.

She smiles again. “I don’t know where my head is tonight.”

“Perhaps it is the guest of honor that occupies your thoughts.”

“You know me well,” she purrs, gathering the coat closed. “Fake fur, I trust?”

“Of course. Fake fur for a... lovely lady.” He opens the front door.

A short ride to the edge of town is followed by an eternity of city driving through congested streets. Outside City Hall there is a lineup a block long of people waiting to get in, likely with little hope of doing so, but Chase is escorted directly inside. An aide takes her coat and she steps into the ballroom where a giant flat-panel screen has been erected over the stage at one end of the room.

An older man approaches. “Doctor Meridian. So nice to see you again.”

She smiles, averting her eyes. “Hello, Commissioner Gordon.”

“It’s James, my dear. Would you care for some wine?”

She accepts a glass and scans the crowd. “Is he here yet?”

“Not yet. In fact, I was just about to activate the Bat-Signal.” He points to the stage. “Purely symbolic, of course. It’s all prearranged. Would you care to do the honors? I understand that you and he are—shall we say—acquainted.”

“I’d love to.” Her eyes probe the windows where the searchlight will project the Bat symbol into the sky. Her hair sways against her face; her breath quickens.

The Commissioner ascends the stage and steps up to the microphone. “Citizens of Gotham City, your attention please. The peace of our fair city has been threatened many times by the machinations of colorful, yet violent, villains such as the Riddler and Two-Face. But each time this has happened, the threat has been averted by the heroic and selfless efforts of none other than Batman. Tonight, we celebrate the release of a major Hollywood film based on the most recent of his many adventures. Please join me in welcoming the Dark Knight of Gotham City!”

Applause sweeps through the crowd. The Commissioner nods at Chase. “Doctor Meridian, if you please.”

She smiles radiantly and presses the big red button mounted on a table next to the microphone. Everyone in the room looks up as the shadow of a giant bat is projected onto the storm clouds rolling over City Hall.



“This could take awhile,” the Commissioner says. “Please, have a seat.”

Chase sits down, nervously tucking one leg under the other. Her dress rides up and she feels naked before the crowd, although most eyes remain firmly focused on the sky. She leans forward to cover her exposed leg with both hands, wondering if her outfit might be a little too much. Had she turned herself into the wrong sort of woman? But what kind of woman would interest a creature of the night like Batman? An intellectual equal, like Doctor Chase Meridian, or the call girl she now resembled? Or perhaps a woman who could be two people at once?

Batman makes his entrance through an open window and swings across to the stage on a pre-installed rope. His gaze lingers on Chase for a moment before he greets the Commissioner and accepts the approval of the crowd. Only when the ceremony is over, and the movie premiere is underway, does he approach her.

“I’m pleased you could be here, Doctor Meridian.”

Chase sways over to the Dark Knight, gazing up at the famous mask with its slitted eyes and pointy ears. “You can call me Chase,” she says coyly. “Our relationship is no big secret. Even the Commissioner knows.”

“Nonetheless, I am a public figure,” he says, his face etched in stone.



“Don’t be so silly.” She touches his arm. “Nobody would mind seeing you in the company of a beautiful woman. You do think I’m beautiful, don’t you?”

When he fails to respond, Chase sidles in close to his body. “A word to the wise,” she says lightly. “You might want to show a little more interest, or people will think there’s some truth to that silly rumor about you and that Boy Wonder of yours.”

His arm tenses. Chase pulls it tight around her abdomen and reaches up behind his head. “It’s working,” she says softly, her eyes scanning the crowd. “They think I’m your girlfriend. How about we up the ante?”

Batman releases her and steps back.

“Perhaps, Doctor Meridian, you would enjoy a ride in the Batmobile.”

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It’s Gotham City as she’s never seen it before: 200 miles per hour in the dark, riding a rocket. Chase is wrapped in her fur coat and strapped into the passenger seat of the high-performance Chevy with its famous bat-fins and webbed engine vents.

“It’s the car, right?” Batman grins but his eyes never leave the road. “Chicks love the car.”

“It’s not *just* the car.” She sniffs disdainfully, her nose held high.



Batman laughs and aims for a narrowing gap between two moving vehicles. The Batmobile explodes through the opening, leaving a sonic boom in its wake.

Chase shrieks. Her hair whips across her face as the car screams through a tight corner. “That, sir,” she says coldly, “is no way to treat a lady.”

“As Captain America once said: ‘But lady, you’re no lady.’”

Chase glares at him, then turns away and tidies her hair. Buildings, cars, trucks and faceless masses of people whip by too quickly to see, even those moving in the same direction as they are. Amazingly, they seem to hit every intersection just as the light turns green. She runs her slim hand over the matt-black dashboard. “Strange... I could’ve sworn that this car was destroyed by the Riddler.”

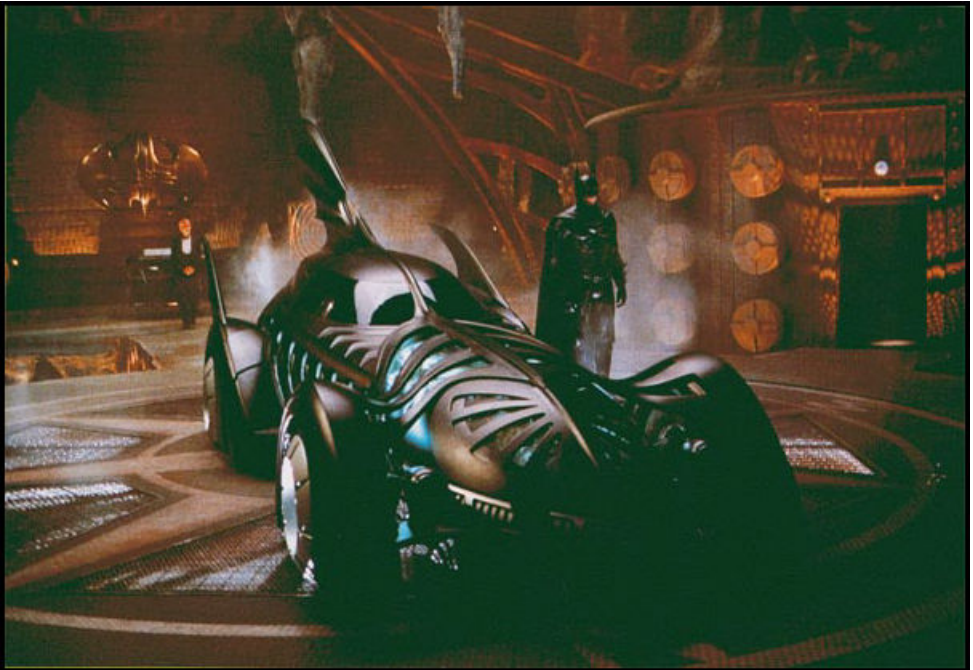
He shakes his head. “Only in the movie.”

“I see. A little creative writing by the scriptwriter?”

“Precisely.” He flashes her a grin. “Sadly, real life is not nearly so dramatic as Hollywood would have you believe.”

“I’m sure.” She smiles back. “So where are you taking me?”

He doesn’t answer, but all too soon Gotham City is well behind them.



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The Batmobile roars to a halt in the middle of a giant turntable that immediately does a one-eighty to reposition the vehicle for a fast exit. Batman gets out, speaks briefly to Alfred, then helps Chase from her seat. “Welcome to the Batcave.”

Chase looks around her at the jumble of vehicles and computer equipment spread amid a confusion of stalactites and stalagmites, neon lights, and bridges and stairways that lead off in every direction. “It’s amazing,” she says. “How did you manage to rebuild so quickly?” She steps toward a large dome crammed with gadgets, including various manikins, some clad in Batman and Robin uniforms, some in protective armor, some that stand naked, and some that are not male.

Batman steers her in different direction. “Another exaggeration from the film, I’m afraid. The Batcave actually suffered very little damage.” They approach a giant screen that dominates the computer center. At the touch of a button it springs to life and a window appears with an image of the Earth from space.

“Google Earth? I’m disappointed,” Chase says playfully. “I thought your stuff all had to have your own special brand.”

“You are correct,” Batman says seriously. “This is the Bat-Earth. Note the Bat-overlays of my own design.” He types in ‘Gotham’ and the map zooms in to show Gotham City, its streets littered with colored icons. “These are the positions of all police and emergency vehicles, updated in real time from their GPS units.” He sounds pleased with himself. “And *these* are the current locations of all known criminals in the area.”

“Really. I didn’t know that criminals came equipped with GPS.”

“Not as such. They’ve had microchips embedded in their skulls—unbeknownst to them, of course. Thereafter, every time they pass near a sensor—which are positioned all over the city—their location is immediately relayed to the police database, to which I have full access.”

“I see. Has the ACLU heard about this?”

“Of course not,” Batman says, his face impassive.



“I thought as much. I guess that mash of icons is City Hall. All that police protection. But what about this?” She points at a bright spot on the edge of town.

“That is none other than Arkham Asylum, which I believe you are somewhat familiar with. Were the Riddler, or Two-Face, or any other of my worst foes, ever to escape, I would know about it immediately.”

“Cool. And what about those two? They’re not like the others.” Chase points to a pair of icons outside the city. “That’s Wayne Manor, isn’t it?”

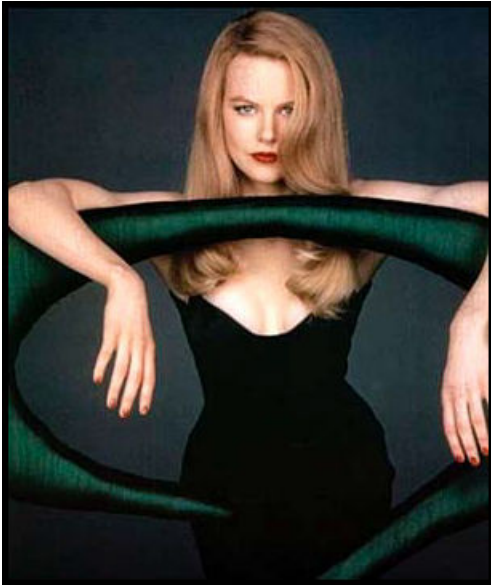
“Oh, uh... Well, you see, Robin and I are both chipped as well. It’s in case we’re ever captured. So the police would know where to find us.”

She laughs. “Does Bruce Wayne know you’re living under his house?”

“Indeed. He and I have a... working relationship.”

Chase peers closely at the map. “You know, those icons are right on top of each other. I guess Robin is around here somewhere.” She scans the Batcave.

Batman quickly shuts down the program. “I think he’s upstairs.”



“I’m glad.” She flips her hair forward and drapes herself over a railing. “We wouldn’t want him dropping in on us unannounced, would we?”

“That would be rather awkward,” he says, looking away. “To say the least.”

“It certainly would. Because you and I have business to attend to.” She struts across the floor of the computer center, her hands behind her back, her chest thrust forward.

“The kind of business that concerns a man like you—” She touches his arm lightly. “—and a woman like me.” She shakes her hair back and smiles.

Batman says nothing, but his eyes follow as she continues her slow walk.

Chase stops in front of a tall device situated between two large banks of computer equipment. “What’s that thing?” The machine is dominated by a large glass chamber. Thick cables link it to the computers on either side. A helmet-like object dangles underneath, and below that is a plain wooden chair.

“Ah, yes. Well... that machine was confiscated from a criminal.”

“I’ve seen it before,” Chase says. “Isn’t it the Riddler’s brainwave thingy?”

“Ah, you remembered.” Batman places himself between Chase and the machine. “You see, I am attempting to understand how this infernal device works, so as to ensure that, uh... no one can ever use it again.”

“Wasn’t it destroyed? I’m sure it was. While you were saving Robin and I from that awful pit.”

“It was damaged, yes. But not destroyed.”

“Isn’t it kind of, like, dangerous? I mean, it’s a weapon, right? He used it to control people’s minds. If it ever fell into the wrong hands...”

“That would be extremely dangerous, yes. But I can assure you, it’s perfectly safe here with me.”

Chase moves closer. “But is it really safe from you?

Might you be tempted, someday, to use it on some poor helpless woman? Might you use it to make her fall in madly love with you, perhaps?”

Batman looks skyward. “That would be rather unethical.”

“Oh, I don’t know.” Chase sidles over to him and runs her hand across his chest. “If it made two people happy, would it really be so wrong?” Batman hesitates, then puts his arm around her back. Chase lifts her face up to his. “Is that why I feel the way I do? Is that why I can’t stop thinking about you—about being with you? Is the Dark Knight of Gotham City controlling my mind?”

“I would not do that,” he whispers, “to someone I loved.”

Her body tenses. “You love me? Is that what you’re saying?”

His voice is distant. “I have loved Chase Meridian since the first day we met.”

“I love you too.” She smiles at him. “You can kiss me now.”





Their mouths meet and settle into a hard rhythm. She tastes his lips, his tongue, and the manhood that flows from his body like a kind of liquid.

She feels helpless before his power, like a little girl being scolded by her father. She wonders if she could free herself even if she wanted to, and that makes her cling to him that much tighter.

“You should go,” he says.

“Will I see you later?” Her eyes search his face for an answer.

Batman touches her hair, gently, but he shakes his head. “I have work to do here.” His eyes are locked on the brainwave machine.

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Chase steps from the elevator into the silver closet of Wayne Manor. Alfred is waiting outside. “I saw you down there,” she says. “You knew him all along.”

“Guilty as charged, madam.” He bows and accepts her fur coat.

Chase glides to the base of the curved stairway and pauses. “Alfred,” she says. “This basement tenant of yours... You’ve known him for a long time?”

He smiles. “Forever, it often seems.”

“Then tell me, please... He is a man I can trust, is he not?”

Alfred nods slowly, almost sadly. His eyes drop. “The Dark Knight is the finest man I’ve ever known. He would not hurt... the woman he loves.”

She smiles. “Thank you for that. It’s just that... He’s so hard to read. He seems so... I don’t know. Conflicted.”

“He has his dark places, Doctor,” Alfred says stiffly, “as do we all. There is nothing more difficult than losing someone you love.”

“Oh, of course. His parents. I heard—”

“So we must do our very best—you and I both—to forgive him his trespasses, as I am certain he would forgive us... Were we ever so unfortunate as to be in his place.” Alfred turns and walks away. Chase watches him go.

In her bedroom, Chase undresses slowly in front of the mirror, marvelling at the feminine perfection of her body. She does not know why simply being the woman she is should feel so wonderful, but the feeling is there and it flows through her like the heat from a bonfire.

She kicks off her shoes and returns the little black dress to its place in the closet. She makes a little pile of her lingerie and replaces it with a plain black negligé.



Black is *his* color, she thinks. Perhaps it will draw him to her this night.

In the bathroom, she washes her face and brushes her hair. As her thick tresses ebb and flow across her shoulders, she locks eyes with her image in the mirror and finds herself unable to look away. “I am Chase Meridian,” she whispers.



Suddenly she can think of nothing else. “I am a beautiful woman. I am in love with Batman.” The air seems to crackle around her, but perhaps it’s only the static from her hairbrush. She sprays under her hair and brushes from the inside out, gently shaking her head first to one side then the other.

“I am Chase Meridian,” she says out loud. “Batman will come to me tonight. I will be his woman.” She lays the brush aside, settles her hair and steps softly into the bedroom.

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He comes to her during the night, silent as a breath of air. She glimpses bat-like ears when the door opens, a hard black shadow against the soft sable of the hallway.

And then he stands before her, like an emissary from the netherworld, his cape still billowing from the speed of his passage. “I’m glad you came,” she says, though she can hardly breathe.

“There are times, Doctor, when one must simply give in to temptation.” He guides Chase into the bed and slips under the covers next to her.

Chase slides her hand across the hard expanse of his chest, letting her hair fall across his shoulder. “I agree,” she murmurs as her mouth settles over his and stays there, her lips working hard to elicit a response. Finally, his lips get in gear and a sigh escapes. She drinks it in.

A gloved hand paws at her chest. Her hand wanders south, finding only spandex and more spandex. “You know,” she says, when they break for air, “you’re never going to find the Batcave if you don’t lose the shorts.”

“Understood.” His hands disappear under the sheets. A moment later his utility belt hits the floor, his legs flex and she feels hairy skin rub against her own.

“So it’s a two-piece,” she says, tracing the emblem that still decorates his chest. “I always wondered.”

Strong hands take her by the shoulders, pulling her closer. “You are so beautiful,” he says, before pulling her mouth into his.

Chase squirms in his grasp, freeing one of her hands to creep under the covers. Her mouth is forced open and a snake wriggles in, seeking its mate. In response, she grabs the gearshift between his legs and makes like she’s behind the wheel of the Batmobile.

Wet lips slide apart. “Now the mask,” she whispers fiercely. “Let me see you.”

He shakes his head. “The mask stays.”

“You sure about that?” She works her fingers up and down what he would undoubtedly call the Bat-shaft. “You like that?” She tweaks the knob at the end. “Just one little peek?” He moans and turns his head away.

Chase takes pity on him. She feels him hard against her body, with the strength of ten men, ready to take her—yet she senses his vulnerability. She feels his conflict in the tension of his muscles and her womanly heart aches; she feels a need to console this man, a need to heal him, the need to be his woman.

“You help so many people,” she whispers. “You do so much good in the world... Let me help you tonight. Let me do something good for you.” She climbs on top of him and takes him into herself, and together they ride off into the night.

It’s Gotham City as never before seen. She rides the mighty Batmobile, impaled on its stick shift, held in place by a pair of strong hands that knead her breasts like stress balls. She feels the wind in her hair, the glow in her loins, the power between her thighs. They take speed bumps at 200 mph, the chassis squealing like a cornfield of mice on crank—and there are no more turns, no detours, only burning, flat-out speed.

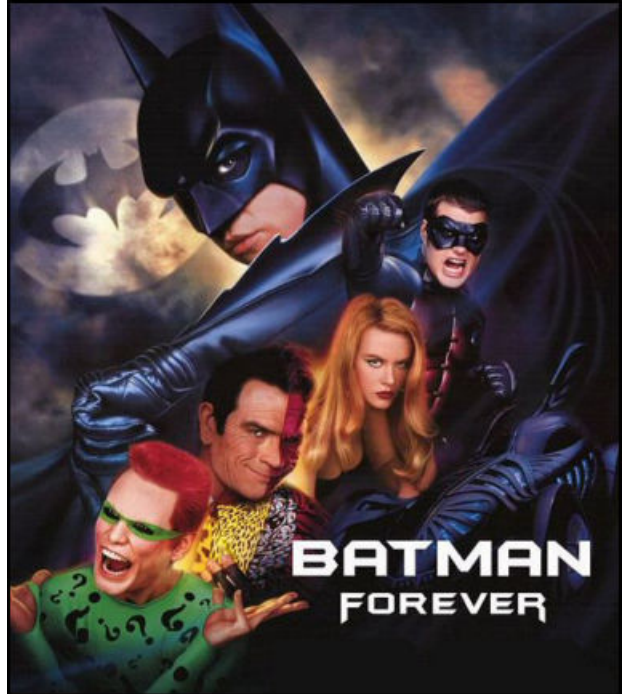
She is Chase Meridian. She is Batman’s woman. Her mind is aflame with the knowledge; she believes it to the molten core of her being. And when at last she crashes to a moist, soaring halt, she goes limp with the relief of having done that which she was created to do.

Her lips find his ear in the dark. “You were wonderful,” she murmurs.

He buries his face in her hair. “I am so sorry.”

“I forgive you,” she tells him, without knowing why.

True to his nature, Batman soon disappears into the twilight. Chase rises from the bed, discards her negligé and glides into the closet. Her fingers sink into a sea of blonde hair and work the zipper free from her neck. Its descent feels like tearing through raw flesh, but she no longer has a voice with which to scream.



A male head pops into view. Slowly, the skin suit is stripped off and put away. A silent figure closes the door to the bedroom intended for female guests. Amid the pale shadows of morning, it drifts away up the corridor, searching for another room and another life. A door closes. It makes no sound.

- *Epilog* -

Dick Grayson (aka Robin) finds Batman hard at work in the Batcave, hunched over a computer monitor next to the brainwave machine. “You still fooling around with that thing? That’s, like, every day this week.”

“The problem, Boy Wonder, is that our old friend the Riddler failed to properly document his code. Untangling this mess is truly to enter the mind of a madman.”

“Still think you can use it to rehabilitate the bad guys?” He hands a bottle to Batman and sits down himself, on the chair underneath the machine.

“Bat-beer, my favorite micro-brew. How did you know?” He pops the top. “To answer your question—yes, absolutely.”

Robin sips from his own bottle. “Any luck so far?”

“The results have been encouraging, to say the least,” Batman says, staring at his protégé. “The only problem is that the effect is only temporary.”

“So that’s what you’re working on—making the change permanent?”

“That is my goal and my hope, yes.”

Robin puts his beer aside. “I may be out of line here, Bruce... but I’m worried that you’re using this project as a way to avoid dealing with your feelings.”

Batman grins. “My feelings? You’ve been watching too much daytime TV, Boy Wonder. Or do you go by ‘Girl Wonder’ now?”

“Scoff if you must. But I know how tough it’s been for you, the past few months. I know how much you miss Chase.”

“I appreciate your concern, my friend. But I am dealing with it.”

“And what about that movie—holy smokes! Don’t you think it’s awful, the way they changed the ending? I mean, considering what really happened.” He slams a gloved fist into his palm. “I just wish there was something I could do.”

“Like you said,” Batman says, eyeing Robin through the amber lens of his beer bottle, “I’m working on it.” ■
