

BASED ON THE HIT WARNER BROS. SERIES CREATED BY BRUNO HELLER

GOTHAM

DAWN OF DARKNESS



J A S O N M O M O A

O N E

At a little past two a.m., Thomas Wayne was still at work on the computer in his office—the ultimate man cave—when he thought he heard a creaking sound. It seemed to come from above, or maybe behind him.

Thomas listened intently for a moment, then shrugged—maybe another bat had gotten in—and he returned to work.

This part of the house wasn't airtight, but its walls were thick, and little sound ever made it downstairs. In fact, what with its raw stone and concrete, exposed pipes, and the accompanying mustiness, it really *did* feel more like a cave than a basement. There were a lot of nooks and crannies where light never reached, and he'd seen bats down here before—sometimes hanging upside down, dormant, or flying around at night. He'd considered exterminating, but the bats didn't bother him, and they couldn't get upstairs into the main part of Wayne Manor, so he didn't see the point.

Besides, he sort of liked the company. Aside from

him, the bats were the only ones who knew about this place's existence—situated as it was directly below his first-floor study. Even Thomas's wife Martha and his teenage son Bruce didn't know about it.

A minute or so later, he heard more noise. This definitely came from above him, and it didn't sound like a bat—it sounded like a bang, as if something had dropped on the floor upstairs.

That's odd...

He wasn't home alone. It could be Bruce, Martha, or their butler, Alfred Pennyworth. But it would be highly unusual for any of them to be up and about at this time of night, and even more unusual for one of them to go into Thomas's workspace. Martha always respected his privacy and while Bruce—like any fourteen year old—got curious from time to time, Thomas had made it clear to him that his office was off-limits, and the boy usually complied. This left Alfred, his devoted employee for many years, who was the least likely to enter alone and uninvited.

Especially in the middle of the night.

Figuring he ought to check it out, Thomas left the office, closing the steel, high-tech security door he'd had installed. He kept a lot of valuable secrets here, including ones regarding his company, Wayne Enterprises, and these days, with crime rampant in Gotham, there could never be too much caution.

Creeping up the steep staircase which led to the secret entrance, he listened for any more sounds. Nothing. At the top landing he waited about a minute,

but still didn't hear anything. Perhaps something had fallen on its own—that happened from time to time. Maybe a book had been precariously placed on his desk, and had somehow fallen off. Or maybe a window or a door had been slammed shut by a breeze.

Had he left a window open? The night was chilly...

After several more moments of absolute silence, he was ready to accept that it had been an anomaly and was about to return downstairs to finish up his work, when he heard voices—men's voices—coming from inside his study.

Thomas couldn't make out what the men were saying, nor could he tell how many men there were. Then he heard more movement—maybe furniture shifting. Thomas's pulse quickened. People were upstairs. They had made it past the security system, and entered his home. Bruce, Martha, even Alfred, could be in danger.

Then there was a banging, as if someone was pounding on something, and the sound of more objects hitting the floor.

He rushed back down the stairs, going as quickly as he could without falling. Into the keypad, he typed in the password—B-R-U-C-E—and the basement door swung open. He went right to the landline and tapped in three digits.

"Nine-one-one, what's your emergency?" the female operator asked.

"This is Thomas Wayne," he said, keeping his voice low. "There appears to be a break-in at Wayne Manor."

"Sorry, what's your name?"

"Wayne. Thomas Wayne."

A pause, then the operator said, "Wait, Thomas Wayne. *The* Thomas Wayne? The billionaire? The richest man in Gotham?"

I don't have time for this. Impatient, Thomas said, "What's your name, please?"

"Jessica."

"Jessica what?"

A pause, then, "Meyers."

"Send the police here immediately, Ms. Meyers," Thomas said, "or you'll never work in Gotham again." Without waiting for a response, he hung up on her. In general, he hated threatening people, but sometimes it seemed the only way to get anything done.

Thomas kept a loaded handgun in his office, just for emergencies—and this qualified as an emergency. He retrieved the Walther semi-automatic from the back of one of his filing cabinets, and then moved again for the door.

Staying in the basement, waiting for the GCPD to show up, simply wasn't an option. He figured it could take ten minutes or longer for the police to get here at this time of night. He thought about Bruce and Martha, hopefully still asleep in bed, but he had to do whatever he could to protect them. Besides, someone had broken into his property, invaded his space. *His home.* This was a violation—felt like it on a gut level. It reminded him of the way he'd been feeling at work lately—vulnerable, disrespected, irrelevant, cast aside.

He hated playing the part of the victim, and remaining passive wasn't in his nature. For centuries, the Waynes had been fighters.

Again locking the office, he headed back up the stairs, padding quietly. The door at the top led to a secret entrance behind the fireplace in his office. There was no subtle, quiet way to enter the study—once he pressed the button the shelves would part, and if there were in fact an intruder or intruders in the room, Thomas wouldn't exactly be taking them by surprise.

He listened carefully at first—didn't hear anything.

To hell with it. He pressed the entry button.

The two halves of the door parted, and he saw that the study had been ransacked. Heavy, leather-covered furniture had been overturned, drawers pulled out of the desk and dumped. Classic, valuable books, papers, antique statuettes, all had been thrown about, some shattered, and office supplies were strewn all over the floor. A massive grandfather clock lay on its side, the glass broken out. That must have been what he had heard from the office below.

What the hell? There were large gashes in the walls, and the plasterboard had been pulled away in several places, revealing insulation and exposed electrical wiring. Here and there he saw gaping black holes in the wooden slats that lay underneath.

Aiming the gun ahead of him, Thomas crept into the room. Thoughts swirling, he made his way through the study, avoiding the stuff on the floor.

Who did this? he asked himself, over and over.

Random thieves? Professional criminals? Then he noticed the empty space on the wall opposite the windows. One of his most valuable paintings—Picasso's *Le Picador*—had been taken, frame and all.

Thomas was gutted. Not over the money. True, the painting was worth tens of millions of dollars, but even if it were gone for good it wouldn't make a dent, or even a smudge, in Thomas's private fortune. It was the painting's sentimental value that couldn't be replaced. Thomas's great grandfather had bought it from the young, struggling artist himself on a street corner in Seville. Or at least that was how the family story went.

He paused a moment, and frowned. Was that what the break-in was all about? A painting? If professional art thieves had come here to steal a painting, then why ransack the study?

Unless they were looking for something else. Maybe still looking for it.

The thieves could still be in the house, even upstairs.

Intent upon making sure his family was safe, Thomas left the study. If he saw an intruder he planned to shoot first, and to hell with asking questions later—he wouldn't ask questions at all. All he needed was a good look, and he'd get his man. Cool under pressure, he was a good shot. He had never served in the army, but his grandfather used to take him hunting and skeet shooting, and he practiced at a private shooting range north of Gotham. Alfred had helped him with that, pressing his training until he was satisfied with the results.

He continued into the foyer. The only light came

from several night-lights, and he had to squint to see at all, especially as he approached the main hallway where it was even darker. Then he detected movement to his right. He shifted, and was about to fire his weapon, when he realized he was looking at the mirror, at his own dim reflection.

Feeling ridiculous, he stayed put, catching his breath. The house was almost silent—the only sound Thomas heard was his own breathing. He passed through the dining room, then the drawing room, noting that all the windows were secure and there was no sign of a break-in.

Then he saw them.

Three men coming toward him, from the direction of the kitchen—or the servants' staircase. They were all in black, wearing Halloween-style masks. There was a werewolf, a zombie, and a gorilla. The gorilla was holding the Picasso, while the zombie had something in his right hand. A knife? No, it was wider than a knife. It looked more like a meat cleaver.

When the men saw Thomas they stopped, as if surprised. They stood about ten yards away, and it was an awkward standoff—like deer in headlights, staring at one another. It seemed to go on forever, but it was no more than five seconds. Then motion. The werewolf guy took out a gun, and it glinted in the dim light.

Thomas raised his weapon, aimed it as best he could, and fired, hitting him in the chest. The intruder grunted in agony and fell back, keeping his feet.

"Come on," the zombie said, "let's get outta here.

Thomas didn't recognize the voice, muffled as it was, but the accent was pure, working class Gotham.

The zombie and gorilla took off toward the front door, but the werewolf remained and aimed his gun at Thomas's face. Thomas leapt to his right, ducking behind the grand piano. A bullet hit the piano, and another whizzed by overhead.

Leaning to his left, Thomas saw a sliver of the man, visible between the legs of the piano, and he fired the Walther, hitting the intruder again. He groaned and stumbled backward, toppling over a club chair.

Leaping to his feet, Thomas rushed past the body and went outside. Dull orangeish light coming from old-style lampposts illuminated the long driveway. The other two intruders were getting into a car, slamming the doors and revving the engine. The car sped away along the driveway toward the front gates. The night guard, Nigel, was supposed to be on duty, but the gate was wide open. Where the hell was he?

Dropping his gun hand to his side, Thomas went back into Wayne Manor and turned on the lights. He was heading toward the main stairway, to go up and check on his family, when he heard a muffled voice.

"Hey, rich guy. Where you goin'?"

Thomas stopped and turned back. The werewolf guy stood in the doorway to the drawing room. With a bleeding gash in his leg, he was aiming his gun. Thomas still had his own weapon by his side.

"You got what you wanted," Thomas said. "Why don't you just leave?"

"You wanted me to leave, you should'a thought about that before you shot me."

The werewolf guy's finger moved against the trigger.

Thomas flinched as a shot rang out.

A bullet ripped into the side of the guy's neck—knocking him off of his feet. The gun fell to the floor, along with his dead body.

Then Thomas saw Alfred on the mid-landing of the stairwell, holding his Browning 9mm sidearm, crouched a full twenty feet from his target. In his sixties, Pennyworth was still as fit as a man half his age, and possessed a lethal set of skills honed in the British Royal Marines. That was why Thomas had hired him. A butler who could make tea was easy to find. A butler who could save lives? Not so easy.

"Nice going," Thomas said, "but I had the situation under control."

In the distance, sirens blared.

"Of course you did, sir," Alfred said. "I don't doubt that for a moment."

T W O

Before sunrise, GCPD Detectives Harvey Bullock and Amanda Wong arrived at Wayne Manor.

“I should be in bed right now,” Harvey said, “getting all rested up for tomorrow morning’s hangover.”

Harvey and Amanda had been partners for about a week now, ever since Harvey’s last partner got killed in a shootout during a drug store robbery. He’d liked his last partner. Marv was a good guy, but what could you do? It seemed like Harvey went through partners faster than rock bands went through drummers.

So enter Amanda, stage left. Ideal partner?

Not quite. First problem—their personalities. Harvey was a husky, rugged Irish-American with a scraggly beard. He liked to wear old suit jackets and fedoras, and didn’t give a damn if his clothes were in style now, or if they’d *ever* been in style. He lived by the adage, “*It’s not how you look, it’s how you feel,*” and he always felt like the coolest dude in the room. If he hadn’t become a cop, he would’ve been a sailor, or a

dockworker, or maybe a lumberjack if he lived in the woods and knew how to swing an axe.

Amanda, meanwhile, had Asian features, wore her hair in a tight bun, and her clothes were neatly pressed. If she was attractive, Harvey hadn't looked long enough to notice. She was in shape, but thin—way too thin, as far as Harvey was concerned. He liked women with meat on their bones and if they had a temper, liked to slap him around a little, so much the better. Amanda couldn't win a fight with a punching bag.

Worse, she was a snob. For example, when she was off duty, she liked to go to wine bars and to the theater and freakin' museums. What was up with that? For Harvey, it was bars—real bars, ones that sold beer and whiskey—and maybe an occasional trip to a pool hall or the racetrack.

They got out of the car and headed along the graveled driveway. Beat cops and medical personnel were working the scene, and there were black-and-whites, emergency medical services ambulances, and a Gotham TV news truck. Lacey White, the young, curvy brunette reporter was chatting with a cameraman, prepping to report from the scene.

"Never too early to break a hot news story, huh Lace?" Harvey called out.

When she spotted Harvey, her expression brightened.

"Harvey!"

She handed the cameraman the mike, then rushed

over. He met her halfway and she gave him a big, tight hug. Damn, she felt good. Smelled good, too—a combination of lady soap, whatever perfume she had on, and her own natural scent. It gave him flashbacks to the nights they'd spent together, how she'd tossed him around like a giant beanbag and had her way with him—just the way Harvey liked it.

He whispered into her ear. "I miss you, sweetheart."

She whispered back, "Me, too. What's wrong, Harv? Lose my number?"

They'd gone out a few times a couple of years back, always had a great time—hell, if they hadn't, he would've forgotten about her by now. If he was a relationship kind of guy, which he definitely wasn't, she might've been the one for him. She was definitely his type—fun, sexy, no attitude.

"Maybe I did," he said, "but I promise I'll find it soon, sweetheart."

She nodded, and he smiled, feeling good about himself. Not all guys could make that work—blow off a woman, and then call her "sweetheart." Not without seeming like a total sleaze ball. Harvey could work the magic.

"I'd really like that," she said.

Her soft, raspy tone reminded him of the time she'd whispered in his ear after she'd beaten the crap out of him. "*Lacey's in charge,*" she'd said, "*and don't you ever forget it.*"

"I'll be in touch."

"I bet you say that to all the girls," she replied.

"Yeah, actually I do," he said, smiling. "Thing is, in your case, I mean it."

She laughed, enjoying the banter, as she headed back toward the cameraman. Harvey got along well with all of his old flames. As he often told people, "*Don't judge a man by his friends, judge him by his exes.*" Every guy got along with his friends, but if he got along with his exes—well, that told you something about the man's character.

As he resumed walking with Amanda toward the entrance, she tossed him a harsh, judgmental look. Already he was beginning to find it familiar.

"What?" Harvey asked.

"Flirting at a crime scene?" she said. "Seriously?"

"We're not at a crime scene yet," Harvey protested. "We're *outside* a crime scene. Big difference. Huge, actually."

Amanda remained stone-faced. "When we get in there, I'll take the lead," she said. "You just hang back."

Harvey did a double take, partly because he was at least half-drunk and partly because he was thinking, *is she serious?* Amanda had been getting more and more controlling. What was up with that? She'd only been his partner for a week, and she kept insisting on doing a lot of the driving, picking the music they listened to in the car, and editing his arrest reports before he handed them in. But telling him how to handle an investigation? Was she serious?

He had twenty years in the Department, nine as a detective, and she had what, five and less than a

month? Besides, she was a woman. He didn't have anything against women—like, *obviously*. He loved women, and women loved him—it was a mutual respect sorta thing, and he had a lot of, well, notches on his belt to prove it. But he didn't think women should be cops was all. There was plenty of other work they could have, so why cops? For example, was he trying out to be a cheerleader? No, he was not.

The other day he'd voiced his opinion to Amanda, and she'd called him a sexist.

Harvey had fired back, "I'm no sexist. I'm the *opposite* of a sexist. If I was sexist, I wouldn't like women as much as I do, and if I didn't like women, I'd *want* them to be cops, so they could get hurt or killed. But I don't want them to be cops, because I love women and want them to be safe."

She hadn't bought it, but it had shut her up.

Now he said, "Sorry, I had a cold last week and maybe my ears are still a little clogged. I thought I just heard you telling me how to do my job."

"First off, you're piss drunk," Amanda said.

"Whoa, I'm not at all drunk," Harvey said. "A little buzzed, yeah, okay, but not drunk. Want me to walk a straight line for ya?" Harvey managed a couple of steps, as if he were walking along a tightrope, and lost his balance. Then he said, "Or, better yet, wanna give me a breathalyzer?"

"Why do I need a breathalyzer?" Amanda asked. "I can *smell* it from here."

Attitude, Harvey thought. See? You didn't get crap

like that from a man. *A man'll stab you in the back, but he won't needle you to death.*

"Second, I'm better at a crime scene than you are," Amanda said.

"What?" Harvey couldn't believe this. "Who says?"

"It's a fact," she said. "I just am. You get too worked up, you don't ask the right questions, and this is all exacerbated when you've been drinking."

"Oooh, big word," Harvey said. "I'm impressed. When did you memorize that one?" As they headed up the several stairs, leading to the entrance, Amanda was muttering to herself. Harvey, dizzy, had to hold the railing.

Yeah, okay, he was a little buzzed. So what?

Amanda noticed he was wobbling and smirked. She rang the doorbell.

"Okay, I need to hear this," Harvey said. "So how are you better than me?"

"It's called having people skills," she said. "I have them, you don't. Honestly, your attitude embarrasses me sometimes. We're in a partnership, so it reflects on both of us."

Harvey laughed—for effect. He didn't think any of this was funny.

"I embarrass you, huh?" Then he was full-blown serious—even angry. "Look, you're lucky I'm even working with you, okay, sweetheart?"

"Sweetheart?" Amanda said. "Seriously? Who do you think I am, your news reporter ho?"

"Whoa, easy, Lacey's a classy lady," Harvey said.

"And what's wrong with 'sweetheart'? Why's that a bad thing to say these days? It's a term of freakin' endearment."

Amanda rolled her eyes. "You wouldn't work with me if you had a choice," she said, ringing the bell again.

"What do you mean?" Harvey asked. "I mean about not having a choice."

"Captain Essen told you if you didn't, you were going on desk duty."

This was true, but Harvey hadn't known it was public knowledge.

"Where did you hear this?" he demanded.

"Gimme a break," Amanda said. "Everybody in the department knows about your misogynistic tendencies."

"Wait," Harvey said, "they said I gave a massage to *who*?"

"How much exactly did you drink tonight?" Amanda asked.

"It's last night, now," Harvey said. "And not much. Not as much as usual anyway."

"If you're inebriated you shouldn't be here," Amanda said.

"No, *you* shouldn't be here," Harvey said. "You and your fancy words. *Inebriated*." He laughed. "What's wrong, people can't say 'drunk' anymore? That's too low class?" He belched then continued, "Wanna know the truth? Okay, yeah you're right. I didn't wanna work with you, and I still don't wanna work with you—but as long as we're together, I'm in

charge, I call the shots. *Comprende mundo?*”

“*Comprende mundo?*” She wrinkled her face as if she smelled something foul. “That doesn’t even mean anything.”

Harvey glared at her, and didn’t notice that Martha Wayne had answered the door. When he did notice her, he let out a soft whistle.

Talk about pretty—yowza. If you looked up “Harvey’s type” in the Encyclopedia Britannica, you’d see a big picture of this lady. He’d seen her around a lot over the years, talked to her a few times at charity balls, GCPD functions, and whatnot. She was blonde, classy, okay a little on the thin side, but somehow with Martha Wayne the whole package worked. The thing Harvey liked most about her, though, was her confidence. In a weird way she reminded him of Fish Mooney.

Yeah, Fish and Martha came from totally different walks of life—it probably wasn’t possible to get *more* different—but there was something similar about them, too. Fish always made herself the center of attention. Same with Martha Wayne—when you were in the same room with her, you noticed her. It was hard to look away, and she didn’t just have attitude. She had the looks to back it up.

Even now, in the middle of the night, after there’d been a murder at Wayne Manor, the lady of the house looked stunning. How about that as a litmus test for beauty? Of course Martha Wayne was married, and Harvey wasn’t the type of guy who would ever make a pass at another man’s wife, but looking? Looking

never hurt nobody.

Snapping out of it, he realized Amanda was already asking questions.

"Were you here when the shooting happened?" she asked Martha.

Had Harvey's gaze drifted down to her chest?

Yep, yep it had. Hey, he was only human.

"No, I was asleep," Martha said. "We were in Switzerland for a week, and just arrived back this afternoon, so I was pretty tired. Actually, it was the gunshot—I mean *shots*, that woke me up."

Harvey caught a glimpse of Amanda, sneering at him as if saying, *Seriously?* They stepped through the doorway and started down the hall. He shook his head a little and spoke up.

"Um, how many shots were there?" he asked. It didn't really matter; he just wanted to say something.

"Several, I believe," Martha said. "I'm not sure. When I heard them, I went and woke up Alfred, our butler." Harvey and Amanda followed her along the wide, brightly lit hallway, past all the fancy antique furniture, toward the crime scene further back in the house. He couldn't help noticing Martha's swinging hips. Even in yoga pants, or whatever she had on, her body looked in perfect proportions. Harvey didn't know how to draw, but even if he had, if he was the best damn artist in the world, he wouldn't have been able to draw a body like that.

"You're so classy," Amanda whispered into his ear. Harvey began to smile, then realized she hadn't

meant it as a compliment.

As they approached a door that probably led into the drawing room, there was a kid waiting for them. Martha approached her son Bruce, who was standing there in pajama bottoms and T-shirt. Harvey had met the kid a bunch of times. Good, polite rich type. Smart too.

"Bruce, why don't you go upstairs and get some rest?" Martha said. "You've had a long day, and you're probably still jetlagged."

"I'm not tired, Mom." He glanced at Harvey and Amanda, his eyes wide, and said, "Are you the detectives who'll be in charge of this case?"

"Yep, we are," Harvey answered.

Bruce eyed him carefully, but didn't say anything more. Could the kid tell he'd been drinking? Eh, highly, *highly* unlikely. Nobody could hide his drunk better than Harvey Bullock.

"Who do you think is responsible?" Bruce asked.

"We don't know yet," Amanda said. "We just got here."

"But you must have some idea," he insisted. "I've heard that police always know who the criminals are." Something in his voice indicated that he didn't believe it, though.

"Cynicism," Harvey said. "I like that, kid." Harvey belched, re-tasting that last shot of Jameson he'd downed. And, damn, it still tasted good.

Outside Thomas Wayne's study the body remained splayed. Several uniformed cops were in the room—a

couple of them talking to Thomas Wayne and Alfred Pennyworth, his butler, near the entrance to Wayne's study. Pennyworth may have looked like an uppity butler, but he had a tough-ass past—you could see it just by the way he stood, and by looking in the guy's eyes.

The medical examiner was photographing the dead guy, who was in a hooded sweatshirt and was wearing a werewolf mask.

"Who is he?" Harvey asked.

"Looks like a werewolf to me," one of the cops said. He was a fresh-faced blond guy, probably right out of the academy.

Smartass. The kid must've caught his expression.

"He has no ID on him," the cop said, "and obviously we didn't want to pull off the mask. I mean, not till the ME and you guys got here."

"This the only vic?" Harvey asked.

"Yeah, there were two other intruders, but they escaped."

"The security's tight here. How'd they get in?"

"The security system was disabled and the guard at the gate, guy named Nigel Hayward, got ambushed. When we got here he was tied up and gagged. Beaten up pretty bad, too—his face looked like hamburger meat. He's in Gotham General now. He'll live, but he's gonna take a lot of scars with him."

"We'll have to talk to Nigel," Amanda said.

"Good idea," Harvey said, the sarcasm so dry it almost sounded sincere. He got a pair of latex gloves

from one of the EMS workers and squatted near the body, careful not to get any blood on his favorite chinos. Reaching out, he gripped the edge of the mask, avoiding the wound on the dead man's neck. "Time for the big reveal," he said. "Let's see who we've got under here."

The dead guy was a pudgy-faced, red-haired guy with a thick scar on his forehead.

"Never seen him before in my life," Harvey said.

"Neither have I."

Who the hell said that? Harvey looked back over his shoulder and saw that Thomas Wayne had come up behind him.

"Hey, Mr. Wayne." The detective stood up, lurching a little. "I'd shake your hand, but..."

"Do you want to tell us what happened here?" Amanda asked.

"Yes, but it's late obviously," Wayne said, "and I've already explained it all to the officers. Can't they fill you in?"

"Better if we get it from the horse's mouth," Harvey said. "No offense."

"None taken," Wayne said.

"And we'll need to speak to Mr. Pennyworth as well," Amanda said.

"Of course," Wayne said. "If you'll give me a moment..." Harvey nodded, then watched Thomas go over and whisper something to Bruce, who was still standing with Martha. A moment later both mother and son headed away, probably to get back to

bed. Before Bruce exited, however, he looked back at Harvey, as if to say, *Find out who did this.*

Harvey smiled, and gave the kid the thumbs up.

A short time later, Harvey and Amanda were seated across from Thomas Wayne and Alfred Pennyworth at the dining room table. Wayne leaned his elbows on the polished wood surface, while Pennyworth sat stiffly.

"We'll make this quick," Harvey said. "There's been a bunch of other art robberies in Gotham over the past couple months, so there's a chance the same crew is behind this one. So you say there were three intruders in the house, right?" The uniformed cops had filled him in, but he wanted to hear it for himself. Besides, it made him sound official.

"That's right," Wayne said. "All in Halloween masks. A zombie, a werewolf, and a gorilla. The gorilla was holding the Picasso, the zombie had what looked like a meat cleaver."

"That explains how your wall got chopped up," Harvey said. "Do you have any idea why they did that?"

"No," Wayne said, and he shook his head. "None."

Questioning witnesses was Harvey's forte, and even when he was two sheets to the Jameson wind—as his relatives in Ireland liked to say—he could tell when somebody was holding back. He had that feeling about Thomas Wayne.

"Come on, you must have *some* ideas," Amanda

insisted. Harvey glared at her, annoyed. Hadn't he made it clear that *he'd* ask the questions?

Wayne remained silent for another few seconds.

"Well, since they're art thieves, it might be that they were looking for some sort of electrical alarm system," he suggested. "Maybe they thought the painting was wired for protection?"

No, he's reaching, Harvey thought. *But for what?*

"Do you have separate alarms like that for your paintings?" Amanda asked.

"No," Wayne said. "I thought my main system would suffice." With a smile he added, "Obviously I thought wrong."

"How do you think they disabled the main system?" Harvey asked.

"That I have no clue about," Thomas said. "Nobody knows those codes except my wife and Alfred... well, and Wayne Security, the company we employ."

"Well, they figured out the code somehow," Harvey said. "So somebody must've squealed."

He looked at Alfred.

"I beg your pardon," the butler said, and it came out more of a growl. "Are you implying that I might have any involvement in this?" Pennyworth had a British accent. It wasn't a fancy Brit accent, though. It was the kind of accent that tough guys had in crime movies.

"I like to shoot from the hip," Harvey said.

"Bloody idiot," Pennyworth said. He looked like he was ready to jump over the table. Harvey kept a hand on his piece—just in case.

"It's okay," Amanda said. "Let's just calm down."

"I'm calm," Harvey said. "It's this guy who looks like he's about to blow a gasket." Then he said to Pennyworth, "Down, boy."

The butler's face went red and Harvey saw veins in his forehead. So the detective turned back to the master of the house.

"Is it possible somebody at Wayne Security is involved in this?" he asked.

"Anything's possible," Wayne said. "I'll certainly conduct an internal investigation."

"Yeah, I think that's a good idea," Harvey said.

Pennyworth was still sneering.

"So where were you when you heard the intruders?" Amanda asked Wayne. "In your bedroom?"

Wayne hesitated, then said, "No, I was in the kitchen."

Again Harvey's gut told him something was off about the man's answer. "Didn't they have to pass by the kitchen to get to your study?" he asked.

"I suppose they were already in the house when I went down to the kitchen to get a drink," Wayne said.

He was smooth—Harvey had to admit it.

"Okay," Harvey said, "so you heard them, and then what happened?"

"I came out here, and one of the intruders—the one with the werewolf mask, shot me, so I shot him. He didn't die though—Alfred shot him from the stairwell."

"One shot from the stairwell, huh?" Harvey was

impressed. "That's some good aim ya got there. What're you, some kind of sniper?"

"Actually, I did toy with it in the military," Pennyworth said.

"A butler who knows how to kill," Harvey said. "I guess that can come in handy."

"It did tonight," Wayne said.

"Back to the walls," Harvey said. "Sorry, but I ain't buying the security system theory. These art thieves are pros—they can tell if a painting's wired or not. Without doing enough damage to raise the dead."

"Okay, so perhaps they thought I had something hidden in the walls," Wayne said. "Jewels, or money, or some sort of valuables."

"Do ya?" Harvey asked.

"Do I what?" Thomas asked.

"Hide valuables in your walls."

"No," Wayne said. "It was just another theory. I have no idea why they chopped up the walls, Detective. Maybe they're just crazy. There are a lot of crazy people in Gotham these days—just look how Arkham's overflowing. There's a mental health crisis in this town, which is why Wayne Enterprises has been such a huge advocate for mental health reform in Goth—" He cut himself off, rubbed his forehead with one hand, then continued. "Look, it's late and I'm exhausted, so can we call it a night? I'd be happy to answer any more questions you have, just as I'd love to get my painting back, but it's very late and it's been quite an eventful evening. If you'd like to

come by again tomorrow and—”

“Just one more thing,” Harvey said. “You said nothing else is missing, but can you think of anything else these guys might’ve wanted? Besides the family jewels?”

“What do you mean?” Wayne asked.

“Something else valuable,” Harvey said. “Some other piece of art maybe? Something they were *really* after.”

“Do you have any idea how much *Le Picador* is worth?” Wayne said.

“Let’s just say I’m confident it’s out of my price range,” Harvey said.

“It’s worth tens of millions of dollars, or more,” Wayne said. “I think it’s more than a big enough score for art thieves, don’t you?”

“Touché,” Harvey said. “But tying up the guy at the gate? Taking apart your office? These don’t exactly look like the moves of professional art gangs. Too much fuss, especially when their target was hanging in plain sight.”

“Can I ask you a question now?” Wayne asked.

“Shoot,” Harvey said. Then he pointed to Alfred, “I mean him, not you, Sniper.”

“Have you been drinking tonight?” Wayne asked Harvey.

“‘Scuse me?” Harvey asked, pulling back as if offended.

“Because I think Captain Essen might want to know that one of her detectives showed up here after a night

out on the town, tossing around wild, bizarre theories when he should've been trying to find my stolen property."

"What makes you think I'm drunk?" Harvey asked.

"I can smell the alcohol from across the table," Wayne said.

Harvey glared. "How do you know it's not my mouthwash?"

Amanda stood up. "Thank you for your time, Mr. Wayne, Mr. Pennyworth," she said. "We'll keep you updated on the progress of the investigation." At that she spun and marched out of the room ahead of Harvey, moving at a clip.

Leaving Wayne Manor, she was looking straight ahead, in a rush to get to the car. The sky was starting to lighten to the east, but it was still pretty much dark.

Harvey had the car keys out.

"I'm driving," she announced, and snatched it away. A headache was starting to make itself known, and Harvey didn't protest.

"Well, that went pretty well, huh?" he said as they drove along the driveway, the headlights illuminating the open gate ahead. Amanda, at the wheel, still wouldn't look in his direction. Harvey didn't get what was wrong with her, why she always had to be so freakin' moody.

"Women," he muttered.

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