

# **[BRAVE and the BOLD]**

[ISSUE #12 - BATMAN FEATURE STORY]

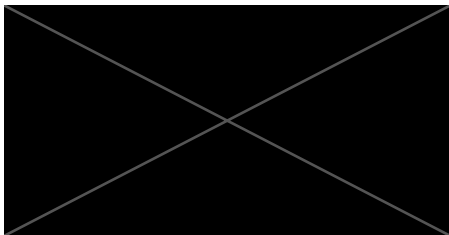
"[UNTITLED]" Part [02]

By

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## **PAGE 1**

SPLASH PAGE. TRISTAN GREY, fully transformed into a (more) horrific version of his Man-Bat self, crashes out of his attic dorm room window. Tumbling out after him (more falling than chasing) is MAPS MIZOGUCHI in her home-made ROBIN costume.

TRISTAN  
KREEEEEEEEEEEE

SFX  
SKSSHHHHHHH

TITLE & CREDITS

## **PAGE 2**

Maps grabs the tail end of her rappelling rope before she hits the ground. Glass is falling all around her.

MAPS  
UNF!

She jumps down to the ground safely. Tristan is flapping off into the night.

MAPS  
TRISTAN! Wait!

A young student couple is making out on a bench in the courtyard as Tristan zooms past them, kicking up loose trash and debris in his wake. The kids don't even notice.

Maps runs after him, shouting at the kids as she passes.

MAPS  
Go make out in your rooms! It's not  
safe out here!

Tristan flies into the woods on the edge of the Academy grounds. Maps runs up to the edge of the woods in hot pursuit, her hand to her ear, trying to contact Batman via the earpiece.

MAPS

Robin to Batman! Come in! I found  
Tristan. Repeat: I FOUND TRISTAN. He's  
heading into the Gulley behind the  
school.

(beat)

I'm going in after him! Unless you  
think that's a bad idea. Just let me  
know.

Close on Maps' face, resolute.

MAPS

Okey-doke.

### **PAGE 3**

CUT TO: Inside Isla's apartment, Bruce and Isla are making out  
on her couch. HAM the dog sleeps happily on the floor. The TV is  
on. There are a couple of wine glasses on the coffee table.

Closer on the two of them, kissing. But Bruce is distracted now.  
There's a buzzing in his ear.

MAPS (FROM EARPIECE)

Skkk--Robin to Batman-- Come in,  
please--

Bruce breaks away from the kiss, leaving Isla momentarily  
confused. Bruce's ear is still buzzing (Isla doesn't hear this).

MAPS (FROM EARPIECE)

Batman! HELP!--skssshhhh

BRUCE

Isla, I, ah... I'm sorry. I have to get  
going.

ISLA

Oh! Um...okay.

Bruce is already grabbing his jacket and heading for the door.

BRUCE

I have...somewhere to be right now. I know that sounds crazy. And abrupt. But I'll call you as soon as I can and hopefully we can...pick up where we left off.

ISLA

Bruce, this is mad. Where do y'need to be at this hour?

Bruce looks at her earnestly.

BRUCE

I promised to look in on a friend.

Isla looks back at him, still confused but trying to be understanding. She doesn't respond.

Bruce turns to go, looking back over his shoulder.

BRUCE

I'm really... I had a good time tonight. At the gala. With you.

(beat)

I'll call you.

Isla stands by the door, watching him leave. Her dog watches alongside her.

## **PAGE 4**

Maps is wandering through a dark tangle of branches, her flashlight out.

MAPS (CALLING OUT)

TRISTAN??

She looks behind her as she hears something approaching.

MAPS

This is hopeless...

(beat)

...is what a NON-ROBIN would say in this situation! Never give up!

SFX  
GRMMMMMMMMMMMM

MAPS  
Oh, jeez. Something's coming this way.

BATMAN pulls up in front of Maps on his motorcycle (the one Bruce was riding earlier). Dried leaves blow all around.

BATMAN  
Are you okay?

MAPS  
I found Tristan! He WAS in his room, but I've never seen him like this before. He's way more...BATTY. Like, out-of-control-batty. I tried talking to him but he smashed out of the window and took off.

Batman is concerned.

BATMAN  
Are you hurt?

On Maps, looking herself over.

MAPS  
Oh! No, I'm fine. I maybe got some rope burn on my legs.

Batman pushes a button and the motorcycle converts to a much cooler Batcycle.

SFX  
Zzzzzt CHK-KLAK

Maps sits on the bike behind Batman, pointing deeper into the forest.

BATMAN  
Which direction did he fly in?

MAPS  
That way.

BATMAN  
Okay. Hold on tight.

The Batcycle tears off through the woods.

## **PAGE 5**

Tristan, still looking like a grotesque Man-Bat, flies through the skies above Gotham City. He's gotten some distance from the Academy now but he still looks half-crazed.

He clutches his big bat ears and winces as a musical melody wafts on the breeze.

SFX

music

Tristan pauses in mid-air, still clutching his head and trying to fight off the hypnosis.

TRISTAN

Hurrrrrr...

But it's no use. His eyes glaze over and he arcs upward through the clouds.

TRISTAN

GRAHHHHHHH

Behind him, a small Bat-Drone follows.

SFX (DRONE)

DEET DEET

## **PAGE 6**

Big shot - Batman and Robin rip through the streets of Gotham City on the Batcycle, narrowly avoiding traffic. Maps is trying to hold onto the drone remote and looks like she's having a hard time.

BATMAN

Have you got a lock?

MAPS

Yes! No! I thought I did, but he keeps moving! He's in the clouds again!

SFX (BIKE)

GRRRRRRMMMMMMMM

Batman swerves around a dumptruck. Maps nearly drops the remote.

MAPS

Holy--

BATMAN

Hands inside.

Closer on Maps now. She's tapping the remote screen, which shows a radar and a blurry dot.

MAPS

Wait, I think I've got him. My fingers are fritzing out the circuits or something!

Maps looks confused.

MAPS

Umm. That's weird. There's TWO of them on the screen now.

BATMAN

Two?

She's holding the screen up, trying to get a better signal.

MAPS

Three!

(beat)

Four! What the heck is going on up there?

## **PAGE 7**

Back up above the clouds, another Man-Bat streaks past us looking vicious. It knocks the drone off-kilter

MAN-BAT

SKREEEEEEEEEE

SFX (DRONE)  
DEET DEET DEE--skkkk

Three other Man-Bats (Men-Bat?) join Tristan as they arc through the clouds, screeching.

MAN-BAT (VARIOUS)  
KEEEEE-KEEEEEEE-SKREEEEE

Together, they dive down toward the city again, heading for a tall church steeple.

Back on the streets, Batman sees the flock of bats diving and drives toward them, tail-light streaking behind the bike.

MAPS  
I think I broke it.

BATMAN  
There. They're heading for St. Augustine's.

SFX  
BRMMMM

## **PAGE 8**

Close on St. Augustine's steeple against the Gotham skyline. Dark bat-like shapes circle it, flitting in and out of the belfry windows.

Watching them from a few buildings away are Batman and Robin. Batman is perched on a ledge surveying the scene through compact Bat-binoculars. Maps is on a fire escape, also watching through binocs, but hers are huge and clunky.

BATMAN  
Makes sense. St. Augustine's has been officially under construction for the better part of the decade. UNofficially, it's a tax write-off for the D'Amico family. It's empty.

MAPS  
Until now.  
(beat)  
Are we going in there?

Closer on the duo. Batman is still looking through the binocs.

BATMAN

No. It's too dangerous. We don't know  
how many of them are in there. And  
you're not combat-trained.

On the Man-Bats again, through the binoculars. Still circling.

MAPS (OFF-PANEL)

What are they doing?

Batman puts his binoculars down.

BATMAN

Hunting.

From below Batman and Robin, a scream erupts from the street.

VOICE (OFF-PANEL)

AAAAGHHHHH! H-HELP!

## **PAGE 9**

In the alley below, a Man-Bat is grabbing a terrified man in mid-flight. Above them, Batman is already diving toward the creature from above.

MAN

YAAGHHH!

Batman drives his heels into the Man-Bat's head, knocking it down to the street and causing it to let go of its victim.

SFX

WHUNK

MAN

Unf!

The disheveled man is already running away in terror as Batman faces off against the Man-Bat. The creature is picking itself off the ground and eyeing Batman with ferocity.

MAN-BAT

HSSSSSS

It lunges at Batman, who ducks under one outspread wing.

SFX

WHFFF

Batman uppercuts the Man-Bat, who flies backward through a plate-glass store window.

SFX

KRRSSHMMMM

## **PAGE 10**

Batman is inside the dark store now, almost on top of the Man-Bat as it lies in the wreckage of some electronics.

But the Man-Bat has changed somewhat. Its face has reverted to something more human. It has a bloody gash across one cheek from the broken glass and its hands are up, protecting itself.

MAN-BAT

Hurrr...Hurrr...

Closer on the Man-Bat, looking even more pathetic. Maybe even...crying?

MAN-BAT

...Hhelp...me...please...

Batman, holding the man by the furry scruff of his neck, wants answers.

BATMAN

Who are you? Answer me! How many of you are there?

The man wants to answer, but he's holding his head in pain, eyes squinted tight, as the hypnotic music fills the panel.

SFX

Music

MAN-BAT

I'm...s-sorryy...I--rrrrrrghhhhh

Without warning, the Man-Bat turns feral again and launches itself up through the ceiling, leaving a stunned Batman in its wake.

MAN-BAT

HREEEEEEEEE

SFX

CRASHHH

## **PAGE 11**

CUT TO: the next day. Wayne Manor. Bruce is in the kitchen making himself some coffee. He's wearing pajama bottoms and has some bandages on his injured shoulder from last issue. He's spooning some coffee grounds into a stovetop espresso maker.

BRUCE (NARRATION)

St. Augustine's was a dead end. Church belfry contained some bones and tattered clothes but it's definitely not a Man-Bat NEST.

BRUCE (NARRATION)

Mia got back safely to her dorm room at the Academy. I might be giving her a bit too much rope. Too much HOPE. She shows promise, but she's headstrong.

Bruce sits down in a kitchen chair sipping his coffee and looking at his phone.

BRUCE (NARRATION)

Headstrong. I should call Isla. Right now. The longer I wait the harder it's going to be to win back her trust.

BRUCE (NARRATION)

I feel SANE when I'm with her. GROUNDED. That's what you want, isn't it Bruce? A life that finally makes SENSE? So call her.

On the phone is the article about Bruce and Anastasia - the paparazzi photo from the previous night.

BRUCE (NARRATION)

Right. Now.

Wide shot of Gotham.

BRUCE (NARRATION ON THE PHONE)

Hi. It's Bruce. From last night. I just wanted to check in on you to see how you were doing. Would we be able to meet somewhere?

In an upscale part of town now, Bruce walks toward a large, austere building - Gotham's famous MACKENZIE CLUB. It looks like it was built at the turn of the century - made of stone with large pillars facing the street. But the windows are blacked out, which is weird.

BRUCE (NARRATION)

Gotham doesn't care what you WANT, Bruce. There are creatures in the city, feasting on innocents. Multiplying. God knows how many there are.

BRUCE (NARRATION)

And right now, this is your only LEAD.

ANASTASIA DUBROVNA opens the door for him and greets him with a hug. She looks amazing despite the face that she nearly died twelve hours ago.

ANASTASIA

Bruce! Darling! So happy to see you!

## **PAGE 12**

Inside the club's foyer, Anastasia closes the door behind Bruce, who notices that it's being locked.

BRUCE

Nice to see you up and about, Anastasia. How's your neck? Did you end up seeing a doctor?

SFX (DOOR LOCK)

CLICK

ANASTASIA

Oh, no. I'm happy to say that it LOOKED  
much worse than it WAS.

Close up of Anastasia's neck as she indicates the bite area with  
her fingers. No sign of the marks from the previous evening.

ANASTASIA

You see? I feel like a new woman. All  
thanks to you.

She leads him into the main lounge, which is dimly lit by ornate  
lamps. Bored socialites and wealthy Gotham elites lounge on the  
plush chairs, their eyes glazed over. The place looks like the  
world's most expensive opium den. Two more gorgeous models  
approach with drinks.

BRUCE

Ha ha. All I did was call for help. I'm  
a bit SQUEAMISH around blood, believe  
me.

ANASTASIA

Let's get you a drink.  
(Waving to a nearby waiter)  
Marko! Can we get something for Mister  
Wayne? What will you have, Bruce? We  
have EVERYTHING.

On a nearby chaise lounge, Bruce sees a man in a suit with a  
large slash across his face. It's the Man-Bat he fought in the  
alley!

BRUCE

Whatever YOU'RE having.

And off to another side of the room, TRISTAN is slouched lazily  
on another chair. He's dressed in a disheveled suit, looking  
half-drugged.

Anastasia is smiling seductively at Bruce as she turns his head  
back toward her. The other two models approach.

ANASTASIA

That is the perfect answer. The perfect  
answer for a perfect man. I was SO  
hoping you would call me today.

**PAGE 13**

Anastasia kisses Bruce. The other two women have their hands on his shoulders, in his hair...

ANASTASIA

Mmmmmmmmm

One of the women is unbuttoning his shirt. Bruce has pulled away somewhat from the kiss. Soft music is beginning to fill the background of the panel.

BRUCE

Anastasia, wait. I--

SFX

Music

Closer on the seduction. But now the music has transformed into legible text. Bruce can hear what the music is saying, and it's speaking directly to him.

MUSIC (MORPHING INTO WORDS)

Mia nomo estas Legio, cxar ni estas  
multaj... Aligxu al ni...

Anastasia bites Bruce's neck. He's under the sway of the hypnotic chant. The other girls bare their fangs as well.

MUSIC

Aligxu al ni...Stay with us...Be with  
us...

From Bruce's POV, the room we saw before now shows what's REALLY there - where we once saw lounging socialites, we now see disfigured bat-people, all of them grotesque and looking directly at us. The walls and furniture are awash with blood. It's a nightmarish fever dream.

MUSIC

SEE with us...

Back on Bruce, transfixed, horrified, reaching out as the women engulf him.

BRUCE

NO!

## **PAGE 14**

A black, blurry panel. Bruce's POV again. He's coming to.

BRUCE (NARRATION)

Blacked out. Can't happen again.  
Can't...

He's being half-carried up a grand set of stairs, supported by two of the Man-Bat creatures. Anastasia leads the way.

ANASTASIA

Do not be afraid, my love. I was afraid  
and alone in the world, and Mother  
saved me. She saved all of us.

BRUCE (NARRATION)

Can't. Save. Everything. Everything  
is...swimming.

Close on Bruce, bleary-eyed, trying to look around. Get his bearings.

BRUCE (NARRATION)

Windows blacked out. Should have seen  
it, Bruce. Should have... Saved...  
Mother...

He's led through a large masonic door and is nearly bowled over by the smell coming from the dark room within.

ANASTASIA (TO MAN-BATS)

Bring him.

BRUCE (MUTTERING)

Mthhr...shd...hv...

Bits of bone and flesh are strewn about. We see hints of the carnage in the flickering candlelight. There are Man-Bats hanging from the ceiling.

SFX  
Rattle rattle

From the back of the room, a large, shadowy figure waits for them.

MOTHER  
Sssssssss

## **PAGE 15**

Half-page SPLASH. The shadowy figure shuffles forward into the light. The MOTHER. She's big. Twice the size of a man, and her lower body is that of a serpent. Her upper half is naked and beautiful (in a demonic way) and she wears bits of ancient jewellery which dangle over her breasts, covering up anything I'm not allowed to show in a Batman comic. Bruce looks small and helpless before her.

Her 'voice' doesn't come from her mouth; rather, we hear her words in tail-less balloons that mimic the music we've been seeing. She's in our heads.

MOTHER  
Hssssssssss

Close on Bruce, on his knees, out of his mind.

BRUCE (NARRATION)  
Smells. Old earth and... blood. Rot. In the ground. Mother. No. Not Mother...

Closer now on MOTHER'S face, licking her wet lips.

MOTHER  
Do not fear, my sweet child. Mother is here.

## **PAGE 16**



SHRIEEEEEEEEEEK

**PAGE 17**

It's bedlam in the dark room. Mother and the rest of the creatures (including Anastasia) are holding their heads to block out the sound, contorting in pain. Bruce fumbles away from them, still out of it.

SFX  
EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE

Bruce ploughs through the crowd. The high-pitched sound still wailing in the back of the panel.

SFX  
EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE

He shoulders his way through a locked balcony door. Bits of splintered wood fly everywhere.

BRUCE  
Hnnnf

SFX  
KRNCHHH

Long shot. Bruce tumbles over the edge of the two-storey balcony in a shower of wood and glass.

He lands on the street amid a bunch of pedestrians and traffic, rolling instinctively to avoid killing himself.

SFX  
KNCH

BRUCE  
Nngh!

SFX (CAR HORNS)  
HONK HOOONK

**PAGE 18**

Bruce picks himself up off the road. He's covered in blood from his neck bite and the fall. Torn clothes. Scratches all over. People on the street are shocked.

PEDESTRAIN

Holy--

BRUCE (NARRATION)

Rib cracked. Can't... mother... Got to get... get to...

He presses a bloody wad of money into the hand of a guy who's about to get into a cab as he shambles into the back seat.

BRUCE

Need to get...

CAB GUY

Whoa, okay buddy, okay.

PEDESTRIANS (VARIOUS)

Oh my god. Was that Bruce Wayne? Fell from the top floor window! Somebody call a-- Bruce, lend me some money, man!

BRUCE (NARRATION)

Get to... Robin...

Slumped down in the back seat, Bruce mumbles out instructions to the cab driver.

BRUCE

Gotham...Gotham Academy...go...

The cab driver looks over the back seat to see who he's driving.

## **PAGE 19**

The taxi drives down the dark road leading into the Gotham Academy campus. It's dusk.

BRUCE (NARRATION)

Burning up. Stay here, Bruce. Stay...Aligxu al ni...

CAB DRIVER (FROM CAR)

Here you go. It's sixty-five bucks.

Bruce stumbles out of the cab door, half on his knees in the driveway, one hand feebly touching his earpiece. The cabbie is looking at him from inside the car, counting the cash he was given.

BRUCE (NARRATION)

Don't think... I can... mother... Help me.

BRUCE (ALoud TO EARPIECE)

Robin. Robin... Come in...

Now Bruce is at Langstrom's lab/office, on his knees, almost clawing at the door. KIRK LANGSTROM is at the open door, looking down at him, surprised.

BRUCE

S-serum.

LANGSTROM

My God!

Bruce is on the lab table now, shirt open. He's perspiring, almost crazy out of his mind. Langstrom is quickly and awkwardly mixing a beaker of serum.

LANGSTROM

I don't know how this happened to you, Mister Wayne, but I'll do what I can. Assuming your...bite...was indeed Homo-Chiropteris in origin, my serum should reverse the effects.

Close on Langstrom as he swirls the solution, looking sideways at Bruce, maybe more intrigued than he is worried.

LANGSTROM

Although...there's no way of knowing how this strain would manifest within you. In many ways, it's quite PROFOUND and BEAUTIFUL--

Too late! Bruce's back arches in pain as a sinister transformation begins!

BRUCE

Aaaaaaghhhh!

## **PAGE 20**

Close on Bruce's eyes. They're turning red, matching Mother's glassy, demonic eyes.

BRUCE (BREATHING HEAVILY)  
Hahhh...hahh...

His face contorts with...laughter? He doesn't turn into a full Man-Bat, but there are fangs in his mouth now to match the eyes.

BRUCE  
Hhhha-ha-ha-ha-ha

Big panel. Bruce throws Langstrom across the lab, shattering beakers and test tubes and scattering books everywhere.

LANGSTROM  
Aaahh!

SFX  
SMASHHH

He leaps out the lab window, hissing.

BRUCE  
Hsssssssss

## **PAGE 21**

CUT TO: Isla's house. A quiet street shot.

ISLA (FROM INSIDE HOUSE)  
I didn't say that. I think he's lovely.  
Maybe too sporty for you.

Inside, Isla is pouring a bit of brandy into her coffee cup as she talks to someone on the phone. HAM is growling at the window.

ISLA  
Absolutely not. I told you I quit. Ach,  
ye're such a mother hen.

HAM  
GRRRRRRRRRRR

Close on Ham, ferociously barking.

HAM  
GrrrrrrrrrARK BARK BARK BARK

Isla is lighting up a cigarette, turning to see what her dog is barking about.

ISLA  
Anyway, I'm a grown woman, aren't I? I  
can look after myself. Ham, what the  
devil has gotten into you?

Close on Isla as she hears the doorbell ring.

ISLA  
I'll call ye back, love.

SFX  
BING BONG

## **PAGE 22**

SPLASH PAGE - Isla opens the door to reveal Bruce Wayne. He's smoldering in a half-open shirt and jacket. His eyes are red and hypnotic. There's a devilish smirk on his face.

BRUCE  
Well? Aren't you going to invite me in?

END OF ISSUE TWO