

ABEL. AS
IN KANE AND
A BELL.

CLEVER, ISN'T
IT? THOUGH I'M NOT
SURE FATHER MORENO
IS REJOICING,
I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT
APPRECIATE THE
WORDPLAY.

I ADMIT THAT
WAS A BIT CHEEKIER
THAN MY USUAL WORK
BUT I FEEL YOU AND
I HAVE GOTTEN TO KNOW
EACH OTHER SO I CAN
LOOSEN UP A BIT.

THERE'S
SOMETHING ABOUT
YOU THAT PUTS ME AT
EASE, BATGIRL.

I FEEL
COMFORTABLE
ENOUGH TO
DISCUSS MY
PAST...

SPECIFICALLY
MY HISTORY WITH
FEMALES. I KNOW,
THAT SOUNDS
CLINICAL AND
DISTANT...

BUT
THERE HAVE
ALWAYS BEEN
WOMEN IN MY
LIFE.

I HAVE MONEY.
AS MUCH AS I WANT
WHENEVER I CHOOSE
TO TAKE IT.

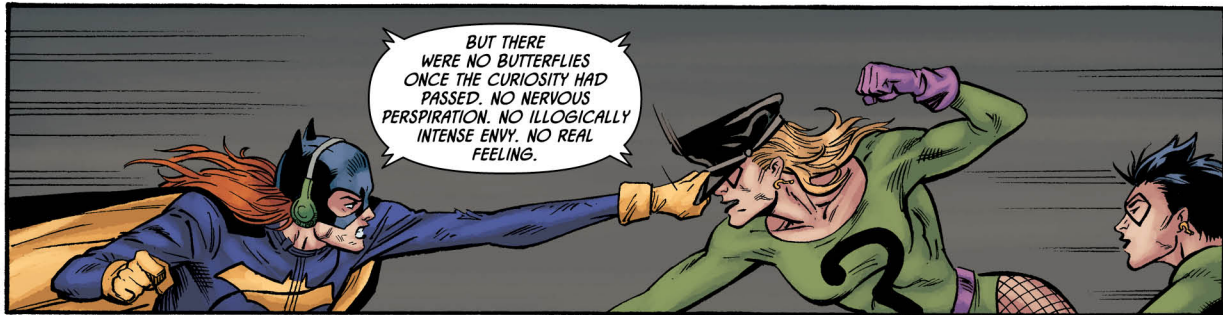
I HAVE POWER.
I HOLD ALL THE
ANSWERS.

BECAUSE OF
THIS, SOME WOMEN
FOUND ME ATTRACTIVE.
A CERTAIN KIND OF
WOMAN ANYWAY.

AND I SUPPOSE
THAT I WAS ATTRACTED
TO THEM, TOO, FOR
A TIME. IN A WAY.

SIMPLE
ANIMAL
URGES.

RAW
PHYSICALITY.



BUT THERE WERE NO BUTTERFLIES ONCE THE CURIOSITY HAD PASSED. NO NERVOUS PERSPIRATION. NO ILLOGICALLY INTENSE ENVY. NO REAL FEELING.



LAST NIGHT, I WAS ATTACKED BY THE JOKER, BATGIRL. SWIFT. BRUTAL. CRUEL.

I FACED OBLIVION. MY LIFE FLASHED BEFORE MY EYES. THINGS READ AND AS YET UNUSED OR LEARNED FILLED MY MIND. PUZZLES. WORDS.



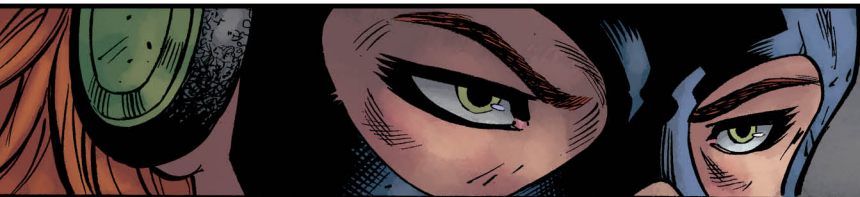
PERHAPS IT WAS JOKER'S RANTING ABOUT BATMAN'S WEDDING, BUT ONE PARTICULAR NEOLOGISM STRUCK ME MOST PROFOUNDLY.

THE TERM "SAPIOPHILE." "AN ATTRACTION TO INTELLIGENCE." IT SEEMED SO SIMPLE, YET IT WAS AN UTTER REVELATION.



IT WAS AN ANSWER TO A RIDDLE I HAD NEVER KNOWN TO ASK.

AND SO I DEVISED A GAUNTLET FULL OF TRAPS AND PUZZLES FOR YOU.



IS NOT ANY FIRST DATE TRULY THE SAME? TWO GLADIATORS FACING OFF, ASSESSING ONE ANOTHER, CIRCLING EACH OTHER...



EACH HOPING TO RULE THE RING.



SUCH A GOOD SPORT. YOU KNOW YOU HAVE TO KEEP PLAYING THE GAME AND THE TAPE IF YOU WANT THAT VERY LAST HOSTAGE. AND WE'RE RIGHT BACK WHERE WE STARTED.

BY NOW THE POLICE ARE PLAYING CATCH-UP TO YOU, PICKING UP YOUR LEFTOVERS.

THAT WILL GIVE US SOME PRIVATE TIME AT THE END OF OUR DATE.

SOME TIME TO GET CLOSER. SO I CAN TELL YOU...

I BELIEVE I COULD COME TO LOVE YOU, BATGIRL.



IF YOU HAVE MADE IT THROUGH THIS CHALLENGE WITH AS MUCH WISDOM AND CLEVERNESS AS I ANTICIPATE, IT IS POSSIBLE...LIKELY EVEN...

...THAT I ALREADY DO.

