

BATGIRL #

“LITERACY”

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DAMION SCOTT, PENCILS

MICHAEL WRIGHT, NEEDS A TIME MACHINE

PAGE ONE

SPLASH

Downshot. High angle.

Batgirl is perched on a utility pole along a street in a bad neighborhood of boarded up businesses. Might be cool if she's "standing" on the pole itself supported by a one hand grip on a cross brace. Wires and cables and crap loop from the crossbars of the pole. She's looking down at a solitary figure walking along a cracked sidewalk. The figure is in a light jacket and ballcap and carries a gym bag under one arm. One of the large gym bags and it's marked (we'll see here of later) with the logo HERMES. The jacket cannot disguise that he's a big guy. Ten paces behind this guy four gangbangers follow. They're in gang colors of bandanas or "kiss my ass" hats or something to make them uniform and distinctive.

TITLE: **LITERACY**

CAPTION: PREDATORS.

CAPTION: PREY.

PAGE TWO

PANEL ONE

The gangbangers close with the man with the bag. They smile and call after him. They are playful and amused the way bullies always are when checking out their targets.

GANGER 1: HEY, BUDDY. WHERE YOU **GOIN'**?

GANGER 2: CAN'T YOU **SEE**, TREY? HE GOIN' TO THE **GYM**.

GANGER 3: GONNA WORK **OUT**.

PANEL TWO

A couple of them scuttle sideways around the man as he walks, flanking him. The others close behind. They're still joking, teasing.

GANGER 1: THAT'S WHAT YOU GOT IN THE **BAG**, AH-NOLD?

GANGER 2: SNEAKERS? A JOCKSTRAP?

GANGER 3: YOU A **JOCK**, BUDDY?

PANEL THREE

Tight shot as one of the gangers behind grabs the strap of the gymbag and tries to pull it from the man's grasp. Keep the man's face hidden. The two flankers pull small handguns from under their shirts or jackets or whatever. The gangers are no longer smiling. Their faces are fierce, predatory. All-business now.

GANGER 2: LET'S SEE THE **BAG**, ARNOLD.

GANGER 1: GIVE IT UP **EASY**, MAN.

PAGE THREE

PANEL ONE

Large panel.

Batgirl drops among the gangers kicking the one holding the bag and sending him reeling back. As he falls back the gymbag opens and thick bundles of cash fall out. There's like a million in twenties and fifties here. The man is turning and the gangers look up shocked.

PANEL TWO

Batgirl clocks two more gangers as the cash tumbles to the ground.

PANEL THREE

Batgirl whirls as one of the gangers takes a bullet in the chest spilling him back and throwing his sneakered feet in the air.

SFX: **BLAM!**

SHOT GANGER: unnf!

PAGE FOUR

PANEL ONE

LARGE PANEL

Batgirl dives as the man in the ballcap opens up with a pair of automatics. One in each fist. The ballcap has fallen off. We see that the man has a shaved head and his face is covered in purple tattoos. He looks crazed. He's blasting down gangers and bullets strike the sidewalk and streetpoles and a few bullets go through a couple of the cash bundles breaking them open to spill bills. Batgirl's in the middle of it all.

CAPTION: MISTAKE.

CAPTION: NOT PREY.

PANEL TWO

One of the wounded gangers sits on his ass on the sidewalk holding his bleeding side with one hand and blasting with a revolver with the other. He grits his teeth against the pain. Bills flutter in the air.

CAPTION: KILLER AGAINST KILLER.

PANEL THREE

Downshot of Batgirl standing on the sidewalk with the tattooed guy and the gangers lying dead all around with the bills fluttering down to rest all around. The gymbag lies on the street its contents spilt.

CAPTION: UNTIL ALL ARE KILLED.

PAGE FIVE

PANEL ONE

Batgirl crouches and begins to pull the bundles of cash back into the bag.

PANEL TWO

Her gloved hand picks up a piece of folded paper amongst the cash. It has a few flecks of blood on it.

PANEL THREE

She holds the paper unfolded and looks at it.

PANEL FOUR

A triptych of panels across one tier.

Tight shot of the paper. We see only a couple of the hand written block letters at a time. The words fill the panel at an angle as though seen from Batgirl's POV.

1 MILLION DOLLARS

PANEL FIVE

Same kind of shot.

ALONE. ON FOOT. NO GUNS.

PANEL SIX

Same kind of shot.

The lettering is seen upside down now.

KILL HIM IF

PANEL SEVEN

Batgirl looks at the note held in both hands at an angle. Her head is cocked as though trying to decipher it.

CAPTION: WORDS.

PAGE SIX

PANEL ONE

Another triptych of panels.

Stephanie (the Spoiler) Brown is asleep in her bed.

PANEL TWO

Same shot and angle but now a bat-eared shadow falls over her.

PANEL THREE

Same shot and angle but now Batgirl's gloved hand covers her mouth and her eyes pop open in surprise.

STEPHANIE: mmph!

PANEL FOUR

Large panel. Steph sits up and stares at Batgirl crouched on her bed holding out the ransom note.

CAPTION: STEPHANIE BROWN.

CAPTION: THE SPOILER.

STEPHANIE: oh.

BATGIRL: READ THIS.

PANEL FIVE

Steph sits on the edge of the bed pulling her bangs from her forehead and looking blearily at the note in her hand. Batgirl crouched close behind her.

STEPHANIE: Wow.

STEPHANIE: IT'S A **RANSOM** NOTE.

PAGE SEVEN

SIX PANEL GRID

PANEL ONE

Stephanie turns to look at Batgirl. Batgirl is pulling that gymbag from behind her.

STEPHANIE: WHERE'D YOU FIND THIS?

BATGIRL: READ IT.

STEPHANIE: NOT UNTIL YOU SHOW ME WHERE YOU GOT IT.

PANEL TWO

Steph looks with goggle eyes at the gymbag held open by Batgirl to reveal blood speckled bundles of cash heaped inside.

BATGIRL: READ IT.

STEPHANIE: woo.

PANEL THREE

Stephanie looks at Batgirl.

STEPHANIE: WHY'D YOU COME TO ME?

BATGIRL: READ IT.

STEPHANIE: WHY NOT TAKE THIS TO BATMAN?

BATGIRL: READ IT.

PANEL FOUR

Steph squints in close-up as she regards the off panel Batgirl.

STEPHANIE: YOU MEAN YOU CAN'T READ?

PANEL FIVE

Close-up of Batgirl.

BATGIRL: READ.

BATGIRL: IT.

PANEL SIX

Maybe a shot through Steph's open window at the two girls in the glow of Steph's bedside lamp looking at the ransom note. Leave plenty of room for the big word balloon here.

STEPHANIE: (SHOW IT HERE AS WRITTEN IN THE NOTE)

**"WE HAVE YOUR BROTHER FALCO. WE WANT ONE
MILLION DOLLARS OR HE DIES BIGTIME. WE WILL KILL HIM IF
YOU DO NOT FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS EXACTLY. SEND
MONEY IN A
HERMES GYM BAG, SEND MESSINGER ALONE. ON FOOT. NO
GUNS TO"**

PAGE EIGHT

PANEL ONE

Steph turns to Batgirl.

STEPHANIE: HEY, CAN I COME ALONG?

BATGIRL: NO.

STEPHANIE: WHY NOT?

PANEL TWO

Batgirl in close-up.

BATGIRL: TOO SLOW.

BATGIRL: READ IT.

PANEL THREE

Steph smiles at her. Steph holds the note.

STEPHANIE: AND WHAT IF I DON'T READ IT?

STEPHANIE: YOU'LL NEVER KNOW WHERE THE DROP IS.

PANEL FOUR

Batgirl in close-up. Same as panel two.

PANEL FIVE

Largest panel.

Steph is dressed as Spoiler now and pilots her motorcycle down a dark suburban street with Batgirl seated behind her. Batgirl sits back holding onto a support bar behind her. The gymbag is secured to the handlebars of the bike by bungee straps.

SPOILER: SO, DID YOU NAIL THE BAGMAN FOR THE KIDNAPEE--

SPOILER: --OR THE KIDNAPERS?

BATGIRL: DRIVE.

PAGE NINE

PANEL ONE

The bike tops a hill and we see the river and the lights of a bridge and the skyline of Gotham beyond.

SPOILER: THIS IS IMPORTANT, BATGIRL.

SPOILER: WAS THE MONEY COMING OR GOING?

PANEL TWO

Shot of them on the bike.

SPOILER: YOU INTERRUPTED THE DROP OR NAILED THE PICK-UP GUY FOR THE BADDIES.

SPOILER: BAD NEWS FOR THIS FALCO EITHER WAY.

PANEL THREE

Large establishing panel. Spoiler and Batgirl crouch on a signal stanchion that crosses elevated train tracks. Batgirl has the Hermes bag on her shoulder. They look down at an elevated train platform and station. A placard says D STREET. The station is deserted. A few newspapers blow on the wind along the tracks.

SPOILER: HERE'S THE DROP. "D" STREET ON THE GMT.

SPOILER: I DON'T SEE ANYONE AROUND.

PANEL FOUR

Shot of the girls. Batgirl touches the side of her head to turn on her nite-vision. Spoiler looks off panel.

SFX: (SMALL) tek!

SPOILER: WE WEAR THE SAME KIND OF MASK. WHAT'S YOURS--

BATGIRL: QUIET.

SPOILER: (SMALL) --MADE OF?

PAGE TEN

THREE PANELS IN NITE-VISION MODE. GREENISH AND BLURRED.

PANEL ONE

We see a darkly dressed man in a trenchcoat lurking in the shadows in the station entrance.

PANEL TWO

We look down on the street where we see a car parked along the street under the platform. A pile of cigarette butts lie by the driver's side of the car.

PANEL THREE

Another dark figure lurks by the stairs leading up to the platform. A sign by him points upward reading: ALL TRAINS.

PANEL FOUR

Batgirl turns to Spoiler.

BATGIRL: WHEN?

SPOILER: THE NORTHBOUND LOCAL. JUST LIKE THE NOTE SAID.

PANEL FIVE

As seen from a high angle looking down at the girls where they crouch. We see this through a sniper's scope. Telephoto shot. Tight composition with background blurred. The crosshairs rest between the girls. Someone's watching.

SPOILER: WHAT DID YOU SEE?

BATGIRL: GO HOME.

SPOILER: NO WAY.

BATGIRL: THEN WE WAIT.

PAGE ELEVEN

PANEL ONE

Seen from the waiting car below. A figure walks down the street toward the station. The figure wears a light raincoat.

PANEL TWO

The guy waiting under the stairs conceals himself and looks up through the steps at the figure walking up the steps.

PANEL THREE

The guy on the platform moves behind a column with a handgun in his gloved fist as the figure moved on to the platform. The figure is a lean guy in tinted glasses and long hair swept back in cornrows. A whitened scar runs down the guy's face in a ragged line. He's dressed in black with gold chains visible.

PANEL FOUR

The sniperscope moves to the figure on the platform. The figure just stands waiting.

PANEL FIVE

Nite-vision downshot as the subway train pulls down the tracks toward us. In the nite-vision mode the trains lights glow extra-bright.

PANEL SIX

The figure stands on the platform and regards a man standing in the open doorway of a subway car. The man inside wears a GOTHAM KNIGHTS start-up jacket and gloves and a cloth cap pulled low over his eyes over a pair of dark sunglasses. In addition to that the man in the car has a nylon stocking pulled over his face.

GUY IN CAR: DECIDED TO COME YOURSELF.

GUY ON PLATFORM: IT'S MY **BROTHER**.

PAGE TWELVE

PANEL ONE

The figures speak. One in the car. One on the platform.

GUY IN CAR: WHERE'S THE BAG?

GUY ON PLATFORM: THERE WAS A PROBLEM.

GUY IN CAR: WE DON'T WANNA **HEAR** THAT.

GUY ON PLATFORM: MY MAN GOT RIPPED OFF.

PANEL TWO

Batgirl and Spoiler. Batgirl points a finger down toward the platform. She holds a hand to the side of her head over her ear.

SPOILER: (SMALL, WHISP) WHAT'RE THEY SAYING?

BATGIRL: QUIET.

ELECTRONIC: (VERY SMALL) that's too bad...for Falco.

PANEL THREE

The figure on the platform speaks.

GUY ON PLATFORM: YOU ASK MY MAN TO WALK THROUGH THE HILL IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT CARRYIN' A MILLION LARGE

GUY ON PLATFORM: I'D SAY THIS IS **YOUR** FAULT.

PANEL FOUR

The man in the car smiles under the stocking as the doors of the car close.

GUY IN CAR: WE DON'T **SEE** IT THAT WAY.

GUY IN CAR: SHAME WE COULDN'T DO BUSINESS.

PANEL FIVE

The Guy on the platform runs for the doors as they close.

GUY ON PLATFORM: **NO!**

PAGE THIRTEEN

PANEL ONE

Batgirl leaps from the arc over the tracks. She tosses a batarang an line as she jumps.
Spoiler comes out of her crouch.

BATGIRL: TAKE THE TRAIN.

BATGIRL: I'LL TAKE THE CAR.

SPOILER: **WHAT** CAR?

PANEL TWO

The Guy on the platform turns, a hand under his coat, as the gunman on the platform steps from behind that support column. The train is rushing off.

GUNMAN 1: YOU **HEARD** THE MAN.

GUMAN: NO PAY. NO PLAY.

PANEL THREE

Batgirl drops toward that car that was parked below as it pulls from the curb.

PANEL FOUR

Guy on the platform comes up with a shotgun that he's worn slung from his shoulder under the raincoat. He gunman raises his pistol.

PANEL FIVE

Spoiler drops to the roof of a train car. He feet skipping under her.

SPOILER:uh!

PAGE FOURTEEN

GRID FORMAT. EVERYTHING HAPPENS AT ONCE.

PANEL ONE

Batgirl drops to the roof of that car speeding away.

PANEL TWO

Spoiler slips and falls on her ass atop the train car.

SPOILER: ow!

PANEL THREE

The Guy on the platform blows the gunman away with the shotgun.

PANEL FOUR

The driver of the car turns to look out his side of the car, eyes raised. At the same time Batgirl slips down the side of the car on the passenger side.

DRIVER: WHUZZAT?

PANEL FIVE

Spoiler slides along the roof of the train car reaching frantically for a hold.

SPOILER: oop!

SPOILER: whoap!

SPOILER: eep!

PANEL SIX

Seen through the sniper's scope we see the Guy on the platform standing over the fallen Gunman. The Guy holds the smoking shotgun.

PAGE FIFTEEN

ALL SAME SIZED PANELS.

PANEL ONE

Batgirl clings to the underside of the racing car. She has her cape wrapped a\over her and off the street. The Hermes bag drags along the asphalt.

PANEL TWO

Spoiler has a handhold and slings a leg over onto the roof of the car.

CAPTION: (STEPH'S HAND WRITING)

Dear Diary,

I know what my next science paper is going to be called:

"My Love/Hate Relationship With Gravity."

PANEL THREE

The Guy on the platform stumbles as a shot from above takes him. It's a shot through the shoulder by a big caliber.

GUY ON PLATFORM: unnh!

PANEL FOUR

Platform Guy lies on the platform, a smoking hole through the back of the shoulder of his coat. Gunman 1 stands up holding a handgun on him. Gunman 1 has the front of the clothes on his chest blown open and we see a second chance vest revealed there with buckshot embedded in it. The second gunman from under the stairs comes from the shadows holding his gun aimed at the man on the platform with both hands.

GUNMAN 2: DEAD?

GUNMAN 1: **HE'LL** LIVE.

PAGE SIXTEEN

SIX PANEL GRID

PANEL ONE

The Guy from the Car exits the train at another platform. Spoiler lies atop the car and watches.

PANEL TWO

Spoiler stands atop the platform and looks down at where the Guy from the Car walks across the street toward a bar called THE PADDOCK (there's a horseshoe in the logo of the dingy sign). It's a corner taproom with neon beer signs in the windows. The car that has batgirl under it comes to the curb nearby.

PANEL THREE

The driver steps from the car pitching aside a cigarette butt and speaks to the Guy from the Car as he walks toward the door of The Paddock.

DRIVER: WELL?

GUY IN CAR: A WASH. LOTS OF EXCUSES AND NO CASH.

PANEL FOUR

Batgirl crawls from under the car as the two enter the bar. If you show the bag show that it's worn from being dragged under the car.

DRIVER: WHAT'S NEXT?

GUY IN CAR: WE'LL FIND OUT WHEN KINSEY GETS HERE WITH THE MULE..

PANEL FIVE

High angle shot.

Spoiler swings down on a line. We see Batgirl climbing the front of the building.

PANEL SIX

Batgirl is climbing in through a window with Spoiler by her. Angle this so we can see a second car pulling to the curb behind the first.

BATGIRL: KINSEY IS HERE.

SPOILER: WHO?

PAGE SEVENTEEN

PANEL ONE

The two creep through a dark room stacked with beer cases.

SPOILER: YOU'RE ONE STEP AHEAD OF ME FOR ONCE, HUH?

BATGIRL: QUIET.

SPOILER: EXCUSE ME. SOME OF US SPEAK IN MORE THAN TWO-WORD SENTENCES.

PANEL TWO

Batgirl claps a hand over the startled Spoiler's mouth. Batgirl looks away as she does so.

OFF PANEL: (BELOW, SMALL) LOOKIN' FOR YOUR BROTHER, MIGUEL?

OFF PANEL: (BELOW, SMALL) HA HA HA HA HA

PANEL THREE

In the bar. It has a horseracing theme that was long ago forgotten. Pictures of horses are framed on the walls. The Guy from the Platform sits slumped on a bar stool holding a hand to his bloody shoulder and glowering murderously at the others who smile at him. The guy from the subway car has pulled off his stocking to reveal that he's an ugly bastard with short cropped hair died white/blonde.

GUY ON PLATFORM: IF YOU'VE HURT HIM...

GUY ON CAR: FALCO? I WOULDN'T HURT HIM FOR A MILLION DOLLARS.

GUNMAN 1: HA.

PANEL FOUR

Some of them turn where a figure speaks from the shadows at the back of the bar.

SHADOW FIGURE: FUN'S OVER. TIME FOR THE CASH AND CARRY.

GUNMAN 1: NO PAYMENT. MIGUEL TRIED TO GAME US.

PANEL FIVE

The figure steps from the shadows. A twentyish punk with bad hair and nose ring. He sneers.

FALCO: A DOLLAR SIGN INSTEAD OF A HEART.

FALCO: MY OWN BROTHER.

PANEL SIX

Miguel looks stunned as the thugs around him look amused.

GUY FROM THE PLATFORM: FALCO?

PAGE EIGHTEEN

PANEL ONE

Falco has a fistful of Miguel's shirt. Miguel stars at him in disbelief.

FALCO: YEAH. I KIDNAPPED **MYSELF**.

FALCO: WHAT'S I **S'POSED** TO DO? YOU DON'T GIVE ME A PIECE OF THE TRADE. KEPT SAYIN' I WASN'T **READY**.

PANEL TWO

Looking down a wooden staircase to the bar below. The walls of the staircase lined with dusty horse pictures.

FALCO: SO I **BOUGHT** MYSELF A PIECE. BUT YOU WON'T EVEN GIVE UP MY **RANSOM**.

FALCO: NOW THE PRICE **DOUBLES**.

PANEL THREE

Spoiler and Batgirl in the shadows at the top of the stairs, crouched close to one another. Batgirl has the Hermes bag in her fist.

FROM BELOW: TWO MILLION AND MOM AND DAD GET **ONE** OF US BACK.

PANEL FOUR

Miguel has recovered his composure, he grips Falco's wrist and snarls at him.

GUY FROM THE PLATFORM: ISLAND JIMMY GOT **KILLED** BRINGING THE MONEY FOR YOU.

GUY FROM THE PLATFORM: HE **VOLUNTEERED** TO BRING IT.

PANEL FIVE

Falco reacts to this. He looks stunned and saddened. His cool is gone. Behind him the other thugs scowl.

FALCO: (SMALL) JIMMY?

FALCO: WE CAME UP TOGETHER.

PANEL SIX

Tight shot of Batgirl and Spoiler.

SPOILER: (SMALL, WHISP) IF WE'RE GONNA DO SOMETHING IT BETTER BE NOW.

PAGE NINETEEN

PANEL ONE

Angle on Batgirl tossing the Hermes bag down the stairs. It's a looping, underhand toss. Spoiler stands and stares.

PANEL TWO

The bag lands in the middle of the thugs who all stare in surprise at it.

PANEL THREE

The bag lies on the floor, bundles of cash spilled from it.

PANELS FOUR-EIGHT

A tier of same-sized slice panels showing hoods in close-up.

PANEL FOUR

Falco stares down in shock.

PANEL FIVE

The Guy in the Car looks on with a cruel smile.

PANEL SIX

Miguel looks puzzled.

PANEL SEVEN

The driver squints through a haze of cigarette smoke from the butt in his lips.

PANEL EIGHT

Gunman 1 looks feral, eyes darting to one side.

PAGE TWENTY

PANEL ONE

Large panel.

Everyone makes a grab for the bag as Spoiler and Batgirl leap in from above.

PANEL TWO

Batgirl vaults from the back one hood to spinkick another in the jaw.

PANEL THREE

Spoiler lands with both feet between the shoulder blades of a hood and cannons his head first into another hood's gut.

PAGE TWENTY ONE

PANEL ONE

Miguel has picked up a gun from the floor with a look of rage as Batgirl sends a hood headlong into bar front.

GUY FROM THE PLATFORM: (WEAK) YOU WANTED THE MONEY, LITTLE BROTHER?

PANEL TWO

Miguel aims the gun, hammer back at Falco who looks up from where he kneels at the Hermes bag, hands dripping with cash bundles.

GUY FROM THE PLATFORM: SEE IF YOU CAN SPEND IT WHERE I'M **SENDING** YOU.

PANEL THREE

Spoiler ducks in the foreground as Batgirl wings a batarang over her to wicket toward us.

BATGIRL: DOWN.

SPOILER: WOOP!

PANEL FOUR

The batarang wedges itself twixt the hammer and the firing pin of the handgun in Miguel's fist stopping the hammer from falling. Miguel looks stunned.

SFX: **TANG!**

GUY FROM THE PLATFORM: uh?

PANEL FIVE

Largest panel.

Spoiler uses a barstool to clock Miguel over the back of the head making him drop the handgun. Batgirl jumpkicks Falco in the face sending him tumbling away in a flurry of cash. The other hoods lie about the bar inert.

PAGE TWENTY TWO

PANEL ONE

Shot of water lapping around wooden pilings of a pier. Something splashes into the dirty water.

FROM ABOVE: THEY ALL HAD WARRANTS OUT ON THEM.

SFX: PLUNK!

PANEL TWO

Same shot and angle. Larger splash.

FROM ABOVE: BIG SURPRISE, HUH?

SFX: SPLUNK!

PANEL THREE

Two more splashes.

FROM ABOVE: ONE MORE TO GO.

SFX: PLUNK!

SFX: SPLUNK!

PANEL FOUR

Spoiler stands at the end of a pier and drops a handgun toward the water. Batgirl stands behind holding the Hermes bag. The skyline of the city behind them.

SPOILER: ALL THE NASTY GUNS GONE. THE BADDIES BEHIND BARS.

BATGIRL: THE MONEY.

SPOILER: YEAH. THE MONEY.

PANEL FIVE

Batgirl hands the bag to Spoiler.

SPOILER: I KNOW AN OVERWORKED REGISTERED NURSE WHO COULD USE A MILLION.

SPOILER: BUT I KNOW A CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL THAT COULD USE IT **MORE**.

SPOILER: sigh.

PANEL SIX

They walk toward Spoiler's bike parked at the foot of the pier. Spoiler has the bag over her shoulder.

SPOILER: SO, HOW ABOUT TRADE, BG?

BATGIRL: TRADE?

SPOILER: YOU TEACH ME THAT TRICK WITH THE BATARANG AND I TEACH YOU TO READ.

END

