
Episode 456 – Game mechanics in text is a terrible idea

It was a nice apartment, well-lit, spacious and well furnished. A pair of nice, plush leather couches set the scene, arranged in a neat L-shape, with a small coffee table between them. What dominated the room, however, was the massive flat-screen against one wall, so big as to loom over all else around it. By comparison, the broad windows with views out over a strangely futuristic metropolis and the other doorways leading away to gods alone knew where seemed like afterthoughts.

“So I found a place that carried artisan hand-fed, organic, freerange, retro-synthpop raised wild boar bacon,” Rebecca commented as she and Tsuneo entered. “And I must admit that I was tempted to try it out.”

“How was it?” He asked.

“Oh, I said I was tempted,” she admitted. “But then I looked at the price and considered otherwise.”

“I thought you’d be as pretentious about your food as you are about everything else,” Dan offered as he and Rick followed them in.

“There’s a point where sense has to take over,” Rebecca admitted. “Look at the price of a block of artisan heirloom cave-aged macrobiotic recursive goat’s cheese. That’s a bit rich for even my tastes.”

“No comment,” Tsuneo shook his head.

“I had something more important on my mind,” Rick spoke up.

“As long as it’s not trendy foods, I’m in,” Dan said.

“So we’re reading a Batman crossover fic,” Rick noted. “Which fits nicely into one of the cornerstones of Internet culture, which is to day, debating how Batman would beat various other fictional characters.”

“I note that’s ‘how’, not ‘if’,” Tsuneo spoke up.

“Of course,” Rick nodded. “So that given the subject matter of this fic, I was thinking about how Batman would beat various Mass Effect villains.”

“Well I can tell this is going to be a scintillating intellectual debate,” Rebecca sighed.

“And we’re not going to be able to stop it,” Tsuneo added.

“But of course,” Rebecca agreed.

“So my first thought was of course Kai Leng, given that he’s set up as Shepard’s nemesis in Mass Effect 3,” Rick spoke up. “You know, kills Thane, steals the Catalyst, nearly kills Shepard a couple of times and all.”

“Well that’s simple,” Dan quickly shot back. “Kai Leng’s a ninja, and everyone knows that Batman is strong against ninjas.”

“Makes sense to me,” Rick nodded.

“Fine then,” Tsuneo interjected. “If we’re going to do this, then we might as well do something a little more involved than just punching out one bad guy.”

“What did you have in mind?” Rick asked.

"The Shadow Broker," Tsuneo explained. "A figure so mysterious that not even their own henchmen know what they look like, and who lives in a secret spaceship hidden in a remote world. Plus on top of that they'd managed to get a council Spectre on their side."

"Well that is a little more involved," Dan admitted. "But I think that he could pull it off."

"Oh yeah," Rick nodded. "Batman would use his detective skills to get the attention of the Shadow Broker through his henchmen. He'd then arrange for himself to be captured and, because he's that valuable, taken to the Shadow Broker's ship. From there he'd escape and take down the Broker himself."

"Right," Dan agreed. "And then he hands it all over to Liara, but also warns her against having too much power and that he'll be watching her."

"Although he might also throw in a quip about Oracle," Rick added.

"Also true."

"I've got a thought that's related to that," Rebecca spoke up. "General Petrovsky. He rules a massive space station and has armies of henchmen, and is ruthless enough to do whatever he needs to in order to win. On top of that, he has access to killer robots and Reaper technology and has shown no hesitation to use both."

"Well that's a tricky one," Dan considered, "But I think Batman would see this as being like two crimelords battling for control off Gotham, like a clash between Mafia families or the war of Jokes and Riddles."

"Oh yeah," Rick agreed. "Really I can see a lot of comparisons between Gotham and Omega."

"So obviously Batman's going to see that Aria's plan is screamingly insane and is going to get a lot of people killed," Dan said. "What he's going to do instead is infiltrate Petrovsky's headquarters and take him out in a decapitation strike that forces him to surrender his forces."

"Much like what Shepard did," Rick agreed. "Only using a stealth approach rather than fighting through hundreds of Cerberus goons."

"Right," Dan continued, "But that's not all. He's realised that Aria is also a threat, given that she's a crimelord and was willing to kill thousands of innocent people to get to Petrovsky. So he uses his surrender to take her out, and then tells Nyreen that she's in charge and that she can build a better Omega for everyone."

"How about a more direct comparison?" Tsuneo asked. "How would Batman defeat Clone Shepard, who has all of Shepard's skills and technology?"

"Well, for starters, Batman would use his detective skills to figure out Clone Shepard's identity," Rick considered. "Decode the masked voice, take note of their behaviour and the like. Likewise, he would have figured out that Brooks was a double agent and working with them."

"Right," Dan agreed, "He'd see right through her stumbling, inept nerd act."

"So then with all this in mind, Batman would use this against them," Rick continued. "He'd create fake voice messages to lure the pair of them into acting openly, and then trap them."

"Yeah. I mean, Clone Shepard would still be a tough fight, but Batman could get the drop on the pair of them to start with."

"Clone Shepard would still fall to their death," Rick noted. "Happens a lot around Batman."

"Fine," Tsuneo sighed. "How then would Batman take out Saren, the original Mass Effect villain. And remember, he has Sovereign and an army of Geth at his back."

"Well, Batman would use a signal blocker Bat-gadget to cut off Saren's connection to Sovereign," Dan suggested. "Then when he's confused as to what's going on, Batman would take him out."

"You're saying that Batman could make an Indoctrination jammer?" Tsuneo asked, somewhat disbelieving.

"Oh yeah," Dan nodded. "He would have developed it after fighting Saren on Vermire, and figuring out what's his big weakness."

"I guess that makes sense," Tsuneo admitted.

"I'll admit that you two have done a good job so far," Rebecca spoke up. "But how about this? How would Batman stop the Reapers?"

"So we'd have to take into account the idea that it's just Batman here," Rick immediately replied. "So no Justice League or Green Lanterns or anything else to back him up."

"Just Batman," Rebecca confirmed.

"Right," Rick continued, his tone determined. "Batman lands in London and goes for the reaper transport. He punches out Marauder Shields then is zapped up to the Citadel. Once there, he punches out the Illusive Man as well and goes to the Catalyst—"

"Does he punch out the Starchild?" Dan asked.

"Almost certainly," Rick nodded. "So he goes to the Catalyst and activates the Control ending, because Batman doesn't kill; even the Reapers get to be reformed. He supposedly disintegrates and vanishes... only to wake up on Zur-En-Arrh."

"That is the stupidest thing I have ever heard," Tsuneo simply stated. "And yet, it makes perfect sense."

"Speaking of, I figure that The Illusive Man owns an Owl mask," Dan added

"No question at all," Rick agreed.

"Good morning everyone," the Voice crashed into the conversation.

"And good morning to you too, Bat-Mite," Dan replied.

"Voice, I just want you to know that whatever you're about to say can't be anywhere near as stupid as what we've just been through," Tsuneo shot back.

"Um, thank you?" The Voice managed.

"And to continue the theme of stupidity, I assume we're reading more of Batman the Future Knight today?" Rebecca asked.

"We are, yes," the Voice confirmed. "We'll be looking at the next two chapters."

"Wow, more long, dull, drawn out fight scenes," Rebecca sighed. "I am so excited."

"Are we going to have any actual story development?" Tsuneo asked. "And I mean any actual story, not just some exposition dumps between fights."

"There are a number of key story beats in these chapters," the Voice explained.

"That's a no," Tsuneo finished.

"I mean, the fic could do something completely unexpected," Rick offered as he took his place on the couch.

"Like what?" Tsuneo asked as he and the others joined him.

"Like, I dunno," he shrugged. "Talía shows up and demands a century and a half's worth of child support payments."

"Rick?"

"Yeah I know, stupid idea."

"It is," confirmed as the big screen turned on, switching the world over to prose format. "And yet, it's still better than anything the fic will give us."

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> A few moments later, the shuttle docked at the ship. Bruce came out with his suit and tie.

Tsuneo: I've got to wonder why he bothers if everyone on the ship knows he's Batman.

Dan: Just because you're a vigilante doesn't mean you don't want to look sharp.

> Someone came up with a tablet with all of the Normandy Crewmates and soldiers.

Rebecca: Including the nameless generic NPCs

> Bruce scrolled the tablet

> until it reached the bottom. At the bottom, were the deceased members.

Tsuneo: And now we see how much of a hash the player made of things

> He walked to his living

> quarters and examined the tablet. He helped himself at a table on the other side of his bed. A list of

> all the known surviving members. He jotted their names down on a sheet of paper.

Rebecca: He had all the information at hand, but he wrote it down anyway

> 1. Commander Shepard - location unknown,

Rick: Possibly exploded or turned into a space god

> leader of the Normandy.

Rick: Heir to the throne of –

Rebecca: No.

> He spent the next five minutes writing down the names and sipping clear spring water.

Dan: Batman only drinks natural glacier water from the mountains near Nanda Parbat.

Tsuneo: Because of its mystical properties?

Dan: No, because he's rich.

> He met some of them before mainly

> as Batman. He met Kasumi Goto while investigating a series of well planned burglaries and other

> maladies.

Dan: Why am I not even remotely surprised?

> Let's say it didn't end well for either of them.

Rebecca: Kasumi had learned not to pick fights in rooms full of valuable antiques

> He met Garrus before the encounter on Palaven as Bruce Wayne.

Tsuneo: Further invalidating the previous chapter.

> A failed cop turned vigilante, now a retired war hero. And Jeff 'Joker'

> Moreau, he met him also as Bruce Wayne.

Rick: Admittedly, Bruce had twitched a little at the nickname

> Though physically impaired, he was one of the best

> pilots that Bruce ever met. They became quick friends soon after.

Dan: I imagine Bruce Wayne has absolutely no use for a daredevil pilot with military and private sector experience. Heck what am I saying, he's probably flying the Bat-spaceship as we speak.

> His hand cramped a little but he was finished then. He marked his next target.

Rick: Cheapy D.

> The two krogan crewmates who served the SR-2

> during the Reaper War, Urdnot Wrex and Grunt. He knew they were at their homeworld and better

> yet, he knew exactly where in Tuchanka they were.

Rick: Them and Carmen Sandiego

> He called Wilson on his omni tool.

Dan: I guess all the other Normandy crew members are dead. Either that or he just doesn't care.

> It took a hot minute but he finally answered

Rebecca: [Wilson] I do have a life of my own, you know.

Rick: [Batman] No you don't.

Rebecca: [Wilson] You're right, I don't.

> "Wilson, I know what our next move is. We got to go to the krogan homeworld, two of the crew

> resides there and it's the closest lead we have."

> "Might I warn you, Mr. Wayne, Tuchanka is still a very dangerous place

Rick: I mean, Batman lives in Gotham City. How much worse can it be?

Dan: I don't think Gotham has Thresher Maws.

Rick: Would you be willing to bet on that?

Dan: Well no...

> although it's still in reconstruction."

Rebecca: Reconstruction on Tuchanka is almost complete. No, wait, they blew it up again.

> "I know Wilson, I can take care of myself."

Dan: [Batman] I'm a big vigilante, I can look after myself.

> "Get comfortable, Mr. Wayne, it is going to be a few hours until we get there, and I suggest some

> rest."

Rick: Batman needs to be told these things. [Pause] Genuinely. He's terrible like that.

> The call ended and Bruce went to the bed to rest.

Tsuneo: He said to get some rest so he got some rest

> He looked up at the ceiling for a minute and
> he closed his eyes. Then he fell asleep quickly. All of a sudden, he was getting flashbacks to when
> his parents died.

Rick: The default state of Batman

> He peered down on the chalk markings and paid his respects.

Tsuneo: [Flat] Wow. Such rich emotions.

> Then he got
> flashbacks to when Penguin froze him in the Iceberg Lounge. He was hammering the criminals until
> Oswald froze him in place. And the last words Penguin said until it faded black.

Dan: Wark wark wark wark.

> Then back to normal sleep, he was done dreaming.

> Hours later, Bruce woke up from his sleep. He got up and went to take a shower. It was a cool
> shower instead of the normal warm shower.

Rebecca: Fic, this had better be important down the line

> And then in about fifteen minutes or so, he walked out of the shower

Rick: Other people need the hot water, you know.

> and wrapped one towel around his waist and used the other to dry his hair. He then
> grabbed a toothbrush and paste and brushed his teeth quickly.

Tsuneo: Intense morning routine action!

> After that, he put on his clothes and
> cleaned his bathroom and laid the dirty clothes in the laundry cart.

Rick: Can we at least assume it was a futuristic space laundry?

> Now it was time to go to the gym and exercise and train for the harsh environment of Tuchanka

Rebecca: How do you train for being irradiated?

> for he will be there for several days,
> searching the ruins. He arrived at his personal training room and started to warm up with light
> jogging and stretching. Then he began weightlifting and core exercises.

Dan: I can only assume that Batman's workout includes punching a few ninjas.

> A light mixture between the two. He was a little sore from yesterday,

Rebecca: He was a little worn out from punching goons non-stop for twelve hours.

> so he let it off easy today. He exercised for about thirty
> minutes and finished off with some push ups. He took some sips of water and walked back to his
> room to prepare for his mission.

Tsuneo: I think it's reasonable to assume that Batman can take care of being Batman. You know, that we can skip past this. Like we don't need to see it. In minute detail.

> He suited up to be the Batman.

Rick: This being Mass Effect, I can assume he spent some time juggling the stats on his armour

> He finished by putting on the mask. The Caped Crusader was ready

> again to find Ra's and bring him to justice. He walked to the bookshelf in his private office and

> pulled the secret lever that led to the Batwing.

Tsuneo: Sorry, the hidden lever in his private office that leads to the secret hangar for the Batwing.

Rebecca: Yes.

Tsuneo: On his *space ship.*

Rebecca: Your point?

Tsuneo: Who exactly is all this secrecy for?

Rebecca: Batman. It's his emotional support secret hangar.

Tsuneo: You know what, I'll just leave it at that.

> He traveled down to a secret hangar suited only for himself.

Dan: No Robins allowed

> He piloted the Batwing to take off. It was built for space traversal as well. But only for

> orbiting a nearby planet. He took off into orbit.

Rebecca: This fic really captures all the wonder and magnificence of space

> Around the ship was the Krogan homeworld, Tuchanka.

Dan: Tuchanka, the brown planet.

> The planet, although in reconstruction after the war, still remains mostly in ruin.

Tsuneo: It was taking them a while to clean up after the global thermonuclear war

> Moments

> later, he entered the planet's atmosphere. The heat from the ozone was nothing to the Batwing.

Tsuneo: Really? I thought they'd neglected re-entry in the design and it had burnt to a crisp. Thanks for letting us know, fic.

> Then he finally made it past the mesosphere and into the stratosphere.

Dan: And finally into the blogosphere.

> Now he was flying high

> above large city ruins. He had slowed the Batwing to a complete stop. Then he ejected and glided

> above the debris until he found a good landing spot.

Dan: I'm just going to assume the Batwing's going to be hovering there for the rest of the fic. Like passing Krogan are just going to point at it and randomly try and shoot it down or something.

Rick: And he comes back and it's somehow propped up on bricks.

> The hazy sky slightly obscured the sun. The

> dust was rich in the air and it made breathing such a chore.

Rebecca: Every breath was accompanied with a resigned sigh

> He could hear the sound of gunfire in the distance.

Tsuneo: Heck, it's practically like home.

> Even if the Krogan were united, there was still small amounts of conflict here and there.

Rick: Mostly between pro and anti-shippers

> He finally found a clear spot to land as he was losing altitude. It was wide and clear enough
> for him to land and began his search for answers.

Rebecca: Just start looking at a random spot in the ruins, I'm sure you'll turn up something.

> Sunlight flashed in his eyes as he looked at the
> distant and a forlorn civilization. Not to put pessimism and conspiracy theories first,

Tsuneo: I mean, it's how Batman works anyway

> Batman must find his nefarious foe before this comes true.

Dan: I mean, they nuked the planet centuries ago. You're probably a little too later for that

> He began his journey across the war-torn city to find
> Wrex. He'll have to avoid armed conflicts, or he'll meet his certain death.

Rebecca: Did he consider flying over it instead?

> He made his way through the mazes of debris and smoke. Across the bare ruins of once tall
> buildings and highways, Batman slowly made progress across the city.

Rebecca: I mean, they've got a landing pad at Urdrnot headquarters and everything.

> He suffered a few cuts on
> his face, forehead, and his legs from not being able to see clearly and walking into random objects.

Rick: Batman apparently failed to notice things right in front of him

> He finished navigating the building and found open space to explore and search. Then he received
> a call on his omni tool. He answered the call.

Dan: It was a scam caller claiming to need his password

> No voice, it was a transmission. Someone is trying to find him.

Rebecca: They want to serve him notice for illegally parking his Batwing.

> He quickly ended the call with worry
> and with some anger, and traced the source of the call to whoever was transmitting it.

Rebecca: A call centre in the Philippines

> It was four
> hundred meters northwest from his current position. He makes his way to the source and to find out
> who is sending this transmission.

Dan: Time for another pointless sidequest!

Rick: Will there be grates and nondescript vantage points?

Dan: We can only hope.

> He suspected that it was a trap. Either set up by Ra's, the Alliance, or the Citadel.

Tsuneo: He responded to the likely trap by running straight into it

> They will be disappointed because he'll beat them and find out what they know.

Rebecca: I'd say he's being overconfident, but y'know, Batman.

> He ran towards the signal. As the signal got stronger, Batman got more suspicious. Then he
> arrived near the signal, about thirty meters away. It led to a courtyard with empty flower beds with
> dead and dried plants and mossy stone.

Rick: And not even a whimsical gnome in among them

> No one was there and Batman predicted a trap. He turned
> on detective mode and looked around. He didn't see anybody. He jumped down into the courtyard
> and looked around. Then he noticed that someone was behind him pointing a gun at him.

Dan: It's the little details that get you

> He
> equipped the disruptor and turned around with his hand behind his back, waiting for the disruptor to
> connect to the gun. It was a salarian aiming at him. He was wearing shiny and black armor, possibly
> STG. His skin was orange-like

Rebecca: It was orange-like in that it was orange

> with some red face paint.

Rick: That means he's poisonous and that predators shouldn't eat him

> "The Citadel and Alliance has been looking for you ever since you came up on our radar,

Dan: I can only assume they got tired of finding alleys full of tied up thugs

> and you have been a pain to find but finally, we stand."

Rick: Fortunately, you were at a random patch of rubble on Tuchanka when I happened by. Isn't that convenient?

> "You don't have to do this, I'm looking for someone far worse than I, if you decide to shoot, then I
> will leave you no choice." Batman replied and he gripped the disruptor hard and pressed the button.

Tsuneo: Wouldn't it be more useful to build that tech into his suit instead of having an external device?

Rick: Would that make it mobile suit gun-jam?

Tsuneo: Out.

> The gun was jammed and Batman was ready to strike.

> "I have no choice but to turn you in, so put your hands up or I'll shoot, and what is in your hand?"

Dan [Batman]: My lunch. You caught me on break.

> Batman smirked and limbered up. The soldier shot but his gun was jammed. He then threw it to the
> ground and equipped a collapsible baton from his belt.

Rebecca: Galaxy-wide advanced civilization with multiple technological wonders including flash-forged searing blades.

Rick: I got a stick.

Rebecca: Wonderful.

- > Batman lunged at him but the soldier
- > counter-attacked and struck Batman in the face with the baton a few times.

Tsuneo: I have a feeling that being smashed in the face repeatedly should hurt or something.

Dan: I mean, you'd think so.

> Now he noticed that this is no ordinary soldier.

Rick: He was a soldier with little epaulets on his shoulders

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> STG Soldier |||||
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Tsuneo: Did the fic just stutter or something?

Rebecca: I'm not sure

> "I'll have to play it smart and use a variety of attacks, and when he's stunned, I can give him all I

> got." They were in a standoff

Dan: He was going to use a variety of attacks like standing there and doing nothing

> until the salarian attacked Batman. Batman grabbed the baton and

> countered by elbowing the soldier's cheek. Then Batman commenced a beatdown and finished him

> with a headbutt. The soldier wasn't unconscious, he recovered rather quickly.

Rick: Phase Twelve recovery actions and we're all good

> |||||

Tsuneo: It just did it again.

Rebecca: But this time there are less of them

> Then he struck again, but he hit Batman in the left leg this time.

Tsuneo: Let's assume it did nothing and move on.

Rebecca: let's.

> He recovered and countered the next blow. Then Batman had to become offensive.

Dan: So he went on a racist rant on Twitter

> He shot the batclaw quickly and caught the soldier off guard.

Rick: Say, while you're at it, why don't you try and disarm him?

Dan: And rob us of this epic fight scene?

Rick: Goodness, you're right. What was I thinking?

> He pulled the salarian towards him to make a slam. And he did, and after he

> slammed the soldier, he went for the ground pound.

Rebecca: Instead of getting an endless scene of Batman beating up bad guys, we're getting an endless scene of Batman beating up one guy. It's a lateral move at best

> |||||

Tsuneo: And there we go again.

Rick: I'm coming up with a theory here, and it's pretty stupid even by my standards.

> The soldier got up and threw a stun grenade. Batman's vision was disorientated for a second while

> holding his arm in front of his face. When he got his bearings back, the salarian lunged towards him.

Rebecca: It's only polite.

Dan: Making you wonder why he didn't just lead with that,

> It exploded on the soldier's chest. He was stunned and Batman struck him normally and
> knocked the soldier to the ground. He finished with a ground pound to the face.

> |||||

Tsuneo: You're right, Rick. That is pretty stupid. But yet...

Rick: Yeah.

> The soldier got up once again and wiped some of the blood off of his face and mouth. They both
> moved in a circular motion across from each other, eyes deadlocked with one another, both trying to
> find the right opportunity to strike and counter-attack.

Dan: Batman's trying to figure out how many more gadgets he's got to stun the guy with.

> "He is getting more vigilant,

Tsuneo: Up until that point he'd been perfectly fine with the beatdown

> I need to use gadgets that use an area of effect attack." He said to himself

Rebecca [Salarian]: I can hear every word you say

> as he got a smoke pellet from his utility belt.

Tsuneo: Wait, here we go. Electric smoke pellet. This guy's going down.

Dan: Electric smoke pellet can take down a room full of Penguin thugs before breakfast.

> He looked at the soldier as he was aiming the
> pellet. The soldier charged and Batman threw the smoke. The soldier was quickly disorientated

Tsuneo: And electrified? No? What, just a normal smoke pellet?

Dan: Ripped off.

> and Batman pummeled him.

Rebecca: Fool me six times, shame on you. But fool me a seventh time, shame on me

> Then he grabbed the soldier's right arm and snapped it. The soldier
> screamed for a few seconds, holding his arm and rolling on the floor.

Tsuneo: A few more hours of this and he might get tired of it

> |||||

Rebecca: And it is going down as Batman beats up the boss.

> Then Batman used the electrical smoke pellet this time to give the soldier a good surprise.

Rick: Instead of using a smoke bomb, he used a different sort of smoke bomb

> It was time to finish him.

Dan: Just like the Mortal Kombat announcer demanded

> The soldier got up and threw another stun grenade.

Rebecca: And patiently waited for Batman to recover, again.

> Batman was more prepared

> and he was ready to counter the flurry of attacks. After about twenty more strikes,

Tsuneo: At this point I can only assume they're both as bored of this fight as I am

- > Batman caught
- > the baton and broke it and kicked the soldier away. Then the soldier drew an omni blade.

Rick: Making the baton kind of pointless, really

- > An orange curved blade designed to kill its intended target close range.

Rebecca: Up until this point, he'd just been messing around.

- > Batman used his cheat card

Dan: Batman fights by Yu-Gi-Oh rules

- > and threw the electrical smoke grenade and threw it.

Tsuneo: He threw the grenade and he threw it

- > The smoke dispersed and soon, the electrical cloud bursted, electrocuting the soldier.

Dan: Finally. Electric smoke pellet's going to do the heavy lifting from now on.

Rebecca: Batman already broke his arm.

Dan: Pffft, details.

- > He was binded from the shock and a minute later, he fell to the floor.

- > Iiiiiii

Tsuneo: You know what, Rick? You're right, and I hate it.

- > The soldier could barely get up, but he applied some medi-gel and adrenaline to keep him up and
- > fighting.

Dan: And a splint for his arm, while he's at it. I'm sure he's got time.

- > He berserked at Batman,

Rick: Whoops, we hit the enrage timer

- > swishing, chopping, and stabbing his blade at him. Batman dodged

Rebecca: Not being stabbed is a new plan

- > but didn't strike the soldier while he was worn. Instead, Batman got the freeze cluster grenade.

Dan: I think he's still got to get through the concussion detonator and glue grenade before this fight's over.

- > He threw it to the ground. It exploded and smaller ice chunks exploded under the soldier's feet.

Rick: And then he wakes up in a hundred and seventy years

- > He looked under at his feet and back at Batman. He broke the ice with his blade. Batman
- > kicked the salarian and knocked him on the ground.

- > III

Rebecca: And there we go.

Tsuneo: This may actually be the stupidest thing we've seen in one of these fics yet. I'm really not sure how I feel about that.

> The soldier got up and lunged at Batman to go for the kill. He tried to push the blade into Batman's
> heart. But Batman finally countered by punching the soldier in the face

Dan: He countered him by doing the same thing he'd been doing for the last twenty minutes.

> and changing positions. Batman beats the salarian into a pulp and then he stops.

Rick: By the time you've beaten him to a pulp, it seems a little redundant

> The soldier was going nowhere. The soldier got on his communications.

> "Send medevac, spectre down, need medical attention." He said very weakly until he passed out.

Rebecca: Also send backup like, half an hour ago.

> "A Council spectre, I should scan the salarian to find out his identity." Batman scanned the body and
> a biological file opened.

Tsuneo: [Batman] I should scan him and find his identity.

Dan: He scanned the body and found his identity.

> "Major Lanik Pasowen, STG ret. Now a council spectre."

Rebecca: He discovered that the Council Spectre was a Council Spectre

> He called Wilson to inform him of the threat.

> "Wilson, we got a problem." He said.

Dan: [Wilson] You've got a problem, I've got a problem, I can't get my shows to stream and spoilers are all over the extranet.

> "And so I see, be careful Mr. Wayne, those spectres were hand picked by the Council to be the best
> at what they are,

Rick: Nobody can manage their complex love life and feed their fish like a Spectre.

> expect more of them hunting you soon, good luck finding Wrex." The call ended

Tsuneo: [Batman] Fat lot of good you were.

> and Batman continued his journey to find the Krogan Overlord.

Rebecca: Now that we wasted twenty pages on an inconsequential fight, we can get back to what passes for the plot

> There was a long road ahead of him.

> He walked out of the gardens. He entered the coordinates of their last known location into his omni
> tool.

Tsuneo: Up until now he'd just been wandering aimlessly through the rubble.

> It centered inside a collapsed building twelve kilometers northwest from Batman's current
> location. This was going to be a delightful journey across the city.

Rick: Smash cut to Batman frolicking in the fields

- > He was on a hill overlooking the
- > rest of the city. The place he was looking for is far across the urban landscape. Mazes of collapsed
- > buildings and swept streets.

Dan: The city is radioactive rubble, but the streets are remarkably clean

- > An occasional explosion here and there in the distance. He saw an
- > armored convoy heading toward the middle of the warzone. These small skirmishes were a usual
- > sight here in Tuchanka,

Rebecca: It's like a regular Saturday night in Gotham city, but with slightly more nuclear weapons.

- > but there were also places that were being rebuilt.

Tsuneo: Sometimes the skirmishes took place in the middle of the construction work, which made things really awkward

- > That means that some of
- > the explosions were because of demolition efforts to help rebuild the city.

Dan: Batman, expert explosion analyser

- > The hill dropped off and it
- > was a great time for Batman to jump off and to spread his cape and glide through the city.

Tsuneo: At this point he's just looking for excuses to jump off things

- > He went as far northwest as he could

Rick: Before he hit the map boundary.

- > before he landed on the streets. It was a solid four hundred meters
- > before he touched down on the empty streets and avenues.

Tsuneo: I suppose these meaningless distances are useful, somehow.

Rick: They're a break from the meaningless fights.

Tsuneo: I'll take it.

- > He aimed his grappling gun at a
- > building and he propelled up the building. He kept climbing up the building until he reached the top.
- > It was a rather tall building, perfect for another glide across the city.

Rick: He resisted the temptation to go 'whee'

- > He flew across a few more blocks until he landed on the roof of a small filling station.

Rebecca: By a miracle of convergent evolution, ancient Krogan gas stations look just like human ones

- > About three hundred more meters of free flying. Though the air was burning his lungs up.

Dan: He had decided that he didn't need to bring a breather or anything for the polluted radioactive wasteland

Rick: Batman may be able to breathe in space, but even he has limits

- > So he stood and took a break for a few seconds. He
- > opened his omni tool and looked at the Normandy crewmates, to find out who he will go for next.

Tsuneo: How about the other Krogan who also lives on this planet?

Rick: Cunning plan.

> He
> took a minute to look, but he would have to make up his mind later, for where it was time to go as
> his lungs had cleared up.

Rebecca: He walked off the lung damage

> He jumped down from the roof of the small filling station. He treads the
> rough ridden and blood stained roads across the rubble of a once grand civilization and empire.

Rick: Yep, fall of the Ottoman Empire was going to happen.

Tsuneo: I'm sure that's not what the fic meant. [Pause] Pretty sure.

> Whose army was large enough to conquer the entire galaxy, now diminished but rose again after
> the Reaper War.

Dan: When the entire galaxy has been reduced to rubble, living in the radioactive wasteland doesn't seem so bad

> Everyone feared of another rebellion, but the Citadel has plans to start another
> genocide of these powerful soldiers and another fall of this great empire.

Rebecca: The Salarians had their fingers crossed behind their backs all along

> More despair and misery if
> the krogan pulls the wrong move again, a certain doom or another major setback.

Tsuneo: Genocide: A major setback.

> A long and
> laborious journey across the ruins and smothered highways and boulevards. Bruce had long ways
> to go,

Rick: Despite the fact that it is a rundown hellhole, Gotham City generally has great roads. Can't have a Batmobile chase otherwise

> but he persists until he is done, protecting the people of his city. He failed Gotham,

Tsuneo: I'm really not sure how much he could have helped when Reapers were destroying the city

Dan: He's Batman. He'd have a plan to stop them.

> but he will
> not fail again, through dedication and perseverance Batman is again up to the challenge. He learns
> from his mistakes,

Rebecca: He's learned not to get frozen in ice for a century and a half

> adapts, and finally to deliver the finishing blow.

Tsuneo: That's nice, but aren't you meant to be finding someone?

Dan: I feel like we're getting further away.

> As he navigated and struggled through tons of obstacles and dirty, suffocating air, Batman finally
> arrived at Wrex's last known location.

Rick: The last Pizza Hut in the galaxy

> A fallen skyscraper in which some call, a humble and heart-warming home.

Dan: It's a nice, cozy radioactive ruin.

- > He found some stairs as he squeezed through tight corridors and narrow hallways.
- > He figured that they were on the top floor or somewhat close to it.

Rebecca: Top floor of the fallen skyscraper.

- > He knew this was the right place.

Tsuneo: His blind guesswork told him so.

- > But silence looms, usually krogan are loud and raucous.

Tsuneo: Like racoons going through your garbage, only with shotguns

- > It is usually never this peaceful.

Rebecca: Maybe it was nap time

- > Now it raises suspicion in Batman. Did they move on somewhere else or were they...

Dan: Batman briefly considered that he shouldn't have spent hours faffing around with the STG agent.

- > Then Batman saw an ominous and grim sight. As he made his way to the top, he saw dead krogan
- > lying all over the place. But he didn't see Wrex or Grunt anywhere.

Rick: What about Wreav and Dagg?

- > The foul, appalling stench of death, made his nose cry out in suffering.

Tsuneo: He needs some Bat-noseplugs.

- > But hope arises that they could still be alive and out there
- > somewhere. He examined the room for clues while he counted the bodies in the room.
- > "I need to set up a crime scene and a reconstruction of what happened."

Rick: He's going to need a lot of chalk

- > Batman turned on the
- > forensics scanner and looked for clues among the dead and rotten. He noticed something that these
- > wounds were not caused by gunshots but by blades. This was the work of Ra's assassins.

Tsuneo: Because they are the only people in the galaxy who use blades

- > He's trying to keep Batman away from him.

Dan: That's why he keeps calling up Batman to taunt him.

- > That means that his plan is going to one that destroys the
- > Citadel or other major city or installation.

Rebecca: He can tell all this from a pile of dead Krogans?

Dan: He is the world's greatest detective

- > Then he made a reconstruction of the crime.

Tsuneo: Up next on CSI Tuchanka

Rick: Looks like they had to... cut and run [Mimes putting on sunglasses]

Dan: YYYYYEEEEEEEEAAAAAH

- > At first, the assassins were sneaking up on the krogan, taking them out one at a time.

Rebecca: It took a lot of stabbing.

- > But seconds later, they
- > were spotted. A bloody battle ensued as both human and krogan blood was spilled, but where were
- > the human corpses.

Dan: They may be murderous assassins, but they at least clean up after themselves.

- > That remained a mystery for now, but Bruce may have one possible answer but
- > didn't want to spill it out.

Rebecca: Batman didn't want to tell himself the answer

- > It was a disturbing answer, but I assume to you that you know what it is.

Rick: Ninjas dissolve when dead. Everyone knows that.

- > He found some footprints that match krogan footprinting.

Dan: If you can't tell the difference between human and Krogan footprints then maybe you're not cut out to be a detective

- > He assumed that they killed all of the
- > assassins and moved to another hideout. A trail to follow. He reckoned that they went far off. Twas
- > time for another journey ahead.

Tsuneo: More random grappling and jumping off things.

- > Either short and simple or long and complex. He will get his
- > answers either way. He and Wrex will have a long, nice chat with one another.

Rebecca: They had a pleasant conversation over tea and scones

- > He made tracks out of the building while following the trail left behind by the nice krogan.

Tsuneo: For very generous values of 'nice'

Dan: They ask politely before headbutting

- > They appear faint for now but they will get stronger and more clear as Batman draws near.

Rebecca: It's not much of a minigame otherwise.

- > About a couple of kilometers outside
- > the hideout, Batman noticed that the footprints now turned to vehicle tracks

Rick: Clearly he was pursuing a Transformer

- > on a more clean but still
- > hampered freeway. No difference. It just makes the trail far longer and time consuming than he
- > initially thought.

Tsuneo: Now would be a fine time for your Batmobile.

- > He casually made his way across the land.

Tsuneo: ...or not. We're really going to walk this one out.

- > The tracks led out of the city and into the countryside.

Rebecca: Might this be time for a stroll in the countryside? Or even, dare I say it, a ramble?

- > The day was fading out and night was approaching. Long and exhausting hours
- > has Batman relieved for cool air.

Dan: Could probably do with a shower while he's at it.

- > But the dangers of darkness looms under his feet. Thresher maws.

Rebecca: He was on the lookout for Wormsigns

- > These creatures can attack randomly.

Rick: There was also every chance he would encounter a pack of 2d4 Orcs

- > Batman requested the Batmobile from his omni tool. A
- > moment after, the Batwing arrived and dropped the Batmobile on the freeway in front of him.

Tsuneo: Making you wonder why he didn't do that earlier

- > He jumped in and turned the Batmobile and calculated an ETA. A five hour drive to his destination.

Dan: Okay, so he didn't need to track them after all. He just wanted a nice stroll in the countryside.

Rebecca: The blasted, radioactive countryside.

Dan: You take what you can get.

- > The satellites tracked the vehicles hours ago and they stopped in a much nicer and more grand city.

Dan: It was a more pleasant radioactive ruin

- > Not a warzone, someplace where people live.

Rebecca: Not the warzone where people live.

- > He pressed the gas pedal, and the Batmobile
- > zoomed across the freeway. Following the trail to the other city.

Tsuneo: Using all his detective skills, Batman realised that the best way to get between cities was to take the highway

- > The sun was going down and the
- > night was closeby. He has about two or three hours before it falls upon him.

Dan: Sunset takes forever around here. Just get it over with already.

- > Beware the thresher maws

Rick: I can only imagine that the Krogans put 'beware of the Thresher Maw' signs on their gates

Dan: How many cartoon mailmen do you think get devoured each year?

- > for they will consume anyone unfortunate enough to stumble above them. The freeway was
- > clear, making the road trip more hasty. The sky was red

Rick: Great. Now a Crisis on Infinite Earths is breaking out

- > and the Batmobile was the fastest it's been.
- > The destination was still a ways away. He calculated the distance in miles. Two hundred and thirty
- > six miles away.

Dan: He's hoping there's a truck stop along the way.

> There was no way Batman could make it in time before nightfall as it was approaching swiftly.

Tsuneo: If only he had some sort of flying vehicle, one that was conveniently bat-shaped or the like.

> He set a time limit to thirty minutes. And if he doesn't make it, he'll have to stop
> for the night.

Rebecca: That's if his Batmobile can't clock almost 500 mph, that is.

> Time went fast that evening. The thirty minutes was up and night had arrived.

Tsuneo: Night that was two or three hours away.

> Batman
> stopped the Batmobile on the side of the road and killed the engine. He looked at the GPS. He still
> had one hundred and sixty three miles left. He called Wilson.

Dan: He poured some coffee. He had a good scratch.

> "I have to stop for the night, if I alert any thresher maw roaming around, it will be a death sentence."

Rebecca: His plan was to stop in the middle of nowhere and assume that the Thresher Maws won't bother him

> "I understand, sir, get comfortable, it will be quite a night,

Dan: [Wilson] I'll be up here on your personal spaceship, sleeping in my own bed.

> have you got a lead on the krogan overlord?"

> "Yes, I'm tracking him to another city approximately one hundred and sixty three miles away from
> my current position,

Rebecca: Approximately 163 miles.

Rick: Approximately.

> I believe this is where he is residing now."

Tsuneo: If you could do that then why didn't you before now?

> Batman thrives at night,

Tsuneo: Which is why, up until now, he's operated in broad daylight.

> but not this night, here in Tuchanka, everything at night is far more
> dangerous, from plants to animals.

Rick: When they say 'keep off the grass', they mean it.

> He ended the call and took off the mask and watched videos on his omni tool.

Dan: [Batman] Enough tracking Krogan warlords across blasted radioactive terrain. Time for cat videos.

> He grabbed an MRE from the storage compartment.

Rebecca: Meals Ready to Eat. Three lies in one.

> It was in case of an emergency and needed provisions to survive.

Dan: He's played enough Oregon Trail to know what happens if you don't

> It was bacon macaroni in marinara, a hard granola, wheat crackers, and drink mix.

Tsuneo: And every part of it tasted exactly the same

> An insulated cardboard heater and a plastic fork. He grabbed a canteen full
> of water and mixed the mix in it. He closed the cap and shook it. He took the insulated cardboard
> heater and covered the food with it. He ate the crackers and the granola. He gave the bacon
> macaroni fifteen minutes to cook.

Rick: Thrill as Batman cooks dinner!

> Then he took it and opened the bag to eat the food inside. He grabbed his fork and dug in.

Rebecca: And he misses Alfred even more.

> He swiftly ate the contents though it was still a little cool. A playboy
> billionaire eating military rations,

Rebecca: Apparently Bruce Wayne has never slummed it before

Dan: All those years of travelling when he was training to become Batman? No matter where he was, he had five-star meals waiting for him.

> but you do what you gotta do to survive especially in a hostile world like Tuchanka.

Tsuneo: And remind me, why isn't he flying there in his spaceship?

> He ate the food for a while, it was quite a lot, but strenuous calorie burning
> requires lots of food to stay fit.

Rebecca: I bet Batman also obsessively counts his steps

> He took some sips from his canteen. The mix was pretty good, and
> the meal was decent enough.

Tsuneo: As processed dehydrated food substitutes go, it wasn't bad.

> He finished up and threw the bags out to the freeway.

Dan: An act witnessed only by a crying Indian

> Bruce finished the night off looking at a few more videos

Rebecca: It's his personal greatest hits compilation. And by that I mean his favourite times he's hit the Joker.

> and finally going to sleep.

> Then he woke up. At four in the morning, and it was still nighttime. Batman had no other choice but
> to risk it,

Tsuneo: I mean, he could get a few more hours sleep.

Rick: No other choice!

> and to find Wrex and get answers and get out to find Ra's.

Rebecca: Up until this point, he'd been rather casual about the whole thing

> He put on his mask. He has wasted enough time, and it was time to go.

Dan: [Wilson] ...I'm just saying a pickup and drop off wouldn't even be difficult. Have this all done before sunset and home for tea.

> He figured the thresher maws had made their nightly run across the planet.

Rick: Thresher Maws keep strict office hours.

> He turned the Batmobile and drove off once again. Going the same speed as last time,

Dan: Batman obeys the speed limit and merges into traffic carefully

> he wasted no time in getting there.

Rick: No more time, that is. Apart from all the time he's already wasted.

> Ra's is not sleeping and neither shall Bruce. He could hear the sound of earthquakes nearby.

> "Dammit, thresher maws." Bruce said. But the quakes faded. He sighed in relief. It was another
> hour and thirty minutes. And Batman arrives in the city.

Rick: But then he has to go through baggage claim.

> The tall structures towered with grandeur and majesty.

Rebecca: Well, nothing for it but to blow them up.

> There was a large wall protecting the city inside. Made from krogan steel and
> reinforced to handle large attacks from the ground. There were anti-air cannons on the walls that
> watched the skies. This was a fortress rather than a city. The fine chrome steel laden with some
> gold and silver.

Rebecca: They're really into art deco trim in this radioactive wasteland

> A perfect city for an overlord. Batman was close to his objective.

Tsuneo: You kind of get the feeling that someone important lives here.

> The large pyramid-like temple in the middle of the city was the place.

Rick: Either that or a themed casino

> Batman dares not to sneak inside. Where he will be shot or fed to the varren.

Dan: Because Batman never, ever sneaks into dangerous situations

> He had to be noticed. He took the main road to the temple. He made
> his appearance widely known to the public.

Tsuneo: Batman, master of stealth.

> Then he stopped the Batmobile in front of the temple.

Rebecca: He parked it in a 'small cars only' space, the jerk.

> There were guards on the entrance. He exits the Batmobile and walks towards the temple entrance.

> "A human approaches the temple of the overlord." One of the guards whispered.

Dan: Yeah, Carl. I can see that, Carl.

> Batman approached them.

> "I'm here to see Urdnot Wrex, overlord of the Krogan." He said to them. They didn't look too happy.

Rick: They're wearing armour and carrying railguns and he's treating them like doormen. I wouldn't be happy either.

> "He's not taking visitors today,

Rebecca: You need to make an appointment with his personal assistant

> so shove off and wait."

Tsuneo: That he's dressed in a bat suit doesn't seem to have registered

Rick: They're used to dealing with Shepard, who thinks that a slinky cocktail dress or dorky hoodie is appropriate to wear on a military space ship

Tsuneo: This is true

> "Don't make me hurt you and walk inside."

> "That was a terrible mistake, human."

Rebecca: He said to the author of the fic

> The Krogan said angrily, cocking his gun and aiming at him.

Tsuneo: This may be a good time to rethink your plan.

> Just about when pulled the trigger, someone yelled "STOP" behind him. He lowered his gun and

> bowed his head. A krogan walked up to Batman. It was a female.

Dan: You can tell because she has a unique NPC model

> She said to Batman.

> "Come human, Wrex wishes to have a talk with you."

Dan: [Batman] Wrex knows who I am?

Rebecca: [Krogan] He went through Kaiden's comic collection.

> She had a white face, but most of her head was covered up.

Rick: She was wearing her bee-keeping outfit

> She escorted Batman to the throne room where Wrex is sitting talking to

> somebody, he seems to be arguing with him. The female introduced Batman

Dan: He usually does his own introduction, often after smashing down through the roof

> and bowed to Wrex.

> "So you come to me seeking answers. You convinced me not to kill you,

Tsuneo: [Batman] When did that happen?

> now convince me to talk to you." He said.

> "I need to ask where Commander Shepard is and..."

> "Enough, I will not betray one of my friends and a hero to someone dressed in a costume." They
> laughed except for the female.

Rebecca: Having a good idea of where this was going, she went to fetch the body bags.

> Batman got angry and walked up to Wrex and gave him a hard headbutt.

Tsuneo: I see this is off to a great start

Rebecca: They're Krogans. That's probably a formal greeting

> He flinched and covered his nose. Some blood was oozing out. Everyone was shocked
> and the guards aimed their weapons towards Batman. Wrex raised his arm and told them to lower
> their weapons.

> "Now you convinced me to talk, you have a stout heart and a mind of a fighter, I like it."

Tsuneo: [Wrex] But seriously, that was still a dumb move.

> He said wiping the blood off his nose. "Now tell me what you want and I will answer."

Dan: Just think, a good headbutt and everyone is a lot more helpful

Rick: Imagine if they tried that during Middle Eastern peace talks

> "Where is Commander Shepard,

Rebecca: Well everyone's skin isn't covered in glowing green crap, so we can rule that out.

> I need to find a man named Ra's al Ghul, an assassin."

Dan: [Batman] Okay, so he's not an assassin but he leads the assassins... He's an assassin manager.

> "Yes, that man, we have been tracking him for years but with no luck,

Rick: He's wily and illusive, like a cartoon fox

> I haven't seen the Commander in months,

Rebecca: Not since Grunt's unicorn-themed birthday party.

Dan: Grunt had a unicorn birthday party?

Rebecca: Give the kid a break, he's only like five years old. Plus, Krogan unicorns are hardcore.

> but Grunt has, no more than a month ago."

Dan: And Grunt didn't pass on any details, apparently.

> "Where is he?" Batman asked.

> "He is out fighting outside the city, not far from here, but he'll be back."

Tsuneo: Who's he fighting?

Rick: Eh, more just generally fighting to pass the time.

> "I'm going but after a few more questions."

> "Ask away, but don't waste my time."

Dan: Batman quietly files away the 'if you were a tree' one.

> "The assassins, your old hideout, where did they go?"

> "Oh them, they were delicious, tasted sweet. So we ate them."

Tsuneo: They apparently taste-tested them first

> Batman walks out of the temple and back into the Batmobile.

Rebecca: And after that, he suddenly has no more questions.

> He entered nearby battles and skirmishes outside the city into the

> computer. There was one only five miles out.

Rebecca: It was a convenient battle that was close to transport and shopping

> Batman drove out into the countryside to find Grunt before he finished his battle.

Dan: Interrupting a guy in the middle of a fight is just plain rude.

> He made it but there were mercenaries and krogan enemies. They

> held Grunt and his company hostage.

Tsuneo: The place they were holding him hostage had convenient floor grates and undefined vantage points.

> Destroyed vehicles and scattered cargo were spread out

> across the plain. They were beating them with batons and pipes.

Tsuneo: Apparently none of them had bought a gun to the fight

> All mercenaries were human and krogan.

Rick: All mercenaries ever. There were never any from any other species.

> He knew they were hired by Ra's.

Dan: How did he know this? He's Batman. He just does.

> Batman was getting himself into another fight.

[They all groan]

> Seven human mercs and three krogan berserkers. He jumped out of the Batmobile.

Dan: See, perfect opportunity for some vehicular carnage just wasted.

> Three enemies with batons, two with knives and one with a shield.

Rebecca: The rest were standing around, feeling a bit awkward for not having any weapons

> They were alerted to Batman's presence.

> "Look out, it's the Bat!" One of the mercs exclaimed. Batman cracked his knuckles as the first merc

> charged him with the shield.

Rebecca: Someday it will occur to him that's not how you use a shield.

> Batman stunned and then attacked him from above.

Rick: The idea of covering his head with his shield had never occurred to him.

> "We'll kill you, bat." Another said as he tried to attack with a knife.

Tsuneo: And these are the guys who took Grunt hostage?

Dan: What's left of the guys who took Grunt hostage.

Tsuneo: Fair point.

> Batman dodged all of the swings

> and at the last swipe, Batman punched him in the face and took him out.

Dan: He could have done that at any time, but he wanted to show off first

> Then two more mercs tried to attack at the same time.

Tsuneo: In defiance of martial arts movie tradition

> Batman countered them both.

Rebecca: Don't ask how. He just did.

> Then he went on the offensive. He delivered massive blows.

Rick: That did massive damage to their weak spots

> He stunned and beatdown one of the krogan but he got back up. He

> tackled one of the mercs and twisted his leg. He screamed as he rolled around on the ground.

Dan: Oh don't be such a drama queen, Gary.

> He hits the closest one. One of the Krogan charged at him and dodged out of the way. He shot

> explosive gel at one of the mercs and it exploded on his chest.

Tsuneo: To the bad guys' surprise, the exploding gel exploded

> He was stunned and started swinging his arm around at the others.

Rick: These cheap thugs are more dangerous to each other than to Batman.

> Batman came to stun and beatdown a krogan and then he

> found out how to knock them out for good in one flurry.

Dan: He stopped mid-fight to read up on it

> He used that method to knock that krogan out

Rick: It turns out that all Krogans are ticklish

> by slamming his head on the floor. And kicked his head and knocked him out entirely.

Tsuneo: And exploded him a few times, just to be sure.

> Three

> down, seven to go. He continued to lay down strong strikes upon his foes and caused concussions.

> He dodged the krogan charges and countered the mercs strikes.

Rebecca: But he began to realise that all the fun had gone out of his life.

> He took another krogan down by exhausting him

Dan: Hours later...

> and two more mercs.

Tsuneo: He made them run laps until they got tired of it

> Four left. A merc with a knife attacked Batman. He dodged it, but didn't knock him out.

Rebecca: For no particular reason.

> "You're mine, puny human." The krogan said angrily. He broke the arm of the merc who had the
> knife and kicked him to the floor.

Rick: Wait, the Krogan attacked his own guy?

Rebecca: I'd blame the confused narration, but the truth is that I'm beyond caring

Rick: Entirely fair.

> One of them with a baton and another attacked him together in harmony.

Dan: In eHarmony, that is. It's where they met.

> He countered them both and knocked them out.

Tsuneo: It's moments of tension like that which really keep me invested in the story.

> And there were no more human mercs

> left as Batman took the last one out. The krogan was left and he taunted Batman.

> "Kick his ass." Grunt said.

Dan [Grunt]: By the way, I am here

> Batman walked towards the krogan who was ready to charge.

Tsuneo: He was stamping his foot and snorting steam like a cartoon bull

> He took out a batarang and sprayed explosive gel on it and threw it at the rampaging krogan.

Dan: I don't know if this is a good idea, but it'll be fun finding out.

> As soon as it hit him, Batman detonated the gel right in his attacker's face.

Rick: Aaah, boom

> He plumped down on the floor unconsciously.

Rick: [Batman] Wow, it's that easy? Should have done that ages ago.

> All of them were defeated. Some of them were still awake but couldn't get up. They

> insulted Batman as he walked by. A couple were awake but could barely move. And some of them

> were completely knocked out.

Tsuneo: And some of them were simply beyond caring

> He walked over to Grunt and his squad.

> "Hey, that was some good fighting, you'll make a very good krogan." Grunt chuckled.

Dan: [Grunt] Stick some more armour plates on your back and you'll be good to go.

> Batman cut

> the restraints with his gauntlet. The company got up and Batman was looking straight at the young
> tank-bred.

> "I need to know where your Battlemaster is,

Rick: Check the Master Unit List.

> Commander Shepard."

> "Wait, how did you know about Shepard, you weren't one of the crew as far as I can remember.

Tsuneo: You'd probably remember if there was a guy in a bat suit lurking on the ship

> If you want me to talk, I'll do it when this battle is over,

Dan: The huge pile of unconscious guys don't mean a thing, huh?

> I overheard the mercs talking about a raid on

> the city, though they wouldn't stand a chance, I'll talk when it's over." Grunt replied.

Rick: Can't talk, got killing to do.

> Batman walked away to the Batmobile. He called Wilson.

Tsuneo: You really get the feeling that the author originally just wrote 'Alfred' then went through and replaced all the references

Rebecca: Given Wilson's utter lack of character, you may be on to something there

> "We have a problem, there will be a large mercenary attack on the capital city and the only way I'll
> get answers is when the attack is repelled."

> "I fear it could be a diversion set up by Ra's,

Tsuneo: He wants to make sure he's first in line at the Black Friday sales.

> intended to kill Wrex, I advise you to watch the rooftops

> while the others focus on the main attack force."

Dan: Lurking is his specialty

> "No doubt it is." Batman ended the call and drove back to the capital city. He went back to the
> temple. The guards didn't stop him this time, he went straight through.

Rebecca: He had a platinum membership and got to board first

> Wrex was sitting on his throne, tapping his right index finger on the armrest.

Dan: Wrex is still adjusting to politics. He has to remember he can't punch his way to a trade deal.

> Batman approached him to bear the news.

> "Wrex, there will be a mercenary attack on the capital city, they will be here sometime tonight."

Dan: Apparently the Krogan have no way to communicate other than running messages

Rick: Wrex strikes me as the type who never checks his phone anyway

> "Well I better get to my battle station then."

> "No, you should stay in here, it's not safe."

> "I am a KROGAN OVERLORD,

Rick: So he's as generic soldier type for the multiplayer mode?

> I belong to fight with my fellow soldiers, and you will too or you won't know where Shepard is."

Rebecca: Quick cut to Shepard off on some random planet taking photos of wrecked spaceships

> Wrex yelled. Batman turned around and walked out of the temple.

> He grappled to the rooftops of the residential buildings. He was sweating profusely from the heat of
> the day.

Rick: Turns out there's a downside to that heavy black suit

> He found some shade to rest until nightfall.

Tsuneo: Up on his personal spaceship, Wilson fluffs his goose down pillows, makes the bed with thousand thread count Egyptian cotton sheets and sighs heavily.

> The day was passing slowly but night rose slowly and steadily.

Rebecca: Using all his detective skills, Batman had discovered that night follows day

> It got colder and it was getting darker. The krogan were in battle positions. Wrex
> was giving them an inspiring speech.

Tsuneo: A speech so inspiring that you'll just have to take the narrator's word for it.

> It was Batman's queue to go to him. He glides across the city.

Dan: In deference to Wrex's orders, most of the AA guns didn't fire on him.

> Then landed near where Wrex is. He walked up the stair of the wall where Wrex was giving his
> speech. The night was growing ever darker.

Dan: As night often does

> "Finally you're here." He said. Batman looked over the wall to see ground vehicles in the distance.

> "This many enemies, I thought there was something more impressive than this."

> "Listen to me, this is a trap, there are people out there trying to kill you."

Rebecca: As evidenced by the enemy army attacking him.

> "Them over there probably, ain't nobody going over these walls." Wrex said confidently.

Rick: Wrex had built a wall and promised that he'd make the Turians pay for it

> Batman saw a slight disturbance in the air.

Tsuneo: Yes, his prank war with Kasumi is a lot of fun, but now is not the time.

> Something was moving behind Wrex. He acted quickly and

> attacked the assassin. He knocked him out with a good hit to the carotid.

Dan: If I was Batman, I would always assume there were ninjas lurking nearby

Rebecca: You do that anyway

Dan: Well, yeah. I'll give you that

> The assassin revealed himself behind Wrex.

> "These are the kind of people who are trying to kill you, get back to the temple and I'll protect you."

Tsuneo: Given that you demonstrated the point by effortlessly knocking one of them out, I think it loses some of its impact

> "No, if I die, then I die a hero not a coward." Wrex replied back at Batman.

> "It's not SAFE,

Rick: Or MIIO, ISF or even the Mastrovika

> these assassins are no ordinary assassins!"

Tsuneo: As evidenced by how hard it was to beat this one.

> Batman turned on detective mode to

> reveal more assassins. He got into a fighting stance. Wrex shot the assassin lying on the floor.

Tsuneo: Batman won't kill, but he's apparently okay with people around him killing

> "One word of advice, run." One of the cloaked assassins swung at Batman. He dodged them all

Rebecca: Fortunately they all attacked the same spot at the same time

> and

> took the assassin out and threw him off the wall. It wasn't that tall to kill someone if they fell off.

Dan: The Krogans had handily built a safety net for this sort of occasion

> There were four of them.

Tsuneo: Well, four left.

> One of the assassins tried to go for Wrex.

Dan: It's a targeted strike to take out Wrex with the minimum possible collateral, so they only used a small nuclear weapon.

> Batman shot the batclaw and

> slammed him to keep him away. One of them used another as a platform to propel them higher in

> the air to attack Batman.

Rick: Aha! Cirque du Soleil strike!

> He countered it pushing the sword and kicking him away.

Tsuneo: One kick is enough to deal with an enemy assassin

> He struck at one

> of them but he dodged out of the way for a counter-attack. Batman dodged all of them.

Rick: These expertly trained assassins are apparently flailing around like Muppets

> Then he went for a takedown.

Dan: He'd built up his meter enough.

> He took one of them out by slamming him on the ground and breaking his

> arm. Another one went for Wrex. Batman threw his batarang at him. He knocked the assassin off
> the wall.

Rick: [Batman] Oh yeah. Totally meant to do that.

> He could hear the sounds of gunfire in the distance. The battle has started. There were two
> assassins left.

Rebecca: Thank you for that, fic. I had honestly lost count

Dan: And by that you mean you stopped caring

Rebecca: Well yes.

> He stunned one of them and transferred into a beatdown. He finished off by kicking
> the assassin in the face.

Rick: Boot to the head

> The last one uncloaked himself. He grabbed the sword to kill himself.

Rick: Wrong target, Steven.

Dan: Joke's on you, Fred, I took out a bounty on myself!

> The blade pierced deeply in his chest. He fell to the ground and bled out to death.

Tsuneo: Batman won't kill, but how is he with people killing themselves?

Dan: Given how often he fights ninjas, I suspect it's something he's used to

> Batman turned around

> to see a laser pointed at Wrex. He ran quickly towards to tackle him before the shooter made his
> shot.

Rebecca: Thank god for highly conspicuous laser sights

> He missed and Batman kept the krogan down.

Tsuneo: Say, maybe next time lead with that.

Rick: Or at least fire while everyone's distracted.

> He quickly grappled up to find the shooter. It

> was odd because firing and killing a target. The only person he knows that could do such a thing,
> and that was deadshot,

Tsuneo: Literally nobody else could shoot a gun.

Rebecca: Seems about right, judging by this fic so far.

> but deadshot would've been dead for years now.

Tsuneo: For all you know he could be in another block of ice

> This shooter poses some similar qualities from deadshot.

Rick: In that he also had an odd relationship with Catman

> Batman finally traced the shot to a building where the shooter was aiming once again at Wrex. It
> was a large building with a square structure.

Dan: Given the lack of scale, I'll assume that the structure is a portaloo

> He got out the disruptor and quickly jammed the

> sniper. It was successful and the sniper's gun was jammed.

Tsuneo: He jammed the gun and the gun was jammed.

> "The Batman is here, let's give him a proper welcome." The sniper said.

Rebecca: So they laid out the good tea set.

> There were other armed gunmen nearby armed with more advanced weaponry.

Tsuneo: They had all the latest in Nerf guns

> These were no ordinary soldiers and

> mercenaries. These guys are experts at using guns and strategizing their attacks.

Rebecca: Which is why they stood around and did nothing while the assassins were slaughtered

> They are also extremely well at hand to hand combat.

Rick: I mean, they're carrying guns so that puts them miles ahead of the other goons in this fic.

> They have motion sensors behind them, alerting them and

> others when somebody is sneaking up on them. And they have special microsensors to indicate that

> a friendly is nearby or when someone is down.

Tsuneo: Such systems already exist. They're called 'eyes'.

> They can be easily distinguished by their silver

> coating on their armor, and all of them were wearing that coating.

Rebecca: This silver coating obviously helps them avoid notice on high places in the bright sun.

> This was going to be a challenge at most.

Dan: Or a straight walk-over like every other brawl in this fic.

> Batman turned on detective mode. Scrambled, he was jammed. Someone nearby has a

> jammer equipped.

Rick: They had a Detective Mode Jammer, and he didn't have a Detective Mode Jammer Jammer.

> And he saw some of them equipped with mines. It was a good thing and a bad thing.

Rebecca: He was indifferent to the idea of landmines

> He could detonate the mines when someone nearby walks into them. But they will explode if

> he is nearby.

Dan: Thanks fic. I think we get how mines work

> Batman saw somebody hanging out near the edge. He grappled towards it and

> shimmed over there. Now he was right under the soldier. He turned around and looked over down

> on the city.

Tsuneo: The soldier was patiently waiting for Batman to get in position.

> Batman got a reinforced rope and pulled the soldier down over the edge. He screamed

> as he was dangling over the side of the building.

Rick: [Soldier] Oh hey, the view's even better from here.

> "Someone's screaming, get over there." The sniper said. Batman climbed up and found a nearby grate he could hide in.

Rick: Batman needs a timeout

> He jumped in before one of the mercs turned the corner to check on the other. Batman took him out using the grates. He had no time to waste.

Rebecca: Which is why he was spending all his time farting around with them

> There were four more armed mercenaries left. He still has an electrical smoke grenade.

Dan: Who wins, four armed elite mercenaries or one zappy pellet?

Tsuneo: My money's on the pellet.

Dan: Every time.

> He left the vicinity of the grates and moved on. Two of them checked the grates and placed a thermal charge.

Tsuneo: Hopefully they got their buddy out from there first.

> "Three, two, one, fire in the hole." He said as the fire razed through the grates. They dispersed and continued to search. He was on a little shack overlooking the roof.

Rick: It was a high-rise shack

> The four soldiers were paired with two.

Rebecca: I can tell their anti-sneak attack sensors were working wonderfully.

> They cleared the rooftop, checking every possible hiding point. One of them passed by and didn't check the roof of the shack.

Tsuneo: So they didn't check every hiding place, did they?

> Batman dropped, attacked him and did a ground pound on him. He aimed his batarang at his partner and knocked him to the ground and then went for the takedown. The other two spotted Batman from below and started shooting at him.

Dan: While he's on top of their buddy.

Rebecca: Buddy is a strong word...

> He evaded them and jumped down from the ledge. He crouched and sneaked around the corners. He saw the sniper trying to take another shot at Wrex.

Rebecca: Wrex's new job was bait

> Batman threw the electrical smoke pellet, hoping to knock the sniper or at least disorientate him. There were still mines around. Batman quickly hailed the pellet towards the sniper.

Dan: And there were still mines around.

> It landed somewhat close to him and the electric cloud dispersed.

Dan: Also, there were still mines around.

> The sniper disengaged his shot and left to hide somewhere.

Dan: Though seemingly irrelevant to the action as it progresses, it has to be pointed out in all fairness that there were still mines around.

> The other mercenaries sauntered over to where Batman threw the smoke.

Rick: Sauntered, eh?

Rebecca: They may have missed their target and four of them have been taken out, but they're feeling confident about turning it around.

> Only to find he wasn't there.

Tsuneo: Batman had left hours ago

> They were on top of the mines. Batman

> aimed the disruptor at the mines. As soon as they were in non-lethal range of the mines, he

> detonated them and sent them flying across the small corridor. They survived the explosion,

Dan: They were only lightly exploded

> but he

> highly doubted they would survive being krogan prisoners, for they would kill them in the matter of

> hours.

Rebecca: The Krogan criminal justice system is in desperate need of an overhaul

> But Batman has no choice. Now all there's left is the sniper. Batman found him hiding in the

> pantry on top.

Tsuneo: It was there all along. Just take our word to this

> He punched through the door and grabbed the sniper by the neck. He was turian, he

> wore white combat armor.

Dan: I thought they were all in shiny silver gear.

Rick: He's a subcontractor, so he gets to wear his own stuff.

> He had his helmet on. Batman took it off

Tsuneo: That added weight and meaning to the scene.

> and revealed his face. He has a

> light carapace with the three diagonal striped face paint, indicating that his home was in Invictus. He

> grew up with outlaws and criminals and learned to shoot a gun at a young age.

Rebecca: Batman could tell all this from his facepaint. He's that good.

> Batman knew his name. Rodan

Rick: The fire breathing pterodactyl and sometimes friend of Godzilla

> Tsyren, the famous marksman of Invictus.

Dan: I've never heard of you. Now what do you want?

> Batman punched him in the face.

> "Where's Ra's, tell me where he is and I'll let you choose what I can do to you." Batman said angrily

> and deeply.

Rick: [Rodan] Can you throw me a garden party?

> "Not yet, detective, he's not ready for you, he'll call you when he does." Rodan flashed and escaped
> from Batman's grasp.

Tsuneo: Good thing he greased himself up in advance

> As he gained his bearings, Rodan was already gone.

Rick: [Batman] So that's what it feels like.

> The battle was coming
> to an end. The rest of the mercenaries were retreating into the wild. It was very dark with only a little
> light. The thresher maws out for the hunt. They wouldn't last very long out there.

Rick: They'll be fine as long as they don't walk regular steps in a straight line

> Now it was time to talk to Grunt and find out where Commander Shepard is.

Dan: [Grunt] Oh yeah, he was here all along. You walked past him twice.

Tsuneo: [Batman] Why didn't you tell me?

Dan: [Grunt] The look on your face.

> He jumped down to the ground and
> walked to the main entrance of the city where krogan are piling the bodies on a large pile near the
> gate. Batman walked over a few bodies

Rebecca: He had to kind of scale them; they were clogging the path.

> before finding the tank-bred krogan.

> "Now that this battle is over, where is your Commander?"

Dan [Grunt]: Just over there.

Tsuneo [Batman]: I meant Shepard

Dan [Grunt]: Well why didn't you say so earlier?

> "Last time I heard, Shepard was heading to the colony of Anhur, a very foul place,

Rick: You can't even get a decent coffee there

> said that it was the last place they heard about your target, Ra's." Grunt replied.

> "Thank you, I'll be on my way." Batman walked away.

> "Hey, who are you?" He asked.

> "I'm Batman."

Rebecca: Grunt somehow didn't get that memo

> Batman replied and then walked back to the Batmobile near the temple. He got inside
> and called Wilson on the omni tool.

Tsuneo: Not even going to say goodbye to Wrex?

Dan: Nah, looks like he's busy with the mountain of corpses.

> "Have you got any leads on Ra's or Commander Shepard?" Wilson asked.

> "Yes, they said that the Commander had tracked Ra's to the colony of Anhur."

Rick: Which he was probing for precious metals

> "Be careful, sir, that planet is still under major conflicts."

Rebecca: It started as a fight in a parking lot and escalated from there

> "Don't worry, have the Batwing pick me up, we're heading there to find leads on any of the two."

> Batman ended the call. A few moments later, the Batwing arrived.

Rick: Now that's just good service.

> The strong winds blew from the

> force of the afterburners. Batman exited the Batmobile and grappled up to the Batwing.

Tsuneo: He's got to figure out a less involved way to do this.

> He got inside and waited for it to pick up the Batmobile.

Rick: Say, how do they pick up the Mako anyway?

Dan: I just assume Shepard launches it off a high cliff towards the Normandy and the hope it lands in the bay

Rick: Fits.

> It clamped the Batmobile and now it lifted up into

> the air and jumped into the vast darkness of space

> -----

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> Batman flew back to the ship with haste and docked the Batwing in his personal hangar.

Dan: As opposed to docking it in the mess hall.

> He shuts it

> off and gets out to change out of the Batsuit. He stored it in a pod and changed back into the suit.

Tsuneo: Batman's day-to-day wardrobe arrangements are of great interest, obviously.

> He took the elevator back to his office. The doors opened and he pressed the only button to go up.

Tsuneo: It was a one-button lift.

> The doors closed. The elevator slowly ascended the shaft.

Rebecca: I couldn't ask for a better summary of this fic's pacing.

> Then it stopped and the secret door in the bookcase opened. It revealed his office.

Rebecca: Imagine if you walked out into somebody else's secret door. It'd be so embarrassing.

> He walked out of the office and into his room. He set

> the destination to the planet, Anhur, to find his next lead for Ra's.

Rick: He's got a spare galaxy map in his office for just such occasions.

> But he also had some catching up to do with his work.

Dan: [Wilson] Well, maybe if you hadn't wasted time on Tuchanka and slept out overnight...

Tsuneo: [Batman] That's why I slept out overnight.

- > He had to sign documents. To approve the selling and shipping of products.
- > And to approve internships and job applications. And to acknowledge the employee of the month of
- > every corporate office.

Dan: And congratulations to Bob Elcor, our employee of the month!

Rick: False gratitude. Thank you all for this reward. I am truly humbled.

- > The ship went faster than light speeds.

Rebecca: It makes interstellar travel very inconvenient if it doesn't

- > He spent the next few hours signing
- > and working, and took the last hour resting for his next mission.

Dan: [Batman] Can't you just fake my signature like Alfred always did?

Rick: [Wilson] That explains so much about the state of your company.

- > He woke up from resting and took some of the documents to the shipping department.

Rebecca: The shipping department of his private spaceship, that is.

- > The approval of sales and shipping of products to the main office.

Tsuneo: When I think of Batman and Mass Effect, I immediately think of boring office minutiae

Dan: It's what makes it for me

- > The jump had ended and they had arrived.
- > Bruce walked to Wilson's office because Wilson said that he had a new gadget ready for use.

Rick: It's a new type of Batarang with a chewy caramel centre

- > It was near Bruce's office just one floor below.

Dan: There was also a crew member there for Bruce to have conversations with

- > He took the lift and entered Wilson's office.
- > "Mr. Wayne, your new gadgets are waiting for you."
- > "Gadgets? I thought there was only one ready."
- > "I know, but I forgot to give you this one as well."

Rebecca: You are a terrible Alfred

Tsuneo: They had a hundred and seventy years to get ready for this. You'd think they'd be better at it

- > He pulled out two gadgets from his desk. One of
- > them was the cryptographic sequencer. And the other was the voice synthesizer.

Tsuneo: So by new gadgets, what he really means is...

Rick: Ones he had ages ago, right.

- > "The sequencer, I don't need it anymore,

Rick: He'll regret that when he needs to prop up a table on the next planet.

- > "I'll happily take the voice synthesizer." Bruce said, pushing it away.

- > "No take it, Anhur is not really a fully developed colony,

Dan: The electrician doesn't come till next week.

> many residents are very poor and the technology is older than today's standards.

Rick: They are only up to Advanced Technology I

> You will find old municipality consoles you come across in Gotham long ago

Rebecca: They have two hundred year old computers.

> and the omni tool cannot hack it.

Tsuneo: Fortunately, they leave their passwords on post-it notes

> You can also find and listen in on private radio

> broadcasts that cannot be easily encrypted." He handed him both gadgets.

Rick: [Wilson] Elaborate setup, sir?

Tsuneo: [Batman] Elaborate setup indeed, Wilson.

> Bruce took them both and walked out of Wilson's office and back up to his quarters.

Dan: [Wilson] Well gee, you're welcome.

> He walked to the bookshelf and pulled the secret lever and the elevator was open.

> He entered the elevator and opened the sequencer. He tested the radio grid by moving the joysticks
> around.

Dan: Which joysticks were those?

Tsuneo: The ones on the controller, obviously

Dan: Well that makes... wait, what?

> He stopped and exited the elevator after it opened the doors only to find a little room locked
> by an old and locked console.

Rick: Wilson had this installed in the time it took him to hand over the gadgets.

> It was a test for Bruce to put the sequencer to good use.

Rebecca: May, how incredibly convenient

> He opened it

> and saw the encrypted code. He rolled the joysticks around and he found the first word. It was in the
> northwest direction on the left side.

> TEST-

> Then he rolled his right thumb to find the next word.

Tsuneo: I can't think of anything more thrilling than watching someone stand around playing with joysticks.

Rick: And yet, Twitch exists.

> Then pointing south, he found the next word

> while keeping the left thumb in the northwest direction.

> TEST SEQUENCE - PASSWORD ACCEPTED.

Dan: And we get a tutorial for the hacking minigame. Thanks fic.

> The console was unlocked and the doors opened. Then he saw a robot, a fuel pump, and a Batwing
> that was low on fuel.

Rebecca: This sounds like a setup for a dirty joke

> Then he knew he had to use the voice synthesizer.

Tsuneo: I mean obviously.

Rick: Whenever I see a fuel pump and a robot, I immediately think 'voice synthesizer.' It's just common sense.

> He aimed it at the robot and then redirected it at the pumps.

> "Fuel the aircraft." A female computer voice commanded the machine.

Rebecca: [Batman] I knew to use that specific voice because shut up.

> It walked towards the pump

> and grabbed some fuel and dragged the hose to the Batwing's fuel tank.

Dan: Making me wonder how he'd been refuelling it before now

> It was powered by element zero, to make it travel faster in space.

Rick: Sorry, to make it travel in space. To literally make any of this possible.

> The robot finished fueling the Batwing and then took the hose

> back to the pump and deactivated itself.

Rebecca: [Batwing] Can't the robot do that too?

> Batman calmly walked towards the Batwing and got in it for

> another mission. He didn't exactly know where in Anhur his answers were,

Rick: His plan was to check under every rock on the planet.

> but he narrowed the search down to the Eastern side of the continent in front of him.

Tsuneo: He had never been there and knew nothing around it, but he still knew where on the entire planet to look

> He made a quick descent into the atmosphere as it burned the Batwing.

Rick: [Batman] Note to self: check the re-entry shielding.

> Then he entered the atmosphere and made his way to the last known position.

> He found a spot in a small town to land.

Tsuneo: True to chase scene law, he landed on a fruit cart.

> The buildings were falling apart. They could barely withstand a simple blow of wind.

Rebecca: Entire cities had been destroyed by a breezy day

> Made from sheet metal and mossy rock.

Dan: I have a lot of questions about the building code here

> The sky had an odious and solemn tone.

Rick: The weather was serious at all times

> Even the more wealthy townsfolk had worn structures but they were far more
> noticeable than the working class.

Tsuneo: They were covered with a better class of filth

> These dirty and gangrel commoners made Bruce want to start a relief effort.

Tsuneo: Ie: throw money at it.

Rick: Money is one of Batman's superpowers.

> They spoke a more archaic version of the english language.

Rebecca: Everyone sounded like they came from a Shakespeare play

> Weekly storms destroyed crops, making food as rare as gold.

Dan: Do you think the author has gotten over that the planet sucks yet?

Rick: Maybe they need another couple of pages to drive the point home

> The ground was damp and the mud fell deep with every footstep.

Tsuneo: The locals were really bad at road maintenance

> Water flooded the hole as someone stepped in it. The smell was foul and there were
> animal feces everywhere.

Rebecca: On the upside, they had a thriving organic fertiliser industry

> Animals, domestic and feral, roamed the depressing town, looking for
> leftovers and something to kill like rodents or reptiles. Wooden planks stretched across rooftops for
> makeshift bridges.

Rick: Did he accidentally land in a Fallout raider camp instead?

Dan: It would explain a lot

> Balconies that reached on the higher floors that have rusty iron bars replacing
> the screen doors and wooden supports.

Tsuneo: Of course, the black bat-shaped spaceship blends in perfectly here.

> There hasn't been a dry season in years here. Whereas the other parts of Anhur had rich soil and
> dry seasons. But here were the wetlands.

Rebecca: They deliberately settled on the worst part of the planet

> A place for criminals and the poor hide from the corrupt
> government of this planet. Many people noticed Batman walking down the main street

Tsuneo: Really inconspicuous there

> and went to
> hide in their homes. Then a local bully, a tough guy preying upon the weak for money and food.

Tsuneo: Then, a bully. Not a bully anything, just a bully generally.

> He was beating some poor soul for some crackers and carrots.

Dan: But do they eat them together? Like sliced carrot on crackers or something?

Rick: I think we're overlooking the real point here, which is what flavour of crackers they are.

- > It was an old man around the age of
- > ninety five bringing food back home from the market to his family.

Rebecca: There's a point where a setup passes by overdone and into the downright comical. And we passed that a long time ago.

- > "Please sir, I need to feed my family." The old man begged.
- > "You old codgers cannot even stand up for yourself." The bully teased.

Tsuneo: At this point I can only assume that the bully is an old-timey greaser or something

- > He was a man in his thirties.
- > He had a long beard stretching down his neck and just touching his chest. His hair was black and
- > his eyes were emerald green.

Rick: And yet this one thug is better described then Wilson

- > Batman interfered by slamming the bully against the wall and telling him.
- > "If I see you out here again, you will get much worse." He threw the man down in the mud.

Dan: Hah, joke's on you. That mud could feed a family of four around here.

- > "Do you realize who you're messing with,

Tsuneo: [Batman] Uh... No. I have no clue whatsoever.

- > we run this town, you're nothing to us."

Rebecca: You're nothing to us said the mud-covered bully to the centuries-old billionaire vigilante detective

- > The man said as he got up and walked away. The old man was already gone.

Rick: The 95-year-old man had escaped at amazing speed.

- > Not even saying thank you in the process.

Tsuneo: I can't imagine why he'd be afraid of the violent obvious madman in the bat suit

- > Batman continued his search in the town.

Dan: And by search, we mean roughing up random encounters.

- > Maybe he could get answers from the people who run this place.

Rebecca: And so he found a pig to interrogate.

- > All he has to do is to follow the man he just threatened.

Rick: All he needed to do was follow the trail of filth

- > He went westward
- > where he last saw the man walk. He activated the forensics scanner. He looked at the man's
- > footprints and scanned them.

Dan: Which is pretty impressive given that the town is apparently awash with ankle-deep muck

> Then he isolated the patterns of the prints to his unique footprint.

Rick: The bully was an old-timey pirate with a peg leg, which make him easier to track

> Then he followed the trail that the man left behind.

Dan: I mean, it's an open street. You can literally see him down the road.

> The trail led across numerous buildings and

> alleyways. He carefully navigated through a dangerous maze

Tsuneo: Their hedge maze had gotten a little out of hand

> as he climbed the rooftops; the trail was still hot.

Rebecca: Given that the bully had to pick himself up and then wade through the muck, how far could he have gotten?

> Rain was covering the footsteps so he had to move fast.

Tsuneo: Somehow the rain made the mud-strewn town even filthier.

> Lightning cracked in the

> distance, and thunder roared seconds afterward. The tracks led to a marketplace. They finally

> touched ground there.

Tsuneo: He'd been levitating up until that point

> He walked down the street to find the tracks leading to an apartment building.

> That must have been their hideout.

Rick: Or maybe it's his paint and sip class. You can't just assume these things

> The front gate was locked by a security console. He tried to

> hack it with the omni tool, but it didn't work.

Dan: Then, since it was a gate, he just climbed over it.

> Now the cryptographic sequencer was useful.

Tsuneo: And the forced setup pays off

> Batman

> pulled it out and opened it to unlock the door. He rolled his thumbs to find the password.

> Jack of Hearts - Password Accepted.

Rick: Batman has a long history with playing card-themed villains. I'm just saying he should be wary of this guy

> The gate opens and Batman enters the apartment.

Rebecca: His plan was to sneak into the place by walking in the front door

> He followed the footprints across the small hallway with grime and lime stains everywhere.

Rick: They were in the middle of making guacamole

> They went upstairs leading to the third floor. He walked up the stone stairs to the third floor

Tsuneo: The man Batman was trailing went upstairs, so Batman followed him upstairs. Brilliant.

Dan: And that's why they call him the world's greatest detective

> Then they stopped

> at room Three C. The door was wooden and easy to break through. There were people talking in

> the room. Batman listened in on their conversation.

Rebecca: They're having apparently not noticed the man kicking their door down

> The man that Batman encountered was talking to them about him.

Rick: [Bully] I mean, sure he ambushed me, but on the upside, fresh coating of mud!

> Then he can hear the sound of guns cocking in the room. He turned on detective

> mode. There was someone about to open the door.

Rebecca: They're expecting a pizza delivery.

> As he opened the door, Batman gave him a jab and kicked him back inside the room.

> "That's him, the bastard I was talkin' about." The bearded man said.

Dan: You sure about that? I mean, it could be any guy in a batsuit, really.

> There were five enemies in the

> room, the man included. One of them was armored with sheet metal,

Rebecca: Just a piece of sheet metal. He really hadn't thought this plan through

> an improvised version,

Rick: As opposed to professionally manufactured sheet metal armour, of course.

> and

> one was armed with a pistol, all humans. Batman threw a batarang at the armed thug. He fell down

> on the floor hands on his head.

Tsuneo: The fights in this fic have me on the edge of my seat.

> The room had a wooden table in the middle with some money,

> playing cards, a couple bowls of warm hamburger soup,

Rick: They haven't quite figured out how hamburgers work

> and a knife, there's a kitchen on the right side.

Dan: Hit a guy with a Batarang, then check out the room.

> A television and mangy couch on the opposite side of Batman's position.

Rebecca: I love this fic for the well-realised vision of a futuristic world.

> The ceiling was leaking water above a metal bucket collecting the water.

Dan: This feels like the sort of place that a Bugs Bunny villain would live

> Batman struck the man who he encountered earlier,

Tsuneo: Sorry to interrupt, back to the fight scene.

> and then to the armored thug by stunning him and taking him down with a beatdown.

Rebecca: 'Armored' is a generous description.

> Some of the others tried to attack Batman

Rick: But most of them were content to simply stand there and gawp

> but he was vigilant and countered every one of their attacks.

Rick: Mash the triangle button again.

> He finished the armored thug off, but he got back up. They were strengthened by an

> unknown substance that makes them difficult to defeat.

Tsuneo: It's spinach. Turns out Popeye was right

> Batman then lunged at someone and

> grabbed his arm to dislocate it from the shoulder. He did so, but the man got back up like it's

> nothing.

Rick: So was his shoulder still out, or...

Rebecca: Oh yeah, just now he's waving his dead arm around like a flail.

> Now Batman knew what he had to do. He needed to go straight for the weak spots.

Rebecca: Up until this point he'd been just casually hitting them wherever.

> Get them on the

> ground and finish them. He continued punishing them with beatdowns and critical strikes

Dan: Along with the occasional wet willy.

> until he got

> an opportunity to finish one of them off. The armored guy was down. Batman jumped on top of him

> and finished him off with a punch close to the brain.

Tsuneo: The area known as the head.

Rick: Cunning.

> He was instantly knocked out. Then Batman

> gave another beatdown to someone who just got up. He finished with a strike to that artery, now he

> is out for the count.

Rebecca: The other thugs had decided to use their time wisely by moving the couch.

> Three left as Batman threw a batarang at the one going for the gun. Then

> Batman grabbed another and slammed him on the table. He broke it in half and the crook wasn't

> getting up.

Tsuneo: I suppose he's not even going to pay for that.

> Countering and striking again, Batman was punishing them for the use of illegal

> stimulants and opioids.

Rebecca: Their terrorising the downtrodden people of the town had barely rated a mention

> He broke the fingers of the man he encountered and broke the arm of the
> other. Blood was painted on their faces.

Tsuneo: From their broken arms, obviously.

> Then he broke the other's leg and he was out.

Rebecca: I thought they didn't feel pain, or something.

Rick: I mean yes, there's that, but also – look over there!

> It was only the man left.

Tsuneo: The man, not any of the other men.

> Batman dragged him across the room and pressed him against the wall near the television.

Rick: Given the description of the place, I can only assume this is some big, chunky eighties box with bent antennas on top

> He punched him in the face and began to interrogate him.

> "Where is your hideout, where are the others?"

Tsuneo: [Bully] This is our hideout! There are no others!

Dan: [Batman] This is it?

Tsuneo: [Bully] I doesn't take much to rough up this mudhole, you know.

> "Listen, you don't want to go there, they're crazy, they kill and string you up on the walls."

> "I'm not asking again, tell me or I'll break every bone body until I find the right one."

Rebecca: The right one's the coccyx. Don't ask how he's going to break it.

> "Ok, ok, whatever you want, they're at the supermarket, it's now their fortress,

Dan: They hang out by the frozen food isles and take nine items through the express lane, the fiends

> listen I'm warning you, these men are insane."

Tsuneo: 'I warn you, they're insane' he says to the adult man in a bat costume

> "Now you may rest."

Rick: Time to go to snooze

> Batman knocked him out and threw him on the old couch. He walked out of the

> apartment to find the supermarket.

Rebecca: It will take all his detective skills to locate it

> He walked the maze of the marketplace. It was a rather small

> town with some tall structures. He pulled up the map of the town. The supermarket was on the other

> side of town. Batman walked his way.

Tsuneo: Why use your Batwing, glider cape or grappling gun when you can trudge through the mud instead?

> Maybe Ra's was there by coincidence or something.

Dan: Ppft, what sort of paranoid vigilante detective are you?

> This was
> his best lead to find answers for now. Besides, it's something to do, bring justice to these lawless
> streets.

Rick: Dispensing vigilante justice was his hobby

> Nobody was in sight, they were afraid of him or something far worse.

Dan: Now why would they be afraid of the man in a costume beating up thugs in broad daylight?

> The streets were
> flooded with rain. The storm had ceased for a while. The sunshine was now cutting through the
> dense clouds. The water reflected light off and to a beautiful day.

Rebecca: It was a beautiful day in this run-down swamp hellhole

> Maybe it won't rain for several days. As depicted on the radar.

Tsuneo: I'll just assume he has a Bat-weather radar and move on

> The supermarket was now a few blocks away. Batman created a
> shortcut by grappling and gliding off of the tops of buildings.

Rick: All while resisting the temptation to go 'whee'

> The supermarket was in sight. But
> there was a large fence surrounding the parking lot and behind the building. There were armed
> criminals everywhere.

Dan: So maybe they actually are Fallout Raiders

Rick: It would explain a lot

> Batman had to sneak in instead. Gliding inside only meant a suicide note.

Tsuneo: I don't know, maybe if he was doing it at night time...

Rick: Batman operating at night? What madness is this?

Tsuneo: You're right, I don't know what I was thinking.

> It was almost an army here.

Rebecca: As opposed to the armies of goons he's beaten up so far, of course

> This force was meant to hold this city.

Dan: Well, from what we've seen of the city, I've got to ask: Why?

> All of the money and food was
> here, in the hands of crooks. Batman can liberate this place. All he had to do was call someone.

Tsuneo: Nobody in particular, just someone out there in space

> He transmitted a signal to someone.

Rebecca: It was picked up by a tinfoil-hat wearing recluse whose delusional rants were suddenly confirmed

> Then he snuck to find a secret entrance. It took some time to find it
> but he found a gate with a security console next to it on the side of the parking lot,

Rick: It was a boom gate and he was dealing with the ticket machine

> but it was still quite a walk to the supercenter.

Rebecca: Worst part is they haven't re-paved the carpark in ages.

> It was time to use the sequencer again. He pulled it out and began deciphering the passcode.

Dan: And there is a hacking minigame

Rick: Fallout Raider base it is

Dan: Maybe one of them will have a Nocturnal Pool Cue

> Fire Sale - Password Accepted. The door opened and Batman walked in. He had to sneak around

> the guards. He'll have to find the leader of this criminal organization.

Rick: Batman's new arch-foe, the grocery manager.

> He snuck across the parking

> lot, avoiding armed patrols. These guys were well dressed and armed with assault rifles, shotguns,

> and submachine guns.

Tsuneo: One of them had a M-12 Locust and was blatantly not holding the foregrip

Rebecca: Does that bother you?

Tsuneo: Like you wouldn't believe

> Batman used troop transports and recon vehicles for cover.

Rebecca: So it's not so much an army of criminals as an actual real army.

> He made some distractions to lure the guards.

Dan: He called for a clean-up in aisle four.

> Then he made it across the parking lot and into the store. It was built like a refugee camp.

Rick: Really? I thought it was built like a supermarket.

> There were sleeping bags everywhere and a kitchen with soup pots.

Dan: But only soup pots. They were really out of luck if they wanted anything else.

> There were armed guards.

> "If I alert anyone, the base will go on lockdown and I can't take anyone out because they have

> someone monitoring them with heartbeat monitors,

Rebecca: They're remarkably well-prepared backwater swamp bandits

> I must make way to the manager's office on the

> other side." Batman found that the sides of the store were mostly empty. There were guards

> everywhere else and gathered in the middle of the store.

Tsuneo: There were guards everywhere and there were guards in this one place as well

> He made his way to the office, getting stopped here and there to wait out a guard.

Dan: Including one who was microwaving broccoli in the lunchroom, the fiend.

> There were a few aisles of old groceries and clothes. Still fresh food as well.

Rick: But they still don't have that one brand of pickles you're after.

- > Everyone was gathered in the middle, eating soup from the kitchen. Batman
- > doesn't have long until the people responding to the signal arrives. And they arrive rather quickly,
- > but the distance will give him some time.

Rebecca: So had they arrived or not?

Tsuneo: They had arrived, except that they will take some time, but they will do it quickly.

Rebecca: Thanks, that really clears things up.

- > He was near the manager's office. The door was in sight.
- > All he had to do was wait for the guard to leave and it was time to find some answers.

Dan: Sadly, the manager was in a pointless meeting so he'd be waiting an hour.

- > The guard threw his cigarette away and walked to the electronics section.

Tsuneo: Somebody stocked the AA batteries on the rack for the AAA batteries again.

- > Batman quickly entered the manager's office to find the leader of the organization.

Dan: The manager was in the manager's office

Rick: Cunning

- > He dressed in a gray suit and a black tie.
- > Black leather shoes and a white handkerchief meant that he was the richest in this town.

Rebecca: He really fits in with the swamp bandit look of this community

Tsuneo: That suit must be a nightmare to keep clean

- > He had the power over these people. He was eating noodle soup

Rebecca: In a blatant display of his wealth and power.

- > and then he stopped and looked up at Batman.
- > He grabbed the man and questioned him, asking about Ra's.
- > "Ra's al Ghul, where is he, was he here recently?"

Tsuneo: He came here for the ambiance, obviously

- > "Yes, he was here recently, but he left in such a hurry, you'll never find him because he knows your
- > every move." He laughed.

Rick: [Batman] Just like that? You're not going to put up a fight?

Dan: [Manager] And mess up my suit? Do you know how hard it is to get this thing pressed?

- > Batman smacked the boss's head on the window cracking it, knocking him out in the process.

Rebecca: Now how are you going to get your answers?

Dan: There are problems with his process

- > He threw him on the ground and left through the side door to storage.

Rick: Well we sure learned a lot.

Rebecca: Yes, it was definitely worth the time taken to break in here.

- > Storage was full of supplies and guards.

Tsuneo: But were they guarding the supplies or supplying the guards? [Pause] I'm sorry, I get so bored sometimes.

- > There was no sneaking past them. Batman must take them
- > out. There was a tightrope conveniently stretched across the room,

Rick: One of the raiders was practicing his high-wire act

- > providing an efficient vantage point to plan out attacks.

Rebecca: Good gosh, it's a specific and defined vantage point. What will they think of next?

- > He turned on detective mode. Four people patrolling the aisles and two
- > others at the loading bay all wearing military armor and carrying assault rifles and shotguns. That
- > makes six in total,

Tsuneo: Batman has the power of basic maths skills

- > time to make his moves. They all were near each other in some way

Rebecca: They were near each other in the way that they were standing next to each other.

- > and there were shortcuts to cut across the shelves. One of them was alone

Tsuneo: So they weren't all near each other, were they?

Rebecca: No, they were just near each other in different ways.

- > and Batman saw him as his first
- > target. He walked across the rope to the guard's location. Storage was also filled with rodents and
- > bugs.

Rick: It wasn't infested or anything. This was where they store their rodents and bugs

- > Describing the atmosphere of the room.

Tsuneo: I think the authour's notes just spilled into the fic.

- > Batman waited for the lonesome guard to pass and
- > Batman jumped down and choked him to sleep. Then he noticed that the guard was wearing a
- > heartbeat monitor.

Dan: He had a condition and that was his life alert

- > He grappled back up to the tightrope and continued surveying. In a moment's
- > notice, the commander of the guards came on shortwave.

- > "One of the guards is down, someone's here, find them."

- > "Spread out." One of the guards said.

- > "Reinforcements will arrive, ETA two minutes." The commander said. Based on the tone and the
- > manner of speech, the commander was human.

Dan: That and the fact that everyone else here was human as well

Rick: You might be on to something there

- > Then Batman noticed proximity mines in the area.

- > "I have around two minutes before backup arrives,

Rebecca: [Guard] Yeah, I said that!

> I need to take them out fast and one of the
> guards are armed with proximity mines." Batman said to himself.

Rick: Maybe he's recording all this for posterity

Rebecca: Batman's memoirs turned out to be a lot duller than expected

> 1:58

Tsuneo: Timed event it is

> "I found a man down."

> "Nothing we can, leave him."

Dan: We can't even make the effort to finish a sentence

> Batman aimed a batarang at the guard who recently called at the man
> down . He threw it and knocked the man down.

Tsuneo: He had conveniently separated himself from the group.

> He jumped back down and took the guard out on the ground.

Rick: Oh hey, that's where they keep the Home Brand stuff.

> 1:46

> A group of them ran towards the disturbance. They aimed right at the tightrope.

> "You think you're smart? Think again." The guard shot at the rope to destroy it

Tsuneo: Shoot at the narrow rope instead of the huge figure lurking on top of it. Smart.

> "Or now?"

> "I found someone." The group ran to check on him.

> "This is not good, he won't wake up, anyone got a spare medi-gel."

> "Medi-gel doesn't work this kind of injury, it only works on flesh wounds."

Rebecca: Don't any of you illiterate swamp bandits read the instructions?

> "Nothing we can do for him,

Dan: Time to divvy up his stuff, I guess

> spread out and get..." Two of the guards screamed as they were
> getting electrocuted by the smoke pellet.

Tsuneo: Electric smoke pellet, carrying the scene again.

Rick: Bruce should rebrand himself as electric smoke pellet man. He'd get a lot more done.

> One of them was caught in the smoke, but the electric shock can only take two at a time.

Tsuneo: Because reasons, I guess

> The one that made it was the one armed with proximity mines.

Tsuneo: Does that mean he's got proximity mines ready to deploy, or...

Rebecca: On no, he's strapped them to his body as a deterrent. He is not very smart.

> 1:13

> "Oh no, that's not good!" They went into terrified status.

Rick: They even updated their status on Facebook

Dan: 'Am terrified'

> "There's only two of you, this is a major disappointment." The commander said.

Rebecca: There's a guy dressed in a bat costume effortlessly eliminating his men, but this is what bothers him

> The shaken guards

> walked around the shelves looking behind them every few seconds. Batman tried to sneak behind

> one of them

Tsuneo: I guess we're no longer caring about the timer

Dan: I never did to start with

> but a proximity mine delayed him.

Dan: The explosive device was a minor inconvenience.

> But he was heading towards another mine. Batman

> turned the corner with the disruptor and aimed it at the mine. He pressed the button as the guard

> walked over the mine. It blew up right below him.

Rick: Batman has the 'ah, boom' button.

> It was one of those concussive mines that knocked enemies out.

Rebecca: It was made out of cartoon dynamite

> He fell to the ground with a mild concussion.

> "Finish the last one whoever you are, he has failed me, all of them did."

Tsuneo: Workplace morale is a real problem here at the raider swamp base

> 0:52

> Batman finished the last one by throwing a batarang straight at him and finishing him with ground

> pound.

Dan [Boss]: Yeah, that showed him! You go, Batrman! [Pause] Wait a moment...

> As the predator sequence played through, I decided to play the Arkham City OST music, You

> Should Have Listened To My Warning. Seriously, the Arkham series soundtrack goes well with this

> story.

Tsuneo: The Arkham soundtrack goes well with a Batman fic based off the Arkham games? I never would have guessed

> "Commander, this Alpha Two-One,

Rick: From Moon Zero Two

> we approached the entrance, preparing to breach."

> "Belay that order and pull back."

> "Acknowledged, we are pulling back." Batman left the loading bay.

Tsuneo: Was that Batman giving them orders, or...

> When he went outside, he saw a couple of frigates.

Rebecca: A pair of giant spaceships had snuck up on him while his back was turned.

> That's how desperate the Council and Alliance want him. He saw a few shuttles

> launch from the frigates.

Tsuneo: They figure while they're here, they may as well pick up some groceries.

> They were Alliance frigates since this was a human colony. Batman left the

> fortress for them to clean it up.

Dan: As always, the janitor has to do all the hard work

> He snuck through the back to find an opening in the fence. He

> ducked under the fence and made his way out. Gunfire and explosions ensued in the distance as

> heavily armed soldiers deployed out on the field.

Tsuneo: Satisfied that he has started a war, Batman sneaks away.

> Their reign of terror ends today as Alliance forces

> captured the stronghold half an hour later.

> "Another beacon for us to find more crooks with guns." One of the soldiers said.

Rick: Just assume this has happened before and move on

> The parking lot was blazing hot and was covered with criminal corpses.

Rebecca: Batman doesn't kill, but he's happy to call for backup that will

> Soldiers were handling prisoners and loading them on shuttles.

Dan: Hey man, we didn't do anything!

Rebecca: Yeah, you just raided a community outreach center.

Rick: We set up a soup kitchen and everything.

> "Whoever the Batman is, he's very smart,

Tsuneo: Please ignore the previous sequence.

> I mean setting a beacon for us to fall for, getting away,

> and leading us to find a bunch of criminal scum to get rid of,

Rebecca: It's great how he lead us on a wild goose chase.

> I mean these people were controlling an entire town for goodness sake."

Tsuneo: Kind of making you wonder why they never did anything about it earlier

> An N7 Soldier wearing the black armor

Rick: He hadn't customised it yet

> said unto the normal infantry.

Tsuneo: Having your rank as 'normal infantry' can't be good for morale.

> They were searching the supermarket for anyone hiding. Checking every possible hiding
> spot possible.

Tsuneo: Even the weird foreign canned goods section and the discount meats bin

> "What do we do to the prisoners, hand them over to the turians and be done with or keep them
> ourselves?" A soldier asked.

Rebecca: You're humans taking humans prisoner on a human colony world. I think you've got this covered

> A couple minutes later, some soldiers came out with the leader of the fortress.

Dan: [Soldier] He was hiding under the table in the meeting room. We almost missed him.

> Blood oozed down his face from a cut on his forehead. The N7 soldier examined him.

> "You'll get nothing from me, nothing at all."

> "We'll see about that, we'll see." The soldier said, turning the boss's head left to right.

> "We'll keep the boss for interrogation, and hand over the others. When we beat the info out of him,

Dan: I can only assume that telephone books and rubber hoses have survived into the future

> we'll hand him over as well." The N7 ordered the other soldiers.

Tsuneo: The boss asked about his rights as a prisoner, but they just laughed.

> He took the boss himself aboard

> and they flew off into the distance. The rest of them dispersed about an hour later after they swept
> the supermarket.

Rick: So would you say it was a... supermarket sweep?

Tsuneo: I hate you so much

> Batman ended the video footage and recalled the drone. He called the Batwing to pick him up. It
> was time to leave.

Dan: He'd run out of coins for the parking meter.

> With no leads for now, all that he had to do was wait.

Tsuneo: [Batman] Hmm, maybe if I'd actually tried to find out anything...

> He walked across the plain

> to the landing zone. After a moment, the Batwing was hovering above the landing zone. It slowly
> descended and Batman grappled up and got inside.

Dan: Great, now he's going to track mud all over his spaceship.

> He flew back to the ship.

Rebecca: Presumably none of the soldiers or the ships that bought them here noticed this

> Then he noticed someone was intercepting his communications. It was an intrusion.

> "Can you hear me, Batman, I know you can." The voice was staticy and distorted at first.

> "Riddler." Batman couldn't believe it, it was Edward Nigma Riddler.

Dan: Edward Riddler, of the Boston Riddlers.

> "Yes, I, Edward Nigma, the Riddler, your genius archnemesis and intellectual successor.

Rick: The whoever is playing Moriarty this week to your Basil Rathbone Holmes.

> My genius

> has allowed me once again to hack into that primitive communication system." He sounded much

> older.

Rebecca: I mean, it's been almost two centuries...

> Batman isolated Riddler's channel so he couldn't eavesdrop on Batman's other conversations.

Dan: He didn't want Riddler to know he had Cluemaster on the other line.

> "At the time of your sudden disappearance and presumed death, I was preparing a laborious and

> ingenious plan to actually stop you, but you didn't show up.

Rick: And Riddler ended up getting punted by the team of Shaggy and Arya Stark anyway

> When Cobblepot froze you with that

> Freeze Gun, everyone cheered at that fact, but I didn't believe him.

Dan [Penguin]: I froze Batman in a block of ice

Rick [Riddler]: I don't believe you

Dan [Penguin]: He's right there under the dance floor. You can see for yourself!

Rick [Riddler]: Not buying it

> So I decided to build a cryochamber of my own and set the limit for every fifty years

Rick: Wouldn't it be hilarious if Batman woke up a year after Riddler froze himself?

Tsuneo: No. No it would not.

> until I gave up because I thought you were dead and found this future around fifty years ago."

Rebecca: He froze himself for the possibility that Batman might come back at some point in the future.
Riddler really needs some new hobbies

> "Why should I care, you don't have long to live."

Tsuneo: Jeez, ageist much Batman?

> "See, that's where you're wrong, you supercilious and flamboyant being,

Rick [Batman]: You had a hundred and seventy years and that's the best you could come up with?

Dan [Riddler]: It sounded better in my head

> the recent technological

> advance in medicine has made us immune to almost all known viral and bacterial diseases known

> to mankind

Rebecca: But introduced a whole swarm of alien ones.

> and prolonged our lifespan in the process.

Rick: Oh, and we cured cancer and most other diseases

> Now I will utterly destroy you this time.

> Through countless hours of calculation and research, I have formulated a plan to defeat you once

> and for all, either by retiring your position or literally destroying you."

Tsuneo: He will both utterly and literally destroy Batman

> Riddler laughed.

Rick: [Batman] Um, that's nice and all, but I'm kind of busy with an actual threat at the moment.

> "I will not let you hurt anyone or set any traps."

Dan: This is going to be about Riddler trophies, isn't it?

> "That's where you are wrong, I will be everywhere, watching, waiting, and using every opportunity to

> defeat the Dark Knight, and my broadcast is encrypted,

Tsuneo: Batman starts twiddling the thumbsticks again.

> no way you will send my location to anyone ever."

Dan: Riddler's taunts sound like they're coming from a petulant twelve year-old

> Riddler ended the broadcast. Batman called Wilson on the omni-tool.

> "We have a problem, Riddler is back."

Rebecca: [Batman] And how did he get my number anyway?

> "Correct me if I'm wrong, sir but is Edward deceased by now, the last you encountered him was

> over a hundred and seventy three years ago."

Dan: I mean, he could be a legacy villain by now

Rick: I mean, yeah. For all we know there could be a whole galaxy full of bad guys who have adopted the identities of Gotham villains

Dan: And not just humans either. There could be an Asari Catwoman, or a Salarian Sacrecrow.

[Pause]

Rick: What about a Volus Professor Pyg?

Dan: A Volus in a pig mask would be the best thing ever.

> "I was just as surprised as you are, Edward built a personal cryochamber,

Rick: A cozy little cryochamber for one

> knowing that I would still be alive, turns out he was right."

Tsuneo: Just to recap from literally seconds ago.

> "As always, your old enemies are the most dangerous of them all,

Tsuneo: Because so far, future Batman has two enemies, both ones he met before

Rebecca: It's not really an effective sample size

> consider caution, Mr. Wayne."

Dan: Because Batman is normally so blasé about the whole crime-fighting thing

> "Thanks, I'm heading to the ship now."

Rebecca: Really? Because I thought he was going to hover over the planet for a while and give the Alliance frigates something to shoot at.

> Batman ended the call. He took a few minutes to dock to the
> ship. He got out and changed back. Bruce took the lift back to his office.

Dan: Oh no, I don't think I can handle the breakneck pace of another 'Batman gets changed' scene.

> The bookcase opened to
> reveal his office. He walked out. He was tired, so he went to bed. He sat down on the side of his
> king sized bed. He went to sleep for about two and a half hours before he woke back up.

Tsuneo: Batman goes to sleep!

> He rubbed
> his face and walked straight to the bathroom. He was growing a beard. He grabbed the shaving
> cream and the razor and he shaved his face. After about five minutes of shaving, he went to take a
> shower.

Rebecca: When I think both Batman and Mass Effect, this is exactly what comes to my mind

> After showering, he brushed his teeth and applied deodorant.

Rick: Actually it was secretly Bat-Spray shark repellent. You can never be too sure

> He walked out of his bathroom after
> he changed. He threw his dirty towel and clothes in the laundry basket

Dan: Say, who cleans the bat-suit anyway? Does that go in the same hamper or what?

> and went to his office to work. Same old things. He realized he had to go to a meeting today.

Dan: Forget shaving, can we possibly handle the intense action of a remote business meeting?

Rebecca: Will revenues have grown at a rate comparable to last quarter? What was the effect of the latest HR policies on workplace safety? The tension is killing me!

> He checked his omni tool for
> the time. He had fifteen minutes. He got up and took the lift out of his room and into the main
> offices. It was on video as well. He walked to the meeting room, turned on his hologram,

Rick: And set his virtual background to a pleasant tropical vista

> and waited for everyone else to show up.

Rebecca: Whoops, someone's forgot to turn their background on, and now you can see stacks of unwashed laundry.

> About two more people showed up before the meeting started

Rick: Everyone else was late.

Dan: Even in the future, Zoom meetings suck.

> and when it actually started,

> everyone appeared at once. Managers, CEOs, and board members from different corporations

Tsuneo: Including Stagg Enterprises and Kord Industries

[Pause]

Dan: Do you think that Ted Kord is still around?

Rick: I'd blame Booster Gold if he was

> gathered in this holographic meeting. Other humans, a couple of asari, volus, and elcor.

Tsuneo: Nobody invited the Vorchia representative?

Rebecca: They did, but he's too busy chewing on his omni-tool.

> The usual species with the skills of speech.

Rick: Mission statement. We must dynamically re-engineer our core competencies to synergise with disruptive solutions to emergent opportunities through logistic solutions

Dan: Thanks for that, Bob Elcor

> Fast forward an hour and forty minutes,

Tsuneo: If only we could, fic. If only.

> it was over and everyone ended the meeting. There was really nothing important.

Rick: Meetings that could have been an email: The meeting: The fic!

> If anything, it was pretty boring for Bruce.

Rebecca: He spent all his time looking at his watch and casually browsing in another window

> He didn't talk much either. So

> many things to do as a business casual. He can't wait to find any more news about Ra's or any

> leads at the very least. The room grew cold

Dan: Awkward silences all round

> and Bruce walked out to find Wilson, to see if he had

> any leads on Ra's or the Normandy crew. He took the lift up to Wilson's office.

Rebecca: Just assume that Wilson's always in his office and never goes anywhere else

> He checked the time again, waiting impatiently for the lift to come to a complete stop.

Tsuneo: Even this fic is getting bored of this fic.

> The door opened and Wilson's

> office was empty, he wasn't there. Bruce called him. No answer. He figured that Wilson was busy at

> the moment, he can wait. He sat down on a chair in front of the desk.

> He pondered for a few minutes and boredom caught the better of him and he fell asleep.

Dan: Time for a quick bat-nap

> He slept in

> the office for about two more hours, and then he woke up to find Wilson sitting at his desk waiting

> patiently for Bruce, clicking his pen a few times over.

Tsuneo: I'd ask what was the point of this interlude, but if I started I'd never stop.

> "Ah, you're awake, what can I do for you, Mr. Wayne?"

> "Have you got any leads on Ra's or anything?"

Rebecca: Since you're doing everything else for me, can you do my detective work too?

> "I'm afraid I don't have anything on him, but I may have something on one of the Normandy crew."

> "Go on."

> "I received word that the Migrant Fleet is nearby

Rick: Batman's going to try and sneak onto a spaceship, isn't he?

> and one of the admirals was one of the crewmates, her name is..."

> "Tali'Zorah." Bruce interrupted.

Dan: He's Batman, he just knows this

> "Where are they now?" He asked, rapping his fingers on Wilson's desk.

> "We'll be there, just right in front of us as we speak." Wilson replied. Bruce looked a little confused.

> "Right in front of us?" He asked.

> "Yes, they are." Bruce observed from the security cameras outside the ship.

Tsuneo: By that point, they're not security cameras.

Rick: Yes they are. He's worried that someone's going to try and sneak onto his spaceship.

> He could see the massive fleet of quarian ships.

Tsuneo: Don't you hate it when a massive fleet of alien spaceships sneaks up on you?

> He was stunned, befuddled, and astonished. How could we be in the

> middle of the largest flotilla in the Milky Way.

Rebecca: The idea that he was on a spaceship hadn't occurred to him

> "Someone is here to see you, Mr. Wayne." The secretary called.

> "Well, what are you waiting for, go get some answers." Wilson said.

Tsuneo: [Wilson] Now quit loafing on my desk, I've got work to do.

> Bruce walked out of his office and took the lift down to the main lobby. He checked the time.

> 1:43 PM.

Rick: It could be five minutes since the last scene, or it could be twenty hours. There's no way of knowing.

> This is the only chance he has at finding Ra's because Bruce knows he's planning something

> heinous, considering he is the leader of the assassins. With his ultimate goal of destroying

> civilization because of the corruption it causes.

Tsuneo: In case you'd forgotten the plot, here it is again

> Bruce went to the airlock to greet the visitors.
> Arriving at the airlock, Bruce greeted the quarian admirals while keeping his distance.

Rick: Including the insane one voiced by Claudia Black

Dan: The insane part of that is a redundant statement

> And in the middle, Admiral Tali'Zorah vas Neema, or Normandy as she was recently titled.

Rebecca: That's like calling someone by her previous married name.

> Bruce told her to
> follow him to the meeting room. They walked down the lobby to the meeting room.

Tsuneo: They went to the meeting room so they went to the meeting room

> He opened the
> door and let her through. Then he entered and closed the door and tinted the windows and the room
> was darkened.

Dan: [Tali] This is some stupid surprise party, isn't it?

> "What is this about, why are the windows tinted."

Tsuneo: In case someone's looking in. From space.

> "It's confidential, I need to keep this a secret between us." Bruce replied, cutting the audio receptors
> and handing Tali a folder.

Rick: Yes, but what colour was it, and how does it relate to Brick Hactar?

Dan: Deep cut

> "Wait, this is the man we were hunting after the War,

Rebecca: The folder is the man they were hunting

> what interest do you have in him?" She asked.

> "I need your help, I need to know where he is, or where you're commander is, he is a serious
> threat."

> "What does a billionaire CEO want with a notorious assassin?"

Tsuneo: Ra's al Ghoul is a shareholder and has a seat on the board. It's awkward.

> "That doesn't matter right now, all I need you to do is tell me what you know, where is Commander
> Shepard?

Rebecca: Recovering after being exploded

> Where is Ra's? You are one of the only crew members who had recent contact with the
> Commander."

Tsuneo: Yes, well, you've given her plenty of reasons to trust you with confidential information and the whereabouts of her friend.

> Bruce said impatiently. He was losing his cool.

Rick: That and he didn't know if Tali was making faces at him

> "I know where Shepard is, at Eden Prime." Tali concluded.

> "Where the War started. You can leave now, Miss Neema."

Rebecca: At least use her title

> Bruce concluded and untinting the windows.

> "Actually, I have some questions for you, Wayne. Do you know the vigilante, Batman,

Dan: [Batman] I cannot tell a lie. I'm his secret backer.

> and what

> connection he had to the man known as Ra's? See what I have found interesting is that a man who

> disappeared one hundred and seventy years ago and an urban legend disappeared at the same

> time, came back around the same time.

Rick: [Batman] Admittedly, I could have handled that better. In fact, I could have done every single part of it better.

> Really suspicious" She said.

Rebecca: Batman immediately considers her for a future Batgirl position

Tsuneo: Tali would make a pretty decent Batgirl, all things considered

Rebecca: Costume would be a challenge though

> "I only know what the news tells me, it was merely coincidence that the Batman came back at the

> same time I did, this session is concluded, Tali."

Dan: Way to dodge the question there

Rick: Somebody's not getting a loyalty quest

> Bruce showed her the door. They walked back to

> the airlock. She walked back to her ship and they disengaged from the airlocks and Bruce's ship left

> the Migrant Fleet.

Tsuneo: When he cuts somebody off, he does it hard

> Wilson called.

> "Sir, have you got the location of Ra's or the Commander?" He asked.

Rick: [Batman] No, but I'm rethinking a lot of what I've done lately.

> "We're going to Eden Prime, where the Reaper War began." Bruce replied

Dan: Stopping off for photos at the Jenkins Memorial

> "Very well, I'll tell the pilot to take us there, it'll be a while." Bruce took the lift back to his personal
> quarters

"And that was the sequence of fight scenes that formed next two chapters of Batman the Future Knight," Tsuneo considered as the big screen switched off, reverting the world back to prose format.

"In which the game mechanics are used as a substitute for actual narration."

"You know, I thought that we'd reached a point where these fics can't surprise me with their stupidity," Rebecca continued. "Between a Transformers-Need for Speed Crossover, Libertarian wizards in magical aeroplanes, mind control smoothies and anything Storm Force, I thought I was good."

"But?" Rick asked.

"We just had a fic where there was a boss fight health bar in the text," Rebecca continued. "I cannot think of anything that we have seen before now that will top that. Furthermore, I can but only hope that we will never see anything stupider, although I also know that's a fleeting wish."

"Not that the fight wasn't bad enough already," Dan continued, "What with it being stupidly drawn out forever and full of obvious video game mechanics that really don't make any sense outside of a video game."

"Right," Tsuneo agreed. "The fic is built entirely around video game logic, and doesn't try to make that work for a prose narrative."

"And I feel like there's more coming," Tsuneo added. "We have the return of the Riddler to look forward to. Given the way that this fic is cribbing from the Arkham games, I have no doubt that he'll be used as a part of a collectables hunt side-quest"

"Something that is peak video game logic," Rebecca nodded.

"Right," Tsuneo agreed. "And while I hope I am wrong, given the fic's track record so far, I somehow doubt it."

"Not that it really did any better when it tried doing stuff of its own," Dan considered. "I mean, take the descriptions of the Anhur colony."

"There's a point where you can go 'okay, so this is a dump' and a point where it becomes ridiculous," Tsuneo agreed. "And the fic went firmly for the latter option."

"Besides the fact that the fic overdid it to death, it really didn't fit the general Mass Effect aesthetic at all," Rebecca noted. "This is a universe where individual soldiers can be outfitted with force shields and everyone is equipped with a magic tool arm that can do just about anything. A filth-ridden, run-down swamp town really doesn't sit with that at all."

"Rick's idea that it was meant to be a Fallout Raider camp really is the only explanation I can think of that makes any sense," Dan shrugged.

"Especially when you consider that the bad guys were holed up in a supermarket," Rick added.

"Either way, it does feel jarringly detached from the rest of the universe," Tsuneo agreed. "And it's clear that the author didn't think it through at all."

"Honestly, my biggest takeaway is that the author managed to take the idea of a Batman/Mass Effect crossover and make it boring," Rebecca finished. "And that's a strangely impressive feat in and of itself."

"Well I can see you're really getting excited about the fic," the Voice barged in to the conversation.

"Voice, that last comment shows just how little you listen to us," Tsuneo replied.

"Fantastic," the Voice continued. "So I will see you all next time for the last part of the fic."

"Not the conclusion, of course," Rebecca noted.

"Think of it this way," Rick spoke up. "If the fic had an end, that would mean we'd have to sit through a final boss fight."

"Yeah, no," Tsuneo winced. "I'll take no actual ending in this case."

"Although..." Rick considered. "I had a thought about our crossover fights from earlier."

"What's that?" Dan asked.

We say ‘this is the stupidest thing I’ve ever seen in a fic’ a lot, and with fair grounds too. However, I really cannot think of anything that could possibly top ‘seeing the bad guy’s health bar in text’. Its one thing to incorporate game mechanics into your narration (which this fic does a lot) and another altogether to actually show the health of the character as the fight is progressing. And while I’ve said a lot that game mechanics don’t translate to prose, this narrative choice is only proving the point.

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Batman: the Future Knight written by yeabro

Questions? Comments? Complaints? Boss health bars? Email us at [elmerstudios00 \(at\) gmail.com](mailto:elmerstudios00@gmail.com) and register your Jeff.

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