**Gotham City Rent Party**

Maybe due to their bird connection, the Penguin was the only villain who made the event. He had seen the announcement in the *Vigilante Voice*. “Benefit for Superhero in transition, 8pm until whenever.” The chain-smoking cynic, more curious to see who would show up than anxious to help out a former associate, came disguised as a robot chicken, but his umbrella gave him away. Waddling through an array of supportive fans, male and female, young and old, he eventually caught Robin’s eye.

“Great heavenly icebergs, it’s the Aristocrat of Crime! Penguin, gosh, how long has it been? We must be talking over twenty years—since I left town.”

“1983 to be precise, before your *Teen Titan* years…Wha wha wah,” he squawked. “Not a great career move if you ask me. Tell me, which of these lovelies gets my donation, or do I take my pick?”

“Just give it right to me please, you know, the neighborhood being what it is…”

“Whaaaa, haaa, no thanks to you. I’ve had to hire double security down at my club since your split with the big guy. I’ve even considered dissolving the whole Cobblepot Estate and moving south.”

“Florida?”

“No. Antarctica. But I hear the atmosphere is heating up down there, too.”

“Holy ozone! That really sucks. Remember the old days when life was simple: masters of the underworld verses the caped crusaders. We won, you lost; then you lost and we won.”

’Well Dick, you don’t mind me calling you Dick,” Penguin asked, pushing aside a pile of Boy Wonder souvenirs priced to sell, and hoisting his girth onto the window seat.

“Only if I can call you Oswold,” Robin sighed and pulled up a resin chair he had claimed from a neighbor’s trash.

“It’s only about the bottom line now. In the beginning you had only one fan to please, a boy who read comic books to peer into a subversive world that his parents knew nothing about. He took fifteen cents to the drug store and picked up the latest issue of *Batman*, which he would hide while supposedly doing his homework. All those bulging biceps and pulsing passions opened a world of intrigue, violence and sex.”

“Gosh, the way you’re talking about them, I feel like buying one and sneaking off to read it right now, if I could only spare the change.”

“We were an escape for kids who wanted to look like Bruce and have a ride like the Batmobile; who felt split between good and evil, like us, but never got to express it. Ever since we became box office sensations, however…however…” Distracted by a shapely fan walking through the room with cheese and crackers, the Penguin slid off the bench and waddled away.

“However what?” Robin called after him., but his cell phone began buzzing. He had gotten a text that read: “Thought I’d stop by, but heard your place isn’t worth Robin’! E. Nigma.”

“Kerplop! The aging crime fighter sighed, holding his head in his hands, “I’m so over, the Riddler figures casing my apartment is a waste of time. This town has sure changed. I really should have signed that contract and gone to Hollywood instead of joining The Outsiders in San Francisco. But that seemed like such as sell-out at the time.” Suddenly very tired, ex-crimefighter, teen-idol Dick Greyson picked up a graphic novel left in his bathroom by the grandchild of a fan, and retreated to his room. His guests, who had brought their own booze, never missed him.