

BATPERSON AND ROBBIE: CUTE MEAT (Curzon)

[This one-act was selected as a runner-up in a contest at Actors Theater of Santa Cruz and performed there in 2002. Also given a staged at First Stage, Los Angeles, 2002.]

CHARACTERS: (2)

BATPERSON, in Batman costume

ROBBIE, in Robin costume

VOICE, offstage, possibly pre-recorded, male or female

SETTING: Two airplane seats side by side. Two chairs will suffice.

(Batperson is sitting in his seat reading a flight magazine. After a little while, Robbie enters, checking the seats.)

ROBBIE Excuse me, is this seat taken?

BATPERSON What's the number?

ROBBIE 15B.

BATPERSON Then this must be you.

ROBBIE Thanks. (Puts his bag under the seat. Sits down, puts on his seat belt.)

(Pause.)

BATPERSON (attentive) You look familiar.

ROBBIE That's funny. I was thinking the same thing.

BATPERSON Do you mind if we talk? Some people don't like to.

ROBBIE Not at all.

BATPERSON Good. My name is Batperson.

ROBBIE Nice to meet you. (They shake hands.)

BATPERSON And your name?

ROBBIE Oh, sorry. Robbie.

BATPERSON Nice to meet you. (They shake hands again.)

(Pause.)

VOICE Welcome aboard, ladies and gentlemen. Please fasten your seatbelts. The airplane has been cleared for takeoff. Here we go!

(BATPERSON and ROBBIE mime the plane's liftoff, leaning backward.)

(Pause.)

VOICE The captain has turned off the seatbelt sign. You are welcome to move about the cabin. Thank you.

(Pause.)

BATPERSON I hate flying.

ROBBIE Yes.

BATPERSON Unless I'm in control, that is. I always want to fly what I'm in.

ROBBIE I'd like to fly myself one day.

BATPERSON I'm sure you will.

ROBBIE Do you mind if I ask what you do for a living?

BATPERSON I'm independently wealthy.

ROBBIE Really? Wow! Must be nice.

BATPERSON It is. What about you?

ROBBIE For a living? Oh, I'm still in school.

BATPERSON Which grade?

ROBBIE Tenth.

BATPERSON That's a good year.

ROBBIE It is, I suppose. That's what they tell me.

BATPERSON Not true?

ROBBIE Oh, the kids at school make fun of me.

BATPERSON Nice kid like you? Why would they do that?

ROBBIE They don't like my mask.

BATPERSON Really? I think it's very becoming.

ROBBIE Thank you. They say it makes me look like I have something to hide.

BATPERSON Well, do you?

ROBBIE If I told, I wouldn't be hiding it, would I?

(They smile together.)

BATPERSON I suppose not. Well, ignore the kids. They're just ordinary. People even make fun of me sometimes too.

ROBBIE Gosh, why?

BATPERSON They say I dress oddly. Do you think I dress oddly? (Points to his costume.)

ROBBIE Not at all. You look cool.

BATPERSON Thank you. I thought I did, although my outfit is rather warm.

ROBBIE You wear it because you want to, right?

BATPERSON I used to put it on only for special occasions, then take it off. But after a while it got to be such a bother — on, off, off, on — I finally decided just to . . .

ROBBIE You don't really wear it all the time, I bet. You have to take it off to go to bed.

BATPERSON No. I actually I sleep in this.

ROBBIE Holy Bedroom, no kidding? Boy, I'd like to see that. . . . I mean . . . Excuse me, I didn't —

BATPERSON And what do you like to wear to bed, Robbie?

ROBBIE You really want to know?

BATPERSON Only if you really want to tell me.

ROBBIE Actually I wear these clothes to bed. They seem to make me sleep better.

BATPERSON You mustn't be ashamed of what you do in bed, Robbie.

ROBBIE Oh, I'm not. It's just that my parents don't approve.

BATPERSON Conventional, huh?

ROBBIE You wouldn't believe. They keep hiding my mask.

BATPERSON But you keep finding it and wearing it, right?

ROBBIE Exactly.

BATPERSON Have you ever thought of moving out of your parents' place?

ROBBIE Oh, I have, lots of times. But where could I go? I'm underage.

BATPERSON Bummer, as they say. Young people really are quite mistreated, aren't they?

ROBBIE They say I'm making a spectacle of myself.

BATPERSON If only you could find some other, some more congenial, place to live.

ROBBIE Holy Mortgage, if I could only afford it.

BATPERSON Some big, roomy place, but in the city.

ROBBIE That would be so neat. But how could I do it?

(Pause.)

ROBBIE You wouldn't know of a place, would you?

BATPERSON Me?

ROBBIE Would you?

(Pause.)

BATPERSON No, I'm afraid not, Robbie.

ROBBIE (disappointed) Oh, I didn't really think you would. It's all right.

(Pause.)

BATPERSON Tell me, what do you think about criminals, Robbie?

ROBBIE (strongly) They're *bad!*

BATPERSON They tend to be, yes. And what do you think should be done with such people?

ROBBIE I don't know. Punished?

BATPERSON Do you ever have the feeling that you want to chase them, catch them, and end their nefarious ways?

ROBBIE Wow! Do I ever! But isn't that the job of the police?

BATPERSON I'm sorry to say, Robbie, that our modern police forces often do not do their job.

ROBBIE Holy crime wave!

(Pause.)

BATPERSON I'm going to tell you something, Robbie. And I don't tell just everybody, believe me. (an afterthought) May I call you Robbie?

ROBBIE Of course.

BATPERSON Thank you. And you may call me Batperson.

ROBBIE Wow! Thank you . . . Batperson.

BATPERSON And what I'm going to tell you, Robbie, is this. I fight crime.

ROBBIE No!

BATPERSON By day, I go by a different name. I live an entirely different lifestyle.

ROBBIE Really? I don't suppose you could tell me that other name.

(Pause.)

BATPERSON Bruce.

ROBBIE I knew you were a Bruce!

BATPERSON You knew it?

ROBBIE You just look like a Bruce — under that outfit, I mean.

BATPERSON I will take that under advisement and ponder it later.

ROBBIE And what sorts of crime do you fight?

BATPERSON You wouldn't believe the number of people roaming the streets at night wearing the strangest of garb and doing the dastardliest of deeds.

ROBBIE No! Like what?

BATPERSON Women dressed like cats.

ROBBIE No!

BATPERSON And men dressed like penguins.

ROBBIE Holy Antarctica!

BATPERSON More like Unholy Anarchy, Robbie. The things I have seen. (Shakes his head.)

ROBBIE Well, it sounds like you're doing your part at least.

BATPERSON Unfortunately, I have only begun to put a small crimp in the capers of these criminals.

ROBBIE Have you ever thought about going after them with a partner?

BATPERSON I have. But it's not easy finding someone compatible. I tend to be a night person.

ROBBIE Somehow I sensed that!

(Pause)

BATPERSON You're very good, Robbie. A good head on your shoulders.

ROBBIE Me? Good head.

BATPERSON You know, if we put our two heads together —

ROBBIE Your good head together with my good head —

BATPERSON We might work wonders.

ROBBIE You think so? A dynamic duo? Wow!

BATPERSON I can only echo your "wow," young man. Two fighting crime would be so much more formidable than one fighting alone.

ROBBIE But what about school?

BATPERSON Some things are more important than school, Robbie. And fighting crime is one of them.

ROBBIE I don't know. We might run out of criminals to fight one day, and where would I be without an education?

BATPERSON I suppose Alfred could tutor you.

ROBBIE Alfred?

BATPERSON Alfred is my man.

ROBBIE You own a man?

BATPERSON I employ him. I don't exactly own him.

ROBBIE And what exactly is this Alfred to you?

BATPERSON Oh, he's quite elderly. (Smiles) Unlike you.

(Pause.)

ROBBIE So somebody else lives with you?

BATPERSON Alfred is completely understanding. And the soul of discretion.

ROBBIE (fidgeting) I don't know about this.

BATPERSON No pressure. Fighting crime must be always be consensual.

VOICE Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. We are about to begin our descent into Gotham City. Please fasten your seatbelts and place your tray-tables in their

locked and upright position. It has been a pleasure serving you aboard this short hop, and we sincerely hope that you will fly with us again soon. Thank you. The local time is 11:32.

BATPERSON Didn't they even serve a snack?

ROBBIE I don't think so.

BATPERSON I didn't really want the snack. But they should at least offer.

ROBBIE Yeah, I'm hungry. (Looks) But I don't see the flight attendant. Holy — Holy — (Stuck for a word.)

BATPERSON Hamburger?

ROBBIE No.

BATPERSON Horseradish? Hot fudge sundae?

ROBBIE Holy Hot Sauce! And I want some!

BATPERSON You have quite the colorful way with words, Robbie.

ROBBIE I'm not allowed to swear.

BATPERSON It's charming actually.

ROBBIE Thank you.

(Pause.)

BATPERSON I don't suppose you'd be interested in a snack at my place?

ROBBIE Snack? What do you have?

BATPERSON . . . What do you like?

ROBBIE Do you have any plain vanilla? Ice cream, I mean.

BATPERSON So you like plain *vanilla*, huh?

ROBBIE Sometimes. Most of the time.

BATPERSON To tell the truth, I rather enjoy *vanilla* myself.

(Pause)

ROBBIE Could I phone my folks?

BATPERSON Of course. There's a phone in my car.

ROBBIE Cool.

BATPERSON My car will be waiting for me when I arrive.

ROBBIE Even cooler. . . . I don't want my folks to worry.

BATPERSON Tell them you'll be in excellent hands.

ROBBIE They make me go on dates.

BATPERSON Yes, mine used to do the same to me.

(Pause.)

ROBBIE I really love my parents, but . . .

BATPERSON Do they love you?

ROBBIE Of course. . . . No.

BATPERSON They're deeply ashamed of you, aren't they?

ROBBIE . . . Yes.

BATPERSON And you don't really like them very much, do you?

ROBBIE Not really.

(Pause.)

BATPERSON I've been looking for a ward, did I tell you?

ROBBIE Have you?

BATPERSON Haven't been very successful.

ROBBIE No? I suppose it's hard finding somebody . . .

BATPERSON Have you ever thought about being somebody's ward?

ROBBIE Would that make that somebody my warden?

BATPERSON I believe the word is warder — guardian.

ROBBIE But what if it doesn't last — the crime fighting together, I mean?

BATPERSON I suppose that could happen. People bump into each other on airplanes all the time, and that's the end of that. People set up housekeeping all the time, and then that comes to an end too.

ROBBIE Sad, really.

BATPERSON Yes. But, you know, something tells me that there's a special chemistry between certain people. You can't explain it. It just is. They meet, they connect . . . and they last forever.

ROBBIE You think so? Can that really happen?

BATPERSON I do.

ROBBIE You know what? I do too.

(Pause.)

VOICE Ladies and gentlemen, please prepare for landing.

BATPERSON Here we go, Robbie!

ROBBIE Here we go!

(They mime coming in for a rather bumping landing. Takes a few seconds. But they make it.)

BATPERSON /

ROBBIE Hey, look at us!

(They hold up their hands locked in triumph.)

BATPERSON We made it! What do you say, Robbie? What do you say?!

ROBBIE Holy Matrimony, Batperson! Holy Matrimony!

BLACKOUT