THE ADVENTURES OF THE BLACK CAT

Girls in Black

CHARACTERS

Felicia Hardy/Black Cat

Elizabeth Short/Black Dahlia

Peter Parker

Dave Harrison

Bugs Milner

Scar

Spike

Commissioner Barbera

Thug

ACT ONE

The Black Cat was standing on a rooftop. She was bored. Spider-Man seemed to have called it quits. His suit was now in Jameson’s office. She knew that Peter Parker was Spider-Man, but she wasn’t letting anyone know about what she knew.

BLACK CAT

(with a sad tone)

Oh, Peter… when will you stop blaming yourself for Farnum’s death? It’s sad, you know… he made the mistake of joining with that Major Forster guy in taking over the building, but he managed to redeem himself by saving your life in that explosion. It took death to make him a real hero…

She teared up a little bit before noticing that something was going on in a nearby alley.

BLACK CAT

WHAT THE F--???!!!

Before she finishes her sentence, we instantly go to an alley, where a crook is trying to fire at a strange, unsettling figure looming at him.

THUG

(scared)

NO!!! STAY AWAY!!! PLEASE!!!

BLACK DAHLIA

You shall not escape my wrath… Cathy Ludlow’s fate will be avenged.

THUG

(frantically firing his handgun)  
NO!!! GET AWAY!!! I WAS JUST FOLLOWIN’ ORDERS!!!

Suddenly, the Black Cat looks at this. She tilts her head with curiosity as she does it.

BLACK CAT

What is this all about? I guess I should drop in.

The Black Cat jumps from the rooftop and lands on her feet.

THUG

(even more scared)  
AAAAAAAAHHHHH!!!

The thug stumbles backwards with fear and hits the wall hard. The hit knocks him unconscious. The shadowy, ghostly figure looks at the Black Cat.

BLACK DAHLIA

You dare interfere with my mission?

BLACK CAT

(sarcastically)

Gee, I dunno… ever since I saw Elisha Cook, Jr. being beaten by Humphrey Bogart in “The Maltese Falcon”, I kinda feel bad for wimpy, stupid thugs.

BLACK DAHLIA

(angrily)

Don’t even DARE to talk about movies!!!

The figure fires beams at the Black Cat, which send her flying through a wall. The Black Cat stands up dizzily. She then looks around. The figure is gone, but her voice is heard.

BLACK DAHLIA (VO)

The Black Dahlia will return!!!

BLACK CAT

Looks like I struck a nerve… but why did she get so jumpy when I did my movie reference? Guess she has a grudge against movies… maybe she likes radio better. I think it’s time for the Black Cat to take a break for a while and leave the case to Felicia Hardy.

Later, at ESU, Felicia is asking Dave Harrison about Peter’s whereabouts.

FELICIA

Dave, has Peter been here?

DAVE

Nope… I tell ya, Felicia, Pete hasn’t been himself since Farnum’s death. He thought he could help him with finding a new lease in life, but once he heard of Farnum being killed in the explosion, he hasn’t been around.

FELICIA

Yeah… I guess it’s tough for him… I get the feeling that he might need someone to talk to.

Felicia walked out. Dave looked at her walk out and then looked down a bit. Dave found out Peter was Spidey when he fell from a rooftop. On that occasion, Dave put Peter’s Spidey costume on and dressed Peter with his own clothes. Now, Dave was thinking.

DAVE

(thinking)

It’ll take more than talk to make him snap out of it.

Later, Felicia knocks on the door to Peter Parker’s apartment. The door opens, and a very weary and tired Peter is seen standing inside.

FELICIA

(feeling sympathy for him)

Oh, Peter… why do you do this to yourself?

PETER

Because I promised to help Farnum… and yet, he died before I could fulfill that promise.

Peter then stands in front of the window and looks into the distance. Felicia walks toward him and puts her hands on his shoulders, massaging them.

FELICIA

There was nothing you could have done, Peter… if I know Farnum, he would be thankful that you stood by his side even after the incident at the tower. Now listen… I need your help. I want you to find some files for me relating to something or someone called “The Black Dahlia”.

Peter sighed a bit and then answered.

PETER

Okay… I’ll snatch the file for you. C’mon, we’ll ask Commissioner Barbera for help.

Meanwhile, on another part of the city, the dark figure walks around the streets. As she walks around, we notice that she is tearing up.

BLACK DAHLIA

(sadly)  
Why? Why did young Cathy Ludlow suffer a fate as horrible as mine? She did not do anything wrong… and yet… they massacred her… I shall not rest, Cathy… I will avenge you… just like I’m avenging my own fate.

Later, we see the Police Department from the outside. After that, we go to Commissioner Barbera’s office.

BARBERA  
NO!!! NO!!! NO!!! NO!!! NO!!! You can’t have da file!!!

PETER

Commissioner, I don’t understand this… we’ve worked together for quite a while, and now, you don’t want to give us a file to investigate.

BARBERA

Parker… how da heck do I make ya understand… I won’t give da Black Dahlia file to ya!!!

FELICIA

Commissioner Barbera, I’m surprised at you. You’re acting like you’re afraid of something… as if you don’t want us to find out something.

PETER

C’mon, Commish… level with us... why won’t you let us take the file? You know we’ll return it…

Barbera stands from his desk in a huff and goes to the file room. He then takes a file and hands it to Felicia.

BARBERA

Here… dis’ll keep ya outta my hair.

FELICIA

You’ve been most kind, Commissioner.

BARBERA  
Yeh, yeh, now get outta here before I change my mind and snatch dat file from ya.

Felicia and Peter walk out of the office and then head for Felicia’s apartment. They start reading the file.

FELICIA

What an awful way to go…

PETER

Yeah… but I still don’t get it… why are you so interested in this case?

FELICIA

I have my reasons… and I can’t really explain them well.

FELICIA kept reading the files.

FELICIA

(thinking)

She dreamed of being an actress… that might be why she was ticked when I mentioned “The Maltese Falcon”.

As she browsed through the files, Felicia came across a very interesting picture.

FELICIA

Whoa… Peter, look!

Peter looked at the picture. It had a group of police officers in charge of the Dahlia case. Two officers, the ones in charge of the investigation, were sitting down in front of the five officers standing in the back row.

PETER

Oh, that’s the team in charge of the Dahlia case, led by detectives Harry Hansen and Finis A. Brown…

FELICIA

Yeah, but… look at this young, short man standing in the center of the back row…

Peter looks at this young man and can’t believe what he sees.

PETER

Oh, my… he looks like Commissioner Barbera!!! I remember now… he once told me his father worked in LA.

FELICIA

Now we know why he didn’t want to give us the file. Don’t you see? The Commissioner is a proud man… he has taken down a lot of criminal operations over the years… but this… this is the only case his family has never been able to crack. That’s why he was so hesitant; he didn’t want us to see him as a failure because of this.

Peter looked down a bit.

PETER

(sadly)

I can relate…

Felicia looked at Peter. She knew that Farnum’s death was still affecting him, but she couldn’t do anything about it without letting him know that she knew his secret identity.

PETER  
The Commissioner’s father failed this Black Dahlia woman… I failed Farnum…

FELICIA

Peter… you did what you could… Spider-Man also did what he could… life is like this… you just gotta learn to forgive yourself.

PETER

If only it could be that simple.

Felicia looked at him warmly and kissed his cheek.

FELICIA

You’ll learn in time… now if you’ll excuse me, I have things to attend to…

Felicia walked out of her room.

FELICIA

(to herself)

Like a meeting with Commissioner Barbera… not as plain Felicia Hardy, but as… the Black Cat!!!

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

Commissioner Barbera was in his office. He was smoking a cigar as he was reading the newspaper. The headline said “Ludlow Girl Found – Killed in the Same Way as the Black Dahlia”. He was minding his own business when suddenly; he heard a voice behind him, which startled him.

BLACK CAT

Evening, Commish.

Barbera jumped to his feet and dropped his cigar. He then looks at the Black Cat. She was standing near the window.

BARBERA

What’s da big idea?

BLACK CAT

The window? I was in a hurry, I needed a shortcut. Plus, entering from a window is much more dramatic, don’t you think?

BARBERA

Get to da point…

BLACK CAT

The point is… I know your father was involved in the case… and I… want to help.

BARBERA

(angered)  
WHO DA HECK TOLD YA ‘BOUT IT?!!! I just… yeh, now I know who… dose snitches Parker and Hardy!!!

BLACK CAT

Commissioner, I know you’re upset… but they are really concerned about you… when they found out, they understood why you wouldn’t give them the file. Now please… could you tell me about the case?

There was a moment of silence until Barbera decided to give in.

BARBERA

Aight… I’ll tell ya… it was a typical mornin’ in 1947… I wusn’t born yet… my old man was assigned as part of da crew to investigate dis “Black Dahlia” case. He was allowed to investigate separately, whereas Hansen and Brown led da main investigation until it wus closed. But even after da case wus closed, my dad kept investigatin’, and he kept secretly reportin’ progress to Hansen. He was kinda like da black ops guy of da unit, riskin’ his own life and makin’ sure dat every detail fell in place. I once managed to look at his files when I wus five. I kinda had a grasp on the kinda work he wus doin’… and dis wus pretty dangerous work. He had to visit taverns in LA and a lotta unfriendly places. I managed to memorize da whole shebang. Later on, I t’ink it wus 1957, my old man called Hansen… he told ‘im he had solved da case. I had overheard ‘im, and he saw me standin’ dere. He just went to me and kissed me on da forehead and told me to remember da name “Milner” if anything happened to ‘im. After dat, he walked out through da door and dat’s it. I never saw my old man again… until a few weeks later, when the newspaper reported dat he had been shot in da airport. It wus den dat Hansen finally closed da case… without my ol’ man and da evidence, dey couldn’t pin down da killer. However, I do remember who his prime suspect wus…

The Black Cat felt sympathy for Barbera. She didn’t know that he had to endure the loss of a relative. Although a man of a gruff exterior, Barbera did have a soft spot deep down. He just did a good job concealing it.

BLACK CAT

I… I’m so sorry, Commissioner. I’m here to help in any way I can… now, who killed Elizabeth Short?

Barbera sighed a bit and then decided to reveal the case results.

BARBERA

It wus Bugs Milner… a surgeon turned crook… he had da skill to pull off da killin’… he works for Silvermane.

The Black Cat now figures it out. It was a planned mob hit contract. Maybe Miss Short had stumbled on something she shouldn’t have seen and then was taken in by Milner and met her gruesome end at the hands of the crooked surgeon.

BLACK CAT

So… all along… the killer has managed to evade the police… but not this time… I’m going to inform Miss Hardy about this… and Commissioner… if I were you… I would pin down Milner for good. Maybe you could go check on Miss Hardy at St. Charlotte’s.

The Black Cat jumped out of the window and used her grappling hook to climb the building. Barbera just sits there. He then looks at a picture of his family back in 1955. His father stands there, smiling. Now, Barbera has made a decision.

BARBERA

I’m not gonna run anymore, dad… da Black Cat’s right… now a girl called Cathy Ludlow has met da Dahlia’s fate… Milner has to go… permanently.

Barbera ran out of his office, with his gun in hand. Meanwhile, in an abandoned warehouse, the old criminal surgeon Bugs Milner is talking to two of Silvermane’s lackeys.

MILNER

Okay, boys… I cleaned up your mess…

SCAR

Aight, good… if Silvermane had ever found out, he would have turned us into mobster pie!!!

MILNER

Well, how fortunate for you that I have use for you knuckleheads… or else, I would have told Silvermane myself. Now, get lost, I’ll call you if I need you…

SPIKE

Okay, Bugs…

Milner goes to his lab and starts cleaning up his medical tools. He then starts chuckling like a demonic imp as he cleans them up. Meanwhile, the Black Cat had changed back into Felicia Hardy and was now driving towards St. Charlotte’s Church in Midtown. There have been people who had sighted a ghoulish looking woman here. The church had been abandoned for quite a long time. Felicia enters the church from the back door. She looks around. The setting is eerie. This place really hadn’t been active for years, and it had the cobwebs and dust to prove it. This whole setting was making Felicia jumpier than usual. She then walked up the stairs and opened a door. This was the church’s nave. Now, she looked around and then, a hand touched her shoulder.

FELICIA

AAAAAGH!!!

She turned around and saw the Black Dahlia, standing there with an imposing look. The Dahlia seems to recognize Felicia.

BLACK DAHLIA

You!!!

Felicia looks around and then looks back at the DAHLIA.

FELICIA

Ummm… me?

BLACK DAHLIA

Yes… you are the girl who stopped me the last time.

FELICIA

How did you--?

BLACK DAHLIA

I can read souls like books… secret identities can’t be hidden from me for very long… but now… I think I will have to get rid of you… you have found my sanctuary and I can’t let you interfere with my mission!!!

FELICIA

Wait!!! I’m not here to interfere… I’m here to help you… I know all about you, Elizabeth… I know how much you have suffered over the years…

The Dahlia’s menacing posture changes once Felicia mentions her real name. The expression in her face shows vulnerability and sadness. She then breaks up and starts crying. Felicia goes to her and puts her hands on the Dahlia’s shoulders.

FELICIA

I’ll help you avenge yourself… your killer has been found… Commissioner Barbera told me who it is…

The Dahlia stands up and looks at Felicia. Her expression seemed much softer now.

BLACK DAHLIA

What is your name?

FELICIA

Felicia Hardy.

BLACK DAHLIA

You are a brave woman, Miss Hardy… daring to risk your life to help me…

FELICIA

Well… it’s the least I could do… plus, I’m already involved with the case and sooner or later they’ll find out… and you wouldn’t want another murder like yours to happen, would you?

BLACK DAHLIA

Indeed… you are right… I guess we have no choice…

FELICIA

So… how about it? Are we a team?

Felicia extended her hand for a shake. The Dahlia looks at Felicia’s hand and a soft smile is drawn on her face. She then grabs it and the two girls shake hands.

FELICIA

(smiling)

Attagirl!!! Now this is going somewhere!!!

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

As Felicia went to her car, the Black Dahlia changes intro her astral form – we, the spectators, can see her as a translucent spirit, but the people around her can’t see her. Felicia starts the car, and as she does that, we see Commissioner Barbera’s car parked nearby. He waits for Felicia to drive ahead in order to follow her.

BARBERA

Dere she goes…

Barbera then tails her car. As she drives, Felicia looks at her rear view mirror and smiles.

FELICIA

Well… looks like the Commissioner decided to accompany us… I knew he wouldn’t let me down…

As they keep driving through the highway, we go to the abandoned warehouse. Milner is overseeing a gun shipment. He is checking crates of machine guns and rifles.

MILNER

Everything seems in order, Scar… Silvermane will be most pleased. Our clients will receive their weapons on schedule.

SCAR

Yeh… and we won’t have to worry about snoopy kids after we ship ‘em out… ‘cause Silvermane wants us to close down dis place and move into a new warehouse in da hills… no one goes dere, so we won’t have to deal with dese stupid brats coming in uninvited.

MILNER

Very good… I’m going to miss my work… but at least what I did to the Ludlow girl could be considered my “farewell performance” before my retirement.

SCAR

Man… time sometimes can play against ya… if we had our way, we would stay young forever.

MILNER

Indeed. But now, let us focus on our task.

Outside, the Dahlia and Felicia are sneaking into the warehouse. Felicia is holding a handgun.

BLACK DAHLIA

(whispering)

A handgun?

FELICIA

(whispering)

Well, you can’t beat mobsters with just martial arts, you gotta have additional protection.

BLACK DAHLIA

(whispering)

You make me wish I had one when I was alive…

Felicia pats the Dahlia on the shoulder in order to comfort her.

FELICIA

(whispering)

Well… in New York, a handgun is a way of life… I dunno about LA, though. Okay, now… are we ready?

BLACK DAHLIA  
(whispering)

Yes… my death will finally be avenged…

The Dahlia and Felicia move into the warehouse.

FELICIA

Okay… one, two, three… BLAST AWAY!!!

Felicia starts firing her handgun and hits some thugs, killing them instantly. Milner and Scar turn around and notice the two women.

MILNER

WHAT?!!!

SCAR  
WE’RE UNDER ATTACK!

Two thugs run towards the Dahlia and fire their handguns. The bullets hit her, but they don’t seem to affect her. Her eyes start shining and she fires beams at the two thugs. The thugs are instantly erased from existence by the Dahlia’s beams. Milner looks at the Dahlia and seems to recognize her face.

MILNER

No! This can’t be! It can’t be her!

The Dahlia notices Milner hiding behind a crate and remembers the face. She hears her own screams in her head. The screams from when she was massacred by this cruel man, who has unfairly managed to live for so long. She glares at the old crook as her eyes shone once again.

BLACK DAHLIA

You will pay for your crimes… you remember me… don’t you? Well, now I will make sure you never forget…

Felicia was running towards the confrontation between the Dahlia and Milner, but she is grabbed by Spike, one of the henchmen.

SPIKE

Ya ain’t goin’ anywhere, girlie!

FELICIA

Don’t bet on it, ugly!!!

She stepped into his foot, the heel pinning it down. Spike then starts hopping around while holding his foot.

SPIKE  
YAAAIIIIGH!!! Accursed broad!!!

FELICIA

Flattery won’t get you anywhere.

Felicia smiled playfully and kicked him in the face.

FELICIA

High heels… gotta love ‘em.

Scar then charges toward Felicia. She looks at him.

FELICIA

(with her typical wit)

Oh, brother… who does your make-up? That’s a pretty wicked scar you have in your face! Going all the way from your lip to your eye. I’ve always wanted one of those.

SCAR

(drawing a knife)

How’s ‘bout I give ya one.

FELICIA

No offense, but I don’t think you have the credentials or the style to make a scar in my face look good.

Felicia jumps in mid-air and does a backflip.

SCAR

What da f--? UGH!!!

Scar is kicked in the stomach by Felicia and he drops to the floor. Felicia then turns her attention to the Dahlia menacing Milner.

BLACK DAHLIA

You have claimed your last life, you cruel being… I could just end you right now… but that wouldn’t satisfy me at all... instead, I have decided to let you live with the fear that I might haunt you for every night that remains of your miserable life. It’s a much more fitting punishment… but if you tempt death… you might just get it.

The Dahlia then turned around, leaving a shaken Milner behind. Milner then glares at the Dahlia once she starts floating away and grabs a machine gun. He aims the machine gun at Felicia. If he can’t kill the Dahlia, then he can kill her partner. The Dahlia looks back at Milner and swiftly teleports in front of Felicia. Milner fires his machine gun and hits the Dahlia, but then, another blast is heard. Milner has an expression of pain in his face as he falls back into the sea while firing a few more rounds at the night sky. Felicia and the Dahlia look to the side and see Commissioner Barbera holding his smoking handgun. He then looks at the two girls.

BARBERA

It’s over…

Felicia walks toward the Commissioner and hugs him softly. The Commissioner hesitates a bit, but he hugs Felicia back, crying on her shoulder. He had finally done what his father always wanted him to do – to get rid of the killer of the Black Dahlia. Later, at St. Charlotte’s, Felicia and the Dahlia are having a conversation.

FELICIA

So now that Milner’s dead… what will happen to you?

BLACK DAHLIA

The being who revived me in this form has given me the choice to return to her realm and finally live in peace, or to roam Earth and keep fighting against evil and protecting the innocent.

FELICIA

So… I’m guessing you decided on the former…

BLACK DAHLIA

The former me would have… but you, Felicia… you have given me hope… before I met you, I felt life was unfair and cruel… however, now I know that life is only as bad as you make it… and it’s up to you to decide whether you want it to stay that way, or if you want to improve it…

The Dahlia extended her hand at Felicia. Felicia softly grabbed the Dahlia’s hand and shook it.

BLACK DAHLIA

I have a sister in this world now…

Felicia smiled. It was the first time someone had ever said that about her. The Dahlia then started rising, floating above Felicia.

BLACK DAHLIA

Until we meet again, Black Cat… Felicia Hardy… you’ll take the secret of my existence with you…

FELICIA

And I’ll leave mine with you…

The Dahlia smiled warmly at Felicia and then closed her eyes as she vanished from sight. Felicia then sighed as she slowly walked through the nave.

FELICIA

Well, Dahlia… I must have left a big impression on your life… as big as the impression you left on mine…

Felicia smiled with pride and joy as she walked out of the church. We then see a plastic bottle on the altar, and on its top, a black dahlia flower stands, blooming happily as the first rays of morning sunlight illuminate it.

THE END

END OF ACT THREE