

- - [HELLION FOR HIRE 23: PITCHING SEASON](http://forum.newsarama.com/showthread.php?t=108656)

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MattBrady

04-13-2007 07:21 AM

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**HELLION FOR HIRE 23: PITCHING SEASON**

by *Billy Tucci*

BLACK CAT, in her own mini-series, will pursue a mysterious statue of the Egyptian cat goddess, BAST, and its cosmic secret, through nine incarnations and nine lives.

The ancient artifact's disappearance piques FELICIA HARDY'S feline curiosity and leads to the discovery that she is far from being the first to bear the mask and claws of the Black Cat. In fact, the statue itself is directly tied to the very existence of past "Cats", all of whom have been drawn to its mysterious power of "jinxing" that affects probability fields and causes "unlucky" events upon its holder's enemies.



But the more involved Felicia becomes in the mystery of Bast, it is *she* who becomes the one tainted by bad luck. Unable to escape the mortal danger of the reversed "jinxing," the desperate woman tracks down and blackmails BROTHER VOODOO to help her find Bast and unlock its dark secrets. Cornered, Voodoo ambiguously informs her that only way for her to accomplish this is at great risk – Felicia must transcend time and thus "see" through the eyes of past Black Cats.

And so through the centuries Felicia perilously spins for her life. From Ancient Egypt, to the Barbary feline-pirate of the Napoleonic Wars and on through the 19th and 20th Centuries, Felicia takes on various incarnations in hopes that as the ninth Black Cat, her luck will be better than that of her predecessors.

But is the mysterious Haitian's black magic nothing more that powerful hallucinogens? Who exactly is behind Bast's theft and why was it taken in the first

place?" Dr. Sam Beckett's "Quantum Leaps" never held such desperation, but then again, that "chameleon" could never fill out black leather like Felicia Hardy either!

"Oh Boy Mon!"

Since I wrote about pitching comic book stories a couple "Hellions..." ago, I've been receiving lots of requests via email (thanks guys) asking exactly what an editor wants to see in a pitch and if I could provide an example of one of mine. Well **Black Cat – Nine Lives** is one I recently submitted to Marvel Comics. Not my best, but something I believe would be a lot of fun and has the potential to have some great commercial success. Besides, I'd really like to draw Felicia in pirate regalia or as a 1920's "flapper." I fell in love with the character while on **Heroes For Hire**, and want to do her at least one more time. The editors at Marvel seem to like it but fortunately for you, they've already got big plans for Miss Hardy this coming year. No one said that it was quite "dead" (as you never know in this biz) but not something



they can't do right now. Of course I'm disappointed that they didn't go with it, as just like you guys, I'm first a fan. But I won't let this "one that got away" because, I can always hope to get an editor drunk at a con, but also have two pretty damn big "mainstream" projects in the works to keep me busy in the meantime....

So that's it. That's a comic book pitch. A few paragraphs to grab your reader (the editor), and then, if they're interested and the time comes for further meetings and exploration, you can hit them with the details. However for the initial pitch, never,

ever get bogged down in the details. Editors, film producers and others who take submissions for intellectual properties are drowning in pitches, scripts and treatments as it is. Most are writers and artists (and many are very, very good) who have their own visions and ideas, so especially in the case of comic book editors, the only reason why they're taking submissions is because they're being paid to.

But of course there's good news and bad news, the good news is that if you're a good artist you will eventually get work in comic books. The bad news is, if you're a writer you're going up against heavyweights from not only the comics industry but also movies and TV who now write and want to keep on writing the lion's share of the big books.

But that shouldn't discourage you, to step up to the plate in the first place and throw out that pitch! The most important thing in pitching *anything*, is to actually *do it!* I have many friends who've had these great ideas for years, and for of one reason or another, have never submitted it or worse, not even put it down on paper. But even for those of you who have submitted writing samples and didn't get the response you were looking for (or one at all), I wonder if you've in more to other editors? The more you submit, the more recognized your name will get. Maybe they'll think you're a crazy nutcase, but at least you'll be a recognizable nut case and that just might open a door for you. Jeez, even crazy ol' Charlie Manson wrote a Beach Boys song.

Okay, that's an extreme case, but look at the many writers who made a name for themselves in the fan pages of comics. Look at the letter pages of any Silver Age or even Modern Age books and you'll find many of today's "stars" offering opinions, praise and critiques. With the letters pages serving as their arena, they got noticed by editors for their wit, knowledge of comics and talented writing, and being that this was (and still is) a very small industry, ended up grabbing some great writing gigs and even making history.

So the point of this column is to encourage any potential writers to get off yer keister and to the keyboard. Start writing down your ideas, submit them, talk use the internet to spread them, share them and get some feedback. Get psyched up, inspired, or whatever it takes to get you out to the "mound" and pitch! After all, this is YOUR industry.

### **Inspiration and "Slipping Into Fiction"**

Speaking of inspiration, this Saturday I'll have the honor of doing a store signing at "Slipping Into Fiction" in Port Charlotte, Florida. Shawn Sidock and crew have one of the nicest stores I've ever seen, with a great collection of graphic novels, merchandise and Manga. In the past year alone, he's had such comic stars as Ethan Van Sciver (**Green Lantern**) and Jim Cheung (**Young Avengers**,



**Illuminati**), and it'll be real nice to be in Florida for the weekend. If any of you can make it down on Saturday, please come as I'll be there from noon to 6pm talking comics, doing sketches and perhaps we can all get some pizza too! For more information please call (941) 743-0073 or go to their website, [www.slippingintofiction.net](http://www.slippingintofiction.net).



Anyway, getting back to "inspiration," I get most of it from store signings. I love doing conventions, but they never equal the energetic intimacy of a comic book store signing. Being a sponge, I draw that energy to fuel my own creative fire. I get so

inspired talking to comic book readers that I'm not ashamed to say that they (you) truly are my "mentors" when it comes to my storytelling ideas. Believe it or not, most come from someone commissioning me to do a sketch on a character. While doing it, the conversation leads to me asking dozens of questions and doing hours of reading and online research. If you look at the attached illustrations of Felicia, they were commissions done for Cat' fans. They aren't the tightest drawings of course, or the best anatomically, but like the environment that they're created in, they have a sort of "fresh energy" that makes them alive in my eyes. I believe I get more enjoyment and inspiration doing them than their owners do – well especially if they suck! Regardless, I love convention and store signing sketches. I love flipping through others' books. I get inspired. (I also get jealous whenever I see someone with a Dave Stevens, but perhaps that's motivation enough for me to get off my own keister and commission some work myself.)

For the record, I owe a bunch of commissions to some great folks who have waited so patiently it's criminal. I want you all to know that I'm finally organized a doing two a week. I appreciate your support and promise I won't let you down. As I've told you all, I don't like to rush them, but do need to pick up the pace a bit!

I'd also like to extend an apology to you all for "Hellion" being a bit sporadic these past couple of weeks. I've been traveling so bloody much these past six weeks. So many shows and meetings located all over this hallowed fruited plain and the good earth. That coupled with a seemingly endless cold/flu that's just won't get the hell out of my system has really put a chink in the ol' Hellion assembly line.

I didn't get Peter David any questions for the interview so that obviously screwed things up too for my last column. I promise that in the next few days as I can't wait to show you the pages to **Fallen Angel #17**. But it's just so damn hard for a family man to write a screenplay with its Producer's endless notes and alterations, a column and draw. But if it's okay with Master Brady, I am hoping to move this column to Monday's or Tuesday's since I spend most of Monday mornings on the computer anyway.

So here I sit, doing "air drums" to Queensryche's Silent Lucidity and know that energy is better served with pencils in my hand, so I'll take my leave of you all and get back to the art table and hopefully draw!

But never forget, get up off the couch, write your pitch, send it in because...



Molon Labe!  
Billy Tucci

NightRiver

04-13-2007 08:33 AM

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Nine Lives sounds like a fun Mini. Sad that it wont be happening in the near future, but I am happy to see that Marvel has big plans for Felicia. She's always been a favorite of mine.

Bevbos

04-13-2007 09:14 AM

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Dude, your Black Cat: Nine Lives pitch sounds \_\_\_\_ing awesome. I hope Joe Q is receptive! It sounds like an awesome premise. Time travel + Felicia Hardy... how can you really go wrong?

boomboom

04-13-2007 09:48 AM

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I WANT YOUR PITCH!!!

Love it Billy!!

The Guvnor

04-13-2007 09:48 AM

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Thanks for the interesting insight on pitches Billy and it is a pity that it got rejected as it sounded like a fun romp.

dchart1

04-13-2007 10:23 AM

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In honor of Friday the 13th, we have a pitch for Black Cat miniseries. You are a tricky one aren't you Matt... :p

DaVeO

04-13-2007 10:31 AM

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Hey Billy,

Were you a little inspired by the recent Iron Fist series and JSA over at DC in regards to a Black Cat Legacy? It's a good idea, and I wish Marvel would have more legacy characters. But where DC already has an established long history to draw from, Marvel has to make-up their own histories for the current character.

But in this way they are not running the risk of peeving off fans by replacing the current hero, just telling an "untold" past.

And your Black Cat is amazing looking.

she\_burns

04-13-2007 11:16 AM

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That Black Cat artwork is gorgeous! :eek:

Billy Tucci

04-13-2007 11:34 AM

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Quote:

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Originally Posted by **DaVeO**

*Hey Billy,*

*Were you a little inspired by the recent Iron Fist series and JSA over at DC in regards to a Black Cat Legacy? It's a good idea, and I wish Marvel would have more legacy characters. But where DC already has an established long history to draw from, Marvel has to make-up their own histories for the current character. But in this way they are not running the risk of peeving off fans by replacing the current hero, just telling an "untold" past.*

*And your Black Cat is amazing looking.*

---

DaVeO,

I haven't seen the new Iron Fist or the JSA books. I was just having fun and perhaps poking a little fun at a really bad "comic book" movie released a few years ago. I

love the idea of these legacy characters and Marvel has such a rich cast to work with I'm sure they'll do it. I'll hopefully be writing some "Golden Age" books and that'll give me the opportunity to inject history there as well.

Thank you for the nice comments (all of you actually) on the art. I love drawing Felicia. Aside from Shi, Cat' and Wonder Woman are my favorite characters to draw at cons and signings. I just wish someone would ask me to do a Rocketeer!

B

FrogMan

04-13-2007 11:51 AM

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I want to "do" the Black Cat one more time, too. ;)

Lestat de Lioncourt

04-13-2007 12:08 PM

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Hiya

You're Black Cat proposal sounds fun Billy! It's a shame it wasn't approved, but as a fan I'm still excited to hear that Felicia will get more self-titular exposure this year :)

Groovy sketches too!

BlackCatGuy

04-13-2007 01:00 PM

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Hey Billy!

Like I discussed with you, I abso-freakin-lutely **LOVE** the 9 Lives pitch!  
It's a real shame that the big guns at Marvel aren't gonna do it any time soon!:mad:  
You know, they can kill off an icon like Cap, but they can't give us Black Cat fans a nice new mini series or even a full fledged ongoing! Although, I'm very intrigued to see what they have coming up for Felicia!

Keep pitching though, as you have such a great many story ideas that NEED to be published!

Great Felicia illustrations by the way! There's some very lucky owners out there!!;) ;) :D

ANGELDOGGIE

04-13-2007 01:05 PM

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Hey Billy, Could you draw me a ROCKETEER!!!!.....pretty please?!;) 'nother great column, fun AND informative!!:D

BlackCatGuy

04-13-2007 01:08 PM

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Quote:

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Originally Posted by **Billy Tucci**

*I just wish someone would ask me to do a Rocketeer!*

*B*

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Billy, I'll bet you a couple of Kirins that Dom is gonna ask you to do a Rocketeer for him in Philly!:cool:

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**ANGELDOGGIE**

04-13-2007 01:09 PM

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By the way I absolutely LOVE the synchronicity of your column featuring the Black Cat on, of all days, Friday the 13th. You sir are a GENIUS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!: D

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**BlackCatGuy**

04-13-2007 01:09 PM

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Quote:

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Originally Posted by **ANGELDOGGIE**

*Hey Billy, Could you draw me a ROCKETEER!!!!.....pretty please?!*

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See?!

I honestly didn't see his response until AFTER I just posted!:eek:

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**johnchrist**

04-13-2007 02:00 PM

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so I've been told it's better to track down an editor's mail and send it that way, as opposed to bothering with sending it through a company's submission process. Is this basically true?

(either way, hope to get some editors drunk at next week's APE and sneek my business card and various scrips into their pocket)

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**j-rod**

04-13-2007 03:17 PM

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Billy

You disappeared on me after the amazing Liverpool demolition of The Arse a few

weeks back. I never got to twist in the knife while the wound was fresh. Sigh!!

I've got my first ever pitch on Tuesday for a TV pilot and I'm bricking it. Glad to know there's others doing the same thing in different fields.

Awesome Black Cat work there, You and Dodson own that character now.

Best  
J

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Shanobi

04-13-2007 04:52 PM

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Good article Billy! Can't wait to see you on the convention circuit this year.

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Billy Tucci

04-13-2007 05:52 PM

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Quote:

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Originally Posted by **j-rod**  
*Billy*

*You disappeared on me after the amazing Liverpool demolition of The Arse a few weeks back. I never got to twist in the knife while the wound was fresh. Sigh!!*

*I've got my first ever pitch on Tuesday for a TV pilot and I'm bricking it. Glad to know there's others doing the same thing in different fields.*

*Awesome Black Cat work there, You and Dodson own that character now.*

*Best  
J*

---

Good luck J-rod! As for the Liverpool Arsenal game I still don't believe it happened. It was a youth game right? ;) As for Dodson, I don't even hold a candle to that stud! But thank you anyways.

Anyways, thanks for the kind words guys. John --As for pitching I'm not sure how the submissions route works, but that doesn't sound like a good idea. Being a published creator also works, again getting an editor drunk just might be the ticket too! Remember to keep your pitches short and simple, they're not going to read full scripts.

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MarkSparacio

04-13-2007 06:24 PM

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Hey Billy, another fine column. I think that you were a little hard on yourself when you said that "Nine Lives" wasn't one of your better pitches. As you know, you've told me basically all your pitches and I think this is right up there with the best of

'em. I totally agree with your statement that it will be much harder for a writer than an artist to break into this field. It's a combination of what you mention and the fact that it takes two seconds to look at a piece of artwork, yet it can take a while to read through a proposal or script. Unfortunate, but true. Have a great time down in sunny, warm, no hint of a nor'easter in sight, Florida.  
I'll speak with you when you get home.

Just wanted to add a quick shout out to BlackCatGuy, ANGELDOGGIE and all the other people posting. See you during convention season!

JDSage

04-13-2007 07:35 PM

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*Nine Lives* sounded interesting. It somewhat reminded me of past *Witchblade* mini-series and of course the current *Iron Fist*. Still I liked it, the story's scope is far grander than most *Black Cat* mini-series ideas I've heard of over the years.

Plus I thoroughly enjoy any fiction that has such an open canvas when it comes to potential locations and themes. I can almost imagine the *Black Cat* as a Trojan princess watching in horror as the Greek nations descend upon her people, or a double agent entrenched in the espionage of WWII era Europe, like the famed Mata Hari.

Nice illustrations there as well Mr. Tucci, I like how sweet and fresh faced Felicia comes out in those drawings.

Hey Mr. Tucci I was wondering if your AIM account still worked? I was kind of hoping to ask you a couple (or dozen) questions for [On the Range](#).

P.S. No offense to Liverpool and Arsenal, they're both very good clubs, but everyone knows Manchester United is the class of the Soccer world. :D

j-rod

04-13-2007 08:31 PM

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Quote:

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Originally Posted by **JDSage**

*P.S. No offense to Liverpool and Arsenal, they're both very good clubs, but everyone knows Manchester United is the class of the Soccer world. :D*

---

As much as I'd like to give a witty response, the 7-1 defeat of Roma was kinda impressive.

Noooooooooo! Must...give...response...



5 Times. Read em and weep.

J

Deathangel

04-13-2007 11:14 PM

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... Wait, Billy Tucci is a /b/tard?! :confused: :eek: :confused:

Also, good pitch. Dunno if it's something I would necessarily pick up, but it is a neat concept nonetheless. Isn't it a bad idea to post submissions ideas on the internet before sending them off, due to copyright and other legal reasons?

Drcharles

04-15-2007 04:51 AM

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Billy Tucci is a great artist, anything that he draws is always going to attract the T&A brigade,  
Me included.....:) :p

All times are GMT -4. The time now is 04:50 PM.

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(<http://forum.newsarama.com/showthread.php?t=108656>)

Billy Tucci

04-15-2007 10:06 AM

Quote:

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Originally Posted by **JDSage**

*Nine Lives sounded interesting. It somewhat reminded me of past Witchblade mini-series and of course the current Iron Fist. Still I liked it, the story's scope is far grander then most Black Cat mini-series ideas I've heard of over the years.*

*Plus I thoroughly enjoy any fiction that has such an open canvas when it comes to potential locations and themes. I can almost imagine the Black Cat as a Trojan princess watching in horror as the Greek nations descend upon her people, or a double agent entrenched in the espionage of WWII era Europe, like the famed Mata Hari.*

*Nice illustrations there as well Mr. Tucci, I like how sweet and fresh faced Felicia comes out in those drawings.*

*Hey Mr. Tucci I was wondering if your AIM account still worked? I was kind of hoping to ask you a couple (or dozen) questions for [On the Range](#).*

*P.S. No offense to Liverpool and Arsenal, they're both very good clubs, but everyone knows Manchester United is the class of the Soccer world. :D*

---

Okay, first off enough of that wanker Mann U crap! :)

As for asking me questions, send me a message here. I haven't used my AIM in a while, I seem to spend too much time on it...

Damn, I guess I should read the Iron Fist storyarc, is it really similar?

I was already thinking of having a Mata Hari Cat, but the Trojan Princess is freaking incredible! We'll see what happens as you never know with comics!

again thank you all for the nice comments.

Anyone have any ideas for my next column?

BlackCatGuy

04-15-2007 11:30 AM

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Quote:

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Originally Posted by **Billy Tucci**  
*Anyone have any ideas for my next column?*

---

You need to devote a column entirely to the glory of the Gunners! People need to be educated on the power of Arsenal!:D :cool:

(plus, add some nice things about Everton. That would make my wonderful mother in law happy!);)

And again Billy, your Black Cat proposal NEEDS to see print! If the folks at Marvel read this column, they will see the overwhelming support for your story idea here!

C'mon Marvel, give us what we want!!

The Guvnor

04-15-2007 11:49 AM

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Quote:

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Originally Posted by **Billy Tucci**  
*Anyone have any ideas for my next column?*

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Maybe an interview if you get the time or you could recount a wacky tale that happened at some convention. Or perhaps a Wanker special seeing how we didn't get a wanker in this column.

Deathangel

04-15-2007 01:38 PM

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David M Beck

04-15-2007 01:43 PM

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**Lookin' amigo!**

Hey slick,...this is beautiful work on the cat lady,...we should do a art trade. Too bad Marvel didn't bite.

DMB

JDSage

04-15-2007 02:50 PM

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Quote:

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Originally Posted by **Billy Tucci**

*Okay, first off enough of that wanker Mann U crap! :)*

---

Man, that joke did not go as I had planned!

I'm a Yankee so I don't really watch Football, except for the World Cup, but I know enough to know that mentioning Man U will bug anyone who isn't one of their loyalists. :D

Quote:

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Originally Posted by **Billy Tucci**

*Damn, I guess I should read the Iron Fist storyarc, is it really similar?*

---

Well to be perfectly frank I haven't read the Iron Fist work myself yet. I was just working off of what I had read about the series (premise, synopsis and so on) when I made that comment before.

I'm one of those struggling artist times, which means I'm as broke as I am brilliant, so buying Iron Fist is more on my to do list than my pull list.

Quote:

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Originally Posted by **Billy Tucci**

*I was already thinking of having a Mata Hari Cat, but the Trojan Princess is freaking incredible! We'll see what happens as you never know with comics!*

---

Thanks! I'm glad you liked it.

I know a lot about key moments in ancient history and mythology, plus the *Iliad* is one of my favorite stories, so the idea of the Bast statue being the reason for Troy's downfall appealed to me.

Something else I just thought of is a reinterpretation of the classic Chinese fable *Journey to the West*, with an emphasis on the part of the story that tells of a Buddhist monks' quest to find religious texts and the magical Monkey King that safeguards him on his journey. I guess the idea of a white haired Asian Cat, dressed all in monk robes, kicking demon butt across the landscape of Asia, as she hunts down the Bast statue, turns me on ... but not in a dirty way of course!

Quote:

---

Originally Posted by **Billy Tucci**

*Anyone have any ideas for my next column?*

---

Well since I'm currently going through a query letter, how about showing everyone an example of how you would write a query letter to a major publisher?

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