As much as the comics and the movies and the tie-in merchandise might want you to believe, the people that go out every day and defend the world against supervillainy are… well, people. Prone to flaws and foibles and…

Have we already covered this track before? It’s so hard to tell these days.

Well, regardless of what you might have read in some *other* stories about the sorts of people who go out and fight (or cause!) crime on a semi-regular basis, it’s a pretty universal complaint for a lot of spandex-wearing superheroes that their outfits ride up too tight.

And for Helena Bertinelli, one of Gotham’s least-renown superheroes, “too tight” was something of an understatement.

“Oh jeez, you weren’t kidding when you said that you needed my help…”

Dinah Lance, the Black Canary of Star City, walked in a circle around the supple Sicilian that had summoned her there that night. It had been so long since the Birds of Prey had flocked together, Dinah was shocked with what she had seen! A sixty pound weight gain in a Gotham City crime fighter? Didn’t Bruce keep everyone on a tight leash if they were going to bust heads on *his* streets?

“Yeah, well… it’s not like I get a lot of time to do the whole ‘hero’ thing these days, okay?” Helena huffed, crossing her arms over a squishy tummy as she tried to shrink down into a purple pullover, “You’ve got I don’t know how many Bat People running around these days, and it’s hard for me to get in any exercise without criminals to bust.”

“Uh-huh.” Dinah looked the husky Huntress up and down, “So that explains the *jiggling*…”

“I do *not* jiggle!”

“Try saying that without sloshing indignantly next time.” Dinah clicked her tongue and tapped her chin, “Yeah… I think you’re going to need a lot of help if we want to get you back into crime-fighting shape… why not call Babs? She’s big on physical therapy and—”

“No! No more Bat Family!” Helena crossed her arms and scowled, “They’re the most well-connected cape wearers in town—the last thing that I need is for Dick Grayson telling all of his Titans friends that I’ve put on some winter weight! Because then *they’ll* tell *their* friends and then, before you know it, I’m getting diet tips from Superman.”

“You know what, I see your point.” Dinah shrugged her leather-covered shoulders, “But, um… you know that *I’m* currently on the League roster, right?”

Helena furrowed her thick black brow, steaming visibly with consternation at having hasted her loss at this particular *7 Ways to Back to Dick Grayson*.

“Crap.”

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As much as she didn’t like to admit it, Helena struggled with her weight more than most superheroes in the field did. Having been born into a Sicilian crime family, and at the *top* of one at that, she had always had something of a taste for the finest things in life. And as just about any Sicilian will tell you, the finest things that they could offer in life was always their food.

Cutting *out* this rich food was going to be the hardest part about whipping this husky Huntress back into fighting shape.

“Oh come on, this isn’t even remotely fair!”

Stuffed into a juniper jumpsuit with her long dark hair tied up in a bun, the top heavy woman *thought* that she couldn’t have been more uncomfortable if she tried. But the minute that Dinah started going through her kitchen cubbards and getting rid of everything that was delicious, she would admit to feeling pretty damn uncomfortable!

“It’s for your own good, Helena.” Dinah said without an ounce of remorse as she tossed the box of uncooked spaghetti noodles into a trash bag, “All of these carbs are just gonna come back to bite you in the ass anyway.”

Here, the Black Canary gave her teammate the ol’ reacharound, pinching an inch or two of the olive-colored cheek chunk that was poured into her purple sweatpants.

“And judging by how tight these things are already, that sounds like the last thing you need right about now.”

Helena grumbled audibly as she watched the skinny, chesty blonde reach up and pilfer more and more from her cabinets. At least she’d had the common courtesy to not dress up in her fishnets and leather jacket. Something about seeing her in the same sort of workout clothes as her made her feel a *little* better… except that hers weren’t *new* and they definitely didn’t have the outline of her lovehandles poking out from underneath her tanktop.

Or, uh… the crease in her sweats where her cheeks lapped over themselves.

“Don’t worry—we’ll get you back into shape in no time.” Dinah dusted off her hands before tying the nylon straps of the garbage bags, “And when you’re back into your spandex, you can pig out as much as you want to keep your energy up. But until then, these are going *straight* to the homeless shelter.”

“*That’s $20 pasta, Dinah—!!”*

“Listen, if Ollie found out that I came all this way, dumped your pasta into a trash bag, and *didn’t* donate it to the needy, he’d have a conniption.” Dinah put her hands on her hips, “Besides, I can guarantee that they need it a lot more than you do. Now *march*—we’re gonna get some laps in while the sun’s still down.”

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There was no denying that, underneath all of the extra blubber that had settled around her waist and thighs, the Huntress was still athletically sound.

At least, as far as any *normal* person might have been concerned.

But she was a superhero—and that meant that she had to be ready for anything. And since she didn’t have any superpowers, that meant that she had to be ready to *outrun* anything. And that meant that she wasn’t nearly as fit as she felt when she was running laps with Dinah.

“Come on, Huntress—get back on the prowl!”

With the sharp *pweet!* of her whistle, Dinah urged Helena to get back to work from the comfort of her chair near the entrance of the obstacle course. She couldn’t remember exactly *when* she had greenlit Dinah making such drastic rearrangements to the underground bunker in her compound with which she (over the course of the many sedentary months, should have) used to train, but at the moment it didn’t exactly seem pressing.

Because there were actual, factual fireballs being hurled at her from the other end of the track.

“Jesus Christ, Dinah!” Helena hollered out, “Are you trying to whip me into shape or kill me?!”

“If I don’t whip you into shape, the next criminal who can throw fireballs *will* kill you.” The Black Canary said from behind her sunglasses, “So I’d suggest getting back into the swing of things *fast*… oh, and ducking.”

“Shit!”

As much as Huntress liked to think that she was still in some semblance of fighting shape, having to duck to dodge an actual, factual fireball was something that kind of forced you to realize that you were dealing with a pretty sizable amount of belly blubber. It was certainly enough to keep her from pulling off a perfect crunch, and she was hefty enough around the middle that she couldn’t bend all the way forward…

“Dammit Dinah, my hair!”

“We’ve all gotta make sacrifices.” Dinah slurped from her glass of Pink Lemonade, “Fear is the mind killer, Helena!”

“MY STYLIST IS GONNA KICK YOUR ASS!”

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The Bertinelli Mansion was quiet—for once.

In the months that had gone by, Helena had slowly laid off the amount of hired help in hopes of getting some exercise and doing things for herself. Dinah was a big proponent of the “self-actualizing” lifestyle that her longtime boyfriend promoted, but really, it just wasn’t that hard to cook and clean for herself.

At least, not when everything was being warped and twisted into a weight loss exercise by her hellish harpy of a fitness instructor.

Luckily, Dinah couldn’t be *everywhere*. And she’d been working hard enough on getting back in shape. Who was she to tell Helena that she couldn’t enjoy a little late night cannolo? Fresh from the bakery right up the street, bought in secret, and sequestered away for such a time when she needed it most…

“Ooh baby doll, come to mama…”

Huntress opened the fridge, looked at the clamshell container that had once housed her delicious and chocolatey sweet, only to find that it had not only been pilfered from its clear plastic container, but that said container had been *left in the fridge*.

*Mocking her*.

“Looking for your little cheat meal?”

Helena had learned to absolutely loathe the sound of Dinah’s voice, especially when it sounded like she had something delicious in her mouth. Somehow she could *see* the shit-eating smarminess that came with this position of power over her that Helena had given her as her trainer.

And she was *not* happy about it.

“…no.”

“That’s right.” Dinah swallowed, “Maybe I wouldn’t have heard you sneaking out of your bedroom if your thighs didn’t rub together so much.”

“Goddammit Dinah…”

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“Well, I think that my little diet and exercise regimen was a success.”

Helena couldn’t argue with the results. Though she hadn’t lost *all* of the weight that had come with her hiatus from crime-fighting thanks to the Bat Embargo, she *had* managed to shed a significant amount of poundage from around her belly and her butt. Those thighs were still a little thick for her liking, but then there was still some incentive for her to get back on the streets of Gotham City and start busting some heads, wasn’t there?

“I’m a big enough woman to admit it when I’m wrong, Dinah.” Helena arched her back to get a good look at her pert posterior in the mirror, “You run a tight ship when you set your mind to it.”

“Thank you.” Dinah grinned as she put her hands proudly on her hips, “Just another day’s work in the life of your friendly neighborhood Black Canary.”

As she posed triumphantly in the mirror, it was hard to ignore the small pot belly that eeked out from underneath the dark blue tank top that constituted Dinah’s crime fighting outfit. And it was even harder for Huntress to not give it a good poke with her finger—the smallest amount of revenge that she could manage after all of the hell that her trainer had put her through these past few months.

“Looks like that’s all the day’s work you’ve done in a while, huh *Fat* Canary?”

Dinah rolled her eyes at the intrusion of her personal space, not exactly please that her informal client could lose a first knuckle in the amount of belly chub that had climbed up on her waistline since she had started living the high life in the Bertinelli mansion.

“Alright, alright, it’s not important as to who gained what.” Dinah scoffed at the acknowledgement of her admitted gains, “The point is that you’re back into fighting shape and that you’re ready to take on whatever Gotham City can throw at you. Right?”

“I don’t know—I could always move to Star City, where things are a lot easier and I could afford to be a lot softer around the middle.” Helena smirked with another poke, “Nevermind the fact that I wouldn’t be the chunkiest crime fighter on the streets at night.”

“Okay, listen, I know that you’re feeling yourself, so I’m gonna let that slide.” Dinah huffed, “But could you *not* poke me like that? Come on, Helena. You’re big enough that you don’t have to rub it in.”

“I don’t know, Di—you’re the bigger person between us…”

Helena snorted as Dinah pinched the bridge of her nose, sighing in deep resignation of her position as the fatter between the two of them.

“You know, I regretted saying that almost immediately after it left my mouth.”