

## Batman: The Animated Series - "Baby Doll" by Luke G.

I'm assuming that if you're reading this right now, you don't need dumb old Luke to tell you about Batman the Animated Series. It is a cartoon series that was better than most live action serial shows for adults being made in the early 90s. Get out of here, Twin Peaks. Go suck an egg, Picket Fences. Beat cheeks Baywatch.

One episode of the show puts it all in a neat little bubble. "Baby Doll" tells the story of Mary Dahl, a "child" actress who was in fact an adult with a rare medical disorder that renders her a constant adolescent. Dahl has perfected this persona for her hit TV show, and speaks her innocent catchphrase, "I didn't mean to!" in a perfect cutesy voice. Hiding under this is a dramatic actress and complicated adult who wants to get out. When she fails at a Shakespearean career, she is rebuked when the networks don't want her juvenile antics for a second run.

Dahl slips into a nostalgia that quickly turns deadly, and reasons that if she just gets the family back together, she can have the good times again. She has made the decision that many have made before her: I am going to become a Batman villain. She assembles henchmen who inexplicably cosplay Gilligan and the Skipper. She hires a personal assistant that looks like Marcy from Peanuts and obviously knows martial arts. She goes to one of the knockout gas stores that we can only assume litter the streets of Gotham City and orders a pallet. She puts a gun in a doll.

I poke fun at the conceits necessary to make a show for kids, but this episode has it all. Batman is at his best when he wins through brains, not brawn. When Mary attempts to conceal herself in a crowd of children, he dramatically reveals himself so all the kids run to him in awe...all except Mary.



Here in 2015 my aging car doesn't have gull-wing doors, but the top comes off. My car doesn't talk to me, but the

smartphone in my pocket can and does. It's magically connected to my stereo and my car's diagnostic system, so it can sit on my dashboard and tell me where to go and how long it will take with traffic and how the engine's doing and play music directly from the wireless global data network and a custom playlist of radio shows that updates while I sleep and my wrist just buzzed to tell me my girlfriend wants pizza tonight and... our present future can be pretty fantastic, too.

*"The teens in the show had cars that could be anything."*

## Mighty Max - "Armageddon: Outta Here" by Ida

Most people never saw the Mighty Max

cartoon and only associate the character

with the not so popular Polly Pocket toys

for boys. It is unfortunate because the

twenty-seven episode, two season series

about a boy who has a magic hat that

enables him to travel through space and

time using portals is brilliant, epic,

metal. Upon Jung Max receiving his

enchanted baseball cap, he befriends a

sagacious fowl named Virgil who mentors him

through adventures and a hardcore guardian

Viking named Norman who protects him. The

three main characters, like Amadis de Gaul,

travel to exotic places and fight with wit,

comedy and bravery against evil. When the

show first aired I was nine years old and



under their desks. They must have lived and  
breathed to grade quizzes and prepare for  
drilling long division into students' heads.

## "I could never imagine my teachers outside of the classroom"

An episode of

Recess that has

stuck with me

focuses on this

very subject.

Badass Spinnelli

spends the weekend

with Ms. Finster,

an older teacher

all the kids see as mean. After one day with  
her, Spinnelli begins to find her boring too.  
Ms. Finster notices her dismay and decides  
to relieve her younger days she spent with  
Spinnelli's wild grandmother. She serves  
Spinnelli a luau dinner Saturday, and they  
spend Sunday at battling practice, playing  
mini golf, and eating junk food. Spinnelli is  
pleasantly surprised that Ms. Finster does  
indeed have a life and knows how to have  
fun!

Even now, working for a university and  
pursuing an MBA there, I have to remind  
myself that my professors are just people.  
They joke. They have interests. They want to  
get to know their students. This realization  
really makes all the difference in a  
worthwhile education.

Thanks, Recess!