



**Batman #17**  
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*Batman*  
**Hizzoner, The Joker!**  
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**The Present:**

**The Krol Estate, Gotham:**

“Full schedule today sir.” She rushed him down the stairs of his mansion, out the door, and towards the limousine, not looking up from her PDA as she spoke: “Meeting with the Commissioner, with the Teachers Union, lunch with Mayor of Blüdhaven, and you’ve got to meet with Judge Besson to discuss your ideas on law reform, then there’s golf with Bruce Wayne.”

Armand Krol tucked in his shirt and fixed his tie, yawning as he did so. “He’ll cancel, Louise. He always does.”

She glanced around expectantly, looking for someone, for something, then continued to speak. “Let’s hope so, you’ve got to make time for the disability awareness dinner tonight... Where’s the limo? God, I told Jean to be here at half past exactly...”

“Maybe he’s in bed. Like most normal people at this hour...”

“Early bird catches the etcetera, sir!” he couldn’t help but smile at her comments. She was enthusiastic, yes, but she got the job done. And in this business, you had to get ahead where you could. “Here he is, pulling up now...”

She opened the door and pushed Krol in, and then he looked up. A woman clad in red and black placed a long, slender finger against her ruby red lips, and cooed. With her other hand she raised the massive prop gun. Was it a prop? Sure looked like it, thought Armand.

“Bye-bye.”

She pulled the trigger, a gunshot rattling through the grounds of the estate as it hits its target. Louise fell to the ground awkwardly, gasping for air as the hole in her chest gushed blood down her blouse. Armand Krol's eyes widened as he scrambled about the back seat of the limo, but Harley Quinn just smiled and pointed the weapon at him, shaking her head.

"Nuh-Uh, big man. Best not do anything you might regret. Best not do anything that'll end up with you gaining a hole in the head."

Harleen Quinzel oozed past the shuddering mayor, and crouched over the body of the personal assistant and took out a stick of lipstick, and proceeded to decorate her face. When she was done she picked up the PDA Louise was constantly looking at. She climbed back into the car and placed her feet on Krol's lap. "Let's have a look. Avoidable. Avoidable. Avoidable." She repeatedly pressed the delete button. "Well then, oh friend oh pal oh chum o'mine. Looks like your schedule is clear for the foreseeable future. Isn't that lovely?"

Krol stammered and stuttered, unable to speak as the woman fiddled with the gun barrel with her spare hand. "G-G-G-G-G..."

"Armando!" His head span round as he heard a new voice. "You look tense back there with my beautiful companion... Want me to tell you a joke?"

The white face.

The green hair.

The red lips.

The smile.

Armand Krol screamed.

The Joker burst out laughing.

What a way to start the day.

## **The Night Before:**

### **Gotham Central:**

The banners draped down from the ceiling, balloons were placed in every corner, and party poppers exploded one after the other, as James Gordon stepped into the squad room, holding himself up with a cane. "WELCOME BACK, COMMISSIONER!"

Before he could think to say anything, he smiled. He motioned to them to stop cheering, and then Sarah Essen hugged him tightly, only to release him when he cringed in pain. He motioned to his chest. "Uh, bullet wounds Sarah..."

She smiled awkwardly. "It's been rough but I've kept the department together in your absence."

"Thanks Sarah." He smiled and looked over to his right as Petite approached him, grinning from ear to ear.

"Good to have you back Jim! I'm glad to see you on your feet!"

"I think we all are!" Sam Merkel looked up from his newspaper and saluted his old friend. "Good to have you back, Commish."

Jim nodded back at his old partner. "Thanks, Sam."

Harvey Bullock stood by the window, glancing from the skyline to his partner as everyone hugged him. His chest still ached where he had been stabbed, but he, like James Gordon, was healing. He looked back out to the city outside. It was quiet. Arkham Asylum was visible in the distance, over the buildings, a black silhouette on the red horizon.

"Harv?"

Harvey turned to see James Gordon standing behind him, his hand outstretched. He took it, shaking it slowly. "What's up, Jimbo?"

"I want to thank you for having my back. You saved my life back in the hospital."

“Hey, you’re my partner... If I wasn’t going to have your back, who was? It’s what I’m here for.”

“Still, are you alright? You basically took a bullet (or sword if you want to get picky) for me, and...” Gordon looked around, embarrassed, and then grit his teeth. “Seriously, thanks Harv.”

“Don’t mention it.”

James scratched the back of his head for a moment, and then looked back at his partner, a wry smile on his lips. “Are you blushing?”

Harvey looked up, and shook his head vigorously. “No...”

“Now look, I wanted to talk to you about something...”

**Wayne Manor:**

“Thank you for visiting us once again, Ms Vale...” Alfred Pennyworth, faithful manservant and long time retainer of the Wayne Family, bowed welcomingly as he took the coat from her back. She wore a long black dress, and diamond earrings. “And may I say that you look, as always, beautiful...”

Vicki Vale blushed. “Thank you Alfred.”

“Master Bruce will be down in a moment, Ms Vale.” He looked around cautiously for a moment, and then his gaze returned to the young journalist. “I think he’s having trouble finding the right tie...”

“Typical...” She rolled her eyes jokingly and laughed, and Alfred nodded. “May I get you a glass of wine? Master Bruce has allowed me to access the wine cellar, which means this is quite the occasion!”

“I’ll have whatever—” She paused mid-sentence as Bruce Wayne descended the staircase wearing a black suit and tie, a smile on his face. “Whatever he’s having.”

**Arkham Asylum:**

Jeremiah Arkham scribbled something on his clipboard and looked at the two orderlies clad in white inside the security booth. "Any problems?"

"Killer Croc was banging his head against a wall a while ago, complaining about how his stomach hurt. Moaning that he was hungry for sweet meats. We didn't ask, we just doused him in sedatives, and they kicked in a while ago... He put up more resistance than usual. Weird."

Arkham nodded. "We'll have to up the dosage. Wait... Do you hear that?"

"No... I don't hear anything..."

Jeremiah nodded. "Exactly. Did you have to sedate him?"

"Doctor Arkham? What do you mean?" The orderly shook his head. "Who?"

The chief psychiatrist looked at the two security guards in the booth at the top of the long corridor that lead down to the major case cells, tapping his foot impatiently. "Do you hear laughter? Do you?"

"Uh, no Sir... You kind of blank it out on the longer shifts... Maybe he went to sleep..."

"You idiots! The Joker doesn't ever sleep... Get your gear, we'll need to check on him."

The two men sighed and picked up their batons and shields. "Yessir."

Jeremiah Arkham led the way as they approached the cell furthest away from the security booth. He took a key card from his pocket and swiped the mechanism next to the door, and watched as it swung open. A strong breeze hit the three men, and they saw the massive hole in the wall of the cell. Jeremiah sighed heavily. "Oh, no."

“Sir, should I start the alarm...?”

“Don’t bother, he’s long gone now... I need to call the Commissioner...”

### **Wayne Manor:**

Alfred hurried into the fourth dining room in the Manor, to be met by praise from his employer. “You’ve really out done yourself this time Alfred...” Bruce smiled as he took a fork to the couscous, and took another bite of the dish. “This is delicious...”

“Thank you, Master Bruce... But I regret to inform you that the signal is lit... You’re needed.” He shook his head mournfully. “I’m sorry to disrupt your dinner with Ms Vale...”

Vicki shook her head. “It’s alright, Alfred. When I started this relationship, I knew that this would happen. Besides, I still have a charming gentleman to share the rest of the meal with, do I not?”

Bruce beamed. “Brilliant idea m’love. Alfred, please, take my place, whilst I go about my business outside.”

Alfred nodded. “Yes Master Bruce of course.”

### **The Cave:**

He stripped off as he ran down the steps, pulling open the grey vault that contained his costumes when he arrived on the cold stone floor. He pulled the familiar black and grey from where it rested and began to get dressed, looking over to the computer as it began to buzz to life. “What’s happening in Gotham?” He pulled on his gloves and pressed a button, and then his eyes narrowed. “Arkham.” He sprinted toward the car, and dived in, the engines always prepped and ready. He pushed down on the acceleration, the cave lit up, and he shot down the runway, and out toward the city...

### **Gotham Central:**

He landed silently, and approached the glowing light that projected the symbol into the sky. The bat upon the clouds. James Gordon puffed on his pipe, and tapped his foot impatiently.

“Commissioner.”

“Hrm?” James span round and his eyes widened, the pipe slipping from his lips and cracking in half on the ground. “Gah.” He leaned over and picked up the two pieces, and then rolled his eyes, pocketing them.

Batman smiled dryly from within the shadows and began to speak. “I’m sorry about that, Commissioner.”

“I’m still getting used to it...” He shook his head. “*Commissioner*. I heard about the breakout.”

“I expected you to. There was an explosion at Arkham Asylum.”

Batman nodded grimly. “Any details?”

“Orderlies found evidence of an explosion in one of the inmate’s cells. By evidence they mean a hole in the goddamn wall... Inept...the cell belonged to—”

Batman didn’t even ask. He knew. His gloves creaked as he clenched his fist. His words sounded stiffer than usual through gritted teeth. “*Joker*.”

“He’s loose on the city once more, and we only found out now...”

Batman froze to the spot. *Julie. Dick. Barbara.*

“Jeremiah Arkham deserves to be put away for the way he allows the inmates to come and go as they do... Are you alright?”

*Julie is dead. Has been for two years. She’s at peace now.*

*Dick is better than ever. Grown into an identity he can claim as his own. Out of the shadow of the bat into a new, different, better spotlight.*

*Barbara has come into her own with the help of Ollie and the New Outsiders.*

*Ouch.* He suppressed a smile. *Now wasn't the time.*

"I'll be fine. Any idea how an explosion was generated?"

"Harvey has taken Merkel down to Arkham. They're reviewing security tapes." James placed his hand on the switch that turned off the light. "They'll report back to..." He didn't turn around. Batman was gone and he knew it. He smiled slightly before pressing the switch. "Good luck."

### **The Present:**

#### **Gotham City:**

"Have you strapped our little treasure in, sugarplum?" Joker smiled as he turned a corner, and then looked over his shoulder to see Armand Krol duct taped to the backseat, Harley Quinn sitting atop him. She flicked the syringe in her hand and jabbed it into Krol's neck, pushing down on the lever and then throwing it away when she was done.

"Yes, Mister Jay." She grabbed Krol's head and gave him a big wet kiss on the forehead, leaving black lipstick when she turned back to her lover. "He's as safe as a safe in a safe place."

"Oh, I don't know about that, m'love. He's in a limousine with copious amounts of alcohol and two certified LOONS... I don't know about SAFE... But I do know about SECURE..." He giggled to himself, and tipped his chauffeurs hat over his eyes. "Show him the presents we brought along with us!" He winked at Krol slyly. "Don't ever accuse us of being poor party poopers!"

Harley Quinn took the big black bag from the front seat and clambered back beside Krol, who was twisting and turning in his seat, his mouth gagged. "Don't worry Armando. We play nice." She began to unpack the things inside the bag. Bolt cutters. A small battery and an assortment of different coloured crocodile clips. "Did I say nice?" She picked up the bolt cutters and looked back at Armand. "Oops. I lied." She open and closed them, the blades gnashing as she did so. A dark look twinkled in her eye.

**The Night Before:**

**Arkham Asylum:**

"I need visitor records from when he last came in."

Jeremiah Arkham sighed heavily. "I have them here, Detective Bullock." He dumped a small pile of papers in front of the large police officer. "We've been through this many a time."

"Yeah." Bullock began to thumb through the pages. "You really should do something about that." He looked over to Merkel, who was already well into his pile. "See anything?"

"Your usual loon chasers." He rolled his eyes. "I hate this crap. The amount of women who have nothing better to do than to write letters and visit the crazies... It's insane."

"Do I sense some pent up resentment there, Detective Merkel?" Jeremiah leaned toward the bearded police officer, and smiled smugly. "Some unresolved feelings towards your mother maybe?"

"Lay off, Arkham. Don't pull your psychobabble with us," grunted Bullock. "If you could keep ol' Smiles McGee in side for longer than a month at a time, we wouldn't have to be here..." He shook his head and continued to look through the logs. "Anything you could help us with here?"

"He must have blown the hole in the wall when Waylon Jones was playing up. His... 'episodes' are loud enough to create the kind of cover you need to mask an explosion."

Bullock groaned. "Great."

"Wait..." Merkel put up his hand and motioned for Bullock to hurry on over. "I've got something a bit weird... Joker was visited by a Ms. T. Todd a week ago..."

"Yeah?"

"T. Todd? Thelma Todd? She was a famous actress that worked in Marx Brothers films. I loved her in Horse Feathers..."

"Oh, God..." Bullock looked through the release she wrote. "I'm guessing that if we compare these fingerprints to Harleen Quinzel..."

Merkel nodded. "We'll have a match."

### **The Present:**

#### **Gotham Central:**

"Harleen Quinzel, AKA 'Harley Quinn', escaped Arkham Asylum during what Detective Merkel dubbed the 'City of the Dead' event. Yes Sam, you can sit down." James Gordon pointed to the two photos of Harley Quinn, a before and after from when she was one of Gotham's eminent psychiatrists to the make up wearing minstrel she became after Joker exerted his charismatic influence over her, driving her insane. "We have reason to believe that Harleen slipped Joker, real name unknown, a stick of plastic explosive lipstick, as found by Harvey and Sam when they searched Joker's cell during their investigation." He sighed, and then made a double take as a man entered the room. "Can I help you?"

"I'm Detective Hawke." The large man approached the front of the room and offered his hand to the Commissioner. He had broad shoulders, his black hair was slicked back and he had a moustache to rival Tom Selleck. His blue eyes pierced through Gordon as he spoke. "I've just transferred from Opal. I heard you needed some extra manpower to deal with this Joker escape?"

"I've not read your file..." Merkel offers a dossier to the Commissioner. "Ah."

"It's not finalized yet, sir. But I heard you needed the help..."

Gordon eyed the man up. "Do I..." He paused. "Where are you going to be working?"

Hawke winked discreetly at the Commissioner. "Night shift."

“Oh.” Gordon nodded slowly, an inkling of an idea forming in his mind. “Take a seat, Hawke.” The detective took a seat next to Bullock, and nodded at the large detective.

“Nice ‘tash,” quipped the Detective.

Hawke nodded. “Nice...” He looked around, and then shrugged. “Nope. I’ve got nothing.”

Harvey smiled and nudged the man on the shoulder. “You’re alright.”

“Anyway people, we need everyone on the streets till we find this creep. You know your assignments, go do your job!”

Hawke watched as all the officers streamed out of the squad room. “Where does that leave me?”

“You’re with me, Hawke.” He grabbed his coat and hurried out of the room. “We’ve got to inform the Mayor that Joker’s on the loose... It’s not going to be pretty...”

### **A Week Ago:**

#### **Arkham Asylum:**

“I got you your favourite flavour.” She pointed to the guards that examined the thin plastic stick she had given them.

Joker pressed his hands against the glass and smiled. “Oh, Thelma, darling, you didn’t did you?”

“Yes puddin’.” She leaned in close to the glass, and whispered into the air holes. “I bought you a stick of highly undetectable *plastic*, courtesy of our new employer...” She leaned back and smiled. She couldn’t help but fidget in her chair, barely containing her excitement at the thought of what was going to happen next.

“Thelma, baby...” He shook his head. “I don’t like this guy giving you orders... I want you to make me a promise... Next time you see him, you tear his head off, you hear me?” He paused and then shrugged his

shoulders. "We'll do the job, we've already got paid! But you blow. His Brains. Out."

"Yes sir, Mister Jay."

He blew her a kiss and then stood up. "See you on the other side." He waved and then headed back to his cell, escorted by a guard.

When the guard and the Joker had turned a corner, the man smiled and began to speak. "Hot piece of ass there, Joker."

The Joker stopped walking. "Any other day, screw... And I'd tear your eyes out with my teeth. I'd decorate my cell with your blood. But today?" He smiled. "I can't get that hot piece of ass out of my head." He continued began to skip forward. "RIDE ON, SILVER!"

### **The Night Before:**

#### **Gotham City:**

He turned a corner in the car, heading south. "The Sun is coming up, Alfred... And I'm nowhere. I know how Joker got out, I know that Harley had *something* to do with it, but I'm not even *close* to figuring out where he is..."

"Are you coming back to the Manor? Vicki is asleep in your bedroom. I thought it best she not leave with a rogue like that about."

"Good thinking. Did she enjoy the soufflé?"

"Very much so. I'm glad that it didn't go to waste. Now, are you going to answer *my* question?"

"I need to keep working on this. I need to find Joker before his personal body count builds..."

"What are you thinking?"

"I'm heading to one of the satellite caves to pick up some props. I hope your training can come in useful..."

“Oh Master Bruce, not the moustache...”

“I’m afraid so, Alfred. Batman out.”

**The Present:**

**Gotham City:**

“This is getting boring. You’re not making any noise!” The Joker fumbled his hand into his pocket, and brought out a CD with purple writing scrawled on top of it. “Yay. It’s still here.” He placed it into the CD player and began to press the forward button. “Duran Duran...? Nope. ABC...? Nope... Erasure...? Nope... Ooo. I’ve got it. Track... Seven...”

“Track seven?” Harley smiled in glee and put down the scalpel. “I love track seven!”

The music began to play. Armand’s eye opened wide. He was numb all over. He couldn’t feel his hands or his feet. He was trapped in himself. But he could hear the music, and he could hear Harley and the Joker sing along.

*Looking out a dirty old window...  
Down below the cars in the city go rushing by!  
I sit here alone and I wonder why!*

Krol would scream if his mouth wasn’t gagged.

**The Present:**

**The Krol Estate:**

“My God...” Gordon climbed out of the car and sprinted over to the bloody corpse of Mayor Krol’s personal assistant. “Dead!”

Hawke stood over her body, his fists clenched. “Joker.” Gordon leaned

back to reveal her face, frozen in pain but with a red smile drawn on her face with lipstick. "He's got Krol."

Gordon looked around and examined the tire tracks. "In his limo by the looks of it. He comes through here..." he motions with his arms to beside the house and then towards the two officers. "And stopped here. The way the pebbles are built up around here suggest he accelerated..."

Hawke crouched down and took a small black cloth from his inner pocket, and then unwrapped it beside her corpse. He took out a small scalpel and a thermometer. "Sir, I want to figure out how long she's been here, may I?"

"Good thinking. Take her liver temp. I'll call in the Mayor's licence plate, we can low-jack his car and figure out where he is, and then I'll contact the ME."

Hawke looked up and showed Gordon the bloody thermometer. "Still relatively warm. I'd say she's been dead for about six hours."

"And it's one now..." Gordon covered the phone receiver and continued to speak. "I've got uniforms on the way here, and I've got the car company on the line. You'll drive."

### **The Present:**

#### **Robinson Cemetery:**

"Still with us, Armand?" Joker pulled over the car and stepped out the drivers seat. "Still breathing?"

Krol groaned, blood dribbling down his shirt and sleeve. His face was sticky, and he couldn't see out of one eye. Everything was dark. Harley looked to Joker and tore off the duct tape that covered his mouth. "You... You..." He looked at his hand and his eyes widened. What was left of his hand. "You.."

"Lucky for you my beautiful assistant administered some beautiful anaesthetic before she proceeded with surgery, else you'd be screeeeaming in pain right now."

"You won't... Get away... With this..."

"Or what? What are you going to do?"

"It's not... What I'm going to do Joker... It's what Batman is going to do... When he finds you..."

Joker frowned, a sad look covering his face. "Oooo, don't be mean Armando. I'm not scared of Bats, in fact, I'm looking forward to meeting him again!" He leaned in close to the butchered Mayor, and smiled. "Want me to tell you a joke? That's part of my shtick and all... Best not upset the masses, you know?"

"Screw... You..."

Harley slapped the Mayor across the face, and then picked up the bolt cutters, gnashing them once more. "You keep it up Mayor, and you won't be able to screw anything for a while, you get me?"

Joker rearranged the Mayor's bloody clothes, and smiled. "A man walks into a bar and orders a drink. He goes to the bartender... 'I can have any woman in this bar that I want', so of course the bartender is curious. He's a lonely man. Sure, he talks to the clientele, but are they interested in him? No. He's a tap to them. Something they can get beer out of. So he asks the newcomer 'What's your secret? You want to help a guy out?' and the man, who smiles at being asked this question, leans in close, close to the man's ear, and whispers: 'I'm a rapist'." The Joker bursts out laughing.

"That's..." Krol grimaces as a twinge of pain rushes through his leg. "That's sick..."

"Bite your tongue!" Joker jerks up, and grabs the sides of the Mayor's face. "Or I'll do it for you." The Joker flashes his teeth and clicks them together. "Yum-Yum-Yum!"

Harley grabbed the Mayor and pulled him out of the car. Krol hits the muddy ground hard, and rain hits his cheek. Blood mixes with mud, and Krol groans as his body is dragged across grass and muck, until Harley

pauses. "This is where you get off, Mayor A."

"What are you... What are you doing?"

The Joker swiftly pulled up his purple trousers and crouched next to the shivering Mayor. He began to whisper in the man's ear. "Are you going to bargain, Mayor? Are you going to trade your fortune? Your wife? Your socks?"

"Go and... Go and die, you grinning freak..."

The Joker stood back up, his gangly frame towering over the mutilated Mayor. He grabbed the spade next to an open grave, and leans on it. "Do you know I have trouble sleeping, Armand? I have..." He moved his finger around his head. "I have trouble turning off. My mind is a constant cacophony of thought processes. The doctors have never seen anything like it. They've strapped me to machines, bought with the funding you've provided, and studied me, but no. Nothing. They ask me: 'What are you thinking, Mr Joker? What's going on in that head of yours?' And I never tell them. But I'll tell you, Armand. I'm thinking. I'm going through the ways I can kill you. Kill everyone. I'm a dynamo of homicidal tendencies. Yet the system gets me off every time. Your system. Your government. Your civilized methods of law. 'Oh, he's insane, he can't be held accountable' or 'oh, he's a cute guy, lets throw him in a padded room, that'll keep him safe and warm and cosy'... Thank you Armand. For making my life livable." Joker kicked Krol hard, rolling him into the coffin at the bottom of fresh grave.

"Don't forget these." Harley drops a plastic bag full of ice into the coffin. Armand's eye opened wide. He realised why everything was dark on one side of his face. He screamed and he screamed and the coffin door slammed shut, but he still screamed. In the dark he knew that something inside that bag was staring back at him. He screamed as dirt hit the lid of the coffin, and he screamed as everything turned numb.

**The Present:**

**Gotham City:**

Rain hammered down on the hood of the car as Hawke turned the

corner, puddles spraying against the sidewalk as he did so. He scratched his thick moustache and turned to his boss. "What are you thinking, Commissioner?"

"That Krol is dead." Gordon continued to listen to the voice on the other side of the phone line. "Stopped you say? Where?"

"Got some directions for me?"

"Robinson's."

"Damnation." Hawke pulled a siren from the glove box and stuck it to the roof of the vehicle. He pulled his wet arm in and hit the accelerator with his foot. "We'll be there within ten."

"I'll call some others, get some manpower."

**Two weeks ago:**

**O'Grady's Bar:**

"Disgusting. *Disgusting* establishment." He waddled into the grimy bar and hopped atop of a barstool. "You. You there."

"What can I do for you, squire?" The bartender turned and his eyes widened in shock. "Penguin! Uh! Ah!"

"Excuse me?" Oswald Cobblepot placed his umbrella on the bar top. "What did you call me?"

"Mister Cobblepot! Cobblepot! What can I get you?" The man eyed the umbrella and breathed in deeply. "On the house!"

Cobblepot smiled smugly. "Champagne. Your finest. Don't worry, I'm not expecting some Dom, but try hard. Bring the bottle and two glasses. I have a guest who I'll be meeting." He sat there for a moment, and then a beautiful blonde stepped up from behind him, and snatched his top hat from atop his head. "Hey!" He span around with his umbrella prepped, and then watched as the blonde placed the hat atop her head. "Oh. You."

Harleen Quinzel sat next to him and tipped the rim of the hat to her. "Hello, Ozzie."

"Oswald," he corrected.

"That's what I said." She took the glass that the bartender placed in front of her and downed the sparkling liquid. "You called, so talk to me, Ozzie."

"Os—," he paused. "I want you to break your boyfriend out of Arkham." He took a small black pouch out of his dinner jacket, and placed it on the counter in front of Harley. "Plastic explosive. Undetectable by Arkham's measly means. Give this to him."

"Why should I? What's in it for you? And what's in it for me? Or us?"

"I want your boyfriend to kill Mayor Krol. Spread some anarchy. Be bloody and brutal and take as much time as you want. I'll give you half the fee up front, half afterwards, when I see Armand's body in the morgue. You following me so far?"

"Sure. Why Krol? Why not Gordon? Or the Bat? Or anyone?"

"Because I can't be Commissioner or the Bat. But I can become Mayor, if I put my mind to it... Or get someone in a position to become Mayor who I have my claws into." He flexed his hands and took a sip of the champagne. "So do you want the job or not?"

"I've been wanting to break him out since he last got in so... Sure." She finishes the drink and nods. "I'll call him. And ask if he wants in. Then we can go forward with this shindig."

"Thank you Harleen."

"Thank *you*, Ozzie."

**The Present:  
Robinson Cemetery:**

"There's the limo!" Gordon raced ahead, followed swiftly by Hawke.

"I see blood..." Hawke followed the blood trail as Gordon checked out the limo.

"Christ Almighty Hawke, there's been a blood bath in this car..."

"Damn!" Hawke pointed to where the blood trail ends, at the head of a freshly filled in grave.

"Oh, no..." Hawke was already digging at the dirt with the spade to the side of the grave. His muscles flexed and he grunted as he dug the blade into the mud.

"The headstone..." Gordon pointed to the stone at the top of the grave. Two words, scrawled in blood. "*Ha. Ha.*"

"Unoriginal." Hawke threw the dirt over his shoulder, going faster and faster, not slowing down one bit. Gordon began to dig away with his hands, pushing the mud away whilst Hawke continued shovelling away.

"I was surprised to see you in my squad room, you know..." Huffed Gordon, as he continued.

Hawke didn't look up. "...Had to be part of this."

"I... I know..." He continued to dig away as Hawke carried on his vigorous movement of dirt. "And I realise you couldn't walk in dressed as a bat. Not in daylight. But... Those files you had... They looked legit... And so does... That moustache..."

**THUNK.**

"Hit something." Hawke fell to his knees and moved dirt away with his hand. "A coffin."

"Here." Gordon passed Hawke his truncheon, and the detective jammed it into the side of the wooden casket and prised it open. "Gah!"

"My God." Hawke covered his face. "Call the paramedics Jim. *NOW!*"

**The Present:**

**The Hyde Gotham Civic Centre:**

"This is going to be fun." The Joker smiled as he loaded his gun. Harley squirmed in delight. "A real hoot."

**The Present:**

**Gotham Mercy General Hospital:**

"He's going to be in surgery for the next few hours, officers." The nurse shook her head mournfully. "The surgeons should be able to reattach what was... Removed... But his eye... The nerve endings crystallized... There's no hope for it to be reattached."

"God..." Gordon slammed his fist against the wall. He turned to Hawke, who leaned against the wall. "You're still here?"

"Sure, Commish." He pushed himself off the wall and approached the Commissioner. "Do we have any information on what Krol was supposed to be doing today?"

"Dinner with some people. Golf. In an hour he was supposed to host the disability awareness ball at the Hyde."

"Hyde...?" Hawke paced the hallway. "Hyde."

"You're thinking..."

"I need to change my clothes." Hawke began to run down the corridor. "Call your men. Have them surround the building. If he senses something is off he'll go underground and it'll be Las Vegas all over again. I want to finish this. Tonight."

"Alright... Hawke." Gordon flicked open his cell phone and dialled the number. "Harv, listen up..."

### **The Present:**

#### **The Hyde Gotham Civic Centre:**

“And I’m pleased to announce that the Mayor of our Gotham will be here in just a moment!” The room exploded with applause. Armand Krol was loved by the people. “In fact, here he is now—!”

The audience stood up, a standing ovation. But then as the man began to walk on stage the applause began to slow. They saw who was grinning from ear to ear as he bowed and blew kisses. “Yay! Yay for me! Yay for Mayor Jay!” The Joker bowed and brought his pistol out from his holster. He was wearing a black tuxedo, and a purple flower rested in his lapel. “You’re useless now, bellhop.” He fired the weapon, and the announcer fell to the ground, dead. The audience screamed and howled, and headed for the doors. “Nuh-Uh, beautiful people. The doors are locked.” He fired the gun in the air, and everyone froze to the spot. He continued. “How hypocritical. We’re here to bring attention to the disabled... So how about... I cripple you all?” He aimed his weapon at a woman in the crowd. “I’ve killed for worse reasons.”

### **THRASHOOM!**

The ceiling exploded with glass and water. Rain pelted down as a black mass tore through the air and collided with the Joker before he could let off any more shots.

“THIS ENDS NOW.” Batman drew up his fist, but Harley dived on his back, tearing at his cowl.

“OFF.” He threw her over his head, slamming her through the stage and causing it to buckle and break. Joker was up before she hit the ground. The Dark Knight pulled three batarangs from his belt and threw them at the villain, hitting him in the heel, knee and calf. Joker hit the ground hard and rolled over onto his back. Harley had recovered but the Caped Crusader slammed his foot on her face, breaking her nose and knocking her out. “YOU... ARE DONE.”

“Bats! At last, the main man!” The Joker began to crawl toward his fallen weapon, but he suddenly found a batarang in his hand, piercing his pale white flesh. “Guh!” He gripped his bleeding appendage and then turned

ot see the angry vision of rage that was Batman approach him. "Let's be reasonable..."

"REASONABLE?!" Batman steps on the batarang, causing the metal to push down through his hand even more. Joker squirms in agony. "I'll be reasonable. More reasonable than you were to Krol." He leaned over and grabbed the Joker by the shoulders. "But that's not saying much, you ANIMAL."

"You didn't find it funny?"

Batman didn't reply.

"Well at least I'm not being put away by the wonder kids this time..."

Batman grabs the Joker's face and begins to squeeze. "I could kill you and no one would care. The GCPD would call it an accident. And I wouldn't care." The Joker began to squeal as his skull began to contort. "But I won't. Not now."

He dropped him.

"I'm not like you. And I never will be."

Commissioner Gordon burst through the locked doors, followed by Petite's SWAT units. Batman looked at Gordon and nodded, then fired his grapnel through the hole in the ceiling, and flew outside. "It's over. Get Joker back to Arkham. And I want to talk to Jeremiah Arkham tomorrow morning."

"Yes sir."

**Three hours later:**

**Gotham Central:**

"Some announcements to make before we continue with our rudely interrupted celebrations..." Gordon smiled and hushed the assorted police officers. "With Captain Reed transferring to Star City, we have a need for a new shift commander. So, presenting you with someone you should

all, unfortunately. be familiar with.... Captain Harvey Bullock."

The squad room cheered as Harvey took off his fedora and smiled at Gordon.

"Better watch out, he might cry!"

"Hey!" Bullock threw his hat at Merkel, who laughed as he grabbed it and ran off. "Uh, thanks for trusting me with this, Commish... I won't let you down."

"You best not!" Gordon told everyone to get back to their celebrations, and went to his office. He took his broken pipe out of his coat pocket and then sat in his chair. He arched an eyebrow. In front of him was John Hawke's transfer details. And a new pipe. He looked at the open window, with its curtains flapping about the office, and he smiled. "Thank you."

**Forever:**

**Gotham:**

Gotham City quaked. Buildings shivered in the cold, thunder cracked high above and wind howled down below. A maelstrom of chaos borne from the soul of the city.

Alive

Batman smiled, and leapt into the abyss.

Another night.

Just like any other.

***The End!***

If you enjoyed this story, you can find more tales of your favorite DC heroes at DC2 Universe.

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## From the same author on Feedbooks

Tales of the Green Lantern Corps Special: Facets (2005)

Tales of the Green Lantern Corps Special: Facets.

There are 3600 Green Lanterns in existence throughout the universe and there are the seconds, the people ready to take on the mantle of Green Lantern when their predecessor falls. Moving away from Sector 2814 with this one shot, we focus the spotlight on Jar Kell, Green Lantern of Sector 3598, who is having the worst day of his tenure in the Corps!

Batman #0 (2005)

Batman: Shadow of the Bat.

Meet Bruce Wayne. Business man. Playboy. All public masks... But the one beneath it all, the one, true mask... is cloaked in the shadow of the bat!

Meet Batman. Masked vigilante, master of the rarest disciplines of martial arts that grace this earth, mysterious protector of Gotham's streets.

Live his earliest years in this book!

In this issue, Bruce Wayne takes to the streets in the guise of Batman for a quiet night of patrol, and gets more than he bargained for...

Jim Gordon, Harvey Bullock and Sam Merkel investigate seemingly random, but seriously violent, attacks on computer programmers all hired by Enigma Corporation...

Batman #1 (2005)

Batman: The Smoking Gun, Part 1.

Something stirs beneath Metropolis and Batman comes a-calling for the first meeting of the worlds greatest heroes!

Batman #2 (2005)

Batman: World's Finest?

The Worlds Finest team unite to defeat the unstoppable monstrosity discovered last issue, and to defeat it, Batman must join forces with... Lex Luthor?

The Flash #0 (2005)

The Flash: Time Flies, Prelude.

Barry Allen was struck by a bolt of mysterious lightning, and then discovered he had the power of super speed! Follow this series to read the trials and tribulations of the Scarlet Speedster! See the Rogues gallery form and a mysterious villain put into motion a scheme that could destroy the history of the Flash!  
Blood will run!

*The Flash #1 (2005)*

The Flash: Time Flies: Ice Cold Man...

Barry Allen is the happiest man alive! Oh sorry... Barry Allen is the fastest man alive! Everything 's falling into place for the scarlet speedster...

So obviously...

Something has to go wrong!

*The Flash #2 (2005)*

The Flash: Time Flies: Whispers.

It's Flash Day in Keystone city, and the entire city has come out to celebrate!

And what better time for a Rogue to pop up his head and try and kill them all?

Secrets will be revealed, new mysteries will be woven and one character is going to be changed forever in the latest part of Time Flies!

*The Adventures of Superman #4 (2006)*

The Adventures of Superman: Black Zero, Part 2: War on Solitude. Second in the biweekly crossover running through Adventures of Superman and Action Comics!

In the rebuilt Fortress of Solitude, Superman battles his greatest, most evil foe... It's not General Zod, Lex Luthor or Metallo and not even Braniac or Parasite... Who exactly?

*Action Comics #2 (2006)*

Action Comics: Black Zero, Part Three: Fearful Symmetry.

Third in a biweekly crossover running through Adventures of Superman and Action Comics!

Now that the threat has been revealed, and the Man of Steel has been removed from the picture, just what does the evil villain have in mind for Metropolis?

You won't believe the answer!  
And is the man who defeated Superman just a pawn in a much greater game?

*The Adventures of Superman #5 (2006)*

*The Adventures of Superman: Black Zero, Part 4: Men of Steel.*  
Fourth in a biweekly crossover running through *Adventures of Superman* and *Action Comics*!

Superman and Green Lantern Jar Kell reach Metropolis, but an evil lurks on the inside as well as on the outside, awaiting the two heroes and setting a deadly ambush.

*Action Comics #3 (2006)*

*Action Comics: Black Zero, Part 5: Endgame.*

The fifth and final chapter of the biweekly crossover running through *Adventures of Superman* and *Action Comics*!

Superman learns the true nature of his people in the conclusion of **BLACK ZERO!**

*The Adventures of Superman #10 (2006)*

*The Adventures of Superman: Doomsday.*

**THIS IS THE FINAL ISSUE OF THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN**

*Crisis: The Apokolips Imperative, Part 1!*

This is it! The greatest crisis the world has ever faced is upon the heroes of the DC2, and nothing will be the same ever again!

The plans of the evil god Darkseid have come to fruition at last!

It's all-out war as Apokolips invades Planet Earth: heroes will rise-- and some will fall before it's done!--- and unlikely allies will be made! And not even Superman is safe when Darkseid sets his sites on the Man of Steel! You won't believe how this one ends!

*Action Comics #4 (2006)*

*Action Comics: Must There be a Superman, Part One: Fragments and Facets.*

Superman has left Metropolis? Lex Luthor targeted for death?

Metropolis invaded by aliens? The return of a threat from the past?

A revelation that will leave you reeling and... Joey from *Adventures of Superman #3*?

Action Comics #5 (2006)

Action Comics: Must There Be A Superman? Part 2 of 2: War Crimes and Amnesty (Or, the One with all the Action).

Tomar Re will make sure Lex Luthor stands trial for the murder of Jar Kell if it's the last thing he'll do! The only man standing in the way of his fury? A Superman wracked with insecurity, who must overcome his fear of the unknown once more to save his arch foe! Will he pull through to save the day?

Action Comics #6 (2006)

Action Comics: Full Circle and the End.

A forgotten hero, kidnapped in his hey day and trapped in an inescapable prison is released by a freak accident after the death of one of his wretched captors... How will this man react to a world not his own?

Batman #3 (2006)

Batman: A Riddle Wrapped In E. Nigma, Part 1 (of 2).

He's here! The Count of Conundrum! The Prince of Puzzle himself... The Riddler! Edward Nigma has arrived in The Batman's world, and Gotham City won't ever be the same again! Continued from the events of #0, Batman is about to have the worst night in his short career...

Detective Comics #9 (2006)

Detective Comics: Escapism.

Someone has arrived in Gotham, someone who's very existence could bring about the end of humankind as we know it. So when someone is sent from his home to pursue and drag him back to the fiery hell he escaped from... You can bet Batman will be on the scene!

Batman #8 (2006)

Batman: Half [A] Life.

Two villains make their DC2 debut in this issue, as one reflects on his life before villainy in Arkham, and another emerges from the shadows to destroy the city! Will Batman stand a chance against this deadly double threat of devilry? Not without a little help from the one man he wouldn't expect assistance from!

Batman #4 (2006)

Batman: A Riddle Wrapped in E. Nigma, Part 2: Clueless?

The conclusion to The Riddler story arc and also the conclusion of Charlie's run on the book! Expect some major twists and turns as Batman and Harvey Bullock race against time to rescue Gotham's elite computer programmers from being murdered by a mysterious villain known only as "The Question Mark Slasher"!

What's wrong with Edward Nigma? What happened all those years ago that changed Michael Hughes into a so called Crime Prince of Conundrum?

Batman #9 (2006)

Batman: Crooked Smiles.

There are rumors circling in Gotham that the Crown Prince of Crime has returned! Are the whispers true? Or is someone trying to scare the inhabitants of the city? Batman intends to find out...

Batman #10 (2006)

Batman: Apokolips History X.

Crisis: The Apokolips Imperative, Part 3!

The hordes of Apokolips continue to overrun the planet, and in Gotham City Batman protects the one man that Darkseid wants the most, the only man to ever escape from his clutches: Scott Free, Mister Miracle! As Jim Gordon and the GCPD form a desperate last line of defense, the Dark Knight makes his plans to get the son of the Highfather out of the city before its inevitable fall!

Detective Comics #10 (2006)

Detective Comics: Duel.

Crisis: The Apokolips Imperative, Part 12!

Battered and besieged, Gotham City is occupied by the forces of General Steppenwolf, as the rag-tag forces of the GCPD lead a guerrilla resistance and the Dark Knight Detective himself is stalked by Darkseid's own master assassin Kanto! It's a battle royale in the Batcave, the winner take Gotham!

Batman #11 (2006)

Batman: From the Pit, Part 1 (of 2).

As The Batman patrols the night, an old friend rolls into town, and an old foe escapes from Arkham Asylum and begins to wreak havoc in Gotham City!

Batman #12 (2006)

Batman: From the Pit, Finale.

The body count builds as Batman and his new ally fight through the night, and as the Dark Knight finds a survivor from Zsasz's killing spree, he hands the dying victim over to the one woman he thinks can save her, but then paints a target on her back! That woman? Leslie Thompkins!

Batman #13 (2006)

Batman: Too Many Santas Will Kill You.

Batman uncovers a deadly plot to kill one of the wealthiest businessmen in Gotham... Bruce Wayne! And on Christmas Eve of all nights, with a legion of assassins after him, all with murder on their minds, how will the Caped Crusader save the day?

The Flash #3 (2006)

The Flash: Time Flies: A Conversation with my Predecessor...

After the events of last issue, Barry Allen is confronted by Jay Garrick, who has many things to tell the new Speedster...

And not all of them good!

And behind the scenes, new Rogues are born!

The Question Quarterly #1 (2006)

The Question Quarterly: The Death of Vic Sage, Part 1.

Vic Sage is a unique entity in Hub City... A famous journalist who tells the truth in a city of lies and deceit, who becomes an enemy of every criminal in the city with his latest expose! So when corruption and evil crawl beneath the skin of the Hub, and only one man dares fight the never-ending battle for justice, when Vic Sage dies... Who is The Question?

The Question Quarterly #2 (2006)

The Question Quarterly: The Death of Vic Sage, Part 2.

Everything is falling apart in the Hub. Lives are ending, lies have been revealed and the truth... Is the one thing that keeps one man, our 'hero', going. But when the truth is at last revealed, and the

implications of that fully understood... The one sane man in Hub City might conform to the general taste in insanity...

*The Question Quarterly #3 (2006)*

The Question Quarterly: Desolation Row.

For our final issue we have a change of pace as things get dark and gritty in Arkham Asylum. Think you've seen Vic Sage at his lowest? You'd be wrong. Think this is the end? Only for now, as The Question faces a darker threat than he has ever before, as Arkham Asylum suffers a jailbreak at the hands of two dastardly DC2 villains who make their debut in this issue... So when the inmates run free... Where is The Question?

*The Flash #7 (2006)*

The Flash: Time Flies, Conclusion! Part One: Everyone, Run Fast!

Flashback! We return to the past, two months since Issue Three, and The Flash is facing one of his greatest challenges... The Rogues have formed before their time, a leader clad in yellow showing them the way to destroy Barry Allen's life... With a loved one lying paralyzed in bed, and his friends falling all around him, what hope has The Flash got?

*The Flash #8 (2006)*

The Flash: Time Flies, Finale.

Professor Zoom, The Reverse Flash, stands revealed to Barry Allen and Jay Garrick... Who is he? How is he? And why?

*The Flash #9 (2006)*

The Flash: Speed Demon.

A malevolent figure appears in Titans Tower, confronting Wally West AKA Kid Flash, and then vanishes, leaving the young speedster with a foreboding prophecy that comes true almost as suddenly as he appeared! With Kid Flash taken over by some mysterious entity, who you gonna' call?

*The Flash #10 (2006)*

The Flash: Flashes of Lightning.

Crisis: The Apokolips Imperative, Part 10!

The body count continues to rise!

The hellbores are falling and soon the earth will be remade in the

image of Apokolips! But not if the Flash can help it! It's a battle to the death as the despicable Desaad and Darkseid's own bastard son Gravyn plant the doomsday device called the Infernal Machine in Keystone City. Can the Flash outrace destiny--- or will the Black Racer be waiting for him at the finish line?

The Flash Annual #1 (2006)

The Flash Annual: Eulogies.

Jay Garrick, the Golden Age Flash, is dead, and two months later, with the world healing, it's time for his funeral. 'Nuff Said.

The Question #1 (2006)

The Question: The Devil's Fingers.

The Question #2 (2006)

The Question: See No Evil.

The Question is still heading for Las Vegas when he drives into the wrong city at the wrong time, where the citizens are gripped with terror as a new, horrific serial killer is murdering women left and right with no discernible pattern... Until the right pair of eyes gaze onto the problem...

The Question Annual #1 (2006)

The Question Annual: Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas.

The Question is in Las Vegas and a mystery has caught up with him from a friend of the past (is there any other kind?) and two heroes in his way.

The Question #3 (2006)

The Question: A Night In Their Arms.

The lights of Las Vegas welcome a lone traveler onto its streets. Yes, after so many months, The Question has arrived. Why is he here? What is so important to him? What is so important to the whole DC2? The conspiracy continues here.

Powers, Inc. #6 (2006)

Powers, Inc.: Life During Wartimes.

Steel wakes up a new man in the first part of this story, and in the second, Prysm discovers her true identity among the stars, and everything falls apart for her new life as her father is betrayed!

Action Comics #17 (2007)

Action Comics: The Linear Man Is Our Only Hope.

Action Comics #18 (2007)

Action Comics: Doomsdays, Part 1 (of 3): The Tide

Action Comics #13 (2007)

Action Comics: Convergence, Part 1 (of 2): The Thing That Should Not Be...

Something's coming to Smallville, leaving a trail of corpses in its wake! Clark Kent enjoys some down time from his responsibilities with a game of catch, while Lois Lane has to babysit a new reporter at the Daily Planet... But what has the DEO got to do with all this?

Action Comics #14 (2007)

Action Comics: Convergence, Part 2 (of 2): With Teeth!

Action Comics #19 (2007)

Action Comics: Doomsdays, Part 2 (of 3): Shadow On the Sun

Action Comics Annual #2 (2007)

Action Comics: Doomsdays, Part 3 (of 3): Burein Sukuracchi.

DC2 Special #2: World's Finest (2007)

DC2 Special: World's Finest.

Batman #14 (2007)

Batman: Instinct.

The topside of Gotham City has been rebuilt over the past year thanks to Wayne Enterprises and their charitable efforts, but the sewers are another problem entirely... So when sewage workers are vanishing into the darkness, who does Batman think is the number one suspect?

Batman #15 (2007)

Batman: Masks, Part 1 (of 4).

Bruce Wayne is having a good day. Too bad he hasn't been in the Cave since he got in last night with Vicki Vale. Because when he

gets down there and logs on, he's going to discover the terrible fate that has befallen James Gordon. And he isn't going to be happy. Not by a long shot.

The Flash #21 (2007)

The Flash: Ride the Lightning.

Lightning strikes once more in the Twin Cities, and you won't believe the consequences!

Green Lantern #8 (2007)

Green Lantern: Brave New World, Part 1.

A threat from the stars descends from the Heavens, searching for a battery to power the most devastating weapon known to all existence! Hal Jordan, Green Lantern, is all that stands between this villain and his target, and you won't believe the conclusion!

The Question #4 (2007)

The Question: Sneaking Mission.

The conspiracy deepens as a new player enters the game, and the puppet-master reveals himself to one of the cast! With more from the Agents of the DEO, and two buddies from another book making an appearance, you won't want to miss this as this arc continues!

The Question #5 (2007)

The Question: The Double-Edged Sword.

The con is on as The Question and his superfriends infiltrate "Hell" and search for what they're looking for. But as they delve deeper and deeper into Area 15... They realize that something is terribly terribly wrong in this government run complex!

The Question #6 (2007)

The Question: Knocking on Heaven's Door.

Blind, defenseless, lost in the bowels of hell and at the mercy of a master of torture. The Question meets Dr Moon... And witness the return of four characters you'd never thought you'd see again, spinning out of The Question Quarterly...

The Flash #20 (2007)

The Flash: Random Flashes.

In one day, a man's world can be turned upside down. Barry Allen is about to have one of those days. And you won't believe the consequences...

*The Question #7 (2007)*

The Question: Here With Me.

An Extra Sized Finale Issue!

You've seen The Question taken to his lowest by Steel Hand, you've seen him in Arkham Asylum, you've seen him on the road and you've seen him tortured at the hands of Dr. Moon. Travis Clevenger and Bill Nodell find their way to Area 15, only to be confronted by a very powerful someone who doesn't have The Question's best intentions in mind, and inside "Hell" itself... People are dying... But by whose order? And what familiar face makes his "welcome" return to the world of the DC2? All these questions answered and more... Including the most important one asked! What is it? Who asked it? And why?

*Wonder Woman #23 (2008)*

Wonder Woman: Day of Champions.

Wonder Woman battles a close friend, and then is given another task by Athena! With the balance of the world at stake, the Greek Gods aren't the only ones who have noticed, and another champion joins the battle against the greatest threat to humanity since... Forever!

*Nightwing #26 (2008)*

Nightwing: Boy Hostage.

Nightwing is in deep when a confrontation with an old foe goes awry, and he ends up more than six feet under inside a metal casket in New York harbor!

*Action Comics #28 (2008)*

Action Comics: Family is Like...

Superman returns home to find his cousin Kara confused and bewildered, and she's not the only one! Lois and Clark a couple? Who is the NEW Clark Kent? Plus another family member finds Superman, and it's not a happy reunion!

*Action Comics #29 (2008)*

Action Comics: Sons & Daughters of Krypton.

After the shocking final moments of last issue, Superman faces the challenge of a lifetime, and a foe he never thought he'd meet in combat?

It's Father Vs Son across the world, as Jor-El battles his son for his subjugation of the Planet Earth...! You can probably guess Lex Luthor has had a hand in this!

Green Lantern Corps: Liberation #1 (2008)

Green Lantern Corps: Liberation: Invasion.

Our intrepid squad of heroes are on their way to Oa for the last stand against the Manhunters and their mysterious Grandmaster! Who is underneath the hood of the robotic killing machines master? What could possibly go wrong if the Green Lanterns go past Rann? What indeed...

Detective Comics #33 (2008)

Detective Comics: Trial by Fire, Prologue.

A new creative team and a new direction!

Dick Grayson has adopted the mantle of the Bat and has to face all the evil that comes with it! Seeds are sown for months to come as Batman is stalked by an unseen foe, battles against the citizens of Gotham itself, and is targeted by a familiar team! Meanwhile, Harvey Bullock and the GCPD are drawn into a horrendous murder mystery, one that shakes Bullock to his very core!

Also featuring a back-up feature written by Charlie Wilkins & Samantha Chapman!

Detective Comics #34 (2008)

Detective Comics: Trial by Fire, Part 1.

Lucius Fox returns to Wayne Manor and Dick Grayson makes a big decision about Gotham City! The Batman continues his nightly patrols, only to run into a little trouble, the kind offered by... The Suicide Squad!

Batman Vs the Suicide Squad! It begins here!

Detective Comics #35 (2008)

Detective Comics: Trial by Fire, Part 2 of 3.

The calm before the storm. The Suicide Squad nearly had him, he wasn't prepared, and if Bruce was something, he was always

prepared. So with Dick fighting for his life beneath the cowl of the Bat, he needs to rethink his approach. He needs to draw up battle plans. But when push comes to shove, will he really be able to defeat the Suicide Squad, even with a little help from his friends?

*Detective Comics #36 (2008)*

Detective Comics: Trial by Fire, Part 3.

Batman, Batwoman, Blue Beetle and Robin vs. the Suicide Squad! As the Squad launch their attack during a Wayne Enterprises ball, nobody will come out on top! Be here for the extra-sized finale to this arc!

*Wonder Woman #26 (2008)*

Wonder Woman: The Dead-Beat.

In the aftermath of her battle in the Underworld, Wonder Woman returns home to recuperate, but meanwhile, across the world, danger rises and chaos looms...

*Wonder Woman #22 (2008)*

Wonder Woman: Day of the Dead.

Wonder Woman faces the challenge of a lifetime on the first of three days that will shape her world for the months to come! Featuring the return of two DC2 villains, Wonder Woman is tasked by her patron Gods to take down a threat powerful enough to destroy even them!

*Wonder Woman #24 (2008)*

Wonder Woman: All Hope...

Wonder Woman descends into the Underworld, and as the world above waits with baited breath... Down below... Something rises!

*Wonder Woman #25 (2008)*

Wonder Woman: Era.

One tiny event can change everything, and for Wonder Woman, former princess of the Amazons and current defender of the dead isle of Themyscira, currently situated where New York used to thrive, that is a fact she knows too well. With the world in ruins due to something that happened in the world a century ago, during the modern age of superheroics, Wonder Woman is the last Amazon.

With a chance to change the world for the better... Will she take it?

Wonder Woman #27 (2008)

Wonder Woman: The Herald, Part One (of Two). Dreams haunt Wonder Woman that aren't hers, leading the Queen of the Amazons on a mission to save a lost soul, and battle a threat that she could never dream possible!

Wonder Woman #28 (2008)

Wonder Woman: The Herald, Part Two (of Two): Hands Bound. "She is coming!" he screams, and rightly so too, as Wonder Woman is hot on the heels of the someone, or something, that haunts the dreamscape of all of humanity.

Wonder Woman #29 (2008)

Wonder Woman: Twilight.

Twilight over Paradise Island. Beautiful dark blue skies streaked with orange and yellow, running together like an oil painting. The majority of the island slept. Doom's Doorway stood loomed on the outskirts of the city, the imposing mountain silent in the receding darkness of the coming morning, and the guards stood as vigilant as ever. None were expecting what would emerge from the twilight.

Wonder Woman #30 (2008)

Wonder Woman: Potential.

The Cheetah returns, and Wonder Woman must deal with the chaos rout! President Jeb Stewart visits Themyscira House, and so does the White King of Checkmate! That's right, Steve Trevor returns into Queen Diana's life, and the Gods take note!

Wonder Woman #31 (2008)

Wonder Woman: Dystopia, Part One (of Three).

Things start falling apart. Donna Troy is haunted by dreams of her past, Diana is confronted by a shocking new destiny, Mt. Olympus suffers a crisis of its own, and Steve Trevor is not left untouched by the growing evil that spreads across the world. This is only the beginning...

Batman #34 (2009)

Batman: Don't Say a Word.

In this issue, Commissioner Gordon, Sergeant Bullock, Black Mask, Wildcat, Hush, Robin, Alfred Pennyworth and even Batman! The mysterious bandaged man known as Hush strikes in Gotham, but what is he up to? And why does he have his sights set on James Gordon! Robin gets some training from one of the elite fighters of the DC2, and Batman can't catch a break... all that, plus who is the stranger that stalks the Narrows?

Batman #35 (2009)

Batman: The Big Heat.

Black Mask returns to the streets of Gotham City with a whole lot of darkness in his heart and a massive wanting to inflict pain on every single living person that walk the streets. Batman and Robin come face-to-face with the Grey Ghost, and discover the murderous vigilante's true identity... a man with ties to Bruce Wayne's dark past! All this, and The Dark Knight rises as the scarlet hooded girl and the big bad white wolf with his ruby red lips stalk the Narrows and circle the mysterious man into what could be his demise! Intrigued? All this, inside!

Batman #37 (2009)

Batman: When The Man-Bat Flies..."

A murderous villain stalks the Narrows, emulating Jack the Ripper! Is history repeating itself once more? The Dark Knight intends to find out, in his own imitable way! And meanwhile, an old foe resurfaces on a murderous rampage that the Batman will struggle to stop-- and you won't believe the final scene!

Detective Comics #39 (2009)

Detective Comics: What Are You Afraid Of?

Arkham Asylum has been replaced by a bigger, better institution, spearheaded by Wayne Enterprises. During the prisoner transfer, an old enemy escapes-- but in twenty minutes, what can one mad man do? A lot, it seems, as secrets and horrors from Jonathan Crane's past haunts Gotham City as a living embodiment of fear runs free!

Batman #39 (2009)

Batman: Surface Tension.

Jason Todd is Batman?! Dick Grayson is missing, presumed insane?! This issue, Black Mask makes a move against the city, prompting the new Batman and Robin team to launch an all out offense on the Gotham Underground, all the while Hush and Constantine Drakon make their presence known in Gotham City, and while two "old" players appear on the scene, promising many nights of mayhem for the city of Gotham!

Batman #40 (2009)

Batman: Confinement.

Dick Grayson fights for his life against the villainous Nicholas Lucian, the devilish madman who holds him captive, all the while edging closer and closer to the darkness that consumes the city he vowed to protect! Batman comes faces-to-face with his arch-foe, and it's not who you think! Batwoman joins the search for the missing Dick Grayson, racing against time, unsure if he's even alive!

Green Lantern #20 (2009)

Green Lantern: Secret of the Star Sapphire.

Hal Jordan, Green Lantern of Sector 2814 faces a threat from the past as the Star Sapphire of the Zamorans barrels down on Earth, to test the Oan representative of Earth! It all begins here, as a new era for Green Lantern begins!

Batman #41 (2009)

Batman: Until Death.

Meet The Flesh-Monger. Meet The Prince of Lies, and his loyal aide-de-campe Milo Vesuvius. Meet the Gun-Moll. Meet Boss Synth. Meet the new breed of villainy that Gotham City must accept as her own-- even if she doesn't want to. How will a Batman and Robin team survive if they can't trust one another? And will Dick Grayson survive the night?

Green Lantern #21 (2009)

Green Lantern: Infect, Part 1.

In the aftermath of last issue, Hal Jordan is pulled across the universe for a debriefing by the Guardians of the Universe-- and is briefed on the secret history of the Zamorans! All this, and Guy Gardner returns-- and he's not entirely himself...

Batman #42 (2009)

Batman: Fear of the Dark.

Beneath Gotham City, Batwoman, The Dark Knight, Robin and Batman are at the mercy of Brimstone and his cohorts Charaxes and Killer Croc! The torture of Dick Grayson comes to a head, Jason Todd and Barbara Gordon are exposed to a mind-altering substance that shifts their perceptions from sanity to madness, and all the while, a greater threat looms over Gotham City as the gangs move toward war!

Green Lantern #22 (2009)

Green Lantern: Infect, Part 2.

All-out-war over Coast City's skies as Hal Jordan battles Guy Gardner, with the safety of the entire universe at stake! Chloe Sullivan returns, as these two ring-wielders slug it out, and you won't believe the events that unfold!

Green Lantern #23 (2009)

Green Lantern: Infect, Part 3 (of 3).

One man heads to Oa, triumphant, whilst another finds himself trapped on Earth -- and the Green Lantern Corps shut down their home-base and issue a kill-on-sight order to ensure that they do not fall!

Wonder Woman #32 (2009)

Wonder Woman: Dystopia, Part Two (of Three).

The pieces fall into place as Themyscira is besieged by the entire world, Donna Troy steps up and Zenobia follows, Athena's plan begins to unfold and Ares takes the fight to Kronus on Paradise Island! Diana's fate is revealed and Steve Trevor and Apollo begin their own counterattack, and below, in the Underworld, Persephone raises an army of the dead, and begins their march to the world above!

Wonder Woman #34 (2009)

Wonder Woman: The Good Old Days.

In the future, the world is a different place, all thanks to one woman. In the past... Wonder Woman faces a blast from the past, a long forgotten secret from The Apokolips Imperative!

Batman #46 (2010)

Batman: The Way Things Will Be.

Bruce Wayne is back, so what does that mean for Gotham city?  
Jason Todd is about to find out.

Shazam! Special #1 (2010)

Shazam!: Sons of their Fathers.

Action Comics #47 (2010)

Action Comics: Heart Of Kryptonite, Soul On Fire.

Green Lantern #27 (2010)

Green Lantern, Love Lost, Part 2.

Hal Jordan takes his daughter and Chloe Sullivan to Rann, where the ringslinger teams up with Adam Strange to face some demons, and Chloe shares a heart-to-heart with Alanna. Meanwhile, people close to Hal Jordan are visited by a strange apparition, and not all of them make it out intact, and Guy Gardner pays a visit to Carol Ferris, who is still seeing visions of a dead man as plain as day!

Green Lantern #24 (2010)

Green Lantern: A Day Like Any Other.

Green Lantern 2814.2, Hank Henshaw, returns to Earth, and takes on all the duties of his partner, Hal Jordan, in the aftermath of Infect! But with Mongul prowling on the outer fringes of the solar system, and Coast City in his sights, how will one of the greatest, most talented Green Lanterns perform? The ultimate test for Hank Henshaw begins!

Green Lantern Annual #2 (2010)

Green Lantern Annual: The Rise and Fall of Sinestro.

Sinestro has been a presence since the earliest days of the DC2--infected with the LEGION virus, enraptured by Parallax, used and abused and made a pawn in a game he never wanted to play in. But what happens when Sinestro is freed from all the possessions and the mind control? What happens then? What happens when Sinestro roams the universe once more?

Green Lantern #25 (2010)

Green Lantern: Requiem.

Across the universe, chaos begins to unfurl. Mongul hurtles away from Earth, hoping to avoid the colossal rage that the Green Lantern Corps is aiming to unleash, Hal Jordan and Guy Gardner at the forefront of the tidal wave of emerald might that wants the yellow-skinned intergalactic terrorist's head! Meanwhile, just because the world is looking one way, doesn't mean that the rest of the galaxy stops ticking over-- something is looming on the horizon, and it means nothing but trouble for the Corps and beyond!

Green Lantern #26 (2010)

Green Lantern: Love Lost.

Guy Gardner inducts John Stewart into the Green Lantern Corps, whilst Hal Jordan receives a phone call from an old flame-- Carol Ferris is back on the scene, and is she seeing things, or is an old face really back? Will this spell trouble for the burgeoning relationship between Hal and Chloe Sullivan?

Green Lantern #28 (2011)

Green Lantern: Love Lost, Part Three (of Four).

One year later... and we're back. The story continues.

Green Lantern #29 (2011)

Green Lantern: Love Hurts, Part Four (of Four).

Heroes live, heroes die.



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