



The Question Quarterly #1
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Editors Note: When Charlie asked me to write a Forward to his first instalment of *The Question Quarterly*, after being flattered, my first thought was: *I can't! I don't know anything about the Question!* Upon further consideration, I changed my mind. You see, what you are about to read is a work that has been near and dear to the writer for a very long time now, something that he is very excited to share with the rest of us. If you've been at the DC2 for any length of time, you may know that Charlie is often called The Man With the Plan; he suffers from a sovereign case of F.E.S. (Fanboy Enthusiasm Syndrome)— he wants to write every title, he's got an idea for every character...! As a matter of fact, the first time I ever encountered him (on a now-defunct superhero RPG board, about a year ago), I had just killed the Atom, much to the Admin's dismay, and Charlie PMed me, unsolicited, with an offer to help me write myself out of my gaffe. "I've got an idea!" He said. Since then I've heard that phrase from him a thousand times— and it still makes me take notice.

Charlie is not your typical writer. He plays with styles and conventions as if those sorts of things are too little to constrain his story, his idea... In a sense, *they* serve him, not the other way around. He reminds me a little of a young Quentin Tarantino (if he had turned his hand to comic-writing), amalgamated with a punch-drunk Grant Morrison. So don't look for a traditional linear story in *The Question*. Just read it, absorb it, and then think about it at the end; it'll come together, trust me.

I don't really know the Question. But I know Charlie. He enjoys this stuff as much as *you* do, and maybe more. So sit back, relax, and enjoy— the train's about to leave the station, and the conductor's feelin' the need for speed!

The Question Quarterly

Issue 1: "The Death of Vic Sage, Part One of Two"

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Prologue: Who is The Question?

The supermen and the superwomen stand by a grave. In the shadows of this cemetery stands a man clad in grey and black, a cape flowing over his shoulders, a stern look across his face. As rain starts to pour down from the sky, a crack of lightning illuminates the dark graveyard, and the man in black can see someone approaching slowly, deliberately. He shakes his head slowly, and then looks up to his peer, the blue, red, yellow suited Superman.

"They're leaving." His tone is light, but he knows that any one of his comrades who hears it... They listen. Apart from the man standing next to him right now.

"Bruce. Do you hear me?"

Batman spins around, and gets up close to his super powered companion.

"Clark... Of course I hear you. You're standing right THERE."

He turns and looks back at the grave, shakes his head, and then looks back at Superman.

"Now I want you to do something for me, Kal. Look beyond the grave. What do you see?"

Superman looks confused and shakes his head, looking at his bat themed comrade.

"What do you mean?" He rubs the side of his head, and looks at the unmarked gravestone. "Bruce. I need to know... Who is The Question?"

My name is The Question. And I want answers.

You see me, faceless, surrounded by that perpetual mist, and you ask: "What drives this man? What makes this man do what he does?" Truth is, I don't know. My name is Vic Sage, television personality, and borderline

schizophrenic.

My name is The Question. And I want answers.

I wander the streets, take in the sights, and I wonder... What awaits me? What terrors and horrors await me in the darkest recesses of the human mind? I've seen it all, and you can excuse me for being a little crazy. Like I said: -

My name is The Question. And I want answers.

But the answer isn't all I'm after, for what is an answer without the question? I don't hold all the cards, and even if I did, I hold them close, close to my chest, not letting anyone see, let alone me. I've seen it all. Murderers, rapists, kidnapers and pedophiles. I've seen it all and I've watched, rarely acting. That's not my job. My job is to observe. To look for the answers.

My name is Vic Sage, and you're killing me.

Yeah, you. You and all your kind, always watching, judging. Like me. You observe. Don't think I can't see you through my featureless face and gaunt body. You can't see my eyes but I can see yours. You take it upon yourselves to rule your domains. I wish I could rule mine, but impossible. I'm haunted. Dying.

My name is The Question. And I want answers.

I tip the peak of my hat, cover my face, wrap myself in my coat and walk. I hear everything, the city speaking only to me. It tells me things, tells me things no one wants to know. It would drive you crazy, the constant chatter, and I'm surprised it hasn't done me in already. Any way... I watch. I listen. And I judge them. If they see me they don't show it.

I want answers. But I need The Question.

Like I was saying, I've seen it all. I've seen the puzzle that is humanity. Some pieces don't fit. Some do. That's life. That's how you live it. You feel pulled down, dragged under. Everyone has it at one time. Some times it takes a toll. The loving husband, an argument too many, snaps, kills his true love. That is life, my friends. That is life.

My name is Vic Sage. But I don't even know if that's true anymore...

I've seen wondrous sights. I've seen the highest star in the sky, the lowest recesses of the city below. Everything and nothing, all through my featureless face. You wonder why I cover my face? To hide the tears. This is too much for any man to bear. The burden so heavy, but I take it. I take it and don't complain. At least you won't ever see me complain. That's my rule. My aim.

My name is The Question. And I want answers.

I wander the streets, take in the sights, and I wonder... What awaits me? What terrors and horrors await me in the darkest recesses of the human mind? I've seen it all, so you can excuse me for being a little crazy...

Chapter 1

Chapter One: Duality on the edge of the double-sided sword.

The After: -

Gun shots. I stumble back, a bloody taste in my mouth, and grab for whatever's closest, which seems to be nothing... I fall to the ground, and hit the wooden floor with a thud. I drift into darkness, the sound of the waves crashing against the rocks below the pier filling my ears. My head aches, and I can feel blood pouring across my eyes.

Is this the end?

"Victor!" The man. The assassin. His gun arm drawn, aimed at my head, me, powerless, weak. "We grow tired of your attention. So my employers, they hire me, yes?"

I hear him cock the weapon with a thought. His mechanical implants buzzing and whirring. A laser sight from his eye drifts over my face, and he smiles.

"So goodbye from my friends... My employers... Goodbye from Inter-gang!" I cough up more blood, and look over at my assassin. He smiles and I hear the whirring of cogs in his head.

"Bastard... Aren't you g-going to let m-me have my l-last w-words?"

"Hhh. Go on then."

He moves the gun away from my head. I breathe a sigh of relief but find myself choking on my own blood.

"C-come closer."

He does so, trusting in the fact that he's already broken both my wrists. He leans over me, my bloody lips whispering to him.

"You... do realise that this disused pier is condemned? Do you think it not a stupid coincidence that I lured you here for our confrontation?" I smile. The wooden panels creak loudly. "Do you not hear that noise?"

His dark grin turns to a look of fear. The first manifestation of fear I have seen on his scarred face. I reach to my belt with broken fingers, and fumble with a button on my buckle. Green gas shoots up, surprising him, causing him to jump up and then down again, causing the rotten wood to shatter completely, sending us both down into the rocks and water below. He screams from the soul, his cybernetic implants going into overdrive, and crunching as he connects with the rocks below.

I'm luckier, if you could call it that. As I plunge into the depths, and as my breath rushes out of me, I smile. I'm ended.

The Before: -

Vic Sage! Who is he? What is he? Truth be told, Victor Sage is a hard-hitting TV newscaster for World Wide Broadcasting Company! But when needs must, he takes on a different identity... Alias THE QUESTION!

ques•tion (*kwes-chun*)

n.

1.
 - a. An expression of inquiry that invites or calls for a reply.
 - b. An interrogative sentence, phrase, or gesture.
2. A subject or point open to controversy; an issue.
3. A difficult matter; a problem: *a question of ethics.*
4. A point or subject under discussion or consideration.
5.
 - a. A proposition brought up for consideration by an assembly.
 - b. The act of bringing a proposal to vote.
6. Uncertainty; doubt: *'There is no question about the validity of the enterprise'*

Vic Sage! A razor sharp mind, fists like lightning, and more handsome than any movie star!

Vic Sage! An alias... Not truly real... In truth, he is actually Charles Victor Szasz, and slightly unhinged at the fact....

Childhood abuse, at the hands of his guardians... It twisted him inside. He created a new identity for himself, that of suave Vic Sage, and he fit so well into that identity, he forgot his former, and never looked back!

His face darkens, the light dims. His hand shakes slightly but he doesn't care. He grits his teeth, smiles, and begins something his, something new. The cameras are on him, he can't be any less than fabulous...

"Vic Sage here, reporting for our own Hub City's World Wide Broadcasting Company. I'm here to talk to you about illegal gambling. How many of you willingly support illegal gambling operations? How many of you frequent the gambling tables or play the daily lottery that are set up?" He shifts his sleeves, sliding into more comfortable state of mind. "You don't need their kind... They need you!" he slams his fist hard against his desk. "Only you can keep them in business! They can't exist without your play!" He smiles arrogantly at the camera in front of him. ""Part of the responsibility lies with you! You are willing partners in their crimes! You should be held accountable for your assistance in these dreadful crimes. You complain about being screwed over, being taken for a ride, but you set yourselves up for these falls. Learn from mistakes. Or they will come back and haunt you."

"Haunt you."

"Haunt you."

Haunt you.

The station suffers poorer ratings every time he goes on air. Death threats

directed at Sage. He doesn't care... Almost as if... He's not afraid. Fearless. Or what the other employees truly suspect... Insane.

Victor Sage is insane.

Chapter 2

Chapter Two: Soul Crushing Numb Feelings!

Before: -

“Intergang? You want to do an expose on INTERGANG?!” Syd Starr shakes his head, and looks at his sister, a bead of sweat falling down his brow. “Are you insane, Sage? Oh wait...” He laughs to himself, highly amused by his joke. “Dad will sort this.”

“Yeah, Vicky... This sounds a bit O. T. T. If you get me...” Celia Starr smiles wide, and then giggles softly. “But you do whatever you want.”

“Syd...Celia...” Sam Starr, president and founder of W.W.B enters the office, puffing on a chunky cigar, smiling glumly. “Get out my office... And son... Put back my cigars.”

Syd looks around slowly, and slips three cigars back on the desk.

He slides over to his father, his tone slimy and manipulative “Dad... Sage wants to...”

Sam throws his hand up to signal silence.

“Didn’t you hear me? Get out of here! I’m having a meeting with my best reporter.”

Syd shakes his head and grumbles beneath his breath, then exits the office, slamming the door behind him.

“Now talk Vic. Tell me what you’ve got...”

Vic Sage puts his hand through his red hair and rearranges his collar. "I have information on... Steel Hand."

Sam is silent at this news.

"The Steel Hand? The most ruthless crime lord on this side of the country? Second only to the leader of Intergang? God, Vic... You better be able to deliver the goods on this..." He takes out two cigars from his inside pocket and offers one to Vic. "If you get the story, I'll let you run with it. But you've got to let me tell my contact in the HCPD... If anyone in Intergang gets wind of this... You're dead. We're all dead."

Vic takes the cigar and shakes his head slowly.

"Sir... With all due respect, no. I can keep this quiet. I've been working on this for the past eighteen months without anyone finding out... I have the full story..."

Sam gasps for a moment, and then nods his head.

"Damn it, Vic! I respect you, so I'll respect your wishes... But try to be safe."

"Always." Vic shakes Sam's hand and leaves the office, waving goodbye to his fellow reporters before leaving the office, determined.

"You wanted to speak to us, Starr?" The man in the shadows smiles slightly, a glint of metal reflecting off his fist. "You have information?"

"I do indeed... Victor Sage, the upstart reporter... He's doing some kind of expose on your activities... And Intergang..."

Starr smiles slightly, Steel Hand nodding at the information.

"You have been very helpful Starr." Steel Hand nods, rubbing the edge of his glasses slowly. "Come here."

Starr rises from the seat, and goes over to the crime lord, who clenches his

metallic fist with an almighty crunch.

"Now Starr... You better not be lying to me..." He moves his hand with lightning speed, and grabs Celia Starr's wrist. "I don't like liars..."

"I know! I know! You've said..." She pulls herself away, only able to because Steel Hand released her arm. She winces in pain and rubs it. "You've said before..."

He laughs loudly. "You're an intelligent woman, Celia... Playing the fool, playing the dolt and the idiot... But I know the true you. You're intelligent... But not intelligent enough to be careful with a certain politician who-shall-not-be-named..." He smiles slightly, motioning to photos on the wall behind him.

"It was love, you bastard!" She holds herself back, remembering where she is, and acting accordingly.

"Language deary. Remember who I am." He looks around slowly. "Anyway, he was married you stupid sow!" He shakes his head. "Intelligent enough to know that, surely..."

"We didn't care."

"His wife did."

"What?"

"Did you hear? Did you hear? The governor... He was having an affair!" Syd bursts out laughing, throwing the Daily News to the desk, a tear rolling down his cheek.

"Celia! Isn't this the guy you used to pine for?" He shows the front page to his little sister, who blushes slightly. "You can't see the girls face... But she's steaming! Some hooker they say... Damn." He winks at his sister and nudges her side, but she slaps his elbow away and storms out the office. "What's her problem?"

"Probably you, Syd." Vic Sage nods slowly and smiles at the snide son of

his boss.

“Vic, you’re insane, talking to me like that...” Syd raises his fist and shakes it threateningly.

Vic smiles.

“Insanity is part of my individual charm. Now move. Or are you going to use that?”

He motions to the shaking fist of Syd Starr, who snaps at that exact moment, lunging at the reporter. Vic smoothly glides to the side of his attacker and pulls Syd’s wrist up, near breaking it.

“Syd. Don’t ever try and touch me. I’ll let you off this time...” He strengthens his grip, causing Syd to yelp out, and then moves closer to his ear. “Don’t risk it.” He releases all of a sudden and rearranges his tie. “Get off the floor, Starr.”

“Hhff.” Syd shakes his head and goes to complain to his father in his office, but hesitates, and leaves the building in a huff.

“Sir?” Vic slowly enters the room, silence meeting him. His gaze floats across the empty office, until it meets with Sam Starr, who sits quietly in his large black chair.

“Are you alright sir?”

“The sponsors rang. Told me to tell you... to scrap the story... Steel Hand has an iron grip on this city, and all the dirt on all the officials. Including me...” Sam wearily sighs, and takes a long drag on an old cigar. Little specks of ash go everywhere, and he coughs quietly.

“What do you mean then, sir?” Sam looks up and laughs slightly, then rummages through his draws, grabbing a handful of photos, and scatters them across the desk.

“Celia. With Governor Hesh. I mean... Come on... Hesh of all people...”

"I always thought Hesh was quite the looker."

"Excuse me?"

"Nothing. He had an affair with Celia then? Damn." Vic stands up abruptly. "I'll check all this out."

"Where are you going now?"

"To see Tot." Vic smiles slightly, looking away from Starr.

Sam sits up, and looks confused. "Who?"

"You don't know him. I'll be back." Vic hurries out of the office, and gets out of the building as fast as he can, hailing a cab and heading for the waterfront.

Chapter 3

Chapter Three: Pseudonyms.

Professor Rodor has always been a close friend to Vic Sage, ever since... The incident... No. Wait. Since before, since college, where the young cocky lad that no one ever knew appeared from the masses of students, excelled in any and all classes, and then proceeded to become the most powerful reporter on TV today.

But right now, we pull back the curtain of the past further, back to an age of innocence, but not for one Charles Victor Szasz...

"The hole for him! The hole for the disrespectful little snot!" Sister Clarice grabs the young red haired boy by the arm, and throws him at the wall in rage. "How dare you disrespect our Lord and Saviour! HOW DARE YOU!"

"If he's so great, why did he let my mum leave me? Can you answer that?"

"Because she was a whore! And you are a whoreson, so to the hole with you!"

Mother Graham grabs the small boy by the hair, and pushes him into the dark closet, and slams the door on him. "Alone! Alone with your demons..."

This was the first time Vic Sage emerged from Charles Szasz mind, and the first time his mind fractured.

It wouldn't be the last.

Days later, the closet door is slowly opened, and Mother Graham smiles heartedly.

"How do you feel now child?" With that, he spits in her face, and runs behind

her, kicking her swiftly in the backside, and slamming the door on her, locking it behind him.

Charles Victor Szasz leaves the orphanage at fifteen, and doesn't return for another fourteen years.

Rodor smiles as he answers his door. Vic Sage stands there with a serious look on his face, his eyes deep, his mind elsewhere.

“Come in Charlie, come in...”

Vic comes out of his daze and looks up. “Hmm? It’s Victor now...” He smiles. “But you know that, ‘cause we have this conversation every time we meet.”

“The rituals of civilization. We each of us evolve our own rites of reassurance...”

Vic’s face goes blank for a moment, and then he smiles. “I don’t recognise the quote. Who said it, Spinoza? Buber?”

Rodor grins broadly. “The author of the sentiment is your humble servant, Aristotle Rodor. Ph.D..” He bows elegantly, smiling still. “At your service.”

Professor A. Rodor, one of the greatest living brains on Earth. He could have been the next Einstein, the next... Heck, I don't know anymore famous scientists, but he was great, yet he stuck at the university I attended, taught the next generation, and created something that could have made the map. He created pseudoderm, a second skin that could have been used as a cheap and efficient way of bandaging wounds and helping with the healing process. But after some tampering by a Dr. Twain, that all changed.

Pseudoderm was intended to work as an applied skin-like bandage with the help of a bonding gas, but had an unforeseen toxicity (created when Twain, like an idiot, messed up the formula) which was fatal when applied to open wounds... So

the entire experiment failed, and the two doctors parted ways.

Rodor is as much The Question as I ever was. But things change. People move on.

"I need help..."

Rodor's face lights up. "You need The Question!"

"I suppose so, yes. The Question can get jobs done which I could never... Even imagine... As Vic Sage."

Rodor shakes his finger. "Or Charlie Szasz..."

Vic shakes his head slowly. "He's not here anymore sir."

"Says you. I have your belt. I have the gas."

"Thank you Tot."

"Whatever happened to us, Charlie? You aren't the same man after..."

"No. *Never* speak of that day. Please sir, never..." Vic's hand shakes slightly, and he clenches his fist, and then presses the bridge of his nose, anxious. "I've got to go. Sir. I've always respected you. You're like a father to me..."

"And you're like a son, Charles..." The two men embrace, and Vic wipes away a tear. He looks back at his mentor, and sees only death.

Hub City. I hate the Hub. City of darkness and corruption.

A hell of a city...

A city of hell...

Intergang runs this city. Pumps its veins full of drugs, send disease rampaging through its body. Coke. Prostitutes. All on its streets.

My name is Vic Sage. And I want answers.

But the answer isn't all I'm after, for what is an answer without The Question? I don't hold all the cards, and even if I did, I hold them close, close to my chest, not letting anyone see, let alone me. I've seen it all. Murderers, rapists, kidnapers and pedophiles. I've seen it all and I've watched, rarely acting. That's not my job. My job is to observe. To look for the answers.

But Hub... It doesn't hold any of the answers... And I won't be able to find any with this face...

I look down at my belt, the thin black belt that I thought lost in the catacombs of history.

I look at the belt.

I look up at the street I'm in and see the shops. I stumble across to a closed clothes shop and look at the mannequin in the window.

Its blank face stares out across the street, sees everything pass by, everyday, every month, every year... I smash the glass and clamber in, grabbing some new clothes.

A trench coat, a black shirt and tie. Some nice pants.

What every man needs.

But am I everyman?

Perfect. I put it all on, and then attach my small thin belt.

The button is there, same as always, and I know, in my hearts of hearts, this is what I have to do. I press the button, and am consumed in the gas. A small pink block falls out of the buckle and I proceed to put it on my face, and at last, once again, I feel whole.

My name is The Question. And I want answers.

I wander the streets, take in the sights, and I wonder... What awaits me? What terrors and horrors await me in the darkest recesses of the human mind? I've seen it all, so you can excuse me for being a little crazy...

I'm freaking back. And Intergang has hell to pay.

Chapter 4

Chapter Four: Big Trouble, Little Hub

“You sent the photos to the media!?! Damn you Hand! Damn you!” Celia slams her fists against his chest again and again, and screams in his face, but he just stands there and takes it. About three minutes worth of chest punching later he grabs her face.

Then *squeezes*.

As blood sprays everywhere, her screams fall silent, and then she lies on the floor, bleeding everywhere. “Eurgh. Gratuitous.” He laughs to himself. “STUKA! Get in here with a mop and bucket!”

“Yessir, Steel Hand sir.”

The streets call to me.

They know I have returned.

The Question is back.

And I've damned myself.

Dr Twain was a liar and a cheat. He took the corrupted formula to the corporations; the Intergangs, the crime organisations, and they planned to send it to Africa, Vietnam, wherever it could be used. Rodor discovered the plot, and confronted his old associate, but was told he would

be liable too, for creating the Pseudoderm and allowing the formula to be used!

Rodor did the only thing he could.

He called in the press.

Vic Sage came to the aid of his troubled teacher, and planned to write a scathing expose on the corruption that was at hand, but his apartment was firebombed by a masked criminal, and every piece of evidence and writing was lost.

Rodor had a plan. He had continued to refine the formula, made it so it wasn't toxic, yet Twain had patented it, it was legally his, so he made a mask which disguised his features, and planned on using it to destroy all of Twain's illegal work!

Vic stole the mask, defeated Twain, and burned down the entire warehouse where it was all being stored.

With Twain inside.

This was the second time Charles Victor Szasz's mind fractured. It wouldn't be the last.

Rodor thanked Sage for doing this favour for him, and Vic revealed that as this masked avenger, this faceless foe of injustice, he was free. Free from responsibility, free from the moral boundaries placed there by authority...

Rodor understood this, and The Question was born.

Vic knows where Steel Hand, head of the Hub branch of Intergang, works. The Ditko lounge, strip bar and club where thirty of Intergang's 'finest' spend their illegally gained dollars. He has an office in the back, quite large, formerly of Biggie Biggs, the former leader of this branch of the 'company'.

Vic can't strike here yet.

Time passes, and he stands in the shadows, breathing quietly, waiting patiently.

People leave, people arrive, but bar slowly emptys. About one o'clock, when most of the patrons have left, and the women are dancing their last dance, he walks in, his fedora tipped over his featureless face, and he sits at the bar. A young women wearing some kind of spandex costume reminiscent of Wonder Woman's star spangled armour strolls over to him and smiles.

"Last call, mister. What'll it be?"

Vic grimaces beneath his mask.

"A Steel Hand."

"A what, mister? I don't know what that is..." She smiles broadly, and bites her lip, innocently, her small hand slowly moving down her chest, her innocent smile widening. "Do you want something special?"

Vic shakes his head. "No."

She frowns, confused at this difficult customer. She squats slightly, trying to see underneath his fedora.

"Can I help you at all?"

"What do you mean, mister?" She stands up abruptly, smiling again.

"Get out of here, right now. People are about to get hurt here."

"Oh yeah, who are you, *The Martian Manhunter*? Predicting the future like that..."

Her eyes light up, and she leans in close, whispering. "You aren't are you?"

“No. And the Manhunter doesn’t predict the future. He reads minds.”

She flicks a lock of her hair back casually. “Whatever. I’m gonna’ have to ask you to leave.”

Vic clenches his fist in anger, and looks up slightly at the woman. “Not before I get Steel Hand. You aren’t gonna’ move me.”

She slams her fist on the bar, and starts shouting. “We don’t sell Steel Hands!”

Everyone turns and faces the bar, and she looks up angrily.

“We got ourselves a problem, people...” Vic smiles, and a large man, his frame and body shape reminiscent of an ape, strolls over.

“Is you causing some problem, mista?”

“Causing a problem?” Vic stands up suddenly, causing the man to jerk back. “I am the problem!”

Vic grabs the big man’s face and slams it into the bar, then hits him over his neck, knocking him unconscious. “I’m the goddamn Question, and I want some goddamn answers!”

“It’s a cape!” Five people draw their guns, and the dancers dive off their podiums, hiding behind the chairs. “Ice the freak!”

They all fire, but The Question is behind the bar, kneeling next to the women who served him before anyone can even get a shot off.

“I told you there was going to be some trouble.”

“Y-You’ve got no face, you freak!”

“Now that’s not nice.” He grabs a bottle of vodka and an old rag, grinning broadly behind his mask.

“What you gonna’ do, drink it? You ain’t even got a face! Let alone a mouth...”

“Drink? I’m going to spill it. All over there.” He opens the lid, stuffs the rag inside and shakes, then takes out a lighter from his pocket and pauses. “I’m really glad I started smoking again, miss.” He lights it up and looks over the top of the bar, hurling it at the gangsters who are still firing. “I’m sorry for the problem, miss.”

The glass shatters, and the flames shoot up, scattering the criminals, and making them run for the door, leaving the door to Steel Hand clear.

“Oh... Don’t worry.” She smiles. “It’s a temporary thing.”

“They’ll all say that. Every last one of them.” He shakes his head. “Get out of here. Right now. Please.”

“Hmm. All right. If you say so.” She clammers out the side of the bar, and runs out of the door, blowing Vic a kiss as she goes.

“Kids today...”

“Stuka! What the holy hell is going on?” Steel Hand grabs his hand cannon, and ducks beneath his desk.

“It’s a cape sir! A freaking cape! He just threw a Molotov at the men, we’re stuck! Alone!”

Stuka grabs a shotgun, and pushes over a cabinet, hiding behind it.

“Damn. This is all going to hell. Where’d you put Starr’s body?”

“She’s in the back room, ready for transport.”

“STUKA YOU SHMUCK! I TOLD YOU TO TAKE HER, AND DUMP HER IN A HOLE SOMEWHERE! YOU INEPT FOOL!” Steel Hand shoots his assistant in the head, and ducks back by his desk.

“Good help is so hard to find...”

“So I’ve heard, Steel Hand.”

Vic stands in the doorway, his body wrapped in shadow.

“ARGHHHH!” Steel Hand stands up and fires his gun at the figure, hitting him dead centre in the chest about five times. Vic stumbles back, hits the wall behind him, and slides down.

“TEACH YOU! I’M THE BOSS! YOU’RE A SHMUCK! A LOSER! YOU’RE DEAD, MAN, DEAD!”

Hand ducks back behind his desk and reloads, laughing to himself.

“Dead... Dead... He’s dead...” He stands up, points his gun at Vic’s corpse and...

“Wait...! Holy mother of God!”

Nothing.

The Question is gone, but a bulletproof vest with five chunks taken out of it is left, causing Hand to feel a warm trickle move down his leg.

“Oh no! NO!” Steel Hand runs out into the corridor and is met with a steel tray to the head, knocking him out instantly.

“You’re the shmuck Hand. Thank your guy at the door for the vest.”

Vic grabs some handcuffs from his pocket and chains Steel Hand to a radiator, having to connect his elbow with his wrist, the metallic fist being too big for the restraints. Vic grimaces slightly, and feels his side, being met by a warm red feeling trickling down to his hip.

“Hrh. Time to do some investigative journalism.”

He hurries into Hand’s office, and rummages through the fallen file cabinet. What he sees surprises him. Schematics for weapons... Strange, out of this world weapons. Contacts in Las Vegas, Metropolis... All with the same schematics... Bloody hell... Red sun radiation? Promethium piercing bullets? What is this? Vic grabs the information and stuffs it in his

pockets, and then he takes whatever else he can, making sure he leaves nothing incriminating. Steel Hand was going down, one way or another. He hurries out of the office and gasps. Oh hell. Steel Hand... Gone... The handcuffs snapped like twigs. Vic hurries out of the lounge, and heads for a car, something, anything, to make his getaway in. He collapses half way out the door, his head swirling in a storm of darkness.

Chapter 5

Chapter Five: Down Hill Struggle.

Vic jerks up, his head pounding more than ever. He's lying in a bed, his bloody wounds dressed, his face... He touches his face, and finds that the Pseudoderm still attached.

"That really is your face then, huh?" A soft voice emerges from the shadows, and the bar woman emerges, dressed in a long Hub City Giants shirt and wearing large grey shorts, smiling. "I saw you stumble out of the bar, you got beat up pretty bad... I couldn't just leave you..."

"You should've done just that! You've endangered yourself and everyone you know doing this! Argh..." He doubles over, clutching his chest.

"You're wounds... I dressed them to the best of my ability... I'm a medical student..."

"Hrgh... Why work at a place like The Ditko Lounge then? As a stripper?" Vic collapses back in the bed, breathing heavily. "Why?"

"To pay for school... Mom didn't raise no sucker. I'm near able to complete my tuition. But not as a stripper... 'Exotic dancer' is the more appropriate name."

"ToMAYtoe/ToMAHtoe. What's your name?"

"Elliot." She sits next to him, and slowly runs her hand down his face. "What happened to you to make this... happen?" She smiles.

Vic looks around, taking in the room. "Can you keep a secret?"

She laughs knowingly. "Hypocratic oath and all that. Patient doctor confidentiality."

"Pass me my belt."

"You aren't going to do anything kinky are you?" She smiles and flicks her blonde hair over her shoulders, her full lips... Vic snaps himself out of his daze and shakes his head.

"No way, Elliot. Oh and... I've noticed your accent has changed..."

"Being a big city girl, I had to learn how to say 'ain't' before I got into the business..." She grabs his belt from the chair next to him, where his shirt, coat and hat lay.

"Heh. Back away." She does so and he presses the small button, and a jet of yellow gas is released. She gasps, covering her face with her arms, and then looks over her forearm to see the mask peel off.

"VIC SAGE?!"

"In person. Secret keeping has begun."

She smiles again, putting her long finger against her lips. She slowly moves over towards him and puts her hand against his chest. "I imagined you'd be smaller... Less... Filled out..."

Why is he trusting her?

"Appearances can be deceiving."

She smiles and leans closer to his face, nudging the mask away from his face, and getting close, nose to nose.

"What are you doing, Elli-"

"Shh."

Vic wakes up suddenly, and feels his face.

No mask.

Oh hell, last night really happened... Need to get up, need to, oh...

Elliot is laying next to him, her naked body pressed against his, her Giants shirt flung next to the door, his shorts laying at the end of the bed. He looks down at his wounds, and is amazed to see they've not reopened.

Wow. She is good...

No. this is all wrong. Hell. She was (not literally) in bed with Steel Hand. Claims to be a student of medicine... But... Damn damn damn. Mistake. Mistake. Mistake! This has all been a mistake... Why did he trust her?

I shouldn't have returned to this mask.

The Question was dead, and I dragged up the remains, and thought it would work but... After the... The incident... I just can't... It's all... Oh hell, it's all screwed up!

I slowly move myself out of her soft arms and grab my t-shirt. The mask slowly rolls up into a ball and I pop it back into my belt, tying it round my waist to prevent my trousers falling down. I pick up my coat and slowly. I leave without saying goodbye, and hope and pray nothing else happens today.

"He's gone." Elliot lifts herself up, smiling, her right foot slowly stroking her elegant left leg, then moving her long blonde hair to her back. She picks up her giants top and puts it over her naked body, then smiles. "Did you hear that? He's gone. You have all you want now?"

Steel Hand smiles and emerges from the kitchen. "That and more. You've been fantastic. For him... And for me. That drug you did him up with sure made him a lot more... malleable..." he strokes her soft cheek with his metallic hand and

she smiles.

“Malleable? Made him a whole lot more flexible too...” She smiles widely. “Want me to help you relax, sir?” She strokes his chest with the side of her hand and he smiles.

“No.” He sticks his gloved flesh and blood hand into his long jacket, and pulls out a silver pistol, then proceeds to fire seven shots into her chest. “But Vic sure could use you now.”

He rummages through his pockets and takes out all the documents he had recovered from Vic’s coat. Elliot coughs slightly, and blood pours from her mouth and nose.

“Damn, still alive? I can’t seem to kill anyone these days.”

He fires another three shots into her torso, then dumps her on her bed. “Let’s see Sage wriggle out of this one. I can imagine the headlines right now: Vic Sage Wanted for Rape and Murder.”

“Sir... Sir...” Rodor opens the door and Vic collapses into his arms.

“Charles?”

“I made a mistake... Always... making mistakes...” He blacks out, his wounds opened once more.

“Charles! Victor... Wake up...”

“What we got?” The man chewed on the donut, crumbs falling down from his mouth.

“Woman dead... Raped too we think, nothing solid as of yet. Coroner will get back to us ASAP But... Uht... It’s quite bloody, sir...”

“Bastards... Lets have a look at the scene, and then we’ll wait for the crime lab

report, ok?"

"Yes Detective Miller."

The uniformed officer nods, and opens the door, and Miller gags at the sight in front of him. There's blood everywhere, on the walls, the floor, and even the ceiling, and the coroners office have just packed up the victim's body.

"Hey, N'omi..." One of the women zipping up the body bag with the corpse inside turns at her name, and nods.

She looks around, and then replies. "Detective."

"Any ideas?"

Naomi looks around the room and points at a massive puddle of blood. "I'm thinking a crime of passion. The attacker started the attack near the kitchen, where that first, biggest, blood patch is. Then he... or she... got angrier and angrier, wouldn't stop shooting her (ten shots sir. This bastard was angry), and she came to rest just here."

She points to the side of the bed, where the blood splatter is concentrated.

"And this guy... Or gal... Realised what he... or she... had done, and picked up her body, then placed her on the bed... and punched her in the stomach a couple o' times. Made sure she was deceased."

"Hmm. Interesting. We have witnesses identifying two people leaving the apartment. Some people are even saying they saw Vic Sage leave here... But we need some coroboration to support whatever statements we get."

"You said two men..."

"No one could...would... identify the second. Could be that guy Hesh. Who knows what our dear ex-governor is up to now that his infidelity has been revealed to the press at large..."

"The cops are crawling over my place... that Sage has screwed with me

once too often... ”

“You’re petty troubles matter not to beings such as us. You have the resources, you deal with it. You have the assassins, you have the man power. You deal with it.”

“I’m planning to, I’m planning to... In fact... I have just the man...”

Steel Hand picks up a paper file and flicks through it, smiling.

“Good. We shall talk again.” The screen flickers and goes blank, then silence.

Steel Hand shakes his head, grimacing. “No good bastard... Telling me what to do. Hmm.”

He picks up a phone with his real hand and dials a number.

“Mitch. It’s me. Yeah, The Hand. Get me the ‘Beast. You know which one. What? Dammit Mitch... The original. The best. Get the Russian down here yesterday. I have a major job for him. What major job, do you ask? Well, how about this? The murder of Vic Sage...”

To be continued!

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 #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!

Batman #17 (2007)

Batman: Hizzoner, The Joker!

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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