



House of Mystery #1
various

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Foreword

I love horror stories as much as the next guy, but depending on who is next to me and when, that is all subjective. Horror films scare the bujesus out of me, but I still watch them. Why? To be *scared* of course. With all that's going on in the world you've just got to be loving that what scares a cinema goer more than bombs and poison gas in the real world are unstoppable zombie killers in the fake world. You've got to love that, seriously.

So the DC2 has a surprise for you. A real cool surprise that I think you'll all love. Ten pulse pounding tales of terror and suspense, all right here, just waiting to be scrolled down to. Now just because they're supernatural doesn't mean they'll scare you, but I just hope they make you do one thing.

That one thing?

Think... What if?

So put on your copy of the Tubular Bells*, sit back, and grab a pillow, but I promise you... You won't be able to stop reading!

Charlie.

**Note from the Editor - That's the EXORCIST THEME for those of you not in the know!*

Chapter 1

A Wicked Blessing

*Sebastian Faust in
"A Wicked Blessing"
Written by Crow*

*Mizzer Crow has been a big help during this project, and you can be sure that **Sebastian Faust** is going to be seen again at the DC2, appearing in the Doctor Occult miniseries in a six-part back up tale! Now, read on...*

Who am I? My name's Faust

Where was I? In the middle of New York, trying to get pass all the little goblins, ghosts, and Booster Golds in my way. The Upper West Side of the city shone brightly under the light of the Full Moon, and the neon signs the storeowners put up.

Where was I going? To church, of course.

"Can I help you?"

"Yeah, I'm here to save souls."

Faust was standing at the entrance of St. Johns Cathedral, peering inside through the temporary security's broad shoulders. Inside was a big church packed with a big crowd of people already enjoying the service.

With the Crisis still in the hearts of the world, many realized death could come at any time. Many also believed that sin brought the disaster in the first place. So the famous fundamentalist Bishop Jonathan Adventis decided to come to New York City and keep all the faithful and righteous pure. Anyone who came could get purified and redeemed during this night of witches and demons.

Of course, many people came. Faust could see a great mass of people brought together, looking towards salvation. Well most of them. The children looked a bit unhappy. Who could blame them? Faust couldn't.

Now the only obstacles in his way were a six foot Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum, who were blocking the only entrance for latecomers. But Faust had a job to do. Here, at a union of Holy Spirit and faith, was lurking a black heart. His only problem was figuring out whose it was.

"What do you want? You don't look like a reverend." The first said.

"Doesn't mean my job isn't to save a soul or two when I get the chance."

The second guard grimaced and came face to face with Faust's shades, staring into Faust's eyes as much as possible. "Look a-hole, you waste any more of our time and you'll have to save your own."

Faust's hands came up in protest, his body leaning backwards. "Guys, guys, I just want to share my faith."

"Is that why you're dress like a Matrix reject?" Faust looked down on himself. Black cargo pants filled with things, a black shirt, black shades, black boots and a long, black trench coat. Was it wrong for a guy not to enjoy prancing around in red and blue spandex?

"Plus," the first added, "The Bishop said to look out for trouble and you're it." He too, leaned down face to face. "I don't like you. I don't know why, but you smell like trouble."

Faust knew it was time to stop being friendly. The easy way never worked for him, never will, because of the edgy feeling he left in most of those around him. No one could stand him because he lacked something that they did: a soul. He was used to it by now; it was his birthright thanks to his dad. But time was being wasted and he didn't want those people to end up in his position.

"Sorry fellas, but this hasn't been fun." He reached a finger up slowly to the middle of their foreheads, their eyes following his fingertips. "Now sleep."

Instantly a spark of violet energy leapt out of him, dropping them to the floor while their life-force crept into him through his fingers. Their energy and abilities were his now, at least for a little while. Soul tapping, he called it.

Walking through the cathedral entrance, he removed his shades, revealing misty, cloudy blue eyes devoid of the usual pupil and iris. Amidst the hundreds of people within, his eyes began to change to a more solid violet color as they read the auras of those around him.

The cathedral was very eerie on the inside. He was expecting a televised event, but there wasn't one camera in there. Hell, there were barely any electronics at all. No lighting was on but at the entrance outside and a few ominous around the altar. The real lights came from the candles arranged around the congregation, and the chilling silver moon light that hit the stained glass from the outside.

At the front were the remnants of a line of worshipers receiving Holy Communion. The Bishop, aided by only two other reverends, stood at the front giving the body and blood of the Savior to church-goers through wafers and wine, respectively.

His shades still off, he couldn't see anything at all that stood out... but he could feel something there, something dark. From the corners of his eyes the shadows seemed to dance on their own in places where there were

no candlelight... the people were sitting there with quiet faces, no emotion whatsoever... it felt like the evil was all around him. Was it the Bishop, his followers, or some in the crowd?

"Come my son, don't you want to be saved?" The Bishop greeted from the front. His soft voice held an air of gentleness and authority together than echoed throughout the large Cathedral.

The whole congregation turned to stare at him, most of them indifferent, others put off. "Must be a product of my birthright," he thought.

He walked to the front, looking and looking for any sign of where to strike. All his oracle acquaintance told him was that there was an evil, but not how that evil would be present. It left him with questions.

As he approached the Bishop, he slipped his shades back on over his eyes and surveyed the old man. He had on a long, black robe with white and orange designs embroidered onto them. His face was a kind, gentle face, with creases one only could get from a lifetime of laughter. The kind of face that Mr. Roger's grandfather must have had.

"Why do you hesitate my son?" Faust hadn't noticed that he was only the one standing, and that he was being watched by a full congregation of hundreds of people. It'd be harmless to get a little communion, right?

The Bishop leaned forward, offering a wafer, which Faust took into his mouth, and wine, which he drank. The Bishop smiled and nodded, a sparkle in his old, kindly eyes. "May God save your soul," he said.

Faust looked straight into the older man's eyes, taking his shades down a bit. "I don't have one."

Suddenly, Faust took in all his strength and punched the Bishop as hard as he could. Adventis flew in an arch backwards, landing on his back with wine and wafers all over his robe.

The congregation gasped and rose. Though expressionless, they appeared offended, or hurt, at what Faust did.

"You're going to want to step back folks," Faust said, regurgitating the wine back out while incanting a spell, the result being a breath of flame from his lips.

The crowd stepped back as the fire lit up from the part of the stage and the upper most pews, making a thin wall of flames. Turning, he saw the Bishop gathering himself and trying to stand. "How dare you!"

Faust removed his coat and put his shades down to his shirt. His eyes turned misty again, pulsing blue. He could now see the dark shape within the Bishop. Good thing he took that gamble. "The wafer and wine were tainted. And you never blessed me with the sign of the cross."

Stepping forward, he took out a cross, incanting a spell to make it shine. In a quick motion he struck the Bishop's assistants quickly, who turned to shadowed forms and then disappeared. "Now were going to exorcise you from the poor Bishop you just made me uppercut."

Faust slapped the cross right onto the forehead of the Bishop, chanting aloud as a wave of white light pushed him backwards. The Bishop's eyes rolled backward as black energy tore from his robes, bearing a large, seven foot demon with ebony skin and white and orange markings. It stood on hind legs like some kind of beast and breathed raggedly.

"What are you called, minor demon?"

"How do you know I am not a demon lord?" The demon hissed.

"You have no wings, no real human features, and sorry to say it, you don't rhyme. That knocks out all the upper demon classes."

The demon nodded in interest. "I am Bazu. And who are you?"

"Jesus."

Bazu growled. "Human, who are you?"

"Santa Claus."

Bazu charged up onto Faust, knocking him over and leaving a paw mark on Faust's shirt. Taking a long sniff, he appeared satisfied. "You smell of the Faust line. But you are not old enough to be Felix? And the Felix I know loves to boast!"

Faust squirmed beneath Bazu. "I know. He's my dad."

The demon smiled a crooked, sinister grin. "Well younger Faust, the wafer and wine were corrupted with what my brethren like to call a demonic drug named DMN."

"What do you want with an army of demons? You've not power enough to control, no minor demon can."

"Not after tonight."

The congregation began to step through the flames that were spreading through the church, unharmed and their faces totally blank. At the front was a little girl who began to shake, and suddenly a visible string of white, cloudy energy was ripped out of her, flying right into Bazu. She fell onto the floor, shaking violently, her bones shifting and sliding and her skin stretching and ripping. In a few moments she had the shape of a demon. Soon the same was happening to the rest of the congregation, and their souls continued to come to Bazu, basking him with power.

Bazu breathed over the neck of Faust, his voice as coarse and rough as rocks over gravel. "Now Faust, let's take a peek at that soul."

"Sorry pal... no can do." Faust began to slide a hand into his pocket, finding the contents of a canister dripped through his pocket. He took what he could and wet his hand with it.

"There's nothing to be sorry about young Faust, you will be happy as one of my slaves." Bazu laughed.

Faust slid his hand up to Bazu's chest. "I'm not on the menu tonight."

Pushing up, his hand began to burn and break into Bazu's chest like a wrecking ball through concrete. "Holy water!" Bazu screamed, jumping aside as blood poured out his chest.

"To think a demon could possess a holy Bishop and enter a church unscathed, but a little holy water gives him heartburn. Too bad for you, I left my Mylanta at home."

"The Bishop wasn't as holy as he seemed." Bazu choked out, running towards Faust and leaping into a pounce. Faust's eyes turned blood red as he rolled and blasted a burning burst of violet energy into Bazu. Bazu skidded against the floor, his body twitching and blood still falling from his chest. Faust, raising a hand in the air, chanted a spell. Simultaneously, the lights blasted off, and the stained glassed shattered above them to reveal the moon light into the church. The only things that were left untouched were the candle lights.

Quickly, the souls of the congregation tore their way out of Bazu and returned to the crowd. They began to move around confused and dazed, but alive.

Faust walked over to Bazu, his eyes flickering with an arcane burn. Bazu spoke hastily. "Please Faust, I beg of you. Let me live! I can give you riches beyond your wildest dreams!"

Faust stepped closer again, shaking his head. "If I were my father, I'd enjoy the fact that you're squirming underneath me asking for mercy. I'd probably take the money too. But I'm not my dad. I don't take bribes."

Bazu leaned onto his front legs, trying to reason better. "Aha! A good man through and through! I can make you famous, the greatest hero the world has seen! Better than Superman and Captain Marvel!"

Faust shook his head and came right above Bazu. "I don't want it. You've figured me wrong Bazu. I don't believe in good or evil. I can't believe in abstract ideals that reflect feelings, because I have none. I don't care for heroes or villains or gods or devils. I have no conscience or guilt. I already know where my soul is."

Bazu's eyes lit up with a spark of chance. "For a piece of your soul, I can grant you immortality! Something any Faust would want!"

"You don't get it do you Bazu? My father sold the only thing tying me to humanity when I was just a baby. I only believe in concepts, like retribution, punishments and justice."

His hands coursed with his burning arcane power as he pulled out a dagger from his waist. His eyes were the ominous color of blood. He knelt close to Bazu, who tried to inch up against the wall as much as he could, away Faust's darkly eye. Faust gave a wicked, devious grin as he leaned in as close as he could. Bazu whimpered and began to shake nervously, his breath heavy and heart thundering. "Do you get it now? I don't have a soul."

And through the yells of the terrified innocent, and the howls of horror from the Hound of Hell, the full moon shined on as pure as always, and the candle lights finally went out.

Happy Halloween.

End?

Chapter 2

Skeptic

*Doctor Thirteen in
"Skeptic"*

Written by Sebastian Gutierrez Sanchez

*Mr Sanchez is the ongoing writer of **The Flash**, and he took the time out of his speedy schedule to deliver this piece of fine work (and this day being his birthday of all days!)? I'm sure that there will be ramifications from this story, and I'm sure that Mr Sanchez will be sure to pick up where he left off down the road sometime, but enough of my teasing, read on...*

Terrence took a sip from his coffee, and looked to the pictures lying on his desk. Cases, ranging from ghosts, vampires and magical artifacts, to talking toilets and evil bunnies. All were handed to him from a wide variety of people from around the world, so he could investigate the truth behind them, magic or otherwise, but there were none he couldn't explain without science. The artifacts all had wires and odd metals in them, and after thorough analysis, they were all just strange looking guns, or devices like that. Some were teleporters, but nothing beyond his knowledge. The ghosts disappeared after a discharge of energy, and he concluded they were energy themselves, taking forms but without intelligence, memory or anything relating them to human beings. And like that, everything had an explanation, a scientific, congruent, explanation.

He had decided to take a break, and go for a walk through the neighborhood. Little children had disappeared mysteriously in these surroundings over the last week, so he went to search for things, clues,

anything. After all, he was an investigator, wasn't he? Besides, that would help him to relax, after a whole day reading kid stuff.

After he had finished doing this, two hours had passed and it was already getting dark. Children were trick or treating in the streets, all over the Halloween themed decorated houses. He suddenly hoped he had bought enough candy for his daughter to give out.

Walking through the park, he saw some strangely dressed people. Two big guys, dressed in hideous demon costumes, one green and one gray. The gray one seemed to be the leader, holding a rod with a crystal on the end of it. Terrence quickly concluded that they were both freshmen trying to scare little children, so he decided to hide behind a tree, and wait for them to do something. It was a nice place on a nice day, and he wouldn't allow them to ruin it. The park was quiet, so after a few moments, he could hear them talking.

"So, we need three more of them. We take them today, he lets us out. We don't take them, we may never leave again."

"Understood."

"So, they're the kidnappers? Well, I'll be damned." Terrence thought. He quietly moved to a bush near them, but when he looked up, they were gone. Still, he knew they must be around somewhere.

After waiting for what seemed like ten minutes, Dr. Thirteen saw a little girl walking alone through the park, wearing a fairy costume. She looked tired and probably chose the park as a shortcut. An innocent mistake that would cost her. And before he could do anything, the 'demons' appeared with a loud explosion of smoke in front of her. The green one grabbed her arm, and she started to scream. Dr. Thirteen jumped from where he was hiding, facing them.

"Leave her alone! I've already called the police, they'll be here any second!" He lied. He didn't have the time to dial.

"Oh, how brave of you, Doctor Thirteen, but we really need young flesh, and it appears we are awfully behind on our schedule. So, if you don't leave us alone, we'll have to take care of you too." the gray one says.

Have they been spying on me? How do they know my name?" Terrence thought. He was scared, for him and for his daughter, but if he decided to run, the girl would be lost. "You hide behind your costumes, trying to be brave? I pity you. Leave her alone, and you can start your life from scratch." Doctor Thirteen said, firmly. He knew that it would never work, but he had to make time to think of a plan.

"Well, you had your chance. Mr. Green, get rid of our unpleasant company." He grabbed the little girl, and as Mr. Green prepared to attack. Terrence noticed his yellow, large teeth, and forked tongue. Good mask.

The green one ran towards Terrence, but the doctor swiftly evaded him. Mr. Green collided with a tree, bringing it down. The tree was old, already ready to fall, just needing a bit of pressure, Terrence thought.

"The police are coming." he menaced them again. He hoped he could get away from this without the use of force. And then he laughed in his head at the thought.

"We don't care about the police, or any of your earthly justice makers. Maybe you haven't noticed, but we're demons. And you must be lucky, because we don't care about you; we only came here for a special request. So leave now, and maybe my partner and I will leave you alone, grant you a few years more of your pathetic life." Mr. Gray said in a calmed way. The little girl cried and tried to escape from the gray demon once more.

"Definitely psychos." Terrence whispered.

Before Doctor Thirteen could do anything, Mr. Green grabbed him from behind. Terrence tried to break free, but Mr. Green's grip was monstrous. Mr. Gray raised his rod, and aimed at Thirteen's head.

"You sure were brave, dear foe, but this is going to end. I hope you've had a naughty live, that way we can still meet again. A blast from my rod, and I'll make you disappear. And that way you'll start believing in magic. Well now, goodbye. " When Mr. Gray stopped speaking, his rod started to shine.

"Magic? Do you really think that can scare me? I've faced scarier looking things, and each one of them didn't have the slightest effect on me! There's no such THING as magic!" Thirteen shouted, before Mr. Green throws him to the air. The rod shot something and then everything went bright.

"Well, it seems the girl is coming with us after all, doesn't it, cutie?"

"Well, if you think that a flash of light will stop me, you're one of the worst cases I've met." Said Terrence Thirteen through gritted teeth, cleaning dust from his coat. He had multiple wounds, possibly broken an arm because of him flying through the air, but he didn't surrender.

"Well, it appears our pursuer won't go away that easily, isn't that correct Mr. Gray?"

"Indeed. I wonder how he could have survived our demonic blast."

"You guys are sick. There are no such things as demons. Your psychosis has gone a little bit too far."

"Far and *away* is where you're heading." said Mr. Gray, raising his rod again. But fractions of a second before he could shoot, Dr. Thirteen leapt into him and everything went bright. When the light disappeared, the psychos wearing costumes were nowhere to be seen. Terrence looked at the rod, confused. He spent some time looking around and at it. The explanation eluded him, thing that had never happened before. Which left him even more confused.

"This looks familiar. Those extraterrestrial beings that tried to conquer earth, had weapons like this. Could this be it? Or was it... No, this has to be that." He said out loud.. When he looked away from the rod, he noticed the little girl, curled up on the floor, crying. "Don't worry, kiddo. There are no such things as demons, or anything like that. They were just bad men, but it's over. It's finally over. Uncle Terrence has scared them."

The girl didn't stop crying. He was never good with kids. But then,

something miraculous happened. He heard muffled voices in the distance, approaching. When he looked around, he saw the kids that had disappeared walking towards him. They must have escaped, he thought. "What a great day."

Terrence called the police, and was taken to the station to answer some questions. He waited until all of the kids had been picked up by their parents before he himself left. When he returned, it was way past midnight. He entered his home, stumbling all the way to his room. Dangerous people dressed as demons were really exhausting. Seconds later, he was asleep.

Traci, Thirteen's daughter entered his dad's room. Since her mother died, years ago, her father had tried his best to give her a good life, even if it almost cost him his own. She of course was worried for his health, but equally glad that he was home at last.

"Good night, dad." she whispered from the door. And with a single movement of her hand, a blanket floats over and covers Dr. Thirteen.

End.

Chapter 3

Urban Myths

John Constantine in
"Urban Myths"
Written by Sam Harrison

Mister Harrison took over the reigns of Wonder Woman from our esteemed E-I-C after the IXE, and he's doing a cracking job with it, making it his own in only a few issues, but another character he's fond of is John Constantine, and once again, you can be sure that John will be appearing elsewhere after this one shot! And of course, as this is a book containing the mouth of John Constantine, beware of the odd bit of language...

The room is filled with smoke, the odd flapping of cards being played is the only sound in the room. You could have cut the atmosphere with a knife. Six people surround the hexagonal table, one on each side. They all have pint glasses in front of them, and only one or two aren't smoking.

The dealer hands out another round, the game nowhere near as important as the conversation.

"He's a bloody myth," one player says past the cigarette pressed between his lips, "an urban legend, John Constantine doesn't exist."

"Bugger off he doesn't exist," the player to his right replies, "my cousin Harry saw him once. Hustling pool in Hammersmith."

"If he's a bloody magician then why does he need to hustle pool?" the sceptic asks, "Surely he can pull a wedge of fivers from his top hat or whatever."

The second player takes a pull on his pint, "For the fun of it! He likes winning off people who don't know he's cheating them."

The sceptic scoffs.

He folds his hand, everyone else calls. The dealer wins. He hands out another round after lighting up a cigarette.

The second player, after finishing his pint, carries on, "You wanna hear the story? You'll have to believe me if you hear the story."

The first player shrugs.

Harry was scared. He'd been dragged into this pub, a shady and rather unpleasant pub, and then been left. Abandoned by his mates. He was sat all alone at the end of the bar trying very very hard not to attract any attention whatsoever.

"That's pretty good," a smooth scouse accent said from his right, a blonde man in a brown trench coat had sat down next to him at the bar. The blonde man pulled a pack of silk cut from his pocket and slapped them on the bar next to his pint. It was lager of some kind, that Harry knew from the colour and the fact that northerners didn't drink cider. The blonde man stuck out his hand for a shake and Harry accepted it, he had a charm that made it hard to ignore him, "Name's John. Hell of a hole we've fallen into eh mate?"

"Harry. And yeah, this place's a bloody dive," Harry replied as the bartender walked past. He gave him a dirty look and Harry did his best sheepish look.

John laughed voraciously and clapped Harry so hard on the back a few

drops of his pint spilled over the rim and onto the bar. When he stopped he turned and pointed to the pool tables, "Fancy a game Harry old son?"

"Nah mate, I'm shocking at pool," he replied, "can't pot for toffee."

"Brilliant," John replied, switching his charm back on, "I'll have a chance then."

They began to play pool. Harry was, as he had said, shocking. It took him ten to fifteen minutes to just pot half his balls. But unbelievably, John was worse. He was six and seven balled in the first two games they played, which collectively lasted an hour. In the third game he seven balled himself, Harry had potted all his but couldn't get the black and John miscued so fabulously that it darted around several cushions without hitting any of his balls before potting the black and the white. It was so bad it was impressive. After the debacle that ended that game two men came up to Harry and offered them a game of doubles, John happily accepted for the both of them.

"How about we make it interesting lads?" John said, behind the two men Harry stood shaking his head frantically, "Tenner down, winner takes all?"

The two men looked at each other and shrugged then the one on the left, who had a fantastic Motorhead moustache, agreed, "Yeah all right."

John grinned widely like the Cheshire Cat, the rest of his face hidden by the poor lighting in the pub. He placed a cigarette in his mouth and lined himself up to break. His cue flashed forward at an ungodly speed and he potted all of the yellows bar one, all the reds were in obscure places on cushions and his final yellow was placed over a pocket. He potted the yellow and then the black and took the twenty pounds off the table.

"Nice playing with you lads," John said, lighting his cigarette, "I think I'm going to use our winnings to get me and Harry here a pint." He said, pushing through the angry masses of the two unwitting losers. Harry's

blood went cold when he realised John had used him to hustle them. They would think he was in on it. He was screwed.

Harry and John sat back in their barstools with fresh pints, Harry kept looking over his shoulder and jumping whenever anyone brushed past him. John was off on a rant about children. Apparently he wasn't a big fan.

"So I'm in the queue at the Post Office and there's this woman behind me with a screaming baby," John finishes one cigarette and pulls another from his pack, lighting it with the first, "so I tell her in no uncertain terms to either shut it up or sod off."

Harry looked at John quizzically.

"And she goes 'Even you were a baby once. Have a little patience' and I almost lamped the bloody woman," John took a deep pull of the pint of Stella he bought with his ill-gotten gains, "I hate it when people say that. I was a bloody sperm once, you don't see me cuddling up to a wank stain do you?"

"No, yeah," Harry replies, only half listening.

"What the hell's got you so agitated mate? Are you like this all the time," John asked pointing at him, invading his personal space with his finger, "you're not one of them schizos are you?"

"Those blokes you cheated earlier--"

"I did not cheat them, I do not cheat." John interrupted, "They just didn't know what they were getting into. They should've known not to play pool with John bloody Constantine."

"Is that all the proof you have?" The sceptic said with a tone of disbelief, "A lame story about how somebody hustled a pool game, supposedly with magic, and said he was Constantine. Pile of arse."

"He didn't use magic to win pool," player two said, "he's just ace at pool. Harry reckons he went back in time and spent years practising like Bill and Ted did to learn guitar at the end of the second one."

"I remember that," the dealer said with a chuckle, "Death played double bass."

"Too right," another player, sat to the dealer's right, inserted, "there were robots made of hubcaps and all."

"That was a great film." the dealer said wistfully, "Death'd never play double bass though. He's more of a metal fan. System of a Down and all that."

There was a silence. The sceptic raised an eyebrow.

"Of course Death's a bloody metal-head. He's on all the t-shirts!" player three said, with a raucous laugh.

The whole table erupted in guffaws for a few minutes as they all forgot what had been said. Then when it quietened down the dealer took his pile of cash, he'd won the round played during the story as well, and the fourth player started another story.

"I heard the Queen called him up once," he said, "to do an exorcism on one of her Corgis."

"You what?" the sceptic said, mid scoff, "Everyone knows ghosts can't possess dogs."

There was another pause. The whole table turned slowly to look at him.

"Interspecies possession just seems stupid to me." the sceptic said, as if it were perfectly normal card-table conversation.

The dealer takes a card from his hand and puts it on the top of the deck,

replacing it with one from his sleeve. He's not even trying to be subtle about it, but nobody seems to notice.

"Maybe the ghost was a Corgi ghost. Like the dog died and possessed it's babies or something."

The dealer laughed and placed his hand of four aces on the table, "It wasn't the Corgis, it was the Queen Mum. She came back as a bloody zombie and kept jumping out at tour groups. You can't imagine how much they paid to keep people quiet. Four aces by the way."

"What?!" the second player look at his hand, "Crap. I thought I had two aces, but these are a seven and a Jack. Don't know what I was thinking. You win again John, just like the last ten hands."

"Yeah I do." John said with a smug grin on his half-lit face he gathered up the enormous pile of money in front of him and pocketed it, "I should probably be going, I don't want to lose to this cheating bugger any more." John pointed with his thumb to the sceptic as he left the room, pulling a pack of Silk Cut from his pocket.

"Yeah, he's right!" Player two shouted, standing up and facing off against the man to his right, "You cheating wanker, you've not lost a round!"

The sceptic stood up and an ace fell from his shirtsleeve, "This is not what it looks like..." He said, pleading in his voice as the other four crowded around him menacingly.

John Constantine stood outside, leaning against the brick wall and lighting his cigarette. Chas would be here any minute to pick him up, and then John could pay him back that ton he owed him. It'd been a pretty good night all in all. He felt slightly guilty for screwing the sceptical guy, but then he'd opened his mind tonight.

"He'll never call me a bloody urban legend again," he said, to nobody in particular, "and all the other's will have a much better story to tell their mates around a smoky cards table next time they get together."

Chapter 4

Ready to Die

*The Phantom Stranger in
"Ready to Die"*
Written by Dan Johnson

*What good would a horror anthology without an appearance by... The Phantom Stranger? Nothing, that's what. So here you go, a tale of ghost and mystery from the writer of **Elseworlds: Legacies!***

For most, death marks the beginning of a journey into the afterlife, passing from one world to the next. However, for some reluctant souls, this journey can only begin once they themselves let go of living. An innocent man has been murdered, and the responsible party continues to walk free. Some have referred to me as the Phantom Stranger, and today I am here to help direct this lost soul to its rightful place, before it is too late!

The church at the top of the hill in this innocent, suburban neighborhood filled with people on the Sunday two days before the horror themed October holiday. Little did they know, a murder took place in the same location where they worship their God, the same place where they ask for forgiveness of their sins. He was 21 years old, a deaf man with a pure heart and an uncorrupted soul; a bell ringer who saw something that he wasn't supposed to see, and was killed for something he didn't even understand.

Comfortably sitting in the pews, the people were ignorant to the change in the

atmosphere. A chilling wind flowed through the house of God, but none of them would recognize the feeling of a lost soul passing by.

"Jussssstice." The whisper filled the church, echoing off the walls. At first, those who had come to this holy place were taken off guard and didn't understand what they had heard.

"JUSTICE!" The spirit screamed out as it passed through the church once more. The room flooded with terror as the people rushed out through the doors. As the scared churchgoers sprinted to their cars, the bell began to ring continuously, only ceasing when everyone was miles away.

"These people can not comprehend what you are experiencing." The Phantom Stranger approached the spirit in the bell tower from the shadows. The soul showed no resemblance of its previous form, and nothing but a ghastly white creature was left in its place. The Stranger tipped his hat upwards to reveal his silver hair. "I know you can hear me, your physical ailments make no difference in this realm." The ghost turned his head towards the Stranger to acknowledge his presence. "What is your name?"

"Ryan. Ryan Montgomery."

"I know your frustration Ryan, I have dealt with many who feel the need to resolve crimes done to themselves before moving on to the afterlife."

"I can't move on, not until the man who killed me is punished for what he did."

"And you know who is guilty of this evil deed?"

Ryan let out a sigh, "Unfortunately, no. I remember walking into the basement of the church one night and seeing a group of men in robes chanting. I didn't recognize any of them with their hoods on, and before I knew it, I blacked out and ended up here."

"Though it is not in my power to become directly involved, I will do

everything I can to help you." The Stranger said as he placed his hand onto his chin and shut his eyes. "Explain the men to me."

"The robes looked like they might have been made out of velvet, and they were cardinal red. They were also carrying these amulets, a symbol of two concentric squares, with arrows pointing to each corner. I know I've seen it before..." The Stranger opened his eyes as he heard the description of the amulets.

"The arms of chaos. You are certain that what you described is what you saw?"

"When you can't hear, you rely largely on your eyes. I can say with complete confidence that this is exactly what I saw."

"Take me to this cellar, Ryan. I may need to involve myself more than I thought."

The two descended deep into the church's underground, through many locked doors which would keep those living in the mortal plane of existence out. As they seemed to be approaching a well lit area, Ryan halted.

"I don't know if I can do this."

"What are you unsure of?"

"I'm unsure of what I'm going to do when I look into the eyes of my killer. I don't want an eye for an eye, but what if I can't stop myself from going over the edge? I don't know if I'm capable of hurting someone now that I'm... whatever it is that I am, but I don't know if I want to take the chance."

The Stranger placed a hand on Ryan's shoulder.

"There are many variables in the afterlife, which means that there is no telling to what extent you are able to come in contact with the living.

One thing that I have found in my many years of travel, though, is that a soul is never lost in the transition. If deep down, you know that you would not harm a living being, then I am certain that you will not."

The ghost replied with a nod of his head, and the two continued their descent.

They began to hear chants as they reached the final few stairs, and both Ryan and the Phantom Stranger witnessed a group of five men in red hooded robes just as they had been described. The Stranger brushed past Ryan, extending his arm and pointed at the men. "Cease your actions at once! Are you aware that the Lords of Chaos are only using you for their own gain?"

The group of men turned towards him and lowered their hoods. "You?" Ryan spoke as he took a step back in shock. "You're the priests of this church. I recognize all of you. Father Brian, Father Broome, Father Infantino... why would you do this?"

"Ryan, these are not the men that you once knew, they are but pawns of the Lords of Chaos."

In a corner of the room, a crack in the stone floor began to break apart, forming a deep hole. Flames shot out, and from the pit emerged a woman wearing a magenta dress with a large purple amulet positioned in the center of her chest.

"You are one to talk, Stranger. The last I had heard, you were still a puppet to the Lords of Order."

"Tala," the Phantom Stranger's eyes narrowed, "I should have known that you would be involved with Chaos again."

For a countless amount of years, the Lords of Order and Chaos have been in a never ending battle using their recruited soldiers. Tala, controller of one of Hell's many levels, takes joy in toying with humans and condemning them to her realm, and has been known to associate with the side of Chaos when she can gain from the partnership.

"In the past, I have attempted to corrupt individual men, but why go to all that trouble when I could corrupt those who lead by example?" Tala said. As she spoke of this, a great amount of excitement was evident in her eyes.

"Chaucer had the right idea, 'If gold rusts, what will iron do?' I doubt he expected that idea to help towards such a disgusting act." Ryan said.

"What do the Lords of Chaos gain from this?" The Stranger asked.

"They seem to be recruiting more soldiers for their idiotic war. I believe the deaf bell ringer was who they had their sights set on, though now that you have reached him, the effort seems pointless." She closed her eyes and licked her lips. "That doesn't mean I still can't play with my new followers though. Kill these intruders!" Tala yelled out, directing her minions to attack.

The hooded priests charged towards the Phantom Stranger and his ghastly companion. The Stranger pointed his hand towards one of them, and knocked them to the ground with a flash of light.

"Ryan, we must contain these men without hurting them, they must—" Before he could finish his sentence, his body was paralyzed by Tala's dark magic.

The four priests circled around Ryan, each held a mace with mysterious symbols inscribed on the handles. One of them swung at the ghost and hit his shoulder.

"Agh!" Ryan yelled out. "How did they hurt me?"

Another two men sandwiched Ryan, both ready to swing. As they lunged towards him, the spirit phased through the stone floor, causing the priests to knock each other out.

The next hooded man gripped his mace tightly, extended his empty hand towards the ghost, and threw the weapon. As it hurled through the air, Ryan held his hands out in front of his body. The mace made contact with his hands, and he winced as he held onto it. With the magic imbued

weapon in his possession, he flew forwards and jabbed it into the stomach of the now empty handed priest.

Tala approached the Stranger and caressed his cheek with her fingers.

“Why do you waste your time with these humans? This world is full of nothing but hatred and sinning, it is too tempting to not condemn them Hell where they belong.”

He balled his hand into a fist and forced his mouth open. “They are capable of great things, they only need a guiding light.”

“And you are that light?”

“When I am needed. They are stronger then you think.”

Ryan floated over to the final priest, looking the man in the eyes. The priest, hands shaking, dropped his mace and fell to his knees. “P-please, have mercy.”

“Mercy? Do you deserve it for the crime all of you have been involved in Father Broome?” Ryan said to the priest. He floated in, inches away from the man's face. “Who was it that murdered Ryan Montgomery?!” He screamed.

“It... ” the priest lowered his head in shame, “It was me.” Father Broome slapped his hands onto his face, covering his eyes. “You don't know what it's like. I'm supposed to teach by example, to be virtuous so that others will live their lives the same way. They all come to church for selfish reasons. Nobody practices what we preach. Nobody!”

“I did.”

The priest lifted his hands off of his face, showing the tears that streamed down his cheeks.

“That's not enough! She promised us power, and respect! It's more than I

could ever expect from the people who come to church on Sunday, and then forget about our teachings for the remaining six days of the week. I never wanted to involve you in this Ryan, your soul was pure, but mine has been corrupted beyond recognition.”

“It's a shame that we could not have been allies, but you have chosen your side and I mine.” Tala said to the Stranger.

“Our relationship is not a result of our alliances, it is because of your twisted perception of life. We never could have been allies.” Tala squinted her eyes in response to the Phantom Stranger's reply.

“I'm giving you two options Broome! You and your cult must turn yourselves into authorities and confess your sins, or you will never be rid of my spirit. I swear this on my soul and the God that you and I once both worshiped, I will haunt you for the rest of your life.”

The priest bowed his head. “Of course. I must pay for my actions.”

Ryan looked over to see the Stranger, still in the clutches of Tala's magic. He took the mace he had acquired from the priest and heaved it at the woman, smashing the jewel on her chest. As it shattered, she let out a scream and the Stranger was released from her hold. He lifted his arm and pointed his hand at her, which glowed with a magical light.

“Return to Hell Tala, and tell your employers that they will not take this soul.”

“It doesn't matter, there will be more. They already have their sights set on another, one by the odd name of... Massachusetts I believe. Either way, our paths will cross again, Stranger.” With her final words, Tala entered the hole in which she had come from earlier.

Close to an hour later, a crowd of news teams and random bystanders had formed outside of the church, surrounding the police officers guiding the handcuffed priests into vehicles. Father Broome turned his head and looked to the roof of the church at the Phantom Stranger and Ryan.

“I think my time here is done.” Ryan said, looking at his slowly

disappearing body. "I think I'm finally moving on."

"I wish we could have known each other under better circumstances, but my time with you has been exceptional." The Stranger replied. At this point, half of Ryan's image had dissolved.

"Wait, who are you? What is your name?"

"I have long forgotten my real name, but some recognize me as the Phantom Stranger."

"Well, whoever you are, thank you." The Stranger responded with a tip of his hat as the soul of Ryan Montgomery faded away to another life.

I have no real place in heaven or hell, though I do not belong in the mortal plane either. I do not remember my past, and I do not know what the future will bring me. One thing that I do know is that there are souls that are lost in their journey to another life, and I possess the abilities to aid them in their travels. To some I am looked at as a friend, but to others, I am no more than a helpful stranger. I do not ask for anything more than that.

End?

Chapter 5

Raven's Quest

*Manitou Raven in
"Raven's Quest"
Written by Crow*

Crow again, with another tale of mystery, this time focusing on the stange character of Manitou Raven, but as the first of two breaks from the norm in this book, I must warn you, this will be unlike anything you've read on the site, and it's all the better for it!

Into the forest, pass the mundane and norm,
darker and darker become the shadows that formed,
in a place where magic and witchery exist,
were a tribe of natives who secretly lived,
and of them, one night, a young shaman once roamed,
over death, under danger, to places unknown,
he found where trees grew crooked and craven,
when lakes were dried and sea waves end,
and out he called, mighty and brazen,
"Speak to me Fates, so speaks the Raven!"

And out came three witches, who really were one,
Weird sisters they were, from darkness they'd come,
and Raven looked to the Maiden, the Mother, the Crone,
expecting verses or curses, blood, teeth and bones,
and out from the Crone's mouth came an unexpected taunt,
she said "Okay, little man, what do you want?
You call us forth, expecting thundering and rubble,

Expecting double, double, toil and trouble,
Our time is limited, we'd like to rest,
Now give us one question a piece, and we'll try our best".

Raven's brow arched, thoroughly surprised,
But he asked his first question, thoughtfully wise,
"My tribe grows larger, bigger in size,
how can I answer their problems and cries?"
The Maiden spoke with tears in her eyes,
"You won't, tonight your tribe meets their demise",
"How" Raven asked, and said she "Not so fast,
One question, young Raven, is all that is asked".
To the Mother, he spoke, "How will my tribe meet its end?"
She gave a kind smile and said "Listen little friend,
tonight betrayal will kill your kin,
destruction and disaster follows therein",
Raven asked "Who?" and said Mother "Not so fast,
One question, young Raven, is all that is asked".
To the Crone, he said "How do I find the destructor of my tribe?"
She said "Follow your totem, and he'll be your guide",
And the witches then left, in a cloud of fire and smoke,
and in sorrow and grief did young Raven choke.

He raced home to his village, darkness below and above,
And found everyone dead, even his love.
He wept and he wept, over Dawn, his white dove,
His heart was lost with nothing left to dream of.
And for the following week did he bury each man, woman and child,
the graveyard he made stretched far pass a mile,
and when he was done praying for family and friends,
he sought retribution, he wanted revenge.
A headdress he donned, that had wisdom and sight,
and a dream catcher which recorded history and life,
and a hatchet that could cut through anything cruel,
And the magic of the earth, Raven's greatest tool.

Then a Raven did fly, up over his head,
leading him into danger, heaven forbid,
through trees and gardens and thorns and more,
through seas of monsters, and dead galore,

until he reached a fortress so tall and so wide,
that the uppermost part touched Heaven's underside.
Inside he faced ghouls who roses from the dusts,
and ghosts and banshees that were wicked and rough,
demons who sought souls and succubi, lust,
but after so long, enough was enough,
once he had killed all the monsters within,
he cried out "Come out you killer-of-children!"
But the only person who came out, was a man such as he,
he was bloodied and wounded and seeking relief,
Raven ran over, seeking to help the battered drifter,
Trying to cut open his vest; the hatchet would cut it much quicker,
But the hatchet did sink, and the man did scream,
his chest was torn by the hatchet, he was evil it seemed,
he knocked back young Raven across the reach of the room,
and began to thunder about, shouting evil and doom.

"You've stung me little shaman, when I sought to deceive,
so if you wish to live I think you should leave",
Raven arose strong, his weapons all ready,
he bravely declared "I will stand steady".
And the man laughed and bellowed "You dare think to fight?
I'll crush you and eat you for my dinner tonight,
Though I must admit, your village seemed a good meal by sight,
They tasted too pure to whet my appetite,
But your brother, oh I liked him a lot,
I guess betrayal adds spice to the pot,
For his quest to find power I gave him sin instead,
He now rots in my stomach long, cold and dead",
And then he grew and he grew, a man no more,
He was a Chief among chiefs, a giant of war,
Though Raven did fear and tremble in place,
He looked up into the giant's giant face,
and he steadied his hand for Heaven's embrace,
And leaped nimbly into death with honor and grace.

And because his heart was pure, his ravens returned,
they added fire to his touch, oh the giant did burn,
and when the shaman seemed to get pummeled or hit,
The ravens were there to defend and protect,

And soon young Raven ripped open the giant Chief's chest,
And the spirit of the universe did manifest.
It spoke to young Raven, to gather his wit,
and soon materialized as a shaman's medicine stick.
And the giant was scared, he knew he would die,
because young raven had learned the secret of life.
"Great Destroyer" Raven yelled, "You sought to defeat,
But my tribe lives in me vengeful and free",
And came from Raven a mighty force to behold,
the spirits of the dead, all too brave and too bold,
And they brought down the giant chief, they ripped him apart,
Raven had lived, but something died in his heart.

And then a spirit did form, in the shape of a bird,
thunderous and powerful, a voice to be heard.
It said "Young Raven, a human you are nevermore,
you will live as a Manitou, always and sure,
to live as a man, but to judge as a god,
to destroy the wicked as my divine rod".
And into its wings did new Manitou embrace,
realizing now he had fell into fate,
and for hundreds of years did he sleep in a void,
in the dream walking realm that he used to enjoy,
And he trained and he trained, asleep yet awake,
Waiting for someone to wake him from his grave.
And though millennia passed since Raven's descent,
the time had come for his earthly advent.
So all you evil and wicked, watch with who you grudge,
because soon you may be hunted and judged.
While humans may be kinder and willing to move on,
Manitou Raven will give you a devil's reward.

Chapter 6

The Mercy of Monsters

The Mercy of Monsters
By Brandon Herren

Mister Herren, our Creative Director, returns to the fiction fore front with this fantastic tale of Frankenstein and another horrific creature from the depths of fear itself!

Part 1: Dark Dealings

“Could it be...?” The voice rasped with nervous hesitation, “that you are not a monster?”

The creature stirred slightly. He swayed only a little by his arms stretched above him to the shackles above. Large drops of water streamed down his cheek from where they dripped on the back of his head. At first he wondered if the voice had been a hallucination, a phantom in a mind long starved from sensations of the outside world. He glanced upward to the long stairway that wound down into his dungeon and squinted against the piercing light that outlined a lone advancing figure.

“Could it be you are not simply an abomination of one man’s sin, an arrogance unleashed on the world of men, but rather something else?” The skinny man navigated each footfall carefully, placing his shoe down as not to slip on the moss and slime covering each step. His formal dress

implied that he was a gentlemen of some standing in the nearby village. His voice bounced and echoed around the dank stonework. "What if you are something more?"

The creature raised his head fully in attention of hearing those words, and the man caught his first full glimpse of the monster with a gasp. He placed his foot down as distracted and slipped for an awkward moment before catching himself on the stone wall.

"You still believe I am not a monster?" The creature's voice cracked dryly like the last fallen leaves of autumn. His already shocking features highlighted with dirt and grime.

"M-my God..."

"No. No stranger. God has nothing to do with me."

The man approached slowly now, awestruck by the thing in front of him. "I-it's.... it's just that I... I wasn't sure you see... I'm an educated man of the 19th century. I've been to university. When the village people said that you were a daemon, I expected a monstrous abomination of a man, yes, but a man still nonetheless. B-but... you really are something else aren't you?" The man looked at the scars of stitch-work covering the creature in front of him.

The creature shifted now to steady his weight. His clothes were rotten rags, the stench of which almost overwhelmed the pervasive odor of must and mold in the constantly damp hole that had been the home of the reanimated man for months. "Why?"

The man searched the gray and dirt-smeared face of the thing that half-hung from thick iron bonds in as much awe as horror. "Why? Why are you here?" He squinted thoughtfully at the captive. "That is a thought of some complexity. My daughter was correct in her discussion of you. You are a being of some cognizance."

"No." The creature's voice was now clearer, and gaining strength. "Why... have you come here? Why have you put yourself in such grave peril?" He righted himself to his full height now and breathed deeply as his eyes pierced through the man.

“Oh... ah...” The man stumbled backwards in fear even with the monster in chains. “No... I...”

“You mentioned your daughter. I assume she is the same gentle child who has visited me here in my prison. Who has brought the food that has kept me alive.”

“Y-yes. It is she.” The man relaxed now at a distance. “She stole away in her hours of play unbeknownst to anyone. When I discovered her secret activity last week I was sick with fear and forbade her return. She protested in your behalf but I would have none of it.”

“But you have reconsidered...”

“Yes.” A shadow fell over the man’s face as well as the room from a cloud passing above. The streaks of light shooting through the holes in the stonework faded out. “The disappearances have begun anew. The villagers believed the villain caught when they ambushed you, but now that would seem to not be the case. No female child in this countryside is safe.”

“And so perhaps I am not the monster after all. I see. You have come here for my assistance.”

“Yes.”

The two stood for a long moment without speaking. The dripping water echoed in the recesses of the half-collapsed corridors that adjoined the subterranean prison. The man was at once aware of his fearful surroundings when a rat brushed his leg as the monster stood silently looking toward the ground.

“I will need clothes and a warm meal.”

“Of course. And what else?”

“That is all. And I will go free when this task is complete.”

The man shook his head, not entirely convinced of his answer. “Then we

have a gentlemen's agreement?"

The creature made a short grunt of a laugh.

"And..." The man jumped in. "Just one more thing. If we are to be as partners in this dreadful affair, I would like to know your name."

"My name?" The creature stopped on the question for a moment as if genuinely unsure of the answer. "That would be a simple matter had my creator bothered to present me with one. I can only be called one thing as the need has arisen, to carry the name of my father as a curse like the very life he so thoughtlessly and arrogantly bestowed upon me, and has suffered so dearly for. My name is Frankenstein."

"So it is true. I had heard whispers while among the academia during my last visit, hushed rumors and ghastly secrets of the doctor's mad experiments... And I scoffed at their foolishness. How was I to know that when I returned I would find you." The man reached to the inside pocket of his coat to retrieve something as he moved forward. "Here. Let us remove your bonds." He produced a key and showed it to the creature.

Frankenstein didn't notice as he looked down again and his body tensed. The muscles beneath his rough green-gray skin flexed tightly and he planted one booted foot forward. The heavy irons went taut and groaned in defiance briefly before the masonry holding them shifted. There was a low scraping sound as the entirety of the ancient castle keep above seemed to move under the creature's power. The rock holding his restraints gave to the pressure and exploded. What was left of the wall crumbled as he moved freely forward. He brought one hand over to twist off the bolting mechanism and did the same for the other arm and the shackles fell with a clatter on the floor.

"You could have fled at any time?" The man's senses reeled as his mind tried to keep up with each new astonishment. "Why did you stay here?"

"I had no reason to leave, no purpose to pursue. Where is a thing such as myself to go in this world?"

The man watched as he could see expression now in the creature's face for the first time. It was one of a stressed burden as he now stood free on

the world once again, as if he immediately regretted regaining his freedom and was now lost.

"Now you have a purpose. Come. I have a barn where you can rest and fill your stomach before the dark dealings of the night hours to come."

Part 2: Without Pity

The dark shape sped through the chilled wind, creeping between the buildings and homes of the small community. Even with a burden over its shoulder nearly its size, it moved effortlessly and with an unnatural speed. Its large, dark eyes glinted with the moon's light as it glanced around hastily. Its clothing was as black as the shadows it moved in and out of and there was little to betray his presence to the watchmen at both ends of the main road. A flash of lightning illuminated its pallid face for scant seconds before it moved again.

In moments the shadow was advancing silently over the leaf-strewn ground of the hillside beyond the village. The young girl it carried as its cargo stirred in and out of consciousness as the first drops of rain hit her cheek. She tried to call out for help but was unable to summon the will. She saw the ground rushing underneath and the felt boney, claw-like hands wrapped around her legs. Somewhere in her nascent thoughts she was aware that she was to be the next victim of the mysterious predator.

As the kidnapper topped the hillside another flash of lightning revealed the shape of a large man directly blocking its route. The dark thing attempted to leap over its opponent but was caught by the throat and forced back down to damp earth, now alleviated from its captive. The thing hissed and thrashed wildly at being interrupted from its mission.

The creature set the girl down as she quickly regained her senses. His face was obscured by a wrap of material. "Do not panic. Run back to your family as fast as you can."

The girl breathed hard as she stumbled clumsily in her first steps and

was quickly gone.

Frankenstein turned his attention back at the thing beneath him. Its countenance was almost without color, accented only by yellow eyes and dingy, pointed teeth, the two in the front being more pronounced and of irregular length. Without hair, its only other features were pointed ears, a crooked nose, and misshapen brow. "You're nothing more than vermin."

The thing tore at his sleeve and swiped the cloth from his face before letting out a seething gurgle that strung into a sibilance of words. "The masster will be angry... you musst let me beeee..."

"Where is he?" The creature spread his fingers like a claw and pressed them into the vampyre's chest just over his heart.

"No. I can't tell you. He'll kiiiiilll meeeee..."

"I'm going to kill you. It's only a matter of how painful this will need to be." He pushed hardly, forcing his fingers into the necrotic flesh with a squirt of thinly-colored plasma.

"Aiiiiiiiiieeeee!!! No! No, sssstooooop!"

"Where?" The creature's voice was flat and without pity. He pushed his hand deeper into the thing's chest.

"Aaaaiiii! Cursssse you." The vampyre's already horrible countenance twisted into new terrible expressions. "Over... o-over the next valley. The manor... in the foothillsss..."

Frankenstein closed his fingers and crushed the vampyre's heart. Its shriek was cut short as its body rapidly degenerated into dust.

As the girl reached the edge of her village she heard the horrible screams of her would-be captor echo through air, sounds she would carry with her until her dying day.

Part 3: Frankenstein vs. The Vampyre

Lord Ruthven sat and watched the downpour through the large glass doors. A low-burning fire crackled in the hearth behind him while his head rocked back and forth, as if the pattering of the heavy drops outside were in time with some unheard spectral symphony. His appearance was well-kept and his fanciful attire one of undue privilege. The Lord's light skin was off-set by his striking ebon hair that flowed around his long, thin face. Ruthven's cool gray eyes stared with piqued interest as a shape approached in the strobe of the electric storm.

The large man continued without pause along the length of the yard and then unimpeded through the doors, shattering them as he progressed inside. Frankenstein stopped in front of his enemy.

"You are not at all who I was expecting. A loyal minion or torch-bearing mob yes, but what are you?" The Lord's eyes flared at the remarkable thing in front of him.

"I am Hell's mercy, fiend." The soaked creature stood dripping and unmoving.

"A fiend am I? So that would make you God's avenging angel? A vengeance set upon the earth to strike down the wicked for past sins perhaps?" Ruthven laughed.

"Perhaps."

The self-proclaimed Lord continued, his level demeanor never wavering. "Or a shambling beast. Some accursed fool brought on by some misbegotten sorcery, left to roam without direction in man's world. A lost soulless thing. Why do you take this cause with me? Extraordinary beings such as we should stand united."

"I do not think so. I may be many things, neither desirable nor of worth, but I am not a parasite."

"Then know my power!" Lord Ruthven launched from his chair on the

creature with blinding speed, clawing and shredding an intermingled mess of cloth and flesh.

The creature only gritted his teeth and shot out an arm, catching one of the vampyre's own and hurling him back into a bookcase and sending a jumble crashing to crash on the floor with Lord Ruthven. The vampyre hissed and flew back at the creature, locking onto his shoulders with its claws.

"You cannot kill me! I have lived for centuries, preying on the weak and feeble creatures of this world. We will one day rise as the masters of these pitiful humans and all will do our bidding!" Ruthven reared back with a hiss as his now pronounced fangs came down into the creature's neck.

Frankenstein stumbled to one side and into a table, crashing through and down to the tiled floor. Another lightning flash illuminated the vampyre's face as he recoiled in disgust. He spat the creature's blood out as if it burned his mouth. Frankenstein reached over to grab a jagged leg of the destroyed table and shoved it forward. The vampyre writhed and shifted, causing the stake to miss the heart and driving into the middle of its chest instead. The vampyre's appearance grew hideous and less human now. The Lord's eyes burned red and his features were sharp and horrific.

"I will kiiiiilll you!" The vampyre swiped at the creature's throat but Frankenstein reached out with both hands and seized the thing's head on both sides.

"Perhaps I have found a purpose after all. I may be an abomination, but there are far worse things under heaven than I." His grip tightened on the vampyre's skull and it squealed in pain.

"No! I am an immortal! Where is your mercy now?" Ruthven clawed and lacerated the monster's arms frantically. Dark streams of blood ran freely down the creature's arms.

"Mercy is for men. And we are monsters." Frankenstein jerked his hands to the right, twisting and snapping the vampyre's head from his shoulders. Gore sprayed out of the neck of the vampyre's spasmodic

body as Frankenstein kicked it away. He continued to squeeze the head between his large hands as it cracked and collapsed into a pulpy mess before suddenly eroding into dust.

Frankenstein rose to his feet and surveyed the room to find the man from before in the ruined doorway. He stepped inside and looked around.

"You've done, Frankenstein. You've freed us from this scourge. There are not words to express our gratitude."

"Why did you follow me?" The creature wiped blood from his neck and arms with the remnants of Ruthven's clothes.

"I, uh, I needed to be sure. Certainly you understand. I could not rest until I knew."

The creature nodded. "You are lucky to have a family to care for."

The man stepped through the wrecked interior. "These books. Some of them are very old. I've never seen anything quite like them. It must have been the vampyre's collection." The man shuffled through the pile on the floor. He raised one archaic volume without a label and flipped its yellowed pages. "Oh my. Fantasmagoria, daemons, incantations... "

"Take them. I plan to set this house afire when I depart."

"Yes." The man flipped the pages and stared in disbelief. "My son Abraham has become quite taken in all of the supernatural goings on in these past months, much to my chagrin. If only I could keep him as interested in his course work."

The monster wrapped a piece of drapery onto another broken table leg and laid it beside an oil lamp. The rainfall outside lessened as the storm was finally passing.

The man closed the book and put it inside his coat. "Where will you go?"

"I do not know."

"I am forever indebted to you, Frankenstein. If you ever need help..."

Seek me out."

The monster stopped and nodded at the man in agreement. "What do I can call you, 'man who does not believe in monsters'?"

The man was taken aback as it almost looked like the creature had the barest hint of a smile.

"My name is Van Helsing."

The End

Chapter 7

Some Kind of Monster

Scare Tactics in
"Some Kind Of Monster"
Written by John Elbe

Mr Elbe, editor of... Many, many things on the site, and also the writer of Suicide Squad and the Blue Devil serial in Showcase, sent in two startling stories that you are about to read, and so, for the first, prepare to rock, as we join the greatest band in the DC2, Scare Tactics...

*'... We all have to live! We all have to die! But death is bliss!
You all want one thousand more years of this?
You all want one thousand more years of this?
You all want one thousand more years of this?
We don't need you blessing!
We don't want your frakin' blessing!
Your youth is gone and you're just deprecating!
America! America! America!
You failed the mil-len-nium!
Mil-len-nium!
Mil-len-nium!
America! America!
America...You failed the millennium!'*

"That was the monster new single from the Scare Tactics called 'You

Failed the Millennium' off their upcoming album 'Freak of the Week'. You are listening to the graveyard shift with your ghoul of the night, DJ Dark. And, as promised, we have in studio with us the man behind the monsters, Arnie Burnsteel, the manger of Scare Tactics. Thanks for hanging out with us at this ungodly hour, Arnie."

"Thanks for having me." Burnsteel said, leaning toward the microphone in front of him.

"Now Arnie, we've been teasing all three of our listeners for hours that you had a surprise for us. Can you elaborate?"

"I can indeed Dark! I brought some friends with me who might be persuaded to play for your listeners here live, as a sorta kickoff for their show tomorrow night at the Gotham City Coliseum, where they will be the opening act for the band Bloodless Crank as they kick off their world tour."

"Well, there you have it folks! Scare Tactics will be live in studio next so stay tuned."

Everything had happened so quickly. Her mother had woken her from a sound sleep. Her mothers trembling hand covered her mouth. Within seconds Nina had been made aware of what was happening. They had returned. Their bloodlust would not be sated until one of their kind had been sacrificed. How many had lost their lives so far? Fifty? One hundred? What would it take to put an end to the senseless violence?

They thought she was too young to understand but she listened to the stories around camp about how their kind had lived a veiled existence for years. They only existed on the lips of parents who chose to keep their children well behaved using fear. Fearful that if they misbehaved, the sinister creatures of the night would come and take them away while they slept soundly in their beds. That was the case until a small group grew restless. They were no longer content with feeding on small prey.

They had overstepped their bounds and blood spilled out into the city streets. It was immediately apparent that this small group's uncontrollable lust had cost all of them their peaceful existence just as a world war was breaking out.

They called themselves crusaders but to everyone else in the world, they were nazi's. These nazi's swept through the countryside and into the mountains in pursuit of the creatures that violated their people. Some fled, while others died immediately during daring daylight raids on their dwellings. In the end, they were the fortunate ones. The ones that remained were rounded up and placed into camps. Lager der vampires or camp of the vampires.

Nina felt a hand reach out and firmly grip her shoulder. It was her father who held her still while five or six nazi soldiers poked their rifles and spat at the girl who frantically struggled to release herself from her bonds. They came into the camp unannounced and grabbed the first one they saw. Saying nothing, they took this girl and drug her out of camp to the small clearing on the hillside. They held her down and Nina flinched as each spike was driven deeper into the ground. The helpless girl continued to pull at her shackles but to no avail, the chains that bound her were now also secured to the hillside.

Nina began to pull herself up the gate, but felt her fathers grip tighten as he leaned down to whisper in her ear, "There is nothing more we can do my child. She is lost to us now."

The sunlight was now beaming through the trees and the group behind the fenced in area began to move back into the few shadows that still remained. Nina took both of her hands and held firmly onto the gate. She couldn't leave her to die alone. She squinted as she watched the girl give up her struggle. Their eyes met and the girl mouthed something so quietly that only one of their kind would be able to hear.

"Go Nina. Be brave. Never be afraid."

Nina felt the warmth of the sun begin to singe her exposed skin. Her father finally was able to pull her away from the gate and drag her behind him. Nina was forced to close her eyes and she began to scream. "No Cecania! My beautiful sister! No!"

“Nina? NINA!”

“WHAT!” She shouted as she wiped the tear off of her cheek and turned around.

“Nina, I am nervous.” Slither said as he began to pace in the small room they occupied in the Gotham City radio station.

“What?” She growled back at him.

“He’s worried about the performance here tonight.” Fang said to no one in particular.

“He’s worried about the performance? Why on mothers earth would he be worried about that?” She began to pace behind Slither, who nervously looked behind him. “I mean the fact that we have a vampire, a werewolf, and a couple of mutants pretending to be a rock band...”

“Nina there is no reason to yell.” Fang said nervously.

“NO! I am not even finished yet!” She turned Slither around and pointed her finger in his face, “No reason to worry that the little government freak show we broke you out of could come out of the shadows and take you back...no, your worried about a live radio performance that we don’t even do for real. If it wasn’t for our little sorceress friend who cast spells that allow us to play in this little charade, we wouldn’t even be able to pull off this or any other show we do!”

“I think you sing pretty.” Grossout muttered from the corner he sat in.

“Shut the frak up! All of you, just for one minute!” she shouted before slowly pulling her finger from the face of the trembling Slither.

“Hey. Speaking of, where is out favorite sorceress Azarathia at?” Fang

said looking around "It's almost showtime."

"Probably spending as much time as possible away from you freaks!" Nina screamed as she headed toward the door, "Just stay quiet and sit tight. I will go find her so we can get this over with."

She slammed the door behind and no one moved from where they either sat or stood.

When Nina found her, Azarathia was down the hall, in an unoccupied office. She paused at the door when she heard voices coming from inside the room. Nina became enraged at what she heard and quickly kicked the door in and stood face to face with the startled sorceress.

"Who the hell were you communicating with bitch?" Nina screamed.

"Who do you think you are barging in here like..."

"Can it, witch! I heard enough! You were telling them where we were at!"

"Why would I do that? Why would I risk your well being as well as my own?" Azarathia took a step back as Nina edged closer to her "It's been my spells that have allowed your little band to exist without anyone knowing that you're all the freaks you only pretend to be on stage. I allow you interact out in public as normal looking humans!"

"I think maybe you've grown tired of being a groupie and are willing to cut a deal."

Nina's speed surprised Azarathia as she tackled the woman to the ground. Nina quickly clamped her hand over the sorceress's mouth. "Shhhh. No hocus-pocus. I am going to enjoy this." She whispered as she took her other hand and pulled Azarathia hair back and exposing her neck.

"Nina stop!" Fang yelled from the open doorway. "What are you doing?"

"The bitch sold us out! They will be coming for us any minute now!" She stood up as Azaratha's lifeless body fell to the side.

"Why? How?" he said shaking his head. "It doesn't matter now. But without her spells keeping us hidden, it won't be long before...what do we do now?"

Nina slowly licked the blood from her lips, "We run."

The beginning!

Chapter 8

The Last Stop

Night Force in
"The Last Stop"
Written by John Elbe

Here we go again... !

A door slowly opened and a man stumbled through. He was slightly disoriented as several fragrances rushed to his nostrils. The room was dark except for the fire that burned in the fireplace on the far side of the room. He took several steps forward as he tried to get his wits about him.

"I have been waiting for your return doctor." A voice spoke from a chair near the fireplace.

The man took several more steps until he found an empty chair next to the man and he slowly sat down. "Your Night Force is dead Baron. I am the only one who survived."

Baron Winters leaned forward in his chair. "That is not the case, Doctor Seven."

"The mission...everything went wrong. I was separated from the others." Doctor Seven muttered as he stared at the dancing flames in the fire.

“Your being, as well as your judgment, have been corrupted Doctor. You shouldn’t have deceived me.”

Doctor Seven looked somewhat shocked at the statement. “I don’t know what you are implying Baron, but I ensure you that I didn’t deceive you in the least bit. Tannarak was threatening the balance of chaos and order. I enlisted your help because I knew you would want to ensure that the balance remained.”

“The only thing Tannarak threatened was you and your position in the magic community. You attempted to use me and my Night Force to banish a foe you were too weak to face on your own. Now you have paid the ultimate price for your trickery. Though it may seem like a few short days that you’ve been gone, I ensure you it was much longer. The others returned on a night much like this over thirteen years ago.”

“Thirteen years? But I...”

“In the time you’ve been gone your wife remarried and then shortly after died in a plane crash. That occurred seven years ago. Your son took over your business but was gunned down by the Yakuza in San Francisco after making commitments he could not keep. Afterward, they burned your club down to the ground. Your daughter married four years back, but without any other family members to support her, she died of a heroin overdose while whoring herself out on the streets of Los Angeles.”

Doctor Seven glared at Baron Winters. He was sickened with the fact that he knew Baron was telling the truth. “I should kill you for what you have done to make my family suffer so Winters”

“You chose to upset the balance of chaos and order by going after someone you had no right to. I am not the Phantom Stranger. I do not believe in justice. I deal only in balance. I am not a fair or forgiving man. You deal in parlor tricks when you should have played the hand that was dealt you. I may not be fair, but I do believe that man controls his own destiny. Yours was taken out of your hands and left to fate. And fate sometimes has a cruel sense of humor.” Baron Winters paused

before he continued, "As for killing me, maybe you feel you should, but cannot. Not here at least, and I don't plan on leaving this mansion any time soon."

Doctor Seven continued to stare into the fire. Unable to either speak or move. He was completely unsure what to do next as Baron Winters stood up and reached out for a poker that leaned against the mantel. He then took a step and stood over the Doctor who slouched in his seat.

"I am going to offer you a deal. There are two doors behind me not too unlike the one you returned here through. You must choose to go through one of them. Behind one door is kingdom of heaven. You will spend forever with your family and experience nothing but bliss for all eternity. Knowing full well that you've lost thirteen years and that your family suffered in your absence. Behind the other door is your life...thirteen years ago, with a chance to make everything right with all the knowledge you have learned here today of their lives in your absence. Having you in their life does not guarantee the outcome will be better; it could very easily turn to the worse for you and them. But before you choose, let me tell you a tale about another man who had to make a choice not too unlike the one you are facing. The tale may appear familiar at first, but please indulge me for I was there and I know what really occurred."

In a time long past, there lived a beautiful princess. This princess had taken to a stranger from a far off land. They quickly began a clandestine affair. Their love for one another could not be put to question but they were fearful that if the king had gotten word of their liaison he would make the consequences dire for both of them.

For quiet some time, the couple embraced every moment they could steal and counted every heartbeat before they were together again. They dare not speak of what the future would hold but would relish in the moments they had together. But the young man knew that the time would come when the princess's soul would become as restless as her spirit and she would no longer be content to make love in the shadows of a kingdom her father ruled over. The man knew that he would have to conjure up enough bravery to confront the king and announce

his intentions with his daughter. Before he had a chance to confront the king, word had gotten out of their affair. The man was swiftly taken away and imprisoned. The king would soon decide on his fate.

The king believed he ruled fairly over his kingdom and the manner in which he extracted justice he felt was equally as fair. No one dared argue with the manner that the court of justice was held; instead the king's people celebrated it as a special occasion. People would come from all over the kingdom to observe the circus of events as they unfolded in the vast amphitheater.

After a few short days of imprisonment, the man was brought before the king to receive his verdict. In the hours and days before the ceremony, the man had learned how the king would deliver his judgement. At first, the man had hope that he might be able to persuade the king to forgo punishment and allow him to take the princesses hand in marriage. But as more details were passed on to him he knew that wouldn't be the case.

Now he stood before the king and his court. He bowed before the king but his eyes were focused on his beloved the entire time. He hadn't seen her since he was locked up. He ached with the thought of running to her and fleeing together hand in hand. Alas, he knew that fate had something else in mind for both of them. He would be forced to make a choice between the two doors that lie before him and she would be forced to watch whichever event that occurred next. Two doors. His choice to make. Innocent or guilty? On the inside of one door would be a beautiful woman, it was certain she would be amongst the fairest in the land. As a reward for his innocence they would be wed in a beautiful ceremony that would immediately follow. Behind the other door lie his punishment for being found guilty. He would be faced with the fiercest tiger in all the land. It was certain that the creature would devour him without a moments hesitation after the door opened. It was in his hands now whether he would be found guilty or innocent.

After bowing to the king he began the long trek across the dirt floor of the arena. The crowd fell silent as he advanced toward the identical doors in front of him. He did not break his gaze from the face of the beautiful princess. He knew that she must hold the knowledge of what lie behind each door. As he neared the point where he must head toward one door or the other, he noticed a swift but subtle motion with her hand. If he had more time, he would analyze what choice she would want for him. Was their love true? Would she be able to bare seeing him in the arms of another. Would she rather he be with no one else but her and

send him into the mouth of the creature?

She motioned to the right and with out hesitation he reached out and opened the door...

"I am more than aware of the tale, *The Lady or the Tiger*." Doctor Seven stated, "I don't see the point in this or this charade any longer."

"This not a charade my friend, but I will tell you something they leave out every time the story is retold. The point of the tale isn't what choice she was making for him but what choice he ultimately made for himself. The choice I have had to live with everyday since opening that door."

"What?" Doctor Seven quickly turned toward Winters, "You want me to believe that it was you who inspired that story?"

"I would prefer to think that when I told the story to Frank Stockton he choose to relay the tale within the spirit it was told to him. Now I would think it wise that you make your choice as well." Baron spoke as a very large royal bengal tiger moved out of the dark shadows of the corner and stood next to Baron Winters, "I am not sure it is in your best interest the you linger for long since it appears that Merlin here has woken from his nap and is looking to feed."

Doctor Seven slowly stood up has he glanced down at Merlin and then at Baron Winters. It appeared that he was going to say something and then thought the wiser of it. He slowly turned away and walked toward the two doors that had been presented to him. Without hesitation he opened the door on the left and stepped through. The door swiftly closed behind him.

Merlin looked up as he changed back into his more familiar form, an African leopard. "Was it just for effect or were you trying to imply that I would eat that retched human being?"

"I was growing tired of him and it was time for him to go." Baron said stroking his companion on the head.

“What door do you think he choose?” Merlin inquired.

“The one I wanted him to choose, of course.”

THE END

Chapter 9

Slasher Flick

Doctor Occult in
"Slasher Flick"
Written by Charlie Wilkins

Thought I'd throw my hat in the ring and introduce to you a prelude to the miniseries starring Doctor Occult! Debuting in the new year, with covers by Borize and back ups by Crow, you'd be foolish to miss out on Til My Dying Time! But if you can wait, here you go, the penultimate tale of our anthology...

It's the sound at first. The drip-drip of water falling loudly to the gutter. The drip-drip of something, but what, she does not know, the screaming in her own ears deafening, preventing her from thinking. All she can concentrate on is the drip-drip. The drip-drip of water, she tells herself. Water. It's been raining, it must be water, flowing through the drains and falling to the gutter. But then memory, realisation... The claws that she saw, the flesh rending talons... The drip-drip of blood, she grimaces, the drip-drip of what's soon going to happen to her.

Death. Pain. Torture.

All of the above and with that... She realises the screams are her own. Her throat burning and her blood boiling. Her nails dig into her palm as her hand is clenched in a tight fist. The pain distracts, but not from the obvious, the drip-drip of blood, of water, and the thundering steps of

something following her. Her screams dull, the pain too, and then she stops, hesitation, the thundering footsteps behind her in the distance, but in front of her, just there, nowhere else... A house. Had she ran so fast? Had she left the city and entered the suburbs? Was it possible? Probably not, but the thundering footsteps and the drip-drip that haunts her aren't possible either, so who's to complain?

The door opens with ease, the door hinges whine, all contributing to the cacophony of terror that plagues her. Every little detail, every little squeak and squeal, every thundering footstep and drip-drip, all of it, and her screams, dying down, that make the tears fall, drip-drip. She scrambles into a room, darkness, nothing, all pitch black, all silent, except the thunderous footsteps that plague her, the drip-drip long gone, apart from the gentle sound of something falling, something silent...

It returns, closer, the drip-drip. Steps thunder, droplets falling, and then, he sniffs the air. Takes in the scent, and she whimpers. Could he smell her? Could the creature that stalks her so smell the fear secreted by her skin, her soul? Who knew, but as the clawed hand slowly pushes open the door, and his muzzle and teeth glint in the light of the fireplace, she knows it is the end. Wait, she thinks, wait she thinks as she realises that something has changed, something is amiss... The fireplace, the smell... All new, all old yet just so recent, just so appearing in the room that she thought empty.

"Visitors, I assume?" The voice, like silk, like pureness, but deep, a man's, brave, but flawed? Maybe, she cannot think, the fear in her mind screaming at her to run, to run. But she cannot, the creature now visible in the flickering light of the fire. But what manner of creature, that stands on two legs but roars with it's teeth bared, with blood tangled up in its brown fur? What manner of creature indeed? "It seems that I am welcoming both welcome and unwelcome, but it does not matter." Why does he speak so elegantly, when he clearly can see that there is a creature in front of him that defies all logic? Is he blind? Surely he must be, to act so calmly. "I'm a Doctor, you see, a Doctor of something you must be very familiar with." The man scratches his chin, and then steps up to the growling creature, and with one swift movement, passes his hand through it's chest. Not punched through, not clawed, ripped, rend,

simply passed, like a hand through water, so effortlessly. "Doctor Richard Occult, at your service." He frees his hand, no blood on him, no obvious marks that he just put his hand in the chest of a hell beast, or whatever it is... "Silver, holly, ivy, all that, ridiculous ideas when you can simply... " The creature howls, blood of its own, black blood, oozing out, oozing, oozing slowly, it's own black blood, and then with that final howl of defiance it falls, dead, last breath gone, taken, lost. "... Remove the heart of the problem?" He smiles, the heart in his hand still beating, a massive misshapen lump of muscle, and with that he clicks his fingers, and it's gone in a puff of smoke, a puff of smoke, the creature dead at his feet, the girl, tears in her eyes, the drip-drip returning, loud, obvious. "He'd make a nice new rug, if I dare say." The smile fades as he sees the pain, sees the pain inside her, and then shakes his head. "I'm sorry, I'm sorry... This isn't the time for jokes... What's your name, miss?"

"Rose."

Doctor Richard Occult's eyes widen, and then he clicks his fingers again, the young woman gone, vanished to her home, no memory of the ordeal, the experience, and with that, the dear doctor, so alone now, so alone for some reason only he and his inner demon know, sits back in his chair, the fire flickering. "The House of Mystery... Brings bad memories..." He grits his teeth, purses his lips for a moment, and then wipes the forming tear away from his eye. "Oh Rose..." Drip-drip. The drip-drip of tears.

So alone now, so alone in the House of Mystery, resting place for the damned.

The End, for now...

Chapter 10

The Final Word

The Final Word

It's been a strange ride, and here we are, the final tale... And remember when I said, a while ago, about two breaks from the norm? Well we've seen one from Crow, so I think it's time that you have your second, in Mark Bower's finale to our anthology...

On this Halloween, just as on every other Halloween, they would gather at midnight, swapping their stories, but eventually, as would always happen, the tales of horror would finally end.

But that's all they were - tales. The real horror began when the tales of the unexpected ended. That's when the really unexpected thing happened. It was inevitable.

They all waited nervously, just as they always did, for the unforeseeable event that was about to happen.

Cain glanced over at Destiny, who was frantically flicking through his book, desperate to find a page that would tell him what fate had in store this time.

Meanwhile, Abel looked over at Mordred, Mildred and Cynthia, who were casting yet more protection spells that were doomed to failure.

Eve just sat there. After all these years, she and her sons should have gotten used to it by now, but they never did. No matter how many tales they told, someone else always had to have the last word. And so she closed her eyes, and waited once again for the unexpected. She didn't know what it would be, but she knew what it would sound like.

Plop!

If you enjoyed these stories, you can find more tales of your favorite DC heroes at DC2 Universe

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From the same author on Feedbooks

Detective Comics Annual #1 (2006)

The explosive second year of Bat-titles starts here with three exciting tales written by the new creative teams on Batman & Detective Comics:

"Wings on Fire"

With Gotham City barely recovered from the Crisis, Firefly arrives to burn it down! Who is Firefly? And even more importantly, what is his connection to up and coming crime boss Oswald Cobblepot?

"Gotham Nights"

Bruce Wayne and Dick Grayson are invited to the Gotham Hyde Civic Center during it's grand reopening after the Apokolips War. Bruce is hoping for a quiet evening and a chance to improve his image but when new and old faces alike make an appearance and a deadly threat is uncovered, you know it's not going down without a hitch!

"For Love and Money"

Get inside the heads of two very different members of the GCPD in this back-up tale featuring James Gordon and Harvey Bullock.

DC2 Showcase Holiday Special (2006)

Seasons greetings from the DC2!

Take a peek at several tales that span across the DC2 universe this holiday season. It's a time for celebrating with family & friends, spreading good cheer, and maybe a few surprises along the way!

Crisis: The Apokolips Imperative (2006)

This is it! The collected first mega-event to rock the DC2 Universe as the eternal struggle between The New Gods and the forces of Darkseid comes to Earth!

DC2 Showcase #1 (2006)

The classic anthology title that started the silver age makes its DC2 debut. Showcase kicks off DC2's second sensational year with four brand new tales from every corner of the DC2 universe:

Mechanical Dreams: Part 1 (of 3)

Written by: Legacy:

A familiar character makes their DC2 debut with a tale that

reveals his traumatic origin. Find out who it is in part one of a three-part tale.

Batman: Curfew

Written by: Kevin Hill:

When three young boys are caught out after dark, they discover that their only hope of rescue from the horrors of Gotham City lie in the hands of the modern myth, the Batman!

Blue Devil: Hollywood Nights: Part 1 (of 3)

Written by: John Elbe:

A soap star, a reality TV actress wannabe, and a script doctor, all share a house in West Beverly Hills with Daniel Patrick Cassidy, a special effects/stuntman who is about to accept the role that will change his life forever on the new movie, Blue Devil.

Superman: Obituary: Part 1 (of 3)

Written by: Julian Balrup:

After the recent grueling battle that was Crisis, Superman begins to evaluate his life and decides to take it upon himself to write his own Obituary. Writing as Clark Kent, he chronicles key moments in his life that shaped him to become the hero that we know him to be.

DC2 Showcase #2 (2006)

The new DC2 anthology series continues...

Mechanical Dreams: Part 2 (of 3)

Written by: Robert Harding

The DC2 introduction of Victor Stone continues. His life has been turned upside down as the mechanical dream turns into a nightmare!

Rip Hunter Lives!

Written by: Charlie Wilkins

One man travels alone in the time stream, all but lost to the world, until he's dragged into something that even he doesn't understand on the outskirts of eternity itself! Meet the new Rip Hunter as he meets the old Linear Men... Pulp action at it's finest!

Blue Devil: Hollywood Nights: Part 2 (of 3)

Written by: John Elbe

Daniel Cassidy's life appears to be looking up when he has two beautiful women fighting over him and Blue Devil the movie is back in production. But, a freak accident on the set reveals how far

someone is willing to go to get a movie made in Hollywood. Will Cassidy pay for it with his soul?

Superman: Obituary: Part 2 (of 3)

Written by: Julian Balrup

Clark has had a trial by fire, now he has a brush with the skies. Clark begins to decide how he wants to use his powers. He wonders should he use them to be mankind's savior or its ruler...

House of Mystery #2 (2007)

Happy Halloween! DC2 Universe presents a collection of nine tales featuring your favorite horror and supernatural characters such as Doctor Occult, The Shade and many more!

DC2 Special #3: A Very DC2 Christmas (2007)

The staff of DC2 come together again to give you a little taste of the holiday spirit in several stories that run the gamut of emotions. Join us as we give you our Christmas present.

DC2 Showcase #3 (2007)

The conclusion to Showcase volume one is finally here!

Mechanical Dreams: Part 3 (of 3)

Written by: Robert Harding

His life has been turned upside down by those closest to him but now he realizes what he has been made into and what will come next. As a great terror spreads through Vic Stone's life, he must decide what path to take and more critically, whose side will he join. This is the end of the beginning. Welcome Vic Stone, to the DC2.

Blue Devil: Hollywood Nights: Part 3 (of 3)

Written by: John Elbe

After being blasted with supernatural energy Dan Cassidy is trapped in the Blue Devil suit. He is now in the battle of his life on the movie set as the cameras film everything. When it's over his life will be changed forever. Will he be able to embrace his destiny when he discovers the truth about why he has become Blue Devil?

House of Mystery #3 (2008)

Happy Halloween! DC2 Universe presents a collection of six tales featuring your favorite horror and supernatural characters such as Deadman, The Phantom Stranger and many more!

DC2 Special #4: DC2 Holiday Special (2008)

DC2 Special #4: DC2 Holiday Special.

Spend some time with the both writers and artists of the DC2 & DC3 as they celebrate Christmas with several heartwarming tales... and one tale starring Ambush Bug.

If this doesn't put you in the holiday spirit, then your name must be Scrooge!

House of Mystery #4 (2009)

Happy Halloween! DC2 Universe presents a collection of four tales featuring your favorite horror and supernatural characters such as Man-Bat, The Phantom Stranger and many more!

DC2 Special #5: Another DC2 Christmas Special (2009)

Join the staff of DC2 as we celebrate another year of holiday cheer with several short stories and vignettes that will take you from a certain farm house in Kansas all the way to the very halls of the DC2 offices in New York City.

Weird Western Spectacular #1 (2010)

To commemorate the new Jonah Hex film, a stable of the writers for DC2 joined together to create not just a celebration of everyone's favorite ugly as sin bounty hunter but a plethora of Old West heroes and heroines as well.

DC2 Special #6: The Naughty and Nice List (2010)

DC2 presents our annual holiday special featuring tales that span the DC2 Universe proper as well as our DC3 multiverse and Elseworlds. Enjoy and Happy Holidays!

DC2 Special #7: The Ghosts of Christmases Past (2011)

DC2 Special: The Ghosts of Christmases Past.

Join the writers and artists of the DC2 comics fanfiction community in celebrating the holidays with this collection of superhero tales that explore the joys of the season.



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Food for the mind