



Ultimate Gotham Girls #17
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Ultimate Gotham Girls

#17: Facades, part 4

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Neither of them moved at first. Batgirl was still unsure exactly what she was facing, despite the clues she had found. Two-Face stood staring at her, that red eye narrowing and the ruined face angrier by the second as it began to understand the situation. He moved differently than Harvey did; as he stepped toward Renee, his arms swung loosely, and his legs swaggered more than they walked.

Renee shook herself out of the shock and dove to the side just as Two-Face lunged for her.

“Well well,” rasped a different voice from Harvey’s throat. “Looks like I get a visit after all...looks like Gotham’s wised up since we left...More bats flying around, breaking all the rules.”

Renee didn’t answer him. She was preparing for the fight that she knew was sure to come. There wasn’t much space in the bedroom; the overturned dresser provided an irritating obstacle by one wall, and Harvey’s bed was pressed up against another. The bookshelf by the window looked sturdy enough to hold her weight, but could easily topple and cause too much mess and damage. It would be so hard for her to keep the space she liked around herself. Her dark, watchful eyes took in all of the details that she could, without straying away from the man in front of her for more than a few seconds.

“Got you trapped, Bat,” that voice growled from her old friend’s mouth. “You’re not about to fly off and tell on me.”

“Wanna bet?” Renee allowed herself the banter, it loosened some of her tension and made her ready to fight. She turned on her deeper voice, and

hoped it was a good enough disguise.

"I'm a betting man," Two-Face twisted his lip into a sick smile.

Harvey always had feared that his worse self was stronger than his better, and now his fears seemed confirmed. No matter how he shouted in the back of his own head, Two-Face did not reach for the coin. He didn't know who the new woman was in the costume, and he didn't care why she had broken into his home. All that he knew was she was an ally, a strong one, and his other half was too close to tearing her apart so that he could go free.

Two-Face showed no outward sign of his inner struggle. He only advanced on Batgirl as she ducked around his furniture, studying his face and looking foolishly unwilling to fight him. "Aw, s'ammer? Knew me, huh? Knew the old me? Too scared to swing a fist at old Harvey?" he mocked her, holding his arms out wide. "I can take it. Fight me!"

Renee narrowed her eyes and shot out from behind the bed, flinching only slightly as her kick connected with his chest. She felt his breath give out despite the bravado, and tried not to remember how useless Harvey used to be in fistfights.

It was easy to forget, from the way that he was fighting now. As soon as the kick landed, Two-Face grabbed her leg and twisted viciously, slamming Renee to the ground much too easily. His gnarled hand sunk into her cowl, unable to break the tough fabric but still gripping and pulling at her hair, keeping her off-balance, and for a few crucial moments, unable to stand. "We're stronger now," the face grinned. "No more nice guy."

Renee gritted her teeth and forced a flip out of her body, vaulting off of the man's arm and tearing her head free, wincing but otherwise ignoring the rip of her hair. "I don't want to fight you," she said to him, taking a defensive stance again and watching every move of his eyes. "Not if I don't have to."

"Way you've been snooping," he countered, throwing an easily-ducked punch, "looks like you have to."

"I know what you've done," Renee stalled, stepping carefully over the debris on the floor as the two fighters circled.

"See, now I really can't let you go!" The voice almost cackled from Harvey's mouth, and Renee shivered to hear it. "Can't have you ruining my revenge."

"I know this isn't you, Harvey," she tried again, side-stepping another strike and responding with a punch to his arm. "I know you don't want this. I know you're in there!"

He started to laugh, and of all the cold, cruel, triumphant laughs Batgirl had ever heard, his was one of the worst. "You don't get it, do you?" He moved quickly, suddenly closing the distance between them with no regard for his possessions, and lashing out brutally at her. "I **am** Harvey! Always have been. Always will be. I'm just the part no one gets to see."

"I know Harvey Dent!" Renee ducked his hits, taking one sharp punch to her side to get a shot at his chest, putting all of her guilty feelings away. "He never would have done this. Never. He isn't a murderer!"

"No, but he wanted to be," Two-Face grinned. "You never woulda guessed. Kept me hidden for a real long time, he did. All those thoughts he didn't want to have, couldn't handle having. Even way back when. So he pretended they didn't belong to him, blamed it all on me instead!" His words were accented with more punches, the thick hand seeming not to feel the cut of glass when it crashed into a mirror instead of her head.

"Why are you telling me this?" Renee cut in, trying to duck behind him but cut off by a quick block.

"Cause it hurts to hear it," he sneered. "And you ain't getting out alive anyway." He struck out and grabbed Renee's arm, continuing to talk as he pulled it roughly behind her back. "All those thoughts...that's who I am. That part of Harvey, that murderous, criminal, depraved—"

Renee stopped his enraptured speech with a quick headbutt into his chin. "Flip your coin, Harvey," she said in a tone impossible for him to read, when she had gotten her hands free again.

The good eye narrowed and the red one burned with an even uglier look than before. "You don't tell me what to do!"

Deep in Harvey's divided mind, the better man was shaking at his bars. "Flip it!" he cried mentally, a phantasm for now, heard only to the consciousness that was moving his body, unable to do anything himself but watch and beg. "Let the coin decide!"

There was no reply on Two-Face's part, but Harvey could feel the effort it took him to resist. He wouldn't be able to hold out very long... and he would be more distracted the longer he tried.

Renee couldn't know what went on inside his head, but she could see and take advantage of his distraction. Her swift kick cracked his chin, and Two-Face staggered backwards. With a low growl, he reached into his pocket again and launched the quarter into the air. Renee's breath caught as she waited for it to land.

The metal hit his ruined hand, and he held it out with a meaner grin. Bad heads.

Renee wasted no more time before kicking him square in the chest, resolved to fight now that she knew she really had no choice. She wouldn't give him any time to recover—no matter how much Renee hadn't wanted this, Two-face was dead-set on a battle, probably to the death. Talking was no longer an option. All that she could do was fight to wound him, try to knock him out, and get a confession while she still could.

Her hand slipped into a pouch on her belt and tapped the button on her digital recorder. It might not stand up as evidence on its own, but it would certainly be a good start. "So you framed Ivy for the murders."

"After all the trouble she caused us, had to return the favor." Two-Face even chuckled as he took punch after punch, finally grabbing Renee's arm firmly. "Harv wanted her put away. I was the one with the guts to do it."

"You broke into her files," Renee continued for her recording.

“Right under Jimmy’s nose,” he laughed, wrenching Renee’s fist back and hitting it into the back of her head. She tore her arm away and ducked down into a roll, to put more room between them again, even just the few feet she could find. “Bet a lot of people are gonna regret teaching me law,” he continued. “Now I know how to escape ‘em.”

“But you didn’t.” Renee went for another kick, and Two-Face went flying over his dresser. “I’ve caught you. I know everything...Two-Face,” she hesitated only a second to use that name. “And you’re not getting away with it.”

He was sneering as he clambered to his feet, the kind of expression that Renee had never imagined on Harvey’s face. But she was past that shock now, and kept him off-balance, plucking a flash grenade from her belt and tossing it toward him, tapping the recorder again in the process. His hands came up to both his eyes, and Renee took the opportunity to race up and duck into his pocket, as he had done for so long now. She clutched the coin in her gloved hand and stood on the other side of the room, waiting to see what he would do.

Once again, he started to laugh. It was low, fast, jittering. He twisted his burned lips into a smile and faced her right down. “You didn’t want to do that.”

“Didn’t I?” Renee asked, holding her closed hand out. “Want it back?”

Harvey inside his own mind screamed “Yes!” The Harvey on the outside laughed again. “Without that damn thing I get my fresh air. Keep it!”

Renee was thrown off. Her plan had backfired, and now she was stuck. Worse, Two-Face was confident. He was stronger and quicker and more dangerous than ever, and he proved it by bolting toward Batgirl, carrying a belt from his dresser, and tossing it around her neck before she had time to react.

Her hands shot up and kept the leather from touching her skin, but he had already made it into a noose, and it was pulling tight even as Renee’s mind raced for a way out. “Harvey,” she choked, trying to keep the belt as slack as possible.

She didn't like what she was about to do, but it was her last hope. He was stronger than her, and infinitely more willing and determined to kill.

"Harvey's not here!" the voice hissed.

"Harvey...it's me," She stopped what efforts she had still been making to hide her voice. One hand still firmly keeping the belt from her neck, she reached the other for her cowl and pushed it back enough for him to see her face.

She was lucky. In his moment of shock, she freed herself and threw the belt to the side, panting. She would deal with the finger-shaped bruises later—right now, she took his still, blank expression for a good sign, and tossed the coin his way.

It was the chance he had been waiting for. In his own head, Harvey Dent had despaired when the last flip was decided. He had thought it would be impossible to convince his other side to flip again soon enough to save Batgirl. But when he had seen Renee's face under the mask seen what his own mismatched hands were doing to her, a reserve of strength that he hadn't known himself to be saving burst from his mind to overpower his dark side. He had been resigned to Two-Face's need to harm strangers, and gone along with it nearly willingly. But he would let nothing harm the few friends that he had.

The coin flip was the last it took to free him. With his heart racing, Harvey plucked the coin out of its track through the air, and looked down to see the result. The face of George Washington grimaced up at him, disapproving as George always seemed. But he was clean and free of any marks. Good heads.

He slumped exhausted to the floor and stared at her, both of them breathing deep to make up what they had lost in the fight. His eyes pleaded with her to see the change, even before he broke the silence. "Renee...help me..."

"You're back?"

"It's me," he nodded, getting unsteadily back to his feet. "I—"

"I think I know what happened," she said quietly. "Enough, at least. Harvey...God, how could you?"

He shook his head, reached his hand toward her then pulled it back. "I never would have, not without him...before he...Renee, I need help...God help me, I need Arkham. It's going to be hell but I can't leave him out here...leave me out here."

She was convinced now. The cowl was down at her neck, black hair unruly and hanging limp around her face. He was the Harvey she remembered, now.

"I won't tell anyone," he told her. "I know...your line of work needs to keep secrets."

"Thank you," she said softly. "But, *can* you keep it secret?"

Harvey's face fell farther. "I can't control what he does...just try to keep it contained. I can't anymore...I tried, believe me I tried."

"I believe you. I'll try to get you in solitary...for both our sakes."

"Renee, forgive me," he stared at her. "Put me away and forgive me, I always tried to keep this from happening."

Renee nodded, and pulled the cowl back over her face. "Let's go, Harvey. I'll take you in."

"In a shocking twist, the murders of Councilmen Livingston and Darien were solved early this morning, when former District Attorney Harvey Dent, of all people, turned himself in to the police. While the GCPD have issued no official statements as of this morning, your favorite radio newshound Pete Puckett has done some sleuthing! Dent appears to be preparing to plead insanity—ironic after such a full career against the rest of our fair city's crazy underworld. He has requested a media-free trial, but we all know the story will get out to you the listeners, and you

know where you'll find it first! For now, Dent is being held in solitary confinement at Arkham, and that's all the scoop we've got. Unfortunately, rumors of the Batman's involvement are impossible to confirm or deny. In light of the news, we here at K202 would like to apologize to everyone's old favorite Poison Ivy, and remind our listeners and our newshounds to stop jumping to conclusions. Sorry, Pam! For K202, I'm Susan Ian, and this has been your breaking news report."

Harley hurried over to the radio as soon as the report finished, and turned the dial a few spots until a fast dance song poured out of the speakers. She returned to her gardening work with a spring in her step.

The yard had been ruined the night before, some plants trampled under running feet and crushed under thrown objects, others smothered when the mob had succumbed, one by one, to the poison in the air. There was glass shattered all through the weeds, the delicate blossoms in Ivy's greenhouse wilting in the chilly morning air. Harley and Ivy had come home that morning to find most of the people still lying on the ground, or fallen over on the floor inside the house. It was only after realizing that the alternative was to call and deal with the police that Ivy grudgingly pulled them all off her property and back to fresh air. She wasn't sure exactly how long it would take them to wake, or how much they might be affected by such prolonged exposure. She was sure that she didn't care either way.

Now the two women were hard at work under the sun, digging up and re-planting a number of the surviving plants and a larger number of new arrivals. Ivy cooed and stroked the stem of a vicious-looking carnivore, who snapped at her slim fingers with an unsettling snarl.

"These should help us out," she called over to Harley, who spent more time bobbing her head to the music than digging with her spade. "I'd love to see anyone try to come back with these babies on guard."

"What're we gonna do about the stuff inside though?" Harley asked her again. Now that the plants were being taken care of, she hoped she'd get an answer.

Ivy shrugged and walked over to help her with the work. "We can get back what we need. It's not like there isn't money for the taking in this

town. Frankly, makes us lucky you're not well-known under the mask," she added with a chuckle. "People won't think twice about selling to you."

"Hey, so, if we're already gonna be stealing," Harley started with a hopeful smile, "can we get a TV?"

Ivy laughed at her friend's excitement. "Sure, why not."

Harley leaped up and hugged her around the middle. "Thanks, Ivy! This is gonna be great!"

By the time the sun had slipped below the skyline, Ivy's garden was deadlier and more lush than before. The two women sat together inside now, Ivy pleased with the work they'd done, Harley just glad to have a roof and a cold drink again.

Once they were finally settled and Harley was cheerfully jabbering about the new television she wanted, they were interrupted by a single sharp knock. Ivy growled under her breath as she stood from her chair and made her way to the door.

She stood tall and alert in the gathering darkness, still awkwardly suspicious as she looked around, but strong and demanding. Batgirl.

"What do you want?" Ivy asked, laying a hand on her hip.

"Pretty rude to someone who just cleared your name, aren't you?" Batgirl shot at her.

"If you're looking to get angry at something, take it somewhere else," Ivy dismissed her, turning to walk back inside and slam the door. She stopped when Batgirl stuck out her hand and grabbed Ivy's wrist. A beat went by and neither of them knew what she would do, until Renee slowly shook Ivy's hand. "I...wanted to thank you. Really. If you hadn't given me that lead, I don't think we would have solved this case."

"Well, having one's livelihood on the line makes it a little hard to be stubborn," Ivy said, and shook the black-gloved hand.

"We're even, then," Batgirl said and quickly pulled her hand away. "So I really hope you stick to what you've been doing. Whatever it is. 'Cause I don't want to have to come back here angry."

Ivy let a sly smile cross her face, as her eyes drifted along the black curves standing against the sunset. "You know, you're free to stay away...unless I'm that irresistible."

Renee gave a quiet chuckle and looked Ivy over pointedly head-to-toe before answering her eyes. "I don't have to tell you how you look. But I'm not letting it get in my way. You come out of your little retirement, and I promise I will see you locked up." With that much, Batgirl turned and walked confidently back the way she had come, finally melting into the night with her cape fluttering in the breeze.

Ivy closed the door with the same little smile and settled herself back into her chair.

"Who was it?" Harley asked her.

Ivy looked back with a chuckle. "Someone it's going to be very fun to know."

If you enjoyed this story, you can find more alternate universe tales of your favorite DC heroes at DC3 Multiverse.

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From the same author on Feedbooks

Ultimate Gotham Girls #11 (2008)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: Clown College, Part 2 (of 3).

With the Joker's 'school' well underway and the clock ticking closer to 3pm, will Batgirl and Zatanna be able to prevent even more carnage? What about with some unexpected help? And how will Harley hold up when forced to choose between her man, and her only friend?

Ultimate Gotham Girls #10 (2008)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: Clown College, Part 1 (of 3).

The Joker's been lurking in the background, and it's never good when he rears his head again! Harley's ideas and Joker's plans are coming together at long last, but is Harley really on-board with the joke? Ivy sure hopes not! And either way, the Clown Prince of Crime is going to have his hands full when Batgirl and Zatanna catch up to him!

Ultimate Gotham Girls #2 (2008)

Don't Say a Word, Part 1 (of 2)

Ultimate Gotham Girls #1 (2008)

Girls' (K)night Out.

Meet Harley Quinn. She is bound and determined to meet her number one hero, the object of her affection, Gotham City's premiere costumed champion...The Joker! To do it, she's teaming up with the seductive and deadly Poison Ivy...whether or not Pamela Isley likes the idea! Just what a neophyte Batgirl needs for on-the-job training!

Ultimate Gotham Girls #3 (2008)

Don't Say a Word, Part 2 (of 2).

The all-new, all-daring Batgirl is put to the test, tracking down a ruthless killer of children! But there's more to the mind of Mockingbird than meets eye, and Renee must walk the abyss of madness to figure it out!

Ultimate Gotham Girls #4 (2008)

The Joker Rules April Fools!

It's April Fools Day in Gotham and that can only mean one thing! The Clown Prince of Crime is giving the city a hearty greeting, and Batgirl must struggle, not only with a diabolical mastermind that gives even Batman pause, but whether or not to accept help from a shocking source!

Ultimate Gotham Girls #5 (2008)

Harvey and Ivy.

Harvey Dent has a curse: he's the acid-scarred mobster Two-Face! And he has a past: having pursued prison for Poison Ivy! Is there a connection between the two events? How does one lead to the other, and how do the lives of these two villains intersect? It's all in this issue of Gotham Girls, as signs point to dangerous storms brewing for our heroes...and other protagonists!

Last Sun of Krypton #1 (2008)

Last Sun of Krypton, Part 1 (of 3).

Travel with us now, into the past, to a time when a great and advanced race of people lived, loved, fought and struggled with the day-to-day and with the higher aspirations of all people. Come and witness Kal-El, with his family around him, as he discovers that for his generation...there seems no future to aspire to! What do you do in the face of the ultimate end?

Last Sun of Krypton #2 (2008)

last Sun of Krypton, Part 2 (of 3).

Even with the heavy news hanging over their heads, life must go on for Kal-El and his loved ones. But how can they go on with life as usual when the world is about to collapse? Isn't there anything that Kal can do to help save Krypton and its people?

Last Sun of Krypton #3 (2008)

Last Sun of Krypton, Part 3 (of 3).

"If Lyla had still been there to talk him out of it, Kal knew that he would never have even suggested this solution, let alone volunteered for it. He stood alone in the middle of a large, barren field, staring up at the monolith that was an energy plant, and he could feel the heat of the world gathering beneath his feet.

Two days had already gone by, two more days of heartache and fear, of disbelief and thick, destructive denial. Despite the official

pleas from the Board, and despite the few ready rockets off-world that had already left for the colonies, most of the population refused to budge from their homes on only the word of Jor-El. Kal's breathing was quick and nervous in the heated air. All of those people were depending on his bravery, his intellect...
...and on the nuclear bomb strapped to the hood of his small electric car. "

Ultimate Gotham Girls #6 (2008)

Reality Check.

Harley Quinn can't believe her good fortune! She's made friends with Ivy, won the love of her sweetheart, The Joker, and discovered her old mentor, Jonathan Crane is now in town. Could any woman's life be any better? She's on cloud nine, facing a future bright and exciting, despite The Joker's dislike of Crane's potential influence on the young woman. And then it happens...

Ultimate Gotham Girls #7 (2008)

Reunion.

Where does poor little Harley run with nowhere else to go? To Ivy's house, of course! How long can she hold up away from the Joker, and could he possibly be trying to get her back? Plus, the Ultimate secret origin of Poison Ivy!

Ultimate Gotham Girls #12 (2008)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: Clown College, Part 3 (of 3).

With time racing out, can our three heroines band together and stop the Joker's deadly finale? What's going to happen to Harley Quinn? You won't want to miss the stunning conclusion of *Gotham Girls Year One*-- with special appearance by the Batman himself!

Ultimate Gotham Girls #8 (2008)

Your Worst Nightmare, Part 1 (of 2).

Jonathan Crane is tired of waiting. He has stores of his prized possession, his finished 'fear gas', all over Gotham. With a push of a single button, he will trap everything that breathes in their own worst nightmare, and for once in his life, Crane will be the one unafraid.

What terrors lurk in the darkest parts of the minds of all our stars?
And how will any of them break free? If they even can...

Ultimate Gotham Girls #9 (2008)

Your Worst Nightmare, Part 2 (of 2).

Jonathan Crane --now the full-fledged Scarecrow-- has all of Gotham City under his power, including Batgirl! Can anyone fight their own most feared demons in time to stop Crane from completely taking over?

Ultimate Gotham Girls #13 (2009)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: Overrun.

The One Man Army Corps have taken the Gotham streets, and they're doing their jobs on the villains-- but are they safe for our heroes? When Batgirl ticks one off on patrol, can she stop a super-strong robot all by herself, before it hurts anyone else in its attack on her?

Ultimate Gotham Girls #14 (2009)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: Facades Part 1 (of 3).

After years of hiding, Harvey Dent has finally returned to Gotham City. But for his old friend Renee, is this a good thing, or bad? And when Poison Ivy is framed for murder, who's going to search out the truth, no matter how shocking it may be?

Ultimate Gotham Girls #15 (2009)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: Facades, Part 2 (of 3)

The investigation is underway-- Renee Montoya, AKA Batgirl, hot on the tail of Harvey Dent, AKA Two-Face! But can Renee truly believe that her old friend is a killer? And what would she do if she discovered the proof? Meanwhile, how long can Harvey hold his two selves together, under the stress and the guilt of what he's done?

Ultimate Gotham Girls #16 (2009)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: Facades, Part Three.

Batgirl's continued investigation of a double-murder frame job finally brings her to Harvey Dent, and forces her to confront what's happened to her old friend. How deep does Harvey's madness

extend? How has it affected him, through his entire life? And what will Two-Face do when he finds Batgirl prying into his secrets?

Ultimate Gotham Girls #18 (2009)

Gotham Girls: Jack of Hearts.

Jack Napier has had a crush on Harley Quinzel since they took Psychology together, and she has always ignored him. But when Harley robs Jack's magic shop, could fate be bringing them together? How can a man with such an eerily familiar face win the heart of the girl of his dreams, and is Harley's heart really free for her to give?

Ultimate Gotham Girls #19 (2009)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: Now and Then.

Ultimate Gotham Girls #22 (2009)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: Save Our Circus.

Haley's Circus is back in town, and ready to put on a killer show for Gotham City...at least, it was until a half-rate supervillain made a big-name mess by setting the animals loose! Join all our Gotham Girls, even including guest-stars, as they try to clean up in time for the show. And check back in with Harley Quinn, as she makes a couple new friends...

Ultimate Gotham Girls #24 (2009)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: Face to Face, Part 2.

Two-Face is on the loose, with only Poison Ivy to keep an eye on him. Will Ivy slide back into her villainous ways, or will Two-Face force her to show her new colors? How will Harvey Dent be able to face up to his deepest fears, when he's just become free of them? And what on earth are Ivy and Batgirl doing working together? All this and more in the thrilling conclusion to Gotham Girls year two!

Ultimate Gotham Girls #23 (2009)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: Face to Face, Part One.

Harvey Dent has had enough. After months of treatment and no progress, he is desperate to get rid of the voice in his head, the other half of his mind that has always been there. And with the help of a touch of magic, Harvey can get his wish...but at what price?

With Two-Face on the loose and no coin to contain him, how will Batgirl be able to keep Gotham City safe?

Ultimate Gotham Girls Annual #1 (2010)

Ultimate Gotham Girls Annual: Resolution & Spoiler's Nutcracker Suite.

Ultimate Gotham Girls #25 (2010)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: Beginning Again.

Ultimate Gotham Girls #26 (2010)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: Scout's Honor.

Ultimate Gotham Girls #27 (2010)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: A Light in a Dark Wood.

Ultimate Gotham Girls #28 (2010)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: Rocket's Red Glare, Part 1.

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