



## **Birds of Prey #2**

Matthew Davies

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Omen Zatanna Vigilante

*Birds of Prey*

Issue 2 (of 4): "Dissent in the Ranks"

Written by: Matthew Davies

Cover by: ArtTeach

Edited by: Mark Bowers

*Zatanna awoke with a start.*

*"Zee, there's no time for daydreaming!" her father reprimanded lightly.*

*She turned to him, studying his smooth, neatly trimmed moustache and the thick black locks that fell almost to his shoulders. He wore a glamorous tuxedo, perfectly straight and precise, along with a gleaming top hat that rested atop his head. A wan smile was touching his lips, his eyes glittering with excitement and his hands shifting nervously.*

*"It's our first joint show in three years – you don't really want to start it off late, do you?" he reminded gently.*

*"I'm ready, Dad," Zatanna replied with a smile. She reached out and squeezed his arm reassuringly. "Don't worry...it's gonna be great."*

*"It sure is!" a voice came from behind her. She turned to see a blonde-haired woman dressed in a magnificent, spaghetti-strap silk dress. "Nothing ever goes wrong at the Ritz!"*

*"Mum?" Zatanna muttered in disbelief.*

*"I'm right here for you sweetie," Sindella comforted, pecking her daughter on the cheek. She turned to Zatarara and grinned. "You'll be a showstopper, Zed."*

*"Thanks, gorgeous," Zatarara said with a grin.*

*"Mrs. Zatarara," a young man wearing a backstage shirt interjected.*

*"Yes?"*

*"We have some VIPs that need attending to, ma'am."*

*Sindella nodded. "I'll be right there." She winked at Zatara and exited the room, wishing them both good luck as she left.*

*"Excited, Zee?"*

*"You bet," Zatanna replied, aware that something was wrong, but not aware of what it was. "Dad...this...this is great."*

*"It sure is, sweetie!"*

*"No, I mean...everything." She paused. "Everything's good. It's all...perfect."*

*Zatara smirked. "Wait until we're up there! It gets a lot better than this!"*

Dawn.

Barbara Gordon had almost forgotten what sunlight was as it sifted through the blinds and melted like golden ice cream across her face. With a weary groan, she ran a hand back through her fiery red hair and pushed herself into a sitting position with a yawn. A searing pain shot through her back as she swung her legs over the side of the leather sofa and tossed her blanket aside.

"You're awake early," a familiar voice came from the kitchenette across from the redhead.

"So are you, Dinah," Barbara responded, casting a glance at the contemporary clock positioned on Helena's wall. Six thirty A.M. "Please tell me yesterday was a dream..."

Dinah snickered "You really think we'd be sleeping in Bertinelli's apartment otherwise?"

"She's not that bad," Barbara insisted, rising from her seat and pulling open the door of the refrigerator. "She just thinks differently to us. She has a different outlook on life."

"Yeah," Dinah agreed, "the psycho-crazy-killer-freak outlook."

A harsh, mocking laugh emanated from the doorway of the single, lavishly decorated bedroom as an unkempt Helena Bertinelli emerged. Even having just woken up, the Italian beauty was stunning. Tresses of ebony hair caressed the back of her neck, accompanied by a firm but gentle hazel gaze and a slim, lithe figure. Her naturally rouge lips contrasted well against her tanned skin, and she propped herself against the doorframe

"Psycho? Crazy?" she repeated mockingly. "My, my, you really do have such a black-and-white view on things, don't you?"

"What you call black and white, I call sane," Dinah retorted, gulping down a mouthful of refreshingly clear water.

"Girls, stop it," Barbara demanded, resentment lacing her tone. "How can you stand here and argue while the lives of our friends are on the line? I can't believe I have to keep saying this!"

An awkward silence fell upon them.

"We move at seven," Barbara informed, her voice placid once again. "Suit up."

Omen was poised in the centre of the casino's basement, unmoving. An eerie silence emanated from her, the only hint of light around her from the four humming stasis containers at varying positions about the chamber. As she moved, she moved slowly and elegantly, perhaps even hesitantly, as if she were a toddler learning to walk for the very first time. Her feet, concealed by her blood-red robe, padded softly against the concrete as her gaze wandered to each of the containers. She reached out and placed a hand on the glass coating of each as she spoke, her voice gentle and terrifying at the same time.

Almost like a teen that had seen far too much for their short life span... almost... haunted.

“Green Arrow.”

Inside of that case, through the almost blindingly white haze coating the interior of the glass, lay the emerald archer himself, his body motionless and his eyes glazed over.

“Vigilante.”

The next case revealed a black-clad man with the fragments of a red visor hiding the similar effect sealing half of his gaze.

“Zatanna.”

The final case contained the equally limp body of a young, raven-haired girl. A small, content smile touched her lips.

Omen’s eyes fell to three empty cases propped against the walls, and brought one hand to her temple. Her eyes fluttered closed from behind the shadow shrouding them, and she focused...focused...

Images flashed sharply through her mind: a sewer. Three familiar female vigilantes. A hidden entrance

“Guard the lower entrance,” she ordered briskly. “They will be entering through there in an hour.”

A large figure, cloaked in the darkness, nodded with a soft, guttural growl.

“It shall be done,” it responded gruffly.

Batgirl rested atop a rooftop, bathing herself in the warm, golden glow from the rising sun. Running a hand back through her hair, she exhaled audibly, as if releasing all her troubles into the air, and rose to her feet.

She turned to face Black Canary, her expression solemn.

“Anything yet?” she enquired.

Canary shook her head. “Huntress hasn’t left the sewers yet.”

“Damn,” Batgirl hissed under her breath. “Hurry it up, Helena, we don’t have time for this!”

The first thing that hit Huntress as she dropped down into the sewers was the overwhelming, and extremely sickening, stench that wafted up her nostrils. She almost wretched as she waded through the knee-deep, green-brown water, the foul liquid spraying upwards around her. A frown creased her face as she made her way deeper into the tunnel.

Her mission was simple, more of a reconnaissance assignment than anything: enter the sewers a mile away from the casino and ensure the status of underground entrance listed on the city schematics Batgirl had ‘come across’.

It was, as said, a relatively uncomplicated operation, and yet something about it had chills nibbling at her back. Not that she would ever admit to such a humiliating thing, of course. She exhaled slowly, and felt a figurative weight on her shoulders lift momentarily as her eyes fell upon a rusty, battered metallic door.

“Bingo,” she murmured.

“Bingo,” a deep, harsh voice repeated. It seemed to emanate from all around her.

On instinct, Huntress unsheathed her crossbow and coiled her finger around the trigger, all of a sudden alert.

“Where the hell are you?” she demanded.

“I’m behind you,” the same voice grunted in her ear.

Even the Huntress, calm, calculating, and reserved, couldn't restrain the horrified scream that erupted from her throat as she swiveled, snapping the crossbow into position, the tip of the arrow at the perpetrator's forehead.

*Some kind of monster*, she realized. Without a second thought, she squeezed the trigger...only for the shadowed male's forehead to split neatly in two, parting as the arrow seared through the space that had been occupied but milliseconds ago.

A fist jammed into her gut. There was a rush of air as oxygen was expelled from her lungs. The same fist gripped her collar and tossed her upwards, backhanding her across the face and sending her sprawling into the liquid with a *splash*. Huntress attempted to turn the impact into a roll, but her foot slipped and her face slammed into the piping below the liquid. For a moment, she was completely engulfed by the dirtied emerald sea...

...and then she hauled herself upwards, propping herself against the wall and bringing a hand to her nose, smearing the scarlet liquid flowing from it across the back of her glove.

"What the hell *are* you?" she hissed, desperation tinting her voice.

"What the hell are *you*?" the creature repeated, stepping into the light.

In Huntress' mind, there was only one word to describe it: hideous. Torn and abused scales coated its body, each patch of them seeming to vary from dull color to dull color. Tipped fangs filled its scar of a mouth, its wrinkled lips little more than slits on its horrendously distorted face.

"I am Bulk," it screeched. "I am your nightmare!" One mammoth finger stretched upwards to tap its head, leaving the rest of its hand behind "I know what you're going to do before you do! You cannot defeat me!"

"I beg to differ, freak!" Huntress snarled, and launched herself at the monster.

It was already enveloping her with water, which was suddenly lancing outwards from its right arm She hit the ceiling with a sickening thump

and fell once again. Drawing her bo staff and extending it, she ground her teeth as she looked into the eyes of her shapeshifting, precognitive opponent.

“Bring it on, scumbag!”

Omen nodded in satisfaction. Bulk had engaged one of the Three. Turning, her robes rustling as she did so, she trudged over to a small panel inset beside Green Arrow’s stasis tube, and depressed a single button.

“My Master,” she greeted obediently, “the student you sent, the one named Bulk, has engaged the Huntress. Your will be done, my Master...soon.”

“Thirty-one minutes,” Canary stated. “She went in thirty-one minutes ago.”

Batgirl nodded, pausing for a moment to contemplate the statistics before resuming her anxious pacing. They had lost too many teammates already in the past day; losing another would cripple what was left of them even more.

“That’s it,” she informed the blonde bombshell. “We’re going in.”

Canary slid the binoculars she was using to scan for Huntress back into her belt and grinned “I thought you were never gonna say it...”

Batgirl leapt from the roof, descending gracefully, her cape billowing outwards behind her and sending spikes of sunlight bouncing playfully off the material. Her gloved hand darted towards her belt, drawing a grapple device outwards and sending a wire shooting from its barrel with a strange *thwip*. Said wire snapped taught as Batgirl gripped it tightly, her boots skimming the tops of cars as she swung up to the crescendo of the curve...and released the wire, landing into a fierce sprint that carried her through an alleyway and out of sight.

“Show-off,” Canary muttered, and moved for the fire escape.

Huntress cursed as Bulk once again deflected her attacks, swiping away her staff strikes with a single arm and releasing a malevolent chuckle at the same time. She knew she was fighting an impossible fight. She was just an ordinary human, facing up to a monster who knew what was going to happen, and could become anything in order to stop that.

She was once again slammed against the wall as Bulk lunged at her, his arm suddenly a fantastically large mace. Barely ducking under the blow that would have killed her, Huntress kicked back off the wall and propelled herself away from Bulk with an agonizing shriek. Musty fluid coated her as she skimmed the surface of the unholy sea, the broach of her cape tearing free as she brought her elbows down with all her might to slow her unwilling journey. Skin was ripped from its lodgings as she finally skidded to a tentative halt. Gasping with pain, she hesitantly pushed herself to her feet, ignoring the blood gushing from her nose and elbows.

This should have felt like her last stand...but something about that assumption just didn't ring true.

“Huntress!” Batgirl was suddenly poised beside her, a batarang gripped in one balled hand. “What the hell...?”

“It calls itself Bulk,” Huntress explained, her voice betraying her pained relief. “It can see the future, and is a shapeshifter, as far as I can tell.”

Without another word, Batgirl tossed her weapon forward in a well-practiced throw. Bulk's abruptly concrete hand was already positioned in its path, and it lodged itself into the stone. The next moment, his hand was water once again, and the batarang fell effortlessly free.

“Whoa,” Canary interjected, reaching her two companions with her mouth agape

“We need space to maneuver. Scatter!” Batgirl ordered. Both hands were

at her belt once again, withdrawing two golden, spiked blades. She flicked them open from their folded position and slotted them into her hands. They were semi-circular in shape, a grip rule along the straight edge at the base and glistening blades edged out along the curved section.

“Move!” she reiterated, and dived forward, swiping at the beast with the unusual weapons.

Bulk stepped back, the blades grazing its skin as it formed crimson replicas on its vast upper limbs. “Nice,” it complemented mockingly. “Let’s see if you can use them properly.”

Canary charged forward, jumping up at its head with a roundhouse kick. It secured her foot within its grasp and flicked its wrist, sending her to the ground. Huntress was suddenly in her place, showering him in crossbow darts that he scurried to deflect as Batgirl wedged her weapon into his chest. He leapt back, flattening himself against the door to the casino basement as he attempted to compensate for the wounds he had received.

“I said move!” Batgirl bellowed, and dashed back the way she had came.

Huntress, her bow in one hand and staff in the other, scurried after her, releasing bursts of ammo as she did so. “Canary, move!”

“No, I’m going in!” Canary yelled determinedly.

Huntress stopped, desperation gracing her face. “No, you don’t understand! They’re explosive da - -”

An explosion rang throughout the sewers, sending a tremble through the tunnel. Both Huntress and Batgirl were bowled over by the shockwave. Chunks of the ceiling were unhinged and cascaded down around them.

“Go, go, go!” Batgirl roared, not aware of Canary’s situation.

She ran then, the fastest she had ever run before. Her legs pumped harder and harder with each passing second as sweat and sewer water drenched the entirety of her body. A lump rose in her throat and

insanely hot tears streamed down her face as breathlessness consumed her...and then she was topside, Huntress panting for air beside her.

"Canary..." Batgirl spluttered. "Where...is...Dinah...?"

The ground rocked beneath them, and they crawled further into the alley as the pavement threatened to give way with sickening lurches. Huntress rested against a wall, a hand to her throat as Batgirl persisted with her exasperated enquiry. Tears of exhaustion still tore through the dirt caking her cheeks.

"Where...is..."

"She's gone!" Huntress snapped. "She wanted to go back in through the door...but...the explosion..."

"Oh, God..." Batgirl murmured, as her best friend's fate dawned on her.

"Ugh..."

Canary awoke groggily to find her arm buried under a hunk of rubble and the rest of her body...in the basement of the casino! A familiar figure stood over her, cloaked arms crossed over her chest. Although her gaze was hidden, it would have, without a doubt, withered the heroine like a plant without water. Memories returned unbidden as Omen's appearance stirred her emotions...

"Ollie!" Canary screeched, her eyes picking out her lover from amongst the shadows. There were more...all her teammates were gathered, all in strange glass tubes, all...all strangely contented. "What have you done to them?" she demanded.

"They are happy now," Omen replied, her voice fragile and firm at the same time.

"What?" Canary mumbled.

"They have found the meaning of perfection," Omen explained. "Would

you like to find it as well?"

Canary gathered her might together, attempting to pull her arm free from its rocky prison. "What do you mean, 'perfection'?"

Omen nodded towards Ollie's case. "They are...held in their perfect lives. You can have a perfect life, as well. A perfect life with the people you love. Would you like that?"

"You've trapped them in their fantasies?" Canary responded half-heartedly. "You sick freak! That isn't perfection! That's imprisonment! Why do you get to decide what they do with their life, what their meaning of perfection is? Huh?" she pressured, her voice forceful

"I don't," Omen stated simply. "The Master does."

"The Master?" Canary frowned. "Who's the Master?"

"The time for discussion is over," Omen announced. "I will give you perfection, now. You will be happy."

"No!" Canary exclaimed. "People deserve the chance to have a real life, to make their lives as good as they can! You've taken their freedom away!"

"And now I shall take yours," Omen responded bluntly; no remorse could be detected in her tone. "All I have to do is pluck your desires from your mind..."

"Leave me alone!" Canary hissed, yanking at her arm harder than ever. *I have to get out of here!*

"I gave you the choice," Omen offered. "You declined a peaceful solution, so now - -"

And then, the Canary sang.

Batgirl snapped to alertness as a shrill wail split her ears. She was

instantly on her feet, her blades in her hands. "Dinah!"

"Only one person could make that amount of noise," Huntress agreed, pushing herself to a standing position.

"The casino," Batgirl noted, and darted out of the alleyway, towards the fateful building.

But the Canary was already bursting out of the front entrance, her hair flailing wildly around her as she staggered through the police perimeter wire and into the arms of the two Birds. The on-duty police officers raced from their car, guns drawn and figures coiled around the triggers as Omen emerged from the casino.

"Freeze!" one called anxiously.

"Pitiful creatures," Omen murmured, and gestured. The guns swiveled in their hands, the barrels resting against their foreheads. "Self-professed heroines," she declared, directing her attention to the Birds, "I give you this clichéd, yet necessary, ultimatum. Surrender now, or die."

"Dinah, use your scream," Batgirl whispered.

"I've exhausted it," Canary intoned. "And my arm is throbbing like crazy."

Huntress stepped to the forefront. "Do you really expect us to give in that easily, Omen?"

"No," Omen admitted. "Which is why I brought back-up. Please bring them back in one piece."

With that, she was gone...but a trio of deadly figures replaced her.

"You killed one of our collective," a female intoned. "You will not hurt another."

"Collective?" Batgirl mumbled.

"Yes," another female said, and the three metahumans stepped forward.

In the centre was a Gothic-styled woman, attired in a black-and-red outfit completed with fishnet tights and bulky boots. The strangest thing by far, however, was her hair. Thick locks of it, ebony in color, fell like a waterfall to the ground, writhing and twisting in a bizarre fashion. Each individual strand seemed to be...*alive*. Alive and struggling to break free.

"We are the Master's Royal Guard," she said, her tone fiercely melodramatic. "I am Tress."

The second, to the right of her, was no less outlandish. Light bathed her chocolate skin as she slipped into a combative poise. She seemed to be Native American, oval-shaped eyes staring daggers at them from beneath a heavily defined brow. Her hair, a similar hue to her companion's, was pulled back into a sloppy ponytail that fell just past her shoulders. A tan top ended far above her waist, whilst a loincloth was held at her waist by a rope. Gripped in her right hand was a wooden crossbow a little larger than Huntress', but pulsing with an unearthly energy.

"I am Maya," she growled, her voice heavily accented.

The final member of the trio, and the only male, was a complete contradiction to the bold and striking styles of Tress and Maya. Whilst they would stand out in a crowd, he would be unnoticeable amongst even a small gathering... if not for his obvious *mutation*. His slicked back blond hair was dull and began to emanate hints of grey at the edges. His eyes were a dull emerald, and the same color laced the veins in his hands. His throat also seemed to be a faded forest green, almost as if it was glitter from long ago. A brown rag hung loosely from his wiry frame, contrasting black trousers gripping his waist far too tightly.

"And this is Mute," Maya finished.

A malicious smile touched Tress' blackened lips. "He doesn't talk much, but when he does..."

"Now we're introduced," Canary spat, "let's get down and dirty!"

"Happy to," Maya hissed, and dashed towards the blonde-haired

heroine.

Huntress extended her staff with a flick of her wrist, launching herself at Tress, whilst Batgirl tightened her grip on the blades and charged towards Mute, trepidation almost glowing in her eyes.

*Here we go...*

Omen's hand rested on a test tube, and she cautiously drew it from its rack, placing it into another and reaching for a conical flask of scarlet liquid. She slowly tipped the jug's content into the tube, and smiled beneath her hood as it began to react, bubbling and hissing in a clear but unsuccessful protest.

"Just a small amount is necessary," she murmured sadistically. "And then, everything will be perfect...for everyone."

Batgirl was not taken aback when Mute opened his mouth, but the word he murmured, and its effect, was shocking in the extreme.

"Overmaster," he stated in a meaningless monotone.

A greenish ripple erupted from his throat, slamming into the leaping Batgirl and sending her crashing through a garbage can and clipping her hip on a fire hydrant. This extra impact span her through the air and she landed awkwardly on the concrete with an agonizing shriek. Mute's eyes seemed to bore into her as he raised his hand. A focused beam of the same strange energy lanced outwards, but Batgirl rolled aside and it struck the pavement, spraying shards of stone outwards.

"Damn," the vigilante cursed.

Pushing herself back into a standing position, she bounded towards her opponent, barely slipping aside as he launched more energy blasts at her, his palms speckled with the same dusty-substance as his neck. His jaw fell again, and Batgirl threw herself into a sloppy somersault, landing

shakily in a side-alley. A concentrated blast from his fist struck the fire escape above her, sending hunks of rusty metal down towards her. She brought her blades up in a wide, protective arc, using all her strength to propel the rubble away from her.

This momentary success, however, was not to last, as another bolt impacted on her back and drove her into the side of the building. She gave out a short cry, and fell to her knees, her teeth almost grinding through her bottom lip as she resisted the unbearable urge to weep from the pain.

*Don't give 'em the satisfaction!* she thought determinedly, and rose to her feet once again.

"What the hell?" Huntress yelped in surprise as Tress' hair secured her staff within its grasp and yanked it free, tossing it aside and binding the costumed woman's hands to her sides.

"Are you people dense?" Tress retorted, lifting her prey into the air and dumping her unceremoniously onto the police car.

Huntress forced herself upwards using her elbows, but Tress was already slamming her back down. Huntress winced as the glass of the patrol car's beacons shattered, tearing into her back with considerable force. Tress gestured, and her hair constricted its grasp on her, hurling her over the Gothic girl's head with an almost casual attitude. Tress turned with her hair, unleashing a mischievous giggle as her foe kicked out against her.

"Apparently so," Tress continued. "Shall we finish this?"

"I'm gonna kill you - - mmph!" Huntress' voice was reduced to a mere rasp as a strand of vibrant hair launched itself down into her throat, preventing her from talking and provoking a violent nauseous reaction.

Tress grinned "Yes, dear. Of course you are."

Canary cursed as an energy bolt whizzed past her and seared through a parked truck. Flames erupted from the vehicle with a spectacular explosion that hurled Canary into the waiting arms of Maya. The Native American woman brought the butt of her weapon down upon Canary's face, a purple-blue swelling appearing almost instantly as she did so again...

...and again...

Canary could barely feel the pain racking her face. It was almost a constant, and it felt as if it had lasted for an eternity. If only it would stop. If only...

"Dinah! Switch opponents!" Batgirl came from nowhere, her booted foot connecting neatly with Maya's jaw. "Huntress, take this one! I'll handle Tress!"

Canary felt Batgirl's arm beneath her own, and groaned as her hazy vision finally began to clear. She was on her feet now, the one calling himself Mute opening his mouth.

"My master," he whispered.

Canary let out a strangled cry, barely acknowledging the sting of the energy ripple until she found herself buried under glass from a café window. Rising dazedly into a standing position, her own jaw lowered and a familiar buzz tingled through her throat. Her sonic cry was back...just in time.

"Let's see who's louder," she quipped, and unleashed a trademark sonic scream.

Mute's body was caught like a straw in a hurricane, the sonic energy enveloping his very being as it hit him. He would end up in a small crater on the roof of a modest bakery, three blocks away. Unfortunately for him, it would be extremely painful getting there.

Canary turned, one gloved hand cupped around her cheek, gasping at the rush of pure anguish that surged through it. "She really did a job on

me.”

Her eyes strayed across the impromptu battlefield, and nodded in satisfaction as she saw her teammates meeting with similar results. Nobody else was going to end up three blocks away, she was sure; but the pain would most definitely be a similar experience for each of Omen’s lackeys.

Tress’ first move was little more than an instinct as her hair surged at the oncoming Batgirl. The fiery-haired female, however, was fully prepared for such an assault, and exhaled in relief. She had hoped this would be her new opponent’s first move. Slipping into a defensive poise, her eyes narrowed and her mind focused on the hair that was being boosted towards her.

*Finally, an opponent I can take on.*

Batgirl spun her blades expertly, slashing out in a wide sweep that reduced Tress’ hair to ribbons. “Time for a haircut!”

Tress swore viciously under her breath, fully aware that she was beaten as Batgirl’s blades sheared through her every attack. “Please! No! I surrender!”

The remnants of her hair fell limply to the ground in solemn defeat, following Tress’ movements as she bowed her head.

“Good idea,” Batgirl hissed, keeping the blades ready as she strode forward “Now, you’re going to tell me everything – who Omen is, what she wants...everything.”

“No she isn’t!” Maya cried from behind. Batgirl snapped around, but an energy bolt had already lodged itself in Tress’ stomach. It released a burst of energy, incinerating the long-haired villainess completely.

“Stay down!” Huntress demanded, and squeezed the trigger on her crossbow. A dart wedged itself in Maya’s neck, sending a sedative rolling through her veins.

Maya stumbled, her crossbow clattering to the floor as she lurched wildly, before finally following her discarded weapon, completely motionless. "I will not give you the pleasure!" she screamed, and, in one final, desperate move, plunged a dart into her chest.

"You idiot!" Canary growled. "We could've pumped her for information. We could have - -"

"It's not my fault she killed herself," Huntress responded coldly, mopping the sweat from her brow. "And she wouldn't have given us any information, anyway."

"We've got to get inside," Canary insisted, brushing past Huntress "The others are in there, I've seen them! Omen's locked 'em in their perfect lives, or something! We've got to rescue them!"

"We're wounded, and we couldn't handle Omen at the best of times," Batgirl warned, her voice grave.

Canary paused, desperation flaring up in her eyes. "So you're just going to abandon them?"

"No," Batgirl answered. "I'm just saying that we retreat if things get too rough. We'll do no good if we're dead. Oh, and Huntress?"

"What?" Huntress breathed.

"You kill again under my command, and I will throw you out so hard you won't know what's hit you." Batgirl locked her withering gaze onto the part-Italian heroine.

Huntress remained silent.

"Understood?" Batgirl pressed.

"I did what I had to do. I will do it again." Huntress placed another dart into her crossbow and followed Canary towards the casino.

Batgirl gritted her teeth. *Helena, why do you always have to be so damned difficult?*

"I don't understand!" Canary exclaimed. "They were here! They were here before the fight!"

"How do you know, anyway?" Huntress enquired, her voice challenging. "We thought you were dead."

"I got blasted in here," Canary answered, her voice faltering as she fell to her knees. Azure tears welled in her eyes. "They were here..."

"Don't worry, Dinah, we'll find them." Batgirl slipped an arm around her friend's shoulder. "I promise we will."

"A promise isn't good enough," Huntress murmured, and strode towards the exit.

Batgirl released an exasperated sigh as Canary sobbed uncontrollably in her arms.

Omen stood at the water plant, the workers gathered on the floor around her. She gestured, and the hatch on the large pipe before her ripped open. Drawing the test tube from her robe, she emptied its contents into the pipe, and turned away.

"The Omen virus has been unleashed," she murmured. "My work here is done."

With that, she was gone.

## **Epilogue**

Bulk lumbered through the sewers, missing an arm from the earlier explosion. Patches of skin hung limply from his frame all over its body,

and it staggered like a drunkard due to a missing chunk of its right foot. It had been wandering for days, maybe even weeks, without knowing its location. It glanced upwards as it passed the first sign of its journey, reading:

GOTHAM CITY SEWERS  
TUNNEL A-13

“I don’t know who you are, or what you are doing here,” a dark voice interjected from within the folds of the shadows. “But I want you out of my city.”

By the time it reached noon, Bulk would be in an even more dilapidated state.

*To be continued!*

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*Birds of Prey #1 (2006)*

*Birds of Prey, Part One (of Four): Elimination Process.*

The New Outsiders have fallen. A mysterious prophecy is at hand. Las Vegas is under threat. An Omen has struck. And there's only a trio of heroines that can prevent disaster... if they don't kill each other first. Black Canary. Batgirl. Huntress. The Birds of Prey.

*Birds of Prey #4 (2006)*

*Birds of Prey, Part Four (of Four): Salvations and Revelations.*

Las Vegas' last hopes for salvation – Black Canary, Batgirl, and Huntress – have been infected with the Omen virus. With only their willpower keeping them awake, how will they fare against the super-powered Omen and the mastermind of the plot... the deadly Overmaster?!

*Birds of Prey #3 (2006)*

*Birds of Prey, Part Three (of Four): Divided We Fall.*

Batgirl, Black Canary, and the Huntress are helpless to do anything, as the 'Omen virus' is unleashed upon Las Vegas! As the city's inhabitants begin to fall prey to the disease, the superhero trio finally cracks from the pressure.

*Teen Titans #3 (2006)*

*Teen Titans: The Killing Game, Part 1: Clubbed.*

The Titans are pushed to their limits when one of their own is beaten into a coma, with only a black club spray-painted on the victim's chest as a clue. But the mysterious assassin has now targeted the rest of the team...

*Teen Titans #7 (2006)*

*Teen Titans: Fading Star.*

Determined to trace his lineage, Speedy embarks on a journey of mystery and self-discovery as he strives to find his real mother and be part of a family again. This emotional and brutal tale tells the true story of Roy Harper's heritage...and helps him to reconnect with an old friend.

*Teen Titans #4 (2006)*

Teen Titans: The Killing Game, Part Two: One by One.  
Deathstroke has announced the Titans' death sentence...now, he is going to eliminate them, at any cost! He has the perfect strategy for each and every one of them...But has he planned for the blinding rage of Nightwing?

Teen Titans #5 (2006)

Teen Titans: The Beast Within, Part 1.

Starfire reaches Miami, only to find herself facing deadly danger with a strange new ally! Meanwhile, the Titans search out the mysterious telepath that attacked Speedy last issue, and Kid Flash ponders his future...Featuring the first-ever appearance of a new DC2 character, as well as guest-starring the Flash!

Teen Titans #6 (2006)

Teen Titans: The Beast Within, Part 2.

With Speedy's life hanging in the balance, Nightwing, Donna Troy, and Raven face down the terrible might of the Royal Flush Gang! Garfield Logan confronts his fears as the Gordanians approach the new Citadel homeworld...and plan the execution of Starfire! Also: Kid Flash has a heart-to-heart with his aunt and gets comfortable in a familiar costume...

Teen Titans #8 (2006)

Teen Titans: Fatal Attractions, Part One.

As a drug ring spreads throughout the city, the Titans intensify their attempts to break it up and find the ever-elusive answer to a mystery of missing contraband. Meanwhile, two teens grow closer, whilst another two grow apart...

Teen Titans #9 (2006)

Teen Titans: Fatal Attractions, Part Two.

Starfire is devastated by her shocking discovery at the end of last issue, and struggles to cope with the deadly new knowledge she holds...before it destroys her fast-growing relationship with Nightwing. Also: Wonder Girl develops a mystery crush, and Kid Flash attempts to assuage Raven's fears.



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