



Ultimate Gotham Girls #24
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Face to Face, part 2

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The streets were as alive as they ever were at this hour of the night, but to the few who knew what lurked out there, it felt so much more dangerous. Harley kept herself from jumping at her own footsteps as she climbed up to the rooftops. She kept a lookout all around her, even if she knew where Two-Face was. She had worked hard in the last several months to get rid of her skittish impulses, wanting to be more confident in the night. She just wished she'd remembered to test herself on a less-important evening.

"Okay Harl...We've got this...not so hard, is it? Just gotta find a Bat." Harley nodded to encourage herself, and looked out over the city. Even with her hand held up over her eyes, she couldn't find the Batgirl she was looking for. Harley sighed. "Nothin' else for it I guess."

Rummaging through the small bag she'd brought with her, Harley found her trusty explosives. She hadn't brought anything to do that much damage – Ivy was getting more picky these days about people getting hurt, and truth be told it had been a relief for Harley not to be hurting since she'd left the Joker. But there was nothing more attention-getting than a few loud, bright fireworks. And very little more fun.

She set the fireworks up on the roof, lit the match and plugged her ears, and in a few moments the blast sounded over the city. Her brief stay in Arkham Asylum had been a help to Harley; one of the 'friends' she'd made knew how to make his own explosives, and had showed her a few of his secrets behind the cell walls. The burst that blew into the air was a shower of red sparks and glitter, for Harley Quinn. The next firework was wide and blossoming in green, for Poison Ivy. The third was the trickiest of all, and had been a long time waiting for the right time to be used. It simply read 'HELP'.

Harley stood on the rooftop under the sparks and waited, turning around and around to look in all directions. It felt like forever, but finally she caught sight of a swinging figure among the buildings, and Harley jumped up and down and waved her arms. "Hey! Hey, over here!"

When Batgirl finally swung onto the scene, it was with an angry glare for Harley. "What the hell do you think you're doing?"

"Okay, listen, gimme two minutes and I can explain, okay?"

"You've got half of one," Batgirl snapped as she turned back to look out at her patrol route. "I do **not** have time for whatever harebrained scheme you're playing around with tonight."

"It's not, listen, you gotta listen to me," Harley tugged at the sleeve of Batgirl's costume. "Huh, y'know, Ivy said you changed your costume. Looks pretty good, doesn't it?"

Batgirl didn't say a word, only glaring into Harley's eyes.

"Okay, I'm focused, listen, I know where he is," Harley said quickly. When Batgirl didn't immediately jump for joy, she continued. "Two-Face...er, I mean, I think that's what I should call him, but it's not Dent, just the...thing...eugh...but anyway I know where he is cause he's with Ivy and she told me to go and get you so you can stop him, okay, and then everyone's happy!"

Batgirl stared at Harley even harder, trying to read some truth in her face. "Ivy sent you to get me? Why don't I believe that?"

"I dunno, 'cause it's true," Harley protested as she tugged at Batgirl's arm again then quickly let go. "It's true, I promise, I never wanted to let him in but he came to our house and then Ivy and him went somewhere to do something, and I don't know what but **trust** me, Ivy's better now and she wanted you to help and please just get that creepy thing back in Arkham!"

Harley waited anxiously, hopping from one foot to the other until Batgirl gave her answer. "You swear to me you're telling the truth."

"Scout's honor, now come *on!*" Not wanting to give Batgirl a chance to change her mind, Harley took off running across the rooftops. She tried her hardest not to look back, but finally glanced over her shoulder. Batgirl was following her, and quickly catching up. "Ivy told me where they were goin', but that's all I know. You don't know what's happening, do you?"

Batgirl gave her a short nod. "Maybe I don't fully understand it. But I'm going to stop him."

The hideout was a typical one, dingy, small and dim. It was only a few tiny rooms built beneath a ritzy exterior, hidden underneath one of Gotham's skyscrapers. The lackeys and henchmen only differed from their lower-class counterparts by the labels on their suits and the money in the bank. As far as Ivy cared, they were just the same as any other scum underneath the streets. She had been keeping her eyes on this particular group for months, waiting for the right edge to use to take them down. And when the edge had shown up at her doorstep, Ivy couldn't resist.

The back door to the hideout burst open, splintering into a thousand pieces as Ivy grew a curtain of vines to worm inside the wood and make her entrance. "Evening boys, how's business going?" Ivy stepped into the middle of the room with glares at each of the men that surrounded her. It was hardly the first time that she had been so bold in her objectives. But tonight felt different. Tonight, Two-Face followed her through the door, and he drew all the fearful stares.

A well-dressed man pushed himself to the front of the small crowd; round, and sweating with nerves, he shoved up front to see the sight. "Jesus God in hell, what is that thing?"

"My secret weapon," Ivy drawled, then walked up closer. "You lowlifes didn't even deserve to get killed by my plants. Lucky I found help."

The man gulped, and held his hands out, looking as nonchalant as he was able to fake. "Now what's this all about, Old Sal never did anything to hurt a pretty thing like you."

Ivy folded her arms and raised an eyebrow. "You don't even know who I am, do you? You really don't."

Two-Face shifted his weight behind her, and his growl fell down onto the back of her neck. "When do I get to kill him?"

Ivy hissed out of the corner of her mouth, keeping her eye on Salvatore Maroni. "You shut up and let me do what I need to do."

"So you brought a Bad Cop with you, I see, I understand, I do." Maroni held his hands up. He had never been the most prominent gangster in Gotham City, and his tastes tended toward the old-fashioned; he attracted rich, bored businessmen, rather than the drug-addled ruffians he saw in the rest of the city. But nevertheless, he had crossed Ivy's line, paying off a city official for the right to build himself a mansion where a state park already sat. "What do you want, I'm sure we can come to some happy middle, yes?"

"Not likely. You're giving up your mansion, Sal. You're getting the hell out of that park and if any of your scum ever set foot by those trees again—"

One of the other men chuckled, his eyes raking over Ivy's short dress. "Feisty, huh? Y'know I like that in a woman, long as she shuts up when it's important."

Ivy bristled harder than ever, and she heard Two-Face's muttered words. "Never gonna listen to you. Gonna have to hurt them, gonna have to have my fun."

She turned fast to face Two-Face now. "Don't you tell me what to do, I'm giving the orders! I'm not Dent!"

"And I don't take orders. I'm not Dent, either." The teeth in the ruined face were still brilliantly white, the one part of his smile that still looked human. The even teeth showed when his taut skin stretched into a smile, and Two-Face lunged forward, laughing at the look on Ivy's face.

The screams rang out, but the hideout had been well-made, the walls

padded to ensure privacy. The sound hit the ceiling and bounced over the furniture, then petered out to nothing before they could escape the room. Sal Maroni's men fled, blocking the door to their boss in the hurry, and Poison Ivy only stood with her back to the wall while Two-Face caught up to him. The man was pale and sweating, his eyes rolling around the room to try to avoid that ruined face, his Adam's apple bouncing with each swallow.

"Please, yes, anything you ask, it'll be done," Maroni promised, his hand flying over his chest in the sign of the cross. "I swear it, it's as good as over!"

Two-Face's mottled hand was curled around Maroni's starched collar, pulling the man onto his toes. He was smiling still, and ignoring Ivy entirely. "You know what I always loved when we were a DA?" His voice scratched through the air like sandpaper. "I loved watching people squirm. Loved the fear in their eyes. All the threats, the shouting, the promises I never got to keep. I wasn't strong then...not like I am now."

"You've done your job," Ivy called to him, instinctively drawing on her own powers as she spoke. The curtain of vines reached toward their mother protectively, shielding her from the danger, though Ivy knew it wouldn't be enough. "You wanted my help, didn't you? Are you going to throw that chance away now by being stupid?"

His only answer was a laugh, and the snap of a gangster's neck. "Yeah, thing about that is, I thought you were somebody. But by the look of all this you're just washed up." He let Maroni fall to the floor and stepped back up to Ivy, his hunched body towering over her. "Turned into some goody two-shoes...don't even like to kill. The hell did you think I had in mind for Dent?"

"I'm not that weak," Ivy said softly, the vines growing and brandishing their thorns around her shoulders.

Two-Face shrugged, and walked right past her. The thorns dragged across his hardened, calloused skin without piercing it, brushing off uselessly. Ivy growled and put more power behind them, snaking the vines around his arms and legs. When they started to keep him back, when the plants refused to break against his struggles, Two-Face turned back and

snarled. "Let go!"

"You want to underestimate me?" Ivy glared back at him, her hair tumbling around her face, a mane of fire. "Your funeral. You came to me. You brought this on yourself." She reached her hands up to the ceiling and brought them back down with a shout of exertion, and the vines snaked and grew. Two-Face struggled and flailed, but her leafy tendrils held on and kept him down, encasing him in a trunk as big as any oak, with only his hands and his face sticking out of the wriggling mass.

"Bitch!" he shouted, kicking and snarling, like the trapped animal that he was. "You'll pay for this!"

"We'll see about that." Ivy walked past him now, leaving only a glare of distaste on his face before she went back outside. Her eyes fell on the bat-signal shining high above the city. She took it for a sign.

Water dripped in the faucet. The clock ticked once, then twice, tick and tock, call and response. Dogs barked and sirens sang out on the streets. And the silence pressed in on Harvey Dent, as he stared at nothing on the wall of Renee's apartment. There was no voice in the back of his mind, no snide comments that proved someone else was there, who knew him better than he knew himself. No one was there to tell him what to do; there weren't any orders so hideous that Harvey knew he had to do the opposite. He flicked the double-headed quarter in his fingers, up and down, up and down, and nothing changed.

"Harvey? Are you still there?"

He jumped a mile at Oracle's voice over the speakerphone. The room came back into focus around him, and Harvey remembered where he was, what was going on...and that he wasn't alone, not truly. He swallowed hard to get back his voice and answered, "Yeah...yes, I'm here."

"Are you sitting down?"

"Why should I be?" Harvey asked, as a knowing shiver shot up his spine.

Oracle let out a long sigh, and Harvey prepared himself. "I think I've found where your double got to. I've sent Batgirl the coordinates, and she's going to do the best she can...but Harvey—"

"He killed." It wasn't a question; Harvey knew what his other half was capable of.

"Only one," Oracle replied. "It's so hard right now to get all the details, but it looks like only one person died. But it's not going to stop here. And I think you know that."

He didn't respond immediately. His head still felt half-empty, his lonely ideas and memories sloshing in the vacant space and difficult to pull together. He raised a hand to his temple and startled himself again to feel his skin so smooth. But no matter how disorienting, this was what he had wanted...this was what he had worked so hard to make happen...this was better, wasn't it?

"How did you do it, Harvey?" Oracle asked, and he could hear some of her patience wearing thin. "The spell. Where did you find it?"

He bit his lip, the constant worrying of his teeth having given the skin an echo of its former scarring. "The library...the cover was so worn on the book, I can't...I can't remember..."

"You're going to have to," Oracle told him. "If we know how you separated, then maybe we can figure out how to put you back together—"

"**NO!**" Harvey cut her off again, standing up at last in his sudden panic.

"No, I can't. I won't! I'm free now, I'm...you know who I am, you know what he is, how could you even suggest that?"

"Because when you were together, we were safe," Oracle answered so bluntly that Harvey had no choice but to listen. "Because you can control him. Maybe not all the time," she cut off his protest before he even started, "But often enough. Because you've already proven that you have that strength, and if nothing else works, we can not let Two-Face roam the streets. What if Renee doesn't come back?" She asked, leaving a pause as she contemplated the possibility herself. "He can find her where she's vulnerable. What if he kills her too? Then what, Harvey?"

Then you keep hiding, and just let him run wild?"

"No..." He sat back on the couch, slumped over and put his head in his hands. "No...I couldn't. If he...but he won't, she'll win, it won't matter."

"And if she can't? Answer me this, Harvey," she continued, not letting up, "how'd he get out of Arkham that first time? You know how strapped this city is, you know that better than anyone. How do you expect us to deal with your monster alone?"

Harvey bit his lip again and nodded slowly. "I'll...I know you're right."

"Good, because I am. We're going to get you through this," Oracle assured him, "But I will not let you throw the city away to do it. This will go faster if I do the research. You just let me know if I hit on anything familiar, okay?"

"Okay," he answered, setting himself back on the couch. As he and Oracle went through the resources she found, Harvey's mind continued to wander. He knew she was right: Gotham City had been so much safer when he and his darker half were connected. That way, it had only been Harvey who suffered. Now, he had his freedom, and the whole city was in danger.

Try as he might, Harvey couldn't decide whether the trade-off was worth it.

Batgirl and Harley Quinn arrived at the Moroni hideout too late. When the call had come in from Oracle, Batgirl knew that she wouldn't be able to save the gangster, and it had been too much to hope that she would get back in time to catch Two-Face there. Still, she hadn't expected the miss to be so close.

Both women stepped into the mess of a room gingerly. Harley's attention wandered, from the damage to the door and walls, to the traces of blood left in the room, to the torn leaves and vines that littered the floor. Batgirl's eyes were fixed on the tall vine that snaked from floor to ceiling. She could see where Two-Face had been trapped; the vines had been

torn and shredded by human hands, but only in the center of the growth. The plant drooped now that its prisoner had escaped, a dejected mess of green tangles.

“She fought him...” Batgirl placed a hand on the vines, then turned back to Harley. “I thought you said she was keeping him here.”

“She was, that’s what she said,” Harley answered, hopping over the debris on the floor to get back to Batgirl’s side. “But if he got away...I mean, she wouldn’ta left unless she thought she won.”

“And then where would she have gone?” Batgirl asked quickly.

Harley thought for a second. “Home, I guess – hey wait!” She called, as Batgirl turned and started to run, straight back out the door. “What’s wrong, what’s going on now?”

“He’s following her,” Batgirl answered, as sure as if she had seen it herself. “I just hope this time we aren’t too late.”

“I’ve got it!” Oracle tapped just a few more keys and began to read off the spell. In the apartment, Harvey’s blood went cold again. “This ‘spell for the cursed’, that’s got to be what you found. And Zatanna, she wrote up something on reversing rituals.. I just have to find...I’ve got it. We’ve got this.” Harvey could practically hear her grinning through the electronic mask of her voice, but he stayed silent on the other end of the line.

As the night had gone by the silence had become more comfortable, but he hadn’t been allowed to enjoy it. And the more he had thought about it, the more Harvey knew he wouldn’t have been able to, not for very long. At first it was a weight off of his shoulders. But he thought back, all the way back. He remembered the men he... Two-Face...the both of them had killed, and the man who died tonight. He remembered the threats that he had kept from coming true, and it chilled him to the bone to think again of what would inevitably happen if he didn’t re-join with his other half.

But it wasn’t enough. It wasn’t quite enough to make him agree, not yet.

"Harvey, this is it. I'm faxing the information to Renee's printer, you're going to get it any second now," Oracle told him. "So you'll know what to do."

"Will I?" He whispered, not expecting her to hear.

"You will. If you're the Harvey Dent I voted for, if you're the man who risked everything to help this city, the man with the drive and determination that we need, you're going to do the right thing."

It was a challenge, and the words sped into Harvey's mind, widening his eyes. "I'm not..."

"What?"

"That's it...oh God...that's what's so wrong," he said slowly, and rose when he heard the printer start. "I'm not...we were never separate. I've just been sitting here...all that drive, the ambition, the politics, I never could have done that separate...he has the will. And without him this is all I am..." He looked at his two clean hands. "Without him I'm just half a man."

If Oracle was taken aback, she didn't let it show through the digitized voice. "Then you'd better get moving. Renee's on the move again...I'll keep you posted where. You'd just better get ready!"

The radio was on quietly, the hyenas were fed, and Ivy had fixed herself a drink to unwind after the long night. Every minute that ticked by without the breaking news of Two-Face's capture heightened her tension, but she was confident in her abilities. The vines she had summoned were strong, and covered in sharp thorns, a painful cage for anyone who tried to escape from it. And it had been her own call that alerted Oracle to what had happened in the hideout. She had done her part, and she could relax now. At least, that was what Ivy kept telling herself.

The night was dark and the hour was late, but Ivy couldn't bring herself to sleep until she knew for sure. When the hyenas lifted their heads and

barked their alarm, she was glad she had stayed alert. Ivy was up from her chair almost as fast, even before she heard the shuffling footsteps outside, and the pounding at the door.

“He can’t be,” Ivy told herself, but reached out to her flora in the front yard, feeling the intruder through their senses.

Then the door slammed off of its hinges, crashing down into the front hall. Two-Face loomed in the doorway, a twisted black shadow, the sight making even Ivy shudder. “Did you think that could hold me?” He called into the house. From around the corner, keeping out of his sight, Ivy saw the new tears and rips against his twisted skin. His hands were torn and bleeding, the little clothing he wore was ripped to shreds. Green and red both dripped over his skin, the shredded remains of Ivy’s vines, and the dark blood that they had drawn as he made his escape.

Bonnie and Clyde growled and stepped toward the intruder with their hackles raised. Ivy bit her lip to keep from calling out to them; she needed the distraction. She was focusing the best that she could, reached out to the plants in her garden, willed their tendrils to grow and come closer, and counted on the hyenas to keep him busy long enough.

With two swift kicks, however, Two-Face was past the canines. His feet cracked into their ribs, bruising the tender skin beneath their coarse fur. Bonnie and Clyde yelped and withdrew, running to each other with their tails and ears sunk low, wincing with every hurried step to get out of the way. Before Ivy had a chance to move again, Two-Face had turned the corner to face her. In the dark house in the middle of the night, with the wind swirling outside, the scariest thing of all was the hungry grin on his face.

“Guess Dent was right,” he rasped, looming half a foot taller than Ivy and forcing her back in the hall of her own home, into the living room again. “You do gotta be taught a lesson.”

“You can’t have gotten out,” Ivy muttered, clenching her fists and finding her focus split, distracted by the whimpers of the hyenas, the sight of the shredded vines on Two-Face’s mottled skin. “You killed them, too?”

Two-Face rasped out a laugh. “You sorry, two-bit excuse...you think

you're the hero now? You think anyone cares about your precious little weeds?" His eyes fell on the Venus fly-trap on the windowsill and they glittered with malice.

"Don't you dare," Ivy spoke low, and struck out first. She fed her energies into the plant, making it grow, shattering its pot and climbing taller and taller until it towered over Two-Face, dripping its venom. Ivy kept her face steady, but inside her heart pounded: the fly trap was a killing machine, if you happened to be a fly, but its teeth were useless on anything bigger.

It didn't look like Two-Face was aware. He backed away and growled, animalistic, waiting for the moment to strike as he prowled around the plant. Venus watched him, turning its jaws in his direction at every step and keeping Ivy shielded. It couldn't last, and both humans knew it.

Then a Batarang flew into the room, slicing into the side of Two-Face's cheek and spinning out into the wall.

Batgirl stood solid and strong, with Harley crouched behind her in the doorway. "Whatever the hell you are, you're done."

Two-Face grunted and might have said something in return, but Harley didn't hear. Her attention went straight for the corner, to the two whimpering, terrified animals she'd taken in.

"Babies....my babies! What've you done to them you... you big scabby zit!" All three other pairs of eyes turned to look at her, as Harley muscled her way out from under Batgirl's arm and ran straight toward Two-Face. "What've you done, if you hurt them, if you made them cry—"

"Harley, no!" Ivy started to run forward, but Batgirl's sudden grip on her forearm kept her in place. She turned fast to see the other woman with a finger on her lips.

"He's too strong for me, I need your help," Batgirl said quickly, her tone not betraying the magnitude of what she was asking. Her eyes flickered though, and both women knew the other understood; after all the clashes they'd had, and the alliances as well, there was a trust between

them.

Harley threw herself at Two-Face, an agile bundle of feet and fists, kicking and thrashing out at him with all the small strength she had. It wasn't enough to bruise him through the tough, calloused skin, but Harley's quick jumps and leaps kept his attention. She wouldn't let up, not even as her own fists reddened from the impacts, not even as her strength started to fail. For his part, Two-Face lashed out the best he could, growling and staring, keeping his eyes on his tiny assailant. But even when his blows did strike, it didn't stop Harley. As far as he cared, she was little more than a gnat in his face, but she was a gnat that wouldn't be shooed away.

Neither Harley nor Two-Face realized they were giving the other two women a chance to plan.

"Get...out of...my...way!" Two-Face finally connected, his whole arm crashing into Harley's chest. She yelped and fell hard to the floor, bouncing from the impact, but shaking out her head. She would have been poised and ready to jump back in the ring in minutes, if she hadn't seen Batgirl and Poison Ivy ready to strike for themselves.

When Two-Face turned back toward his real quarry, his red eyes widened. Both women had their eyes locked on him, and at the smallest signal from Batgirl, they struck together. Renee jumped into the air, and Ivy threw her power at the two strong vines she had positioned under Batgirl's ankles. With the help of the plants, Batgirl was nearly as acrobatic as her predecessor; she leapt and bounded through the air trusting the plant footholds to be there wherever she landed. Ivy twisted and whipped them to keep Batgirl in the air, letting her dodge and flip as skillfully as Batwoman ever had. Between the two of them, Batgirl and Poison Ivy soon had their mutual enemy surrounded. Out of Two-Face's range, Batgirl smirked as she threw down every trick she had.

The arsenal was impressive. Smoke bombs, batarangs, even a weighted net, all rained down on Two-Face from above. But the lumbering creature coughed and tried to clear the smoke out of his face, ignored the shallow cuts that the blades drew, and ripped through the net. He still wasn't ready for the kick to the small of his back, when Batgirl finally drew in close. She sent him flying forward, right into Ivy's trap.

With Harley and Batgirl keeping her out of immediate danger, Ivy had found the time to do what she planned in the first place. By the time Two-Face fell forward into the Venus fly-trap, it had grown even taller. The flimsy cilia had been replaced with thick, biting thorns, the sticky sap with one of Ivy's own poisons.

"Aaagh!"

The cry came from two places at once and none of the women knew where to look first. In the middle of the living room, the acid was eating into Two-Face's skin, the vines and teeth of the fly-trap keeping him pinned. In the doorway, Harvey Dent sank to his knees with the same cry of pain.

Batgirl caught Ivy's eyes, tilted her head toward Two-Face, and ran for the doorway. "What is it, Harvey? What are you doing here?"

"I have to...oh damn, I didn't know it'd hurt," he winced, sucked in his breath and got back to his feet with Batgirl's help. On the other side of the room, Harvey saw his double writhing, heard his snarls. "He's not down...he won't...the spell, I had it all wrong," he choked out.

"Come on, we'll get you out of here," Batgirl started, pulling Harvey's arm around her shoulder. But he stopped her, taking his arm back and shaking his head. "Well what, then, Harvey, talk to me!"

Harvey swallowed hard, and walked on his own toward the middle of the room, toward the snarling creature he had set loose. "I had it wrong...he's me...it's not so simple. He's not going to stop because...because I have all the caution...he has the drive...I have the intelligence...he has the passion...and without me..." he trailed off, as Two-Face made the point for him. Thrashing and ripping at his prison, he still refused to stop the fight, even for his own good.

"So are you going to get it over with or what?" Ivy snapped, bending down at the base of her plant, stroking its leaves and wincing herself to see it in such agony.

Harvey nodded. The crystal was still in his pocket, the one that had set

off the first spell. Clinking softly next to it was the coin. With a swallow and a last look down at his hands, at his reflection in the window, Harvey drew the crystal back out and spoke to Ivy, his voice choked. "Let him out."

"The things I do these days," Ivy muttered, and relented. She shrank the plant back down to its normal size, gave it back its natural features. Batgirl would later swear that she saw the poor thing shivering in pain.

Two-Face dropped out of its mouth and reared up. He was more scarred than ever, more hideous, more pained and more determined to share that pain. But Harvey was ready.

He lunged. The crystal in one hand, Harvey held out his punctured wrist, focusing all of his energy on finding the same place on his double's arm. Two-Face's mind was a whirlwind of rage and anger, and he couldn't think straight enough to realize what was happening until it was too late. Harvey slammed the point of the crystal down back into the wounds, one edge puncturing each of their wrists. There were no more words to be said, no more ritual to be done. The crystal gleamed with fresh blood and the magic retreated, setting the world back as it had been. There were shouts and cries from two throats before they melded back into one, four flailing arms combined into two. Their faces fell together, and within a moment, they were one again, two halves of the same man.

Harvey was ready as soon as they had their breath back. He drew out the coin and tossed it high in the air, praying with all the strength he had left. Harley, Ivy and Batgirl watched with bated breath, all three preparing their skills for the worst.

The coin fell down to the carpet with hardly a *thump*, and all four sighed with relief. The clean heads stared up at them, and Harvey Dent dropped to the floor in an exhausted heap.

Less than an hour later, the world was back the way it should have been. Arkham Asylum had been called, and Harvey had gone willingly back to his cell, resigned but with a sense of peace.

"It has to be me," He'd told Renee, reaching his good hand for her chin. "I won't let anything like this happen again. I just...I was so tired."

"I understand, Harvey. I'll visit," she promised weakly, although they both knew the chances were small that she would follow through. Still, the gesture had made Harvey smile before they took him away again.

It was only the women now that the padded wagon pulled away. Batgirl had consented to a shot of Ivy's inoculation from the poison as she had caught her breath after the battle, needing little incentive to stop the labored breathing that had come over her. She watched now from the doorway as the car disappear on the streets, and turned around when she heard Harley's wince.

"Hold still, I've got to...there." Ivy threw up her hands when she finished bandaging Harley's bright red knuckles. "It's done, okay?"

"It smarts," Harley muttered. She had been forced onto the couch, only deciding to stay there when Ivy had relented, and allowed Bonnie and Clyde onto the furniture with her. The animals were curled up tightly at either side of her, licking lovingly at the bandages, and forced Ivy to smack them away before they licked away the adhesive. "They're okay though, right? He didn't hurt 'em..."

"Nah. Just frightened. The big babies," Ivy chuckled, and gave Bonnie's ears a scratch.

"Okay...good...I think I'm gonna sleep now," Harley murmured, and slumped to the side a moment later.

Batgirl stepped back toward the middle of the room, closing the door behind her. "Is *she* okay?"

Ivy stood up and closed the distance between them. "Just tired, I think. I don't think she realized how much energy she was using back there."

"Good thing," Batgirl laughed softly. "If she had, we wouldn't have had the time to do what we needed."

"It was a great idea." Ivy smiled, her eyes half-lidded, and the sight made something jump in Renee's chest. Her lips were curled and barely parted, the eyes beckoning, and Ivy took another step forward. "Gotta say...I wasn't sure you'd show up for me."

Batgirl found her fingers reaching, the distance so small now, and her gloved hand brushed Ivy's arm. "I saw what he did in the hideout. You fought him. So I knew you were on my side."

"And that's all?"

The question took her by surprise, but not as much as the hand that laid over her wrist. Under the mask, Renee looked back into Ivy's face. "I...you've proven yourself. More than once. I think you've changed. Or at least, you're trying"

Ivy's fingers grew bolder when Batgirl didn't protest at the touch. They found the break in the fabric between Batgirl's gloves and her sleeves, and slowly peeled the leather away. "You think so huh? You just have no idea...I don't expect you to understand how hard it was not to kill Roland Dagget."

"Oh come on, I'm not so good I couldn't understand," Renee returned the smile, taking her hand back and sliding the other glove away now. "But you didn't do it. You've...grown."

"But grown enough?" Ivy asked, her smirk still pronounced, red lips moving closer. "That's the question, isn't it? Grown enough for you?"

When Renee's hand reached absently for Ivy's again, she could feel the same tension in the other woman's body that coursed through her own. That smile was real...the exhaustion of the fight and the time they'd had to recover combined to fill them both with adrenaline, amplifying feelings that had already been there a long time. The bright bat-symbol on Renee's chest rose and fell quickly with her dizzy breaths.

"You temptress...." She accused Ivy, her voice low.

"I can't make any sparks," Ivy murmured. She took one last step, and her feet were brushing Batgirl's boots. The soft emerald linen of her

simple dress pressed into the catsuit Batgirl wore, Both woman's outfits built to enhance their shapes. The red lips on Ivy's pale face drew even closer, her breath falling on Batgirl's chin, where the cowl didn't hide her. "All I can do is fan the flames when they're already there..."

They didn't know later who had acted first. They just knew that the next moment their lips had touched, and parted, and pulled them toward each other. The sparks had been building since Batgirl first arrived on the scene, and they flew freely between the women now, in fingertips and palms, in feather-light brushes of skin and in strong grips on clothing.

Ivy's alabaster hand slid up Batgirl's spine, all the way up to the neck of her cowl, drawing a gasp from her lips, and Batgirl's own fingers clutched in Ivy's hair. "I can't be stupid...I can't trust you that much."

Ivy laughed and shrugged, and pressed her own body in tighter. "So leave it on. I can be kinky that way."

Batgirl's own relieved laugh trickled into Ivy's mouth as she kissed her again, the hand in Ivy's bright hair surprisingly strong and holding her in place.

In the night all around them, the world was right again. The city was calm and peaceful, granting its heroes a few sweet hours of time to put their duties aside. And in the small cottage on the outskirts of Gotham, Renee Montoya enjoyed every moment.

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 #17 (2009)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: Facades, Part 4 (of 4)

The disturbing origin of Two-Face revealed to her, Batgirl now has to finally face off against her friend-turned-enemy. How badly can Renee stand to hurt Harvey? How badly will she have to, if Two-Face gets the upper hand? And what shocking revelation will finally end the battle? Find out in our stunning conclusion!

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 #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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