



Gotham: City of the Dead #2
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Gotham: City of the Dead
Issue 2 of 4: "Fear and Loathing"
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"Mr. Kord." A voice with a British accent came to life on the Blue Beetles' intercom system. Ted looked around slightly dazed by the suddenness and urgency of the tone.

"Hello?" He inquired in an awkward voice.

"Mr. Kord, it's Batman. There's trouble, I am sending you coordinates right now. Get there as quickly as possible!! And for heavens sake, wear a gas mask!" Ted looked down at the monitor in the bug and changed course in midair. The bug flew away over the rooftops of Gotham City.

Somewhere down below Dr. John Dee entered the dusty room where Seth Newman lay sleeping deeply. Connected to him were several wires with tape attached to his chest and temples. His eyes moved rapidly beneath his young lids.

"Mother, it's ready." Dee walked across the dirty room to a machine and flipped a lever.

"The boy's special ability will kick in instinctively. In moments, his nightmares will fill the streets of Gotham."

Batman lay unconscious in the childhood home of Jonathon Crane, having his own nightmares. Fear toxins coursed through his veins. In the shadows of his mind, several images ran rampant. He found himself trapped in the dark damp cave he fell into as a child. Ahead in the distance, he saw a flickering light and slowly moved toward it. As he got closer, he saw a boy in a chair with his back turned towards him. A projector played images on the cave wall of old home videos. Batman's hearing came into focus. It was the sound of...sobbing? He reached out to

turn the boys chair toward him but each time he did so, he turned with it, the back of the chair still pointed at him.

He looked up at the images on the cave wall. His parents smiling faces filled with delight in a delivery room. He thoughtfully let out a smile of his own. The next scene came to life on the dank wall. His mother held him in the family pool, pulling him around in the water as his father looked on beaming with pride. For a split second, a clip of the film Zorro appeared across the wall and then it went back to the pool scene. As the moments went by, the scenes changed more and more frequently. He watched family dinners and picnics, trips to the Alps and his father skiing, Alfred with a full head of hair, young Bruce playing with Tommy, his boyhood friend, his parents holding hands, his father's office at the hospital. He saw images of Gotham in its glory day, but most of all his parents smiling and laughing, holding him. He saw his father telling him stories of his youth and instilling him with values.

Batman watched intently, almost forgetting where he was. All at once he realized those weren't home videos, they were memories. As quickly as he remembered that, the scene changed. He could feel the air around him change as well. He could remember the smell of the cool night air and the post cinema excitement of Zorro. He watched the wall as the smile faded from his face and was replaced with a look of horror. He looked at the ground as his surroundings changed. The boy in the chair was the only thing that didn't change.

He was in crime alley. A newspaper blew past his feet and the boy stood up from the chair. A man and woman appeared and the boy took their hands. No, he thought to himself. I can't watch this. This wasn't okay. He closed his eyes but nothing changed. The boy, the man, and the woman walked through the alley discussing the movie. A man appeared from nowhere. Batman saw the shimmer of the gun barrel and knew all too well what happened next. He dropped to his knees and stared at the ground. He heard the shots fire and pearls roll into his view. No. No. Not this.

The surroundings changed again and it was back in the cave. The boy in the chair was sobbing. Batman looked up and saw that there were more images on the wall. This time, they were much different and moving much faster. He saw a double funeral and Alfred patting him on the

back. He saw bats. He watched as a young boy knelt on a grave in front of a large monument and took a vow that would change his life forever. He watched years of training go by in seconds and could feel every bruise and broken bone.

He looked on at the circus that changed the life of another young boy; a boy who grew into a young man before his eyes. The dark images appeared faster and faster until finally they stopped. The faces of Alfred and Dick Grayson looked at him from the wall. Their eye sockets decayed and blackened. His worst fears realized. The losses he had suffered; his parents, Julie, the lives of so many Gothamites at the hands of his enemies and in the invasion.

“Worst fear?” He mumbled to himself. He understood for the first time what was happening to him. “Scarecrow.” He said. The boy in the chair turned toward him and he knew who it was. He came face to face with an eight-year-old version of himself.

“Can I come out now?” The boy asked.

“I just wanted to protect you...I never meant to lose...I need you to help me fight this.” Batman took the hand of the young Bruce and they started to walk away from the cave.

Ted landed the bug behind the house where Batman was having his nightmare. He slowly entered the house and made for the living room where he found Batman coming to.

“Batman! What happened?”

Batman was shaking uncontrollably. But at least he was awake now and relatively in control.

“Fear gas...we have to get to Arkham...”

“You have to come to the cave for an antidote, Master Bruce.” Alfred said, interrupting the Dark Knight on his earpiece. “I have the coordinates to the satellite cave uploading to Master Kord’s hovercraft as we speak. Batman tried to stand up and staggered a bit. Ted caught him and

held him up.

"Very well, Alfred. We're on our way." Bruce responded slowly, still shaking off the after effects of the toxins.

Batman and Blue Beetle entered the satellite bat cave. The one below Wayne Manor had been destroyed during the invasion. Alfred had already prepared a shot full of anti-toxins. Bruce sat down at computer console and removed his cowl and gloves. Alfred came over and gave him the shot. Blue Beetle looked around at the cave. Then he walked over to a monitor and turned up the sound. It was the Gotham city news.

"... Again, just moments ago, what appears to be the walking dead suddenly appeared from nowhere...oh my god...I... I'm sorry...I can't..." The pretty young reporter started crying uncontrollably and the cameras panned around to show the fresh chaos. Walking dead filled the streets as they appeared from thin air, smiling. The camera fell to the ground and all that could be seen was people running in every direction. The camera got kicked as people ran by and pointed skyward. The bat signal hung low in the sky.

"My God..." Ted uttered.

"Let's go." Batman said, pulling his cowl back on.

"Do you think it's connected to the invasion?" Ted asked as the two ran toward the batmobile.

"It's possible...get in." Ted climbed into the batmobile, looking at it in amazement.

"What you been doing over there at Waynetech?" Ted asked while checking out the controls and all the gadgets.

"Military applications remember?" Bruce said grinning.

"Yeah, heh."

The Batmobile rolled through panicked streets of Gotham, gunning for the GCPD headquarters. Moments later, the Dark Knight and Blue Beetle

arrived on the rooftop. Jim Gordon waited, and he wasn't alone.

"Governor Newman." Batman said, not showing his surprise at Newman's presence.

"Batman, you did so much for this city last month during the invasion. It's a pleasure to meet you." Batman said nothing as the Governor went on. "I wanted to tell you more about my son. I think he may be inadvertently responsible for this insanity on the streets."

"How so?" Batman asked.

"I..." the Governor sighed, "My family carries the meta gene. I was hoping it would pass him, but...a few weeks ago, we were having a family dinner. Seth wanted desert. His mother told him no and he threw a fit. From nowhere an entire cake appeared on the table. It came from the neighbors house."

"Are you saying he can teleport things?" Batman asked, intrigued. The Governor sighed again

"Yes, he has done it several times since. Toys appear in his room, from a toy store down the streets. In his sleep, the most random things appear in our home. Never anything big, just whatever kids dream about. I dreaded to think what could happen if he had a nightmare..." The Governor looked away toward the chaos down at the street.

"Batman, the dream tech from the labs, the fear toxins." Blue Beetle spoke up for the first time.

"We have to go see Crane. He's obviously not alone on this. Jim, these ...these zombies, what do you know so far?"

"They are very much real. They have been attacking everything in site. The worst part is, whatever is powering them it's spreading." Gordon explained, taking a long draw from his cigarette.

"Just like the movies." Ted said looking at Gordon.

"Jim, do anything you can to stop them. If this is the boy's power at

work, those bodies are coming from somewhere. Get one and see if they've been embalmed. They must be coming from the cemeteries. Governor, is there anyone else who knows about Seth's abilities?"

"Just the family and maybe his nanny." He answered.

"Her name?"

"Ethel, Ethel Dee." The Governor replied.

"Let's go." Batman said to Beetle.

"Batman?" Newman asked, a pleading look on his face. Batman turned to look at him. "Please bring my son back home." Batman gave him a nod and the two heroes headed down the fire escape.

Down below, in the back alley behind the GCPD station, a horde of zombies were lurking around the batmobile. Batman leapt from the fire escape, lobbing batarangs at them. A few of the zombies had fallen by the time he landed. Blue Beetle was close behind, firing off the BB gun. Volts of electricity and flashes of bright light emanated from the gun. More zombies fell to the ground. With the area temporarily cleared, the two got into the car and headed for Arkham. Once inside the Batmobile, Ted spoke up.

"He said the nannies name is Ethel Dee?"

"Yes."

"That's John Dee's mother."

"Yes." Batman fired up the turbines and continued the drive in silence.

Arkham Asylum

The air was thick and ominous. Something was happening out there and only one man knew what it was. Jonathon Crane paced across his cell. Reaching beneath his mattress, he pulled out a baggie full of medications. The so-called doctors had been giving them to him to make him docile. A big smile spread across his face, causing a sore spot on the bridge of his nose to ache.

"Any minute now." He mumbled to himself. An explosion rocked the Asylum and his cell door fell off the hinges. He looked out the still smoking doorway.

"Thank you, Steven." He said to one of the henchman who had caused the explosion.

"No, problem boss." The man answered, and handed Crane a bag. He reached into it and pulled out a burlap sack. Putting it on his head, he stepped over the dead bodies of several guards.

"Let them all out." He ordered his henchmen and dropped the baggie of meds on one of the dead guards. The henchmen went to work fast, opening cell after cell.

"Oh, and don't forget the psych wing." He said, laughing maniacally. Crane walked through a big hole that had been blown on the side of the building. He looked back at the bodies of the guards as they rose. A second round of his laughter was lost in the noise of a waiting helicopter.

The helicopter took off and the Scarecrow watched from the sky as the inmates spilled out of the Asylum. Poison Ivy, The Madhatter, Cornelius Stirk, Killer Croc, and dozens of others ran off into the night, already planning a date with the Batman.

"Life is good." He said and looked forward.

Las Vegas

The New Outsiders were still reeling from the damage of the invasion and were catching the first real rest they had had in months. Ollie and Company were watching television and going over plans for a sting operation they had been working on pulling together.

GNN was reporting live from Gotham City.

"Ollie, turn it up." Said Barbara Gordon as she entered the room. Ollie looked at the T.V and used the remote to turn up the volume. The room fell silent. A reporter leaned out of a helicopter that overlooked the downtown Gotham City skyline.

"...You can't see very much from up here, but reports have been coming into us that, and you're not going to believe this, the dead are walking the streets. We were unable to get a comment from any one in the police department, but this, combined with the extensive destruction from last months invasion, have left the Federal Government with no choice but to declare Gotham City a Federal no-man's land. Again, Gotham City has been declared a Federal no-man's land. It looks like we have a live feed from the Oval Office coming in. President Lord is making the official announcement." The screen changed over to Oval Office. President Maxwell Lord sat poised at his desk.

"Good evening, citizens of America. You have seen the reports of the situation in Gotham City. We are announcing at this time that Gotham city is being declared a no-man's land. Having suffered significant damage in the invasion, the city is no longer safe and all citizens headed for Gotham should be advised that no one will be allowed to enter. In no way, shape, or form is this problem going to be allowed to spread across the country. I have ordered the National Guard to enter the city in aid of the local police.

We ask that our fellow Americans stay calm once again in a time of chaos. We lost many friends and neighbors only a month ago in the invasion. It is a scary time to be alive, but I want all Americans, and the world, to rest assured that the situation is well under control and will be dealt with diligently. Good night and God Bless America."

"Ollie..." Babs looked up at him with tears swelling up in her eyes, "My father..."

"No worries kiddo. I'll get us there." Ollie answered before she had a chance to ask.

"We're coming." Huntress said, getting up from her seat.

"No." Ollie answered, not caring to give an explanation.

"Why the hell not?" Huntress demanded.

"It's okay, Helena." Barbara swallowed the lump in her throat.

“Batman won’t like having a ton of capes around for this. Babs dad lives there, and I have to go to annoy the hell out of Batman.” Ollie said finally deciding to answer. “He does things his way. It’s his city and we’re the only ones who know him.”

“Fine.” replied Huntress plopping down on the couch.

New York

Wally West raced into the bedroom of Dick Grayson.

“DickIsawitonthenewsinGothamthereszombiesandaprisonbreak-atArkhamandthePresident justannouncedfederalnomanslandtheyrenot-lettinganyoneinoroutofthecityitsthesecondcraziestthingieversawand—”

“Wally, I saw it.” Dick said putting on his mask. “I’m going to help Bruce. Alfred just called. Tell the others I’ll be back as soon as I can.”

“Let us come with you,” Wally said, finally slowing his molecules to talk normally “We can help and I’m dying to fight zombies.”

“I have to go alone. Things with Bruce are...complicated. He probably won’t even want me there, let alone the Teen Titans.” Dick answered.

“Okay, but you have to tell me all ‘bout it when you come back. And if you need us, we will be there.” Wally replied.

“I know.” Dick answered and headed outside down to the street. Wally heard his motorcycle start up and take off. He looked down and saw Dick’s belt on the bed. Half a second later, he was running alongside the motorcycle with the belt.

“Youforgotthis.” He said putting it in Dick’s backpack before he could even answer his friend.

“Thanks Wally.” Dick said. Kid Flash slowed down and came to a stop. He stood there in the middle of the road and watched Nightwing ride away.

“No problem, buddy.”

Meanwhile...

There he stood listlessly, with the walls of persistence echoing around him. Locked between two worlds. One whose very existence hinged on the digital. The other so archaic it made him puke with laughter. The only common thread they shared was "they".

Who are "they"? That was the question. And the answer? It was "they" who played Dick Sergent and Dick York like dueling banjos. It was "they" who sold hot dogs by the tens and buns by the eights. It was "they" who was behind the so-called coincidences that so many rock stars died in plane wrecks. It was "they" whose power the red-eyed monster spewed into his room, but "they" called it a radio. And it was "they" who would steal the moon from the very sky that hung above us now, if only "they" had a place to keep it.

But then maybe the paranoia was setting in?

"Nah." He thought to himself as he looked in the mirror. He was thinking of these two worlds. Where up was down, left was right etc. etc. Where cops could be crooks, priests were pedophiles, whores were Hollywood royalty and killers could get their face on a cereal box. They all shared the front page of the paper with their big stupid grins, leering at us like the world was an elevator and they just farted before walking out. Where are we left? Riding the same crap filled elevator all the way to the top floor.

"Nah." he said again to himself, this time with a grin. He walked out of the bathroom of his little apartment and looked across the room at the television. His eyes widened and he picked up his mask.

"Cool, zombies. I am so going to Gotham." Vic Sage turned off the T.V and headed out his door.

Washington D.C.

"...And you're clear sir." President Lord stood up from his desk as he reached for a cigar from his coat pocket. Handlers and assistants rushed to light it for him. He looked at the gathered members of his cabinet.

"Keep me updated on this situation. If this thing gets out of hand, we

will have to take drastic measures.”

“Sir are you suggesting—”

“I am *suggesting* that we protect our citizens by any means necessary. ANY means necessary.”

Back In Gotham...

Batman and Blue Beetle were approaching Arkham Asylum. Batman looked up and saw a helicopter disappear into the horizon. He pushed the accelerator all the way to floor.

“Hang on.” He said to Ted, who was already clutching the dashboard with both hands.

When they reached Arkham, the smoke was still billowing fresh in the air from the explosions. The two heroes leapt from the batmobile and ran toward the building. As they approached, they saw the inmates still fleeing at a frantic pace out of the Asylum. Edward Nigma was among them.

“Nigma!” Batman shouted. Edward turned to look at him and smiled from ear to ear.

“You got bigger problems than little old me, Bats.” The Dark Knight hated it, but Nigma was right. “I’ll be seeing you around.” Edward said and ran away toward the city.

“Come on.” Batman uttered, biting his lower lip.

The two ran into the Asylum and tore down the halls. They had to at least stop more villains from getting out. When they found the Scarecrows henchmen still hard at work letting prisoners lose, Batman greeted the first one with a chop to the back of the neck. He went down and Blue Beetle did the same to the other one. Beetle turned around just in time to see Batman grabbed from behind by a reanimated guard who was trying to bite the Dark Knight. Batman sailed a short, quick punch into the guard’s face, knocking him to the ground. He cuffed the guard to a nearby cell door. The guard tried frantically to get loose. Batman stood close to him and studied him. He saw that the man had suffered a fatal gunshot wound to the left side of his chest.

"This man is dead." He muttered to himself. "We have to end this soon."

"If we find Dee, we find Scarecrow." Ted said.

"Yes, but don't count on it. Crane doesn't play well with others. Once he gets what he wants out of this he'll betray Dee faster than you can say quid pro quo."

"What do you think he wants?" Ted asked.

"My corpse I imagine, a reputation, money. Same stuff they always want. We need to go back to the cave."

Across town, Seth Newman lay in the dusty bed in a comatose state. He was having nightmares of the dead roaming freely around the city.

"We did it Mother!" John Dee announced. "It worked!" The sound of applause came from behind them. The Scarecrow entered the room.

"Everything went off beautifully. I even threw in a full scale prison break to occupy the bat." The Scarecrow chortled. The trio walked toward a nearby window and looked out. They gazed with triumphant smiles at the chaos in the streets. Scarecrow took in the wonder of it all.

"What is the quote? When hell is full, the dead will walk the earth?" He replied out loud to no one in particular. In the other room Seth's nightmares continued. Unbeknownst to him, they had become a reality on the streets of Gotham. The people of Gotham had seen many horrible things. Serial murders, mind control machines, the list went on. The most recent being an alien invasion attempted by the dark god, Darkseid. With their city in ruins and the dead walking the streets, they had nowhere left to go but crazy. Electricity could be felt in the air as the night went on. Gotham City might not make it through the night.

TO BE CONTINUED...

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Blue Beetle #1 (2006)

Blue Beetle, Issue 1 (of 4): Lessons of the Past.

When archaeologist Daniel Garrett disappears in a recently discovered ancient city, it's up to his former student and friend Ted Kord to find him. But before he can begin his search he makes a shocking discovery! Don't miss this 4-part mini-series starring the newest hero of the DC2!

Blue Beetle #2 (2006)

Blue Beetle, Issue 2 (of 4): Time Is On My Side.

Ted takes the fight to Chronos' door step In the second installment of the DC2 debut of The Blue Beetle! Plus, Dan Garret is laid to rest, but what familiar faces show up at the funeral?

Blue Beetle #3 (2006)

Blue Beetle, Issue 3 (of 4): The Evolution of Madness.

Now that Dan Garret has been laid to rest, it's time for Ted's world to turn upside down. The Madmen attack and Ted finds that being a superhero comes with some major pitfalls. Don't miss the debut of the Praying Mantis --- and how is he connected to the Madmen?

Blue Beetle #4 (2006)

Blue Beetle, Issue 4 (of 4): The End of the Beginning.

The Blue Beetle mini concludes but Ted is just getting started. Read the final chapter in his first adventures as a superhero to see what's next for Blue Beetle!

Gotham: City of the Dead #1 (2006)

Gotham: City of the Dead, Part 1 (of 4).

The weekly event kicks off as the son of the Governor is kidnapped. Batman runs down the clues and all roads lead to Arkham. Batman confronts Professor Crane, who makes a surprising request from the Dark Knight. And why have Ted Kord's laboratories been getting robbed? Blue Beetle is in Gotham to find out!

Gotham: City of the Dead #3 (2006)

Gotham: City of the Dead, Part 3 (of 4).

The undead march on in part three of Gotham: City of the Dead. Scarecrow and Dr. Dee see their evil plans come to fruition but why undead? President Maxwell Lord has a plan and an end game in sight. How far will one man go to protect an old friend? Also, more guests arrive in Gotham to pitch in. And oh yeah, Batman is there too!

Gotham: City of the Dead #4 (2006)

Gotham: City of the Dead, Part 4 (of 4).

Gotham: City of the Dead comes to an explosive conclusion in part four of four The Devil's Last Dance and Other Neat Things. Betrayals, Malicious intent and more Zombies! Scarecrow is going down, but who's taking him there? Find out this and more in this final chapter!

Powers, Inc. #5 (2006)

Powers, Inc.: Blue and Gold.

The team is separated and in the fight of their lives. Follow Blue Beetle, Booster Gold and Looker as they battle to save San Francisco from certain doom. What does Booster know about this crisis? The trio turns to an unlikely source. Booster Gold is banned from an unlikely place and has Looker been holding out on the team?

Blue Beetle Vol. 2 #1 (2009)

Blue Beetle: Interview With a Superhero.

It's a fresh start for the Blue Beetle as he takes leave from Powers, Inc. and moves to Midway City. Ted's got his inventor's cap firmly in place to kick off a new business venture, but not everyone is happy about his relocation.

Plus, what's been keeping Ted Kord up at night? What is STAR Labs not hiding anymore? Friends and enemies emerge and a nuclear attack is imminent.

Blue Beetle Vol. 2 #2 (2009)

Blue Beetle: Secret Origins

Mysteries unravel and ravel back up in the second installment of the ongoing series starring Ted Kord. A destroyed S.T.A.R. Labs facility, replicating scarabs and two familiar faces you may know

join the fray as Ted tries to find the answers to a few urgent questions.

Blue Beetle Vol. 2 #3 (2009)

Blue Beetle: Rebirth.

With Peacemaker taken over by a scarab and the Nuclear Family still on the warpath, two El Paso teens come to Ted Kord's rescue as the secret history of the Blue Beetle continues to unravel, with a shocking cliffhanger that changes everything!

Blue Beetle Vol. 2 #4 (2010)

Blue Beetle: The End Is Nigh...Again.



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