



Ultimate Gotham Girls #2
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The soft beam of moonlight cast a pale glow around the room. The boy was sleeping soundly in his bed, surrounded by familiar toys and comfortable blankets. His arm draped across the faded, threadbare teddy that he'd had since birth.

It wouldn't last.

A cold wind rustled the curtains as the window opened slowly. The darkly-dressed man outside couldn't sigh in relief that there wasn't an alarm. He was shaking with too much pent-up anticipation.

He slipped through the window silently, landing with a light thump on the carpet. The boy heard nothing.

A high, quiet, mad laugh escaped the man's lips. After all of this time, all these years of planning, watching, waiting, searching, he was finally going to do it. He would finally have his revenge.

As he snuck over to the little boy's bed and looked down, he felt a pang of something that felt like regret. He remembered so clearly the time when his daughter was this small. But that had been so long ago, and the pang fell away quickly. He had waited much too long for this moment to back out now.

He drew a knife out of the inside of his coat. The moonlight glinted off of the dull metal, giving it an eerie sheen. He reached out a hand to cover the sleeping boy's mouth.

The child woke with a muffled shout, twisting instinctively in his attacker's grip and trying to see in the dark room. With the cold weapon clenched in his shaking hand, the man leaned down close to the boy's ear, and whispered.

"Don't say a word."

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Written by Samantha Chapman
Cover by Borize

The GCPD was on the scene nearly two hours later. Every part of the house was blocked off, and a small group of police had to shout to keep the morbidly curious crowd away from the scene.

Batgirl had been inside the child's room long before the officers arrived. She crouched now in the shadows outside the window, watching the investigation while she still had the cover of darkness.

That morning, Renee had needed to grit her teeth and physically restrain herself from leaping back into the investigation the way she'd been taught to. Every ounce of her had been screaming the lessons she'd learned in police training—Don't touch anything, photograph everything, find the trail, catch the bastard as quick as you can.

She had already broken most of the rules. She didn't know what it was, exactly, but she and the rest of the Bats had some kind of sense for where trouble was going to show up. Thanks to that, Renee had been the first officer on the crime scene. She had taken no pictures. She had actually walked on the scene, stepping over the still body of a little boy. It had taken all she had to fight the impulse to call for back-up and document every near-invisible bloodstain and bit of fabric.

She'd lost the impulse to throw up or scream within her first month as a Gotham City Police Officer.

On the outside, this one looked like a typical Gotham crime. Sad, shocking, media fodder yes, but fairly standard. But in Gotham City, no crime is ever typical. It hadn't taken long for Renee to learn that on the force, and the knowledge was even more vital now.

Two officers that Renee didn't recognize walked carefully into the room, taking great pains not to disturb any part of the scene

“Good God...” one breathed, clenching his fist and turning away.

“Get used to it, rookie.” Renee nodded to herself as she recognized the voice. He was well-respected veteran with the police, who she knew by reputation if not by sight. “You can’t handle it, you’re not gonna last long in Gotham.”

“I can handle it, sir. It’s just... okay. I’m good now.” Renee almost chuckled at the greenish tint in the rookie’s skin. “What do we know so far?”

The older cop chewed furiously on a piece of gum, as a substitute for his usual cigarette. “Well, the dad calls us at 7 am, says he got up and went to wake the kid when he found this. Claims he didn’t hear so much as a peep from Junior all night.”

“He heard nothing? From all this?”

“That’s the story, anyway. Naturally, they’re questioning him down at the station. But you know the drill, it’s our job to figure out exactly what happened here, as quick as we can.”

“Right.” The rookie nodded. Renee watched closely while the two officers searched the room, taking samples and talking quietly to each other. They came up with nothing that Renee hadn’t—until the younger one finally pulled back the covers on the bed.

“Sir!” The older officer hurried to the bedside at the shout, and ran a hand through his peppered hair.

“I wish I could say this was brand new,” he sighed.

“It’s not?”

“Well, the bird maybe. But not the mark.” Renee’s stomach flipped. She listened hard for the next words as the cop called into his walkie-talkie. “Commish? We’ve got more here than we thought.”

“Who the hell does that? He just left this bloody, dead bird on the bed—his *bed*, Babs!”

“Renee, what is with you? You just told me the other day how you worked on that first Joker case, and that was ten times worse.”

“I know. I know. But I was an officer then... God, I don’t know. But I mean, how long were you in this job before you got one of the psychos?”

“Week and a half,” replied Barbara Gordon evenly. The two girls were stretched out on the couch in Barbara’s apartment. Renee had changed into street clothes since her investigation that morning, but there were still traces around her eyes of the dark make-up she used under her mask. Barbara sat with a blanket across her legs, wheelchair waiting nearby.

“Fine, brag about it. But I just get the feeling this whole thing is too much for the PD.”

“That’s what we’re here for. Backtrack a little, though. What kind of bird?”

“Like I know? It was blue. Little. I’m no bird-watcher, I don’t know what it was.”

“Hm.” Barbara put a hand to her chin, bright orange hair falling around her face. “I’d say Penguin maybe, but he’s not dumb enough to try something like this while he’s running for office. Not that he ever stooped that low anyway.. Good call though, on the mark. It’s definitely a sign that this is bigger than your standard petty criminal.”

Renee took a deep breath to calm herself. “So what’s the next step?”

“Same as it was when you were with the fuzz.”

“The fuzz?” Even in her state, Renee cracked a smile.

Barbara only shrugged. “Too many movies, what can I say. But seriously. First step if you don’t have any leads—which we don’t—is look at the victim. I doubt the kid has too many real enemies, but the father

might.”

“What about the father?”

“What about the father?”

“He’s the prime suspect as far as the PD is concerned. Do you think he did it?”

“What do you think?”

“I think you’re not this difficult when Batman asks you a question.”

Barbara grinned. “Okay, fine. But really, do you think it was the father?”

Renee thought for a minute. “No,” she decided finally. “I got a look at him when they were taking him out to the car. It’d be too hard to fake being that upset. And the bird wouldn’t make any sense.”

“I agree.” Barbara stretched her arms over her head and sighed. “Like I said, then. Look at the victim. You should see if Dad will let you look at the case file. You never know, it might work.”

“Yeah, maybe.” Renee glanced at her watch and stood, grabbing her jacket from the back of the couch. “Might as well go now, while they still let visitors in.”

“See ya, then. You understand if I don’t walk you out.” With a sad sort of smile, Barbara indicated the blanket over her legs.

Renee nodded, and let herself out the door.

“But why not?”

“Renee, you know that I can’t let you do that. It’s against policy.”

“But Ji—but Commissioner, please, can’t I just take one look?”

Renee grabbed on to James Gordon's shirt sleeve as she chased him through the halls of police headquarters. Her dark hair was disheveled and escaping from the elastic holding it back, and she looked up pleadingly at her old boss, hoping it would give her the extra edge. "Please, Jim? I just want to look at one thing. It'll take two minutes."

"I'm sorry, Renee! I can't let you." Jim took a deep breath and sighed, turning around to face Renee. "And I don't have time for you to be hanging around here waiting." The two of them were closer friends than perhaps they should have been—even after Renee had left the police force, she and Jim had seen a lot of each other through Barbara. The commissioner had always admired the girl's tenacity, and the sheer courage that she'd always displayed in a dangerous crime scene. But even so...

"Jim, please, I just need one look, I think I can help you with the Dublin case!"

"You aren't an officer anymore, Montoya!" Renee stopped her pleas instantly. She wasn't about to make Jim Gordon any angrier once he got serious. "It isn't your problem. Now go home."

Dejected, with her hands in her pockets and a frustrated frown on her face, Renee turned and walked away.

"Renee!"

She looked back as soon as she heard Jim calling her name.

He rifled through his pocket as he made his way back along the hallway, knocking into a junior officer in his way. When he reached Renee, he passed a small bit of paper into her hand and didn't look at her as he spoke. "If you can figure this out... well, we could use the help."

Renee let herself smile and nod, and slipped the photograph into her jacket pocket.

It was a photo of a small, blue bird with its throat slit, lying on top of a little boy's sheets.

Hours later, Renee's head dropped down onto her chest under the cold blue glow of a computer screen in a dark room. She didn't pick it back up until her dozing was interrupted by the shrill ring of the telephone.

She snapped her head up to attention and grabbed the phone. "Yes, hello?"

"Mockingbird."

"Huh? Hold on, Babs." Renee put the receiver down on her desk and rubbed the sleep out of her eyes. She lifted up her head again to look at the computer; a youth with a dangerous look in his eyes snarled back at her. "What was that?"

"A mockingbird, in the picture. Which I'll be giving back to you in the morning, by the way," Barbara added, "No reason for Dad to know I'm on his case."

"So what's a mockingbird mean?"

"I don't know yet. What'd you find out?"

Renee clicked the mouse and recited back what she had read that night. "Victim Paul Dublin, typical 5-year-old. Due to start kindergarten in September. Whoever the guy was, it wasn't the kid he wanted to hurt," she added cryptically. It happened all too often in this world; an innocent victim used as a tool to hurt someone else.

"So what about the father?"

"Alexander Dublin, 31. Shady record—he's never been found guilty of anything, but this file is littered with arrests and charges. Five robberies, vandalism, one really suspicious case where a little girl died. All with the same small gang of friends, it looks like. But no convictions."

"Right, like that means anything. What's happened to him since?"

"Looks like he settled down about five years ago. Got a house, had the kid."

"Where's the mother?"

"Left a while ago. The police aren't even looking at her. Last heard, she was in Spain living la vida loca."

"So keep looking at the father," said Babs. "You didn't have any trouble getting into my network, right?"

"None at all. Thanks for it."

"Bet you wish you had it back with the boys in blue, huh?"

Renee smiled to herself. It was true; Barbara's computer skills would have been an amazing asset when she was a cop. It was pretty darn useful these days as well, and a huge step up from Renee's standard computer network. "You bet. I'll keep on looking for enemies. With this kind of a record he's bound to have some. In the meantime, if you can figure out what a dead mockingbird means—"

"—you'll be the first to know," finished Barbara. "Look, get some sleep, Renee. I'll take over for now."

"Don't bother, I'm on a coffee high, I'll be up for hours still." *Well, I will be soon*, thought Renee, although she wished secretly for her soft, warm bed.

"Then take that coffee high and get on the streets," Barbara insisted. "Until we figure this all out, we can't afford to let you take the night off."

"Alright, fine. I'll go out, you do my homework."

"I'll call you if anything comes up." A click and a dial tone; Barbara had hung up.

Renee turned off her computer, and the room went even darker. With only the faint orange glow of a streetlight outside to see by, Renee began to get ready.

Her costume looked simple, but it wasn't. Once it was on, it was nearly impossible to tell where one Kevlar-reinforced piece ended and the next began, and she seemed to be little more than a black female-shaped shadow with a proud gold bat-symbol splashed across her chest. Her arms and legs were covered skin-tight in black, her eyes and hair hidden behind the dark mask. It had all become routine by now: dark make-up around her eyes to cover what the mask didn't, flexible fabrics that could cover her without restricting her movement, a flowing black cape around her shoulders to wrap her in a protective shadow. Renee cinched the golden belt around her waist and pulled the cowl over her head, and Batgirl was ready for the night.

In the past few months, Renee had become enamored of her back window—all it faced was a brick wall in the back of another building. She'd hated it at first, since there was nothing to see outside. But she loved it now, since there was no one to see inside.

No one noticed a dark shape slinking out of the window and soaring across the buildings of Gotham City.

It was late again, and dark. He slunk around the large houses at the city's outskirts. The light of the half-moon shimmered in his fair, tousled hair. He allowed himself to laugh as he walked. Other men might not have found their destinations so quickly and with so little guidance. He was not like other men anymore.

A song was playing in the back of his mind. A pretty little girl of about eight was singing.

"Hush little baby, don't say a word, Papa's gonna buy you a mockingbird."

The singing came closer and closer until she was skipping alongside him down the street.

"The next one's just down this way, dearest," he said to her, as the little

girl continued to sing.

“And if that mockingbird won’t sing, Papa’s gonna buy you a diamond ring.” She looked back up at him with a gap-toothed grin. “Thank you, daddy,” she said.

He felt a warm, sustaining feeling growing in his heart, and he hummed along with his daughter. “And if that diamond ring turns brass—”

“Papa’s gonna buy you a looking-glass.” She continued to grin as they drew closer. “I love you, Daddy.”

He wished that he could hug her. “I love you too, Jessica.”

She kept on singing as he approached the house of his next victim.

Close by, a little girl slept soundly in her bed, safe without the knowledge of what was to come.

As she leapt from building to nearby building, the speaker in Renee’s cowl crackled to life with Barbara’s voice. “Renee!”

“What is it?”

“911 call from just out by the river. Try to get there before the cops!”

“On it.”

Without another word, Batgirl changed direction, praying that this time she would be able to do something.

TO BE CONTINUED...

If you enjoyed this story, more tales of your favorite alternate universe DC heroes can be found 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 #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 #24 (2009)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: Face to Face, Part 2.

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

Ultimate Gotham Girls #23 (2009)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: Face to Face, Part One.

Harvey Dent has had enough. After months of treatment and no progress, he is desperate to get rid of the voice in his head, the other half of his mind that has always been there. And with the help of a touch of magic, Harvey can get his wish...but at what price? With Two-Face on the loose and no coin to contain him, how will Batgirl be able to keep Gotham City safe?

Ultimate Gotham Girls Annual #1 (2010)

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

Ultimate Gotham Girls #25 (2010)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: Beginning Again.

Ultimate Gotham Girls #26 (2010)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: Scout's Honor.

Ultimate Gotham Girls #27 (2010)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: A Light in a Dark Wood.

Ultimate Gotham Girls #28 (2010)

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

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