



## House of Mystery #3

various

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"Phantom Stranger" Deadman Constantine Lobo "Guy Gardner" "Green  
Lantern"

## Foreword

*The House of Mystery Halloween horror anthology is a staple of the DC2. Every year we collaborate on the best anthology that we can deliver, and each year, I think we surpass what has come before. This year is no exception. So I'm not going to bore you, I'm going to just say this: **Enjoy**. I know I have!*

— Charlie Wilkins, Editor

# Chapter 1

## Death is the Black Racer

*"Death is the Black Racer!"*

Written by Kevin Feeney

"Fastbak! You have to slow down some time!" The three young Gods wove in and out of the low trees and foliage of Genesis as fast as they would go. A fourth flew alongside them, able to move at comparable speed, but even as they bobbed and weaved their way through the forest, their quarry still eluded them. Suddenly, his green and red clad form burst from the top of the trees, and they paused, craning their necks to look up at him.

"You'll have to try harder than that!" laughed Fastbak, waving his finger at them. As the young Gods yelled out, he turned and dove away again, pushing himself with a secret smile. He was a few years older than them, and he was confident in his skills. Not even the guards of Genesis could catch him when they had a mind - he was easily the best God on aero-disks on the entire planet. He looked to one side, seeking an exit, if he could find one - and there it was! A low ravine, perfect to hide in. Checking that the others weren't close, he gunned his aero-disks, swooping elegantly downwards towards the crevice, smile widening...

...and then suddenly he saw a glint of light which should not have been there. It took him a second to work out what that had to mean. The sun was reflecting off something... something metal. And there were no Genesis patrols out in this area, which could only mean....  
...*Parademons*...

Before Fastbak could shout a warning, before he could do anything, six parademons stood up, and he saw they were not alone - they were armed with a heavy cannon of some sort, no doubt some new device of Darkseid's. It was aimed, and he did not even have time to scream before a yellow ball of energy was coming directly towards him - he squeezed his eyes shut in horror as the energy ball approached him, travelling faster even than sound, and....

... Nothing happened.

A few seconds later, he opened his eyes, blinking in confusion. The energy itself was gone, but other than that.... Nothing. The parademons were still standing there, expressionless now, frozen in the exact same positions they had been in when they fired. And, he suddenly realised, there was no wind, nothing at all - the trees weren't even moving. Even for a God, this was all exceedingly bizarre. *Am... am I dead?* He wondered for a second. But Dead Gods returned to the Source, and....

**"...And that is where I have come to take you."**

At the mere sound of the voice, a horrible chill fell down Fastbak's spine. And suddenly, from nowhere, a dark mist sprang up, shrouding the parademons and the trees and the ravine, and dark clouds seemed to block out the Sun, so that darkness lay across the world. The air was chill all of a sudden, and with mounting dread, Fastbak spun around, seeking the source of the voice.

**"The end has come for you, young God,"** it breathed again, deeply and loudly, drilling into his skull itself, and he whirled to see a figure beginning to emerge from the mist towards him. He had a single impression of a dark and terrible visor, and then common sense took the better of him and he turned and fled on his aero-disks, aiming high so that he would not run into the trees.

Fastbak soared through the sky of Genesis, his heart pounding, but he was acutely aware that he could see no more than a few metres in front of him, and the fog seemed to be ever thickening, the clouds ever darkening. He flew on blindly, pushing through the mist, and suddenly a cliff-face loomed out and he was first to swerve to one side, disorienting

himself as he did so, spinning wildly. He tried to stabilise himself and loomed up....

...to see a dark figure looming out of the fog just in front of him, gliding straight towards him - and he could not help but hear an icy sound almost like cutting, as though his mysterious pursuer was shearing through reality as he moved.

"You're not scaring me!" he shouted out hotly, his voice displaying a courage he could not bring himself to feel as he turned away again, desperately trying to escape, to push his aero-discs to their limits. At the very least, talking might give him a sense of where his foe was.

**"It matters not. Fear me - do not fear me, there can only be one end."** But the voice was coming from everywhere all at once, and terror hammered at Fastbak now. Time itself had come to a standstill - he was trapped and alone, and no help, not even Highfather's, could come to him now. *He was going to die here.* No, no, he couldn't allow himself to think that. If he could reach Supertown, surely... surely something would happen to save him. It must! But which way was Supertown anyway?

He aimed straight up - perhaps from the atmosphere he would have some idea where to go - and he simply pressed himself flat, travelling at full speed. He could only hope that his foe could not pursue, or if he could, that he would be left behind. He did not allow himself to think about possible objects in his way, repressing his horror and ever mounting dread, he refused to think about the mounting chill in the air, tightening its grip around him with every moment, he only pushed himself on... and on...

Finally, Fastbak burst out of the clouds and out of the atmosphere entirely, and he could see the starry canopy of space around him. He slowed down, looking around - but his foe was nowhere to be seen. He... he had actually... But then he looked down, and his eyes widened, as a dark shadow appeared behind the clouds.... And his foe slid out to reveal himself clearly for the first time.

He was armoured from head to toe in pitch black armour, without a shred of colour upon him. A strangely shaped helmet covered his face,

with only a single slit in the visor - behind which there was nothingness, an empty void that seemed to go on forever, a black hole he could feel himself losing his gaze to. Most strikingly of all, the armoured figure was mounted on two long, thin strips of wrought black iron - one under each foot. He seemed to glide through the air smoothly and regally on them, and it was now that Fastbak realised the sickening *slice*-ing was coming from them, as they cut through the air itself. The young God could not help but be struck by the sheer majesty with which the figure improbably moved - tall and regal despite the impossible speed he was traveling at, fully in control. And then Fastbak made the mistake of looking into his visor again, and suddenly he found he could not move.

**“Do not fear, young one,”** The deep voice sounded again. **“Death comes for all things in the end - even Gods must die.”** And Fastbak, despite the nerves in his body screaming for him to do otherwise, could not help but agree, floating transfixed and unmoving as the figure glided through the air towards him, coming ever closer, one armoured gauntlet outstretched.

“No...” the whisper escaped Fastbak’s mouth, and suddenly he shook his head. “...No!” He could not allow himself to be taken in like this. No, he had to escape... he couldn’t let this... this thing destroy him, not here, not while he was so young. He had to fight, even if he could not win, he had to try to escape, to survive, not to concede to this monstrous visage of death. Fastbak could never give up so easily.

“NO!” With a final cry, he tore free of that pitiless dark void and turned away, going to flee - the armoured warrior paused for a split second....

...and suddenly, Fastbak fell to the ground, stunned, his entire body in pain, and he heard a roar of triumph and nearby shouts of concern. He was on the ground, just below where the cannon shot had hit him, stunned and badly wounded, but alive - and the mists and darkness and shroud of fog had all vanished completely, as though the entire encounter had never happened.

“Parademons!” he managed to shout. “Go!” And he himself, before the demons could reload their cannon, managed to scramble up and activate his aero-disks. The demons roared after him, firing another shot which missed, and he sped past his friends, who quickly fell in to follow him.

As he did, he threw a last glance over his shoulder, wondering what in the name of Apokolips was going on. But the answer came again from an unseen figure.

**“You hovered on the brink between life and death, young one, and your will to survive persevered - this time. But know that for you, and for all your kind, there will come a time when you will not be so fortunate, and you will be delivered to the Source. Death will come for you... and for you, as for all the New Gods.... Death is the Black Racer!”**

**THE END**

## Chapter 2

### Five Go to The House of Mystery

*"Five Go To The House Of Mystery"*

Written by Mark Bowers

It was eight o'clock on the evening of the thirty-first of October, and she stood there looking at the tall rundown mansion before them. She wondered what had brought her and her friends to this strange desolate place, surrounded by thick mist on all sides, seemingly miles from anywhere, looking at a house that she remembered from her dreams.

Dumb Bunny looked at her teammates, wondering if any of them held the answers, but they were no doubt equally perplexed. There was the jester of justice known as Merryman, a look of foreboding on his face as he looked at the dark manor in front of them, and next to him floated the heroic Hindenburg that men called The Blimp. Way at the back of them, his face now matching his name, was the archer White Feather, along with the powerhouse known as Awkwardman, who was busy with preventing White Feather from running away.

"Why are we here? What's brought us five together this night in this eerie wasteland," mused the logic-dodging lagomorph who'd named herself Dumb Bunny. "You don't think that this could be..." she paused to remember the name, "limbo?"

Merryman sighed. "You remember," he replied, "your mother and father left that note about this abandoned building they'd found, saying it might make a good headquarters for us."

Her memories stirred, she looked at the piece of paper in her hand, that read: *Dear Daughter, we've found an abandoned building that might make a good headquarters, with all mod cons, for you and your friends. There's a map on the back, Mom + Dad.* Still, it had been an hour since she'd read it, so she could hardly be expected to remember all that.

"It l-looks sc-scary," said White Feather, looking up at the dilapidated mansion, from between his fingers, spotting what he thought were a pair of eyes peeking out from behind a curtain. "I'm not going in!" he added.

"But I'm hungry," groaned the bobbing figure of The Blimp. "We haven't eaten in ages."

Every sinew and fiber in White Feather's body wanted to run away, but he reminded himself he was a hero. Plus, he didn't want to risk getting lost in the mist. "O-okay, maybe we can go in, but y-you do know it's Halloween?" he said, as Merryman climbed the steps to the mansion door.

"What? We should have dressed up in costumes?" asked a confused Dumb Bunny. "And where are we going to keep all the candy?"

As Blimp's stomach rumbled at the mention of candy, White Feather continued, "What if it's a trap?"

"I doubt Mom and Dad would send me into a trap," said Dumb Bunny, frowning at him.

"O-okay, maybe it's some kind of test."

Dumb Bunny was about to reply, when she was interrupted by the sound of Merryman hammering his fist against the door. He didn't know what was awaiting them within the spooky mansion, but he figured it was time they found out.

As soon as he'd knocked, too soon after he'd knocked, the door began to creak open, and they all fell silent as a wild-haired, bearded bespectacled figure emerged in front of them.

"I am Cain," he announced, his inhuman voice a whisper but also a roar. "And you must be the Inferior Five?"

"Do you like our name?" piped up Dumb Bunny, who hadn't yet realized how unnerving or rhetorical the strange man had intended himself to be. "Merryman thought it up. He said he wasn't being serious, but I thought it was kinda cool. *Inferior* – that's like short for *infinitely superior*. It's great that Merryman can make up new words like that; a bit like that Shakespearean guy, can't remember his... " And then she looked at the man looking at her, his annoyance writ loud like something writ loud. "Sorry," she said, "you just carry on, Mister... "

"Cain! I am Cain! And you have no doubt gathered here tonight to view this house, discover its mysteries. Well, Inferior Five, if you want to look around, feel free. I've got to get going."

"Wait, you look kind of familiar," realized Merryman.

"D-didn't I see you in a nightmare?" White Feather asked.

"Hey," said Dumb Bunny, "I had a dream about him too."

"Me too," admitted Awkwardman and Blimp in unison.

"Yeah, I get a lot of that," said the mysterious man, a smile crossing his lips. "Anyway, it's Halloween and myself and my acquaintances are having a storytelling session, so I better get a move on."

Merryman was about to say goodbye, but, before he could say it, the man had disappeared into the mist that surrounded the place.

"Guess we better go in," said Awkwardman, going through the door, the handle coming off in his hand, and the door falling to the floor.

"May as well look around," agreed Blimp, "although I'm not sure why Dumb Bunny's parents recommended it. This is hardly the kind of building I'd want for our headquarters."

"Well, it'd certainly be big enough to house our Inferiority Complex," said Merryman, as he picked up a lit candle and brushed aside a cobweb,

and then walked past a wall of pictures, failing to notice the eyes that were following him from behind one of the portraits.

“W-why don’t we just go home?” suggested White Feather, entering next since he didn’t want to be left outside on his own for even a moment. “Th-the place looks too big, we might get lost in here.”

“Relax, White Feather, this could *be* our home soon,” said Dumb Bunny, trying to reassure him, but scaring him even more.

“We-we’ll get lost I tell you,” warned White Feather, firing his really-long-piece-of-string arrow against the entrance so he could follow it back if need be. It was then he spotted the mouse holes in the skirting board and placed down some of his mousetrap arrows. Then he noticed that the others were leaving him behind and he rushed off after them, his quiver considerably lighter.

It was nine o’clock when they suddenly realized that they were lost somewhere in the labyrinthine corridors of the house. White Feather was the first to mention it, although he’d actually been mentioning that possibility, on and off, ever since his arrival. Looking back at the piece of string that had been trailing behind him, he noticed that it now formed a cat’s cradle behind him. It was as if the rooms themselves were moving around.

White Feather looked desperately in his quiver for some helpful arrows, but none of them were any use.

“It’s okay,” said Merryman reassuringly, “we’ll find our way out soon.” And with that he walked through the door in front of them and came out of the door behind them. “Okay,” he admitted, “this could take some time.”

It was a quarter to midnight when, after going round and round in circles for hours, they finally stumbled upon a dark cobweb-strewn room, with a large chest sitting in the middle.

“Look, a chest,” said Dumb Bunny, who prided herself on her ability to state the obvious. “Maybe we should open it?”

“Why didn’t I think of that?” said Merryman wearily, as he took the candle he’d picked up earlier, and took a closer look at the chest and the sign on it: *Property of previous owners*.

A second later he was opening the chest, wondering what treasures lay within, only to find that it was full of Oreos and a strange device that Dumb Bunny grabbed a hold of.

As Blimp checked the Oreos, and realized that the years had made them inedible, the others looked at the strange device.

“I-it’s got letters on it, like some kind of ouija board,” said White Feather. “W-we shouldn’t mess with it.”

“No, look at the letters,” said Merryman, “H, E, R and O; you know what that means? You know what we could do with this dial?”

“Well, we can’t phone H-O-M-E,” said Dumb Bunny, and then suddenly a light bulb went on over her head.

“Maybe you can see it better now,” said Awkwardman, the light switch coming off in his hand.

“Oh, I get it,” yelled Dumb Bunny. “Leave this to me.” And with that she moved the strange dial to the H position.

Blimp sighed, as his stomach rumbled once more. He’d been hoping that she was going to dial O-R-E-O.

Meanwhile, Merryman looked on expectantly, as the dial revolved once more. All of this time, the Inferior Five had lived in their parents’ shadows, but now they could be heroes if just for one day.

And then, to his dismay, the dial clicked on the O position.

Awkwardman looked at Dumb Bunny in shock. “H-O? Don’t say she’s going to become a... ” he began.

And then the dial moved to R, and Awkwardman remembered how bad at spelling she was, but it didn’t stop there, because the dial continued

moving until it had spelled out its word:

H-O-R-R-O-R

And as the dial reached the last letter, there was a flash of lightning and a gust of wind, and all of the lights went out and Amrryman's candle was extinguished leaving them in the darkest of darknesses.

"How could you dial HORROR?" hissed Merryman in the darkness, over White Feather's shrieks of terror.

"Well, it's Halloween," said Dumb Bunny. "What else would I dial? Besides," she confessed, "I... I didn't turn it. It... it moved itself."

"We're teenagers trapped in a dark spooky house on Halloween," realized Awkwardman. "That can't be a good thing."

"And listen," said The Blimp. "Listen closely."

"But I can't hear anything," said Dumb Bunny.

"Exactly," replied The Blimp. "White Feather's stopped shrieking... That can only mean one thing... "

"I've found my flashlight arrow," said White Feather, his face suddenly illuminated in the darkness.

"Aren't you scared?" asked Merryman.

"Yeah, but I'm always scared," said White Feather. "Nice to have company for a change."

"Okay," said Merryman, relighting his candle. "As long as we stick together we'll be alright."

"Sounds like a plan," agreed Awkwardman, leaning back on the chest, and as he did so, there was a rumble and the chest slid back, revealing a trapdoor that Awkwardman promptly fell down.

"Hey, looks like he's found an escape route," yelled Dumb Bunny.

“Or it could lead to some terrible trap,” mused White Feather.

“Or food,” added The Blimp.

“Awkwardman can handle himself,” said Merryman, trying to forget all of the horror movies he’d seen where the teenagers were dispatched one by one.

“Or maybe we’re a group of teenagers trapped here, being picked off one by one,” mused White Feather.

“Yeah, like American Idol,” agreed Dumb Bunny, nodding sagely.

At which point, a large phantom head filled the room, speaking in an unearthly voice. “You will all die at midnight!” it declared, and then, following some maniacal laughter it disappeared.

White Feather looked at the blank air where the phantom had been a second earlier.

“What time is it?” asked Dumb Bunny, looking at her watch.

“11:50,” replied White Feather.

“Let’s get out of here, pronto,” yelled The Blimp, taking off and moving ever-so-slowly toward the door.

As the others hurtled past him, they ran into the corridors where the suits of armor standing there suddenly came to life.

It was midnight, the witching hour, and Awkwardman now found himself in the basement of the strange house, sitting in the library. He’d looked around for an exit, but had finally given up all hope of finding one. That’s when he rested against a shelf, accidentally knocked a book, and suddenly the bookcase was turning and he found himself in a secret passage.

He slowly made his way along the passage, as it rose ever upwards, and

branching off from it he found a strange control room, filled with banks of monitors and strange controls labeled *room movement*, *holographic phantom head* and the like. After flicking a switch called *ninja pumpkins*, just to see if anything would happen, which it didn't seem to, he went back to the passage and came out at a bathroom, and saw the shower standing there.

If he had been one for exposition, he might have talked aloud, mentioning that, being the son of The Mermaid, he had to regularly douse himself in water to maintain his strength; but he wasn't and so he headed straight for the shower. After all, what danger could befall him in a shower in an old spooky house.

It was about the time that the water hit him, that he heard the staccato music. Pulling back the shower curtain, he saw a jester standing over him with a knife.

"Great, a Merryman psycho," he said, recognizing the figure, and just as he went to retaliate, he slipped on the soap, falling out of the shower and crushing the figure. Looking down, he realized that his friend was actually just a robot version.

Suddenly, another Merryman rushed in. "Hey, Awkwardman, there you are!" he exclaimed. "You've got to help Dumb Bunny, she's fighting some knights and some ninja pumpkins."

"What about The Blimp and White Feather?"

"The Blimp's disappeared, probably looking for food, and White Feather's fighting this huge ghost."

"Okay, I'm recharged," said the dripping wet Awkwardman. "Let's sort out these bad guys."

And with that, he went running out of the bathroom, accidentally pushing Merryman against the wall, dislodging his glasses. But he didn't have time to look back, because he was too busy tripping over, and then rolling towards some suits of armor, smashing them to pieces.

"Glad to see you," said Dumb Bunny, as she ran through the corridors

while some bubblegum pop played in the background. As the pumpkin ninjas attempted to hide in the shadows despite their glowing orange heads, they saw that Dumb Bunny wasn't fooled.

"Hello, Dumb Bunny," they said, their sword flashing before their vegetable visages.

"Bye, Pumpkins," she said, knocking their pumpkin heads off, leaving their animatronic remains to run around like headless pumpkins.

At that moment, White Feather came running out of another room, pursued by some big angry ghost, arrows sticking out from all over it.

Awkwardman grabbed hold of the ghost and accidentally pulled off the white sheet that was covering it, dislodging the arrows as well, to reveal The Blimp, his mouth full of a huge sandwich.

Swallowing hard, The Blimp explained, "Hey, I found a room with all of these sandwich ingredients. Anyway, I just started eating one, when someone threw a white sheet over me and dragged me away. The next thing I know some maniac's shooting arrows at me."

"S-sorry," said White Feather, peeking out from behind a door, "b-but that still doesn't get us out of here."

"You'll never leave," said a big Mummy with glowing eyes, that suddenly appeared lurching down the corridor towards them. As they ran away, the Mummy continued on its way, not noticing Merryman crawling out of the bathroom, trying to find his glasses on the floor.

A second later, the Mummy went stumbling over Merryman, going headfirst towards the spiral staircase beyond. As he hurtled down the stairs, passing the other young heroes, he got wound up in the cat's cradle of string lining the way, wrapping himself up in a huge ball of yarn. Finally, dazed, at the bottom of the stairs, he somehow managed to get up, only to step on a mousetrap, and then, screaming, he started hopping about, landed on the door that Awkwardman had dislocated earlier, and was sent sliding out of the house, down the steps, and into a state of unconsciousness.

Coming around, a minute later, the Mummy opened his eyes to see that the heroes had caught up with him.

"Let's find out who this monster is," said Merryman, pulling at the monster's mask, removing it to reveal a familiar face.

"It's old man Cain, the caretaker," announced Dumb Bunny, in case the others weren't as quick on the uptake as herself.

"No, wait that's just a mask as well," said Merryman, seeing the askew face before him.

"You mean it *is* Mom and Dad!" said Dumb Bunny, hitting her palm against her forehead. "I should have guessed they were being villains when they didn't use their normal handwriting for that note they left me."

"Not *Mom + Dad*," explained Merryman, "but maybe an anagram," he finished as he pulled the mask away to reveal the mop-haired menace beneath.

"Yes, it is I, Mad Mod," said Mad Mod. "After my failure to defeat the Teen Titans last year<sup>\*</sup>, I was determined to defeat some teen supergroup. And I would have got away with it too, if not for you meddlin' kids."

"Looks like we've won though," laughed Dumb Bunny. "You were no match for us."

"But I'm not defeated yet, baby," said the Mad Mod, now livid, as a laser cut through the yarn and the Mummy outfit and he jumped to his feet. "I've got this fab gear I stole from STAR Labs that'll rob you of your powers," he said, waving a stick at them. "It's called a meta-fetter and it'll inhibit your genes."

"Yeah, well I ain't wearing any jeans, so yippie-kay-ay this, meta-fetter," said Dumb Bunny, leaping towards the villain's stick, but to her surprise he grabbed her, and threw her to the floor.

"There was me, happy to kill you in a fun Scooby-Doo-type way," he said, pulling out a gun, "but now it looks like I'll just have to shoot the

five of you... Hey, wait, there's only four of you."

He looked at Merryman, White Feather, Awkwardman and, on the ground, Dumb Bunny, all bathed in moonlight, unlike himself, and then he looked up and saw The Blimp high above him, having finally left the house, struggling to keep in the air as the meta-fetter affected him.

*Plop!*

There was no sense of time, as the Mad Mod opened his eyes.

"What happened?" he asked, looking at the man above him.

"Blimp accident," said Cain looking down at him. "You could be in a coma for weeks. Till then, you're stuck in The Dreaming."

"I remember this place," said the Mad Mod. "I used this for my scheme."

"Yeah, but they defeated you," said Cain. "Still that's what Halloween's about; kids dressing in costumes and being scared, but coming out okay at the end of the day. It's sort of a supernatural PR exercise; a day when the horror is just stories."

"So, I'm stuck here with you?" said Mad Mod, looking into the eyes of Cain. "Listen, mate, hope you didn't take offense at my pretending to be you. You know what they say – imitation is the sincerest form of flattery."

"Don't worry," said Cain, leading his new guest toward his home, "I'm happy to bury the hatchet. In fact I'll treat you like a brother. So, here's the House of Mystery... Dare you enter it?"

**The End!**

\* *Shameless plug for Teen Titans #20*

# Chapter 3

## Monsters

*"Monsters"*  
by Mike Hewison

"The darkness down here, let me be buried by it. I don't want to think anymore, or to feel. Just let me disappear down here,"

The beast swam in the dark waters of the Gotham sewers. Half way between man, and half way between beast, it resembled an amalgamation of different nightmarish monstrosities one might see in their dreams. It's green scaled skin curved and swayed with every stroke of it's powerful arms in the dark water. It's eyes glistened every time it swam beneath a grate, lights flashing from the world above. The world that he'd rejected, which had in turn branded him a monster. Killer Croc had long ago turned his back on the surface world, just as it had done him.

*K'CHNK!!*

The great beast paused, and sunk lower into the water so that only it's eyes may be seen by whatever this new threat may be. He could see flames flicker from where the noise had come. He could hear... voices? No, those from above weren't allowed down here. This was his place. His sanctuary... His body tensed as he rose from the dark waters and slowly approached these men, these intruders who dared enter his territory.

"This izza nice place Bob. See? We can stay here all winter if we want tuh," Came one of the voices.

Killer Croc inched closer, and closer. Listening, preparing his attack... There were three that he saw. Three men who had come to jeopardize his home. His safety, they must be from Arkham he reasoned. They'd come to take him back to his cage. Where he'd finally given in, because that's all there was left for him inside the Asylum. Where the walls pressed in on him, and the sun never shone... Like in his dark sanctuary. NO! Not like here... The great beast rested a hand on the wall and listened in on the voices, listened in on their planning to take him.

"We couldn't of stayed in the East End Pete! Not with them psychos actin' how they was," The second voice said... It sounded old, broken, but not defeated.

"B-b-but the clown iz gone! Same wif da Bat aint he? Weez cudda stayed..." The third voice said weakly.

Croc looked around the corner, half crouching, suddenly he'd become so unsure of what he was about to do. Attack these men? They weren't a danger to him, they were bums. The kind of people those on the surface would just as soon spit on as pass by. Their clothes were ragged, and he could smell the meat they were cooking. It had gone rotten days ago. These men were the definition of desperate. They were the lost, just like him. He wanted to speak with them, it had been so very long since he'd spoken with anyone. And these couldn't be the same kind of people as the ones on the surface... No, these ones must be like him. Right?

"Who's there?" One of them called out.

A sense of panic suddenly overtaken the beast. They weren't supposed to have seen him...

"We don't want no trouble Mister. If yer like us, we got some food we can share," Another of the three stated.

Croc took a defensive step back into the shadows, the all consuming darkness. Better they not see him, better they not know what a monster

he was.... He slipped further back into the shadows of the sewers before he was certain that they weren't following. That's when he ran as fast as he could.

It was another day before he came, once again watching, and listening. Then he'd returned a week after that, and a day after, until he came every day. Watching them, and listening. He learned their names, the one named Bob seemed to be the closest thing to a leader of the group. He was older, Croc listened to him talk about days gone by, about how when in the 70's he'd gone travelling across America working on the Pipelines, only to wind up broke as soon as the job had ended. He listened as Bob talked about travelling all across the States looking for work and so many different adventures he'd had before one day he got into an accident which left him a cripple. His left leg barely worked, and when outside it'd go so numb he couldn't even walk. And then there was Pete, always eager to listen to anything that Bob would say. Always eager to please him, it was clear to Croc that Pete was simple. But he was loyal, and if he was told to find fuel for the impromptu fire pit made from the oil drum he'd come back with so much wood and paper he'd struggle to walk straight. The one he didn't know much about was the third one, Brett; all he really seemed to do was complain. Occasionally he'd bring food, or fuel. But ultimately he'd do the minimum. Croc didn't like him as much.

"That g-guy's back," Whispered Brett.

"Yeah, I see 'em," Nodded Bob.

"What are we gonna do Bob?" Pete asked not quite so quietly.

"He's been coming here for what? A month or so? I say leave 'em alone, and if he's gonna come talk to us, he'll do it when he's ready," Shrugged Bob.

"I don't like it," Brett said quietly.

"Don't worry so much kid, he's just a normal guy like us. And if he was gunna kill us, pretty sure we'd be dead by now," Bob said with a shrug.

Pete turned to the corner where Killer Croc was crouching and waved.

### *Topside*

The alarm drowned out their voices. The noise flooded over them and the only thing they could feel was fear. Terror, it makes you do dangerous things. The leader drew his revolver and shot the clerk. His partner jumped the counter and cleaned out the register, and grabbed a pack of camels. The other two each filled a bag of liquor and then they were gone. First through the back door, and then they heard the siren. That was worse than the alarm. They rounded a corner in the alley, only to realize they were trapped.

“Damn! Where the hell do we go now boss!?” One of them yelled.

The leader, the one with the hand cannon looked around. He had to stay calm. These three would turn on him like a pack of animals if he didn’t keep them under control. He finally saw a way out. “Someone open that freaking sewer grate!”

It took two of them to lift it, and just as it was removed, the leader, Guy climbed down into the darkness. The other three followed suit....

They made their way down into the sewers, further, and further. Darkness overtaking them, ice cold water around their ankles. A silent tension surrounding them all. That’s when one of them finally broke the silence.

“Where in the hell are we going boss man?”

“This way,” Guy muttered.

“Hell, we’re lost aren’t we?” Asked another of the men.

“We’re not lost, I just don’t know where I’m going!” Guy snapped.

He would bring them food, he thought. This way, it’d show he wasn’t out to hurt them. They would accept them if he brought them food... And clothing, those rags wouldn’t help them much when winter came around. He would help them, and afterwards, he’d be accepted. He’d have to go topside of course, and that meant he’d have to avoid being

seen... What kind of food would they like? he wondered. The clothes would have to be nice to, this would probably take him the entire night...

### *Elsewhere in the Darkness*

It was a fluke, an accident really. The group of criminals needed a place to lay low, and the group of the lost happened to have a nice enough place considering the location. Guy, the leader didn't care who they were, he drew his gun and shot the old man down first. The other two didn't have time to react as two of his men came at them with knives and ran them through. It was quick, it was efficient, it was murder. Pete, Bob, and Brett were gone.

"Freakin hobos, trying to get in the way of me counting my money," Guy muttered, lighting a cigarette.

"You two, get rid of this trash, it's ruining my appetite," muttered Gerry, Guy's long time partner in crime.

"Why we gotta do it? You ain't did jack, we killed the Bums," snapped one of the others.

"Do I care? Get to it dammit!" Gerry yelled.

Both looked towards Guy, who nodded. The two others, they would question Gerry, they would complain to him. But not Guy, that was an easy way to get you killed. They grunted and started to drag two of the bodies away.

"Ain't like it used to be is it?" Gerry asked.

"Nah, it's the same, just nowadays, I'm the one playing the jokes," Guy laughed.

"Man, I'm pretty sure that workin' with The Joker as long as it did, might have driven ya over the edge," Gerry said, shaking his head.

**BAM!**

Gerry looked down at the hole in his chest, his precious life blood pouring free. He couldn't talk, all he could do was look at his old partner and wonder why. As if he'd read his mind, Guy smirked and started to speak.

"Nobody, I mean NOBODY talks to me like that bud. The old boss, he didn't push me over the edge, he just told me a very good joke one day," And with that, Guy fired another shot, this one into Gerry's head.

Further down the tunnels, the two thugs dropped the bodies as they heard the shots.

"Jeezus, what the hell was that?" One asked.

"Guy, that's what, he's a freakin psycho and a half. Good chance, he got sick of Gerry's mouth is all,"

"Remind me why we're working for that guy again?"

"It's 'cuz he's a psycho and a half man. You want to work in Gotham, you got two choices, work with the meanest SOB around, or die like a punk, can you think of anyone meaner then the boss?"

"Not down here," the other muttered...

That smell, he knew that smell. Blood, death, for a moment, a sense of excitement. A sense that, he'd have some fun. Then it dawned on him, the three vagrants, his friends might be in danger. He dropped the bag he was carrying and broke into a mad dash. Rounding corner after corner, he knew the danger. Then he saw the two men, standing over the bodies of his friends. That's when the beast took over, inside of him again. The two men, they saw him running towards them, and did the sensible thing, they turned to run. He was too fast, he was too strong. The first one, went limp as his hand wrapped around the back of his neck and squeezed. The second, was half way turning towards the beast then, only to meet the claws of Killer Croc. Neither would rise again. The two men, it wasn't enough, it had been too quick. He smelled more blood, more death further down into the tunnels. He once again started to run towards the smell, towards those responsible for taking his friends from

him. He arrived to their spot, their sanctuary. And there stood a man, cigarette between his lips, and two bodies beneath his feet. One, was his friend, the other he didn't know. That's when something happened, he didn't know what, or why, it just happened.

"Christ!! Is that Killer Croc I see?" He asked.

"No, the others, they met Killer Croc. You? You get to meet someone special, the names Jones, Waylon Jones,"

"Whatever, when people ask, I'm still gonna say I killed Killer Croc," Guy replied drawing his gun. He fired once, twice. The first shot was off, the second tore threw Jones' arm. The beast, the man shrugged the pain off and charged. Guy fired once more, only to hear the sound of an empty chamber. That's when Jones came upon him. He didn't scratch, he didn't bite. He threw his fist hard into his chest, and as the smaller man hunched over, Waylon brought his elbow down hard into his spine. Guy went to the ground, and the last thing he felt was the force of Waylon Jones foot dropping down on his skull....

He wasn't in the darkness anymore. He stood atop the buildings of the world that chased him away. Staring downward, he looked at the people that saw him as a monster, but that wasn't true, not anymore. He was a freak, he knew that. But he wasn't an animal, he was a man. Waylon Jones wrapped his coat around his body and turned away from the bright lights of Gotham City. He'd gone into the darkness, and it changed him. Now, now it was time to bring the darkness back those that sent him there. The doctors of Arkham, The Bat, and everyone that stood in his way.... Killer Croc was dead, long live Waylon Jones.

**The End?**

# Chapter 4

## Treat

*A man void of fear, circus acrobat Boston Brand defied the odds even in his murder. Now, he walks the tight-rope between the world of the living and the dead with the ability to possess human bodies as The Deadman.*

*Alongside the man with a history unknown and connections to the magical world, The Phantom Stranger, the two bring justice to the undead.*

### *"Treat"*

by Dan "BOO!" Johnson

[October 31st – Halloween]

"Smashed jack o'lantern. Pulpy orange pumpkin brains leak into the street and merge with the blood. Orange and red... all I can think of is Lorna with her barrel of candy corn. Reminds me of Halloween at the circus, only less crying children." Boston Brand floated among the oblivious living, talking to himself as he dissected the grisly crime scene.

"Yeesh." He said, leaning in between two detectives inspecting the deceased. "Did she really think 'sexy nurse' would be original? What a cliché costume."

"The deceased deserve more than jokes, Mr. Brand." A ghostly figure spoke from behind Boston.

"She deserves to rest in peace knowing her killer has been brought to

justice, the jokes just help me keep my head straight." Boston turned around to see the ever mysterious Phantom Stranger with his hands hidden in his blue cloak. "But it's nice to see you too, pal." He said, patting his fellow messenger of the magical world on his stiff shoulder. The Stranger flipped the tail of his cloak back and began walking around the scene.

"Hmph." The Stranger grumbled looking down at the body. "The costume is quite tacky."

The Deadman smirked.

"So according to eyewitnesses, our killer was wandering the streets in a mask waving a knife around asking people if they 'deserved a treat.'" Boston explained. "Apparently this woman gave him the wrong, or right, answer and —" Yelling coming from across the street interrupted him. "Would'ya look at that." He pointed to a boy being harassed by a group of children.

"Give me your candy, wuss!" One of the bullies shouted at a shaking boy in a ghost costume.

"Just do it kid, we don't want to have to hurt you." Another said.

Just then, one of them began to violently shake.

"What's going on Billy?" One said, watching the group's ringleader with fear in his eyes.

"He's... he's... possessing me!"

Once the spasm ended, the group of boys dropped their candy and bolted down the street.

"Was that necessary Boston?" The Phantom Stranger questioned.

"Nah... " Boston said watching the bullies sprint away, "but it's nights like these that I love being a ghost. I haven't freaked a kid out like that since this one time —"

"Why aren't you listening to me?" A man was yelling to the police officers but was getting no response.

"Excuse me, sir." The Stranger addressed the man. The man twisted his body around.

"You — you've gotta help me. This is my girlfriend dead on the street. We were attacked by this man in a mask, and he slit her throat, and he tied me me up, and brought me to some warehouse, and tortured me, and then I was here, and —"

The Stranger put his hand on the man's shoulder.

"Calm down, you are among friends. You say you were being tortured and you... ended up... here?" The Stranger questioned.

"I blacked out, I don't know what happened. I just found myself here and nobody is listening to me. That is, except for you two." A puzzled look grew on his face. "Why can't anyone else see or hear me?"

"Unfortunately, I must inform you that you no longer belong to the physical plane of existence that you are familiar with."

"Where am I? Am I... dead?"

"Well Dorothy, you're not in Kansas anymore." Boston chimed in.

"What *are* you? That isn't a mask... *is* it?" The man said, pointing to Boston's grotesque, pale, lifeless face.

"A wise guy, eh? I'll have you know my *mother* gave me this face!"

"Boston please." The Phantom Stranger interrupted. "What is your name, sir?"

"James Sutherland. My name's James. Please, I just want to figure out what's going on. I think this guy is still out there."

"You say that this guy was torturing you? Did you see where he took you?" Boston asked.

"I was a little woozy on the ride over, he had hit me over the head pretty hard, but yeah... yeah I think I can find the place."

*Moments later...*

The splatter of blood was the only moisture that had set foot in the old warehouse in years. A nervous man in a white hockey mask paced back and forth, kicking up dust as it circulated around the room and back down to the cold floor. Next to him, strapped into a chair resembling those found in a dentist's operating room, was the nearly lifeless body of James Sutherland.

"See? The human body can only take so much pain! I know what I'm doing is right." The man's hand shaking, he proceeded to smack it into James' face. "No. I need to know." He said, wheeling over a defibrillator to the body. He punched a series of buttons and held it up to James' chest. "I need to know I'm not making a mistake!"

A jolt of electricity shot through the body.

Outside of the warehouse approached the ghostly trio of Deadman, The Phantom Stranger, and James.

"Woah, where you going buddy?" Deadman said looking at James, whose image was slowly fading.

"He's being brought back to life." The Stranger replied. "We need to get in there and talk to this man. We may still be able to save his body."

Boston made his way into the warehouse and towards the body of James Sutherland.

"Hey, while you're cleaning that sharp object of yours over there, you wanna tell me why you're doing this?" A voice came from the body of James. The man in the mask jerked around to confront him.

"Don't you get it? I'm relieving you. I'm giving you what you want." The man replied.

"I don't think I want to die."

"You think you don't, but what were you doing tonight? Pretending to be someone else. Dressing up as scary things. People are *pretending* to be dead."

"What's your name?"

"Ph-Phillip." He stammered, hands still shaking.

"Calm down Phil, we can sort out whatever you're going through. My name's Boston."

"Boston, I'm doing you a favor. Haven't you noticed that life is just getting darker and darker? Times are rougher. The economy is dropping. I want to save people from depression."

"You can't let words like 'recession' and 'depression' trick you Phil, life is always going to have hardships and it's always going to have a light at the end of the tunnel to treat those willing to take on those challenges. I grew up in a circus, I had to deal with having to always move and always work, but it gave me a purpose. Now that I'm through it all, I can look back and say that I accomplished something."

A tear dripped down under Phillip's mask as he removed it and wiped his eyes.

"I can't be wrong. I took that woman's life. I felt all the complications leave her body."

In entered The Phantom Stranger.

"You must be confused about life." The Stranger said. "You are torturing this man to see how much pain the body can endure, but what you aren't seeing is the aftermath of what would happen if you let him go. Where he survives and is able to see family again, or where he takes pride in his time spent knowing the woman that you prematurely took from this world and can make sure her memory is never lost."

“Trust me. I've seen what happens in death. You take the responsibilities that you have for granted. Sometimes you need the pain to keep you in check.” Boston added.

“And sometimes you need to take a lump for what you've done wrong to learn from mistakes.” Phillip muttered reluctantly.

“You know what you have to do. You have known all along. We merely helped you come to that realization.” The Stranger said in a calming voice.

Less than an hour later the scene was bathed in red and blue lights. Phillip headed into a squad car as James was carefully moved into the back of an ambulance.

“It amazes me how so many can take life for granted.” The Stranger contemplated.

“C'mon man, let's go scare some more kids. It'll cheer you up.”

“I think I am understanding this holiday of yours. You scare one another to ignite a fire before it becomes cold. It's reassurance that even though a struggle is about to come, you are still alive, and fear is just another part of life.”

“Ooh! That kid's got one of those caramel apple suckers! Would you say it's against our ghostly code for me to possess his body to eat that?”

The Phantom Stranger let out a sigh.

“Happy Halloween Boston.”

**The End**

# Chapter 5

## Drinking Night

### *Drinking Night*

Written by Charlie Wilkins

The room was full of stale smoke and the old, clingy smell of beer that'd been left to become flat. It was a pub, and not any old pub, but a man's pub, the kind of pub you wish you would become a patron of when you first learned of the concept of the pub. There was a jukebox (*Bonnie Tyler – Total Eclipse of the Heart, before you ask*) and a cigarette machine, and in the lad's toilets, there was a condom machine that was perpetually empty. Not that anyone in this place got any, the simple fact was, over the five years they'd had it installed, it had once been emptied, and no-one ever bothered to refill it. Now it just ate money, and it was a running joke between the punters directed toward any young bloke who came in to start the night and needed to fill their wallets with sick little promises to themselves in cool latex.

So when the night started, and a few hours in, a group of youths, dressed in their flowing coats and tattooed in what appeared to be the latest in occult designs, no one gave a damn. This was people. This was weird people, and this was London, so no one gave a damn. Their ID checked out; they paid in cash, always notes, and they sat in the corner, muttering to themselves, foreign languages and presumably abstract bands that none of these ex-servicemen had heard of. One of the youths swayed over to jukebox and slammed a pound coin in with his thumb, rolling it in with a flick, and he began to scroll through the pages and pages of

songs. He laughed to himself as he came across bands his father had been a fan of in *his* youth, out of embarrassment, of recognition. He finally settled for a song, and as it turned on, trumpets blaring and drum banging, he began to sway across the floor back toward the table. He bumped into someone carrying a round, and the beer fell back on the other punter, who immediately swore as loudly as anyone could hear.

“Watch where you’re going, you little—”

“Shut up granddad,” hissed the youth, his tongue flicking out like a snake, and he clicked his fingers in front of the elder man’s eyes and the man keeled over, clutching his chest. The glasses clattered across the floor, liquid spilling every-which direction.

The music kept blaring, and the man’s friends rushed over to his fallen body, and looked up at the boy, barely out of his teens. “Who the £\$%^ are you? What the £\$%^ have you done?”

“He got Guinness on my shirt, the prick,” replied the boy, as he laughed and headed back over to his friends. “£\$%^ off.” He winked at the men, who were now very pale, and sat back at his table.

“H-He’s dead.”

The youth leant back in his chair, and looked back at the men, his hair dangling near the floor. “That was the £\$%^ing idea, £\$%^.” He swung back forward, before giving the men the finger. “£\$%^ers.”

The men barged forward, before the table of youths all burst up, and pointed their fingers at the men. “We’re new blood, gramps, we’re the new £\$%^ and you need to back the £\$%^ off.”

“You killed Barry!”

“Barry killed Barry by being a rude £\$%^ who should have looked where the £\$%^ he was going!”

“New blood, eh?” The two groups of seething men and boys looked to the bar, where a tall, lean, blonde man sat drinking his lager. His trench-coat was hanging beside him on the wall, and he was playing with a

pack of cards in front of him. "You know the only reason I come 'ere is because they flaunt the smoking ban?" He flicked the cards into a pile by his drink, and then placed a Silk Cut in his mouth and sparked up a lighter. The flame played up for a moment, drifting across the air like a whisper, and then crackled on the end of the cigarette. "Can't get a pint and a fag in the warm 'round these parts to save a life." He smiled to himself. "*Seriously.*"

"Who the £\$%^ are you?" snapped the leader of the group, spittle flying from his teeth, his fingers rubbing against each other by his side.

"Who am I? I'm nobody, mate, just a passerby." He stepped up, the cards back in his hands, spraying from one hand to another. "But you listen to me, you little dip£\$%^, you come in 'ere, causing all kinds of trouble, and you don't think about the consequences. Well 'ere's one for you:" The cards exploded out of his hands, and caught the group, their hands waving about their faces frantically. "You don't mess with my pub o' choice, you un'erstand me?"

The cards all drifted to the floor, and the lead youth laughed. "You think you scare me, old man? You think you intimidate me 'cause you had a pack of cards and you sprayed 'em in our faces? £\$%^ awf do you. I'm a £\$%^ing magician." He clicked his fingers, and the stranger clutched his chest, the blood draining from his face. His eyes bulged out for a split second, and he dropped to his knees. "And **that** is £\$%^ing magic. I'm £\$%^ing Alastair Crowley mate, I £\$%^ing know what I'm doing." He laughed, and turned to his friends, who were all frozen in their tracks. "What?"

"You're a £\$%^ing idiot, mate." The magician was tapped on the shoulder, and was punched in the face by his apparent victim. "An' that pack of cards? That was magic. And right now, you ain't gonna' be able to cast so much of a dirty look at me for however long you live." He turned back to his trenchcoat, pulled it on, and took his cigarette from his mouth. "An' by looks of it, that ain't gonna' be too long." He walked out of the pub, the door dinging as he left, and the young magician, with blood pouring from his broken nose, looked at the old men as they closed the blinds of the pub windows.

"Old men? £\$%^ing kids today." The oldest man among the group of

punters slammed his fist into the youth's chest, and grabbed him by his long dark hair. "We've been killing smug little boys like you lessons in not \$%^&ing with yer betters for decades, son, and I guess it's time to make an example of you." He grabbed the boy's jaw, and grinned. "Say 'Ah'."

John Constantine turned up his lapels as a cold wind sauntered down the street, and the scream from inside the pub shivered up his spine. He took a long drag on his cigarette, and smiled as the smoke began to dance with the wind. "£\$%^ing London, you'll be the death of me one of these days..."

**The End.**

# Chapter 6

## Night of the Day of the Dawn of the Space Zombies

“Night of the Day of the Dawn of the Space Zombies”  
Written by: Brian “*Brain Eating*” Burchette

**Writer's Note: This special story does not fit into continuity of any sort. Thank goodness.**

It had been weeks since he had come across any other life forms. Not that it mattered that much to him. He couldn't stand everyone he had ever run across, anyway. Now some of the people he had actually run *over* seemed to have been pretty decent; or they at least appeared to be as they slid under his cycle.

His name was Lobo, and he was the best at what he did, at least in this Multiverse. He was traveling back from a place unknown, where nothing was at it should have been. And that kind of crap was fraggin' annoying, he thought.

That was when he saw it. The blue/green planet came into view. He grinned a natural grin that made others who saw it expel fluids from their genitalia, immediately. He had always been impressed with that ability, especially when it came to his long dead folks.

He turned his machine towards the planet, hoping it had decent food, a

place to crash, and something that at least resembled a woman; not necessarily in that order.

**“Guy Gardner, you are needed,”** the voice of the Guardian’s came to him through his ring.

“Of course I’m needed. I wouldn’t be me if I wasn’t needed. What’s the buzz?”

**“We have lost contact with Green Lantern of Sector 666. Since you are the nearest to that location, we want you to look into it and report back to us.”**

“Simple enough.” The green glow around his body that protected him from the hazards of space, flared for a moment as he poured on the speed. It was ridiculous that the Guardians would send him on such a frivolous mission. He was the best that they had. He was the greatest Lantern of them all. He was being ordered to check up on a newbie!

Guy grunted in exasperation. Well, perhaps after he found the lame-o and gave him a good dressing down, he’d have time to find something that resembled an Earth beer and a broad, not necessarily in that order.

The Universe’s greatest warrior landed in the middle of what seemed to be the largest city on the planet. He removed himself from his bike, placed his helmet down on top of it, and reached across into his vest pocket, pulling out an Earth cigar. Chomping down on the end, spitting out the piece he had bitten off, and then lighting it, he began his trek through the deserted streets.

He had to admit that it was a damn large city, with very few aliens living in it. In fact, he thought as he began to look around, where the hell were the little buggers?

**“Hey!”** He called out to the empty street, the cigar hanging out of the

side of his mouth. **“Anybody home? I gotta need to fill my gut.”**

His voice seemed to echo of the strangely shaped buildings. **“Well son of a bitch!”** He said as he through his arms up in the air in frustration. **“First damn piece of civilization I get to and there ain’t no civiliz’in’ goin’ on! Come on!”** He called out again in frustration. **“At least send out a pet I can kick or somethin’.”**

The only response was his voice coming back to him, and the wind that seemed to have picked up. **“Fine, I’ll get my own fraggin’ meal,”** He mumbled to himself as he continued down the street.

He caught a whiff of something odd as he rounded a corner. It wasn’t a pleasant odor; in fact it smelled a lot like rotting flesh. The hair on the back of his back stood up. His pace slowed a bit as he continued to walk down a much narrower, but still deserted street.

**“Don’t have any idea what I’m smellin’, but I sure as frag ain’t eatin’ it.”**

It was at that moment that he began to hear the sound of shuffling feet. He stopped, took the cigar out of his mouth and looked around, his glowing red eyes narrowed as he looked into the deepening shadows.

When he saw the first creature shuffling out of the growing darkness, towards him, he had to admit to himself that it was one of the ugliest things he had ever seen. Its skin was pale, its flesh was torn in several areas, and its eyes had a hollowed look. It raised its arms up at him and made a guttural moan.

**“Whoa, don’t know what you’ve been eatin’, but it ain’t agreein’ with you, pal.”** Lobo said.

He heard more shuffling and turned to see several more figures in the same condition, making their way towards him.

Lobo looked back at the first thing in front of him. **“Your family?”**

The creature only let out another low moan.

**“Ahh well. I might not be eatin’ any time soon, but at least I get to kick some alien ass.”**

He let out a holler of his own as he charged the thing in front of him, smashing into it and pushing them both up against the wall of a building. He slammed his fist into its gut, only to feel his hand slide right into the flesh as if it were made out of jell-o.

**“I knew ya were soft, but I wasn’t expectin’ that.”** He sad as the thing suddenly struck him in the side of the face, tossing him back. **“And I wasn’t expectin’ you to be that strong, either.”**

He jumped up, grabbed the creatures arm as it swung at him again, and proceeded to swing around, pulling arm to flip the thing over his back. He was surprised for the second time when he found himself bent over, holding only the arm.

Turning back around he saw the thing open its mouth, preparing to bite him. **“Whoa, fella. I ain’t that type.”** He swung the arm, striking the thing and sending it stumbling back.

Lobo heard the shuffling behind him... close. He turned to find nearly four dozen of the creatures were now upon him. **“Aww, frag,”** he muttered as he dropped the arm and cracked his knuckles. **“Well come on then,”** he said as he grinned. **“Time to see why they call me Mr. Machete.”**

Guy Gardner flew into the deserted city with a look of confusion on his face. “Ring, where is everyone?”

**Only one living life form can be detected,** the ring responded.

“Well would ya do me a favor and locate it for me.”

The ring did just that and he followed the guidance system, flying around the corner to see a mob of alien creatures, gathered together in a tight circle. Then he noted that some of them in the middle of the gathering were being tossed into the air like rag dolls.

"I thought you said there was only one person here?"

**Only one life form is detectable**, the ring replied.

Stopping in mid air and hovering for a moment, Guy took a good look at the creatures being tossed around. His eyes widened as he realized what he was seeing. "Well, call me George Romero, I'll be damned!"

**Very well, your new designate is 'George Romero'**, the ring said.

Ignoring the comment, Guy created a large green beam of light that ran six feet in width, as he flew into the end of the creatures, knocking through them like a hot knife through butter. He noticed that several of them were cut in half as he made his way to the center of the melee.

He was struck from the side, temporarily losing his concentration, allowing the green battering ram to disappear as he fell a few feet to the ground. Instantly the creatures were upon him.

Guy felt teeth begin to clamp down on his foot. "I don't think so Rob," he said as he smashed his other foot into the zombie's face. He was able to get up and form another shield around himself as he punched and kicked his way through the mob of zombies. He had to reach the center, to help whoever it was that was trying to fight these things off.

It felt like hours, but in reality were only minutes as he reached the middle of the massive congregation. He whirled around, striking two more in the face, before turning back to see what could only be described as the ugliest one he had come upon so far. In fact, it grinned at him and for a moment he actually felt fear; fighting off the urge to wet himself.

He threw a punch at it, hitting it square in the face.

**"Feetal's Gizz, that hurt!"** The zombie cried out.

"You talk?" Gardner asked in shock.

**"When I wanna. Hear, hold this."** It said as it handed him the head of a zombie and turned around, tearing off two more from the alien zombies

shoulders.

"You're not one of them," Guy deduced as he smashed the headless corpse into one that was about to bite him.

**"Do I look like one of them?"** He growled.

"Well... "

**"Listen, if you're done being a wuss, start ripping their heads off or we're going to be here all day."** Lobo grunted.

Guy's eyes lit up. If they really were some kind of space alien zombies, then chopping off the heads was the logical way to eliminate them, and since they were already dead...

Gardner let out a whoop of joy as he brought his will to bare, creating a giant circular blade of pure green energy, and like a man mowing down weeds, he went through the crowd of zombies, eliminating head after head in quick succession.

Lobo, smoking cigar still planted firmly in his mouth, turned and watched him for a second while holding two more alien heads. **"You fragin' Lanterns; always gotta use that toy of yours."**

"Hey, I know who you are now. You're that Lobo fella!"

**"That's one name. I prefer *Scourge o' the Cosmos*, myself."**

"They say I'm almost as big of a pain in the ass as you are." Guy said proudly as he continued to slice his way around the mob.

**"Ain't nobody as big a pain in the ass as me, punk."**

"Who you callin' punk, you clown faced freekazoid." Guy retorted heatedly.

Lobo slammed into two more zombies, grabbing their heads and slamming them into each other. They exploded like two over ripped melons. **"Why, I oughta—"**

Lobo didn't have a chance to finish his threat as a second wave of alien zombies seemed to move in out of no where. *This is like fighting the entire population of New York City, if they were turned into these things*, Guy thought to himself.

**"Oh yeah!"** Lobo shouted happily as more moved in. **"Hey, I told you guys, no biting!"** He cried out as he ripped off another head. **"See how you like it."** He slammed his head into one of them, gripping the flesh with his teeth and ripping it away and spitting it out. The alien continued to fight him. **"Huh, guess you don't care."** Lobo said with a shrug as he put his fingers through the alien's eyes and tore off his head as if he was picking up a bowling ball.

Guy had reshaped his rings energy into a green crane, as it went from one to another, plucking the heads off of the creatures. As he moved through the second wave, he caught the green suit out of the corner of his eye. He turned to see the Green Lantern of the sector heading towards Lobo.

"Hey, I've been looking for you," he shouted as he made his way up behind his fellow brethren. He grabbed the Lantern's shoulder and swung him around, realizing with a sinking feeling in his stomach, that the Green Lantern of this world had also been changed.

"Ring, have you had time to analyze the situation? Do you know what happened here, or how I can stop it?"

**The ring of Melron's, this sector's Green Lantern. You must remove it and get it out of this planets atmosphere. It is the cause.**

"What?! Are you saying that the planet had some kind of 'allergic reaction' to the ring?"

**Yes, this is what I am stating. Now hurry, they're coming for you, George.**

"Who? Never mind." He ducked as a zombie snapped at him, then willed a pair of large pruning shears, cutting off the ring finger of the Green Lantern. It remained expressionless as Guy snatched the ring and

shot off into space.

Lobo looked up in disgust. **"I knew he was yella."**

When Guy got to the outer atmosphere, he tossed the ring into space where he saw it shoot off back towards Oa. He quickly headed back to the city to find all the people that hadn't been killed, lying unconscious on the streets. They were no longer zombies in appearance. However, among the unconscious aliens were several heads and torso's scattered about.

**"Now that was a fight!"** Lobo shouted with a large laugh.

Guy looked around. "So many dead," he mumbled.

Lobo looked at him for a second. **"Hey kid, it was either us or them. And look how many you saved."** He looked at the unconscious bodies around him. **"You think they're going to be all right? Or do you think I should chop off their heads anyway... just to be on the safe side."**

Guy looked at him with disgust. "No! Leave them alone. Man, you are even more demented than what I've heard."

**"Really?"** Lobo asked as he puffed out his chest. **"Thanks. Wanna go get a drink and trade war stories? I ain't usually one for company, but then, I've never come across a Green Lantern that shares my taste in carnage, neither."**

"I'll pass." Guy said. "I have a feeling the Guardians are going to need to know what happened here. Figure out why so it doesn't happen again."

**"Guardians? Oh yeah, those little blue guys. Let me ask you a question before you leave. Not one girlie Guardian among them... how do they have fun?"** He asked as he winked.

Guy just stared at him for a second before stepping back. "Wow, I've actually found someone more disgusting than me." He took off.

**"Ah good riddance,"** Lobo said watching him leave. He turned and

looked at the unconscious aliens. **“Okay, nap time is over folks. Somebody needs to wake up and make me something to eat.”**

Guy Gardner was barely out of the atmosphere when the call came in from the Guardians. **“You are needed on OA, Guy Gardner.”**

**His preferred designation now is George Romero,** the ring replied to the Guardian.

“Aww, shut up,” Guy mumbled as he disappeared among the stars.

**The End**

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## From the same author on Feedbooks

House of Mystery #1 (2006)

Happy Halloween! DC2 Universe presents a collection of ten tales featuring your favorite horror and supernatural characters such as Doctor Occult, The Phantom Stranger and many more!

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The explosive second year of Bat-titles starts here with three exciting tales written by the new creative teams on Batman & Detective Comics:

"Wings on Fire"

With Gotham City barely recovered from the Crisis, Firefly arrives to burn it down! Who is Firefly? And even more importantly, what is his connection to up and coming crime boss Oswald Cobblepot?

"Gotham Nights"

Bruce Wayne and Dick Grayson are invited to the Gotham Hyde Civic Center during it's grand reopening after the Apokolips War. Bruce is hoping for a quiet evening and a chance to improve his image but when new and old faces alike make an appearance and a deadly threat is uncovered, you know it's not going down without a hitch!

"For Love and Money"

Get inside the heads of two very different members of the GCPD in this back-up tale featuring James Gordon and Harvey Bullock.

DC2 Showcase Holiday Special (2006)

Seasons greetings from the DC2!

Take a peek at several tales that span across the DC2 universe this holiday season. It's a time for celebrating with family & friends, spreading good cheer, and maybe a few surprises along the way!

Crisis: The Apokolips Imperative (2006)

This is it! The collected first mega-event to rock the DC2 Universe as the eternal struggle between The New Gods and the forces of Darkseid comes to Earth!

DC2 Showcase #1 (2006)

The classic anthology title that started the silver age makes its DC2 debut. Showcase kicks off DC2's second sensational year with four brand new tales from every corner of the DC2 universe:

**Mechanical Dreams: Part 1 (of 3)**

Written by: Legacy:

A familiar character makes their DC2 debut with a tale that reveals his traumatic origin. Find out who it is in part one of a three-part tale.

**Batman: Curfew**

Written by: Kevin Hill:

When three young boys are caught out after dark, they discover that their only hope of rescue from the horrors of Gotham City lie in the hands of the modern myth, the Batman!

**Blue Devil: Hollywood Nights: Part 1 (of 3)**

Written by: John Elbe:

A soap star, a reality TV actress wannabe, and a script doctor, all share a house in West Beverly Hills with Daniel Patrick Cassidy, a special effects/stuntman who is about to accept the role that will change his life forever on the new movie, Blue Devil.

**Superman: Obituary: Part 1 (of 3)**

Written by: Julian Balrup:

After the recent grueling battle that was Crisis, Superman begins to evaluate his life and decides to take it upon himself to write his own Obituary. Writing as Clark Kent, he chronicles key moments in his life that shaped him to become the hero that we know him to be.

*DC2 Showcase #2 (2006)*

The new DC2 anthology series continues...

**Mechanical Dreams: Part 2 (of 3)**

Written by: Robert Harding

The DC2 introduction of Victor Stone continues. His life has been turned upside down as the mechanical dream turns into a nightmare!

**Rip Hunter Lives!**

Written by: Charlie Wilkins

One man travels alone in the time stream, all but lost to the world, until he's dragged into something that even he doesn't understand on the outskirts of eternity itself! Meet the new Rip Hunter as he meets the old Linear Men... Pulp action at it's finest!

Blue Devil: Hollywood Nights: Part 2 (of 3)

Written by: John Elbe

Daniel Cassidy's life appears to be looking up when he has two beautiful women fighting over him and Blue Devil the movie is back in production. But, a freak accident on the set reveals how far someone is willing to go to get a movie made in Hollywood. Will Cassidy pay for it with his soul?

Superman: Obituary: Part 2 (of 3)

Written by: Julian Balrup

Clark has had a trial by fire, now he has a brush with the skies. Clark begins to decide how he wants to use his powers. He wonders should he use them to be mankind's savior or its ruler...

House of Mystery #2 (2007)

Happy Halloween! DC2 Universe presents a collection of nine tales featuring your favorite horror and supernatural characters such as Doctor Occult, The Shade and many more!

DC2 Special #3: A Very DC2 Christmas (2007)

The staff of DC2 come together again to give you a little taste of the holiday spirit in several stories that run the gamut of emotions. Join us as we give you our Christmas present.

DC2 Showcase #3 (2007)

The conclusion to Showcase volume one is finally here!

Mechanical Dreams: Part 3 (of 3)

Written by: Robert Harding

His life has been turned upside down by those closest to him but now he realizes what he has been made into and what will come next. As a great terror spreads through Vic Stone's life, he must decide what path to take and more critically, whose side will he join. This is the end of the beginning. Welcome Vic Stone, to the DC2.

Blue Devil: Hollywood Nights: Part 3 (of 3)

Written by: John Elbe

After being blasted with supernatural energy Dan Cassidy is trapped in the Blue Devil suit. He is now in the battle of his life on the movie set as the cameras film everything. When it's over his life will be changed forever. Will he be able to embrace his destiny when he discovers the truth about why he has become Blue Devil?

DC2 Special #4: DC2 Holiday Special (2008)

DC2 Special #4: DC2 Holiday Special.

Spend some time with the both writers and artists of the DC2 & DC3 as they celebrate Christmas with several heartwarming tales... and one tale starring Ambush Bug.

If this doesn't put you in the holiday spirit, then your name must be Scrooge!

House of Mystery #4 (2009)

Happy Halloween! DC2 Universe presents a collection of four tales featuring your favorite horror and supernatural characters such as Man-Bat, The Phantom Stranger and many more!

DC2 Special #5: Another DC2 Christmas Special (2009)

Join the staff of DC2 as we celebrate another year of holiday cheer with several short stories and vignettes that will take you from a certain farm house in Kansas all the way to the very halls of the DC2 offices in New York City.

Weird Western Spectacular #1 (2010)

To commemorate the new Jonah Hex film, a stable of the writers for DC2 joined together to create not just a celebration of everyone's favorite ugly as sin bounty hunter but a plethora of Old West heroes and heroines as well.

DC2 Special #6: The Naughty and Nice List (2010)

DC2 presents our annual holiday special featuring tales that span the DC2 Universe proper as well as our DC3 multiverse and Elseworlds. Enjoy and Happy Holidays!

DC2 Special #7: The Ghosts of Christmases Past (2011)

DC2 Special: The Ghosts of Christmases Past.

Join the writers and artists of the DC2 comics fanfiction community in celebrating the holidays with this collection of superhero tales that explore the joys of the season.



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