



Ultimate Gotham Girls #15
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Facades, part 2

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This part of town was dark and dirty. Most of the scattered streetlights were flickering dimly, if not long since burned out. Bags of garbage lined the sidewalks, some more recent than others. Several of them rustled, invaded and called home by growing families of rats. When the hot sun baked and bleached the brick and pavement, the smell could be unbearable. But now, in the dark cool night, this part of Gotham was even more dismal. Now the shadows seemed darker than black, every small alley radiating the possibility of danger. No one walked these streets after dark, not if they had any choice in the matter.

Batgirl hated this part of the city. She almost couldn't bring herself to forgive the people who lived there, always having to remind herself that even in Gotham, the poor-but-good people outnumbered the criminals.

With her long cape catching the wind, Renee swung up to a fire escape on one of the newer buildings. She couldn't believe that this was where he had ended up. It made no sense. Harvey had never hurt for money...although now that she thought of it, he had never been very willing to accept anyone else's. If he had lost more than his face in the last few years, it didn't surprise her as much to be looking for him here.

It was harder to accept that she was looking for him as Batgirl. On some level, she understood perfectly why Harvey would be Ivy's prime suspect. As Gothamites went, Ivy had really never made too many enemies outside the law. She kept to herself—or at least, she had before Harley came to town.

Renee shook a thought out of her head. She had much more important things to think about than what two criminals got up to at home.

Still, she couldn't imagine Harvey doing something so awful, no matter how few enemies Ivy had. Harvey Dent was the very definition of a law-abiding man. Renee still wasn't convinced that Ivy was telling the truth. Even with all the wrong details, what was to say that Ivy hadn't planted the holes herself? If she wanted to get that favor returned, it wouldn't be out of the question that Ivy was framing herself, to get away with the crime. It was easier to believe that than to think that her old friend was a killer.

But still...Renee bit her lip to think of it as she searched along the windows for the right room. If Ivy was not lying, the real murderer would have had to get their hands on Ivy's marks—the hair and the vine. And Renee couldn't forget that she had seen Harvey coming out of the evidence archives in the station. Along with dozens of others, she was sure...but he was making a good suspect so far.

Finally, Batgirl crouched on the fire escape on the back of the second story. An old, carefully-maintained painting hung on the wall inside, a stunning scene of battle between black and white armies, chess pieces come to brutal, bloody life. That picture had always made her uncomfortable. It was Harvey's apartment, alright.

The man came bursting into the room and Renee ducked to make sure that she was hidden in the shadows outside the window. She watched Harvey pace, watched the way his mouth seemed to move only one half at a time, the way his eyes kept shifting with escalating emotions. She couldn't make out any of his words, but Renee could see him talking into the air. And just as there had been back in the station, there was something in Harvey's red, squinted eye that scared her.

Harvey jerked violently, then seemed to calm down. Renee hadn't really gotten to take in his scarred face before, and seeing the extent of the damage was making her wonder how Harvey's mind had remained intact. The man sat on the edge of his bed, dressed for a night alone in faded, baggy clothes. He reached toward his bedside table. A quarter flipped in his nimble fingers, over and over. The first time apparently to decide something as he stopped to study the result. The other times merely out of habit. Maybe even for comfort.

Renee swung down off of the fire ladder. She didn't know what she had

expected to gain from watching him. Heading back to the good part of the city, she wasn't sure if she had learned anything or not.

Some time later, she crouched between the files and drawers that filled up the evidence room, fighting the flutters in her stomach that still told her not to be in here. She had to be sure that it was a frame before she could go any farther into the investigation. If Ivy's old files had been tampered with, that would be the best evidence. There was simply nothing to be done about the fact that she had to tamper with it again to know.

The light snapped on in the big room and drowned out the thin beam of Renee's flashlight. "Something told me I should stay late tonight."

Batgirl snapped her head up and bit her tongue. Of all the people she could have run into tonight, Jim Gordon was probably the most awkward. Renee looked through the cowl at her former boss and friend, her fingers still around the metal of the file drawer behind her. "I needed to check something," she said, making her voice lower than normal and hoping that it would be enough.

"I assumed that much," Jim said, stepping further into the light with his arms folded. "Just thought your group had gotten used to asking for my help, not just taking it. After all this time, a man would think he could earn some trust."

"Sorry," she replied shortly, turning back to the file. "But I think I'm right about this."

"About what? Which case?" Jim asked, less annoyed.

"Ivy's," answered Batgirl, nodding her head as her fingers flicked through the drawer.

"Well, what about it?"

"I don't think she did it," Renee said quietly, looking into Ivy's file and finding her proof. An old, dry vine was stored away in here with several

brittle leaves broken from their stems and missing. Ivy's hair and fingerprints were in her file too, but Renee could see that the lock of bright hair was smaller than it was supposed to be. "I think she was framed."

Jim stared at her, trying to read the eyes behind the mask, and Renee added her reasons. "There's evidence missing here. I think that's what they found at the scenes. She doesn't use dead plants for marks," Renee hesitated before finishing, "and she was shocked to hear about it. Real surprise. She was home all night, I believe that."

"If it is true—which I'm not saying I believe—" Jim said with a pointed finger, "Then do you have any suspects?"

Batgirl looked steadily into Jim's face for a long moment. "No," she lied. "None yet."

Jim stared back at her "We'll keep on searching like we were. You come up with anything, you bring me the evidence, and I'll believe you."

"Thanks, Jim," Renee said with a small smile, heading back into the shadows to take off outside.

"And one more thing!" Renee turned her head back to Jim. He held up a key ring and let it jingle. "Next time, don't break in?"

She almost chuckled. "Next time, I'll get permission."

"All I ask," Jim replied with a wave of his hand, before flicking the light back off and locking the door behind him.

Renee shot back into the night from the dark room, planning her next step.

Harvey kicked the bedpost with a strangled growl. His head was spinning, throbbing, already split into two, finally starting to fight itself. Over and over, he reached for his coin, willing its answer to change. Over and over, his bad side came out on top. Chaos kept winning, and law-abiding Harvey finally had to accept that this was his path.

"You gotta keep cool," whispered a distant voice in his head. "Coin chose. Gotta listen. Gotta do it."

"It's done," Harvey whispered, hands at his temples. "It's over...it's not going away."

"So forget it," that rough voice crooned. "Forget about it, Harvey. Like it never happened."

"I can't!" he cried, standing from the bed to pace, keeping his eyes closed and his head in his hands. "I did it...I killed two men. Two good men."

"No, you sat in the backseat and cried until you had to call the cops," the voice snarled. "I killed two good men."

"I should never have let you," Harvey said, too loudly, forgetting as he sometimes did that the voice was in his mind, and not beside him in the room.

"Coin made the call," the voice replied, and Harvey had no argument.

Harvey Dent used to follow his instincts to figure out what to do. They had served him well as a lawyer, indicating where he should go, what information he should press for, which side of the story was closer to the truth. But even back then, the bad side of the Split had been there, an ignorable whisper in the back of his head. It was so much stronger, now. Another set of instincts, these pointing down dark, dangerous paths. Over the years—and it startled Harvey to realize how long it had been—it had become impossible to decide on his own which instincts to follow.

That was why the coin was so important. He flipped it idly, not pausing to look at the results. The coin that had once been a joke was now the most serious thing in Harvey's world. It was the deciding factor, arbitrary and fair, giving both sides a chance to have control.

Today, Harvey had the more powerful position. But that didn't stop his worse half from poisoning his thoughts.

“Enough about the girl,” the voice croaked, and Harvey’s bad eye tried to roll.

Harvey said and thought nothing in response. He kept going back in his head to the station, to Renee’s face when she saw his, and her friendly gesture even after she did. He had been alone with his mind for such a long time now that he had almost forgotten the feeling of being trusted. After all, if he couldn’t trust himself, why should anyone else?

But Renee still seemed to want to know him. She had always been a great partner—the two of them had worked on a few cases together in the past. Harvey knew her to be a good soul, and a great detective.

It gave him a moment of relief to remember that Renee was off the force. She was such a fine officer that it had depressed him before, but this way was better for him. This way, she wouldn’t catch him.

Harvey started and shook his other side’s thoughts away. While he hardly relished the prospect of prison, much less Arkham (if he were found out for what he was), justice needed serving, somehow. He couldn’t let himself get away with what he had done, if he had any chance to turn on himself.

A rustling at the window caught his attention. Harvey walked over to it and saw more light than had been coming through a moment before. Had someone been there, he wondered? Had anyone seen him?

“Too dangerous here,” that other voice muttered. “Let’s get back to our old place.”

“I sold it,” said Harvey. “And I’m not about to steal it back.”

“Someplace else then. But let’s leave.”

Harvey took the coin again and launched it into the air. Clean heads. “No.” He stared out the window at the garbage and the rats. “We stay here. With the scum. Where we belong.”

It was late that night when Renee swung herself back onto the grass of Gotham's Central Park, winding her line back into her belt with distinctly more irritation than usual. She had been doing her usual patrols—beating up muggers made a satisfying distraction from her fears. But Barbara's own irritated voice had come through her communicator with orders to find their unlikely ally in the park, and to make sure that Ivy didn't know Renee's own phone number.

The redhead was stretched comfortably between the roots of an old tree, arms behind her head and seeming completely calm. "About time. Must be a busy night out there."

Renee gritted her teeth. "What do you want now?"

"Do you believe me yet?" Ivy asked, with a chuckle at Batgirl's obvious annoyance. "You are on my case. Shouldn't I be allowed to check up on it?"

"When I have even a single scrap of real evidence, you'll know," Renee growled. "And until then, you've got no place taking me away from my real work."

"Oh, well pardon me for interrupting," Ivy got to her feet, her leafy dress rustling as she stood. "I sort of thought tracking down a double murderer and freeing an innocent woman counted as 'real work'."

"You aren't innocent," Renee told her, stepping closer to Ivy. "You're just not guilty this time."

Ivy smiled a small, sly smile. "Then you know I'm right."

"I believe that you were framed," Renee admitted, carefully watching Ivy as the redhead paced around her. "But I'm going to need a lot more than that to pin it on Harvey Dent, of all people."

"Then go get what you need," Ivy urged. "Just talk to him for a few seconds. The man's crazy these days."

"And whose fault is that?" Renee asked quietly, through clenched teeth.

Ivy saw the look in Batgirl's eyes, and knew that she should back off, though she wondered why she had struck such a nerve. "Pretty fiery for a Bat, aren't you?" She asked, a glint in her bright eyes. "Or are you just showing off for me?"

"You are completely wasting my time." Renee shook away the thoughts in her head and replaced them with thoughts of her job. "If all you called me out here for was to mock this case then you can forget about my help!"

"But you won't leave it alone," Ivy told her simply, smirking and folding her arms over her green-clad chest as she took a step closer. "You're too good. You and I both know you're seeing this through whether you work for me or not."

"I do **not** work for you." Renee had perfected Bruce's favored enraged monotone, though she still had to work to hold back her natural indignant shouts.

Ivy stepped back, and her arms fell back to her sides. "Of course not," she said more quietly, walking past the other woman and brushing two smooth, white fingers across her black shoulder to flick a stray leaf away.

The gloved hand snapped up to grab Ivy's pale wrist, keeping it in a tight hold. Renee was glad that her cowl came down over her cheeks, hiding enough of her face that she could count on letting no stray emotion through. Ivy's hand was smooth, strangely fragile, and for some reason not struggling to get away.

Ivy's lips twitched up again with an unidentifiable new look in her eyes. The two women stood locked in place until Renee tossed Ivy's arm down, and turned away.

"I'll keep looking. Don't call me again. When I have an answer, you'll know."

"Fine. I'll hear back from you when you corner Dent." Ivy also turned away and started out of the park. "I'll be waiting."

Renee glanced behind her shoulder, watching as Ivy's dress rustled

around her body with her movements, until the leaves were lost among the rest of the park's greenery.

She had thought it many times before, and seen it more than she wanted back with the police, but she'd never felt it for herself before becoming Batgirl. Ivy's true strength wasn't her poison, wasn't her powers or plants or her immunities. Ivy's greatest strength had always been her looks, and the way she used them. Renee had seen too many good men back down, unwilling to hurt the woman who had smiled at them so beautifully. She had always sworn that she wouldn't let anyone's beauty get in the way of her doing her job.

Renee stared after the green dress, knowing that she was wasting time, but still waiting until Ivy was out of sight before she cursed herself and swung back into the night.

If you enjoyed this story, you can find more alternate universe tales of your favorite DC heroes at [DC3 Multiverse](#).

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From the same author on Feedbooks

Ultimate Gotham Girls #11 (2008)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: Clown College, Part 2 (of 3).

With the Joker's 'school' well underway and the clock ticking closer to 3pm, will Batgirl and Zatanna be able to prevent even more carnage? What about with some unexpected help? And how will Harley hold up when forced to choose between her man, and her only friend?

Ultimate Gotham Girls #10 (2008)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: Clown College, Part 1 (of 3).

The Joker's been lurking in the background, and it's never good when he rears his head again! Harley's ideas and Joker's plans are coming together at long last, but is Harley really on-board with the joke? Ivy sure hopes not! And either way, the Clown Prince of Crime is going to have his hands full when Batgirl and Zatanna catch up to him!

Ultimate Gotham Girls #2 (2008)

Don't Say a Word, Part 1 (of 2)

Ultimate Gotham Girls #1 (2008)

Girls' (K)night Out.

Meet Harley Quinn. She is bound and determined to meet her number one hero, the object of her affection, Gotham City's premiere costumed champion...The Joker! To do it, she's teaming up with the seductive and deadly Poison Ivy...whether or not Pamela Isley likes the idea! Just what a neophyte Batgirl needs for on-the-job training!

Ultimate Gotham Girls #3 (2008)

Don't Say a Word, Part 2 (of 2).

The all-new, all-daring Batgirl is put to the test, tracking down a ruthless killer of children! But there's more to the mind of Mockingbird than meets eye, and Renee must walk the abyss of madness to figure it out!

Ultimate Gotham Girls #4 (2008)

The Joker Rules April Fools!

It's April Fools Day in Gotham and that can only mean one thing! The Clown Prince of Crime is giving the city a hearty greeting, and Batgirl must struggle, not only with a diabolical mastermind that gives even Batman pause, but whether or not to accept help from a shocking source!

Ultimate Gotham Girls #5 (2008)

Harvey and Ivy.

Harvey Dent has a curse: he's the acid-scarred mobster Two-Face! And he has a past: having pursued prison for Poison Ivy! Is there a connection between the two events? How does one lead to the other, and how do the lives of these two villains intersect? It's all in this issue of Gotham Girls, as signs point to dangerous storms brewing for our heroes...and other protagonists!

Last Sun of Krypton #1 (2008)

Last Sun of Krypton, Part 1 (of 3).

Travel with us now, into the past, to a time when a great and advanced race of people lived, loved, fought and struggled with the day-to-day and with the higher aspirations of all people. Come and witness Kal-El, with his family around him, as he discovers that for his generation...there seems no future to aspire to! What do you do in the face of the ultimate end?

Last Sun of Krypton #2 (2008)

last Sun of Krypton, Part 2 (of 3).

Even with the heavy news hanging over their heads, life must go on for Kal-El and his loved ones. But how can they go on with life as usual when the world is about to collapse? Isn't there anything that Kal can do to help save Krypton and its people?

Last Sun of Krypton #3 (2008)

Last Sun of Krypton, Part 3 (of 3).

"If Lyla had still been there to talk him out of it, Kal knew that he would never have even suggested this solution, let alone volunteered for it. He stood alone in the middle of a large, barren field, staring up at the monolith that was an energy plant, and he could feel the heat of the world gathering beneath his feet.

Two days had already gone by, two more days of heartache and fear, of disbelief and thick, destructive denial. Despite the official

pleas from the Board, and despite the few ready rockets off-world that had already left for the colonies, most of the population refused to budge from their homes on only the word of Jor-El. Kal's breathing was quick and nervous in the heated air. All of those people were depending on his bravery, his intellect...
...and on the nuclear bomb strapped to the hood of his small electric car. "

Ultimate Gotham Girls #6 (2008)

Reality Check.

Harley Quinn can't believe her good fortune! She's made friends with Ivy, won the love of her sweetheart, The Joker, and discovered her old mentor, Jonathan Crane is now in town. Could any woman's life be any better? She's on cloud nine, facing a future bright and exciting, despite The Joker's dislike of Crane's potential influence on the young woman. And then it happens...

Ultimate Gotham Girls #7 (2008)

Reunion.

Where does poor little Harley run with nowhere else to go? To Ivy's house, of course! How long can she hold up away from the Joker, and could he possibly be trying to get her back? Plus, the Ultimate secret origin of Poison Ivy!

Ultimate Gotham Girls #12 (2008)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: Clown College, Part 3 (of 3).

With time racing out, can our three heroines band together and stop the Joker's deadly finale? What's going to happen to Harley Quinn? You won't want to miss the stunning conclusion of *Gotham Girls Year One*-- with special appearance by the Batman himself!

Ultimate Gotham Girls #8 (2008)

Your Worst Nightmare, Part 1 (of 2).

Jonathan Crane is tired of waiting. He has stores of his prized possession, his finished 'fear gas', all over Gotham. With a push of a single button, he will trap everything that breathes in their own worst nightmare, and for once in his life, Crane will be the one unafraid.

What terrors lurk in the darkest parts of the minds of all our stars?
And how will any of them break free? If they even can...

Ultimate Gotham Girls #9 (2008)

Your Worst Nightmare, Part 2 (of 2).

Jonathan Crane --now the full-fledged Scarecrow-- has all of Gotham City under his power, including Batgirl! Can anyone fight their own most feared demons in time to stop Crane from completely taking over?

Ultimate Gotham Girls #13 (2009)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: Overrun.

The One Man Army Corps have taken the Gotham streets, and they're doing their jobs on the villains-- but are they safe for our heroes? When Batgirl ticks one off on patrol, can she stop a super-strong robot all by herself, before it hurts anyone else in its attack on her?

Ultimate Gotham Girls #14 (2009)

Ultimate Gotham Girls: Facades Part 1 (of 3).

After years of hiding, Harvey Dent has finally returned to Gotham City. But for his old friend Renee, is this a good thing, or bad? And when Poison Ivy is framed for murder, who's going to search out the truth, no matter how shocking it may be?

Ultimate Gotham Girls #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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