

Comics are a recursive medium. Characters, plots, whole settings evolve, live, and die only to return predictably to their original state, or something close to it. Many see this pattern as the defining characteristic of the American superhero comic book. Still, even by such a standard, the developments in the last few issues of The New 52: Futures End seem extreme. The story reached an iconic moment two issues back when three different Batmen, or rather three Batman variants from across the timestream, came together. It then slipped into a storytelling pause until the end of this issue when ... all three variants come together once again. It is rather like one of those intricate square dance maneuvers in which multiple people maneuver across the floor only to return to their original positions once the fiddler begins the second iteration of his theme. Before talking about that scene, which is at the end of The New 52: Futures End #37, we should spend some time with another recurrence seen throughout the DC Universe these days, the multiple appearances of John Constantine. It seems evident that DC has decided to push this character very hard. At present, he appears not only in The New 52: Futures End but also his own title, which is currently in crossover with Earth 2: World's End. He is also, of course, a member of Justice League Dark and the focus of a network television series. Whether all of this is commercially wise remains to be seen. John Constantine is probably the most anti-heroic of all the anti-heroes in DC's stable. Although a pillar of the Vertigo imprint for years, Constantine has struggled in the mainline DCU, where readers have very conservative and very strong ideas about the proper behavior of lead characters, and currently is struggling on television, where network audiences also tend to prefer their morality uncomplicated. Nevertheless, a large portion of this issue is taken up with Constantine, who advises that Frankenstein must return to the place of his birth to resolve the conflict between his mystical, undead nature and the Nth metal infusing him. The conversation also reveals that during the war with Apokalips, now pegged at five years ago (that is, near the current present of the mainstream DCU) Constantine sacrificed Gemworld to destroy a parademon army, although in fairness he points out that the world was doomed in any case. The plot involving the Bats picks up as Terry McGinnis, otherwise known as Batman Beyond, finishes up some extremely pleasant rooftop activity with Plastique. They are engaged in their recreation close to The Wounded Duck, the now-closed establishment of Tim Drake, once Red Robin and now pretending to be dead. They observe Drake arrive just as the present Batman and Batjoker appear. Thus the circle closes and, if solicit images do not lie, the fate of Terry McGinnis is sealed. Aaron Lopresti's pencils are clear and thin, with elongated bodies but highly expressive faces. As usual, Hi-Fi's colors are one of the features of the book, with bright hues and dark undertones suggesting a world under subtle and terrible attack. The post The New 52: Futures End #37 appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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