

In the time before Crisis on Infinite Earths, Earth 2 had a very special place in the multiverse. It was the home of the Golden Age heroes: Kal-L, the original Superman; Bruce Wayne, Batman, and his wife Selina Kyle and daughter Helena; Jay Garrick the Flash; Alan Scott the Green Lantern, and many others. It was also the home to Richard Grayson, the man who was Robin and remained Robin, even as he became a lawyer and ambassador. What was the fascination of Earth 2? Partly nostalgia, to be sure. Partly it was a sense of legacy. Both of these aspects survived the Crisis as many inhabitants of Earth 2 were incorporated into the historical fabric of the unified Earth. But it also had a sense of depth and stability. This was not a utopian world, by any means. For that one had to look to the Legion of Super-Heroes. But it was a world where society was important, where civilization had meaning, and where authority was not automatically a thing to fear and suspect. It had about it the air of the best science-fiction movies of the 1950s, in which scientists were intelligent, leaders responsible, and soldiers brave and resourceful. This is a book about stability. Helena Wayne, the Huntress, and Dick Grayson, Robin, have been trapped under the dome in Metropolis where they have continued to fight crime with the aid of resources carefully seeded throughout the world by Helena's dead father. It speaks to the tone of this world that this precaution does not imply the paranoia and illness that have characterized Batman in so many recent versions, but merely seems far-sighted and responsible. Indeed, this is also a story about responsibility, as Helena loudly wonders why Grayson clings to his identity as Robin, rather than taking up the mantle of his father-figure. The true effect of this issue comes from the juxtaposition of healthy control and responsibility with a diseased version. Telos has decided to pit Earth 2 Metropolis against the Moscow of Mark Millar's Red Son universe. Here we see the Soviet system, surely a picture of control gone insane. And here we see the Soviet Superman, a picture of a responsibility shouldered, and the cost it brings. And yet, the Soviet Superman is a decent person. He truly longs to do what is best for his citizens, even if that involves levels of manipulation, deceit, and control that some would find evil. And, unlike so many of the participants in Telos' arena, he also longs to find a way to cooperate with his rivals. Helena Wayne, meanwhile, is desperate to save the people of her reality. So desperate that her own decency cannot prevent her from taking a dangerous and questionable course of action. The post Convergence: Detective Comics #1 appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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