

In 1961, Gardner Fox, Carmine Infantino, and Julius Schwartz set all of reality to music. In that year's "Flash of Two Worlds," they introduced the concept of universes existing in parallel, each vibrating at a different rate. From there, it was but a short step to the great tuning forks of reality that featured so prominently in Crisis on Infinite Earths and the grand symphony of the multiverse currently being explored by Grant Morrison in Multiversity. So it is entirely appropriate that one moment, indeed one panel, in Earth 2: World's End #22 gives the impression of a great chord sounding, as if in some baroque fugue the music has reached a pivotal point of development, a beat in which a great and familiar theme appears in its full statement, leading forward into a new movement. The panel in question shows Dick Grayson of Earth 2, desperate to find his missing son and still in shock from the death of his wife, fingering a batarang with a look of almost hypnotized fascination. The identification of Dick Grayson with Robin, and later Nightwing, is one of the cornerstones of the DC Universe. One of the more interesting mysteries of the World's End series has been the plan for this character, the reason he exists in the story at all. Like so much about this particular weekly, it has often seemed that the storyline has just proceeded aimlessly with little progress or direction. But it speaks to the power of images in general, and images in comics in particular, that a single scene of Dick Grayson fingering a piece of metal shaped like a bat can crystalize months worth of plot and character development. That is not to say that we know how this particular storyline is going to play out. However, solicits have revealed that Grayson is a character in the upcoming Convergence weekly. We also know from solicits that the eventual fate of the Earth 2 characters is to find themselves on a new Earth, attempting to rebuild their civilization, thus the title Earth 2: Society to begin in June. From this point on, each issue of World's End now points to the eventual new beginning. Whatever the fate of Grayson, whether he is the new Batman promised for that series or not, and my guess is not as that development would be far too obvious, the link between past and future has been made, and a resonance with the deep history of the DC Multiverse established. The rest of the comic, dealing with the desperate plans of Helena, Thomas, and Oliver; the losing war against the devouring planet Apokalips; and the machinations of Barda and Kalibak, likewise gives a welcome sense of movement and purpose. Earth 2 Jimmy Olsen, in particular, is becoming a deeper and more interesting, and more original, character with each passing chapter of the tale. At first his fate seems amazing, but then when you remember that the New Gods and the Fourth World were, after all, introduced in the pages of Jimmy Olsen back in the 1970s, there is a pleasing symmetry to it, like another pivotal chord in the fugue being sounded. The post Earth 2: World's End #22 appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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