

Since ancient times, people have believed crossroads to be dangerous places. They are points of possibility, places of decision, and strategic nodes that dominate the flows of wealth and control. But darkness and evil always flow to power, and folk tales tell that the crossroads was where one went at midnight to meet the devil and negotiate unholy bargains. The world of The New 52: Futures End reaches such a crossroads in issue #41, and the devil most definitely has appeared. Of course, some would say that calling Braniac the devil is overly dramatic. But he is a being who transcends space and time, working his malevolent and mysterious will through the use of physical manifestations that intervene at pinpoint locations in the multiverse, ruining lives, destroying realms, and leaving only a magical trace in his wake. That sounds an awful lot like the devil, when you get right down to it. In The New 52: Futures End #41, Braniac's avatar in Manhattan continues his assault on the city, setting off a massive battle as Superman and his former comrades from the Justice League arrive to wage battle in New York's defense. Meanwhile, in orbit, Hawkman attacks another avatar of Braniac, this one in the form of a skull-shaped spacecraft. The encounter with the orbital avatar, which has incorporated Angie, the former engineer of Stormwatch, results in a breach in reality in which we get a glimpse of different moments from the history of DC comics, including previous realities long overtaken by reboots and crises. A lance of energy destroys Hawkman, but not before it sends him sliding back through previous incarnations, thankfully only a visible change as a review of that character's tangled history would encompass several comics. DC has chosen to give a blatant signal of things to come. Interviews and announcements have told us that Convergence, with its tales of domed cities and doomed timelines, is on the horizon. The walls of reality are beginning to totter. The curtains of continuity are rustling in the first stiff winds of the storm that is approaching. But as the timeline speeds to its end, we still have frustrating examples of mysteries that have yet to be addressed, questions that may remain unanswered even as this world goes down into doom. The interactions between Batman and Tim Drake hint of a dramatic and painful break that no one will speak of. The story of Fifty Sue and her surrogate family has disappeared from view. And the heroes of Earth 2, having served their purpose, seem to have been shunted totally to the side. The world ends not in a whimper, but in screams, screams of pain and frustration. The post The New 52: Futures End #41 appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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