

The echoing threat is an old, in fact a traditional, aspect of dark storytelling. True, there are some stories, such as Dracula, in which evil is vanquished at great cost. There are others, such as most of Lovecraft, where evil is so alien and so powerful that no victory is possible. But probably the most common pattern in darker stories is for the monster to be beaten only for the reader to be reminded that evil is never entirely vanquished, darkness never entirely destroyed, and terror will return someday. After all, that is our experience of the actual world. The best visual representation of this storytelling tradition would be a spiral, where the forces of good make two steps forward and one back, each tale contains the roots of its sequel. The New 52: Futures End #48 is not a spiral of progress, but a circle of futility. The last issue saw Tim Drake, the new Batman Beyond, jump back from the five-year future to the present and confront Brother Eye, resulting in the artificial intelligence self-destructing. Thus, the signal guiding the refugees from the destroyed Earth 2 into the prime universe was never sent and, one would think, the apocalyptic future from which the original Batman Beyond, Terry McGinnis, had come was avoided. In this issue, Tim Drake leaps forward thirty-five years to the point from where, or one should say from when, McGinnis began his journey. And it would seem that everything has been for naught. Brother Eye is still in domination of the planet, and the world is still in ruins. How can this be? Evidently, Brother Eye was able to preserve those portions of the timeline that centered on Terrifitech, even though the Earth 2 migration and the subsequent invasion were avoided. There are a couple of possible explanations within parameters of the story. Brother Eye has indeed demonstrated control over the time stream, as evidenced by launching Tim Drake back into the future. Or, one could postulate that the Brother Eye timeline possesses a large degree of inertia, a natural and intense resistance to change even after one of its primary roots disappears. Regardless of the explanation, the emotional effect is profound frustration and disappointment. We have spent a year and forty-eight issues to accomplish - what, exactly? The new Batman Beyond series has been set up. Possibly some of the storylines begun in Futures End, such as Frankenstein's sacrifice, Amethyst's quest, or Fifty-Sue's new family, will prove to be important in that new book. However, a forty-eight chapter zero issue is not what anyone bargained for in May 2014 when this all began. That clicking sound you hear? It's tens of thousands of teeth gnashing together in united anger. The post The New 52: Futures End #48 appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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