



## The New 52: Futures End, Vol. 1

*Brian Azzarello , Jeff Lemire , Patrick Zircher (Illustrations) , Keith Giffen , Dan Jurgens , Jesús Merino (Illustrator) , Aaron Lopresti (Illustrator) , Scot Eaton (Illustrator)*

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Five years from now, the DC Universe is reeling from a war with another Earth, leaving the world unprepared for an approaching evil that threatens to destroy the future. As heroes are turned into mindless villains, the planet as we know it is no more. The only salvation lies in the past, where this future apocalypse must be averted. Can a time-traveling Batman Beyond help a massive cast of the DCU's finest avert the impending apocalypse?

Written by a cast of the industry's best talents, including Jeff Lemire, Brian Azzarello, Keith Giffen and Dan Jurgens, this new epic series will expose the secrets of the New 52 universe!

Collects issues #0-17.

## The New 52: Futures End, Vol. 1 Details

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# From Reader Review The New 52: Futures End, Vol. 1 for online ebook

## Mark says

I went into this book knowing nothing and expecting very little, and I was very pleasantly surprised by how much I enjoyed it.

Futures End tells a story that takes place in two different time periods: 5 years from now and 35 years from now. And in a sense there is a third time period as well: 1 year from now, when a great war takes place. However we never see this time period; it is only discussed in the past tense.

One year from now two parallel universes will collide (in DC parlance these universes are called Earth 1 and Earth 2) and a great war will take place in which Earth 1 and Earth 2 defend themselves against an invasion by Darkseid and his Apokolips minions. We aren't given the big picture of how this war happened or what exactly happened. We just get some occasional details about "the war" via flashback which help give us a sense of its enormous scope and impact.

One outcome of this war is that many refugees from the parallel universe (Earth 2) wind up on Earth 1, and these refugees are all doppelgangers (identical parallel-universe copies) of someone that's already on Earth 1.

Fast-forward four years to the 5-years-from-now time period and the government wishes to find and detain these doppelgangers (enter real world refugee commentary), and there's one man who has the special ability to see them and differentiate them from their identical counterparts. He goes by Grifter and he is now on the government's wanted list. "Government" here is actually a secret division called Cadmus that has a hidden island facility where they are locking up all of the superhuman doppelgangers.

When we first see Grifter he is working his way through a family's home, dispassionately gunning them down like he's some kind of Terminator. Grifter claims via monologue that his victims are doppelgangers but no indication is given to the reader that they are anything but an innocent human family being murdered in cold blood until finally one of them, a little girl and the last survivor of the family, turns on him with glowing eyes and speaks to him in an alien language. He murders her too and leaves, saying "They walk among us and I walk among them. I love my job." This whole scene reminds me of one of my favorite cult classic movies, **They Live**. Grifter was apparently introduced in the Flashpoint story but I've never read that story so this was my introduction to him, and I loved it.

Fast-forwarding another 30 years to the 35-years-from-now time period (which is actually the point when this book begins telling its story), most of humanity has been wiped out by an evil artificial intelligence called Brother Eye who, in an obvious homage, happens to look just like HAL from 2001. Not only is he eradicating the human population, he is enslaving them with the use of cybernetic implants. In particular, Brother Eye's minions are targeting superhumans and implanting them, building an army of superhuman cybernetic monsters. Imagine (or just look at the cover) Wonder Woman's torso sitting atop a mechanical spider body with red robotic eyes and blades instead of arms and you get the idea.

There is still a pocket of resistance of un-assimilated (and gray-haired) superheroes and they are fighting against Brother Eye's cybernetic minions. One cool thing about this possible future timeline is that the authors have the freedom to kill off just about anyone they want. And in the first few pages alone it's

impressive just how many DC favorites get disintegrated or mutilated in horrible ways. This part of the timeline is one part dystopian sci-fi and one part horror movie. It feels very Robocalypse.

An aged Bruce Wayne, hiding out in his Batcave, is one of the last survivors and he has hatched a plan to go back in time to stop Brother Eye from being created (a la Terminator). Here we learn that it was Bruce himself along with Mr. Terrific that invented Brother Eye. However, Bruce's plan is foiled when Brother Eye's minions show up, and in one last heroic effort he resorts to sending Terry McGinnis, aka Batman Beyond, into the past to save the world. It's very cool to see Batman Beyond, formerly an animation-only character, be officially welcomed into the DC canon by appearing in print here.

And most of what I've just described happens in just the first issue. Whew! This volume contains 18 issues. So buckle your seatbelt, we're going for a ride.

In what remains in this volume, this ambitious story incorporates many corners of the DC Universe. Stormwatch makes an important appearance, so it's helpful (though not necessary) if you've read a Stormwatch story before (I've reviewed two of them here). Also appearing are S.H.A.D.E. (with their microscopic headquarters), Frankenstein, and Amethyst, so reading some of their stories, such as Justice League Dark (like volume 2 which I've reviewed here), would introduce you to those characters. Red Robin also plays a key role, so it might be helpful to have read some of his New 52 appearances (I have not read them, but I've heard they're worth the read). We also get quite a bit of time with fan-favorite Deathstroke. OMAC is here but he is just a government goon. Firestorm, John Constantine, Flash's Rogues gallery, Big Barda, Lois Lane, Hawkman, the Atom, and others also play big roles. And we are introduced to some mysterious new characters too, like Stormguard and Fifty Sue. The scope of this story is ambitious, indeed.

There's a lot going on at once and it jumps around between several future time periods (including the great war period that is never shown and only discussed), which can be tough to keep track of and therefore perhaps off-putting, but I found it quite enjoyable as long as you're willing to juggle between half a dozen different parallel plots. For me the frequent change of POV kept the pace of the story rocketing along at full speed.

I highly recommend this book to anyone that likes dystopian sci-fi. If you're a fan of **Robocalypse**, **The Terminator**, and/or **They Live**, I think there's a good chance you'll like this too. The only thing that kept me from giving it 5 stars is that this volume is not a complete story in itself. There is also a volume 2 and a volume 3. After I've read the whole series I may come back and revise my rating here to 5 stars if the whole series warrants it. But so far I'm really enjoying it and looking forward to seeing where it goes next!

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## Chris says

I decided to read this book because I have loved Tim Drake ever since reading the red robin comics. Also I recently started watching batman beyond after years of thinking it looked awful ( I have a friend who has persistently recommended it for ages).

The Tim drake story line in this volume starts off very slowly but there are a few good good storylines intertwining here. A couple of nice twists too. Issue zero is a great start too.

Overall I really enjoyed this volume. I old say there is a couple of big plot holes but don't wish to spoil it for anyone going to read it and they are not enough to spoil the story.

Overall I would recommend this one especially as you can go into it pretty much cold and it all makes sense pretty quickly. Also there are loads of different characters including from the future and other dimensions and the magical/mythical side so all the DC boxes ticked!!

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### **Adam Spanos says**

DC enters into the weekly epic again with this and as with almost everything after 52, its hit and miss. While I really like the premise, time travel mishap, the follow through sometimes misses the mark. Some segments are done really well, Firestorm, Lois Lane, and Mister Terrific. Others, S.H.A.D.E., Cadmus, and others seemed disjointed. The entire collection started smooth but started to go off the rails but a few big reveals at the end have lifted my anticipation level for volume 2. The art, obviously done by many artists, was really good. No subpar chapters. Overall, a solid but inorganic collection.

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### **Sam Quixote says**

Once upon a time Batman and Mister Terrific created a sentient AI called Brother Eye. 35 years later Brother Eye enslaved all of humanity! Dawww, they grow up so fast, don't they?

So, taking a page from Marvel's playbook of clichés, Batman Beyond/Terry McGinnis travels back in time to avert this disaster and stop Brother Eye's creation. Except he misses the mark, arriving five years too late. These Batmen, eh? Utter fuck-ups!

It's down to Terry and a ragtag collection of DC's least popular and most obscure characters to somehow salvage a win from this absolute mess. Welcome to Futures End – I highly recommend not bothering with it!

One of the rules of DC Comics is that if Hawkman's in the book – and, surprise, surprise, like a golden-winged Jonah, here he is! - that book is going to be shit. I'm gonna have to add another character to that rule: Batman Beyond. I want to love Terry but he's never – NEVER – appeared in an even halfway decent comic! And Futures End is definitely shit.

The story is a sprawling and unfocused disaster, the characters are badly written, and the plotting is nonsensical. So the main story appears to be Batman Beyond preventing the apocalyptic future from coming to pass but Terry spends most of the time putzing about with a cyborg's corpse in a shopping trolley – and that's all he does here!

Other storylines are unconnected, pointless and boring. Frankenstein, Amethyst and Hawkman (shudder) investigate Stormwatch's disappearance and Gifter, Deathstroke and Fifty-Sue (see what I mean about least popular and most obscure characters?) are doing... something... on a mysterious island full of OMACs. And what about the mystery of why Superman's wearing a motorcycle helmet? Yeah, what about it? How is that even a storyline!? This first volume is way too long at 400 pages and its length is especially felt given that almost nothing happens and none of what does is remotely interesting!

Green Arrow is killed off for shock value that just made me roll my eyes (am I meant to care? That's not a spoiler either as it has nothing to do with anything and doesn't count anyway as this is an alternate timeline – Ollie's up and about in Rebirth) and apparently Red Robin/Tim Drake died too but he faked it or something

and Tim, under an alias, spends the book working as a bartender – seriously, that’s his entire storyline! Meanwhile, nobody’s favourite superheroes, Firestorm and Mister Terrific, are written out of character to behave like complete dicks for no reason. And everyone’s referencing a war with Earth-2 – what the hell is that and when the fuck did that happen!?

I’d hoped Futures End might be halfway readable given two competent writers – Brian Azzarello and Jeff Lemire – were involved but it reads like the other, vastly more horrendous writers, Dan Jurgens and Keith Giffen, wrote most of this garbage.

And so I end reading any more of Futures End with the overly tedious, convoluted and rubbish Volume 1 having learned the lesson to steer clear of any comics with Batman Beyond on the cover!

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### **Bookwraiths says**

I'm a complete sucker for these traveling-into-the-past-to-stop-the-future storylines. The fact this one is really well written with great artwork only makes my love of it easier to justify.

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### **Chris Lemmerman says**

Considering I read #0-4 in single issues and then dropped this, I was surprised by how much I enjoyed it. The multiple storylines per issue thing works a lot better in trade than it does in singles; DC's other weekly comics deal with this in different ways, and it shows which one works best.

Batman Eternal focuses on one story per issue, which means different stories go weeks without being touched, but makes for a more cohesive read. Futures End tackles two or three per issue, which means everything gets seen on rotation, but does mean that story progression is overall slower. And World's End tries to tackle everything in every issue and makes a mess of it all.

So whilst Eternal is my favourite, Futures End reads much better in this format than in single issues, and it makes the story stronger overall. I like that the multiple storylines seem to be completely separate, but will likely dovetail together at the end, and I also approve of the visual consistency between issues thanks to a selection of artists that, whilst having different styles, work quite well together. Patrick Zircher's issues are the strongest, but Jesus Merino and Aaron Lopresti are both solid partners, and their rotation between issues is pretty fair.

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### **David says**

Couldn't even make it 1/10 of the way through. Think I'm mostly done with DC for a while.

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### **Wing Kee says**

A meh start.

World: The art is fine, being weekly the art changes a lot and it's inconsistent but I will say the art has really drawn me into the fact that this book is full of white characters, a lot, like almost all. And all the female characters have a specific look. The art is what it is. The world building here is janky and large in scope. There is the huge chunk of backstory that's not really gotten into regarding the Earth 2 war story and new readers would feel lost. There are also a lot of new Wild Storm characters in this that general readers will also not know. It's janky, it's choppy and the pieces don't seem to fit and there is honestly not enough info dumping to set readers up for the story to play out, a lot of times I was scratching my head and I know DC.

Story: Much like my beloved 52 there are multiple stories written by multiple writers that will eventually tie together. Some stories are more interesting than others and some seem lost and pointless at the moment, like the entire Cadmus story, but I hope that like 53 they will all eventually mean something. The core story of brother eye at this point in time is rather slow and without direction making for a lot of the momentum and tension post after the first issue. Terry is meandering and that seems to be the case for a lot of characters in this first act. There are some moments but at this point in time the characters don't really matter and there is no hook for readers to be attached to. Unlike 52 which drew me in with Booster, Black Adam, Rene and others the cast here seems somewhat lackluster. I really love Terry but so far his story has been...zzz.

Characters: I was so looking forward to this book cause it's Terry in the DCU, him meeting the people from the past since the animated series. But Terry here is fairly boring and stupid and directionless. Then there's the rest of the cast with S.H.A.D.E. which I don't care about, Storm watch which I don't care about, Cadmus which I don't care about...are you getting the trend here. It's not that I don't want to care. It's the writing that's letting the story down. I don't get to connect with them like I did with Booster and Skeets. I don't get to see Rene hit rock bottom and come back as the Question. I don't see Adam trying to be a hero. This book so far only has questions and janky writing and it's not doing the characters any favors.

I wanted to like this so much more but at this moment it's a boring choppy drag of a story.

Onward to the next book!

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### **StoryTellerShannon says**

As long as you can handle a dozen stories or more in one book you'll be good with this one. The "world" has ended and Terry McGinnes goes back in time to fix things but there are problems.

I like what they did to reboot Mr. Terrific, who otherwise seemed like a really nice, intelligent guy who was overshadowed by Batman when it came to intelligence. The little girl villain was nice, too.

Some really nice twists on the superheroes we know in this Dystopian setting.

If you are new to DC superheroes I would not start with this series as it plays the story to veterans of the DC Universe. Wait, am I a veteran? ;)

**OVERALL GRADE: B to B plus.**

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## A.j. Garner says

I think I would have liked this if it were divided a little better. I think the mass of these 18 issues just made me not want to read. The story seemed a little slow. I liked that it was based on not mainstreamed characters.

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## Ivy says

5 stars

Enjoyed this comic. Little creepy though.

Can't wait to read Future's End Volume 2!!!!

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## Brian Poole says

The New 52: Futures End, Vol. 1 is an odd beast. It's both important for DC and yet structured so that the entire story might never happen. The *Volume 1* collection covers issues #0 to 17.

That DC has returned to the weekly comics well is not a shock. The original weekly 52 was one of DC's signature successes of the past decade. Subsequent stabs at weekly comics like *Countdown* or *Trinity* may not have been creative triumphs, but they sold well.

So, as part of a current publishing slate featuring three different weekly comics (also including *Batman Eternal* and *Earth 2: World's End*), *The New 52: Futures End* is something of a high profile project for DC. The series is guided by a quartet of prominent writers: Brian Azzarello, Jeff Lemire, Dan Jurgens and Keith Giffen. It introduces the fan favorite Batman Beyond into the main DC continuity. And it develops concepts crucial to *Convergence*, DC's massive Spring 2015 event. But is *Futures End* a good comic?

As has been pointed out, the cast of *Futures End* could be a hard sell, populated by characters whose books failed in The New 52. In these 18 issues, various refugees from cancelled titles dominate the action: StormWatch, Hawkman, Frankenstein, Amethyst, Firestorm, Deathstroke, Grifter, Voodoo, OMAC and Mister Terrific all play central roles. Other famous heroes pop in and out and Batman Beyond gets a lot of spotlight. Lois Lane and Tim Drake (the latter running from his life as Red Robin) also get featured roles. The cynical view might be to look at this as a "Cast of Failures." On the other hand, there were a lot of good concepts in the early going of The New 52 that failed for reasons other than quality. And even some of the series that weren't great boasted characters with potential. *Futures End* provides, at least, an opportunity for these various heroes to prove their worth.

*Futures End* begins 35 years in the future, where Brother Eye and his OMACs have mostly overrun the planet. A small band of free heroes opposes Brother Eye. Bruce Wayne intends to travel back in time, to prevent Brother Eye's creation. But a mishap sends Terry McGinness back through the years instead. Unfortunately, Terry doesn't travel back as far as intended and emerges five years ahead of the current DC continuity.

Terry plots to invade the corporate HQ of Mister Terrific, to destroy the Brother Eye technology. Mister T,



having returned from Earth 2 in the intervening five years, is a celebrity technocrat and something of an arrogant prick. A trio of villains also plots to burgle Mister T's building, landing in an uneasy alliance with Terry. *Futures End* makes references to a "war" involving Earth 2 that badly devastated the main Earth. The Teen Titans are said to have been killed during the war.

StormWatch (including Hawkman) falls victim to a vicious attack in deep space. Frankenstein's old employer S.H.A.D.E. recruits him, Amethyst and the Atom (Ray Palmer) to go and find out what happened to StormWatch. Hawkman survived the attack and he, Frank and Amethyst follow a distress signal that lands them on a bizarre alien planet where they encounter a deadly menace.

Back on Earth, Green Arrow is killed when Firestorm fails to arrive to help him in time. The two men that make up Firestorm, Ronnie Raymond and Jason Rusch, are badly at odds. Ronnie's suffering some bad PTSD from the war. An attempted intervention by the Justice League fails to solve the duo's issues. Jason gets involved in experiments at Columbia that catch Superman's attention.

Lois Lane, running a successful news blog, receives some mysterious clues that lead her to Tim in his new identity. She travels widely to follow the other clues and interacts with Superman, who's mysteriously adopted a helmet that covers his whole face. Lois's plot seems to frequently intersect with an escaped scientist doing mysterious DNA work.

Meanwhile, the shadowy King Faraday presses Grifter into working for him, bringing him to the mysterious Cadmus Island. Grifter's forced to work with Deathstroke and his partner, an immensely powerful young girl cheekily named Fifty Sue. Grifter learns the secret of Cadmus: it's a prison for super-powered refugees from Earth 2.

Those are the main plot threads that *Futures End* tracks. They're leading somewhere, though it's not always easy to discern how the various plot threads will eventually weave together. The problem with long-term plotting is that while the writers know where they're going, far-ranging plot structures like *Futures End* can feel disjointed for readers, especially in the early going. Reading *Futures End* in collected format probably eases some of the impact of the series' structural issues. Even on a weekly publication schedule, some readers complained that plots felt like they came and went at random and didn't build up momentum. In collected format, characters are rarely offstage long enough to lose the thread of their stories. That allows for better flow and a better overview of the master plot direction.

Characterization isn't necessarily consistent in *Futures End*. The story is set five years down the road in DC's universe, but it's hard to recognize some of the players. While Ronnie's PTSD is handled fairly well, Tim's reasons for abandoning his former life don't quite come across. Seeing Lois in a central role is welcome; she's active and dynamic, pulling along her slice of the plot almost by sheer will. Characters like Hawkman, Amethyst and the OMACs are almost blank slates. Frankenstein and Grifter, on the other hand, benefit from the broader exposure they receive in *Futures End*. Readers can easily see how they might fit into present day stories. Terry is also handled well, navigating the complexities of his time travel mission.

One particularly problematic depiction is Mister Terrific. The "media whore egomaniac" concept could be interesting, but it seems out of place for Mister T. Fans used to his thoughtful Pre-52 depiction or the similar deportment he's shown in his New 52 appearances will be shocked by his disposition in *Futures End*. While a lot of what happened in the five-year gap, including the Earth War, remains unrevealed by the end of *Volume 1*, it still seems like a big leap for Mister T from where readers last saw him.

The art is handled by a rotating team of seasoned comic book vets, primarily Patrick Zircher, Jesus Merino,

Aaron Lopresti and Scot Eaton. Ethan Van Sciver and Georges Jeanty also contribute art to a couple installments. The principal art team all shares a fairly similar aesthetic. This is clean, direct comic book storytelling in the classic sense. Panel layouts don't tend to get too tricky and the artists aren't breaking new visual narrative ground. But they all have some rather nice moments, the action is easy to follow and the large cast of characters mostly come off distinctly, minimizing potential confusion. *Futures End* isn't a glamour-filled glory assignment for the art team, but they acquit themselves well.

Whether or not to recommend The New 52: Futures End, Vol. 1 is a tough call. Some parts of the story are particularly enjoyable, while others seem to need a bit more work. The later parts of *Volume 1* provide some plot payoffs that make sticking around seem like an agreeable prospect. This seems like a series where readers will need to have seen the whole run to judge its ultimate success.

This review originally appeared on [www.thunderalleybcp.com](http://www.thunderalleybcp.com)

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### **Shannon Appelcline says**

*Futures End* has a pair of intriguing premise. First, it's focused on someone coming back in time ... to five years in the future to try and change history. That makes this all an alternate reality, but one that has the potential to be fun as greats like *Kingdom Come* were. Second, it concentrates on failed Nu52 characters like Mr. Terrific, Firestorm, Frankenstein, Grifter, and Amethyst. And, in doing so, it proves that anyone can be great under the right writers, as many of these guys are quite interesting.

In the world of weeklies, the touchstone for greatness has always been 52, and this is the closest DC has come to it. It doesn't have the writing problems of *Countdown* nor the badly meandering nature of *Batman Eternal*. Instead it's an intriguing narrative with lots of parallel plot threads that are each looking at interesting parts of the DC universe -- which is pretty much how 52 did it too. And fortunately, it's got some of DC's top writing talent too.

Mind you, *Futures End* isn't without problems. The pacing is the biggest issue, because it plods. There aren't enough important beats in individual issues, nor does the overall narrative advance fast enough. Instead we have 18 issues that just barely manage to get their individual plots to their first big reveals.

Still, of the two new weeklies that I've read thus far from for the Nu52, this is the one that I'm eager to see more of.

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### **Koen says**

Okay, I'm back at it! And this was definitely a nice one to start off with.

I had my reservations and my doubts during the first chapters, but it steadily grew into a longing to read more... Although it was all a bit much to take in with all these characters, you really get sucked into the story thanks to the great build up and the tension this volume is breathing...

It's strange seeing all these strange characters after such a big timeout on my end, but definitely halfway through I felt like I was all DC again ;)

Not going to say much more, because I want to continue as fast as possible... Those last pages really heightened my senses, and need to know more about what's coming next.... Catch ya on the flipside!

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### **Jesse A says**

Very busy, somewhat confusing book once again saved by a huge ending!

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