



Absolutely Atrocious | OR | We're (Not) Alone In This New Old World Of Ours

Absolute Batman (DC Comics) · Absolute Universe (DC Comics 2024) · Batman -
All Media Types · Not Rated · 1993 words

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Fandom: Absolute Batman (DC Comics), Absolute Universe (DC Comics 2024), Batman - All Media Types Rating: Not Rated Category: Gen

Warnings: Creator chose not to add warnings

Relationships: Rogues Gallery & Rogues Gallery (Batman), Jonathan Crane & Everyone

Characters: Rogues Gallery (Batman), Jonathan Crane (Absolute DCU), Jonathan Crane, Selina Kyle (Absolute DCU), Selina Kyle, Eddie Nygma (Absolute DCU), Edward Nygma, Oswald "Ozzie" Cobblepot (Absolute DCU), Oswald Cobblepot, Harley Quinn (Absolute DCU), Harleen Quinzel, Waylon Jones (Absolute DCU), Waylon Jones, Pamela Isley (Absolute DCU), Pamela Isley, Clayface (DCU), Jervis Tetch, Jack Grimm | Joker (Absolute DCU), Joker (DCU), Joker's just mentioned he doesn't actually appear, Harvey Dent (Absolute DCU), Harvey Dent, Victor Fries, Victor Fries Jr. (Absolute DCU), Manbat | Manny, Absolute Manbat (Absolute DCU), Nightmare the Crow (DCU), YAY THERE'S A TAG FOR HER 🤩🤩🤩

Tags: Alternate Universe, Friendship, Existential Crisis, Complaint Fic, Other Additional Tags to Be Added, Alternate Universe - Canon Divergence, Angst and Humor, Character Study, sorta - Freeform, Memory Alteration, Memory Magic, Memory Related, Recovered Memories, Memories, I don't think this quite counts as a 'fix-it' so I'm not tagging that, Body Horror, Mild Body Horror, Canon-Typical Body Horror, Jonathan Crane-centric, POV Jonathan Crane, POV Third Person, Absolute Mad Hatter hasn't really done anything yet so I kept what happened to poor old Jervis vague, unless he's mute or something my version won't really contradict anything

Words: 1993 Chapters: 1 chapter Status: Complete Published: 2026-09-24

Jonathan wakes up to a new world, new memories, and old friends. What do you do when everything you've ever known is turned on its head? Jonathan's answer is 'find someone else dealing with the same damn thing and complain to them about it. Loudly.'

AKA: I hate Absolute Batman. So I thought to myself 'what if the characters suddenly had the memories of their more-or-less main counterparts (albeit a bit softened), and hated the Absolute universe as well?'

I want you to imagine, for a moment, that Absolute Batman didn't exist and I had just made all this crap up. See how ridiculous and overly dark it all is??? Mixed with some REALLY good ideas, I'll admit, but still.

Jonathan entered the warehouse with a screech, slamming the door shut behind him.

"You're taking this well, I see," Kyle snarked from her seat at a folding table that had been set up near the warehouse entrance, under the most functional lightbulb in the place.

It was almost, for a second, like old times. Then the light caught on that ridiculous, bulbous helmet of hers, and he was reminded unpleasantly of the current situation.

"Do you know how long I've gone ignoring my research?" Jonathan asked as he sat down, the skin around the horrible buttons he'd been forced to call eyes pinching when he scowled. "Years!" he answered his own question, and as he spoke he tried unsuccessfully to shoo away the crows that followed him everywhere. He couldn't remember the birdcall language needed to control them without dipping further into other Jonathan's mind, and that was something he was sure he was not going to be doing anytime soon.

"Years of neglecting the truly scientific study of fear," Jonathan continued, ranting, "in pursuit of some mind-numbing *mental experiment* against Bruce Wayne!"

He thunked his elbow against the table, resting his head on his hand, still scowling.

"Oh yes, you have it so bad," a deformed husk of a man said nastily from farther down the table. It took Jonathan a moment to recognize him as Cobblepot, and once he did, he winced hard. "Much worse than having every bone in your body broken!" The sudden meanness went out of the Penguin as he lifted an arm, some of his old self coming back as he sighed in that deep, indignant way only the very rich or otherwise dramatic seemed to be able to manage. "And using guns for crutches. Honestly, where is the style in that? So uncouth..."

"I suppose some of us have had it much worse than others," Jonathan agreed, which was as close as he was going to get to an apology. He — or rather, *other* him — had had a hand in Bane's little attack against Wayne's 'friends', if he was remembering correctly. Jonathan would hardly allow himself to feel something as petty as guilt for the actions of what was essentially a doppelganger, however.

"Isn't it fascinating?" Edward asked cheerfully, that brain case of his sparking slightly as he spoke. And, okay, maybe that brought a little bit of guilt to Jonathan. "We're all so miserable!" Edward cheered, leaning his chair back until it balanced on two legs and throwing his hands into the air. He grew thoughtful, righting his chair and turning his head to the man on his right. Or, more accurately, *men*. "Well, except for Twosie. They pretty much just relived their origin story."

"Yeah, not that bad the second time," Twoface agreed, twirling a strand of their hair that had gotten loose from their bun around a finger. "Especially now that we've been made two twice, it's actually pretty good. **And the long hair ain't a bad look for us, we're thinking of keeping it.**"

"Well, goodie fer ya," Harleen grumbled, running a hand over her nearly bald head.

"What in God's name happened to you, child?" Jonathan asked in concern, eyeing her rather... *interesting* new appearance.

"I don't wanna talk 'bout it."

"She's her little pudding's *daughter* in this reality," Isley informed him, snickering. Harleen glared at her and Isley quickly looked away, still smiling.

(For a second, Jonathan thought that she'd somehow escaped the horrid fate that had befallen the rest of them. After all, she looked just as radiant as ever, albeit somewhat obscured by shadows. Then her face split open *sideways* to reveal a collection of horrifying mouths, and she used a talon covered in what looked to be bug wings to toss some snacks from the table into them, and he knew she'd suffered as greatly as any of them.)

"Oh dear," Jonathan said faintly, looking at Harleen. That couldn't have been comfortable for her, to say the least. Curious, he decided to look around the warehouse, wondering what had become of his other compatriots.

Manbat was hanging from the ceiling, deep in rest, looking more-or-less fine. Though, at this point, Jonathan was hardly going to assume.

Jervis was in the corner, muttering to himself, and Jonathan made a mental note to check on him later. They would have to find out which meds he needed in this twisted universe and procure them, Jonathan decided — and soon, judging by the look of him.

There was an athletic but average man that Jonathan didn't recognize sitting at the table with them. He had a strip of torn paper reading *Croc* in Harleen's colorful handwriting taped to his shirt as a makeshift nametag, which Jonathan took as a sign that no-one else had been able to recognize him either. He looked far too miserable for a man who had finally gotten the normal appearance he'd always wished for, and Jonathan decided that he wasn't going to touch whatever was going on there without a clipboard and a couch for Waylon to lie on.

There was a puddle of goo on the floor struggling to sculpt itself into something resembling a person, utilizing far too many of its own arms to physically shape its being. So *Clayface* got worse somehow, Jonathan thought. *Huh.*

"Speaking of that damnable clown," Jonathan said when he noticed a rather conspicuous absence, thinking of Harley's rather unfortunate new relation, "where is he?"

"Isley tried to kill him because of some Ark stuff," Edward chirped. He pulled a deck of cards from his bag and began dealing them out to those seated at the table, seemingly completely unbothered by the content of what he was saying. "And being around Harls is a little awkward for him right now, so Jokes scrambled. Too bad, really. I wanted to tell him about this *fascinating* new theorem I came up with..."

With the ease of long practice that was only slightly rusty after what was technically a lifetime of separation, Jonathan droned out the Riddler's ensuing ramble.

To a certain extent, Jonathan already knew what had happened to the others. Most of them, anyways. He'd been the cause or at least part of it for a great deal of the things that had afflicted them. But that was *other* Jonathan's memories, and it was all a little fuzzy, and he could make it clearer but that could mean becoming more like the other him. And Jonathan wasn't entirely sure if he could come back, if he went too far into that other self. The one that belonged here, in this reality.

"What's wrong with him?" Jonathan asked suddenly, partially to get his mind out of the spiraling mess of dark existentialism that it had fallen into. He pointed to a monstrous, frozen being that he could only assume was Fries. The good cryogenics specialist was staring blankly at the table, which was actively freezing under his touch, and Jonathan couldn't figure out if that haunted look was just a feature of his new face or a sign of something very wrong.

"He's his own son; Nora's his mom." This was Kyle, in a matter-of-fact way that was really the only way to say something like that.

"Oh," Jonathan said simply. An awkward silence followed. Normally, as much as that word could ever possibly apply to anything concerning them, there would've been some attempts at comfort by that point. But things were different, now.

Their entire lives had been rewritten. Their relationships, their values, their histories. None of them were entirely sure where they stood with each other, anymore. And on top of all that, most of them didn't even look like themselves anymore, in ways that weren't always minor.

"I want my old body back," Waylon groaned, as if reading his mind, folding his arms on the table and letting his head fall down on them. He looked and sounded as if he wasn't entirely sure how to deal with that fact, and now Jonathan *really* wanted that clipboard and couch.

"Seconded," Isley added miserably, her words coming out in a multitude of discordant voices, most appearing from places where no voice belonged.

"Seconded, seconded," Clayface echoed in a dull tone, half-melted into the floor nearby, one golden eye glowing from the part of what passed for his face that *didn't* have a giant hole in it.

Memories of this world's Clayface pressed in on Jonathan, giving him another pang of guilt that he squashed viciously. It was hardly his fault what that buffoon whose body he was wearing had done or what he'd had Clayface do, none of it had been *him*.

For God's sake, Jack was the one that had ordered most of it—

Jonathan breathed deep. That wasn't fair. It wasn't Jack— Joker's fault either. The clown was unpredictable at the best of times, but he did have his lines, ones that the Joker of this world had crossed several times over.

Jonathan tried to close his eyes before the physical impossibility of that action reminded him that his 'eyes' were hard disks sewn into his sorry excuse for a face. He sighed. At least he still looked scary, he consoled himself. And like a scarecrow, there was that. They still had small mercies, it seemed.

A crow landed on his shoulder and began pecking at his hair. Lacking the energy to shoo it again, or at least telling himself that was the reason, he lifted a hand and stroked the bird's back with two careful fingers. It wasn't Nightmare, and oh how he missed her, but he supposed it would do as a substitute.

None of other Jonathan's crows had names. They weren't his pets, nor anything like friends, not like Nightmare and her flock were to Jonathan. They were mindless, expendable servants to the other.

This crow was on the smaller, scruffier side. It nuzzled him affectionately. *Small mercies*, Jonathan thought again. He decided that it was an appropriate enough name. "I think I'm going to call you Mercy," he told the creature softly, ignoring the looks some of the others gave him.

Not all of them gave him those looks, though. Edward just grinned at him, and it seemed more like a true Edward grin than a brain-fried grin, so Jonathan gave him a faint smile in return.

"Haigha?" an uncertain voice called from the corner, making Edward turn his head towards it with a small frown. It was Jervis.

"I'm here, Hatta," Jonathan told him, standing to make his way over to the man now that he'd pulled himself somewhat out of his own head.

"I feel more like Alice than the Hatter at the moment, I'm afraid," Jervis mumbled, his voice quiet and confused.

Jonathan couldn't help letting out a wry chuckle. His old self would've been able to, but this world's Scarecrow was of a cheerier sort. If anything, he supposed could take that from all this; a slightly more upbeat attitude.

"I think we're all Alice, today," Jonathan told Jervis, crouching down next to him and putting a hand on his back. He meant it, he really did.

It was an apt metaphor. Their entire world had been turned on its head and gone topsy-turvy, and the only thing they could do was push on forward and try to make sense of it anyways.

The sounds of a poker game drifted through the warehouse, someone laughing and someone else complaining about Edward counting cards, and it reminded Jonathan of the one place the metaphor truly failed.

Alice, for the most part, was alone. They weren't.

— end of "Absolutely Atrocious | OR | We're (Not) Alone In This New Old World Of Ours" —