

With the coming demise of both Batwoman and Klarion, Ray Fawkes and Ben Templesmith will be left to use Gotham by Midnight as the only remaining venue to chronicle the dark, magical corners of Gotham. In preparation for that burden, they have been rapidly world-building, introducing their characters and setting while also launching a major plot about an extra-dimensional threat apparently looking to enter Gotham by using stolen children as living conduits. Time is running short as Convergence approaches and the Batman Office will take stock of its line and its world in the wake of that event. For all Fawkes' and Templesmith's successes to this point, the ticking clock is their greatest enemy. The first issue of Gotham by Midnight set up the general situation, while the second explored the background of Sister Justine, the team's linguist. Gotham by Midnight #3 splits its story between the present, where Corrigan and Detective Lisa Drake investigate a young girl apparently suffering from panic attacks and smallpox, and the past, where narcotics officer Lisa Drake investigates a mysterious new drug that turns out to have been made from Sidhe bones. This book has made an ongoing theme of language. Sister Justine's expertise is in that area, and Doctor Szandor shows expertise with mystical phonemes as well. The defeat of the monster in this issue is not a matter of battle, but of communication, a fearful, desperate struggle to string poorly understood syllables together to avert catastrophe, a victory as much of luck as skill. Fawkes displays narrative originality and imagination in building tension and excitement from a practice, the deciphering of strange words, that often induces sleep. Templesmith's visual language is dominated by shadow, and he plays it with as much virtuosity as Fawkes shows with mystical codes. The invading creatures, living shadows with articulated hearts, are drawn metaphors of infectious disease, a deadly menace spreading from victim to victim with a power made more frightening by the fact that it is directed and capable of self-restraint. The earlier story is less powerful, but ends with the more forceful and intense revelation. Lisa Drake, it turns out, harbors secrets of her own. She is apparently part Sidhe herself -- ban-Sidhe, to be precise. Like Corrigan, she holds death inside herself, although in her case it is a deadly scream rather than the personification of God's wrath. The post Gotham by Midnight #3 appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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