



Batman: Knightfall, Part Two: Who Rules the Night

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This riveting book sets Batman on a path that will change his life forever. A mass escape from Arkham Asylum and the emergence of Batman's most threatening foe, Bane, sends Gotham City spinning into chaos and takes Batman to the limits of human endurance. Graphic novel format.

THE BAT IS BROKEN.

BANE HAS WON.

But for forces of justice will not go quietly into the night. Instead, a successor to the mantle of the Bat must be chosen to carry on Bruce Wayne's war against crime. Who will be the new Dark Knight? Can he succeed where his predecessor failed? Or will Bane's campaign of terror continue unabated, laying waste to Gotham City?

The second volume of the epic *Knightfall* story, this edition contains *Batman* #498-500, *Detective Comics* #664-666, *Showcase '93* #7-8 and *Batman: Shadow of the Bat* #16-18.

Batman: Knightfall, Part Two: Who Rules the Night Details

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From Reader Review Batman: Knightfall, Part Two: Who Rules the Night for online ebook

Ebony Senn says

Read all three volumes several times, I'm a huge Batman fan. From the start I thought I wouldn't like it as Bruce Wayne isn't the Batman throughout the story, but now it has to be one of my favourite Batman comics.

Elliott Ploutz says

It can pretty much be skipped if you're only interested in Batman and Bane. Azrael is cool in theory...

Jake Kogutt says

This book brilliantly illustrates a Gotham without The Batman but still with "Batman". The Brutal, and tactical new Batman is a nice new change of pace from the normal.

Lina says

I honestly don't know if the movie will be as good as this in some regards.

Lashaan Balasingam (Bookidote) says

Well, now I can confirm that final Arkham game by Rocksteady studios was partially inspired by the events in this trade paperback. That was nice to see; for the record, Scarecrow was a lot less menacing in this than in the game. The story explored Jean-Paul Valley's evolution and was done in an entertaining fashion, maybe a little too easy and linear. Jean-Paul reminded me a lot of Tommy Gunn in Rocky V, except for the ending.

The volume was definitely fun nonetheless. Sucks that Bruce had to be stuck on a wheelchair most of the time...more like the whole time.

P.S. A full review to come.

Yours truly,

Lashaan

Lashaan & Trang | Bloggers and Book Reviewers
Official blog: <http://bookidote.wordpress.com>

Zach says

Like the first volume, I read this one in single-issue format, and I skipped the Two-Face and Scarecrow arcs because they both seemed very tangential. My criticisms of the first volume also still largely apply: Aparo's art is still oh-so-'90s, and Moench's prose is still cringe-inducingly purple, never more than when he tries his hardest to make it elevated (that narration/internal monologue/whatever at the end...ugh). But there's actually a pretty neat device in the last issue (the original Batman 500), which goes some way toward justifying Aparo's "old-fashioned" style in the previous chapters: the first half of the issue, with the injured Bruce Wayne's replacement Jean-Paul Valley wearing the regular Batman costume, is drawn as usual by Aparo, but Mike Manley of "Darkhawk" fame takes over for the second half, where Valley goes nuts and designs his new Spawn-inspired costume. The shift in artists thus gives us a visual cue that shit just got real; sure, the first volume was dark, but it was still the Batman we're familiar and comfortable with. This Batman, as drawn by Manley, is darker, bloodier, and grimmer to an almost cartoonish degree.

Which brings me to why I'm rating this book three stars, when in my heart of hearts I know it's probably only "worth" two. This second volume isn't as much of a page-turner as the first; it lacks the inherent drama of seeing the usually-Invincible Batman growing progressively worn down and demoralized. But the meta-commentary it provides on the superhero comic itself, especially in the wake of Image Comics and the new "violent hero" archetype, is a fascinating one. Valley's Batman gets the job done and is more terrifying than Bruce Wayne ever was, but he isn't Batman; he's the embodiment of the "ends-justify-the-means" fascist Batman is often accused of being. Putting this clearly unhinged man in Batman's place and setting him loose on the streets causes the reader, even if only momentarily, to interrogate the legitimacy of a masked avenger as hero in the first place. Yes, Batman has a moral code, he hates firearms, he doesn't kill; but what if he was just the slightest bit more unstable? This is an important question to ask, and "Knightfall," especially in this middle section, dares to ask it; even if, as a commercial entertainment first and foremost, it does so in a cursory and not especially rigorous way, with most of the contention revolving around Robin objecting to Valley's willingness to kill.

I don't think this is the best critical treatment of Batman by a longshot: that would be Frank Miller's "The Dark Knight Returns" (which I, at least, read as part-satire), or Christopher Nolan's film "The Dark Knight," or for a much more scathing example, Josh Simmons' unauthorized comic "Batman." But I think that any questioning of the usually uncritical presentation of the vigilante as hero is well worth reading for comics fans, and any amount of cognitive dissonance is welcome amidst the usually mind-numbingly black-and-white superhero fare.

John Yelverton says

I realize that they were trying to ride the coattails of Superman's death, but this whole series just seemed weak.

David says

So, when you hear the name 'Batman' I'm sure most of you, like me, immediately associate that character

with his alter-ego of Bruce Wayne.

Not of Jean-Paul Valley.

But that is precisely who Batman's alter-ego is in thus, with Bruce Wayne (the original Batman!) still in convalescence following his brutal battle - and defeat! - by Bane, and with Bruce then temporarily passing the mantle of the bat onto the former Azrael (another lesser-known comic book character to the general masses, of which I was one prior to TV's Gotham and Rocksteady's Arkham series of games), and former foe rather than - for some inexplicable reason - passing it on to Nightwing, or even to his own sidekick Robin (or Tim Drake in this).

But this Batman proves to be rougher and more violent than his predecessor - harking back to the original anti-hero Batman? - dispensing extremely rough justice to the crooks of Gotham city and side-lining Robin (who seems to do nothing but wring his hands throughout). It's really only at the very end - when Jean-Paul crosses a line - that Bruce Wayne re-appears (somehow, and mysteriously, having recovered from his severe injury), leading to the set-up for the final part of the trilogy: a final part that I will read in due course, but that I currently feel I need a break from!

Mike Carpenter says

I really tried to love this comic, but I just could not get into it. First off, it starts out really slow, which is kind of ironic seeing as how volume 1 ended on such a high note. Almost the entire first half is a flashback to an incident with Two-Face which in reality has no bearing on the comic, other than to solidify the fact that Bruce had been "on edge" after that comic. Then of course Azrael takes the role of Batman since Bruce is in no condition to do so, and Bruce goes off to find Robin's missing Dad and his Doctor, so Bruce Wayne, The Batman is more or less gone for the rest of the comic.

After that, Azrael starts taking things to the extreme, using brutal tactics and unorthodox methods that Robin does not approve of while searching for Bane. However Azrael ditches Robin after getting fed up with him complaining, and ditches him. Azrael-Batman then fights the Scarecrow in the biggest lump of padding I've ever seen in a comic book.... However, it is also the best lump of padding I've ever seen in a comic book. Of course that's like saying "That was the best pointless scene ever.", but I would still like to point out how good this part is. The artwork in this section is great, the Scarecrow's plan is very clever, and it was overall my favorite part of the comic. Unfortunately it really held no bearing to the main story, and was overall pointless. After that, the comic remembers that Bane is still the bad guy, and Azrael goes after him. There's a few skirmishes, Nightwing shows up for two pages, and Azrael defeats Bane in a somewhat anti-climactic fight, and really a very disappointing ending. In the end, Azrael is still a jerk, Bruce is still in Santa Prisca, and even though Bane was defeated there was still no real satisfaction with seeing him beaten.

Granted I have not read Volume 3, so I may be giving this comic a bit too much flack. However, where at least volume 1 had a good story and great buildup, and ended on an epic high note, this one has a lot of padding, and ends with a very anti-climactic battle that gives you no sense of satisfaction or closure. However, I can say I really do want to read volume 3, because the overall story of Azrael taking the role of Batman seems interesting, and I would like to see how it all ends.

Bill Koester says

Lots of filler, but the big showdown between the new Batman and Bane does not disappoint.

Elliot Huxtable says

I have a few issues with the dumbing down of Bane but I suppose when you create a character who is the intellectual and physical superior to Bruce Wayne you kinda write yourself into a corner when you have to defeat him. Although it is a little dissatisfying to watch Azrael (tactic: punch him, lots) to only beat him up in an improved Batsuit. Saying that though, the psychological effects of the breaking of the Bat are nicely explored in this, the art is lovely and the Scarecrow's appearance is truly terrifying

Sam Quixote says

This second book in the trilogy takes a long time to say some very basic things: Bruce Wayne is in a wheelchair recovering, Jean Paul Valley is the new Batman and is dispensing a rougher sort of justice than the usual Batman, and that's it. Robin is still wringing his hands like a worried housewife, while Bane having "taken Gotham" does nothing more than sit in his... flat is it? Talking about how he's controlling all the crime in Gotham and all the money he's going to make.

Having read the origin story of Bane (reprinted in "Batman vs Bane" by Chuck Dixon) I thought the character was motivated for higher reasons than money but it seems Doug Moench got lazy and decided to make the motive behind Bane nothing more than tedious money. He's also far too reliant on Venom to make him succeed, I thought he was a criminal genius but all thinking seems to escape him when he fights, making him nothing more than a `roid-ed out thug. Disappointing.

Jean Paul Valley meanwhile does do some un-Batman like things like value innocent life less while modifying the outfit so it looks scarier with claws and outer-armour but he still wasn't a bad Batman. In fact he does something Bruce Wayne couldn't do in the last book.

There is a lot of filler in this book. There's a two-part Two Face story that had no bearing on this book and an extra-long Scarecrow story that also is irrelevant here. The Two Face story only underlines Bruce Wayne's tiredness (it's hinted at depression in this book too strangely), which had been done to death in the first book, while the Scarecrow story is a pointless ramble and seeks to reinforce the "Jean Paul Valley is a more ruthless Batman" message that we get throughout the book anyway (thanks to an increasingly annoying Robin/Tim Drake).

So, stuff happens in this book but nothing that couldn't have been done in 100 pages or less, instead of the 280 pages here. Bane turns out to be a disappointing victor not doing much, Bruce Wayne does nothing more than sit in the wheelchair, Robin is irritating, and Jean Paul Valley sets out to kick butt. The last 25 pages were good, read this if you want to save time, but that doesn't make up for the overall feeling of padding that this mediocre book provides to make this series a trilogy.

Jim says

Good escapist fare.

Brandon says

I spent the majority of my review for Knightfall: Volume 1 gushing over how much I enjoyed the story and how pumped up it made me for *The Dark Knight Rises*. Having just finished Volume 2 and seen *The Dark Knight Rises* twice, I can easily say that I enjoyed this collection on a much higher level.

I'm not sure if it's strictly because now when I read Bane, I can only hear his dialogue in Tom Hardy's voice or that the story takes a turn in a darker, more compelling direction.

That being said, I'm still not completely crazy about the artwork but it does serve its purpose. Some of the character designs are a little on the dated side (Nightwing rocking a mullet) and I often got confused when presented with Jean-Paul Valley (Azreal) and Detective Stanley Kitch in succession as they looked identical.

The battle within the final few pages is something to behold. I'm a sucker for fight scenes that take place in the rain (for some bizarre reason) and this one makes use of the environment wisely. There a few panels in particular that impressed me and left me wanting more.

Charles says

"Hraaoooo. Hrraiiii!"

Uhhh, sure Scarecrow, whatever that means as long as you're cool with it.

Ok, so this volume was slightly better than the first. Again, this is considered a monumental story arc for Bats, but I'm not really feeling it yet. The bits that really took me out of the whole story were the issues dealing with Two Face and Scarecrow. They served as complete distractions to the main story.

You'd think Two Face would be interesting. A twisted and tortured soul ruled by the cruel fate of a coin toss. Well, there's not much of that in here. Rather some sketchy and muddled art and a villain whose goal it is to hold a mock trial to convict and therefore be able to execute the Bat. It's kind of like relying on your high school's model UN to humiliate someone you dislike. Sadly, this wasn't kept to one issue.

Scarecrow...Again, you'd think he'd be interesting but he ends up watered down and foolishly quirky. At first it feels like a tale of revenge but ends up with a standard megalomania trope where he wants to achieve Godhood. What's his downfall? A love of books. Seriously, that's what unwinds his whole plan, and yeah he makes that kooky noise I posted up top several times. I kid you not, at one point he breaks away from his maniacal deed to scare some birds and scream that. The saving grace for this sideshow is Anarky who as the anti-hero wonders what Batman has done to the city and should be judged for being an agent of chaos.

Apparently Bruce can (try) to kick some butt in a wheelchair which seemed a bit foolhardy to me. The main thrust of the remaining issues are JPV filling in as the Batman. Oddly enough his reliance on the "system",

extreme violence, and sheer arrogance pop up quite quickly. First night out, he's showing signs of being a bit unhinged. The city and its officials debate whether the rejuvenated Batman is the right answer for such dangerous times. At times this is interesting, while others just plain repetitive.

It all builds up to the confrontation of the final issue, which he has been warned by Bruce to avoid. The beginning of this finally aims for the stars but ends up falling back to Earth. The attempt at poetic descriptions or Biblical comparisons really took me out and felt like it lengthened unnecessary parts. The final fight is interesting and again feels like some hints of Doomsday v. Supes. It offers some more insight into JPV and presents the reader with the question of "How far will he go?" You find out in the end, but I won't spoil that bit.

Overall, it's okay but nothing to fawn over. I'm truly feeling a bit let down after having to try and find this series for months and months to fill that gap in my collection. As a comics noob, I'm trying to hit up all the (supposed sometimes) high points of DC's major arcs. I mean this is the breaking of the Bat after all! Sadly, it's more like this has been a breaking of my bank account to buy these with little payoff.
