



Batman Vol. 3: Death of the Family (The New 52) (Batman Graphic Novel)

By Scott Snyder



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After having his face sliced off, The Joker makes his horrifying return to Gotham City! But even for a man who's committed a lifetime of murder, he's more dangerous than ever before. How can Batman protect his city and those he's closest to?



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- Sales Rank: #106493 in eBooks
- Published on: 2013-11-05
- Released on: 2013-11-05
- Format: Kindle eBook

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Editorial Review

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Batman, Vol. 3: Death of the Family: Interview with Scott Snyder by Charlie Chang

The Joker is arguably the most popular villain in comics and in entertainment. How do you go about tackling such an icon in not only the Joker?

Scott Snyder: For me personally, the only way to write these iconic characters when there's 75 years of great stories that have already been written is to make these stories personal. Assume that if you make it personal, then that's how you make it original. So I came up with the idea for this story when we were about to have our second kid and I just kept finding myself wishing that I could stop worrying about the first kid once in a while and wondering how I was going to do this again. I came to this realization that Batman has this family and he probably thinks that same thing once in a while like, I wish I could stop worrying about them. Then that led me to this idea that someone might ask him, "Well why don't you just kill all of them? That would make it easy..." and that's the Joker right there. I knew that was the Joker, I could hear it in my head. It was perfect, you hear that and you know he's coming. Then it became a process of trying to develop a story of how to go deeper and deeper and darkly into that idea.

Just a few years ago, The Dark Knight film redefined Joker when a lot of people didn't think that would have been possible. What's different about this version?

Scott: I love the Heath Ledger Joker, I also love The Joker from Frank Miller's *The Dark Knight Returns* and Alan Moore's *Killing Joke*, but we tried to create our version that's both funny and almost humorously apocalyptic in his own kind of way while at the same time giving this Joker his own look. In another book (*Detective Comics*, Vol. 1) his face was cut off and we picked that up because it hadn't been dealt with and we turned it into something for our story where he belts on his own skin-face thing and that's part of the theme of this story where he's trying to say, "Let's look beneath the skin of this relationship and see what you really look like beneath that mask, all of you, you fools." So in a way, I think this is very different than anything you've ever seen, especially if you love the Joker, if you're new to comics or new to the character at all, hopefully it's something that gets your attention.

If you could put your favorite thing about this book, what would it be?

Scott: The thing that I love about it is how dark it is. I try to write the Joker with integrity and from the perspective that he genuinely believes that he's doing Batman a service by getting him to kill his own family because he believes Batman loves his villains more than his heroes or his allies. Because ultimately what's going to happen is each one of them is going to die or fall to some villain and he'll end up alone with the villains that he keeps alive and doesn't kill anyway. So why not just do it now? The twisted truth, brutality, and relentlessness of that conviction is what I love about this book the most. The Joker believes he's peeling back the face of Batman to show a truth that's there that Batman does not want to admit is beneath the cowl.

Some of the other writers writing the tie-ins to Death of the Family have touched on this but coming out of this book, what are you most excited to explore after this big huge epic?

Scott: Well for me, it was never really about what happens in continuity, it was never about the idea that the Bat family isn't going to meet or work together anymore. That was a fun repercussion in the books but it's the first part of a story within a story about the Joker that I plan to continue. Its part of the relationship I'm fascinated by and this is only one piece of it. So to me it's really about this part, the Joker saying we love you and you love us so why don't you admit it.

This book is so full of rich themes and emotional characters, what do you think is the core of this book and what is Death of the Family really all about?

Scott: This book really is a meditation on the dark and twisted nature of Batman's relationship, both with the Joker and with his own family. How the Joker, as evil and horrifying as he is, sometimes can extrapolate from a kernel of truth, a horrible abomination of that truth that speaks to something that can terrify everybody. That to me is really what this book is about and I'm very proud of that.

Review

"This is a book you need to read. Whether you're a fan of comics or not. If you're a fan of good storytelling and can buy into the conceit that a man dressed as a bat can make a difference in the world, then there's no better book for you than this one."—Huffington Post

"One of the best Batman runs in the history of the character. The fact that two of the biggest names in the industry are handling the return of the Joker is just icing on the cake."—IGN

About the Author

Scott Snyder is the bestselling and award-winning writer of *Batman*, *American Vampire* and *Swamp Thing* as well as the short story collection *Voodoo Heart*. He teaches writing at Sarah Lawrence College, NYU and Columbia University. He lives on Long Island with his wife, Jeanie, and his sons Jack and Emmett. He is a dedicated and un-ironic fan of Elvis Presley.

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