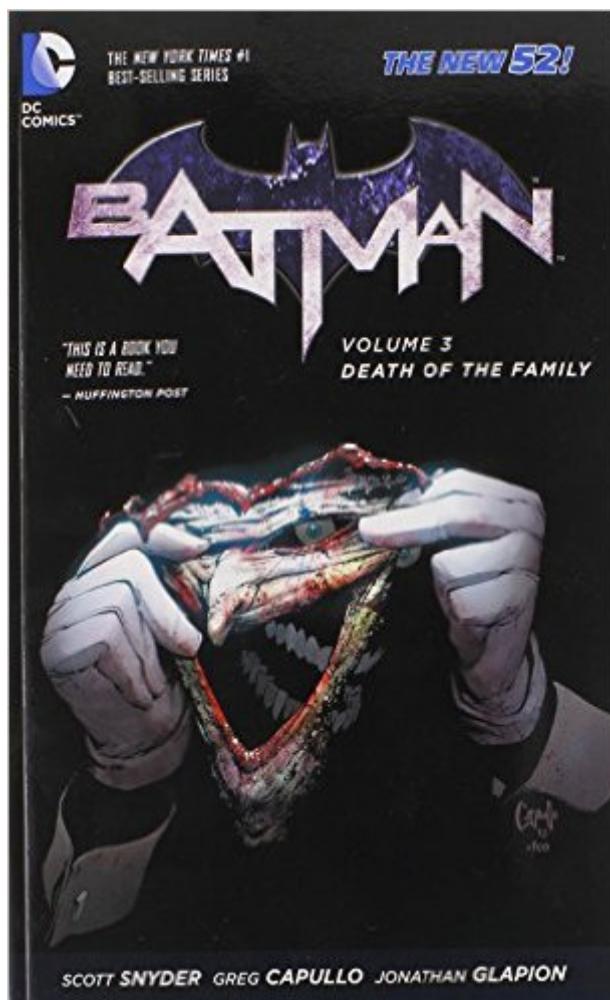


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# Batman Vol. 3: Death Of The Family (The New 52)



## Synopsis

A #1 New York Times bestseller! One year ago, the Joker limped off the streets of Gotham, mutilated and scarred when someone had taken the pale white skin right off of his face. But now, the Dark Knight's greatest foe has returned but for once, Batman doesn't seem to be his target. Instead, the Joker turns his vile hatred towards Commissioner Gordon, Alfred, Robin, Nightwing, Batgirl, Red Hood and Red Robin — the only family Bruce Wayne has left. The Clown Prince of Crime will unleash his most unpredictable, vicious and psychotic assault ever on everyone Batman holds dear. Can Batman stop his arch-rival's most deranged assault ever? Or will the cost of a deadly secret be a family member's life? #1 New York Times best-selling creators Scott Snyder (*AMERICAN VAMPIRE*) and Greg Capullo (*Spawn*) present the long-awaited return of the Joker, as he unleashes his most terrifying, personal assault ever on the Dark Knight. *BATMAN: DEATH OF THE FAMILY* collects *BATMAN* #13-17 along with backup stories illustrated by award-winning artist Jock (*BATMAN: THE BLACK MIRROR*).

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Horror goes hand-in-hand with the concept of Batman so well; it's no wonder modern day phenom writer Scott Snyder's work on the character is so darn good. His work in other horror genres like *American Vampire*, *Severed*, *The Wake*, and *Swamp Thing* are all horror based, so putting his frame of reference with Batman on his earlier work like the *Black Mirror* and *Court of Owls* arcs have been stunning. So here we are now with Snyder writing his favorite villain of all time the Joker, who

has been away for one year since the beginning of the New 52, where in Detective Comics #1 the Joker got his face ripped off and disappeared from the DC Universe ever since. Now the Joker has made his return in Batman #13 under the penmanship of Scott Snyder and artist Greg Capullo and what do we get? One of the most horrific and insightful portrayals on the Joker and Batman in modern day story telling. *BATMAN VOL.3: DEATH OF THE FAMILY* collects issues #13 - #17. After returning to Gotham one year later from his face being cut off, the Clown Prince of Crime resurfaces in Gotham City by doing some numerous errands like taking back his face from Gotham City police department and re-doing some of his crimes he first committed. But the Joker has a plan he's been working up for that whole year; a plan to bringing Batman back to his old ways when he was a solo crime fighter, because from his adversary's perspective, the Bat-family (Nightwing, Red Robin, Red Hood, Batgirl, Robin, and even Alfred) weigh him down - and Joker believes his "real" family is his rouges, to which Joker will stop at nothing to convince Batman that his Bat-family is the cause of all that makes him weak. Beyond me giving out the general plot, I will not give out any real spoilers because there far too many details that I do not think should be given away, so I'll stay clear any specific details. Secondly, the companion book *The Joker: Death of the Family* (The New 52), is supplemental and not necessary. It does go over the various Bat-family and how Joker deals with them single-handly and does explain a certain one-page plot point and the conclusion issues of Snyders Batman...but as someone who has read those, personally, I think it dampens Snyder and Capullos main story. So if you are one who has been holding off buying the *Joker: Death of the Family* trade until Snyders volume 3, here are your choices. If you get *Batman, Vol. 3: Death of the Family* and enjoy it and want to expand upon it, or if you're a completionist and desperately want every chapter good or bad then you can give *Joker: DOTF* a try. If you read *Batman volume 3* and already reading the other Bat-titles, then skip *Joker: DOTF* altogether and get those series in their own trades when they come out. Or get *Batman volume 3* and do not pick up *Joker: DOTF*. I'm for option three, but it is up to you on your purchasing decisions. Now that is out of the way, lets talk about this book. This tale of the Joker is not quite like any version you've ever seen. It's made up of two main parts: the horror aspect and the character study of Batman and Joker. The psychological horror aspect alone is a massive deal Snyder and Capullo work at great lengths to accomplish, Joker being shown like a boogeyman and Hannibel Lector rolled into one, with Heath Ledgers Joker amped up by 10x. The opening alone sets the mood by Joker going to the Gotham Police Department and retrieving his face, openly killing police officers left and right in pitch black while Commissioner Gordon shines a mere flashlight into chaotic darkness with Jokers hi-pitched laugh is chilling and sets the mood perfectly. Panels of Batman walking around an empty and barren

mansion, to seeing Joker's face stapled on and rotting away as the pages unfold, to seeing mutilated bodies as mosaics make for a dark and disturbing book from the Joker that's never quite been this scary in a long time. It makes a sense of dread from the get-go and doesn't let up at all until the very end. And the other factor is the Joker/Batman relationship, which is the main factor here. Snyder throws every kind of metaphor, reference, and just about every nod to Batman/Joker lore is here (even Nolans Batman has a mention if you look right). Jokers reenacting his original crimes to Jokers birth to a plot that dates back all the way back from Batman #1 from 1940, to the very idea of the Joker even knowing every Bat-families identities. It's a massive mind game and as every character outside of the clown and Bat start coming apart from what is happening, the main idea is Batman and Joker understand each other far more intimately then Batman wants to admit, to knowing each other so far that you might even label them as being...lovers. Not in the physical way, but in a soul-mate like manner that they know the game and how it's played. It's all a matter of deception, mind games, and false-truths from the deep conversations Batman and Joker have that makes for a fascinating case study that I think Snyder hits on the head with great ease. Further study goes on the idea of the "death of the family" in not only the Bat-family, but the villains family as well. Snyder represents the family aspect like chess pieces, with Batman being the central piece of the chess board, which is the king; in this case, the Bat-King, and the Joker is the jester that runs the court. It gives more insight on not only the Batman/Joker angle, but the entire look on Batmans rogues gallery and how they define him. The backup stories are continuations to the main plot lines, whereas most of the time backups are usually stand-alone tales. They're well worth your time to read about, especially since they fill in some voids on Joker setting up his big "finale". Snyders writing comes out full thanks to Greg Capullo's fine art. The bleakness and horror Capullo draws on the page gives the narrative the chills throughout. The Jokers manic expressions with his rotting face, to the blackout of the GCPD, the fear and questions from the bat-family, to a horror-themed Camelot for Batman; Capullo pulls off the horror with every page. Additional art for the backups are byÂ Batman: The Black MirrorÂ artist Jock, which too fit the horror style very well. And besides the alternative covers and sketches at the end, this hardcover comes with the special first printing of this new hardcover will feature a special acetate dust jacket. I have to mention it because not only it is for first printings only, but it is a well-constructed cover that is better then the die-cut covers produced last year of Joker's skin mask that peels back to reveal the musculature of his face. It's a feature I do not think the softcover will capture, so this makes the hardcover something special and worth getting. Now as much I enjoyed this book, there are a few setbacks, I think. The first one is this is a pretty dark and horrific book which might be unsettling for some. The other is the Joker is

borderline omnipotent in all ways here. I know the Clown Prince is a clever fellow and has his share of well done plans in the past, but he does everything right to a fault and is 10-steps ahead of everyone. It is too far fetched to believe Joker has this level of control and smarts if he's had a year to plan things out. This sort of thing might take you out of the moment. And the other aspect is the ending and the fallout. Much like volume 2, Snyder ends the story arc with a sense of reactions that will either applaud the man or make you feel like he dropped the ball. Again, I do not want to go into detail for fear of spoilers, but the conclusion might make or break the whole story for you. And the fallout as well. Going hand-in-hand with the ending and by referencing the famous 1988 Batman story, *Batman: A Death in the Family*, which lived up to its title and impact on the Bat mythos for years, the "death of the family" part is something, again, might or might not sit well with readers considering the reference. It's the type of thing that doesn't quite resonate, which we'll only know about for future writers or Snyder finishing the job one day. Either way, **BATMAN VOL.3: DEATH OF THE FAMILY** is one heck of a Joker story. Talk around town has it as being one of the best Joker stories. I don't know if it will top *Killing Joke*, *Jokers Five-Way Revenger*, or *The Man Who Laughs*...but it is still a darn good character study on the Joker/Batman relationship, the utter horror factor, and the massive amounts of philosophical/Easter eggs for fans of the Bat mythos. But some might be turned off by the violence and bleakness, Joker being overly powerful, and the ending/fallout leave you cold. None the less, I'll give this book a 4 1/2 stars out of 5, but I'll round up to 5 because this is still a great horror/character piece from Snyder and Capullo that I think is worth checking out. Then again, these two have been on fire with Batman, so I think everyone knows that by now. If this is Joker's way of showing "love" for the Batman, I am interested to see his "hate" for him as well. We'll see the clock role back in the next two volumes of Batman's new DC 52 origins in *Batman Vol. 4: Zero Year-Secret City (The New 52)*.

After sitting out for a bit of the Nu52, the Joker makes his return and what a return it is. This story arc examines the relationship between batman and the Joker and also that of batman and the bat family and the joker and the bat family. We see the joker close to the recent movie adaptation, that of a true force of anarchy and chaos. But more than that this is a joker with a twisted view of reality. This is a joker who is in his opinion being close with batman. Up until now in the Joker's mind he has never had an issue with the bat family, just with Batman. Even crippling Batgirl ( before reboot) was an attack on Batman not on Barbara. This storyline changes that with the Joker deciding to go after the entire bat family and show them what happens when he goes after them for real. This is a joker who like I said, is terrifying but almost frighteningly enough, he seems in a twisted way, more human

at the same time. Albeit a sick person who you would run from in fear. With the recent Court of Owls storyline out of the way it was good to have the Joker back and unlike other stories that claim to make changes that will last forever, and then everything is the way it was before only a short time later, this story will live up to that claim. The writing is superb and the dynamic of the Joker and Batman is explored in new ways that other writers never thought of. Joker's attack on the Bat family really does change the playing field of the Bat family comics and the fall out is something I am eager to see more of. Snyder is a brilliant writer whose run on Batman will go down as one of the all time greatest if this keeps up. The art is spectacular and disturbing when it needs to be. This is one of the top storylines of the year! Plus as advertised there is special acetate dust jacket showcasing the face of The Joker which is freaking awesome. All in all this is a must have purchase for any comic fan!

This volume does an excellent job of sorting through what was a very messy event, Death of the Family. Patrick Gleason and Peter Tomasi delivered one of the most visceral and affecting chapters of the event with Damian and the Joker's heart to heart at the zoo. The scene is swimming with reds and blacks, and Gleason uses shadows to masterful effect. These issues lead perfectly into the conclusion to the event, which I personally felt was lacking, but won't hold against this volume, seeing as it is originally from a different series. The two remaining issues are the annual and issue 17. They delve deeper into the psyche of our characters, and looks at what their complex family has become. It is a touching, if not dysfunctional, type of love these characters have for each other, and Tomasi couldn't have written it any better. Nothing has changed from the last two volumes. Tomasi nails the tone of the series, and writes these characters better than anyone out there, while Gleason hits the visuals out of the park every time he puts pen to paper. Batman and Robin continues to be the masterfully written, flawlessly drawn jewel in the crown of DC's many bat series. There isn't really anything left to say other than you should absolutely own this book. An unquestionable buy.

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