



Batgirl, Vol. 4: Wanted

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Batgirl struggles to continue fighting crime after being emotionally drained by the death of her brother, James, Jr. With her relationships with Batman and her father strained, Batgirl face one of Batman's most ruthless villains, The Ventriloquist, alone.

Collecting: *Batgirl* 20-26, *Batman: The Dark Knight* 23.1: The Ventriloquist

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Gail Simone (Writer) , Fernando Pasarín (Illustrator) , Jonathan Glapion (Illustrator) , Marguerite Author : Bennett (Writer) , Daniel Sampere (Illustrator) , Derlis Santacruz (Illustrator) , Carlos Rodríguez (Illustrator)

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From Reader Review Batgirl, Vol. 4: Wanted for online ebook

Nicole says

This story arc had some positives, but the things I disliked about it outweighed them. It's about my personal tastes and not about the quality of the storytelling.

I liked Barbara/Batgirl's struggle with guilt because she thinks she was forced to kill her psycho brother James Jr. to save their mother. She feels unworthy to wear the Bat emblem and call herself a heroine, and it's good to see that kind of self-doubt in a heroic character.

Jim Gordon's determination to bring Batgirl to justice for killing James Jr.--even though he knows the depth of his son's evil--gets intense. He notes that he put his reservations about dealing with the Bats aside because they didn't kill. He tells off Batman, blaming Batman for taking on a girl apprentice instead of turning her away. The sequence in which Barbara-as-Batgirl gets her father to see reason is a good one. She's willing to share her secret identity with him...but her attempt to lessen her burden is denied because her father doesn't want to know who Batgirl really is.

However, we find out that Barbara's and Jim's suffering is basically for naught, as James Jr., in the long-standing tradition of comic book villains, is still alive. I think sometimes a villain should just stay dead.

Someplace like Gotham, there could always be a new villain to take another's place.

Barbara's friendship with her roommate, Alysia, is a bright spot in the darkness. It's also good that she's friends with Richard "Nightwing" Grayson, who shares the burden of operating under a secret identity and shares a connection to Bruce.

While it makes sense that Barbara might try to carve out some regular life for herself in terms of trying to have a boyfriend, the Ricky plotline felt less successful to me.

The last chapter, "Homestead," is a Zero Year story, essentially the origin of Batgirl. Barbara (aged about 15) discovers when Gotham is flooded and without electricity that the whole of Gotham is her home and its citizens are her family, and she becomes 'her own hero.' Nicely done.

The art is well-done. The Alex Garner covers are especially stunning. It's just that the gruesome and gory stuff was more than I cared to see.

The story thread about a very sadistic psycho named Shauna, AKA the Ventriloquist, and her fricking-creepy-sicko dummy, Ferdie, was far too disturbing for my taste. I was never clear on whether Ferdie had always been 'alive' or if somehow Shauna's psychic powers were really animating him in a split-personality kind of way. It was also difficult to tell if Shauna was born disturbed or if the favouritism shown her brother and the dismissive attitudes of others toward her pushed her over the edge. Ugh. That story was all too gross for me.

StoryTellerShannon says

The new Batgirl of 52 is no longer Oracle nor bound to a wheelchair.

In this installment she deals with a ton of personal issues and follows on the heels of a female villain with a dangerous, talking puppet.

Wonderful artwork with grittiness and shadow applications.

OVERALL GRADE: B plus.

Sesana says

Gail Simone's Batgirl has been consistently impressive, and this volume is no exception. At the end of the previous volume, Babs killed her brother, James, to prevent him from killing their mother. Something like that will really screw a girl up, you know? Much of this volume is taken up with Babs working through this the only way that somebody like her can: entirely alone. She can't exactly confide in her therapist, after all. And for completely understandable reasons, she doesn't feel like she can reach out to the rest of the Bats, even if Dick does try. Watching her journey through her grief and guilt was, for me, the best part of this book.

But not the only good part. This volume features (and, I think, introduces) the latest version of the Ventriloquist. And the best so far, in my opinion. I was never a huge fan of Scarface, and the female version introduced right before Flashpoint wasn't a favorite of mine, either. This new version keeps the female Ventriloquist with a very personal relationship with her puppet and turns the creepy up to eleven. She's more vicious, with a motivation entirely separate from organized crime. She wants to be famous, at any cost. And her puppet seems to have a life of his own, life that she seems to have somehow given him. Halfway through the book, she stars in her own issue, and it's horribly creepy. She's a great contribution to Gotham's cast of villains.

I'm very happy with this volume. A lot of good work was done here, and I'm still interested in seeing what comes next.

Anne says

4.5 stars

Also posted at [Addicted2Heroines](#)

I have such a girl-crush on Gail Simone!

And if DC ever decides to take her unwillingly off of this title, I have no doubt I would boycott the bastards.

This volume focuses on two different stories that crisscross and intersect very well, in my opinion.

First, we get an introduction to the new (*and I think vastly improved*) Ventriloquist.

Second, we see the fallout from the last volume, Batgirl: Death of the Family. Mainly, that Barbara isn't sure she can keep playing the role of Batgirl after what happened.

Warning: Potential Death of the Family Spoilers Ahead!

For those of you who don't remember the original Ventriloquist...

Join the fucking club.

Nobody remembers him very well, because he's a D-list villain whose only distinction is being less popular than the Mad Hatter.

At any rate, from what I *do* remember of him, he was a tiny little guy with a puppet. And the puppet was a mobster.

Yep. Real Scary.

Now a few years back, they came out with a female version of the character, which seemed to be a bit of an improvement...but in the end, she was still just a crazy chick with a semi-magical marionette.

Enter the new Ventriloquist!

We get introduced to Shauna Belzer when she was a child, being tormented by bullies at a birthday party. As fate would have it, she finds Scarface (*the above mentioned puppet*) during the backyard celebration. And once Scarface is added into the mix, the body count really starts piling up. Now, would Shauna have been a psychopath without the intervention of the dummy?

Maybe.

Probably.

We later find out she had a twin, and both of them were evidently vying for a spot in the fabulous world of Child Stardom.

I have to ask why anyone would think that allowing your child to become part of the Hollywood churn-and-burn is a good idea? If they don't get famous, you might be ok. But if they do, then what?! How many of the BIG child stars make it out of that without serious damage? I mean, the Epic Fails are all over the news! How do you NOT see that?!

Personally, I do not want to have to worry whether or not a video of my kid pooping on a stripper...or some such nonsense...will go viral.

So Shauna is Miley Cyrus with a talking doll.

Imagine, if you can, an even *creepier* version of Wrecking Ball...

At this point, Barbara has hit a low point, and is really starting to doubt herself. For one thing, Jim Gordon is out for blood, after witnessing Batgirl (*supposedly*) kill his son, James.

And James needed killin'!

Still, as evil as James was, I can understand Jim's feelings. After all, you can't stop loving your kid, just because they turned out to be a sociopathic serial killer!

Dear Baby Jesus,

Please don't let any of my kids grow up to be deranged murderer.

Also, peace on earth...starving countries...global warming...etc..

Amen

In a effort to keep her family intact, she tries to hang up her cape and try for a normal life. Of course, that's not gonna happen. Now, those of you who read Batgirl: Knightfall Descends might remember the young punk that she saved, who ended up losing his leg to Knightfall's trap. Well, over the course of the last book, he grew into an *upstandingish* young man, with a major crush on Batgirl. At first it didn't seem to be heading anywhere, but Babs took a shine to the fella, and managed to arrange to bump into him without the suit on.

Awww...

His brother is still in trouble with a gang, though, and it plays heavily into the overall ending of the story. I don't want to spoil too much, but her relationship with this guy ends up being the deciding factor in whether or not she lets her guilt, and Papa Gordon's grief and anger, take her out of the game.

Between date nite, daddy issues, and a totally demented villain, this was an incredibly interesting addition to the new chronicles of Batgirl!

My only complaint (*and it's NOT a new one*) is that I'm getting a little sick of all the gory stuff. Let's tone down the eyeballs hanging out of sockets, the rotting corpses, and the victims who've been flayed alive. I'm a bit done seeing dead people posed in family portraits, m'kay?

Find a happy medium, DC!

Thank you NetGalley!

Sorina says

[And as we know from Vol. 3 Barbara finally snaps and kills her brother. (hide spoiler)]

Jayson says

(B+) 77% | Good

Notes: Flat and mushy, it's an unabating primal scream: prone to punching out of problems, and ill with chronic anticlimax.

Crystal Starr Light says

Bullet Review:

It's so nice to pick up a comic and have almost every single issue be amazing. This is Batgirl. Well - minus the final issue of this volume. Didn't care for the art or the story - must be some what if story? No clue, don't wanna read a million other comics to find out either.

Basia says

BE YOUR OWN DAMN HERO ?

Khurram says

Another great volume to a great series. Last volume Batgirl crossed the line in killing her sadist of a brother James Gordon Jr. Not only must she deal with her own guilt but the wrath of her father Commissioner James Gordon. Yes he knows what his son was, but he was still his son. As penance Barbara give up the Batgirl costume and realises being Barbara Gordon is not really so bad. However Barbara is not the kind of person to take \$hit from anyone no matter what clothes she wears. With the appearance of the new Ventriloquist (a women psychotic enough to be Jokers spoiled little sister), and people she loves and cares about in trouble. Can Barbara really stop being Batgirl?

This is my one criticism of this series. It is the same as people said about Daredevil. How can anyone who has met both Barbara and Batgirl not know that they are the same person? With her red hair her identity is more obvious than Nightwing and the Robins. We are given a not so satisfactory answer from the commissioner, but really? That is just a small criticism, but this is one of the best of the Bat books. I really like that fact that Barbara gets to show her heroics in and out of costume especially in the year Zero tie in issue. I like the fact the extra twist they create between father and daughter aside from the one I already mentioned.

James DeSantis says

This was a solid followup. Volume 3 was better but some things I did love in here. This is broken into two parts. First half revolves around a crazy puppet master chick with a doll who can, you guessed it, talk and kill people. Sounds dumb right? Actually it's the best part. Super exciting and fun and the villain is creepy as fuck and perverted so makes it entertaining. Then we have the second half where Knightfall go after Gordan cause he knows too much. Inbetween we got some fun little moments with Ricky and Bab going on a date and then something horrible happening. It's pretty full and a lot works, but not all.

What I liked: I enjoy Ricky and Babs. I think we get to see outside of the Batgirl suit and that's always a plus for character growth. I also really enjoyed the doll, as he was just super creepy, and his one liners and such were funny as heck. I enjoyed Batgirl not getting over the events of the last volume. What he had to go through with the Joker and then her brother was entertaining and tough. So Glad it's taking the time to show that.

What I didn't like: Knightfall or whatever their name is isn't all that interesting. Infact I find them really over the top and boring. I also didn't like how Gordan was reacting. I get his hatred for batgirl up to a point. He knew his son was a piece of shit, and I get parents love their kids that much, but after the history of his son and then Batgirl I just wasn't buying it.

Still a solid volume for Gail's run. I enjoyed this tiny bit more than 2 but not as much as 3. On to volume 5, the final one, and hope it ends strong!

Gavin says

OK well, this started off a little ho-hum for me, but then Gail Simone kicked in, and I had a real female hero to read about, with real issues, not the usual crap that writers seem to think 'girls' do. I let this one simmer a bit since I read it (about 10 days ago), and yes, I think I'll still have to support 4+ stars. Never has Batgirl felt so relevant to me or to DC at large.

Then I read this: <http://io9.com/batgirls-new-uniform-m...>

Not only is Gail Simone done, but they are revamping...to make Batgirl like 12 yrs old. UGH. BOO! DC you always go fuck up the New 52 ones that are working, when there are so few of them...silly fools.

Well either way, this is serious, grown up mature reading (not tits and ass or swear words) but real issues. Barbara gives up being Batgirl? Has to face down her father, Commissioner Gordon? Does she reveal herself?

Her family is in tatters, and what will happen to her new love interest (Ricky - who I actually think was pretty interesting) and then we're reminded of the past with good ole' Dick Grayson. (wHo I also see is being rebooted into a superspy type dude?).

This is a strong volume for sure, a great follow up to DoTF. Here's a hint: The Commish batslaps Batman!!! Perhaps even deservedly so...

Chelsea says

Babs is having a terrible time.

I didn't enjoy this one as much as the first 2. Probably because I felt like the Ventriloquist villain dragged this down a bit.

This is the aftermath of Babs' fight with her brother James in the last volume. I didn't think he was really dead because this is a comic book. She feels guilty and Gordon is on the warpath for Batgirl. For an interesting concept like that, we don't get as much on it as I would have thought. I'm used to Gordon being a big part of Batgirl's stories but I was surprised by how much we got outside of him in this book.

We get Babs trying to move on and she tries to retire from being Batgirl. She feels unworthy to wear the Bat symbol and she even cuts it out of her uniform. That was really interesting.

I loved Babs and Ricky together and what happens with that made me really sad. Gordon's involvement just made it worse. Babs can't enjoy anything, can she?

I loved seeing Alyria and Bab's friendship. The fight scenes were beautifully drawn, as usual. I wish I enjoyed this more.

Clarissa says

Babs just can't catch a break!

This volume deals with the aftermath of her fight with her brother, James, and how she copes with it. Barbara decides to retire her cape, feeling she is no longer worthy of wearing the bat signal.

Due to recent events, and later events, Babs' relationship with her father is estranged. Jim is usually a big part of Batgirl stories but it was interesting to see his love for Barbara and disdain for Batgirl. His reluctance to learn her true identity surprised me for some reason. It shouldn't have but he was just so adamant about not knowing who was under the cowl.

The ventriloquist plot seemed to drag on and was really creepy. Must you be so crass, Shauna and Ferdie? Just plain weird.

I loved Babs and Ricky and it broke my heart to see him get hurt. Alyria's and Babs friendship is great. Both of these characters worked as a support system for Barbara.

Ricky Ganci says

Gail Simone is writing the best Batbook right now--that has probably been true since the beginning of New 52, but Snyder really gave Batman a long-needed and refreshing overhaul with the Court of Owls, which I

still consider the best pure "Gotham City" story in the setting's history. But when it comes to mixing the comic medium with the psychology of the non-superpowered folk, Gail Simone keeps the story of the renewed Barbara Gordon at the top of the class in terms of plotting, quality, and self-awareness.

We get to revisit some of the earlier plots in *Wanted*, as it really brings together the "Knightfall" storyline with that of James, Jr., and things in Cherry Hill get even messier for Babs. There's a lot of questioning and residual guilt after the events at the docks, and Simone takes Barbara through an identity crisis that succeeds not only as a good story in its own right, but avoids simply being a rehash of the inner struggle that Simone plots for Babs in *The Darkest Reflection*.

This volume is thoughtful in a different way than Vol. 1, neither so similar to the crisis of self that Barbara experiences there, nor so different as to bail on the extraordinary work that Simone has done in the first 19 issues of her run. The range of storytelling options that she has isn't any narrower than Snyder has with Batman, but she somehow keeps the circle small and inclusive even as the story shows remarkable and suspenseful development. *Wanted* is a collection of Simone's best work on *Batgirl*, and even as it sort of does require familiarity with the majority of the previous year's arcs, it's an outstanding sample of some of DC's finest offerings from 2014.

Roman Colombo says

Gail Simone's *Batgirl* continues to be an amazingly well-written book. Yes, it is dark--it is very dark in this case, but Barbara Gordon is stronger than darkness. She might be going through the gauntlet, but Simone makes every moment meaningful and worth it. I'm just sad there's only one more volume from her.
