



Superman: Action Comics, Volume 3: At the End of Days

Grant Morrison (Writer) , Rags Morales (Artist) , Brad Walker (Artist) , Travel Foreman (Artist) , Sholly Fisch (Writer) , Chris Sprouse (Artist)

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The New York Times best-selling creative team Grant Morrison and Rags Morales' landmark run on *Action Comics* ends here in *Superman: Action Comics, Volume 3: At the End of Days*!

Five years ago, Clark Kent moved to Metropolis. Alone but hopeful, he donned a simple t-shirt laden with a giant S, beginning the career of one of the greatest heroes this--or any other--world has seen. Superman has grown with the city around him, and though he is feared by the public, there's no doubt they need him to protect them from this universe's gravest threats. But when the multiverse sends it's deadliest villains against the Man of Steel, can even he turn them back?

Collecting: *Action Comics* 13-18

Superman: Action Comics, Volume 3: At the End of Days Details

Date : Published December 17th 2013 by DC Comics

ISBN : 9781401242329

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Format : Hardcover 224 pages

Genre : Sequential Art, Comics, Graphic Novels, Dc Comics, Superman, Superheroes, Comic Book

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Download and Read Free Online Superman: Action Comics, Volume 3: At the End of Days Grant Morrison (Writer) , Rags Morales (Artist) , Brad Walker (Artist) , Travel Foreman (Artist) , Sholly Fisch (Writer) , Chris Sprouse (Artist)

From Reader Review Superman: Action Comics, Volume 3: At the End of Days for online ebook

Sam Quixote says

The cover gives you a very good idea of what to expect from the book with bits and pieces that are clearly fragments making up a more-or-less coherent whole. That's basically what reading the final volume of Grant Morrison's Action Comics series feels like.

If you know anything about Grant Morrison, you'll know he has a bit of a reputation for mixing in avant-garde, experimental storytelling techniques into his comics that continually divides readers – some hate being confused at all when reading and some enjoy the twists and turns. Arguably the most suitable characters in the DCU for Morrison to write are the 5th Dimension Imps, like Mister Mxyztlk, which is why Action Comics Vol 3: At the End of Days is one of the best suited mainstream Morrison books ever because it's all about those characters - but it's also why the book disappoints.

Simply: I don't care about Mister Mxyztlk. I get that he's an interesting oddball of a character who's not your usual Superman villain in that he's not super-strong with a plot likely to end with a dull beat-em-up fight scene, and that's fine; but to put him and another imp, Vyndktvx, as, not just the main villains of this book, but the main reason behind everything in Morrison's Action Comics run... it doesn't feel epic, it feels very small and underwhelming. Basically this whole series is about a feud between the two imps and Superman is their battleground.

The way the book is structured is really smart but super frustrating to read. The 5th Dimension Imps distort reality so time no longer becomes linear, events that happened become undone, dead characters momentarily come back to life, and characters from other dimensions show up in our dimension – it's a very disorienting experience and Morrison reflects Superman's feelings of confusion in the book's structure with panels and events skewing every which way, so the reader feels disoriented as well.

It's typical of Morrison's brilliance that he would take this creative and enormously imaginative approach – but it's hell to read! I had to keep going back and re-reading pages just to figure out how we made it to certain scenes, even going back to the previous two volumes to see how the series as a whole synced up. Look – I love the creativity here but (and I know how dim and unadventurous this makes me sound in the face of Morrison's genius) when I pick up a comic, I prefer to read a comic, not a piece of performance art and/or abstract art project that is disguised as a comic but is really something else. I appreciate the effort but it made the book very easy to put down.

Which isn't to say the book is a wash – there's lots of great stuff outside of the arty framework. The opening story of Superman going into the Phantom Zone to get back Krypto, his dog, was my favourite part of the book. I think Krypto's a great character and gives Superman this relatable quality to readers everywhere as a pet owner, but it's also a great Superman Halloween story with ghosts!

Sholly Fisch and Chris Sprouse deserve a big mention for their contributions to this series. They did the backups to these issues and I found myself enjoying Fisch's stories more than Morrison's, in part. I mean, Neil Derasse Tyson meets Superman in this book!!! This wonderful story sees Superman on his annual NASA visit to watch a planet 27 light years away – Krypton – before it exploded. The distance to Earth means the images we get from our satellites show it still there prior to explosion.

And, in keeping with the time-travel weirdness in this book, present-Clark goes back in time to the past for a brief chat with Jonathan Kent in a very sweet story. I wish Sprouse had drawn the whole book as I'm not a big fan of Rags Morales' work which is just ok in this book – fine for what it is, but nothing exceptional, though seeing Lion-Head Superman and Ant-Head Superman was a funny surprise! I do miss t-shirt and jeans Superman from the first volume whose look was one of the highlights of this series.

I can't fault Morrison's ambitious, complex storytelling – I wish more writers were like Morrison, but then his unique talent is what makes him so darn special, right? – but I have to be honest as well and, while I see what he's doing (and I'm probably missing a whole lot more too), it was so disjointed and manic so often that I had no problem setting the book down and picking up something else. I got through this, and it's got a great ending, but for long stretches of the book I found myself not caring what was happening. I wouldn't say I was bored because, if nothing else, Morrison is never boring, but I wasn't as engaged as I usually am with his work with this book – still, it was an interesting finale to an uneven but above-average Superman series. 3.5 stars.

Sans says

Oy gevalt.

Anne says

*Good...Bad...Decent...Wacky...Huh?...Decent...Bad...
Um...WTF?...Good...*

Yep. It's Grant! And I can't work up any righteous anger over this crazy mess.

Some of it is really good, like the opening story about Superman and Krypto.

Awww! A boy and his dog! Gets me every time...

But then it degenerates into the classic insanity that Morrison is known for. And even some of *those* stories are pretty good, even if they don't always make sense.

Morales art is a high point, so at least your eyeballs are going to have a good time. Your brain, however? Well, that all depends on your own personal Trippy-Tolerance.

It's Morrison writing MXYZPTLK, so there's really no way to avoid a headache. Sometimes, you've just gotta take the bad to get to the good.

Oh, and there's also quite a bit of time travel.

Recommended for fans of Uncle Grant, Superman, and dogs.

P.S. See, Gavin? You said the only book that Sam and I agreed on was Superman: Secret Identity. You can now add a second book to that list. Ta-da!

Artemy says

A wonderful, heartfelt finale to Morrison's run on Action Comics. Morrison channels both his own signature kind of crazy, and the crazy that is the inherent part of Superman's mythology, like the fifth dimension, Mr. Mxyzptlk, Superman Red and Blue, the multiverse and so much more. It's impossible to comprehend everything he was going for with this volume, but if you're at least somewhat familiar with Superman's deeper lore, it's a lot of fun. Once again, Sholly Fisch's backups are outstanding and worth reading just as much as the main issues — full of heart, emotion and sentimentality, these stories show a lot of love for the character. That, and you get to see Superman team up with Neil DeGrasse Tyson, which is cool! Overall, while not the most accessible, this is still an excellent volume and a great conclusion to this run.

Zack! Empire says

Unreadable.

Jesse A says

Man, I think I was wrong about this series. This was a much, much better entry. Someone still needs to give Morrison some ADHD medicine but it was very good. One crazy positive is that this is the first time I didn't detest Krypto. Color me surprised.

James DeSantis says

So much rage after reading whatever the fuck this garbage of a volume was. It again, had one really solid first issue but then went to complete shit. Morrison gives little fucks how confusing, LCD, mind-numbing stupid his stories get. He feeds off this confusing mix of horseshit. I never understood why people love this guy, because not a single thing I read from him has been "Great" ever. Good? Sure. Great? Hell no.

This volume is even more confusing than the past, the villain is a imp, and he's over the top silly once more and it's so confusing on how Superman even gets out of the Phantom zone. The backup fighters and the...oh screw it. Why waste my time? Fuck this book.

Anthony says

This is the best volume of the 3 in Grant Morrisons Action Comics run. 4 stars is probably a little over generous, since the last couple of issues don't come together all that well, but there's some really cool and nice moments in this volume.

The high point is the first part, which is focuses on the phantom zone and Superman trying to free Krypto from it. It's a nice story about a guy and his dog with some great art by Travel Foreman. There's also some flashbacks throughout the run, which were drawn by Brad Walker, that focus on Clark in smallville and his

prom night with Lana. It's ground that's been covered before, but this is the New 52 version of Clarks last few years in smallville and him losing his parents.

But then in the final two issues, Morrison does what he tends to do and brings it all together to try and wrap everything up. I'm sure people who read more closely will love it, while some will find it confusing. I think if the run itself had been stronger, I'd be more lenient on the ending.

I think people probably approached Morrisons Action Comics expecting a lot, given that All Star Superman is one of the best Superman books ever written and this was supposed to be the title introducing Superman into a new era. But it left me a little confused and disappointed. It also needed a better artist on regular duties, because it's when Rags Morales isn't on art that it's at its best.

Shannon says

[(hide spoiler)]

Mouse says

Ugh...Why? Why do people love Grant Morrison? It's one of those things I just don't get? Actually I will say that I did enjoy hearing him talk on Kevin Smiths 'Fatman on Batman', but this...is a train wreck! Holy moley this was hard on the eyes, ears, and most of all...the brain! What part of any of this makes sense?

The first story Superman got trapped in the Phantom Zone, which is a great story in itself but he got out in one issue basically and it's not quite clear how he did it? Krypto the Ghost Dog, an evil Kryptonian mad scientist mummy whose head is on fire like Ghost Rider, a metal gauntlet? WTF?

The second story involves metal toothed Angels on Mars attacking people and Superman. This actually sounds pretty cool when you type it, but let me tell you...it was a hot mess!

After those two stories this book just went out the window and I cannot even begin to tell you what was happening? Krypto the Ghost Dog returned, a Russian Superman Doomsday showed up, a bunch of Imps, some alternate Justice League, and Dr Tyson???

The art was good....but nothing else was!

Kyle says

Every time I read a Morrison title, I feel the need to come up a new simile to describe his writing. So...

Remember those bright red, hard rubber balls that would bounce twice as high as how hard you threw it? Picture yourself in a concrete room after you have thrown that red ball as hard as you can so that it continues to ricochet dozens of times around the room. Now, if you were to use your eyes to attempt to follow the path of that ball as it bounces speedily around the room..... well, that is a similar experience to reading a Grant Morrison story. You get an idea of the trajectory of things.... but you can never figure out exactly where the point of contact is. Also, you can never be sure that it won't smack you in the face until after it has smacked

you in the face.

I'm a huge Legionnaires fan, so I give this collection a full extra star for giving us a glimpse into the future of the LSH, but the rest of the story was a bit of a let down. A lot of 5th dimension rambling that reads more like heady, pseudo-scientific quote-philosophy-unquote.

Mind you, one of the things I do like about Morrison is how he brings fan favourite, sometimes forgotten, peripheral characters into the spotlight, like he does with Mxyzptlk in this story arc. Because of that, I am always intrigued to see what he will come up with next. So, I can't admit to being a fan of Morrison, but I will admit to respecting his unique approach to storytelling, no matter how little enjoyment I derive from it.

3/5

Emmett Spain says

I can see why this volume would annoy people. Taken on its own, it's more of that good old Morrison wackiness, including fifth dimensional pixies, non-linear narrative, and a "throw my ideas up against a wall and watch them slide off" approach to storytelling. But here is the secret to loving this trade:

Read all 3 trades in Morrison's New 52 run in one session.

It's a fair whack of time to give up, but it's worth it. You see, Morrison plans out his runs in advance (meticulously so, I believe), so you can only really appreciate his work if you take it as a complete volume. Things that really did piss me off in Volume 1 (Nimrod the Hunter is hired to shoot Superman, and then somehow it's already happened and Superman didn't notice that he was shot in the head???) are explained in Volume 3. It's all about the warping effect a particular entity is having on time, that is causing Superman (and the reader) to experience certain events (past, present, and future) out of sequence. It's confusing. It's maddening. It requires a big investment and tremendous patience on behalf of the reader.

And it's brilliant.

It's fair of all Morrison's work to say "this isn't for everyone". He's too divisive and stylistically unique to please everyone. But this is a work of genius, in my humble opinion. Superman is a sympathetic and heroic figure here--it's so funny to me that a writer noted for his convoluted approach to narrative should convey such a clear-eyed look at what makes this character great.

Taken as a complete volume, this is a fantastic addition to the Superman pantheon. I admit that volumes one and two annoyed me as much as I enjoyed them, and have stated as much in previous reviews--but having decided to read all 3 volumes at a run when I bought Volume 3, I realised that Grant had a plan all along, and it plays out in the convoluted, complicated, exciting, and wonderful way that only Grant seems to be able produce.

But taken on its own? Yeah, I could see why it would annoy the heck out of you.

Gavin says

If you've read my review of Vol. 2, well, this is even more all over the place; literally and figuratively. The reveal is that Mr. Mxyzptlk is in human form, in a coma, married to Clark Kent's landlady (who revealed herself in Vol. 2) and they're trying to fight off Vyndktvk (Vindictive? as in: having or showing a strong or unreasoning desire for revenge.) PERFECT name for a bad guy from the 5th Dimension. That part just made me smile once I actually tried to say his name out loud.

Ya, confused yet? Me too. Since he's 5D, he's been setting up attacks on Superman for all his life, past, present, and future. You also find out that he's been the mysterious figure in the earlier volumes, with brown hair and glasses. He can attack Superman anywhere, anytime, and is doing so because the only person who ever stopped him before was Jor-El, Superman's father. But it was impossible to stop him, so...Superman must do the impossible. (This seems to be the gist of the whole book, that Superman CAN do the impossible, and we need to remember that - I agree with Grant Morrison, that our Superman needs to be smart to go with his brains, which many people have forgot over time.)

As for specifics, shit gets weird. So that's why I try to highlight the good intellectual/philosophical focuses of Morrison's work before I tell you how utterly batshit it gets at points lol.

YE BE SEEING MILD SPOILERS BELOW...but I don't think it will ruin it.

Superman gets stuck in the Phantom Zone, by a dude Jor-El sent there (the first one actually) and who's now escaped. There, he runs into Krypto, and a Stranger. A Stranger in the Phantom Zone....a...wait for it...Phantom...Stranger! Not THE Phantom Stranger? Why yes, once he gets his sweet hat (Clothes make the man as he says). That was actually cool. Then he gives Superman the clues he needs to get out.

A Mars mission is attacked by a multitude of Angels...and they all seem to die, as Superman cannot save them...

Smallville, Lana and Clark at prom, cops arrive to tell him...someone is dead.

Current/just future world; a posse of Kryptonite powered people? I think...go after Superman and hunt him down.

His landlady (princess of the 5th Dimension and love of Mystic Mister Triple X) explains what the hell is going on, just in time to seemingly bite it.

The 31st Century, Legion of Super-Heroes has to figure out a way to break into the last time machine, where they plan to go back in time to figure out how to (a) stop their future from happening, and (b) save Superman, and (c) look epic.

Krypto kicks the shit out of people trying to hurt Supes. (That's why I'm a DOG person! Super Cat would probably be busy asking to haz cheezburger.)

Remember Vol. 2 Calvin Ellis? The Baddie that showed up in his world? Well, the baddie arrives in our world thanks to Lex Luthor.

Superman gets ass handed to him by evil Superman Robot, who turns out to be Doomsday as well...only to

be saved by...Lex Luthor in a Lex suit: ONLY I GET TO KILL SUPERMAN!!!!

Then, the Comet Crew (remember Captain Adam Blake and his team of wacky super-brained galactic kiddie kidnappers? Me either...lol jokes.) return to help out, along with 6 year old Susie, Lois' niece, who now has the touch of her badass powers too.

Then, what was predicted to happen in Vol 2. ends up happening...by the way the Robot Doomsday also now seems to be Vyndktvx as well...so yay? All is good? Maybe?

Superman has done the IMPOSSIBLE!

Best story is about Krypto following Clark around in his Phantom Zone form. Then there's some more random shit at the end: JL fighting monsters, then Supes has to go meet Neil DeGrasse Tyson to look at Krypton in a telescope; we see about the Imps on Earth, we see some foreshadowing for the Legion of Super-Heroes, and we get a touching goodbye between time travelling Clark and Jonathan Kent.

Whew. Thus endeth the Grant Morrison Action Comics Superman Reboot. Not Epic, but not boring either. If you made it this far, congrats, you win...nothing but the satisfaction of having finished!

Of the 2, I'd recommend Vol. 2 more than 3, because it's...umm...more grounded in ridiculous as opposed to insane?

Either way, very creative man, Mr. Morrison. But lots of drugs.

Rick Hunter says

I'm not even really sure of where to start with this review. I guess I have to go back to the end of volume 2. That book ends with Superman's landlady telling him she's a being from the 5th dimension and she's married to Mr. Mxyzptlk. I expected this volume to pick up there, but what we get in issue #13, the first in this volume, is a story that reunites Superman with his dog Krypto, has Superman getting trapped in the Negative Zone because of some villain I've never heard of, and the Phantom Stranger is there for some reason. The story in this issue should have taken at least 3-4 issues to resolve, but writer Grant Morrison has Superman resolve everything in one issue and still have enough room in the issue for a backup story. It feels like at least 50% of this story got left in Mr. Morrison's head and never put down on paper.

So, we get back to Superman and his landlady being married to Mr. Mxyzptlk in this issue right? Wrong. We get a story about Superman going to Mars and helping out some Earth scientists that are being attacked by the Metalek robots things from one of the previous volumes. The Metaleks are still on the run from the beings that destroyed their home world years ago. This seems like a repeat of an earlier issue. It is, but it's on Mars now. That makes it different, right? Wrong. This issue also seems to be lacking information and is also something that needed to be told over multiple issues in a longer arc.

In issue #15, things get really screwy. Clark is on his Senior Prom date with Lana Lang, Superman is in the present talking to his landlady again, finally!!!!, and she's telling him about how she met Mr. Mxyzptlk in the 5th Dimension and how Vyndktvx came to have a grudge against him, and Superman is also in the future fighting a team of Supervillians. Sound confusing to you? It does to me too. Along with how confusing the story is, you also have to deal with the crazy ass names that the people in the 5th Dimension have. Each person was named by Grant Morrison throwing a cat up into the air and letting the cat type out the name as it

landed on his keyboard. Then we have 3 of the members of the supervillain team in the future that each have a power based on a color of Kryptonite. One guy is green. One is blue. The woman is red. Not only does the color of Kryptonite they represent change the color of their skin, but it changes their thought bubbles to match. Cool? Actually, yeah, but that's about the only thing in that part of the story that makes any sense. The future part of the story seems like 75-80% percent of it is missing. Around this point, I had to take a break from the book for a couple of hours because it was giving me a headache.

Issues #16-18 bring us the conclusion of Morrison's run on this series. Thank God. The issues see Superman fighting a version of Doomsday and a bunch of other baddies and he gets some help from Krypto, Lois, Jimmy Olsen, The Legion of Superheroes, some other heroes that I have absolutely no idea who they are, and even a couple of normal people on the street. Lex Luthor even gets involved in the action. Mr. Mxyzptlk is in a coma. Vyndktvk is jumping all through time at once waging war in each at exactly the same time with help from numerous people. The Legion of Superheroes are jumping through time to try to out maneuver him. There is way too much going on in these issues, with way too much information left out to be told in such a non-linear fashion.

The only way I can even think of to explain how mixed up this story is would be to tell you to take the movie Pulp Fiction, which is already told out of order, and cut the film into pieces separating the Bruce Willis part of the story off to the side by itself. Do the same for the Travolta/Jackson part at the beginning. The Travolta/Thurman part and put in its pile. Do the same for each of the other parts. After you have each pile separated, cut the film of in each pile into random size pieces. Throw at least 25% of each pile into the trash. Now take random 30 second clips from every other Tarantino movie and make another pile with them. Mix all the piles together. Grab one piece of film from the mixed pile and start taping the pieces of together until it is one long piece again. Respool it on the reel and show that version to someone that has never seen Pulp Fiction before. When the movie is over with, get that person to write a review of the film. When you read that review, you'll understand how I felt writing this one. Morrison's writing gets 1 star.

On to the art. Travel Foreman provided the art for issue #13. It was the worst in the book. 2 stars for him.

Rags Morales turned out some really good art for #14. All of his characters look pretty good, but not great. For the rest of the issues he shares art duty with Brad Walker. The latter draws the best art in the book. Walker also draws the backup story in issue #13. That makes the issue drawn by Morales alone the only issue that Walker didn't have a hand in. Putting him on this book was a good thing. Morales and Walker's issues feature a really great looking Krypto and Saturn Woman. The landlady is also drawn well. The other standout work is the stuff that takes place in the 5th Dimension. Everything there looks a little bit different, even the people. Morales gets 3.5 stars for his solo issue. Him and Walker get 4 stars for their combined efforts.

Chris Sprouse draws the backup stories in issues #14-18. He has the 2nd best art in the book. It is almost equal to the art of Walker. Ma and Pa are standouts. Saturn Woman and a couple of the other Legion members look great too. 4 stars for him.

The best parts of this book are the fabulous little backup stories written by Sholly Fisch. The first volume has a story about Krypto. Through the rest of the issues we get stories about Neil Degraisi Tyson allowing Superman to use Earth's telescopes to see where Krypton was, Mr. Mxyzptlk and his lady love's life together, The Legion of Superheroes, Ma and Pa Kent, and some random kid at the Superman museum in the future. The Krypto and Kent ones were really touching and extremely well executed. All were good, but those 2 were great. For those 2 stories alone Fisch gets 5 stars.

The art scores averaged out to 3.64 stars which I rounded to 3.5 stars. The 2 writing score averaged out to 3 stars. The 3.5 star art score and 3 star writing score averaged to 3.25 stars overall. I rounded that down to 3 stars for this site. If not for really good art and some impressive backup story by Sholly Fisch, this volume would have scored much lower. I usually enjoy Morrison's writing. He's a smart guy, but in this case, I think he was too smart for his own good. Or for ours.

Ryan says

I find Morrison's superhero stuff is always kind of an odd duck - he gets tonnes of credit for how "crazy" and "original" his ideas are, but what he really does is take old ideas, dust them off, and give them a psychedelic coat of paint. The result is still good stuff - not only here, but in his X-Men, for example - but I usually end up finding his superhero work lacklustre compared to the rest of his material.

The problem with that here is that the ideas he's dusting off are all fairly silly - I've never been a fan of 5th dimensional imps, or Krypto, or the Superman Revenge Squad - and while he makes them tolerable, they're still not ideas I can get excited about.

To be honest the stuff that I found most emotionally rewarding were the Sholly Fisch short stories included at the end of the book. Neil Degrasse Tyson training telescopes on the light from Rao at the exact moment Krypton exploded was a fantastic moment.
