



Batman, Volume 4: The War of Jokes and Riddles

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Early in Batman's career, the Joker and the Riddler would seemingly be natural allies. But each man determined that he and he alone must be the one to kill the Bat...and either would sooner burn down Gotham than be beaten to the punch line.

Untold until now, one of the darkest chapters in Batman's history sees all of Gotham's villains choosing sides in a battle of wits that soon turns into a full-blown war—complete with civilian casualties. In the War of Jokes and Riddles, only one side can claim victory...but the scars it leaves will shape Batman's future as he makes the most important decision of his life.

From the critically acclaimed, best-selling creative team of Tom King (GRAYSON, The Vision) and Mikel Janin (JUSTICE LEAGUE DARK), the epic graphic tale BATMAN: THE WAR OF JOKES AND RIDDLES has quickly embedded itself as one of the great stories in the Dark Knight's mythology. Collects issues #25-32.

Batman, Volume 4: The War of Jokes and Riddles Details

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From Reader Review Batman, Volume 4: The War of Jokes and Riddles for online ebook

Stewart Tame says

Most of this volume is an extended flashback. There's a framing sequence set in the present where Bruce is telling Selina about a pivotal adventure from early in his career, what pushed him to the edge, what stopped him from going over, and how the Joker regained his sense of humor.

It's very well-written, some of the best I've ever seen from Tom King. Characterizations are well-nigh perfect, and he even manages to write Kite-Man in a way that stays true to his roots, but turns him from something of a joke into a deeply sympathetic character. I do question somewhat the Riddler's boasting about the subtlety of his planning towards the end. It seems more like someone taking credit for things that happened on their own. Yes, this version of him is all about the subtle plans, but I think he's reaching just a bit ...

Also in this volume, Selina responds to the proposal, though if you've been even halfway paying attention to news from the world of comics, you knew about that already ...

Not just this volume, but the entirety of King's run on Batman is highly recommended!

Logan says

Pretty good! So The War of Jokes and Riddles has been a pretty good batman arc that's been happening low key while Snyder is doing his METAL story. I think overall I liked this one! So the story is Batman telling Catwoman the story of The War of Jokes and Riddles, which is basically in the same vein as The Long Halloween I feel, where it's this year long story, with Batman's entire rogues gallery. In the story, Joker cannot laugh, he doesn't find anything funny anymore; then a war breaks out between him and The Riddler, half the villains flock to Joker's side, the other to Riddler's and thus the war begins with Batman caught in the middle. The story I will admit can be odd at times, with some really weird throwaway issues. It's also odd to see a story where Joker has a straight face the entire time, although I'll give King the points for the creativity, there not many stories where you can say that happens. Riddler was bit annoying though, his design is weird where he walks around with his hair gelled back, his shirt always open with this six pack showing like a jack ass! However at least Riddler's dialogue is short and to the point, unlike if Snyder wrote this and each of his speech bubbles would be an entire essay worth of dialogue; so I think overall King writes him better.

Also we see a spectacular return of Kite-Man, Hell yeah! No jokes though, the issues that focus more on Kite-Man are actually the best issues I felt, and I don't think anyone has ever given Kite-Man such a meaningful arc like King has here. Kite-Man although not my favourite villain or anything, definitely was a stand out here!

Also in the background there's the BIG arc with Catwoman and Batman which I actually thought was pretty sweet and I think King has brought a sweet turn in Batman's and Catwoman's relationship.

But overall this was a pretty well told story, as much as there were some throwaway issues, this book made me laugh quite a bit, and I think King is taking Batman comics in an interesting direction. The Conclusion to

this story was also very good!

Richard says

FINALLY! Finally, a solid, well-done solo Rebirth Batman story! I was not a fan of the first three volumes in this series, but this one really made up for it. Tom King has had some great ideas in this series but until now, they've all been fumbled by messy storytelling. This one was concise and compelling, I'd love to see them make a movie out of it!

Bruce has recently proposed to Catwoman but before she answers, in an effort for her to really know the man he is, he wants to confess during a bout of pillow talk about actions he took a year after becoming Batman, in a crisis known as the War of Jokes and Riddles, a violent turf war between The Joker and The Riddler that shook Gotham to its core. This is that story.

Most Batman fans have compared Joker and Riddler, because they seem so similar at first glance. But this book really focused on why the two are so fundamentally different. A joke is surprise and chaos, while a riddle is in essence about order and logic. And I loved King's exploration of this dichotomy.

Unlike the other volumes in this run, this was really interesting and always kept my attention, whether it was Tom King's amazing interpretation of the Riddler that rivals even Scott Snyder's version, or his creepily unhumorous Joker. King even manages to take one of the sillier Batman villains, Kite Man (Hell Yeah!), and shine a light on him, making him the most surprising and fascinating character in the book (probably in the entire Tom King Rebirth run so far), and the real heart of the story. Seriously, his story is great. Even though I didn't really buy into the idea that all of Gotham's villains would take the sides of Joker or Riddler and the motivation for the war is a bit weak, I really enjoyed this one and would definitely recommend it.

James DeSantis says

If you asked me to name top 5 villains of Batman both Joker AND Riddler would be on my list. While Joker is insane and his unpredictable tactics make him interesting, Riddler cold calculated, overbearing personality makes him almost as equally interesting. Put them together and at each other throats? Now that...that sounds like a book made for me.

The story starts with Bruce speaking with Selina and telling her what happen years ago. When Joker couldn't laugh anymore and Riddler couldn't solve the puzzle on Batman, and when Riddler offered to work together with Joker, and instead Joker shot him and started the war in Gotham. Instead of chasing the Bats they decided to go after each other to take control of gotham and THEN kill the Bats. For a anyone else this would be a way to get rid of your villains but you know Batman, he can't let that shit fly.

Good: I honestly enjoyed the fuck out of anything with Kite Man in here. Talk about a character I never cared about and turning him into someone I can get behind. HELL YEAH! But really...what happens to him and his family is tragic and really well done. Not in a overly cheesy way, I actually felt for this character, and I loved it.

I also really dug the idea of the way. I know a lot of people probably wanted to see more action but I just

loved seeing how Gotham was being picked apart and you caught glimpses of the war. The Deadshot/Slade moment was a highlight and the breaking point for Bruce which came across as wonderful.

I also loved how sinister and dark joker was here. What he's capable of without his "hahahaha" attitude all the time. It reminded me of "Joker" from years ago made by Brain but not as boring. I also really enjoyed Riddler here and his way of going at war was pretty smart and actually interesting.

The ending was a nice touch and can't wait to see the future for Batman.

Bad: The Dinner scene. I mean, I know where in a world with flying aliens, walking talking croc, and a dude named Kite Man. Still...the dinner scene was a bit too much of a stretch. Why not just murder each other there? They're fucking killers. Especially how cold joker is, felt just dumb. This was the only issue I didn't enjoy.

Overall a very very solid entry into the Batman world. In fact I'll say this is probably my favorite arc Tom King has done. I know his run isn't for everyone (and I HATED I am suicide!) but I am Bane was really fun for me and this one was legitimately great. I love when we look away from just Batman and see the world of Gotham. I want more. Nice job king!

Artemy says

Tom King is firing on all cylinders with *The War of Jokes and Riddles*. An incredibly tense, emotional and downright scary story of a mob war between two of Batman's greatest villains, the Joker and the Riddler. I could get a bit nitpicky and say that not every story beat here works well, but damn, the overall result is still incredible, reaching *Zero Year* levels of impact. Speaking of which, in my opinion Tom King has already surpassed Scott Snyder as *the* Batman writer, and if his run keeps going as strong as this, he could even top Morrison. What a ride! I can't wait to get my hands on the next volume.

Sud666 says

OK. So I suppose the new D.C. Rebirth is going to do a reboot. They seem to have suckered Tom King into doing it.

Batman is caught between two rivals- The Riddler and the Joker. They are battling to kill each other and Batman. To be fair, Batman is mostly reacting to events. It's Joker and Riddler who are truly driving the events. So the premise is that the Joker can't laugh and Riddler can't riddle-so they decide to band together (it doesn't last very long) and take out Batman. Then they go to war against themselves. All sorts of secondary villains appear from Ivy to Deadshot to Slade Wilson. Again Batman only reacts to the whole situation and doesn't seem to be in control for the vast majority of the story. The whole Bruce Wayne sits the Riddler and the Joker to dinner to hash it out is really freaking stupid. Seriously? Do billionaires have connections with criminal madmen? "HI Joker's secretary? Bruce Wayne's secretary-can we do lunch?" Is that how it works? Also does King think Billionarie businessmen routinely hang out with and are respected by sociopathic lunatics like the Riddler and Joker? Yeah? What's worse is they both accepted. Two of the most crazy and violent people in Gotham and they are sitting around being lectured too by Bruce fucking Wayne? Yeah? I'm not buying it. In fact, this was one of the reasons I gave this story such low marks. It is kinda dumb. Like

high-school level logic. "So um...there's a rich guy and umm super criminal psycho listens to him...cuz uh..he's rich. Ummm OMG WTF LOL." Yes, that kind of sophomoric nonsense. If you found the previous quote to be agreeable then you will love this issue. For the rest of us, the War between the Joker and Riddler was nothing great. The artwork was nice though. Shame the story was lacking.

Alejandro says

Riddle me this, Joke me that!

This TPB edition features "Batman" #25-32.

Creative Team:

Writer: Tom King

Illustrators: Mikel Janín & Clay Mann

GOOD PREMISE, REGULAR DEVELOPMENT

It's only a year since Batman began his war on crime, and there are two major villains whom started a particular deep fixation over the Dark Knight...

...The Riddler & the Joker...

...and none of them want to be second place in the run of who will kill Batman first...

...and all-out war begins with Gotham City as the suffering battlefield,

This is a thrilling premise, two villains against each other, however, there are several things that they resulted odd or just not clicking...

...it's supposed to be only one year since the appearance of Batman, but it seems that the whole rogue gallery is already in existence, and while **ONE** major villain is presented how he began to rise in ranks, the rest of them seems that all appeared in a bunch at the same time and conveniently, no one is in jail of Arkham.

Also, while I liked a lot that **ONE** major player is introduced as an assistant to Joker, I think that recruiting the **WHOLE** gallery of super-criminals, just weaken the premise of being a war between Riddler and Joker.

Moreover, the angles that Batman (and oddly as Bruce Wayne too) decides to battle against both villains was off-course of the way that the Caped Crusader should react to this criminal war.

And other bizarre factors were the appearances of both villains: a Joker who doesn't laugh, and a Riddler who wants to play of *Twilight's* Jacob shirtless complex.

Therefore, besides some clever riddles and some funny jokes (that easily could be looked in other place and not necessarily personal inspiration of the author), definitely, this war between Riddler and Joker didn't develop in the way that I could wish about it.

Lashaan Balasingam (Bookidote) says

You can find my review on my blog by [clicking here](#).

With unique charisma and a never-before seen story, writer Tom King, alongside artists Mikel Janín, June Chung and Clay Mann, resuscitate the hopes of fans with what will probably go down as one of the most intriguing wars that the Dark Knight and Gotham have ever faced.

Taking place after the events of the New 52's Zero Year, The War of Jokes and Riddles tosses two of the most unpredictable villains in a pursuit of happiness. Narrated by Bruce Wayne as he raises the curtains on this event to his newfound love Serena Kyle, the War of Jokes and Riddles offers readers a glimpse into the madness that veiled upon Gotham and that flirted with the resolve of Batman.

While the first couple story arcs written by Tom King have been shaky at best, his writing style begins to show confidence. Although the repetitive nature of his script is still present, it now has new purpose and works a lot better with characters whose sanity can be questioned. Tom King also shows that he can have a better grip on his narrative with the extra couple of issues; this volume collects issues #25 to 32.

One of the most surprising joys of this volume also lies in Tom King's characterization of some of the most iconic villains of all time. His portrayal of both the Joker and the Riddler aren't reminiscent of the images that fans have of these characters in the past year. Joker is introduced as the maniac we all have grown to love, but also comes with a life crisis. Batman's ability to predict all of his moves has taken away the Joker's ability to be unpredictable, hence taking also away his ability to laugh since being unpredictable is what cracked him up. This struggle to find anything funny is what is developed throughout the story arc and is delivered remarkably in my books.

Riddler is also portrayed differently with far more charisma and with a stronger physical build. He shares a struggle with Joker and looks to solve the greatest riddle of them all: Batman. But the problem that he points us is how they'll both lose if either one of them does the one thing they both want first: kill the Batman. In hopes of building a partnership, these two villain quickly show readers that they are however incredibly incompatible. And so was born the War of Jokes and Riddles.

With two completely different *modi operandi*, these two insane villains grow in threat level and seek the aid of other villains, thus creating a massive division among all the criminals in Gotham. Tom King does a fantastic job in showing how this war among criminals could only create more casualties as the days go by, but it's the artwork that delivers the biggest jolt by presenting us with majestic and exquisite full-page panels of the chaos that rids Gotham.

Credit has to be given to Mikel Janín (as well as the other artists who have worked on this story arc) for

pencils and ink. Although there's a lot of action going on, the story also focuses on the characters. A lot of panels are devoted to the details and the little gestures, but don't be fooled. As little as they may be, they often held a lot of meaning. For example, there's a whole page with equal-sized panels with just Joker trying to laugh. I felt like they really nailed those moments and conveyed far more than what words could ever have been able to do within a page.

The story also introduces us to an intriguing character who plays a pivotal role in the denouement. An interlude chapter offers readers the opportunity to understand his character and to quickly build an emotional connection to his destiny. At first he'll feel like a question with no answers, but as Bruce Wayne continues to tell this story, you'll only feel the ultimate blow when the character's real purpose is revealed. Which brings me to mention how brilliant the ending was.

The final issue of this story arc is one that hit the Internet like a storm. Not only did it end on Serena Kyle's verdict on Bruce Wayne's big question, it also gave us the ultimate plot twist to the War of Jokes and Riddles. Readers found out what Riddler's real intention were, plans within plans were outplayed and Batman gave us a glimpse into his mind and his conflict regarding what really distinguishes him from all the villains out there.

Brilliantly executed and cleverly plotted, Tom King sets the table for bigger things to come. While there are scenes throughout the story that challenged my sense of belief, I've come to compromise with King's vision and see if this story arc is the beginning of great stories to come. One thing is for sure. The War of Jokes and Riddles is by far the best story arc that King has written so far for Batman.

Yours truly,

Lashaan | Blogger and Book Reviewer
Official blog: <https://bookidote.com/>

Mladen says

When it comes to Tom King's Batman run so far i only read Vol 1 I am Gotham. And i wasn't that impressed by it, i thought it was good and entertaining story. I read a couple of issues after that before i got bored and the only reason i came back to read this story was because of issue 24 to find out the answer to the question that was set up.

My major complaint when it comes to Tom King's writing is that his narration can be a little annoying. Especially when describing a character that's not going to play a major part in the story. Who is he? Where he comes from? and we only see him in once before he's gone.

The story was well written and the art was good
But besides finding out the answer that was set up in issue 24 there was nothing that really kept me engaged throughout the story.

Overall i didn't like it that much but at least i got the answer to the question.
2,5/5.

Jay says

I've read a lot of Batman throughout my life. There's been plenty I've had to muscle thru, but also a lot I couldn't put down. This was the latter. You've done it, Tom King, you've made me fall in love with your Batman. An even greater compliment is that this style of story also doesn't fit with my typical preference.

SPOILER I'm not big on the entire rogues gallery appearing throughout a single storyline. It usually just feels like the writers attempt at a summer blockbuster on paper - a reason I never loved Hush. But when they're used as pawns and we get to focus on the two villains with the most potential? **golf clap**

King's Batman has been unpopular with some, mostly because I think anyone after Snyder was going to face an uphill battle of expectations. But I must say, I do enjoy his take. He's retained most of the qualities we love, while adding a vulnerability we usually don't see. It's not weakness, but rather a Batman who is aware of his human limitations, and has to go out there anyways. Snyder's Batman on the other hand was Houdini, who could get out of any situation unscathed (even actual death). Speaking of human vulnerability, King writes every character that way. He's fantastic at writing human characters. Who gives a crap about Kite Man? Well I do now.

Pacing, dialogue, or just setting up the scene page to page, it all works for me in this volume - to the point that I would put it down, then be itching to pick it back up to see where it goes next.

Well done, King. Your Batman has slowly become one of my favorite interpretations.

Oh, and isn't it so much fun to have a Riddler these days worth taking seriously? Thank you, Scott Snyder and Tom King. No more of the asthmatic dweeb who leaves a clue after a jewel heist.

Sean Gibson says

For anyone out there who has ever wanted to root for a bad guy who eviscerates someone as he asks them "What walks on four feet in the morning, two in the afternoon and three at night?"...have I got a book for you.

Forget Adam West's biff-sock-pows; this incarnation of Batman makes even Frank Miller's grimmest and grittiest look like the Muppet Babies (though, in Miller's version, I have zero doubt that Gonzo would have an uncontrollable fetish for those white-and-green striped socks Nanny wears, and Skeeter would be secretly stripping to fund her cocaine habit).

In this year one-style tale, Batman takes a backseat to Joker and the Riddler, who are at odds over which of them should be the one who gets the honor of bumping off the Batman, and they're willing to make the streets of Gotham run red with the blood not-so-innocents to earn that right. Madcap hijinks ensue, including the stabbing, poisoning, strangling, shooting, defenestrating, and blowing up of people (amongst whom is the son of the man who would go on, in a tragicomic turn of fate, to become the villain (antihero?) known as Kite Man). There's also a very bizarre yet delightful dinner at the home of one Mr. Bruce Wayne, wherein the rich white playboy does his best to buy off the baddies with a billion bucks while poor Alfred serves an underappreciated 9-course French feast.

If you can get past the idea of a guy who runs around in green pajamas with question marks on them and who was once played by Jim Carrey in a movie in which Goose played Batman being portrayed as a stone-cold killer to the point where he's in danger of surpassing the Joker's body count, this is an entertaining foray into Batman's past (or, rather, his past in a particularly violent and dark incarnation of Bat continuity).

There's even a delightful three-way fight in which Joker gives the Batman an unlikely "hand" in a way that shapes his character forevermore.

Might not satisfy lovers of angsty Batman or dark knight detective Batman, but should sate your mad-on for (bad) boys being (bad) boys.

*As everyone knows, the answer to that riddle is a centipede starring in Cirque du Soleil.

Chad says

The Joker and Riddler go to war. We just see windows into the war instead of the war as a whole. While there were parts of this I liked (Kite Man, surprisingly), there was a lot that didn't ring true. For one, all of these villains picking a side. There are way too many egos involved for villains such as Two Face and the Penguin to willingly work for someone else. King's writing is often unclear. For a long time in this I was unsure if this was supposed to be a flashback or in current time. The way... King draws out... his narration... drives me nuts... You're often lucky to get one sentence of narration across 2 pages of art. I think he's taking lessons from Negan on The Walking Dead TV show.

Mikel Janin's art is stunning. He elevates the story to 3 stars for me.

Received an advance copy from Dc and Edelweiss in exchange for an honest review.

Sam Quixote says

The Joker's lost his sense of humour and he'd kill to get it back - specifically Batman but also anyone standing in his way. Like The Riddler, whose ego won't allow anyone else to take down Batman but him. And so the two go head to head in all-out war on the Gotham streets, roping in every villain in town in Batman, Volume 4: The War of Jokes and Riddles.

I've been surprisingly enjoying Tom King's Batman run a lot though I've also been waiting to see how long it'll be before he writes his first less-than-gravy Batman book - and here it is with The War of Jokes and Riddles which is mediocre at best. The story was full of too many plot holes for me to really get into.

First of all, the framing device is Bruce telling Selina this story of his past in the present - why? Because he wants her to know this terrible thing he did before she marries him. Except we have to wait until the next book to find out what that thing is, which is very unsatisfying.

Secondly, WHY is this set in the past? And not just the past, but the very earliest days of Batman's career. Bruce dates the story at one point saying "And I was a year away from kicking a tree", referencing that famous panel from Year One. But everything from Batman's outfit, his fame, the setup, the villains, feel far too established to be this early on in the Batman mythos. A few years into Batman's career maybe but even one year down the line from his first appearance doesn't seem at all convincing. I don't know why this couldn't have been set in the present - setting it this far back in the past just throws up too many questions!

And, besides Joker and Riddler's flimsy motivations for going to war against each other in the first place,

why do nearly all of Batman's rogues (again, accumulated far too many for such a supposedly short stretch of time!) all get involved - why not just sit back and watch Joker and Riddler kill each other? There's no motivation for any of them to pick a particular side, let alone go to war in the first place!

Then there's Kite Man. I kinda like that he's been this bizarre running joke throughout Tom King's Batman series but here he gets the full secret origin treatment with such a weirdly serious tone too! Did Tom King lose a bet or something? I mean, why else do we get this many pages devoted to this one-note character? It wouldn't be bad if Kite Man were interesting but he's as rubbish as he's ever been and his origin was tedious to read.

Things get way out of hand in Gotham before the Feds step in which is another stupid detail and Riddler's question mark scar was a bit naff too.

But there was stuff I liked here. It's interesting to see a mirthless, grimacing Joker for a change and King writes him really well. Same goes for Riddler - in fact, King might've written the best version of Riddler ever in this book! Many of the riddles are clever and funny. The nine-course dinner scene, though pointless, was cool. Mikel Janin's art has never looked better either. The book is visually spectacular and Janin draws Batman, Joker and Riddler as superbly as King writes them. Janin definitely elevates King's patchy script up from a crap book to a middling one.

I didn't hate The War of Jokes and Riddles but it's very flawed. If you've been enjoying King's Batman as much as I have, don't expect the same high level of quality with this weak fourth volume.

Steve says

I received this from Edelweiss and DC Comics in exchange for an honest review. I also received a copy from Netgalley.

Another instance with blank pages, with the added bonus of missing the last two issues. An incomplete volume, and that makes this nearly impossible to review.

Diz says

I really loved the characterizations of the Joker and the Riddler in this book. They came across as very dangerous and mysterious figures. Also, it explores Batman's insecurities, and a dark secret that he must tell Catwoman before she responds to his proposal. Oh, and we get Catwoman's answer in this volume. Without giving any spoilers, I can say that this book sets up an very interesting future for this series.
