



Batman: The Dark Knight, Vol. 3: Mad

Gregg Hurwitz (Writer) , Ethan Van Sciver (Artist) , Szymon Kudranski (Artist)

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The third volume of the Best selling *Batman: The Dark Knight* kicks off with the new all star team of Gregg Hurwitz and Ethan Van Sciver.

Batman discovers a trail of bodies but no leads. His detective skills are put to the test as the Mad Hatter begins kidnapping Gotham citizens for an unknown purpose. But as the Dark Knight delves deeper into this mystery, he soon realizes that this is unlike any Mad Hatter case before. The Hatter's gory past will be revealed and Batman's resolve will be put to the test.

Collecting: *Batman: The Dark Knight* 16-21, Annual 1

Batman: The Dark Knight, Vol. 3: Mad Details

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Author : Gregg Hurwitz (Writer) , Ethan Van Sciver (Artist) , Szymon Kudranski (Artist)

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From Reader Review Batman: The Dark Knight, Vol. 3: Mad for online ebook

Kyle says

I've never really given Mad Hatter much credit as a villain... But this volume really goes for the deep, dark, psychotic side of the character and brings out a truly frightening and sinister interpretation of him.

Very good writing and artwork and strong elements of horror. This collection shows how Mad Hatter is a legitimate adversary for Batman and stands beside a-list villains like Joker and Scarecrow.

4/5

Russell says

This perhaps deserves a 3 but I just couldn't. This is essentially a 6 issue origin story of Mad Hatter, the Alice In Wonderland themed villain that is not often utilized for obvious reasons: he's lame.

The story itself wasn't too bad, with a more homicidal Hatter killing people with disturbing ease. Really though, if this many people kept getting iced by various villains in Gotham, who would stay? The Hatter kills several hundred. A big problem though was one victim in particular: Batman's girlfriend. Hurwitz introduces and then kills her off in the period of this 1 arc. Whoa! Shocking!! Please, why I am really supposed to care? Batman apparently forgets about her in a month so why should I give a shit?

The best part is some issues penciled by the excellent Ethan Van Sciver. Soooo in conclusion, it's ok but instead you may want to just watch an infomercial for the Flowbee.

Amanda says

Great artwork, interesting origin for Mad Hatter.. Poor Batman.

Quentin Wallace says

This was the first Batman story I've read in a long time that was a true HORROR story. It's just too dark and disturbing to be called anything else. It also takes the Mad Hatter from a joke to a true psychotic threat. Some may complain that they turned Mad Hatter into the Joker, but that's not exactly true. Plus, they do call him the MAD hatter, so it's about time he lived up to that.

You get an unsettling origin of the Mad Hatter, and then he racks up a body count that is Joker worthy. You even get to see Batman on the edge. (Even moreso than usual.) I was a little concerned when Dave Finch left the title, but Ethan Van Sciver more than makes up for it, so the art is great as well.

I don't think I'd want every Batman story to be this dark, but I would like to see more horror stories featuring the character, especially since he's got enough books that one could be the "horror" title. I think unofficially that's what The Dark Knight was, but it didn't seem very popular. Maybe just too dark for most.

The Annual was also entertaining. It was horror as well, a Halloween tale, but light-hearted, especially compared to the Mad Hatter storyline. if you like Batman stories dark and edgy, pick this one up.

Ivy says

5 stars

Nice that Bruce was able to have some happiness, even if it was only for a short time. Natalya seemed very good for him. The Mad Hatter, Jervis Tetch was very weird (nuts). Felt sorry for him a little though. The story with Penguin, Scarecrow, and Mad Hatter was very funny.

Can't wait to read Batman: the Dark Knight: Clay!!!! Also can't wait to read more Batman and Bat family comics!!!!

James DeSantis says

Wow I almost went with a 5 star but the last issue isn't as good as the rest. I really gotta say I'm enjoying The Dark Knight series a lot. I might go back to volume 1 and read 4 as well. I might like this more than most. I like Batman but I LOVE his villains. He's one hero that I enjoy his rogue gallery more than him. Give me a series that focuses on them and sign me right the hell up. This one focuses on Mad Hatter. Now if you told me I'd enjoy a story with mad freaking Hatter in it I'd laugh. But guess what? This was pretty awesome.

What I liked: The origins of Mad Hatter are tragic. You feel for the guy. He makes a choice, a dumb one in a way, but he's a kid. It's the only choice he saw fit. Then he takes out his rage of all the screw ups he did and murders and kills people to his liking while being just a tad bit nuts. Worst part? It's not even all his fault. Them drugs man. I really enjoyed the origin. I also dug the fact you can see inside batman's head and know he's not always so "cool". Also how great was it to see Batman go rage mode? Always nice.

What I didn't like: The last issue felt rushed. I wish this story went on longer. I felt Mad Hatter was too easy to defeat after all the fucked up shit he'd done. I also thought the art was weird. Like sometimes great, other times really stiff.

Overall I really enjoyed this a lot. I'd say this is great for fans of Batman's rogue gallery. It focuses on them and gives you a nice deep insight in to them. I gotta say this is one of the biggest surprised series for me. A 4/5.

Anne says

3.5 stars

Mad hatter's origin was pretty darn good, and I think Hurwitz did a great job making Jervis' backstory different from the usual **Shitty Childhood Produces Psychopath**.

Jervis came from an incredibly loving family, and (though he was the typical *runt*) he had cool friends who defended him. Even the beautiful Alice liked him.

So what went wrong?

Well, let's just say he made the wrong choice.

WARNING: SPOILERISH STUFF AHEAD

When it becomes obvious that Jervis Tetch isn't growing at the same pace as his peers, his parents take him to a doctor. She informs them that he has a testosterone deficiency, and his growth is stunted because of it. Jervis is understandably devastated, so when the doctor mentions an *iffy* and under-tested drug he jumps at the chance to be normal.

His parents agree to let him try the drugs when they see how heartbroken he is by the diagnosis.

Big Mistake. Huge!

Turns out one of the side effects is mental instability.

I thought this was a nice break from the usual **I'm A Psycho, That's Why!** origin story.

As to why Tetch is fixated on Alice, well I think that's something you just need to read about for yourself.

The Mad Hatter theme *does* makes sense in a twisted way, because Hurwitz rooted the whole thing in a bit of reality.

And once it's explained that one of the side-effects of the drug is obsessive behavior, it doesn't seem quite as impossible for him to be stuck on a loop in Crazy Town.

The only thing I didn't really care for was the whole Love Story.

And probably *not* for the reasons you're thinking...

Oh Anne, you just don't think Bruce could be happy with anyone who isn't ~~you~~ Selina! It wouldn't matter who else they had him hook up with, you'd still bitch about it.

Not true ~~probably~~!

I really liked Natalya, because she seemed like a complete character. Not just some arm candy to take up page time, you know?

But once he told her about his night job?

Well! That settles *that*, doesn't it?!

The only thing they forgot to do was carve an actual bullseye on her head.

*Well, you never know. She could survive! Aren't you being just a teeny bit pessimistic? I mean, it's not like you know **everything**!*

Natalya is a smart, tough, talented lady. She's not a disposable character that...um, what's that sound?

(view spoiler)

Oh. Ok. Never mind. You were right.

The last issue is about a Halloween *trick* Batman pulls on Penguin, Scarecrow, and the Mad Hatter. It has an upbeat ending, but I think this volume was too dark for it to have much of an impact when it came to lightning the mood.

Still, there was this one panel that really made me smile...

Matt says

I wasn't going to pick this book up. Having made it through the first few volumes of Bat titles in the New 52, I am trimming my acquisitions. Catwoman and Batman & Robin just weren't offering me much that I couldn't find in the other books, and Dark Knight seemed like a second version of Detective Comics. But I thought I would give this one more shot, and I am so glad I did. The main story explored Mad Hatter, a villain of whom I have never been particularly fond, but this sets up a frightening origin which spirals into sheer terror in the present day. I HAD to show my friend a few representative panels ("Can you believe they got away with this?"), and I rarely find myself doing that. After the main story finishes, the reader is treated to a spooky one-shot with visuals to rival Batwoman's J. H. Williams masterpieces. I hear this title is running its course after the next collection, and I appreciate that, but we are lucky to have this Mad Hatter story before it does.

Sam Quixote says

Yes - I knew I'd find a good New 52 book eventually! And, after trawling through what seems like an endless array of crap, I've found a really good New 52 book in The Dark Knight Volume 3: Mad.

I've never been sure what The Dark Knight was supposed to be about. Batman is the superhero comic, Detective Comics is the crime/mystery title, Dark Knight is...? Going by the first volume, Knight Terrors, I'd say it was the super-pervy Batman book but thankfully Paul Jenkins and David Finch have exited and taken their deplorable White Rabbit character with them. Gregg Hurwitz and Ethan Van Sciver have stepped in though the Alice in Wonderland theme still persists. So Dark Knight is the psychological horror/warped Alice in Wonderland Batman book apparently.

Volume 3 is about Jervis Tetch, the Mad Hatter. Hurwitz explores his tragic past and how he became an insane Wonderland cosplayer really well as Jervis tries to re-enact a perfect day he had as a kid with a girl called Alice. His stunted growth led to him using experimental hormones in a desperate attempt to be as tall as the other boys and have Alice fall in love with him. The side-effect that probably wouldn't happen, happened, and drove poor Jervis mad. Couple that with his father's profession as a haberdasher, his pet white rabbit, and the Wonderland theme-park where he spent his perfect day and you've got the makings of the Mad Hatter.

I liked that Hurwitz added the detail of the various teas that Jervis drinks altering him in different ways. A roid-esque tea makes him temporarily strong, enabling him to get in a good hit to Batman with his cane, while other teas can make him see what he wants to see, or slow down Batman and cause him to hallucinate.

The teas play to the character while also making him more of a threat to Batman.

But no matter what, Jervis will never really be a threat to Batman, physical or otherwise. So if he can't threaten Batman, who's next? Gotham. This book shows how dangerous Mad Hatter can be to Gotham City when he's let loose with his mind control hats en masse. There's a nightmarish scene where hundreds of bodies are floating in the Gotham river that surprisingly underlines Hatter's insanity and menace to ordinary people.

Where the book falls down is when Bruce falls in love for the umpteenth time and decides to reveal his secret identity to this new love, a concert pianist. This never goes well for the girl and, predictably, doesn't go well here either. Her inclusion in the story felt arbitrary and dull at best and was the only real let-down of the book. Hurwitz needed more of a link between Batman and Hatter so he created this poor woman to be that connection for this book only. That and the fact that Batman doesn't notice all the hat stalls that crop up across Gotham, as Hatter distributes thousands of his mind-control hats to the population were the only big flaws in the book. Batman's faced Jervis before, he should recognise his MO straight off!

After the main storyline ends, the book closes with a one-shot story of Penguin, Mad Hatter and Scarecrow being tricked into going to the Arkham Children's Facility on Hallowe'en, wandering the halls at night scaring themselves silly. It's a funny and inventive tale that shows the extent of Batman's ingenuity and understanding of his rogues.

Gregg Hurwitz has done something I didn't expect with the third volume in The Dark Knight series and written a brilliant Mad Hatter story! He seems to have a knack for writing excellent Batman villain books like 2012's The Penguin: Pain and Prejudice mini-series, which is also worth a look. The Dark Knight, Volume 3 is a really good Batman book and one of the few New 52 volumes that doesn't suck!

B.L. Aldrich says

Mild spoilers: So I've generally found this to be the weakest of the New 52 Batman lines, but Mad Hatter was a marvelous villain. His whole concept could have run cheesy or stupid; instead his history informed his present psychosis beautifully and though he was never going to present much of a physical threat to The Dark Knight, the culmination of this arc was dramatically satisfying. My only gripe is that at this juncture, no matter how likeable the woman the writers devise for Bruce, he's too much of a dysfunctional distracted, self absorbed twit for me to ever credit the idea he could get out of his own head long enough to fall in love with any woman. I only mention it, because a lot of the drama in this plot line was riding on the idea Bruce would be capable of falling in love. So... yeah. Didn't quite work.

Michelle Cristiani says

I'm just not sure on this one. Pluses: creepy, as Dark Knight titles should be. Very tongue-in-cheek, to the point of humorous. And, that the love interest had a little gravitas.

But I just can't get into love interests for Batman. No, it's not because I'm jealous. It's because I know something bad has to happen. It's the inverse of knowing that the hero will survive; Batman's girlfriends never stick around. It's an automatic anticlimax. How it was done was ironically insightful, seeing Batman a

little soft. But something about the story and art (sometimes I really had to squint to see what was going on) both fell just a skinch flat for me. It was as if it took a few issues to hit a groove, by which point it was almost done.

I'll read more Dark Knight title and more Hurwitz, of course I will. I just wasn't unequivocally wow-ed this time.

Jesse A says

This was ok. A decent origins story for THE Mad Hatter. Just never quite pulled me in.

Gavin says

TDK Vol. 3: Mad, is pretty much the new ret-conned origin story of Jervis Tetch. It makes him into a supposedly more psychotic bad guy, as opposed to the usual Mad Hatter. (Alice in Wonderland isn't too spooky) He still uses mind-control, but this time he's using it to fixate on his perfect moment from childhood, and leaves a trail of bodies in his wake. So apparently in the New 52, every Batman Rogue is going to be a mass-killer, and I'm not sure how the 4 Million+ Gothamites will survive with 4 Batman series' of murders and crime (not to mention the Catwoman, Batgirl, Nightwing, and anyone else who shows up in Gotham). There's nothing wrong with this book really, and happily, there are some moments of humour/jokes. One in particular when Batman smashes through a window and the baddie says "I'm supposed to be impressed?" to which Bats replies: "It WAS a pretty dramatic entrance..."

Another thing which is explored here is the damage Batman does to henchmen, one who describes in excruciating detail how he suffered, which catches Bats off-guard before he informs the man that if he catches him on the wrong side of the law again, he'll do worse.

Catwoman shows up in this volume, and it's completely useless. She is LITERALLY stealing a hubcap off the Batmobile.

There's a bigger investigation into Bruce Wayne's new relationship with a concert pianist, and she manages to push all the buttons to get him to open up, but also manages to get tied up with Hatter's scheme...which brings out the DARK of the Knight. There's a lot of bending of Batman here, trying to see if he snaps, and I think that is really what's being explored here; how much he can take before he just breaks.

There's also TDK Annual added to this volume, which has Hatter, Scarecrow and Penguin all end up in Arkham Children's Institution (where Hatter spent time as a kid) on Halloween. It's interesting as a one-of, and meant to be a palette cleanser I think.

So the art is mostly good (I prefer Van Sciver's work to Kudrinski's, but neither one is out of place with the tone of the stories), and the story isn't too bad, but it isn't an essential book, and I don't think Batman: The Dark Knight will become an essential Batman title, but there's room for it for sure.

Give it a read if you're a Bat-fan, for everyone else, it's OK, decent, just nothing with a big WOW-Factor.

???? ???? says

Out of all the New 52 Batman titles, *The Dark Knight* is the only one I never really got into as much as the others. The first volume collected entitled *Knight Terrors* was written and illustrated by Paul Jenkins but

these issues were subpar and lackluster and their artwork was mainly the most exciting part about the ordeal. When Greg Hurwitz took over the writing duties and Jenkins stayed as the artist, the second volume *Cycle of Violence* finally had more substance than its predecessor though there is unevenness in the characterization and the overall plot presentation.

Nevertheless, I was impressed that Hurwitz placed enough effort to tell us a gripping tale concerning the Scarecrow and his descent to madness which started with an awful childhood. On the other hand, Bruce Wayne's love life was also touched upon when he started getting serious with the Ukrainian pianist Natalya who seriously gave me Silver St. Cloud vibes. I remember enjoying a few parts in *Cycle of Violence* and as few as they are, I enjoyed them immensely and they have to be the character-centric moments in the volume.

Now, this third volume called *Mad* concerns the Mad Hatter himself, a villain in rogues' gallery I honestly did not care about as much. Much like with the Scarecrow, the same formula was applied. Readers get to witness firsthand the struggle and descent to madness that Mad Hatter experienced which somehow gave us insight as to why he is committing crimes the way he had been doing during the present. Basically, he is trying to recreate his happiest memory with his childhood crush Alice and Gotham has to suffer the unbelievable ways he inflicts his unique vision of horror on its citizen just to accomplish this. It really was the same thing as with the Scarecrow narrative in the previous volume about the child abductions although Mad had a much more satisfying pay-off and conclusion. If it wasn't for that vital difference, the two story arcs are easily interchangeable.

That would have been an unfair generalization though because I believe I much cared about Hatter's experiences which were bittersweet. And I enjoyed the Alice in Wonderland symbolism since I've always been an Alice fan myself. Artist Ethan Van Sciver delivered just as strongly as Jenkins did in the first volume. His body of work in this one was absolutely chilling in spite of the colorful panels depicting Hatter's ugly version of Wonderland. And the Hatter himself looks positively deranged. I wasn't into the Scarecrow sewing his lips shut in the last volume, personally and I like that the Hatter was drawn less conspicuously insane except for the close-ups of those weirdly spaced eyes. Those eyes completely creeped me the fuck out.

Bruce's relationship with Natalya has also reached its expected tragic and disastrous death. Natalya was after all the ghost of Silver St. Cloud right to her demise which actually made me feel bad because those precious small moments of Bruce finally telling her that he is Batman were just so adorable and it sucks hairy donkey balls that the moment he has let another person in is what cost her life. It was a nice change of scenery that was almost nostalgic; to see Bruce Wayne actually try to live his life outside of his vigilante calling. It broke my heart just a little bit to see him hopeful and only to have that hope bashed in its head. Hurwitz made it believable enough for me so when he flipped the fuck out by the last issue, I bought it.

As a standalone title, *The Dark Knight* can pull off stuff like this without affecting continuity in other titles so don't expect Scott Snyder to talk about Natalya in his own Bat-run because she only existed in TDK, much like the nefarious and city-wide crimes committed by Scarecrow and Mad Hatter in their respective volumes are exclusive to TDK.

There's a bonus story in here called *Once Upon a Halloween* about a night with Penguin, Scarecrow and Mad Hatter which was rather interesting to say the least. I was baffled by it but I nonetheless thought it was quirky and fun to see these villains painted in such a light. So, overall, *The Dark Knight volume 3: MAD* was a great improvement from the last two volumes combined. I certainly hope Hurwitz would continue this upward projectile in his next collected volume which I will get around to reading and reviewing next.

RECOMMENDED: 8/10

DO READ MY BATMAN COMICS REVIEWS AT:

Paweł says

Przedstawienie Tetcha okazało się ciekawsze niż się spodziewałem. Czułem, że jeszcze więcej można z tej historii wyciągnąć, a samo szaleństwo kapelusznika jest usprawiedliwione w kiepski sposób.
