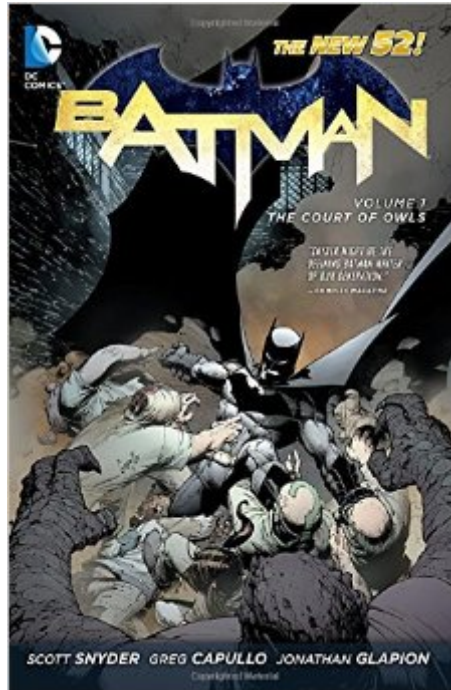


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Batman Vol. 1: The Court Of Owls (The New 52)



Synopsis

#1 New York Times Bestseller The reader will experience the story from Batman's viewpoint on pages 108-117. Following his ground-breaking, critically acclaimed run on Detective Comics, writer Scott Snyder (American Vampire) alongside artist Greg Capullo (Spawn) begins a new era of The Dark Knight as with the relaunch of Batman, as a part of DC Comics' "The New 52!" After a series of brutal murders rocks Gotham City, Batman begins to realize that perhaps these crimes go far deeper than appearances suggest. As the Caped Crusader begins to unravel this deadly mystery, he discovers a conspiracy going back to his youth and beyond to the origins of the city he's sworn to protect. Could the Court of Owls, once thought to be nothing more than an urban legend, be behind the crime and corruption? Or is Bruce Wayne losing his grip on sanity and falling prey to the pressures of his war on crime? Collects issues #1-7 of Batman. From the Hardcover edition.

Book Information

Series: Batman (Book 1)

Paperback: 176 pages

Publisher: DC Comics; New 52 ed. edition (March 26, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1401235425

ISBN-13: 978-1401235420

Product Dimensions: 6.2 x 0.3 x 10.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars See all reviews (904 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #3,292 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #14 in Books > Comics & Graphic Novels > Publishers > DC #20 in Books > Comics & Graphic Novels > Graphic Novels > Superheroes #1392 in Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy

Customer Reviews

I'll start off by saying that this storyline is up there with The Dark Knight Returns and The Long Halloween. I had been waiting to read this for over a year now, and since I'm usually one to wait for the tpb editions to come out to read the comics of my choice, I did that with this one as well, and now I'm mad at myself for waiting so long. Scott Snyder's writing is truly excellent; he knows how to develop a complex storyline all the while getting into great character development. Batman's character in this storyline is one of my favorites of all time; it really rivals the complexity of Miller's Batman in TDKR. Greg Capullo's writing only enhances the storyline. The art is excellent and it only

further immerses the reader in the story. This book makes me question my stance on *The Black Mirror*, as I didn't like it my first time around. Snyder is probably the best comic writer around today. I recommend this book not only to Batman fans or comic fans, I'd recommend this book to anyone. Seriously, buy it now. When you finish reading, I guarantee you'll want to run to the comic store and buy all the recent Batman issues from 8 on. It's that good.

Batman: The Court of Owls V. 1 is a fantastic rebooting of Batman, and should appeal to casual as well as hard-core fans. The story and art are both essential components of comics and graphic novels, and each is discussed in this review. The story is engaging and very interesting. It starts with a bang, with Batman facing off against several members of his Rogues Gallery, a move which draws in long time readers and for newcomers, firmly establishes Batman as a physical force. After that, the reader is immersed in Bruce Wayne's high society, and just that easily, the dual nature of the main character is established. From there, writer Scott Snyder starts up with his own new plotline, in which he turns the history of Gotham City on its head, creating an all-new threat. The Batman faces a foe who always seems one step ahead, and who is a physical match. The pacing with which Snyder develops his story is fantastic, and readers will be swept along for the ride. Greg Capullo's artwork is truly beautiful. Capullo captures emotion and action with great ease, and his drawing is truly art. It will sound strange to make this distinction, but while I was absolutely blown away by the Batman scenes, whether action or in conversation, I was somewhat underwhelmed with the out of costume art, specifically the fact that Bruce Wayne looks almost identical to another character in the book, and Wayne's younger wards look so similar as to be drawings of a younger Bruce Wayne. Given the skill with which Capullo draws, I am sure this was intentional, but it was pretty much the only thing about the book which was anything less than spectacular. By the end of the book, I was excited to read more, and see where else the team of Snyder and Capullo would take the characters. At the end of the day, isn't that the way such a book should be judged?

I am not the most tried and true Batman follower, but since my childhood I have checked in from time to time to get a feel for what the comic was doing. *Knightfall* and *No Man's Land* were the two major crossovers that caught my attention as I was growing up, since these were major at the time, but I've also gone back to read the classics, those being *Dark Knight Returns*, *Year One*, and (according to some) *the Long Halloween*. With the start of the Snyder/Capullo era and a relaunched universe, I was hearing more good things, so I made it a point to at least check back again and read this first trade paperback when it became available. I know nothing of Snyder, but I remember

Capullo fondly as being the only interesting aspect of the Spawn series over at Image Comics. Here, on Batman, his work is surprisingly cleaner and less complicated, which runs counter to what I would have expected when sicked upon a character as gritty as Batman. Capullo is a competent storyteller, though, and he's easy to follow here. He hits his stride in issue #5, during a hallucinogenic episode that Batman experiences; that's when the artist's creativity really shines through and he takes some chances. Watching Batman's cowl assume wildly elongated and impractical lengths and dimensions truly does evoke Capullo's old Spawn days. As for Snyder's story, it gets off to a slow and boring start. The first issue in this collection tries to grab the reader with a large fight scene pitting Batman against all of his rogues gallery at Arkham Asylum. The fight is so generic and impersonal, though, that it fails to thrill. Snyder tosses in a twist with the Joker, Batman's greatest enemy, but it has no real bearing on the plot and doesn't resonate. The plot in the first issue tries to accomplish two things: first, it introduces all the characters in the Batman mythos. Again. As though I haven't read a Batman comic in the last 25 years. I understand that the first issue of a new volume (in a new fictional universe) needs to set the ground rules and appeal to first time readers, but these are extremely familiar characters that Snyder feels the need to trot out in succession, one after the next, and there isn't anything particularly new or enthralling added to any of them that we haven't seen before. There is the conundrum of the three Robin characters who, as part of Snyder's remit for this series, have to coexist within the new continuity simultaneously. In effect, this means that they're tripping on top of one another. This is the fault of the editors and not Snyder, but it still comes off as a bizarre image to see three dark haired boys, all wards of Bruce Wayne, in issue #1. (Within the later parts of the story, Snyder is wise to focus on just one of the Robins-Nightwing-for the purposes of the plot.) Apart from the Robins, stylistically many of the character designs do borrow something from the recently concluded Batman movie trilogy. Otherwise, the cast is standard fare. On the bright side, some of Batman's tech gets a facelift! The other objective of issue one is to get the ball rolling for the grand mystery surrounding a new group of villains, the Court of Owls. Again, with Snyder going for the slow boil, there isn't much to see in issue #1 except a stale crime scene; no villain from this group ever shows up until the second issue. Snyder begins to flesh out a new theme, namely, that Gotham City will personify or belong to either the Batman or to the Court of Owls. This is promising, and he builds upon it, but in the first issue the setup takes the shape of Bruce Wayne simply giving a long and cliched speech about Gotham to a large group of Gotham aristocrats. These scenes are not the stuff of suspense. Snyder adopts a first person narrative throughout the book, which I like. It gives insight into Batman's analytical mind, and it provides a way to give the reader background information about the fictional landscape, as

experienced by Batman, and about the Wayne family, which figures prominently here. Snyder, like Capullo, hits his stride in issue #5, when the slow build up bears dividends, and when the action and sense of danger catches up to the mystery being built. From that point on, the book maintains its edginess. While the main storyline does not conclude in this volume, it reaches sufficient momentum to propel it, and the reader, into volume two. After an underwhelming start, I am surprised by how well Snyder was able to recover in the second half of this collection.

Holy S*%T Batman! I picked up this issue (and subsequent other 4...#6 is pre-ordered) after reading a random online article about this "new" Batman story. That's all I'm saying about the plot, and I highly recommend any Batman fan to check these out. Issue #1 starts a little slow, but by #3 you are audibly saying "no way" as your spouse asks "what?" from across the room. It's that good. Best Batman since Dark Knight series.

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