



Batman Damned: Book One

Brian Azzarello , Lee Bermejo (Illustrator)

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DC BLACK LABEL, the highly anticipated new imprint from DC Comics, starts here!

The Joker is dead.

There is no doubt about that. But whether Batman finally snapped his scrawny neck or some other sinister force in Gotham City did the deed is still a mystery. Problem is, Batman can't remember...and the more he digs into this labyrinthian case, the more his mind starts to doubt everything he's uncovering.

So who better to set him straight than...John Constantine? Problem with that is as much as John loves a good mystery, he loves messing with people's heads even more. So with John's "help," the pair will delve into the sordid underbelly of Gotham as they race toward the mind-blowing truth of who murdered The Joker.

BATMAN: DAMNED is a bimonthly super-natural horror story told by two of comics' greatest modern creators—a visceral thrill-ride that proudly puts the "black" in BLACK LABEL.

Batman Damned: Book One Details

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Author : Brian Azzarello , Lee Bermejo (Illustrator)

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From Reader Review Batman Damned: Book One for online ebook

Ariyan Abidi says

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Sam Quixote says

Batman: Damned #1 kicks off DC's new Black Label imprint where fans can see their favourite characters - though it's mostly Batman - engage in more adult content. Which apparently means full frontal shots of Bruce Wayne's junk! Yeah, that's definitely what's been missing from the main Batman title... and it's also the sole reason why copies of this issue are going for bonkers money on eBay as DC have said they'll censor that panel in future printings.

The Joker is dead - whodunit? Or more accurately: is he dead - or is Batman dead? The comic opens with Batman shot, bleeding out, then falling off a bridge while his ghostly parents wave at him. He wakes up to the TV news which shows the corpse of the Joker having fallen to his death from the same bridge... hmm...

Damned is a very suggestive title, the (ostensibly horror) story is peppered with several of DC's supernatural characters - John Constantine the Hellblazer, Deadman and Zatanna - and Bruce's dad flips him a coin, perhaps the fee to pay Charon the ferryman of Hades. Batman doesn't seem to be himself either and has a breakdown in the Batcave...?

It's a very patchy, vague story. While it's probable that Batman is somehow in the afterlife and is being guided by an unlikely Virgil, Constantine, it's not clear why he's gone to Hell or how solving the mystery of the Joker's death will do anything. There are numerous flashbacks to Bruce's childhood where his father Thomas is rewritten as a philanderer and Bruce was apparently haunted by a teenage witch?!

But I get why it's deliberately unfocused: to draw you in (not so much for me), place the reader into Batman's unbalanced perspective and, most likely, mask what I suspect is a feeble plot - I mean, neither character's really dead or will stay dead so Brian Azzarello has to play silly buggers to make this feel like less of a waste of time. Still, I didn't find the story particularly enthralling and Constantine's narration seemed both pretentious and over-stylised - I think Azzarello was trying for an accent but he can't replicate Liverpudlian speech convincingly.

Lee Bermejo's art though is faultlessly fan-bloody-tastic! He's one of my favourite artists and every single page is gorge. I love his Batman, particularly those amazing shit-kicking boots that look so solid, but mostly for capturing the raw physicality of the character - no-one else makes you believe the power within this guy. Damned looks to be set in the same world as Azzarello/Bermejo's last Batman collaboration, Joker, which featured more realistic takes on DC characters. Zatanna looked sexy as hell as a punky street magician and Deadman was drawn with transparent sinewy red muscles, like something out of a medical textbook, instead of his usual red uniform, which was a really interesting interpretation of his look.

This first issue hasn't totally confirmed to me that this is going to be a great story but I'm mildly intrigued and the comic is readable enough. It certainly benefits from Lee Bermejo's art which is the star attraction

here. Given how good their Joker book was, I'm willing to give these guys the benefit of the doubt but Batman: Damned #1 is still a very mediocre comic. Nevertheless, it's succeeding in drawing attention to DC Black Label, though unfortunately not for the quality of the storytelling but for the gratuitous nudity!

Trent says

BAT DICK

Monsour says

Ok lets get rid of this issue before I start talking about my oppinion. You guys wanna see Bat's badingdong but too lazy to google it here it is

Digital Edition

And this is the original

Your welcome

*Know what separates humanity from animals?
Aint thumbs. Rats got those. No.. Its the ability to lie*

Batman Damned is a self contain batman story that focus on paranormal activity. Which mean we get to see some of the popular magic base characters of DC universe such as:

Jon Constantine and a really cool looking Deadman

Like seriously Deadman never looks so good.

And Enchantress. She probably had a bigger role in this.

The book is narrated by Jon Constantine himself making me a littlebit skeptical for what's really going on. The writing was stellar and the art was gorgeous with some haunting elements that makes so say whaaa...

Anne says

[

(hide spoiler)]

Nik says

Batman Damned gehört zum Auftakt des groß angekündigten DC Black Labels, dass sich dadurch auszeichnen soll, "einzigartige" Geschichten außerhalb der Kontinuität des DC Universe zu erzählen. Zu den namhaften Autoren hinter dem Label gehört auch Brian Azzarello (100 Bullets, Wonder Woman - New 52), der für "Batman Damned" verantwortlich ist.

Für viel Vorfreude sorgte bei der Ankündigung des Titels, dass Lee Bermejo zeichnet. Seine teilweise fotorealistischen Zeichnungen, DC-Leser vor allem aus "Batman: Noël" bekannt, sind auch in "Damned" eine absolute Augenweide und für sich schon ein Grund, durch das Heft zu stöbern und die Panels zu bestaunen. An die Atmosphäre der Geschichte angepasst ist der Stil sehr düster gehalten. Viel grau und Schatten, blutroter Lichteinfall und während bestimmter Sequenzen sepiahaft; zeichnerisch sehr konsistent und in dieser Qualität schon etwas Besonderes.

In Bezug auf die Handlung sieht das leider etwas zwiespältiger aus. Nach dem ersten von drei geplanten Heften ist der Funke noch nicht übergesprungen, und dass wäre z.B. bei einem Buch bei 100 von 300 Seiten kein gutes Zeichen. Meines Erachtens verliert sich Azzarello darin, eine möglichst dunkle und mysteriöse Atmosphäre aufzubauen. Die Monologe wirken an mehr als einer Stelle gezwungen geheimnisvoll und sollen vermutlich ein Gefühl von Tiefe geben, dass sich aber nie wirklich einstellt. Vielleicht kommt in #2 und #3 der große Kniff, der mich als fehlgeleitet entlarvt, aber bis dahin vermute ich eine große Portion Selbstzweck und Oberflächlichkeit.

Die Handlung selbst tappt bis zur letzten Seite auf dem Stand des Klappentexts: Der Joker ist tot. So viel wissen wir und da werden auch keine großen Umwege gemacht, der Rest von #1 dient einem sehr groben Setup der Geschichte, die sich in den kommenden beiden Heften entwickeln muss. Wir treffen John Constantine und Azarellos/Bermejos Interpretationen von Dead Man und Zantanna, die über kurze Auftritte aber nicht hinauskommen und wahrscheinlich erst noch ihre Momente bekommen; wenn sie Batman zur Seite stehen. Der große übernatürliche Zusammenhang deutet sich an allen Ecken an, hier bleibt auf den genialen oder zumindest cleveren Twist zu hoffen, aber bis auf düstere Atmosphäre fehlt bis hier (!) noch der thematische Punkt, mit dem mich der Autor überzeugen muss. Insofern gehen auch die drei Sterne vor allem an Lee Berjemo.

Egal wie das abschließende Urteil am Ende der Mini-Serie aussieht, "Batman: Damned" hat sich schon jetzt seinen Eintrag in die Anekdoten-Bücher für Comics gesichert. Die gedruckte Variante wird aufgrund des mehrfach zu sehenden Genitals von Bruce Wayne sicher bald zu Mondpreisen gehandelt, denn künftig soll dieser in allen gedruckten Varianten nicht mehr zu sehen sein (die digitale Ausgabe wurde bereits von Anfang an censiert). Die Welt ist offenbar noch nicht bereit für Batmans Schniedel...

Cody says

The art was damn good, but my god, that writing; really damn bad. Damn annoying, damn aggravating.

R.C. Rejino says

Batdick.

Video review now available!:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vyp3H...>

Art: 5/5

Story: 3/5

It's obvious Bruce's penis was used as a marketing tactic to sale this comic but tbh, I'm actually glad they did that stunt. With the vast range of Batman comics out at any given time of the year, this one is definitely not gonna fly under the radar now.

Short story long, the Joker is dead and Batman is missing several hours in his memory. At first, it seems like he might or might not be involved in the murder, but then John Constantine shows up and everything starts to get very magical. We find out Enchantress has been haunting (in a friendly way, I suppose) Bruce since he was a child and that the Joker might be killing people now as a ghost. Plus, Deadman is trying to warn Bruce that a dark force is coming to get him. So that's cool.

This is very much a supernatural horror Batman story and, since it's the first in their more "mature" Black Label series, I'm kind of excited to see how twisted (and/or ridiculous) things get. But since this is non-canon and obviously more Mature AND featuring everyone's favorite bisexual Constantine, DC will really be missing an opportunity to not give us a Bruce/John banging scene and that's the tooth.

Excited for the next issue tho.

Jedi JC Daquis says

Batman Damned offers a gritty, street-level darkness and supernatural horror that is even rarely seen nowadays in any Caped Crusader series. The DC Black Label imprint gives the creative team Brian Azzarello and Lee Bermejo the freedom to choose whatever story they want for Bats. And with Before Watchmen: Rorschach and Joker on their list of notable works, we know the feeling it will leave us - uncomfortable and dangling from the salty and murky air we are exposed to (oh wait, did I just describe what the exposed Batawang felt???).

What the first book perfectly does is set the tone. I like the team-up between Batman, Constantine and the Deadman, a very unlikely trio yet here we are. It's an effective team from the narrative perspective, with Batman doing the serious muscle work while Constantine lighting up the mood with his smart, funny, and sometimes fourth wall breaking monologues, and Deadman as the wildcard.

Lee Bermejo's art is stellar as usual. The noir vibe of his art with his undeniable fetish for cloth and face creases can believably create a world full of shit, and I meant that as a compliment. His drawing style is a perfect fit for this type of story.

I am fortunate enough to be able to grab a copy of Batman Damned. News is, it will not be reprinted again.

Garrett says

I think the last Batman comic I gave a 5 star rating to was Batman Death of the Family by Scott Snyder. This is definitely worth the rating and it honestly exceeded my expectations. Azzarello and Bermejo are back together for a dark, r rated Batman story (featuring John Constantine and Deadman!) involving the possible murder of The Joker. Could be a more supernatural story which doesn't always work for Batman, so that would be my one concern. But goddamn this was a hell of a first issue and Bermejo's art looks sharper than ever and Azzarello's writing is almost beautifully poetic and atmospheric at times.

Amber says

A lot of hype going on with this one! Art - incredible! Cool concept, lot going on... most importantly, we see Batman's peen.

Etienne says

Great!!! Darker then usual Batman comic but God it was good. Darker in it's story, in it's characters, in it's writing and in it's illustrations, which are marvelous!! A little piece of art here!

Christopher says

So is "DC Black Label" a way to tell 'adult' stories in the way that "Ultimates" was Marvel's? That is to say, an excuse to make all of the 'good' people into unrepentant assholes? Considering they turn Thomas Wayne into a womanizer in issue #1, it certainly seems like they're using the same teenager's definition of 'adult' that Marvel was.

Otherwise, this issue is... interesting. The plot is intentionally vague and 'spooky' and a little all over the place. It could end up extremely good or a complete disaster in future issues. For now, I'm giving Brian Azzarello the benefit of the doubt, but not much of one considering.

Ryan Stewart says

A good start for DC's Black Label. I'll be interested to see how this can possibly be wrapped up in just three installments, though. It laid a lot of questions on the table, with pretty much no answers.

Lee Bermejo's art is stellar here. Dark, twisted and perfectly suited for the tale Brian Azzarello is weaving. If you liked their collaboration on "Joker," you're going to feel right at home here. Only this one has the restrictor plates taken off and goes pretty violent, very dark and leans into the horror realm.

If this is what we can expect from Black Label moving forward, then color me excited.

Malum says

I usually wait until they collect single issues into a volume before I check out a comic, but this was too tempting to wait for.

The good:

The art is GORGEOUS. Every panel is like a painting. Also, Gotham has rarely looked so dark and dirty (which is perfect).

The story and world are as dark as the inside of a coffin on a moonless night, which really fits a Batman story.

This is almost like a Justice League Dark reunion, with Constantine, Zatanna, and Deadman all running around. I am really into DC's supernatural characters, so I really dug this. As a bonus, Deadman's "muscle" suit was really neat.

The not as good:

They tried really hard to be edgy and included a big old Batman penis, which has since been edited out of the book in digital format and in future print runs. Now, I am no prude and would love nothing more than to stare at Bat junk and Wonder Woman goodies all day long, but putting that into your "mature" book for no reason just reeks of immaturity and desperate pandering.

This book is literally very dark, and they used a boxless and weird font for all of the exposition (of which there is a lot) which makes it hard to read.

There isn't much story yet. We get a main plot and then Batman kind of just wanders around for 40 pages.

Despite the few negatives I listed, this is still a fantastic comic. It's dark, gritty, and has cameos from some really neat characters. I hope the DC Black Label is successful so that we can continue to get these kinds of "grown up" comic book stories.
