Tying into his other blockbuster stories of 2008 FINAL CRISIS and BATMAN: THE RESURRECTION OF RAS AL GHUL, the legendary Grant Morrison confronts readers with the unthinkable: The death of The Dark Knight. The troubled life of Bruce Wayne seems to spin out of control when his relationship with the mysterious Jezebel Jet deepens. Soon Bruce Wayne drops out completely, having seemingly become the victim of mental illness and abandoning his Batman identity for a life on the streets of Gotham City. Capitalizing on the fall of their greatest foe, the Club of Villains begin a crime spree through the streets of Gotham that threatens to bring the city to its knees.

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Personal Review: Batman: R.I.P. by Grant Morrison

My first experience with Grant Morrisons writing was during his very successful stint helming the JLA. After I bought several compilations, a friend of mine who was much more knowledge of comics than myself, informed me that Morrison was a huge star among comic writers but I found the stories highly unimpressive. Of course my buddy had also once gushed over Rob Liefeld so his taste could sometimes be questionable. Over the years, however, I have grown to realize that Morrison is the real deal not some overrated flash in the pan but like his cohort at DC, Geoff Johns, his quality can vary dramatically. Neither have the consistency of Alan Moore. So is R.I.P a boom or a bust? It is most definitely the former.

Batman R.I.P. is an absolute stellar achievement by Grant Morrison. With the release of R.I.P. and All-Star Superman this has been an incredible month for the prolific writer. One complaint I've heard about R.I.P. is that its very stream of conscious and disorienting and I'll admit that this kind of story if done wrong can be very taxing. The story is a continuation of the previous collection with the Black Glove unleashing a psychological attack on Batman the likes of which the Dark Knight has never seen. Morrison puts the reader into the mind of Batman as he spirals downward into a dark abyss leaving us nearly as disoriented as Batman himself. Problems occur in these kinds of surreal story when the writer leaves no lifeline for the reader but Morrison skates that fine edge leaving just enough for a reader to latch onto to produce a coherent story. The Joker also plays a fairly substantial role in the story as well as a group of international villains collected by the Black Glove.

The last big event comic from DC I read was the Sinestro Wars which was quite good but in my humble opinion R.I.P reaches an even higher level. Sinestro Wars was more sound and fury while R.I.P really gets into the readers head. R.I.P. reaches such a fevered crescendo with Batman charging around in a raggedy red and yellow Batsuit taking advice from Bat Mite screaming that he is the Batman of Zur En Arrh, it just feels as if nothing can even return to the way it was. So many stories have delved into the psychology of Batman but this one seems to take it all the way. The conclusion actually opens far more questions than it answers particularly related to the event that created the Batman, the murder of his parents. Grant Morrison takes everything we know about Batman and turns it on its head.

This collection delivers in both writing and visuals and I now put it among the best stories I have read in over 30 years of collecting. Do not pass it up.

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