



House of Mystery, Volume 8: Desolation

Matthew Sturges (Writer) , Esao Andrews (Illustrations)

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In this final volume, the big confrontation between Fig and the Conception, between Fig and Lotus Blossom, between Lotus Blossom and the Magical Physicians, between Fig and Lotus Blossom and Harry, between - okay, between everyone and everyone else, and it's been building since issue one. What will become of the House of Mystery? There's only one way to find out...

Collecting: *House of Mystery* 36-42

House of Mystery, Volume 8: Desolation Details

Date : Published August 7th 2012 by Vertigo (first published August 1st 2012)

ISBN : 9781401234959

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Format : Paperback 160 pages

Genre : Sequential Art, Graphic Novels, Comics, Fantasy, Horror, Fiction, Graphic Novels Comics, Mystery, Supernatural, Gothic, Magic

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From Reader Review House of Mystery, Volume 8: Desolation for online ebook

Meran says

This volume is the last one in this series, sorry to say. As I said for volume 7, I wish another author had taken over the duties, rather than have this series end. I think it had a great run, with sometimes VERY funny stories told by the visitors to the House bar. I also liked the different histories of those patrons, when told. A lot of imagination went into the production of this series. I'm sad to see it go.

The House showed up in Lucifer, I believe, and even in the Sandman series, in much more "grown-up" presentation than the old black and white newsprint volume, which was more for kids in the original run (some of which I have). I hope to see it show up in some of the other comics I read too, now that this run is over.

Peter says

Has a lot in common with The Unwritten, but much more abstract. Incorporates the read in a way that is not corny

Morgan says

Wasn't too happy with the ending to this series. Thought the second to last issue was a better ending. Also thought this comic dragged on way to long. And the horror rather went away, turned to fantasy, then some metaphysical stuff. Should have stuck with horror. I like fantasy and metafictional stuff, but with comics it can get overdone and usually in the same ways.

However, they did tie up the ending with all the characters you cared about at least and told you what happens with each of them. I liked the Sandman tie in with stuff like Goldie, Cain, and Abel. Even some of the new characters were somewhat interesting. I just felt they needed more background story to them because I felt we only got Fig's story.

I just wish this series could have been better. Cause the series was good and then it got off track I think. Giving this trade and the series a four star rating. I had good story telling elements and some of the artwork was good too. Plus the covers keep the horror theme going even if the comic got off that genre and into something else.

Mike Clooney says

I always wanted to like the HOUSE OF MYSTERY revival, since the original is a nostalgic favorite. The series had an intriguing premise, college student Fig Keele stumbling upon the legendary house of many tales, and her ongoing serial being used to frame short anthology stories (in homage to the classic series'

format). The prospect of seeing Cain, Abel, and other mainstays from *The Dreaming* again was also a bonus.

Unfortunately, after a promising start, the series quickly devolved into a self-indulgent mess. It's one of those cases where the writer is deliberately obtuse and ambiguous, thinking he's being avant-garde and artsy, but he's really just being lazy and plotting on the fly. A metaphor for nothing is, after all, still nothing. The story meanders aimlessly, and this volume's device of two parallel storylines set several months apart only serves to confuse the reader. There's no sense of impending denouement in this final volume - by the end, we're just glad it's over.

The best thing about the series was always the one-off "stories" told in the House, and this volume does feature some nice art on those by some of the industry's current best like Darwyn Cooke and David Lapham. I wasn't particularly thrilled with the story revealing the fate of Goldie the Gargoyle, maybe the most endearing character from Neil Gaiman's *SANDMAN*, though.

This is not a stand-alone volume, and if you're interested in the premise at all, it's best to start with the first book. Whether you make it all the way here to Vol. 8 is entirely up to you.

Ella says

This was a good series. Nothing fancy, just a good, fun bedtime read.

Bradley says

The one thing this has going for it is that it's fast. The interesting characters die super quick, the reality-ending scenes too, and the resolutions are as easy as wish-fulfillment.

I guess that's what you get for making a character like this. Rely on a little lost romance, other women stealing your beau's bed, little gargoyles play-acting as real women with jealousy issues, you name it, these are the kinds of subplots you have to rely on. Quirky and out there and creative, but I still think the center cannot hold.

Is the center the house? By all rights it is. But what happens when it gets tiny and gets buried, like the main plot? Dissolution. What happened here?

At least in the earlier issues, we had an underlying mystery and a reliance on revelation. Right now, it's doppelgangers of order and ultimate revision. One part of me likes it, but the other part that reads for pure enjoyment thinks this is all one big cop-out.

I may be in a mood, tonight. Who knows? I'm certainly not being generous.

colleen the convivial curmudgeon says

For a lot of the first half of this book I've had the same problem I've had a lot with this series - i.e. not remembering what happened last time and, thus, having a hard time following what the hell was going on.

It didn't help that it was jumping all over the place in time, and things kept changing...

This was doubly irritating because there's actually a summary thing at the start of the book, but it neglected to reference a really fucking important person in this book, so I was like "Huh? WTF?"

About mid-way, though, things started to become more clear, and a lot was explained. Not just explained but, in the end, summed up.

See - what I didn't know going in is that this seems to be the last in the series. And the epilogue - because Fig likes epilogues and, as she says, too bad if you don't - wrapped up all the various loose ends of people who sort of went off and were never heard from again and their ilk.

The bump to 4 stars (instead of down to 3) comes mostly because I liked the ending. I'm glad that we finally got an explanation, of sorts, as to what the hell was going on this whole time, and I did like the epilogue bits - even if I thought it didn't feel more organic and more like "Ok, we're ending this now, so wrap up time".

Also, I liked the bit after the epilogue. (The epi-epilogue? See, the epilogue was the end of Fig's tale, but not the end of the House's tale...)

Three groups of people, in some untold future time, try to figure out the House - where it came from, and what happened to it. Cain and Abel make one last enjoyable appearance, and the ending was totally fitting, considering the name of the game.

This is definitely a series I want to go back and reread straight through at some point, to fill in a lot of those missing gaps in my memory. Until then it's hard to pin down whether the story, itself, was jumpy in places, or whether it truly was just me.

Fulya ?çöz says

I have always enjoyed reading House of Mystery. The stories are gripping, Luca Rossi's illustrations are artistic and always attentive. Its covers are always great. It has all the things a comic book should have. And now it has ended. Unbelievable but true. I have been reading the series since Feb, 2010. Never missed a trade and sadly this two-year journey ends here. The ending was satisfying however I wish it would have ended in a more horrifying and depressing way. I don't think that a happy end was proper for the series. A little frustrating in this sense. But as Fig says, "Is it a satisfying ending? Is it thematically appropriate? I don't know. I don't give a fuck anymore. A story should have a point, but a life doesn't need one. It just needs to be lived".

Aldi says

Errrr. Wow. Really? That was a Dark Tower level let-down of an ending. Urgh.

Shadowdenizen says

Ok, admittedly, this volume was somewhat of a let-down, and went out with more of a whimper than a bang.

But that didn't at all dim my view of the series as a whole. Sure, [as with any series] some issues were stronger than others, but overall, I found the series did exactly what it set out to do, with relatively few deviations.

But, what really sold me on this entire series was the characters; since the first issue, I was totally hooked. I enjoyed my travels with these characers, laughing, cringing and crying along with them in their trials. I can't give a higher endorsement than that.

I'd give the entire series a solid 3.5 (rounded up to 4.)

Maika says

I've been so thoroughly enjoying this series that it hadn't even dawned on me that there might be an actual end in sight. It came as a great surprise when I learned that Volume 8 contains the final collection of issues of the *House of Mystery* series. Having said that, the ending was very satisfying and entertaining. I cannot think of any loose ends that were left unresolved. While I was sorry to see the story reach its conclusion and will miss reading more about its characters, the ending felt well-timed and was artfully executed. I'm also going to miss the cover art by Esao Andrews, which was exceptional throughout the series.

Katie says

Boring lost the plot half way through given up now going to start reading something more my style

Randomly picked up from library didn't realise this was number 8 in the series kind of the reason to why I don't fully understand the plot

Hollowspine says

The last of the House of Mystery series, I hope. Although it is true that I read every issue of this comic book, I wouldn't say I enjoyed every page. In the first issues I really enjoyed 'meeting' all the different characters and hearing their stories. The use of characters and locations from other comic worlds added to the appeal for me. As the story grew though, it lost it's former charm. The more the plot focused on Fig the less the stories did for me. She was a terrible cliché and so self-absorbed it was actually painful to read.

In the end she is surprised when she realizes who the Conception is, but I saw it coming all along. A mediocre twist at best. I believe the introduction of the Lotus Blossom character was meant to shake things up a bit, but her and Fig were basically the same person. It was pretty lame.

All the best characters had bit roles and in these latest comics are barely mentioned at all. So, I give three stars because of the potential that the book had in it's first pages, but really these last issues are down to about one star. It didn't live up to it's potential at all.

For readers who want to do the work of creating the story for themselves, this is wallows in it's meta-ness. If one likes being pointed to and spoken to by comic book characters, this might be your story. Or if one enjoys creating timelines and trying to figure out what is actually happening by creating charts and graphs, this book has a lot to work on. People age unexpectedly. They go into the future. Then the past. Then a different past. Then they die. Then they come back, but different. It's ridiculously hard to follow, and sadly, I found by the end I didn't really care enough to try.

Anyone just looking for a good story, look elsewhere.

Brenda says

The first few trades were strong enough to keep me committed to the end, but somewhere in the middle of the series, some of the magic began to fade for me. I dared to hope for Vol 8. While it definitely had some enjoyable and satisfying moments, for the most part, it felt forced in some places and phoned in in others. New (and less than likeable) characters were introduced at the last minute, while long loved characters were suddenly missing. Overall, the series was enjoyable and worth the read despite the inconsistency. If I could, I'd add half a star just for Tursig's portion of the epilogue.

Anna says

I kind of feel stupid for not completely understanding WTF was going on. I just went with it. My inner airhead said okay I don't what's going but okay. Anyways how was the conclusion to this series?

I'd have to say interesting. My reason for such a high rating was I was practically throwing to the book on the ground yelling I knew it! JK, I was at work and did that in my mind. I blindly guessed the ending and JESUS I was right. It was predictable in an uncertain way. Then again I am a Scorpio and we are psychics so don't mess with me.

I wish I could say more but I really wasn't paying attention to anything. I kept thinking about the pizza in the fridge.
