



Batman, Volume 9: Bloom

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As the new Batman, former police commissioner Jim Gordon is in for the fight of his life against the bizarre threat of Mr. Bloom, who controls the underworld in Gotham City! At the same time, an amnesiac Bruce Wayne has discovered the truth of his past as the Dark Knight -- and now, he must descend into the Batcave and reclaim that painful legacy.

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Batman, Volume 9: Bloom Details

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Download and Read Free Online Batman, Volume 9: Bloom Scott Snyder (Writer) , James Tynion IV , Greg Capullo (Illustrator) , Danny Mikki (Illustrator) , Yanick Paquette (Illustrator) , Sean Gordon Murphy (Illustrator)

From Reader Review Batman, Volume 9: Bloom for online ebook

Rory Wilding says

With this ninth volume covering the last five issues of *Superheavy*, there is no way in discussing the highs and lows without giving away spoilers, so... **SPOILERS**, if you dare.

At the beginning of this last story arc in Scott Snyder and Greg Capullo's seminal *Batman* run, Batman died following his final bloody battle with the Joker, only to be reborn by the financing of Powers International, along with former police commissioner James Gordon stepping into the Bat-mantle. With the mysterious weed-like Mr Bloom terrorising Gotham, can Gordon live up to the Dark Knight's legacy by fighting this new evil? Plus, what role does an amnesiac Bruce Wayne play in this crisis?

Although the previous volume raised many questions, this volume gives us the answers. For starters, the biggest question raised was why Gordon was donning the Bat-suit? Despite Snyder playing with interesting ideas of Batman being a corporate product for law enforcement, Gordon, who is a middle-aged smoker seems like an unlikely fit, as the journey into becoming Batman allows to be pushed into physical and psychological perfection. Ultimately, Snyder doesn't have an answer other than to give Gordon this quote: "The dumbest idea in the history of Gotham City." The lesson he learns is not to be Batman or any other superhero, but to be a hero in your right, even in the worst situations. This is something we have heard before, but it's an idea that should encompass every superhero who are not supposed to be real in front of our eyes, but how they can influence us as people.

Amidst the Robo-mechanics from Gordon's "super-bunny" and the flowering horrors of Mr Bloom, the true heart of the story and always been throughout Snyder's run is the original Dark Knight. Following the events of *Endgame*, we have seen a Bruce Wayne, who not only has no memory of Batman, but is living a happy life with Julie Madison, whilst rocking a hunky beard. Throughout this new period in his life, Bruce knows there are gaps in his past, but ignores them and yet they come back to haunt him. This all comes to a standstill when he has a conversation on a park bench with a normal and sane human being, who may or may not be the Joker. In this brilliantly unconventional battle between these two characters who have had a history with each other and perhaps do not want to revisit, this continues Snyder's redefinition of the relationship between Batman and the Joker as he finds new shades into why these two cannot exist without one another.

Snyder has always said that Grant Morrison's seven-year run on Batman was an influence upon him as both writers have delved into his seventy-five-year history that evoke their stories, although the former has always humanised the Dark Knight as oppose to the latter's "Bat-God". With issue #49, Snyder is doing his best Morrison impression with Bruce trying to remember his Bat-past in order to fight Gotham's impending doom by activating his fail-safe machine and restore his lost memories, much to the reluctance of his trusted butler Alfred, who all he ever wanted for Bruce, was a normal life. Illustrated by *Wonder Woman: Earth One's* Yanick Paquette as opposed to Capullo (more of him later), this issue presents visually striking pages that glimpses potential Batmen and their strange versions of Gotham City, which very much echoes Morrison's labyrinthine approach to Batman.

Although Batman has the greatest rogues gallery in all of superhero comics, eyebrows are always raised when a new villain is conceived, however, the Court of Owls have been around for five years and have already appeared in direct-to-video animation and live-action television. In the case of Mr Bloom, who you could see as Gordon's own Joker, he is a monster that originates during the post-Zero Year era and how he is

born out the psychology of Gotham's troubled citizens. Although his origin is overly convoluted and how it shoehorns the young Duke Thomas into the plot (who has become a significant figure during DC's Rebirth), Greg Capullo draws Bloom as a plantation "Slender Man". Although the climax seems like a repeat of *Endgame*'s, with the city once again under fire and Gothamites fighting one another, Bruce Wayne's return with an all-new Bat-suit is a fan-pleasing moment, whilst Capullo has a lot of fun with its *Pacific Rim*-styled action.

What is frustrating about this volume is that although it concludes the final big arc in Snyder and Capullo's *Batman*, it doesn't feature their last issue which supposedly bookends their run. We will have to wait till the end of the year for the *Epilogue* volume to be released, which is odd considering this volume features *Twenty-Seven*, what many would consider to be Snyder's final Batman story. Published as part of *Detective Comics* #27 which celebrated the 75th anniversary of Bob Kane and Bill Finger's creation, this short story drawn by Sean Murphy, we see Snyder's sci-fi approach towards the legacy of Batman, stating that through cloning, Bruce Wayne will never die and will be a symbol that never ends, as well as future generations that will carry on.

"Never the end."

Anne says

Warning: Some Spoilers

Well, there were several things I really liked about this volume, so let's start with that.

I thought Bloom was super creepy looking, and I loved the way he sorta stalked around doing...**evil** things. Very horror story*esque*!

Also, I'm really glad that Bruce is back as Batman. Now Jim Gordon can retire his Bugs Bunny costume, and go back to being the world's best police commissioner.

And you know what? This new Robin really grew on me during this volume. Yeah, yeah, we've already got a ton of them, but...*shrugs*
I like this kid!

That scene with Bruce and Joker. That was sort of perfection.
Just sayin...

Ok.

The actual plot was, um, less than satisfying to me. I just...what was the point? Most the time I was confused

as to what Bloom was trying to accomplish, and maybe more importantly *how* he was going to accomplish it. **Fucking seeds?!**

Are you shitting me with this? He's going to get people angry/scared/disillusioned enough to cut open their skin, insert a seed inside, and then these mutant seeds will help him have a self-sustaining energy source for his own power? Did I understand that right?

I didn't get that. At. All.

And as much as I liked Bloom in the beginning for rocking the eerie villain thing, toward the end he kinda had more of a *skinny mime* vibe going. That, coupled with the flower on his face, reminded me of some DIY craft project with the kids that went horribly wrong.

Then there's the storyline with Bruce's girlfriend & the return of his memories.

Everything about that was just so friggin depressing. I get the point: Bruce must die for Batman to rise! But...oof. Does *every* tale of the Dark Knight need to end with feeling that you need to go have a drink somewhere?

And that's gonna be a question that each individual reader will have to answer for themselves. I know so many people who love it when the Batman stories lean toward the grittier side, so I'm not trying to say that those people are reading it wrong. My personal preference isn't universal, and I understand that. I'm just saying it would be nice to see him happy every now and then.

Ok, maybe not *happy*. We all have embarrassing secrets, and mine is that I want Batman to someday skip off into the sunset with a nice girl (or Catwoman!) and get a Happily Ever After. Sorry, sorry...please don't crucify me for that, Batfans!

In all seriousness, this wasn't an amazing installation that wiped away my distaste for the last few volumes, but I found more to like here than I expected. I still feel like this whole story arc was a gross waste of time, and it has *definitely* tainted my view of the character. I've noticed myself scoffing when I see the bat-symbol on t-shirts, or rolling my eyes when I pass a display of anything with the logo on it. Then I catch myself, and I just feel kinda sad.

So maybe I'm more like Batman than I realized...

Gianfranco Mancini says

[

In this final one, Bruce returns Batman again (with an awful new suit that is going to last just 1 year before takin'back an old one, I'm sure)as scheduled and at last Snyder seems learned writing a decent ending.

But of that, the initial dialogue between Bruce and the amnesiac Joker (the best part of the story),

and a few

Robert says

Straight up DNF. If there's one kind of Batman story I haven't got much time for it's the 'Batman as an Eternal Symbol' ilk. Bloom seemed like a well-designed villain, but the story just circled the same old drain endlessly.

David Schaafsma says

Two volumes it took to confirm what Jim Gordon knew from the beginning: “My being Batman? Jim Gordon? That was a mistake,” and all the disappointed former Snyder-created Batman fans seem to agree. And you were doing so well, Scott! Up until you ran out of ideas on how to follow up the Big Endgame Showdown with Joker. So we have Bruce Wayne get over his amnesia (wow, that was original, dude!) leave his girlfriend and kid and his day care job where he was doing some conventional good in the world, so he could return to being the mopey intense superhero we knew and apparently needed. Instead of the Commish as Batman or an Army of techno-Bats and highly trained guys in Batman suits.

Okay, I liked The Bloom villain visually, it's inventively creepy with those long tendril killer arms, though he is not all that memorable as a super-villain, otherwise. The whole seed thing? O-kay. . . . next? I guess the point of these two volumes on one level is to allow Bruce and us to reflect on whether we ACTUALLY need him to be Batman. I say the jury's still out on that one.

But there's some pretty good reflective writing about superheroes and self-reliance near the end. Jim Gordon: “Maybe you just want a superhero to fix it all. Well, I tried to BE that superhero, to try and fix what I couldn't fix as Jim Gordon. But superheroes never fix those things, not even Batman. He can't fix the real things, because he isn't real.”

Batman can only be successful, Gordon says, if he helps us see we have to save ourselves:

“Places like Gotham City are leaps of faith. . . We may hate each other, or fear each other. But we're Gotham, an 'island of stability' where brave new things are made.”

Sounds good, this self-help crime fighting, but we'll have to see if the new Batman creations actually go in this direction, but I have my doubts they will put there money on that number. This run wasn't as good as

Court of Owls or Death in the Family, but it had it's moments.

James DeSantis says

And so this is really the end of Scott's run, or last arc anyway, and boy did I enjoy.

So much great things to really smile about. The return of Bruce (badass return too), mecha suit gundam showdown, love the joker/bruce moment, and Jim's message at the end of the arc was wonderful. This really summed up what Batman was to Scott, and a lot of his views are mine as well so it was nice to see it all come to a close.

I really loved Bloom, and sure him getting Gundam size was a little meh, but by the end I really did love the final fight. Of course the last moments of it are powerful too thanks to Jim speaking, and really talking to the readers as a whole.

Yep, I really thought this was a great arc comeback after end game. Goodjob Scott, you did a damn fine job with your Batman run.

Ivan says

This is the end of Batman new 52 run. There is epilogue but all "big" story arcs are over.

My final impression is that Snyder/Capullo Batman series is probably the best and certainly most consistent one. Maybe I will write something more later but for now biggest highlights for me where stories involving Joker. This is the best/worst we seen from him.

I hope this duo continues cooperation on future Batman comics.

Chad says

I feel like this story would have flowed better if they hadn't split it into 2 volumes. And the end of this series was seriously overly convoluted. The whole business with the seeds really made no sense. I still don't really feel like I know who or what Bloom is. That whole revelation could have been more straight-forward. That being said Bloom is a creepy villain. Duke makes for an interesting Robin. The scene between Batman and Joker make it worth the price of the book by itself. And Bruce Wayne finally returns as Batman! I just wish the whole thing with Julie wasn't so dire. Let the guy have a bit of happiness.

Jesse A says

A good end to Gordon-Batman, Bloom, and all. I, for one, will greatly miss SS on this title.

Roxanne says

This sees the finale of volume 8 and probably the less said about that volume the better, many things were said, many friendships were ruined, but we gotta move on.

Bruce is finally back as Batman!

This volume is super short, i think eventually these two volumes should be put together and the story will be appreciated more, because this does round off the story really well, it also manages to set it up nicely for the whole rebirth thing.(i hate that word).

I really loved a lot of aspects of this volume, from the conversation Bruce and Joker has, which the artwork is so stunning as always so it just works perfectly. I'm also probably too emotionally attached to Alfred and there's such a heartbreaking panel of Alfred begging Bruce not to be Batman again and wow i didn't need to be that emotionally distraught over a fictional butler, so thanks for that Snyder.

I'm still not that bothered about Bloom, he still drags down this volume i just never really got what he was all about and i'm pleased to be shot of him.

Overall a decent ending to a story that divided opinion whether you like volume 8 or not, i do think you'll like this one and if DC does decided to release these volumes as one trade it will probably be rated much more highly.

Also because this is Snyder's last run of this series i gotta say how amazing it has been my first proper Batman trade i ever read was Court of Owls, so if it's anyone's fault i'm now obsessed with Batman it's all Snyder's fault! Also Capullo's artwork is flawless every issue was just stunning to look at. This series is definitely worth picking up, you'll be dragged through the wringer with Bruce but it's totally worth it.

???? ???? #BookDiet2019 says

When writer Scott Snyder had Batman and the Joker face off each other in one epic final battle of everything in his **ENDGAME** arc (Volume 7, issues #34-40), they both eradicated one another not just in a physical sense but in a symbolic one, making this a rather meaningful moment since it was supposed to close the chapter of both characters' prolonged rivalry.

Not only that, but it was also later revealed that Bruce Wayne himself had forgotten who he is and what made him Batman in the first place; including his childhood loss and trauma that motivated him to take up the cowl. To replace him was former GCPD commissioner James Gordon, who had to deal with a lot of cynical reception not just within the comic book pages itself but with the fanbase of loyal readers.

But this is a superhero comic book, so it wasn't really the first time when Batman died before; or at least made believe to have died. Given the character's history and legacy, Batman is irreplaceable but there have been other characters who have taken up the mantle. The most recent example before Gordon was his former ward and first Robin, Dick Grayson. Now DC had gone down the same path with Gordon and for the last eight months starting with issue #41, Gordon was Batman. He was fantastic, dimensional and often fun to read about, even as he struggles to fill such mighty shoes. In the hands of more than competent writers who

understand Gordon's psychology and personality, we get stories that represent why he was such a fan-favorite to begin with, and how deeply cares about his city and would do all in his power to protect it even when he feels like his shortcomings as a crime-fighter outweigh his passion.

In the last eight months, we have to contend ourselves with this Batman and though the fanbase was divided in a lot of factions concerning Gordon's run at the cowl, one thing remains certain that we all can agree upon:

Only Bruce Wayne is Batman. He was, will always be, and should be Batman forever.

I expressed in my previous review of the combined issues #45-46 that I was unhappy that Snyder has to bring back Bruce as Batman because it came off as a cheap cop-out. I do think I was harsh to claim this, only because I was under the impression that Bruce Wayne was NEVER supposed to come back as Batman, and that Gordon will stay as Batman until...I don't know, when Damian Wayne finally takes the mantle once and for all? That would probably happen decades from now, who knows, but for now in this generation and as far as 75 years of history and legacy is concerned, Bruce Wayne IS Batman even when he wasn't.

I suppose the two things that had me convinced that Bruce is permanently removed from the equation were because of (1) The Dionysium completely erased his memories and changed his identity; and (2) A glimpse at the future a century from now during a special story written by Snyder himself where a series of Batman clones take over protecting Gotham even after Bruce's death. Now that Bruce Wayne is once again Batman (after the really convoluted and drawn-out arc that included the sadly expendable Mister Bloom), does it mean that the Batman clones won't happen at all? Did Bruce's return change that future? Again, anything is fair game at this point and I'm sure that if the times demanded it, DC would just do yet another Crisis/convergence/divergence thing again that will make it plausible for a future with Bat-clones to come to pass. It's DC, so I won't put it past them.

Enough with the speculations, and let's talk about the journey towards this inevitable destination.

To make this review as succinct while still substantial, I just want to talk about the highlights. Snyder's *Superheavy* issues during its second cycle were A LOT to digest because of Snyder's verbosity which you don't notice (or would easily overlook) because of his artistic team's way of balancing the text with the visuals. Capullo, Miki and Plascencia once again bring the most dynamic and creative illustrations that defined Snyder's run of *Batman* as one of the more visually captivating comics out there. Most of its pages don't even strike you as something you would normally see in superhero comics. In fact, while I was reading this inside my parents' bedroom and my father walked by and glanced at what I was reading, he asked me if it was Neil Gaiman's *The Sandman*. My dad has good eyesight, by the way, so I know he was paying attention to what he was looking at, and so when I told him that it was Batman, he looked a little unconvinced about it. It led me to the conclusion that he was deceived by the colors and presentation that made him believe it couldn't possibly be a superhero comic book.

FIRST HIGHLIGHT: In the previous issue #47, we ended with a cliffhanger between Bruce Wayne and the Joker--or the normalized version of him post-death at least. The Dionysium seemed to have cured the crazy out of him which would be disappointing indeed if not for the ominous tone the entire dialogue exchange between him and Bruce was written in. As far as I'm concerned, if Bruce Wayne comes back as Batman then this guy will become the Joker again. They're intrinsically inseparable characters after all. Snyder seemed to be gearing towards that reality as well, but it was quite interesting to see that this normal Joker (how should I call him? Joe?) was essentially though subtly *begging* Bruce to move on and not fall back to the Batman role.

If he does, then Joe has no choice but to become the Joker again--for symbolism and old times' sake, you know. There is actually a part of me that feels sad for Joe because based from his dialogue here, he seems happy that for the first time in forever, he is free from playing the chaotic evil to Batman's lawful good. He would even rather die than go back:

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW LARGER IMAGES]

SECOND HIGHLIGHT: Joe's climactic suicide attempt was interrupted by this bullshit: Mister Bloom's hostile takeover of Gotham City. The city has been under attack SO MANY TIMES already than whenever a villain starts doing it again, I just--I don't know, I feel like rolling my eyes and just skimming through the panels, waiting for the good guys to clean up the mess. To be fair to Snyder, each city-wide attack that he made Gotham undergo (whether perpetuated by the Owls, Riddler, or the Joker) have been transformative in spirit. These acts of terrorism didn't just happen for the sake of action fodder; there was always a metaphor he manages to put in that neatly and poignantly makes sense of the tragedies that Gothamites keep on facing and ultimately enduring for the better. So what makes Mister Bloom's act of terror different from his predecessor? Not much; most of it is a little overdone and for shock value--but what it does establish in the end is become a representation of cynicism and hopelessness for Gothamites who have probably given up and allowed for sorrow and despair to take root and bloom into something dark and deadly.

I wouldn't say Mister Bloom is a formidable new villain, but I appreciated what he was supposed to stand for at this point in Snyder's run for *Batman*. This is a villain borne out of the citizens themselves when they lost their hero and have to face the facts that no one is possibly going to save them. Even Jim Gordon's Batman was casually brushed aside as an undeserving pretender who didn't make a damn difference. **THAT PART OF THE STORY MADE ME A LITTLE ANGRY.** Snyder somewhat attempts to diminish Gordon's contribution and hard work as Batman Regent, only to have Bruce himself affirm it again by driving home the point that Gordon has done a spectacular job holding it all together for the sake of Gotham; for stepping up and embracing the challenge of it. Phew, for a while there I thought Snyder was dissing Gordon. And so we get this marvelous speech Gordon made during the climax:

THIRD HIGHLIGHT: ;As I've mentioned many times here, Bruce Wayne coming back as Batman was inevitable. It's downright predictable. Snyder handled his comeback in a dignified manner that his character more than deserved. Sure, there were some annoying details such as the fact that yet another one of Dionysium's erasure side effects was the removal of Bruce's mental and physical scars. I take offense to that because has undone all the pain and suffering that Bruce has undergone to become Batman in favor of him truly becoming 'reborn' in the most literal way possible. Ergo, acquiring perfect, unblemished skin and top physical condition. So the entire emotional journey of his baptism of fire, as well as those lifelong battle scars he had worn with pride, were all for naught becomes here comes the fix-all Dionysium cure? UGH. I was not a big fan of that.

What I did approve of was Bruce's last gift to his now ex-fiancée Julie. He donated the dinosaur statue from his Bat-cave to the children's recreation center. I thought that was a nice gesture. It didn't automatically make the abrupt break-up and ending of that relationship any less tacky and unfair--but Julie and I are just going to have to contend with it now, won't we? It's such a shitty thing, you know. It was as if Bruce's relationship with Julie has been a placeholder for him becoming Batman again all this time. How else am I supposed to see it but just that? The only thing that softened the blow was the fact that I barely knew Julie to care too much about how she was badly treated as the love interest when all is said and done. But whatever, right?

It's not like superhero comics have female readers too who might expect women who play as romantic foils to the heroes to be written at least with more active roles--even if they are just secondary characters. WHATEVER.

My favorite part of this entire arc had to be issue #49 which was illustrated by Yanick Paquette (of *Batman Incorporated!*) as opposed to Capullo. The visuals for that issue were still pretty awesome especially the gorgeous full-paged spreads depicting the kooky, inventive ways Bruce tried to remember being Batman by using a machine that was originally supposed to conceive Batman clones. His DNA imprint was stored there so in order to remember his identity, he had to subject himself to agonizing simulations. I really didn't need to see him die over and over again, or choose a life of fighting crime over having a stable, happy life, mind you. But it was a necessary evil. Besides, I think the one thing that has made me tear up was Alfred's role in all of this, as well as his reactions to what is happening and about to happen yet again to the man he deeply cared for and would want to be set free from his lifelong burden. He was the character who broke my heart the most.

So Bruce Wayne as Batman is back. It has finally happened, fanboys, so shut the fuck up and enjoy it. Your have been appeased. That costume below had me in a state of giddy nostalgia, if I may add, because the gray tights were reminiscent of the BTAS costume. I don't really have anything else to say anymore that I didn't say in the introduction of this post, so I'm afraid I will end this review in a rather anticlimactic note. All I could say is that I am...relieved though a little peeved that Bruce Wayne is back. I can't really complain now, can I? It's all we wanted. Gordon had been great but Bruce is forever and always will be Batman. As painful as it was for Bruce, he simply needs to keep being the hero Gotham wanted because the alternative is accepting that Gothamites have to save themselves and they can't do that. And neither can us fans.

RECOMMENDED: 8/10

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Steve says

I received this from Edelweiss and DC Comics in exchange for an honest review.

Wow, if I had known how the story arc that began with Batman, Vol. 8: Superheavy ended, I wouldn't have rated that volume as low as I did. I absolutely hated, HATED, Jim Gordon wearing the Bat-suit, and HATED the idea of Bat-robots being controlled by GCPD. It made absolutely no sense, not one lick. But then Volume 9 happened. I should know better by now than to doubt Batman in the hands of Scott Snyder. And to think I almost gave up on this series! (DC really needs to consider marketing a "supervolume" combining 8 and 9 together. The storyline makes so much more sense this way!)

At the beginning of this volume, I was just waiting to complain about how amnesia is such a worn-out, overused, and just downright lazy writing. (It's almost as bad as Marvel's non-stop use of time travel.) But then I got into the storyline, the long soliloquies by Bloom and by Gordon from their perspectives of Gotham City. And amazingly, it all fell into place.

I am eminently satisfied that Gordon isn't going to remain Batman, and that Bruce Wayne's future is secure in that role. I am wondering how the bat-villains will make their returns, especially the Joker. Just like Batman can't stay dead, the Joker can't either...

Donovan says

4.25 stars. Horror. Science fiction. Comedy. Sentimentality. The best of Batman fused into a whole new beast. Pretty crazy, but for me a satisfying close to Snyder's legendary run on Batman.

Bloom may not be the coolest villain, even from Snyder, but he's creepy, weird, near-omnipotent, and a damn worthy adversary. The fact that the source of his power can be distributed to others and rerouted back to him? Genius. I can't say I totally understand it, something about electromagnetism and radioactivity, but it's enough to dominate Gotham and the new Batman, Jim Gordon. And it's a solid villain (even being new) to end Snyder's run.

I can't say enough about Greg Capullo and FCO Plascencia. It's rare when an illustrator and colorist are perfectly in sync, let alone in mainstream superhero comics, and are able to achieve something extraordinary and special. Other than Chris Burnham and Yanick Paquette in Grant Morrison's Batman run, Capullo and FCO *are* Batman for me.

And quickly, not really sure what that Detective Comics #27 was about. I mean I guess I do. The whole cloning thing. Although unnecessary and albeit short, one of my favorite illustrator's, Sean Murphy makes Batman look incredible. So he should do some work on a Bat series soon!

Overall, what a blast! Scott Snyder *gets* Batman. The struggle, the curse, the necessity of Batman. The immortality of Batman. The inability to be Bruce Wayne. The heroism and bombast. The horror and comic relief. The drama. What a badass series.

Jedi JC Daquis says

Bloom, while far away from being a mediocre Batman story arc is not the one that I have expected from

Scott Snyder. He's been killing it for five years now, giving us a series that continuously satisfied our Bat nerdiness, both in depth and action-entertainment.

This arc though, it doesn't live to the name of Snyder and Capullo. I liked the concept of Gordon as Batman, he's funny and sarcastic, constantly saying his disgust over the idea, yet he does it anyway. The cowl (or I say, the armor) is just too heavy for him to handle. Mr. Bloom on the other hand, I really don't get what he is trying to prove. He says he's the cure, "entrusting" the power to the people of Gotham through his seeds, yet he's also a murderer, a mob, an I don't know former Gotham city supergenius in nanotech gardener. You see, Mr. Bloom though the action in his story were bloombastic (hehe), he's out of place in Gotham City.

The better part of this arc are definitely the quiet conversations. You know, Bruce's talk with Alfred to let him become the Batman again, I felt pity for Pennyworth, like as a reader, you want him to be back but you feel the other side too. Batman's talk with Gordon was gold too. You know, they've been through hell so many times and Gordon, with an apologetic tone tells him how much he has failed the city and especially Batman, his ally and most of all his friend.

But the most endearing of all was Bruce's heart to heart talk with Joker (yes I know it is debatable but for me he's Joker) by the lake. That place, the peaceful place only the two of them knew was like their exclusive bro-zone. And I love how these two characters, in their own ways struggle after what happened to them post-Endgame. Two lost souls, life-long enemies just there talking about what has become of them. I felt for Joker. He doesn't want to be the Clown anymore.

Bloom, even though I don't want to admit it, is my least favorite arc in Snyder's run. Even the two-part Clayface story felt better for me. I didn't hate volume 9 though, far from it in fact.

Sam Quixote says

I used to look forward to Scott Snyder and Greg Capullo's Batman books. Amidst the sea of crap that was the New 52, their title was one of the few that was genuinely good. Now, after reading this book, I'm just glad they've moved on as Snyder in particular seems burned out of ideas.

Bloom continues to tear up Gotham while Jim Gordon as Mecha-Batman struggles to keep the peace. Bruce Wayne finally realises he has to be Batman and blah blah blah.

Bloom was such a terrible character. He had poorly defined motivations that made him impossible to care about. He's sorta against the one-percenters but he also wants to destroy Gotham with some kind of black hole device because... that's what supervillains do? Which of course leads to giving ordinary people magic seeds to give them superpowers because... oh, I give up trying to understand this tripe! And his powers kept changing to suit the situation. His fingers can stretch infinitely, he can grow to the size of a city block, he can shoot electricity from his hands, now he can shoot fire from his hands, now he can control the army of Bat-bots with his mind - it's so contrived.

Bruce's return as Batman was just plain confusing. He uses a machine to sort of but not really travel across the Multiverse looking for... himself? Meanwhile an alternate white-armoured Batman who's married with kids is also trying to break through to somewhere for some reason? And then suddenly Bruce is Batman again. I have no fucking clue what happened in that sequence!

Snyder's writing style bothered me a lot in this one too. Maybe he's started believing his own hype but he's gotten way too verbose lately and his word diarrhea ruins certain scenes. There's a totally uninteresting subplot about Duke (the new Robin) looking for info on his parents which, for some reason, has led him to the Iceberg Lounge, Penguin's club. Before he breaks in, he tells himself a long, pointless story about his mom. It's not only boring and needless but it drags down the pacing and looks stupid on the page - Duke's just rambling out loud to no-one! And this is one of many such instances throughout. Characters can't just appear somewhere, they've got to tell each other anecdotes about the locations or an incident from their past that's just popped into their heads. Awful, plodding storytelling.

But the writing gets worse as the book goes on. The story ends up falling back on the superhero template of hero vs villain in a destructive final encounter which is bland enough without a key scene missing from the narrative. Bloom is a giant, Batman is just a man - how to defeat Bloom? Suddenly Batman happens to stumble across a giant Joker bot! Then the next time we see Batman he's in a giant grey Bat-bot fighting Bloom. What?! Where did the Joker bot come from? Where did it go? Who was in it? Did Batman defeat it with his Bat-bot (where did he get that?) or did he defeat the Joker bot off-screen and somehow convert it into a Bat-bot in a few pages? We never used to get this kind of sloppy Geoff Johns-esque writing from Snyder in the past but that's the level he's reached at the end of his Batman run.

The Joker cameo was compelling and Batman's triumphant return was awesome - leaping into action, kicking ass, none of this silly robot suit crap which is thankfully over and done with now. Greg Capullo's art is fantastic as usual too, particularly in the Batman action scenes which he knocks out of the park. I also liked his design of Bloom (about the only thing I liked about the character) which was creepy and nightmarish. And while the alternate Batman sequence was bizarre, Yanick Paquette's art made it all look right purty.

Scott Snyder and Greg Capullo did some fantastic Batman arcs together - The Court of Owls, Death of the Family, and Zero Year - any one of which puts them in the pantheon of great Batman creators. But to have three, and back-to-back like that? That's unique. Unfortunately they end their celebrated run with a very poor storyline in Superheavy. I appreciate that they took a risk with making Jim Gordon the new Batman but a bad idea is a bad idea. It didn't so much bloom as it withered on the vine.
