



Batman: Dead White

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Who better than Batman to protect the dangerous city of Gotham, where even the cops are crooks? But the latest imminent terror might be too much for the burgeoning Caped Crusader, who is still carving out a place for himself in the minds of Gotham's criminals.

There's a host of deadly new weapons in Batman's glittering, sinister city—in the hands of a psychotic mastermind called White Eyes. With his radical murder machine, the fiendish leader of Gotham's racist Bavarian Brotherhood can move beyond dealing drugs and hot guns to pursue his real passion: the white supremacist takeover of America.

The homegrown terrorists' first strike—at the heart of our nation's capitol—is only weeks away. But first they'll test out their killer toys on Batman, who is hot on the trail of White Eyes and his brutal militia. Ounce for ounce, muscle for muscle, Batman's no match for the cunning villain and his wicked new firepower. At least, that's how White Eyes sees it.

Batman has other ideas . . .

Batman: Dead White Details

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From Reader Review Batman: Dead White for online ebook

Jojo says

Sure it's batman, how can any one damage something already good? Well this author did. John Shirly's version in this book, had little to do with batman and more about a cop and his drug addicted son. White eyes was not as good as a bad guy as I expected, I perferdly liked Esperanza (the crazy gunmaker) than white eyes. I will defenately read more of the batman series as long as its not John Shirly.

Blu says

Shirley pulls no punches in this tale of a still-new-at-this Batman taking on a violent White Supremacist group with roots in Gotham City. Batman: Dead White leans close to Christopher Nolan's dark, contemporary take on The Dark Knight. The level of violence is surprising (many victims are literally cut in half by a new high-tech automatic shotgun called The Dread), and Shirley's portrayal of the Supremacists cuts no corners - the bad guys toss the "N-word" around with abandon. The book also calls Batman's own sanity into question, as he is haunted throughout the book by visions of a tattered old costume that seems to taunt him into making mistakes. It seems he is still coming to grips with what he calls his Mission, and the toll it is taking on his life as Bruce Wayne. Shirley mixes all of this and more into a fast-paced tale that is surprisingly meaty for a superhero tie-in novel.

Frida Orozco says

This book started great! But by the time I got to the end it was bad. The villain "white eyes" was pathetic, his minion "Esperanza" was a better bad guy. The author included useless information about characters that I didn't care about. So in shorter words did not like the book.

Cy says

In three words: Not Quite Batman

What I liked: The story, once it got started, was interesting if a bit predictable. The author manages to get over the jarring sensation I usually get when you mix superheroes with realistic issues, such as drug-running and racism, without making too many bumps along the way.

What I disliked: The author spends a bit too much time, for my tastes anyway, on original characters rather than on the titular character. Most annoying, however, is that this novel is ostensibly in the Nolanverse timeline, yet neither Alfred nor Batman sound anything like the versions of the characters from the film. To make matters worse, there are a few moments where it didn't seem like I was reading a Batman story at all. Many things he does seem out of character for the Caped Crusader.

In the end: The book surprised me a bit. I wasn't expecting a literary masterpiece going into it, but it proved an entertaining enough read.

Rob says

Never quite felt like Batman.

James McIntosh says

This was my first experience with GraphicAudio, so I wasn't quite sure what to expect. It was interesting and decently done, but still had its cons as well.

Before listening to this story, my main experience with this type of performance (full-cast acting with sound effects and sometimes with narration) had been listening to Focus On the Family's media ("Adventures in Odyssey" and Radio Theatre).

Compared to that, this is not quite as well performed or casted I feel. However, it is still pretty well done. And the voices kind of grow on you and seem to get better as the story progresses.

Also, the content is obviously quite different. This has more intense violence and gore. While some of that does not bother me too much (especially in the cool Batman scenes where his skills and ingenuity are displayed), it does get a bit extreme at times. The same with the language, which sometimes includes, as the beginning content advisory states, "racial epithets" due to the nature of the story. It all could perhaps have been toned back at times.

There is also "implied sexual activity" and some other immoral content that the story could have done without and should not have encouraged. There is a chunk near the end that breaks the story's pacing and is dedicated to discussing some of it, but not all of it. There are other kinds throughout, and I didn't like it.

Despite this, the story itself is still fairly interesting (except perhaps for the conclusion) and I wanted to keep listening to find out what happens. I got a bit addicted I guess and did listen whenever I could.

Pat says

The villain was one-dimensional, and disgusted me. The best villains are still likable in a WWE-heel kind of way, and this one was not. As well, Batman's visions about his old suits was, in my eyes, silly and distracting. The detective plot line was interesting and redemptive, so I give this 3 stars. I mean, it's Batman. A certain level of cool comes with the cowl.

Rose says

"Batman: Dead White" is a mature story that may be a bit intense due to its content and subject matter, but

for those that can withstand the crude language, the graphic violence, and the racially charged conflict in this book - it's quite the Batman adventure, and well worth the listen if you're taking in the Graphic Audio audiobook. The experience is enhanced by an original soundtrack, sound effects, and a myriad of voice actors who provide an interesting listening experience. I did have my qualms with a few of the voice actors at first, but taking in the whole experience, I found it immersible and worth the time.

The scenario follows Batman, in his early years of crimefighting (so he has to deal with his internal demons as well as the external), facing off against a White Supremacist group in Gotham City led by a formidable leader, White Eyes. Dealing with drugs, internal police corruption, weapon development, and most prominent, racism, among a host of other blunt conflicts, it feels so in your face that it may make the listener bristle with how blunt it is (White Eyes made my blood boil, not just for his blunt racist epithets but the fact he nearly rapes a girl to further his "movement" *shudders*). Then again, it fits right in with the collective Batman franchise considering the dark, gritty storyline. The familiar cast of characters are here (Alfred, Commissioner Gordon) as well as an interesting cast of protagonists (Cormack, Gary, Beth, Grenobyl, Harold) and antagonists. I liked the varying shifts in viewpoints, the progressive yet quick pacing in both the alternating action and character focus, and the accompanying soundtrack - it felt like listening to a movie with the descriptions painting each step of the story.

I think there were some relationships/character constructions that were treated in shallow progressions, but for a story that juggled both its subsequent conflicts with action - it's difficult to critique it. I wouldn't say it's the best Batman story I've heard, or even the strongest original cast as compared to some of the comic spin-offs I've read, but for an original novel, I did appreciate hearing it as a whole. It makes me want to look into the other Graphic Audio adaptations of the Batman franchise.

Overall: 3/5

Alex Richmond says

Not sure I like the feel of the book. It's not bad, but it doesn't feel like it fits into the Batman universe. There are things I liked about it, sure, but it just wasn't what I felt it was trying to be.

Phil Elmore says

I'm a big fan of John Shirley's other work, especially "Crawlers" and "Demons" -- though rarely have I been struck, in reading a writer's efforts, with quite so palpable a feeling that I am being informed of that writer's personal details. In Shirley's case, though I know nothing about him except what I have read in the aforementioned novels and his collection, "Black Butterflies," I am quite positive that Shirley is quite politically liberal and almost certainly gay. Neither of these facts of his personal life make any difference to me when reading his books, except insofar as they break the illusion created by the story. I should not have to leave the narrative in order to ponder the narrator, yet I find myself doing so.

"Batman: Dead White" is a competent and compelling story, with some interesting takes on a young and still less-than-completely-confident Batman learning to put himself mentally "in the pocket," achieving a sort of bat-mind-of-no-mind in order to defeat his foes. Batman is, after all, simply a man, whose only advantages are his training, his equipment, and his will. The shades of obsession Shirley weaves into Batman's inner

dialogue are perfectly in keeping with the character as most readers will see it. The action is well-paced, the stakes high enough to give Batman a challenge, and the running struggle between the personae of Bruce Wayne and the Dark Knight worthy of the character's legacy.

That said, the novel suffers greatly from Shirley's left-wing hand-wringing. The man cannot resist editorializing as the story progresses. The result is a host of two-dimensional, unrealistic villains -- from the quintessential redneck, racist Sheriff, to the "militia nuts" who form the key villain's white supremacist followers, to the villain White Eyes (aka "Big White") himself. The steroid-abusing "tan-challenged" leader of the Great Big Evil White Supremacist group against whom Batman is pitted is more a caricature than a character.

When Shirley isn't treating us to trigger-happy senior citizens with Rush Limbaugh and NRA bumper-stickers on their RVs, he's preaching to us that there is no difference between fascists and "neoconservatives." Shirley's political and emotional perspectives also hinder him in his attempts to get into the mind of the Batman, for this detective -- for all his hatred of firearms -- is by no means a liberal. He is a vigilante, a mindset to which most liberals cannot relate. Thus when Shirley writes sentences like, "Batman was ready to rock," the reader cringes.

Fans of the Batman genre will enjoy this book. Despite its flaws, I did. It's worth a read, though I'm a little disappointed in John Shirley.

Winston Crutchfield says

This story is filled with vitriol, hatred, profanity, psychosis, and left-wing political commentary. At best, it's tiresome. At worst, it's offensive and disgusting. The book has many logical and characterization flaws. I can't believe I made it all the through, and I don't even want to give a detailed review. Just avoid it.

Max Z says

Listened to the audiobook version. As the other reviewers said, too many people dying in this one for this to be a proper Batman story. There's too much padding to get to the needed page count - cop and his son's story takes a lot of pages. And the other one, encounter with former Batman love interest, exists solely to tell Batman to confront his shadow and then fly away in the parting scene.

Chris says

This was interesting reading in today's political climate. Again the secret to becoming a US federal agent is be a rich crime fighter. On a whole it was an ok read. I just got tired of Com. Gordon magically being able to get the FBI,CSA, Secret Service etc to listen to him instantly.

Melinda says

Another great Graphic Audio production. Batman is not my favourite superhero, but this was very well done - lots of crooked cops and angst and action.

Trekscribbler says

I don't know that John Shirley has ever picked up a single comic book or graphic novel detailing the mythos of Batman, the Dark Knight, in his life, but, if I base my opinion on the "facts" he presents in BATMAN: DEAD WHITE, I'd have to say loudly that he hasn't. As a matter of fact, I'm honestly surprised that the good folks at DC Comics would have allowed this "interpretation" of the Dark Knight -- if that's what it is -- to see the light of day.

Now, don't get me wrong: the first one hundred pages of DEAD WHITE are very impressive. A new villain has come to Gotham City in the form of Aaron Bunch, aka White Eyes. He's a bit of an old school thinker -- death and destruction are good for business -- with a heavy whiff of New Wave crime thinking -- African-Americans and Jews are the source of all things wrong with the world -- and he hopes to bring an end to the 'Zionist rule' with high tech weaponry and a launch of the Ebola Virus on U.S. soil ... all of this starting with the destruction of Washington D.C. It's a surprising inventive, fresh, and mature idea for a Batman novel, especially given the fact that Batman is a superhero largely brushed off from topics of political relevance with stories of costumed madmen and wild fisticuffs. There's a tremendous amount of thought that goes into the set-up of the characters and the events in this tale set in Bruce Wayne's early forays as the Batman, and author Shirley involves a young Captain James Gordon and a disgraced Gotham City cop Cormac Sullivan.

However, once you get beyond those first hundred pages or so, DEAD WHITE begins to feel less and less like a Batman story and more like an adventurous yarn that was force-fed into the Batman universe. White Eyes becomes less interested in action and far more interested in making grand sermons against the Zionist Conspiracy. A love interest inserted into Bruce Wayne's life feels much like a bad afterthought thrown in for the sole purpose of lightening up the darkness, giving the readers a chance to see, 'Hey, the world ain't all bad,' and it might be more believable if it all didn't feel so Hollywood. Add to the mix the fact that Shirley appears to have no grasp at all for one of the Batman's prime directives -- "thou shalt not kill" -- and you're quickly concerned about the novels rising body count; once Batman savagely kills five men with a rocket-fired missile from his new Batplane in the ultimate showdown, I realized I wasn't reading 'Batman' any more but quite possibly the draft for the next Arnold Schwarzenegger movie ... once Arnold decides to quit politics. Also -- it's a minor quibble -- but one of the inherent strengths of the Batman universe is the subtle work of tying in the darker, subversive Gotham City as a character within the tale, but, sadly, much of this book takes place with other characters, leaving the reliably dark and sinister Gotham City little more than a passing reference. There's a part of me convinced that this just WASN'T a Batman story at one point in its history, but somehow -- be it crafty editing or some heavy "search/replace" Microsoft Word revision -- it became one.

What Shirley does very well in these pages is capture a sense of darkness -- of dread, of doom and gloom -- associated with these elements of crime. I'm not entirely convinced that white supremacists are as dumb as the author would have you believe, but they're quite probably from a mental track as twisted. It's easy to dismiss some relatively off-the-mark character moments in the last one hundred pages because the action is whizzing by with comic book frenzy -- there's guns, explosions, fights, etc. -- but once the villainous White

Eyes descends into glorified speeches and cheap grandstanding, the novel just spirals out of control. There are WAY too many events depicted in the last couple of chapters, including some pretty laughable sequences of what's supposed to be heartfelt understanding between a reunited father and son finally making peace between themselves with the help of ruthless violence, and the book feels rushed together in order to make a publication date.

Other reviewers have also noted: the book is not for the young. I'd have to heartily agree.
