



Earth 2, Vol. 4: The Dark Age

Tom Taylor , Nicola Scott (Illustrations) , Trevor Scott (Illustrations)

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Once thought dead, Superman now returns to Earth to do the destructive bidding of Darkseid!

The Wonders of Earth 2 have struggled to keep the forces of Brutal and Darkseid at bay. But now with the return of Superman, they can no longer stand up to the wake of destruction he brings. But now, with the emergence of a new and mysterious Batman, comes the hope that he may know how to defeat the rogue Man of Steel before Earth 2 is destroyed completely.

Collects Earth 2 #17-20, Earth 2 Annual #2

From the Hardcover edition.

Earth 2, Vol. 4: The Dark Age Details

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From Reader Review *Earth 2*, Vol. 4: The Dark Age for online ebook

Jesse A says

Much better volume in this series. Tom Taylor loves writing Superman gone evil.

Shannon Appelcline says

This is certainly an abrupt right-hand turn for *Earth 2*. It goes from being about the formation of an alternate JSA with some focus on apocalyptic superwar to a full-on superhero apocalypse ... which is perhaps not a surprise given the new author. I'm a bit sad to see more attention give to more classic heroes like Superman, Batman, and even Red Tornado, but at least we retain an Earth-2 spin by having them be the older first generation of heroes.

Despite the changes, this continues to be an interesting comic, doing the things that DC wouldn't be willing to in its main continuity. I especially loved the Annual that finishes off this volume by revealing the backstory of the new Batman.

Kyle says

Suspenseful and tense; mysterious and intriguing, this volume is a complete turnaround from the preceding volume of *Earth 2*. With a rapid pace that doesn't let up and a full-on Elseworlds cast of characters, this story somehow salvages the horrible missteps of volume three which was a jumbled mess of plot threads that never got sewn together. Told through a perfect marriage of script and illustration, this volume is filled with some great artwork that works as a cohesive storyboard, but also it has some very beautifully composed individual panels. Yet it is the writing that shines the most in this volume.... I'm not sure what the word is that describes the opposite of ham-fisted, but *Earth 2*: vol 4 is definitely an example of comicbook writing that is not ham-fisted.

One of the best collected volumes in the New 52
4.5/5

Sesana says

Much better! This volume of *Earth 2* is much more engaging than the previous one had been. The story is more streamlined, so it actually feels like we're getting somewhere. And Taylor is writing evil Superman. It's kind of his thing, and he's good at it. I liked the addition of Aquawoman to the book, by the way. She's a very cool character, and I'd like to see a lot more of her. Oh, and another great shock at the end of the book, when the new Batman's identity is revealed. I can honestly say that this person had never crossed my mind as a possibility, but neither does the revelation feel totally crazy and out of left field when it does happen. Nicely done.

James DeSantis says

Around a 3.5 but I'll give it a 4 since it's heading into a entertaining section.

My dude Tom is back and that means evil Superman is on his way. This volume contains the mighty bastard striking and fucking up the world. Everyone has to team up, including a Batman we don't know who reall he is. The ending is leaves you wanting so much more because you do finally get the history of this batman.

The art is great, the characters are interesting, and we have alot of alternative heroes being different races, genders, and more. It's highly entertaining and a step in the right direction. Too bad after the next volume Tom leaves, and I hear the series tanks. Sad day indeed.

Mark says

This was a great book. The Earth 2 series continues to deliver an entertaining story.

If you're unfamiliar with the Earth 2 series, it begins here: Earth 2, Vol. 1: The Gathering. In a nutshell, Darkseid's forces from Apokolips have invaded Earth (an alternate universe version of Earth called "Earth 2"). In saving the world from Apokolips, the "Big Three" (Superman, Batman, and Wonder Woman) gave their lives (this is *not a spoiler* since it happens at the very beginning of the Earth 2 storyline). In the wake of that, superheroes are thought to be extinct but new superheroes (called "Wonders") are gradually emerging.

What we end up with is a re-imagining of the Justice Society. Everything is familiar but different. For example, Green Lantern (Alan Scott) is here with his power ring, but instead of belonging to an interstellar police organization he is the Avatar of the Green (the Earth, Gaia, etc) and draws his powers from the Earth. Also, he's openly gay. And rich and successful. Atom (Al Pratt) is here but he is a government "super weapon". Red Tornado is here, but she (this time female) is a robot into which General Lane has put his daughter Lois Lane's consciousness. Jimmy Olsen is here but he is a genius computer hacker that calls himself "Accountable". Hourman's power makes an appearance as someone else's new superpower. *Both* versions of Mister Terrific are here (Michael Holt and Terry Sloan). Flash (Jay Garrick) is here but this time he's young (like an alternate version of Wally West). And so on. Familiar but different, and new.

Batman is the star of this book in my opinion. The original Batman (Bruce Wayne) died in the very first story, as mentioned, and now this one has appeared. He seems to have a lot of the same tricks that Batman does, but it's not Bruce Wayne. So who is he? What I love about this is that for once we, the readers, do not know a character's secret identity! It keeps us guessing, trying to figure out who the man in the cowl actually is. For me this was great fun because it puts the reader into the shoes of the in-universe characters (like Lois Lane or Vicki Vale) that are constantly guessing at someone's secret identity.

Spoiler free remark: when you find out who is under the cowl, it comes as quite an interesting revelation. One whole issue (Earth 2 Annual #2) is devoted to this backstory of the mystery Batman, and it is hands down the best issue of this collection and very probably the best issue of the Earth 2 story so far. To the very last panel, I loved that issue.

Besides Batman, there is a lot to enjoy here. Superman is back, but he is evil, having joined forces with Darkseid. If you want to see just what Superman can do if he were to turn bad, this is a good imagining of that, and it's downright terrifying (imagine: ripping up the Washington monument like uprooting a tree and using it as a massive lance to destroy the White House). But could it really be Kal-El that's wreaking so much destruction? He does seem to have all of Kal-El's memories and emotions (like love for Lois Lane), but could Kal-El really turn so evil? It keeps us guessing. A new Kryptonian is also introduced, this time a black one. His name is Val-Zod, and he may present the only hope Earth has against the evil Superman.

I really enjoyed this book, and indeed the entire Earth 2 series from New 52 has been excellent. I think it's a really fun and interesting re-imagining of the Justice Society that also incorporates a lot of underrepresented groups into the superhero pantheon.

Anne says

4.5 stars

There are a lot of books that I like, but don't love. And, usually, I'll say something like, "*I have hope that this title will get better.*" ...but I don't really mean it.

Once a title starts on that downward slope, it takes a lot to get it back on track.

And Earth 2 was one of those titles.

I thought the first volume was pretty cool, but volume 2 started sliding down a bit, and then by volume 3?

Awww. Too bad. It coulda been a contender!

So when I got this sucker from NetGalley, I wasn't all that thrilled to start reading it.

But wait! Is Tom Taylor writing this now?! I love Injustice...so maaaaaybeeee?

And guess what?

Earth 2 is one of those rare unicorn comics that actually managed to leap up from mediocrity, and make a stunning about-face!

This volume made for some damn fine reading!

Everything about the tone of the book changed, and by doing that, it pushed it back into **Wow!** territory.

In this world, the biggest and the baddest of Earth's heroes died fighting Darkseid, and now the second-stringers are stepping up to the plate. We'll call them, The Leftovers.

Some of these heroes peaked 40 years ago, and some of them are still around, but not widely known. And then you have characters like Mr. Terrific, who used to belong to our world, but got swapped out. Kind of like Power Girl and Huntress were thrown into our Earth via Boom Tube explosion?

But, apparently, not everyone originally thought dead on Earth 2...*is* dead.

This is the volume that answers the ***Who the hell is the new Batman?*** question.

I'm honestly up in the air about how I feel about the backstory on that one. I liked it, but something didn't sit right with me.

Whatever. Guess we'll see where that goes.

Red Tornado's introduction was awesome, and so was Jimmy Olsen's!

These characters are so totally warped from their original incarnations, that I was blown away by it!

And speaking of being blown away...

Aquawoman!

Any of you who know me will not be surprised that I stood up and did an awkward fangirl shimmy, when

this lovely lady was introduced!

screaming like a tween at a [insert No-Talent-Boy-Band name here] concert

I love you Arthur! I'll have your merbabies!

holds lighter in the air...sways

I really don't want to spoil any of the plot, so I'm not going to give any details out, but I will say that the twists and turns were spectacular.

If you're a fan of Injustice: Gods Among Us, *I'm not kidding*, you're going to want to get your hands one Earth 2 ASAP!

I would, however, recommend that you also go back and read volumes 1-3, since this is a continuation of those stories (albeit, a better one). It's not like they're some horribly crap books, so you shouldn't have a problem getting through them.

And it would probably be very confusing to read this, without knowing what had already happened.

Highly Recommended!

Also reviewed for

And

Cindy says

THE BEST ONE YET!!

Theediscerning says

Showing you cannot discount all the New 52 titles comes this, which proves that a fourth collection can convey enough of what has gone before to be pretty much fully comprehended by newcomers, engage with enough drama and momentum, and leave you eager to both read on and backwards to see what you've missed. Although there are just four monthly episodes here, and a great Annual contribution to fill missing pieces in, the book is well worthwhile – characters are definitely not what they routinely are, and the battles between them are suitably different and geared in different directions. All the same this is definitely a DC title. There is room for improvement – if the double-page spreads were allowed to breathe as fully as they should, if the artwork was more consistent throughout all the issues, and if the timeline in the Annual story didn't have to retcon so much comic history I would be even more in favour of this title. But with so many instances of naffness from the New 52 this comes as proof of what it could and should have done across the board. Energetic and worth enthusing about – and with a great line about dubstep – this is well worth considering.

Ivy says

5 stars

Very good comic book. Nice to find out the identity of the new Batman. RIP Green Lantern. Hope the heroes will be able to save Superman.

Can't wait to read Earth 2, vol 5: The Kryptonian!!!

Dan says

4.5

Michael Church says

Oh my gosh, this book! Any time that I'm enjoying a series, I get nervous that it will eventually go downhill, and thank goodness that is not the case here. There was a pretty significant reveal at the end of Volume 3 and this manages to keep that momentum running. It's great that this is a big event and it isn't just being rushed through or glossed over in a single issue. This is a team book and Tom Taylor does an excellent job of balancing each character and storyline to give them ample attention. And the cast keeps growing! Every new character is incredibly fresh and exciting. Even though the changes from the main Earth versions aren't that drastic sometimes, it is really interesting to see them introduced.

The story is great. It moves at an excellent pace. I blazed through this whole volume in one sitting. It's also got an Annual issue which fits in pretty well to give the backstory of Earth 2's current Batman. While I'm not really a fan of Batman in general, especially this one and its horrible design, it was still an interesting read. Taylor also manages to make an evil Superman story remain interesting. For now he's been left on the periphery as just an evil villain. The mystery of what happened is really exciting to wait for the reveal.

The art is solid, too. It's all crisp and detailed. The designs are excellent (except Batman). This whole thing is just a joy to read and such a wild ride. Get on board while the getting is good!

Sud666 says

I realize that due to the glut of subpar comics that I may be overrating this series. But I really enjoyed it. There is a heavy Injustice influence but I'll forgive that.

In Volume 4 we see the effects of Superman's attack as Darkseid's new general. It is rather dark and Superman's solution to the Steppenwolf issue was sublime. Meanwhile the strange Batman, whom we do finally learn about in this issue, recruits some powerful friends in Aquawoman and the Red Tornado (Lois Lane, don't ask). They all band together to help this strange kid who might have the power to take on Superman. That's all I'm saying.

I rather liked this violent volume. It certainly does step up the seriousness of the storyline thus far. The artwork throughout this series has been very good. I like Nicola Scott's work. I especially enjoyed her version of the Dr. Fate suit. Well done! IMHO.

Anyways I enjoyed this darker volume in the storyline. Superman's status and Batman's origins both served

as anchor points of the story with the middle being important things like Lois Lane as the Red Tornado. So far this series has managed to remain interesting and rather shocking in terms of plot. The artwork has been excellent so far and I like that in a series. So count me in for volume 5.

Steve says

Wow! That was completely unexpected!

The writing turned around with this volume, and in a great way. The turn of events was very surprising.

The artwork, as always, was fantastic!

Joseph says

A Superman out of control and wreaking havoc? A Batman determined to stop him with a coterie of allies? Haven't we seen this before??

Oh yeah, in Kingdom Come and more recently in Injustice, written by the same guy here, Tom Taylor. Are there no original ideas left?

Too bad James Robinson left the series but I wonder if it had anything to do with this turn of events, since we know he left over creative differences with editorial. Instead of a book with a diverse cast saving the world, it appears we are getting yet another Bat/Super centered book. Yay.

To top it all off, it's yet another war in the DCU! "War, war, war," as Scarlet would say. I'm surprised anyone is still alive on Earth by now in this book. But this reliance on "wars" is getting old, DC. Just stop.

Did we know Lois was dead? I can't remember. Aquawoman was cool but the "I am an Atlantean and you surface dwellers just kinda suck" meme is at least as old as Prince Namor back in the Lee/Kirby FF days. Why can't Atlanteans be nice once in a while and good team players, like Aquaman used to be?

This book is a walking collection of cliched super hero tropes (see what I did there?). It's too bad because there was a lot of promise originally, and Nicola Scott's art is usually pretty and clear. I think she is leaving soon, too.

Either way, done with this series and won't even bother with the new weekly Earth 2 series. Sad panda here, but there ya go.
