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**Arkham Asylum: Living Hell** Dan Slott , Ryan Sook (Illustrator) , Wade Von Grawbadger (Illustrator) , Jim Royal (Illustrator)

From one of the comics business' brightest new creative teams comes a Batman tale with a twist - a giant, gut-wrenching, soul-crushing twist! Arkham Asylum: Batman's dustbin where he dumps the worst of the garbage. A melting pot brimming with the curdled milk of human madness, where the warders are as ensnared by the insanity as the inmates. And where a killer has tapped into all that maniacal energy and is channelling it to his own demonic ends! With cameos from Batman, Batgirl and a dark host of famous - and notorious - super villains, including the Joker and Two-Face, Arkham Asylum: Living Hell is living proof of the old adage - you don't have to be mad to work here, but it helps!

## Arkham Asylum: Living Hell Details

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Author : Dan Slott , Ryan Sook (Illustrator) , Wade Von Grawbadger (Illustrator) , Jim Royal (Illustrator)

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## From Reader Review Arkham Asylum: Living Hell for online ebook

### Albert says

Arkham Asylum by Dan Slott is another of those graphic novels that exist within the Batman Universe and proves that a good Batman story doesn't necessarily need Batman in it. This, instead, is a tale about Arkham and the evil that exists there. It is Noir and it is Horror and in its most darkest depths, terribly human.

Crooked Banker, Warren White, has swindled millions from the savings and various accounts of the populace of Gotham. Targeting the weakest and the elderly. White is a privileged man and believes he will skate past this verdict with nothing more than having his hands slapped. What he doesn't get, until it is too late, is that his crime has landed him on hell on Earth. Gotham's own, Arkham Asylum. Here, White will come into contact with a host of characters, some famous, some even more infamous as he tries to buy his way back to freedom.

But Arkham is a place with secrets all its own and the currency of the Asylum is not cash, it is blood.

With appearances by the Joker, Two-Face, Batman and Batgirl; Arkham Asylum Living Hell is a terrific read. As dark and horrifying as you would think Arkham would be when the lights go out and the things that slither in the dark come out.

This six issue arc was suppose to be the beginning of a new series and its too bad that DC didn't take it any further than six books. Hopefully they will pick this up sometime in the future. But if they do, they need to find a way to capture the lightning in the bottle that this book is.

A terrific fun read for all fans of Batman and Gotham.

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### Jen says

Living Hell lives up to its name—its characters are at once repulsive and grotesque, intriguing and damaged. Batman is hardly anywhere to be seen, and while that might put some readers off, the inmates' antics are enough to hold your undivided attention, although I confess I got kind of lost by the end. Funnily enough it makes less sense to me than Grant Morrison's take on Arkham Asylum.

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### Gayle Francis Moffet says

I love Bat-books that aren't Bat books. I love Bat-books that are about the people living in the world alongside Batman. *Gotham Central* did this beautifully by looking at the cops who work in that crazy city, and *Living Hell* gives us a view from inside Arkham, framed around a smarmy asshole who thinks he got off easy by getting a change of venue.

It's a strong read, filled with a mix of well-known and mostly forgotten villains. The focus of the story is on the people inside the Asylum, not on how Batman gets them in there. It really shows the depth and breadth of the world of Gotham City, an entire mini-series about a bunch of people you've probably never heard of before held together by a strong script and just the basic knowledge of how Arkham works.

It's creepy, weird, and ends with a twist that can only happen in Arkham.

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### **Kimberlee says**

An amazing story, especially since Batman only puts in a rare appearance or two. Essentially a series of shorts following several of the inmates at Arkham. The stories are tied together by following a new character who thinks he's tricked the system by being found not guilty by reason of insanity, but is receives a sentence worse than life in prison: yep, Arkham. What goes on there is everyone's worst nightmare, and then some. I started wondering why Batman didn't get involved to help this - while not innocent - definitely not insane guy. There's a definitely quality of "well, he asked for it" at play here, and I couldn't read it fast enough!

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### **Autumn Byrd says**

As someone who is a HUGE Batman nerd, this was definitely one Batman comic that had my blood boiling and heart beat racing. The suspense and the build of each chapter in this comic leaves you on edge and racing to find out what will happen next. This comic is definitely a must read for any Batman lover.

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### **Dr Rashmit Mishra says**

first up , let's make this clear , this is not a Batman story . If anything Batman is just here to make a few cameo appearances . That said this was a fascinating read , as we read about few low-key Members of Batman Rogue Gallery and their lives inside of the Arkham Asylum and it all surrounds the life of one inmate who in his ignorance tried to get away from his crimes by pleading insanity but at Gotham that doesn't help you go Scott free it lands you in a place worse than Jail , in Arkham Asylum

As stated this was very unique and fascinating read , even the lives of such 3rd string rogues was interesting and dark to read , the art however was a buzzkill and the ending was a bit too melodramatic for me .

worth spending an hour on reading if u can find this at a library or borrow it from someone , don't necessarily would recommend people to buy this

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### **Sam Quixote says**

A crooked banker (is there any other kind?) thinks he's being clever by having his trial moved to Gotham where he's found not guilty by way of insanity. Except in Gotham? The crazies go to a place called Arkham Asylum, a Living Hell that makes Federal prison look like a cakewalk!

I'm familiar with Dan Slott's work on books like Superior Spider-Man and Silver Surfer so I was curious to see if his Batman was as good - n to the ope! He definitely did far better after moving to Marvel than he ever did during his short time at DC.

Living Hell is a meandering, unfocused mess of boring nothing. The banker storyline - which wasn't anything more than a punchline to start with - gets sidelined almost immediately as Slott jumps from one C-

list Batman rogue like Jane Doe and Humpty Dumpty to another. Jane's schtick is to murder people and wear their skins which is apparently so convincing that everyone's fooled. Hmm. Not that I've ever met anyone wearing a skin suit but I'm pretty sure anyone could tell that something's up. I know, I know, suspension of disbelief, yadda yadda yadda...

Humpty Dumpty? A dull fat guy who likes putting stuff together again. How imaginative. Get ready to nearly die of boredom during Slott's telling of that dude's tedious origin! An artist who paints in blood, Killer Croc biting guards, Aaron Cash the guard doing guard duty – I just do not care about the day-to-day goings-on of Arkham Asylum. Batman and Joker cameo a couple times to remind you this is a pseudo-Batman comic and Jason Blood/Etrigan shows up for a garbage finale involving zombies/ghouls/who cares, that's awkwardly rammed in to give the semblance of a story arc. I think I hate Etrigan – I can't stand his annoying rhyming!

Eric Powell's covers are cool but everything else about this comic stinks. Arkham Asylum books are never good and unfortunately Living Hell continues to prove that rule. You want to experience a living hell? Read this crap!

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### **Michael Emond says**

One of those books that I expected more from. It started off really strong but by the end it had lost its cleverness. Slott is a great writer and is doing amazing things with Spider-man. This book is all about Arkham Asylum, a new inmate who basically swindled people out of their retirements and decided an insanity plea would save him hard time - but it gets him sent to Arkham instead. And an ordinary sleaze like him won't survive long there. The cover has a big picture of Batman but be warned - Batman appears in about 15 panels of the entire graphic novel. But I didn't mind that part since the Asylum itself is an interesting place to set a story like this. And it does start out very interesting but then it gets confusing and ends up to be very muddled as The Demon comes in to help solve some demonic hi-jinx that an inmate gets up to.

If you look at the story notes (included at the end) Batman was supposed to play a bigger role in the story and I think that may have helped to ground the story better. Throwing The Demon into the mix doesn't help since he is so poorly defined in this novel and in the DC Universe in general. And the fact he is so ineffective doesn't help.

The artwork is good in the quiet moments but the artist is overwhelmed when it comes to the action scenes - muddling everyone up and not doing a good job making each character distinctive.

Still, a creative effort that comes close to genius but frustratingly fails. I almost wish a Gaiman or Moore could have helped give it some polish.

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### **Anthony says**

I enjoyed this. I mostly know Slott from his Spider-man and other Marvel stuff, so seeing him do something creepy and in the Batman-verse was cool.

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## **Emmie says**

Let me first say this: although I liked the book, things just got a little too freaky for me.

One of the things I've admired Gotham-verse for is its tight grip on reality--excluding elements of characters like Poison Ivy and Clayface. This comic seemed to destroy a little bit of that for me, what with all this summoning people from Hell and ghosts running around Arkham, dealing out vengeance to the inmates.

Honestly? Even if that whole plot *was* only Scarecrow's fear toxin, an opinion it seemed like some of the guards at Arkham were halfheartedly convincing themselves of, it wouldn't have been all too wonderfully great. This comic gets more respect from me for its reveal of how a few of the Arkham inmates (mostly Humpty Dumpty and Shark) were created, not what they did when they were actually in the asylum. The lack of a certain clown was a bit irritating, too, and though his brief appearances *were* pretty decent, didn't have much of anything to do with the plot at all.

All in all, three stars. I don't think I'd read it again though.

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## **Blindzider says**

Totally surprised by this. I wasn't expecting much at all and it turned out to be a fantastic read. First, be aware that Batman is barely in it. Normally this would bother me but the story really engaging. It's basically about some of the C and D Batman villains and is more of a horror story. I give credit to Slott for showing that he can write something other than the fun/entertaining stories and do something not only a little darker but with a slightly more complex story because many of the story threads come together in the end.

Definitely worth checking out.

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## **Ann D-Vine says**

I adore this book. I think it's important to flush your mind of preconceptions, though. For one, it's very much not a Batman book - he makes the briefest of cameos, and though Arkham is littered with familiar faces from his rogues gallery, it very much focused more on original characters and their voices than any existing ones. Secondly, it has little, if anything, to do with the Grant Morrison story, Arkham Asylum: A Serious House on Serious Earth, save for the location and title (though, if you've read my thoughts on the Morrison book, you'll understand that this is wholly a positive attribute, for my tastes). This is very much a standalone arc about a single character in a tiny corner of Batman's established mythos - and it's all the better for it, in my opinion.

The biggest chunk of the plot follows Warren White, the man who will come to be known as the Great White Shark. He is, as his nickname suggests, something of a shark - rigging finances, hunting loans, and basically being the kind of criminal that can ruin lives without lifting a finger. And when he is admitted to Arkham Asylum (by his own, somewhat selfish choice), the characters inside recognize him as even scummier than they are. It might seem a little hypocritical that the Joker, of all people, considers a loan shark to be a bigger evil than himself, but the hatred is palpable, and White needs to find allies on the inside if he hopes to survive against the menagerie of varied and powerful Batman villains.

That's the hook of the plot, anyway. The underlying elements, which form the somewhat psychedelic conclusion, are wildly different from pretty much any representation of Arkham Asylum seen before. And, if I'm totally honest, it's a huge part of the reason I love this tale. Ignoring that it's a unique, fresh spin on an established fictional institution, I'm always slightly dismayed (in varying degrees, depending on the story) by the representation of mental health in the Batman series. Arkham Asylum is painted as being either a dumping ground for actual psychotics, or an unfortunate mainstay of Gotham City's criminal element, or anything in between or outside of it. The worst of it, for my tastes, is in Morrison's aforementioned Arkham Asylum: A Serious House on Serious Earth, which vilified *actual* mental health (and perceived as mental health) issues to the point of being incredulous and disgusting.

Arkham Asylum: Living Hell seems to make the most strides, for my money, towards justifying the needlessness of a mental asylum in a modern-day environment. Not to spoil, because a lot of the surprise is in the reveal, but it's a very old-fashioned (and by that I mean old-fashioned literature) approach to insanity and horror, which, pleasingly, seems to absolve the blame for the human element. Arkham Asylum as an institution that breeds monsters rather than curing them is remarkably justified, in that the people inside are relatively blameless...! I don't think it's ever touched upon again, but that's a shame, because it's almost Lovecraftian in its romantic simplicity of externalized "insanity," and I like it a lot.

Dan Slott is on writing duties here, and a lot of his trademark wit is recognizable. Interactions between Warren White and Batman's rogues are almost always fascinating, if not outright funny. There's a dark undertone to everything (helped by Ryan Sook's pulpish, almost two-tone, slightly exaggerated, cartoonish artwork), but in many ways it raises the material from the murky depths. It's much more enjoyable to read than a book subtitled "Living Hell" might appear to me, and Warren White's transformation from a naive, thuggish criminal to a full-on Batman mainstay is bittersweet without being overtly tragic. Which isn't to say there aren't horrific elements to a story ostensibly about a haunted mental asylum, it's just it's so much softer and subdued than they could have been - making Arkham Asylum: Living Hell a more entertaining read than it could have been, had it been handled by a different creative team.

I as much admire this book for what it doesn't do as for what it does, but then, that's the treasure of having a character and universe as dense as Batman's; Gotham, Arkham, and their populace are deeply entrenched into most all of our minds. When stories like Living Hell come along, that challenge our preconceptions and re-arrange the deck, I tend to swoon - it's everything I appreciate about comic books and their place in popular culture, y'know? It helps, though, that Arkham Asylum: Living Hell is a prison thriller with horror elements that just *works*, thanks to a creative team that knows what they're doing. It's crammed with inventiveness, a ton of great cameos by recognizable faces, as well as original faces that have gone on to become beloved mainstays (Aaron Cash and Humpty Dumpty in particular), and is overall just a great story that is assisted fully by the fun it's having in the sandbox that is the Batman mythos. It sure ain't for everyone, but I love the hell out of it.

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### Michelle Cristiani says

I loved the premise - convicted big shot thinks he'll be better off in Arkham than in prison - but something about it didn't pan out for me in the end. It was neatly wrapped up, and the new characters in Arkham were really interesting. It may have been me as I'm easily confused by time twists in plot, but I had trouble figuring out the timeline. I also got confused by which character was which. But I give it high marks on premise and (bad guy) character development.

## **Mike says**

To call the main characters of Living Hell even "third-string" Batman villains would be generous, but Dan Slott reminds us that characters don't have to be popular to be interesting. Across six issues he builds a compelling tale of the world's worst nuthouse.

If you dislike supernatural elements creeping into Batman stories or require the Dark Knight himself as the focus, this won't be for you. It's also extremely creepy in tone and fairly graphic - I would normally expect something like this to be under the Vertigo imprint. Even with the title "Living Hell" I wasn't expecting something this dark (especially from Slott, who is more well known for his comedic ability).

But those who can handle the elements mentioned above will find Living Hell well worth the read. Things tie together surprisingly but reasonably, horrific events tie directly to the plot and character arcs, and it was all engrossing enough that I couldn't stop reading until I was finished.

3/2012

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## **Gianfranco Mancini says**

Far better than Slott's run on Spidey!

And Dr Arkham with the face and manners of Bill Nighy made me laugh a lot! XD

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