



## All-Star Batman, Volume 3: The First Ally

*Scott Snyder , Rafael Albuquerque (Penciler) , Jordie Bellaire (Colorist)*

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#1 New York Times best-selling BATMAN author Scott Snyder's ALL-STAR BATMAN continues with a new volume featuring new stories drawn by some of the top artists in all of comics!

In the third volume of Scott Snyder's best-selling ALL-STAR BATMAN, a rotating team of all-star artists join the Bat-scribe to tell tales featuring some of Batman's most deadly foes! For more than 75 years, Batman has been one of the most widely recognized and revered superheroes in all of comics. But what would the Dark Knight be without an equally iconic roster of villains to keep him fighting all these years?

When the Dark Knight is taken down by a new enemy whose attacks he cannot counter, he uncovers a plot spanning generations...whose mastermind might be one of his closest allies! But who is the First Ally?

In ALL-STAR BATMAN VOL. 3, Scott Snyder is joined by Rafael Albuquerque and other superstar artists to pit Batman against his darkest enemies. Collects issues #10-14.

## All-Star Batman, Volume 3: The First Ally Details

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Author : Scott Snyder , Rafael Albuquerque (Penciler) , Jordie Bellaire (Colorist)

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# From Reader Review All-Star Batman, Volume 3: The First Ally for online ebook

## Sam Quixote says

Scott Snyder's All-Star Batman continues to be an ironically-named series with yet another sub-par entry in The First Ally. Alfred's old mentor shows up to do something while Bruce is doing something else with a trio of his rogues - yeah, it's not a great story.

And I say that as a big fan of Alfred - I'd totally read a spinoff series starring the butler, whether it's his adventures now or old war stories from when he was a younger man in the SAS - but what Snyder does with him here is just stupid. I liked the twist at the end of the first issue where the kid you think is Bruce turns out to be Alfred but everything after that was unconvincing with Snyder really forcing the Batman parallels into this contrived, crap origin.

I'm fine with Alfred as the Special Ops guy he's been for years now but his mentor, Briar, showing up and turning him into a ninja assassin felt way too much like Batman's past. Alfred isn't Batman - the effect is like trying to force a square peg into a round hole and it just doesn't work. Let him be an elite soldier rather than some lesser Batman! And speaking of pale imitations, I really didn't like the unimaginatively-named Nemesis either who's basically a Talon from Snyder's Court of Owls storyline. Ah, remember when Scott Snyder was good?

The whole book is a muddled affair. I wasn't totally sure what Penguin, Black Mask and Hush wanted with the Genesis Engine (or even cared about what exactly it did) and Batman was just reacting to them like he usually does. There's a failed pirate theme, there's a lot about fathers and sons (Alfred and his father, Alfred and Bruce, Alfred and Briar, Briar and his son, Briar and Nemesis) though it amounts to a hill o'beans.

It was also weirdly off-putting how Alfred kept referring to Bruce as his "son". I know that that's their relationship but I don't think I've ever heard Alfred overtly state it quite like that and it didn't feel right. Some things are best left unsaid, particularly stuff that's so self-evident to everyone involved who matter.

Snyder's American Vampire artist Rafael Albuquerque draws a badass Batmobile and some of his pages stood out - like the splash page of an unconscious underwater Batman being surrounded by "mermaids" - but for the most part the art wasn't that amazing. And, while I wasn't taken with Snyder's writing, I did enjoy some scenes with Alfred who gets up to some cool James Bond-type shenanigans.

Albuquerque and Rafael Scavone write the instantly forgettable backup where Batman's trying to stop Russian mobsters, gun-running, Gotham, blah blah blah - it's so boring.

For those few Batman fans out there waiting for a great Alfred book, The First Ally unfortunately ain't it. The very dull All-Star Batman, Volume 3 only highlights again how much Scott Snyder has overstayed his time on this character.

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## James DeSantis says

It brings me great sadness that I didn't enjoy this one that much. As I always say I admire Scott Snyder and

enjoy the majority of his work. His Batman run in New52 MADE me a Batman fan. Black Mirror to me is the BEST Batman story ever made. All-Star Batman volume 1-2 were decent, some good moments. Volume 3? I think is the biggest drop in quality to be frank.

This is a story about Alfred. Yes, Bruce is here, but this isn't his time to shine. It's time to see a Batman mission in the eyes of his Butler and father figure. The idea is to hunt down Hush but after we get to the meat of the story we see Alfred's old past start to resurface and mixed in with the current time situation. When a old dark past figure shows up with Alfred be able to help save the Dark Knight once more?

Good: I enjoyed Alfred's mindset. Going into his view of Bruce on a mission was both refreshing and quite frankly kind of sad. It was also nice to see him call Bruce his son naturally. I mean we all knew it but we don't hear it enough. Also I think the art was REALLY good and a step above even volume 1-2.

Bad: The fights were uninspiring throughout. The stakes didn't feel high. Alfred's past history was pretty dull to be honest. I also really really found the extra story, the mafia story after the main story, to be awfully boring. I didn't care about that one at all.

Overall All-Star batman comes to a end (in this format) and I'm pretty sad because it leaves A LOT to be desired for me. Now don't get me wrong. I can't wait to read Metal. I think Scott LOVES Batman. But...maybe give him a new character to work on? I need fresh stories and these felt like kind of throwaway stories. A 2 out of 5.

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### **Blindzider says**

A strong attempt by Snyder to fill in some backstory on Alfred, explaining his motivations for being a servant to Bruce as well as his myriad abilities. He also cements the father/son relationship between Alfred and Bruce and that's always a nice reminder. However, some of the details are a little too convenient, with Alfred's and Bruce's past lining up in parallel a little too often. Definitely one of the better arcs from Snyder IMHO.

Albuquerque's art is always hit or miss to me, but rarely is it below acceptable (although his writing on what seems like the backup stories was lacking.) I find the coloring on this volume more impressive though.

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### **Chelsea says**

This was just *amazing*!

Snyder remains my favorite Batman writer. He's the only one who's stories consistently make me enjoy Bruce as a character which is quite a feat. In his stories, I really get a compassionate understanding for Bruce's tireless pursuit to keep others from suffering the grief that he did. He's, to quote Alfred, "an absurd human being" but his goal is an admirable one. I preface this review with that because this book is very much not focused on Batman. It's focused on Alfred.

And I fucking loved it!

This was just outstanding! Every time I've read a story from Alfred's point of view, I've loved it. Robin: Year One was written that way and it's always a joy to read about Alfred's thoughts on his family. It's clear he loves them as though they were his blood and this was just a wonderful example of that. Alfred continuously refers to Bruce as his son throughout the narration and you can feel his attachment to Bruce. It's beautiful and I can't describe it well enough. It's just so incredibly heartfelt and dedicated and I love Alfred as a character so, so much.

"Over the years, my son has developed a bit of a flair for the theatrical. I like to think he gets it from me. But really, if I'm being honest with myself...it's something all his own. The world knows my son as a hero. And he is. Never stopping... even when I beg him to. He's an absurd human being, is the truth... bloody absurd. And I love him for it."

This volume tells Alfred's story. And what an interesting one it is! It tells of Alfred's rebellious past and his attempts to get back at his father for neglecting the Pennyworth family to take care of the Waynes. It tells of how he entered the S.A.S partially out of revenge and fell in with a man called Briar. This story is all told with an interesting tie in to pirate stories. Alfred loved them as a kid: stories of rebellious children who left home and fell in with rag tag crews of pirates and looked to the pirate captain as a mentor. That mentor is later revealed to be less than the hero the young boy thought them to be and they return home before they go down with the ship. Snyder tells this story beautifully.

The irony of Alfred resenting his father's dedication to the Waynes and later become just as much, if not even more dedicated to this family goes without saying. It's one of the more beautiful aspects of the Batfamily history. Alfred loves Bruce and his grandchildren and I've never doubted that. I'm just so surprised and so, so happy that Snyder appears to be one of the only writers to understand that aspect with other writers referring to Dick as Bruce's "best friend" and Damian as Bruce's "real son". Snyder understands that the Batfamily is not about blood.

"All I know is that I love him with everything in me."

This entire volume is the contrast of Briar wanting Alfred to be the son he never had: a perfect Dark Knight with no personal attachments that can be used against him. This is contrasted with Alfred fretting that he may have been the worst thing to ever happen to Bruce. Alfred posits that the pirate stories may have been cautionary tales for parents as, the kids always come home in the end because the pirate captain tries to drag the kids down a bad path. Alfred talks of trying to lure Bruce away from his mission but Bruce ends up right back in the suit every single time.

"Maybe I'm the bad captain, the pirate father, the one indulging him, keeping him away from shore. Prolonging a more and more painful end. Perhaps I can still become the good father. The one who walks away, forces him to come to grips.

Alfred also speaks of Bruce loving pirate tales but hating the endings.

"Bruce loved every bit of it except for the end. For the life of him, he couldn't understand why anyone would leave the island for civilization."

It's also worth it to note that Alfred's love of pirate tales reminds me Dick's love for Robin Hood. I love that the batkids all have their own unique attachments to literary works.

Alfred steadfastly holds onto Bruce and tries to keep him safe in this story and Bruce does the same to Alfred. Throughout the entire arc, Alfred has this internal war within himself that is so fascinating considering the many times he's questioned Bruce's treatment of the batkids. Alfred has always wondered if he did the right thing helping create the Batman and keep him alive and even as he doubts himself, he continues to help.

So, this is a little rambling but I'm honestly just in awe at such a beautifully written, complex, wonderful story. This series has been such a gift! So many out of the box Batman stories that are unlike the other Batsy stories we're getting right now. This series tells stories that actually make me root for Batman and this one made me root for Alfred and want to give him a hug.

Alfred Pennyworth is one of the best fathers in comic book history.

"My son. I have helped him build a pirate story all his own, complete with caves and flying ships and magic cars. I have helped him keep this story going long past the time I should have closed the book. Have I done the right thing?"

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## **Anthony says**

I have to say, All Star turned out to be a fairly disappointing book and follow up to Batman that features some great art

The story never really sat that well with me, in any of the volumes, and I found it a bit overly convulsive and hard to follow in parts

This volume has flashbacks to Pennyworth as a younger man and a threat that's comeback to haunt him in present day, while following some threads from the previous volumes

But it's always kind of...eh or boring

From what I've read of METAL so far, that looks to be a better follow up to Snyder's long Batman run than this, and there is also the finale to All Star to come (in some form) by both Snyder and SGM, which should be cool

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## **Wing Kee says**

Kinda good and kinda fractured.

World: Albuquerque art is brilliant and he's perfect for this series. The world building here is solid and the best part of the story. The premise of a pirate story and the story about Alfred's past is always great. It was good.

Story: The story on premise is good and I liked some parts of it. The pacing was alright but a bit fractured and a bit disjointed. The story moved along well and the emotions involved was good with Alfred being the narrator. However the premise and the villain really did not do this story any favours and the story pieces was a bit too complicated for it's own good. It was aight.

Characters: Alfred is good and he gets a lot of development. However it's not perfect, it's a bit choppy, there were some great ideas and scenes and then some injointed stuff especially with Briar. I liked the idea of Briar but it also felt a little bit more time could have fleshed it out.

A end to a series that should have been better than what happened. But oh well.

Onward to the next book!

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## **Logan says**

Good! Sad to see this series go so soon :( But at least this volume was pretty decent, I thought the story was good and I liked how it evolved around Alfred and his past! Its not an essential series, but I do recommend this Batman series!

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## **Frédéric says**

All 3 volumes of Snyder's All-Star Batman show such an appalling sustained effort of mediocrity it's almost comendable.

This volume is centered on Alfred. Snyder incidentally develops what Alfred became after his years as a SAS and before his position as Thomas Wayne's butler. I could have bought if it hadn't been plagued by pages of maudlin off monologues. And that's the only thing I could've bought because the rest of the story is a confused and long trip through low stakes and crappy characters.

2-3 things to salvage from this: First the nice touch of Alfred who overtly speaks of Bruce as his son, that was kinda moving along with the permanent sad pride/anguish that envelops him when Batman goes on a mission.

Then the hilarious scene when Batman, unmasked by the Penguin and his acolytes is mocked for making a poor impersonation of Bruce Wayne!

Rafael Albuquerque didn't impress me much either. His quick and dynamic distinctive style here verges on sloppy and caricature. Nice coloring by Jordie Bellaire though, in a different style and chart than customary.

There's also a side story involving the Russian mob plotted by Albuquerque and Rafael Scavone, drawn by Sebastian Fiumara that spells boredom in twelve different ways.

In conclusion Snyder really should change from Batsy for a while. His impressive take on the character has long faded away and now it's becoming kind of embarrassing to see him reaching a new low at every book.

As for Albuquerque, after his pathetic Ei8ht book, there's but one conclusion to take : stick to pencils.

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## **Chad says**

Snyder steals from Geoff Johns's Batman: Earth One and establishes Alfred as a former SAS agent. He tries to establish Alfred as the first attempt at Batman somewhat unsuccessfully. The whole story is a continuous attempt to parallel Arthur and Bruce's lives. Albuquerque's art is not bad, but it's gotten darker with this volume, masking some of the detail.

Also contained is a backup story where Batman goes undercover in a Russian gang. The story is just OK but Sebastian Fiumara's art is very good. His art has come a long way. I remember disliking his early work immensely.

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## **Donovan says**

Batman as a modern day pirate adventure. Alfred as mercenary—not new, but Snyder starts with a very brief idea by Johns and builds this into a fuller, richer history. Most importantly, Alfred as father—an idea usually vague or subtle, but here fully embraced.

This may be my favorite All Star Batman volume because of how tender Alfred is with Bruce and how honest he is with himself. I learned more about Alfred here than any other comic. And this tenderness is somehow delicately balanced with brutal violence. I think Alfred's narration also bridges scenes past and present.

Briefly—the artwork is exquisite. Rafael Albuquerque has a great style, like Jock meets Capullo. And the backup story was great too—written by Albuquerque and Rafael Scavon, illustrated by a very Frank Miller-esque Sebastian Fiumara.

Although episodic, I think Snyder achieved what he set out to do with All Star Batman—take Batman out of Gotham and show different sides to these characters in different settings. There's never really been a “road trip” Batman story, and I think the variation and alternate pacing work in this dynamic.

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## **Lashaan Balasingam (Bookidote) says**

**You can find my review on my blog by clicking [here](#).**

It is unfortunate that this series takes an end with volume 3 as Scott Snyder takes a leave of absence to work on other projects. While he states that he has countless more ideas to share with his fans and plans on



bringing back this series, the wait is going to be a killer. All-Star Batman: The First Ally is most definitely the best story-arc in this series and its focus isn't Batman again but rather his trusted partner, mentor and father figure, Alfred Pennyworth.

Collecting issues #10-15 as well as featuring a little story arc at the end, this volume sticks with Rafael Albuquerque's art style and presents us a modern pirate story with an underlying father and son theme to capture the raw and powerful bond that keeps two of the most iconic characters together. I personally haven't seen many stories that put Alfred at the front of the line, but I really loved what Scott Snyder does with this character in The First Ally.

What is it about? The story shuffles around with two distinct stories, one from the past and one from the present. Narrated by Alfred, we're taken upon an oversea adventure where Bruce Wayne infiltrates an operation by pretending to be another villain who looks like him (maybe you can guess who that is?) but finds out that it isn't as easy as it seems. As plans go pear-shaped, Bruce finds himself on a hunt for safety. The story quickly unfolds and reveals a new character who catches them off-guard, but forces Alfred to connect the dots, past with present.

The pirate story theme that overlays this volume was truly well-done and, with Alfred's narration, really helps in convey the core ideas of it all in a stunning fashion. Scott Snyder also does a marvelous job in making it an emotional story by tying in Alfred's relationship with Batman and putting emphasis on the father figure role that roamed under the waters throughout the history Batman's legacy. The angle pursued is truly beautiful and fully explored in this story arc, and honestly elevates this story to a higher level.

The artwork easily captures the essence of Scott Snyder's story and I'm really glad that Rafael Albuquerque stuck around for the whole story arc in this volume. Unlike the previous volume, this one easily felt much more complete and consistent thanks to that alone. I also really love how his art style successfully delivers the brutality and the softness at the same time, and I think it might have something to do with the colour palette privileged.

What however kept me at bay from calling this a pure masterpiece is the forced parallels drawn between Alfred and Batman regarding the Dark Knight mantle. I wish Scott Snyder had restrained himself a bit on that regard as it made the coincidences feel unnatural when you took a moment to reflect upon it. Besides that, The First Ally was an incredibly original story that has strong themes and an emotional finish.

Rumours have it that Scott Snyder might get back to writing more stories for All-Star Batman once DC Comics introduces a brand new comic book format (prestige-style). There are no information on what exactly that entails, but I do love the idea that it ain't over yet and that it might return with something really new for the comic book world to dip their toe in!

Yours truly,

Lashaan | Blogger and Book Reviewer  
Official blog: <https://bookidote.com/>

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## Rory Wilding says

Although Scott Snyder has been writing for DC for close to a decade, he particularly is fond of writing the

adventures of the Dark Knight through numerous cycles, from his Jock-illustrated horror-based *Detective Comics* run to his New 52 Greg Capullo-drawn run on the main *Batman* title. However, these cycles have to end and although Batman will continue the good fight, Snyder is someone who likes to show a sense of finality in his stories, as seen here, his final volume of *All-Star Batman*.

Please click [here](#) for my full review.

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### **Quentin Wallace says**

This volume showed much of Alfred's past we'd never seen before, and much of it had really never even been hinted at. I think there's also a new villain that may be returning at some that's introduced here. Overall I found this one a little too wordy and for some reason I found myself slogging through it rather than truly enjoying it. Not terrible but I could take it or leave it.

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### **Samantha Luce says**

Love the artwork. Presents an interesting look into Alfred's past. Snyder's books are always a treat to read. Multi-Layered stories and primo imagery.

Received a Netgalley ARC for an unbiased reviewed.

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### **Chris Lemmerman says**

[Read as single issues]

Scott Snyder ends another run on a Batman book as All-Star Batman comes to a close in this final story featuring villains from both his past and Alfred's.

The First Ally is a bit of a predictable story; it's not really anything we haven't heard before at this point. Bad guy from the past returns to exact revenge on Bruce/Alfred, etc. The real gem of the story comes in the examination of Alfred and Bruce's relationship, which Scott Snyder really understands to its very core. He also manages to make this seemingly unrelated story very important to the rest of the series and tie all three stories together quite neatly.

The back-up stories collected here are less impressive. They also tell a story from the past, but they're not particularly compelling. The villains are pretty bland, and the story moves at a breakneck pace because it's only 8 pages per issue. I'm glad it's collected here for completeness, but I could have done without it just as well.

The art is by Snyder's American Vampire collaborator Rafael Albuquerque; they work perfectly together, and Albuquerque's art is always great. It's interesting to see how Jordie Bellaire's colouring affects the book differently to Albuquerque's usual colourist, Dave McCaig. I would also point out that American Vampire is still on hiatus, so it's a bit disappointing to see Snyder and Albuquerque here when they have that story still hanging unresolved.

The weakest of the three All-Star Batman stories easily, but still good fun. The art balances out the mediocre back-up strip.

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