

**Brian, what can you tell us about *The Joker*?**

It's dark, it's disturbing... inky, oily, unapologetic noir. It's the story of a crime boss-- in this case Joker-- reclaiming the city he lost when he got locked up.

**How did you approach writing *The Joker*?**

I dove right in the deep end with him. I found he was a character that couldn't be half-assed. His story grabbed me by the throat while I was writing it, and dragged me to some very bad places-- much like what happens to Jonny Frost, the low-level thug who acts as the story's narrator.

**What aspects of his character did you choose to focus on, and why?**

Strange at it seems, his struggle to control-- Gotham City for sure, and its criminal underworld, but also himself. Like... he's insane, but he could be even "insaner," and he knows it. I played with that notion.

**The characters, situations and action are all rooted in a gritty reality, with very little superhero/comic book-y aspects. What made you gravitate toward a more street-level portrayal of Gotham and its residents?**

It just feels right to me. I think Gotham City works best this way; a twisted reflection of our own urban realities. It really is a town without pity.

**What is it about Lee Bermejo that makes him the ideal collaborator on this, after you guys teamed up on *Lex Luthor*?**

Lee definitely shares the same sensibilities that I have. There's a lot of mutual respect too; we want each other to succeed.

**What did he bring to the project that elevated it for you?**

Lee's artwork is stunning. He absolutely nails the mood of this story-- and Joker himself. I don't think readers will see the character in the same way again after reading this book. His work redefines.

**Why do the Joker and Batman fit in with these kinds of stories so well?**

Like Gotham City, they too are reflections of our own reality, I think. There's nothing super or paranormal about them. They're human, only "turned up to eleven."

**What do you hope readers get out of reading *The Joker*?**

An experience-- I hesitate to say enjoyment. Let's say thrilled. I hope they are thrilled. I hope they find that while the criminals of Gotham are scared of Batman, they're absolutely terrified of Joker.