



## The Greatest Batman Stories Ever Told, Vol. 1

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Steve Englehart*

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THE GREATEST BATMAN STORIES EVER TOLD is an anthology that takes the reader through the many different incarnations of Batman through the last 60 years. Reprinting stories from the Dark Knight's entire career, this book portrays the Batman as equal parts crime fighter, detective, and super hero. An overview of the entire Batman mythos, these tales feature some of Batman's most famous allies and foes, including Superman, Robin, Commissioner Gordon, the Joker, Penguin, Catwoman and the Scarecrow.

## The Greatest Batman Stories Ever Told, Vol. 1 Details

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# **From Reader Review The Greatest Batman Stories Ever Told, Vol. 1 for online ebook**

## **Rich Meyer says**

Naturally, this book is a bit out of date, considering it was created for the 50th anniversary of the Caped Crusader. That means great stories like the Killing Joke aren't in here, and thankfully none of the New 52 dreck either.

Pretty much any collection of Batman stories is a good read, no matter from what era they come from. This has a lot of interesting ones, from Wein & Simonson's excellent take on the Calendar Man, Alan Brennert allowing the Dark Knight to save his parents on an alternate world, Carmine Infantino drawing the Blockbuster for the first time, the Joker and the Penguin teaming up in the golden age, O'Neil and Adams providing a great Two-Face tale and Englehart and Rogers reviving Deadshot.

Strangely, yet thankfully, the over-reprinted "Case of the Chemical Syndicate", the very first Batman story is NOT included.

Good, solid comic book reading for an afternoon or two.

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## **Jamie says**

I have owned this book for over 25 years but my younger self couldn't get through the first section of the oldest comics. Now I can appreciate those stories and comic book writing style for what it was and for when it was. By the time the book got to the 1960s and especially the 1970s the writing and style were more my speed and I started to enjoy the book much more.

Still, kind of find it hard to believe these are the greatest Batman stories ever told, and the editors of this book, in the numerous essays, go into detail on why certain stories were left out. While their logic made complete sense, those sentiments were repeated so much I got the sense they agreed with me that this perhaps isn't the definite collection of the greatest Batman stories ever told, but rather a collection of seminal and good example of Batman over the years.

Glad I finally read this book cover to cover, some good stuff here. Yet, because they set expectations a little high with the title, readers, like myself are bound to be disappointed overall.

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## **Michael Allan Leonard says**

You're pretty much doomed right from the start when you're trying to select a small handful of stories out of hundreds of them over several decades and hang the title of 'Greatest' on them, but this collection at best hits the mark about half the time: the fact that there is repeated discussion of the criteria and mentality behind the selection process, and who was involved, is the equivalent of pulling out a pre-emptive bulletproof Bat-Shield from the utility belt.

There are several classic stories here, including a sort of subset of stories that showed the way Batman's origin slowly unfurled over the years, adding slight new details that make them more than just a simple retelling, and a number of good representatives of both specific eras and creators. The Joker is barely present through -- understandably, there were so many Joker stories that they were given their own separate volume. Batman works best when stripped free of the continuing drama of ongoing soap-opera subplots and focusing on powerful, complete, one-part stories, and there are a number of prime examples here, particularly from the Bronze Age.

Likewise, there's some true headscratchers, not worth really anyone's time aside from maybe the creators who might have got some kind of reprint royalty: a Bat-Mite story in which he breaks the fourth wall to pursue his own solo feature by harassing DC staff is a complete waste of space -- I'd have rather seen some of the cool blueprints and technical diagrams of vehicles and maps of the Batcave that have appeared over the years. For some reason, lame C-list villains like Deadshot and Calendar Man get entries while icons like the Riddler are completely absent, and some stories that should've appeared, like Batman's debut in Detective #27, or the first appearance of Ra's al Ghul and Talia, were left out because they'd already been 'reprinted many times' ... which makes the whole idea of a Greatest collection kind of moot if you're leaving off key stories to be replaced with more mediocre, filler-type fare. No one on the editorial side seems to be certain whether this is aimed at the new or casual fan, or the hardcore one who perhaps owned several other reprint collections, and the book suffers for it.

While there is enough good material here to warrant a look, the book fails as a definitive time-capsule representation of the character's legacy, the kind of thing you hand to a younger fan or someone not well versed in Bat-history. Most readers curious about past eras would be better off simply selecting individual digital back issues from Comixology that they find personally intriguing, because the curation element here is very weak and sketchy.

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### **Kari Trenten says**

This is a 1988 collection of Batman comics gathered together from his beginnings in Detective Comics under the guiding hand of Bob Kane to a Golden Age tale of Batman facing the Scarecrow and his worst fears. It offers a wide variety of Batman favorites over the years, showing his evolution as a costumed superhero. Beginning in darkness, shifting to a lighter period with a Robin at his side, only to return to darkness once more, Batman faces a variety of classic foes, overcomes a many a challenge and a mystery. Readers get exposure not only to the different faces of Batman over the years, but to the different styles of comic book writing which were during those times. This book is an educational opportunity for those interested in the history of comics as well as an opportunity to get to know one of the most popular and enduring superheroes within their pages. For all of these things, I give this four stars.

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### **Matej says**

The beginning of this collection is what you'd expect, quite naive, at times crazy, sometimes totally out of character, but above all, fun.

The only downside is that if you have read only modern Batman comics, this collection will feel foreign, almost as if it is a different character that could have inspired the modern Batman, and I'm sorry to say, but

by the end of the collection, it felt more like a chore to read it.

If you are interested in a big sampler of Batman stories that are from the 80s and older, definitely pick this up, but don't expect it to be dark or brooding, although Batman does kill a fair amount of people in it.

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## Brad says

This is the best they've got? I believe they are mistaken. Of the 25 stories collected here, I could only say six felt worth reading, which isn't even to say each of those six were great so much as they were not completely terrible by modern standards. (The companion collection of *The Greatest Joker Stories Ever Told* has the same problem.) Where this collection falls short is in trying to offer lesser-known stories the choosing committee have an affinity for, rather than what the title promises to be.

Dick Giordano notes in his introduction that one of the goals of this collection was to collect "stories that introduced new characters or villains; origins of one kind or another; important events; or stories that in some way or another, illuminated some important element of the Batman mythos." (10) What a great idea...that they chose to ignore in favor of showcasing a variety of artists, writers, styles, tones, etc. It would have been far more rewarding if they had made the book of all of the stories Robert Greenberger's "Endnotes" mentions being cut (mostly first appearances and quintessential storylines of favorite characters), simply for being reprinted elsewhere. (Their frustrating lack self-marketing means that they do not ever name where a casual reader might track those stories down). It would have been great to have that beginner's guide to Batman with, maybe not the "greatest," but the *essential* stories. Instead, there's this collection, full of nostalgia for some pretty bland and weird stuff (like the Penguin's mother visiting town).

Admittedly, it is difficult for me to appreciate some of this early-era Batman stuff. In it, he is never conflicted, acting downright cheery at times and smiling a lot. Those stories do not even hint at the complex character he would become. He's like a neighborhood do-gooder in a hokey "It's curtains for you" melodrama. In addition, his "detective" work in this collection mostly consists of "There's the bad guy, let's go punch him," reckless moves (jumping from one airborne plane onto another) and conveniently effective guessing (which is less deductive reasoning, so much as it is "and here's a less-than-tidy attempt at a resolution"). Nowadays, storytelling styles have changed in comics so that things are shown more than explained, affecting both dialogue (while the witty turn-of-phrase still makes an appearance, nowadays natural speech is patterned and exclamation points used sparingly...rather than flagrantly) and expository text boxes (which no longer appears in nearly every panel, nor features radio drama-like narration. Nowadays, those boxes of text are mostly just functional, like when naming a setting).

But changes in those conventions doesn't account for some of the bad plots in these pages, which are often given a haphazard and convoluted resolution. Others are just odd: three stories with distinctly different ape/gorilla bad guys? Calendar Man? And this Bat-Mite thing that happens with zero context or explanation? It doesn't help that the threat-level isn't particularly high, given that the villains are all robbing the rich or stealing from museums, rather than being engaged in darker, more harmful and far-reaching behavior.

Ultimately, what makes these stories "the greatest" is lost on this casual comics fan. Perhaps if each of the stories were given a mini-introduction that explained its significance (to both the choosing committee and Batman lore) I could understand the reason why some of this bilge was reprinted.

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The six stories that felt worth reading to me were:

"The Origin of Batman" (66-78) (view spoiler)

"Half an Evil" (177-191) (view spoiler)

"There is No Hope in Crime Alley" (237-248) (view spoiler)

"The Deadshot Ricochet" (264-280) (view spoiler)

"To Kill a Legend" (302-320) (view spoiler)

"The Autobiography of Bruce Wayne!" (321-343) (view spoiler)

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### **Marjorie C. Deeb says**

De DC Comics ; Batman est mon héros favori. J'aime la noirceur et la souffrance de ce personnage. Et tout ça, Batman Anthologie, le montre et l'explique très bien ! De 1939 à nos jours, nous découvrons à travers les planches de ce comics, les 20 récits les plus légendaires du Chevalier Noir de Gotham City. Si je ne devais choisir qu'un récit, cela serait, "Mon Commencement et ma probable fin" (Il y en a d'autres, mais je voulais en dire au moins un !) En bref, une petite pépite ce comics !

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### **Chris Schaben says**

Really a hit and miss collection of Batman comics. Some of them deserved to be in an anniversary collection while others had me scratching my head as to why anybody would possibly give recognition to a mediocre or bad comic (I'm looking at you, Bat-Mite!) There were a few good ones, but I'm sure there are better books out there that celebrate his legacy with a more definitive collection of "greatest" comics.

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### **David Leslie says**

I bought this back in '89 just after the 89 Burton film which was the first Batman thing I really loved & I still do even though Nolans films far surpassed Burtons film(s) in every way(except non sensical fun perhaps)that film was the reason I bought this collection & the fact that it includes Son of the Demon alone makes it worth the money. That 1 story was an OGN after all & a very good 1 at that especially the artwork which was amazing for '88 but could be pretty brutal at times,after all it was a late 80s Batman GN.the other non oneshot storys vary from some of Bob Kanes earliest storys which are more of intrest than fun reads but there are a few classics like The Autobiography of Bruce Wayne/To kill a legend/The Batman that nobody Knows which remains one of the best silver age one shots IMO & Robin Dies at Midnight which is another of my favourite Silver storys and one of the main and the many earlier Batman storys that 'Morrison's run made cannon pre new52.This is a must for any diehard Batman fan.Just dont go into it expecting Snyder type tales,some of the ones I mentioned are more fun if not as gritty.Son of the Demon is worth the asking price alone which was cheaper than the actual Graphic novel of SotD back in '89!£7:99 if your intrested which is a steal for all the history your getting!

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## Michael says

This is the late 80s edition of Batman's greatest stories, not the more recent version. Great Simonson cover on this book.

Stories are mostly pretty good - the O'Neil/Adams stories from the 70s are the highlight, but Archie Goodwin spins a strong tale. Bill Finger and Gardner Fox write the stories that inspire Matt Wagner's recent *Monster Men* and *Mad Monk* miniseries (for 1940s stories, both are generally enjoyable). The mid-40s to late-60s stories aren't very good, and the 70s story about Bat-Mite wreaking havoc with the real-life DC editors and creators strikes me as something that the creators liked a lot more than the fans (because, frankly, it is not only the book's low point, but one of Batman's!)

Still, O'Neil, Goodwin and Englehart make this book a pretty enjoyable set of Batman classics.

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## Andy says

INCLUDING BEST SELLING GRAPHIC NOVEL: SON OF THE DEMON

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## Gabriel Gutierrez says

I chose this book because my friend recommended it to me. This book contains stories of Batman and Robin from the 50's and 60's. One of the stories is about Batman and Robin meeting Clayface. Clayface is a clay shifting monster who defeats Batman and Robin at first then Batman finally defeats it by freezing and smashing it into pieces. My favorite quote was "I cannot defeat this monster, it is too strong!", because I have never seen Batman give up on an enemy before and it's interesting to see him give up on Clayface this easily. I think the author's writing style was very creative and showing off the most authentic Batman stories ever. His point of view is to show the classic Batman and Batman enemies in the 50's and 60's. I would recommend this book to any fan of comics and superheroes because you do not find these authentic comics just anywhere.

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## Josh Lafollette says

This collection gives a decent summary of Batman's publication history from the 1940s to the early 80s, but the title is pretty misleading. The first half of the collection is incredibly mediocre, and the second half is hit-and-miss at best. Considering how many Batman stories have been published since his debut in 1939, it's truly baffling that these were the stories that made the cut. Of the twenty-five stories selected, only "No Hope in Crime Alley" and "The Autobiography of Bruce Wayne" are really noteworthy, although "Man-Bat Over Vegas" is just as amusingly schlocky as it sounds. It's tempting to suggest that these stories were randomly selected with no concern for their quality, but even that would probably have yielded better results.

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## Brandt says

I've been immersing myself in Batman and Superman stories in the lead up to the release of *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice* and I actually got this 25 year old collection because the ISBN number on the volume is actually the one for *The Greatest SUPERMAN Stories Ever Told*. However, I didn't mind this collection. Of course, there are weaknesses with a volume that proclaims that it is the **greatest** Batman stories doesn't contain *The Dark Knight Returns* or *The Killing Joke* or any of the multi-issue Batman arcs, but given that this collection was released for Batman's 50th anniversary, the choices in here are quite good. Probably a must read for people who want to read good historical *Batman*.

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## Joni says

Interesante selección de historietas de Batman para apreciar tanto la evolución del personaje como del medio narrativo. Más que la calidad de las historias sobresale la importancia de primeras apariciones, formación de la personalidad, construcción del carácter. Se incluyen historias de finales del treinta a mediados de los ochentas. De la inocencia primeriza, sus limitados dibujantes y coloristas de mal gusto a las bizarreadas de la Silver Age y el camino justo antes de llegar a *Killing Joke* y el cambio de paradigma y tonalidad desde Batman al resto del mundo comiquero.

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