

BATMAN

THE DARK KNIGHT

FIRST APPEARANCE DETECTIVE COMICS #27 (May 1939)

STATUS Hero REAL NAME Bruce Wayne

OCCUPATION Industrialist; philanthropist; crime fighter

BASE Gotham City

HEIGHT 6ft 2in WEIGHT 210 lbs EYES Blue HAIR Black

SPECIAL POWERS/ABILITIES

Master detective with a brilliant deductive mind; quite possibly the greatest martial artist alive; Bat-costume is bulletproof and fire-resistant, featuring a weighted cape and a cowl outfitted with night-vision technology and communications arrays; utility belt contains an arsenal of crime-fighting gear, including various types of offensive Batarangs, de-cel jumlines and grapnels, micro-camera, smoke pellets, acetylene torch, gas mask, rebreather, and flexi-cuffs among other miniaturized non-lethal weapons; employs a variety of detective gadgets, including micro-computers and crime scene analysis kits; maintains a fleet of high-tech and high-powered vehicles, chief among them the Batmobile, Batcycle, Batboat, Batplane, and Batcopter; super-sophisticated Batcave headquarters houses training facilities, forensics laboratories, computer databases, and maintenance bays for all Bat-vehicles.



ALLEY SLAYING Two bullets from a gangster's gun destroyed Bruce's young life.

A FAMILY OUTING to the cinema ended in tragedy for young Bruce Wayne. Walking homeward, Bruce, his father, Thomas, and mother, Martha, accidentally ventured into Gotham City's notorious "Crime Alley" and were accosted by a mugger. Not

content merely to rob the wealthy family, the hoodlum—whose identity was never determined—shot Dr. Thomas and Martha Wayne dead before fleeing into the darkness. As he knelt beside his parents' bodies, Bruce swore to avenge them. After the police arrived, Bruce was comforted by Dr. Leslie Thompkins (see THOMPKINS, LESLIE M.D.). Dr. Thompkins and Alfred Pennyworth (see PENNYWORTH, ALFRED) helped arrange matters so that Gotham's Social Services would not take Bruce into care. In this way, both Dr. Thompkins and Alfred enabled Bruce to realize his dream of becoming a crusader against crime.

THE YOUNG BRUCE WAYNE

At age 14, Bruce embarked on a journey that took him to every continent as he sought to learn all the skills he would need to keep his vow. He studied criminology, forensics, and criminal psychology, and learned from manhunters and martial artists, mastering every fighting style. In time, Bruce forged himself into a living weapon to wage war on crime and injustice. On his return to Gotham, Bruce stalked street thugs as a plainclothes vigilante. Beaten by the very people he intended to

protect, he barely survived his first night out. As he sat bleeding in his study at Wayne Manor, Bruce knew that he had to first strike fear in the hearts of his foes. Just then, a bat crashed through the study window, giving Bruce the inspiration he needed.

BATMAN BEGINS

Establishing a secret headquarters in the caves beneath his mansion, Bruce became Batman, a Dark Knight to protect Gotham and its citizens from vice and villainy. Alfred Pennyworth remained his confidant, tending to injuries and offering sage advice—whether requested or not!

Batman became an urban legend, a cautionary tale that sent shivers through the city's underworld. This Caped Crusader found a friend in Captain James Gordon (see GORDON, JAMES W.), a Gotham cop who didn't approve of Batman's methods, but appreciated the results of his nightly crime fighting. Batman's Rogues Gallery grew to include a host of bizarre criminals, such as the JOKER, CATWOMAN, TWO-FACE, and the PENGUIN. As his enemies increased, help arrived in the form of another young boy left parentless by brutal crime.

HITTING BACK Batman lashes out at the Joker for killing Jason Todd, the second Robin.



FIRST FLIGHT Batman begins his war on crime with an aerial assault upon Gotham's goons.



DARK INSPIRATION Wishing to strike fear among the criminal community, Bruce made the bat his symbol and totem.



BROKEN BAT

Tragedy again struck when the terrorist BANE, after forcing Batman to fight many of his most powerful foes, broke Batman's back. Jean-Paul Valley (AZRAEL) took on the Dark Knight's role while Bruce recuperated from his injuries. This interim Batman was more violent and unstable; Bruce returned to action as soon as his body had healed and he had regained his fighting spirit, with the help of the ruthless martial-arts mistress LADY SHIVA. Bruce took back the mantle of the Bat by force, but Jean-Paul Valley remained a staunch ally as the hero Azrael until his death.



KNIGHTFALL Bane delivers the final cruel blow to defeat an exhausted Batman.



THE LONG HALLOWEEN

One criminal case still haunts Batman. Early in his career, the Dark Knight failed to identify the serial killer known as Holiday and prevent a string of murders targeting the Falcone crime family. "The Long Halloween" ultimately resulted in D.A. Harvey Dent's tragic disfigurement and led to Dent becoming murdering gangster Two-Face. In that regard, Batman lost both a friend and an ally.

DARK TIMES

The Dark Knight helped maintain law and order in Gotham City when a contagion struck, killing tens of thousands. He was also the city's saviour in the anarchic aftermath of a cataclysmic earthquake. With Gotham declared a No Man's Land by the government, Batman and his allies, including a new BATGIRL, fought a yearlong struggle to take the town back block by block. Gotham City was eventually rebuilt, and Batman redoubled his efforts to make known to all returning criminals that a Dark Knight defender still ruled the night. More recently, Batman faced several more personal losses. The first involved the end of his "working" relationship with Commissioner Gordon, who left the police force after a near-fatal shooting. Batman's clandestine ties to the G.C.P.D. would never be the same with his friend and ally retired.



SOLOMON GRUNDY The creature born on a Monday in Slaughter Swamp is among many monsters Batman battles every night of the week.

KEY STORYLINES

- **BATMAN #401-404 (FEBRUARY-MAY 1987):** The Dark Knight's tumultuous beginnings as a costumed crime fighter are chronicled in "Batman: Year One."
- **BATMAN #492 (MAY 1993):** As the epic, multipart "Knightfall" begins, the Caped Crusader fights exhaustion to enemies loosed by Bane, the villain who would ultimately break the Bat.
- **BATMAN: CATAclysm/BATMAN: NO MAN'S LAND (TPB COLLECTIONS):** Batman's greatest battle begins as Gotham City is rocked by an earthquake. This leaves the city reduced to rubble and abandoned to anarchy by all except the Dark Knight and his closest allies.

BRUCE WAYNE: MURDERER?

Not long after, Bruce was accused of murdering journalist Vesper Fairchild (see FAIRCHILD, VESPER), actually slain by the assassin Cain (see CAIN, DAVID) on the orders of then-President Lex Luthor (see LUTHOR, LEX), a business rival. Bruce was vindicated, but Vesper's death served as a stark reminder why close relationships run contrary to Batman's mostly solitary mission. However, Batman still appreciates the aid of his crime-fighting partners, and the value of teamwork.

He has long been a member of the JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA and assembled the first OUTSIDERS team to take action against criminals the authorities could not touch.

GUARDED LOVE Bruce Wayne's latest romance was with his bodyguard, Sasha Bordeaux, now a government agent.

BATMAN TODAY

Batman continues to watch over Gotham as its staunchest defender. Moreover, since his parents' killer has never been apprehended, Bruce knows that the Dark Knight's crusade could be an endless struggle to find "the one that got away." Meanwhile, Batman fights to ensure that no one else suffers the collateral damage of random crime and senseless violence as he did. SB

TRUST Batman's newest nemesis struck at him by being both friend and foe. Ultimately, Batman learned that Hush was his childhood chum, Tommy Elliot.



A FAMILY AFFAIR

The addition of ROBIN to his nightly crusade helped Batman in more ways than he would ever admit. However, when Dick Grayson embarked on his own path as NIGHTWING, the Batcave became a lonelier place for the Dark Knight, especially after Jason Todd's murder and the crippling of Barbara Gordon (see BATGIRL and ORACLE), both suffered at the hands of the Joker. For a time, Batman operated strictly solo until young Tim Drake convinced the Dark Knight that he needed a Robin to give him hope.

FAMILY The Dark Knight counts Robin and Oracle among his trusted allies.

