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**Batman** is a fictional [superhero](/wiki/Superhero) appearing in [American comic books](/wiki/American_comic_book) published by [DC Comics](/wiki/DC_Comics). The character was created by artist [Bob Kane](/wiki/Bob_Kane) and writer [Bill Finger](/wiki/Bill_Finger),[[1]](#cite_note-1)[[2]](#cite_note-2) and first appeared in [*Detective Comics*](/wiki/Detective_Comics) #27 (May 1939). Originally named the **Bat-Man**, the character is also referred to by such epithets as the **Caped Crusader**, the [**Dark Knight**](/wiki/Dark_Knight_(nickname)), and the **World's Greatest Detective**.[[3]](#cite_note-3) Batman's [secret identity](/wiki/Secret_identity) is **Bruce Wayne**, an American [billionaire](/wiki/Billionaire), [playboy](/wiki/Playboy_(lifestyle)), [philanthropist](/wiki/Philanthropy), and owner of [Wayne Enterprises](/wiki/Wayne_Enterprises). After witnessing the murder of his parents [Thomas Wayne](/wiki/Thomas_Wayne) and [Martha Wayne](/wiki/Martha_Wayne) as a child, he swore revenge on criminals, an oath tempered by a sense of justice. Wayne trains himself physically and intellectually and crafts a [bat-inspired](/wiki/Batsuit) persona to fight crime.[[4]](#cite_note-4) Batman operates in the fictional [Gotham City](/wiki/Gotham_City), with assistance from various supporting characters, including his butler [Alfred](/wiki/Alfred_Pennyworth), police commissioner [Jim Gordon](/wiki/James_Gordon_(comics)), and vigilante allies such as [Robin](/wiki/Robin_(comics)). Unlike most superheroes, Batman does not possess any [superpowers](/wiki/Superpower_(ability)); rather, he relies on his genius intellect, physical prowess, martial arts abilities, detective skills, science and technology, vast wealth, intimidation, and indomitable will. A large assortment of villains make up Batman's [rogues gallery](/wiki/List_of_Batman_Family_adversaries), including his [archenemy](/wiki/Archenemy), the [Joker](/wiki/Joker_(comics)).

Batman became popular soon after his introduction in 1939 and gained his own comic book title, [*Batman*](/wiki/Batman_(comic_book)), the following year. As the decades went on, differing interpretations of the character emerged. The late 1960s [*Batman*](/wiki/Batman_(TV_series)) television series used a [camp](/wiki/Camp_(style)) aesthetic, which continued to be associated with the character for years after the show ended. Various creators worked to return the character to his dark roots, culminating in 1986 with [*The Dark Knight Returns*](/wiki/The_Dark_Knight_Returns) by [Frank Miller](/wiki/Frank_Miller_(comics)). The success of [Warner Bros.'](/wiki/Warner_Bros.) live-action [*Batman* feature films](/wiki/Batman_in_film) have helped maintain public interest in the character.[[5]](#cite_note-5) An American cultural icon, Batman has been licensed and adapted into a [variety of media](/wiki/Batman_franchise_media), from radio to television and film, and appears on a variety of merchandise sold all over the world, such as toys and video games. The character has also intrigued psychiatrists, with many trying to understand the character's psyche. In May 2011, Batman placed second on IGN's Top 100 Comic Book Heroes of All Time,[[6]](#cite_note-6) after [Superman](/wiki/Superman). [*Empire*](/wiki/Empire_(magazine)) magazine listed him second in their 50 Greatest Comic Book Characters of All Time. The character has been portrayed in both film and television by [Lewis Wilson](/wiki/Lewis_Wilson), [Robert Lowery](/wiki/Robert_Lowery_(actor)), [Adam West](/wiki/Adam_West), [Michael Keaton](/wiki/Michael_Keaton), [Kevin Conroy](/wiki/Kevin_Conroy), [Val Kilmer](/wiki/Val_Kilmer), [George Clooney](/wiki/George_Clooney), [Christian Bale](/wiki/Christian_Bale), [Bruce Greenwood](/wiki/Bruce_Greenwood), [Peter Weller](/wiki/Peter_Weller), and [Ben Affleck](/wiki/Ben_Affleck).

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## Publication history[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

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### Creation[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

In early 1939, the success of [Superman](/wiki/Superman) in [*Action Comics*](/wiki/Action_Comics) prompted editors at [National Comics Publications](/wiki/National_Comics_Publications) (the future DC Comics) to request more superheroes for its titles. In response, [Bob Kane](/wiki/Bob_Kane) created "the Bat-Man".[[7]](#cite_note-7) Collaborator [Bill Finger](/wiki/Bill_Finger) recalled that "Kane had an idea for a character called 'Batman,' and he'd like me to see the drawings. I went over to Kane's, and he had drawn a character who looked very much like Superman with kind of ... reddish tights, I believe, with boots ... no gloves, no gauntlets ... with a small [domino mask](/wiki/Domino_mask), swinging on a rope. He had two stiff wings that were sticking out, looking like bat wings. And under it was a big sign ... BATMAN".[[8]](#cite_note-8) The bat-wing-like cape was suggested by Bob Kane, inspired by [Leonardo Da Vinci's](/wiki/Leonardo_Da_Vinci) sketch of an [ornithopter](/wiki/Ornithopter) flying device as a child.[[9]](#cite_note-9) [thumb|right|First image of Batman in *Action Comics* #12, announcing the character's debut in the forthcoming *Detective Comics* #27](/wiki/File:Batman_ad.jpg)[[10]](#cite_note-10) Finger suggested giving the character a [cowl](/wiki/Cowl) instead of a simple domino mask, a cape instead of wings, and gloves; he also recommended removing the red sections from the original costume.[[11]](#cite_note-11)[[12]](#cite_note-12)[[13]](#cite_note-13)[[14]](#cite_note-14) Finger said he devised the name Bruce Wayne for the character's secret identity: "Bruce Wayne's first name came from [Robert Bruce](/wiki/Robert_I_of_Scotland), the [Scottish](/wiki/Scotland) patriot. Wayne, being a playboy, was a man of gentry. I searched for a name that would suggest colonialism. I tried Adams, Hancock ... then I thought of [Mad Anthony Wayne](/wiki/Anthony_Wayne)."[[15]](#cite_note-15) He later said his suggestions were influenced by [Lee Falk's](/wiki/Lee_Falk) popular [*The Phantom*](/wiki/The_Phantom), a [syndicated](/wiki/Print_syndication) newspaper comic-strip character with which Kane was also familiar.[[16]](#cite_note-16) Kane and Finger drew upon contemporary 1930s popular culture for inspiration regarding much of the Bat-Man's look, personality, methods, and weaponry. Details find predecessors in [pulp fiction](/wiki/Pulp_magazine), [comic strips](/wiki/Comic_strip), [newspaper](/wiki/Newspaper) headlines, and autobiographical details referring to Kane himself.[[17]](#cite_note-17) As an aristocratic hero with a double identity, the Bat-Man had predecessors in [the Scarlet Pimpernel](/wiki/The_Scarlet_Pimpernel) (created by [Baroness Emmuska Orczy](/wiki/Baroness_Emmuska_Orczy), 1903) and [Zorro](/wiki/Zorro) (created by [Johnston McCulley](/wiki/Johnston_McCulley), 1919). Like them, he performed his heroic deeds in secret, averted suspicion by playing the fool in public, and marked his work with a signature symbol. Kane noted the influence of the films [*The Mark of Zorro*](/wiki/The_Mark_of_Zorro_(1920_film)) (1920) and [*The Bat Whispers*](/wiki/The_Bat_Whispers) (1930) in the creation of the character's iconography. Finger, drawing inspiration from pulp heroes like [Doc Savage](/wiki/Doc_Savage), [The Shadow](/wiki/The_Shadow), [Dick Tracy](/wiki/Dick_Tracy), and [Sherlock Holmes](/wiki/Sherlock_Holmes), made the character a master sleuth.[[18]](#cite_note-18)[[19]](#cite_note-19) In his 1989 autobiography, Kane detailed Finger's contributions to Batman's creation: [Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

### Golden Age[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

#### Subsequent creation credit[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

Kane signed away ownership in the character in exchange for, among other compensation, a mandatory byline on all Batman comics. This byline did not originally say "Batman created by Bob Kane"; his name was simply written on the title page of each story. The name disappeared from the comic book in the mid-1960s, replaced by credits for each story's actual writer and artists. In the late 1970s, when [Jerry Siegel](/wiki/Jerry_Siegel) and [Joe Shuster](/wiki/Joe_Shuster) began receiving a "created by" credit on the Superman titles, along with [William Moulton Marston](/wiki/William_Moulton_Marston) being given the byline for creating [Wonder Woman](/wiki/Wonder_Woman), Batman stories began saying "Created by Bob Kane" in addition to the other credits.

Finger did not receive the same recognition. While he had received credit for other DC work since the 1940s, he began, in the 1960s, to receive limited acknowledgment for his Batman writing; in the letters page of *Batman* #169 (February 1965) for example, editor [Julius Schwartz](/wiki/Julius_Schwartz) names him as the creator of the [Riddler](/wiki/Riddler), one of Batman's recurring villains. However, Finger's contract left him only with his writing page rate and no byline. Kane wrote, "Bill was disheartened by the lack of major accomplishments in his career. He felt that he had not used his creative potential to its fullest and that success had passed him by."[[15]](#cite_note-15) At the time of Finger's death in 1974, DC had not officially credited Finger as Batman co-creator.

[Jerry Robinson](/wiki/Jerry_Robinson), who also worked with Finger and Kane on the strip at this time, has criticized Kane for failing to share the credit. He recalled Finger resenting his position, stating in a 2005 interview with [*The Comics Journal*](/wiki/The_Comics_Journal): [Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

Although Kane initially rebutted Finger's claims at having created the character, writing in a 1965 open letter to fans that "it seemed to me that Bill Finger has given out the impression that he and not myself created the ''Batman, t' [Template:Sic](/wiki/Template:Sic) as well as Robin and all the other leading villains and characters. This statement is fraudulent and entirely untrue." Kane himself also commented on Finger's lack of credit. "The trouble with being a 'ghost' writer or artist is that you must remain rather anonymously without 'credit'. However, if one wants the 'credit', then one has to cease being a 'ghost' or follower and become a leader or innovator."[[20]](#cite_note-20) In 1989, Kane revisited Finger's situation, recalling in an interview: [Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

In September 2015, [DC Entertainment](/wiki/DC_Entertainment) revealed that Finger would be receiving credit for his role in Batman's creation on the 2016 superhero film [*Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice*](/wiki/Batman_v_Superman:_Dawn_of_Justice) and the second season of [*Gotham*](/wiki/Gotham_(TV_series)) after a deal was worked out between the Finger family and DC.[[1]](#cite_note-1) Finger received credit as a creator of Batman for the first time in a comic in October 2015 with *Batman and Robin Eternal* #3 and *Batman: Arkham Knight Genesis* #3. The updated acknowledgement for the character appeared as "Batman created by Bob Kane with Bill Finger".[[2]](#cite_note-2)

#### Early years[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

[thumb|Batman made his debut in](/wiki/File:Detective_Comics_27.jpg) [*Detective Comics*](/wiki/Detective_Comics) #27 (May 1939). Cover art by [Bob Kane](/wiki/Bob_Kane).

The first Batman story, "The Case of the Chemical Syndicate", was published in *Detective Comics* #27 (May 1939). Finger said, "Batman was originally written in the style of the pulps",[[21]](#cite_note-21) and this influence was evident with Batman showing little remorse over killing or maiming criminals. Batman proved a hit character, and he received his own solo title in 1940, while continuing to star in *Detective Comics*. By that time, National was the top-selling and most influential publisher in the industry; Batman and the company's other major hero, Superman, were the cornerstones of the company's success.[[22]](#cite_note-22) The two characters were featured side-by-side as the stars of [*World's Finest Comics*](/wiki/World's_Finest_Comics), which was originally titled *World's Best Comics* when it debuted in fall 1940. Creators including [Jerry Robinson](/wiki/Jerry_Robinson) and [Dick Sprang](/wiki/Dick_Sprang) also worked on the strips during this period.

Over the course of the first few Batman strips elements were added to the character and the artistic depiction of Batman evolved. Kane noted that within six issues he drew the character's jawline more pronounced, and lengthened the ears on the costume. "About a year later he was almost the full figure, my mature Batman", Kane said.[[23]](#cite_note-23) [Batman's characteristic utility belt](/wiki/Batman's_utility_belt) was introduced in *Detective Comics* #29 (July 1939), followed by the [boomerang](/wiki/Boomerang)-like batarang and the first bat-themed vehicle, the [Batplane](/wiki/Batplane), in #31 (Sept. 1939). The character's origin was revealed in #33 (Nov. 1939), unfolding in a two-page story that establishes the brooding persona of Batman, a character driven by the death of his parents. Written by Finger, it depicts a young Bruce Wayne witnessing his parents' murder at the hands of a mugger. Days later, at their grave, the child vows that "by the spirits of my parents [I will] avenge their deaths by spending the rest of my life warring on all criminals".[[24]](#cite_note-24)[[25]](#cite_note-25)[[26]](#cite_note-26) The early, pulp-inflected portrayal of Batman started to soften in *Detective Comics* #38 (April 1940) with the introduction of [Robin](/wiki/Robin_(comics)), Batman's junior counterpart.[[27]](#cite_note-27) Robin was introduced, based on Finger's suggestion, because Batman needed a "[Watson](/wiki/Dr._Watson)" with whom Batman could talk.[[28]](#cite_note-28) Sales nearly doubled, despite Kane's preference for a solo Batman, and it sparked a proliferation of "kid sidekicks".[[29]](#cite_note-29) The first issue of the solo spin-off series [*Batman*](/wiki/Batman_(comic_book)) was notable not only for introducing two of his most persistent enemies, the [Joker](/wiki/Joker_(comics)) and [Catwoman](/wiki/Catwoman), but for a story in which Batman shoots some monstrous giants to death. That story prompted editor [Whitney Ellsworth](/wiki/Whitney_Ellsworth) to decree that the character could no longer kill or use a gun.[[30]](#cite_note-30) By 1942, the writers and artists behind the Batman comics had established most of the basic elements of the Batman mythos.[[31]](#cite_note-31) In the years following World War II, DC Comics "adopted a postwar editorial direction that increasingly de-emphasized social commentary in favor of lighthearted juvenile fantasy". The impact of this editorial approach was evident in *Batman* comics of the postwar period; removed from the "bleak and menacing world" of the strips of the early 1940s, Batman was instead portrayed as a respectable citizen and paternal figure that inhabited a "bright and colorful" environment.[[32]](#cite_note-32)

### Silver and Bronze Age[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

#### 1950s and early 1960s[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

Batman was one of the few superhero characters to be continuously published as interest in the genre waned during the 1950s. In the story "The Mightiest Team in the World" in [*Superman*](/wiki/Superman_(comic_book)) #76 (June 1952), Batman teams up with Superman for the first time and the pair discovers each other's secret identity.[[33]](#cite_note-33) Following the success of this story, *World's Finest Comics* was revamped so it featured stories starring both heroes together, instead of the separate Batman and Superman features that had been running before.[[34]](#cite_note-34) The team-up of the characters was "a financial success in an era when those were few and far between";[[35]](#cite_note-35) this series of stories ran until the book's cancellation in 1986.

Batman comics were among those criticized when the comic book industry came under scrutiny with the publication of psychologist [Fredric Wertham's](/wiki/Fredric_Wertham) book [*Seduction of the Innocent*](/wiki/Seduction_of_the_Innocent) in 1954. Wertham's thesis was that children imitated crimes committed in comic books, and that these works corrupted the morals of the youth. Wertham criticized Batman comics for their supposed [homosexual](/wiki/Homosexual) overtones and argued that Batman and Robin were portrayed as lovers.[[36]](#cite_note-36) Wertham's criticisms raised a public outcry during the 1950s, eventually leading to the establishment of the [Comics Code Authority](/wiki/Comics_Code_Authority), a code that is no longer in use by the comic book industry. The tendency towards a "sunnier Batman" in the postwar years intensified after the introduction of the Comics Code.[[37]](#cite_note-37) Scholars have suggested that the characters of [Batwoman](/wiki/Batwoman) (in 1956) and the pre-[Barbara Gordon](/wiki/Barbara_Gordon) [Bat-Girl](/wiki/Bette_Kane) (in 1961) were introduced in part to refute the allegation that Batman and Robin were gay, and the stories took on a campier, lighter feel.[[38]](#cite_note-38) In the late 1950s, Batman stories gradually became more science fiction-oriented, an attempt at mimicking the success of other DC characters that had dabbled in the genre.[[39]](#cite_note-39) New characters such as Batwoman, [Ace the Bat-Hound](/wiki/Ace_the_Bat-Hound), and [Bat-Mite](/wiki/Bat-Mite) were introduced. Batman's adventures often involved odd transformations or bizarre space aliens. In 1960, Batman debuted as a member of the [Justice League of America](/wiki/Justice_League) in [*The Brave and the Bold*](/wiki/The_Brave_and_the_Bold) #28 (Feb. 1960), and went on to appear in several Justice League comic series starting later that same year.

#### "New Look" Batman and camp[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

By 1964, sales on Batman titles had fallen drastically. Bob Kane noted that, as a result, DC was "planning to kill Batman off altogether".[[40]](#cite_note-40) In response to this, editor [Julius Schwartz](/wiki/Julius_Schwartz) was assigned to the Batman titles. He presided over drastic changes, beginning with 1964's *Detective Comics* #327 (May 1964), which was cover-billed as the "New Look". Schwartz introduced changes designed to make Batman more contemporary, and to return him to more detective-oriented stories. He brought in artist [Carmine Infantino](/wiki/Carmine_Infantino) to help overhaul the character. The [Batmobile](/wiki/Batmobile) was redesigned, and Batman's costume was modified to incorporate a yellow ellipse behind the bat-insignia. The space aliens, time travel, and characters of the 1950s such as Batwoman, Ace, and Bat-Mite were retired. Batman's butler Alfred was killed off (though his death was quickly reversed) while a new female relative for the Wayne family, Aunt Harriet, came to live with Bruce Wayne and [Dick Grayson](/wiki/Dick_Grayson).[[41]](#cite_note-41) The debut of the [*Batman*](/wiki/Batman_(TV_series)) television series in 1966 had a profound influence on the character. The success of the series increased sales throughout the comic book industry, and *Batman* reached a circulation of close to 900,000 copies.[[42]](#cite_note-42) Elements such as the character of [Batgirl](/wiki/Batgirl) and the show's [campy](/wiki/Camp_(style)) nature were introduced into the comics; the series also initiated the return of Alfred. Although both the comics and TV show were successful for a time, the camp approach eventually wore thin and the show was canceled in 1968. In the aftermath, the Batman comics themselves lost popularity once again. As Julius Schwartz noted, "When the television show was a success, I was asked to be campy, and of course when the show faded, so did the comic books."[[43]](#cite_note-43) Starting in 1969, writer [Dennis O'Neil](/wiki/Dennis_O'Neil) and artist [Neal Adams](/wiki/Neal_Adams) made a deliberate effort to distance Batman from the campy portrayal of the 1960s TV series and to return the character to his roots as a "grim avenger of the night".[[44]](#cite_note-44) O'Neil said his idea was "simply to take it back to where it started. I went to the DC library and read some of the early stories. I tried to get a sense of what Kane and Finger were after."[[45]](#cite_note-45) O'Neil and Adams first collaborated on the story "[The Secret of the Waiting Graves](/wiki/The_Secret_of_the_Waiting_Graves)" (*Detective Comics* #395, January 1970). Few stories were true collaborations between O'Neil, Adams, Schwartz, and inker [Dick Giordano](/wiki/Dick_Giordano), and in actuality these men were mixed and matched with various other creators during the 1970s; nevertheless the influence of their work was "tremendous".[[46]](#cite_note-46) Giordano said: "We went back to a grimmer, darker Batman, and I think that's why these stories did so well..."[[47]](#cite_note-47) While the work of O'Neil and Adams was popular with fans, the acclaim did little to improve declining sales; the same held true with a similarly acclaimed run by writer [Steve Englehart](/wiki/Steve_Englehart) and penciler [Marshall Rogers](/wiki/Marshall_Rogers) in *Detective Comics* #471–476 (August 1977 – April 1978), which went on to influence the 1989 movie *Batman* and be adapted for [*Batman: The Animated Series*](/wiki/Batman:_The_Animated_Series), which debuted in 1992.[[48]](#cite_note-48) Regardless, circulation continued to drop through the 1970s and 1980s, hitting an all-time low in 1985.[[49]](#cite_note-49)

### Modern Age[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

#### ''The Dark Knight Returns''[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also)

[Frank Miller's](/wiki/Frank_Miller_(comics)) limited series [*The Dark Knight Returns*](/wiki/The_Dark_Knight_Returns) (February–June 1986), which tells the story of a 55-year-old Batman coming out of retirement in a possible future, reinvigorated the character. *The Dark Knight Returns* was a financial success and has since become one of the medium's most noted touchstones.[[50]](#cite_note-50) The series also sparked a major resurgence in the character's popularity.[[51]](#cite_note-51) That year Dennis O'Neil took over as editor of the Batman titles and set the template for the portrayal of Batman following DC's status quo-altering miniseries [*Crisis on Infinite Earths*](/wiki/Crisis_on_Infinite_Earths). O'Neil operated under the assumption that he was hired to revamp the character and as a result tried to instill a different tone in the books than had gone before.[[52]](#cite_note-52) One outcome of this new approach was the "[Year One](/wiki/Batman:_Year_One)" storyline in *Batman* #404–407 (February–May 1987), in which Frank Miller and artist [David Mazzucchelli](/wiki/David_Mazzucchelli) redefined the character's origins. Writer [Alan Moore](/wiki/Alan_Moore) and artist [Brian Bolland](/wiki/Brian_Bolland) continued this dark trend with 1988's 48-page [one-shot](/wiki/One-shot_(comics)) [*Batman: The Killing Joke*](/wiki/Batman:_The_Killing_Joke), in which the Joker, attempting to drive [Commissioner Gordon](/wiki/Commissioner_Gordon) insane, cripples Gordon's daughter [Barbara](/wiki/Barbara_Gordon), and then kidnaps and tortures the commissioner, physically and psychologically.

[left|thumb|The first issue of](/wiki/File:Dark_knight_returns.jpg) [*The Dark Knight Returns*](/wiki/The_Dark_Knight_Returns) redefined Batman in the 1980s. Cover art by [Frank Miller](/wiki/Frank_Miller_(comics)). The Batman comics garnered major attention in 1988 when DC Comics created a [900 number](/wiki/Premium-rate_telephone_number) for readers to call to vote on whether [Jason Todd](/wiki/Jason_Todd), the second Robin, lived or died. Voters decided in favor of Jason's death by a narrow margin of 28 votes (see [*Batman: A Death in the Family*](/wiki/Batman:_A_Death_in_the_Family)).[[53]](#cite_note-53) The following year saw the release of [Tim Burton's](/wiki/Tim_Burton) [*Batman*](/wiki/Batman_(1989_film)) feature film, which firmly brought the character back to the public's attention, grossing millions of dollars at the box office, and millions more in merchandising. However, the three sequels, Tim Burton's [*Batman Returns*](/wiki/Batman_Returns) and director [Joel Schumacher's](/wiki/Joel_Schumacher) [*Batman Forever*](/wiki/Batman_Forever) and [*Batman & Robin*](/wiki/Batman_&_Robin_(film)), did not perform as well at the box office. The fourth film in the series, the Schumacher-directed *Batman & Robin*, meanwhile, was a critical and commercial failure. The *Batman* movie franchise was rebooted with director and co-writer [Christopher Nolan's](/wiki/Christopher_Nolan) [*Batman Begins*](/wiki/Batman_Begins) in 2005, [*The Dark Knight*](/wiki/The_Dark_Knight_(film)) in 2008 and [*The Dark Knight Rises*](/wiki/The_Dark_Knight_Rises) in 2012. In 1989, the first issue of [*Legends of the Dark Knight*](/wiki/Legends_of_the_Dark_Knight), the first new solo Batman title in nearly 50 years, sold close to a million copies.[[54]](#cite_note-54) The 1993 "[Knightfall](/wiki/Batman:_Knightfall)" story arc introduced a new villain, [Bane](/wiki/Bane_(comics)), who critically injures Batman after pushing him to the limits of his endurance. Jean-Paul Valley, known as [Azrael](/wiki/Azrael_(comics)), is called upon to wear the Batsuit during Bruce Wayne's convalescence. Writers [Doug Moench](/wiki/Doug_Moench), [Chuck Dixon](/wiki/Chuck_Dixon), and [Alan Grant](/wiki/Alan_Grant_(writer)) worked on the Batman titles during "Knightfall", and would also contribute to other Batman crossovers throughout the 1990s. 1998's "[Cataclysm](/wiki/Batman:_Cataclysm)" storyline served as the precursor to 1999's "[No Man's Land](/wiki/No_Man's_Land_(comics))", a year-long storyline that ran through all the Batman-related titles dealing with the effects of an earthquake-ravaged Gotham City. At the conclusion of "No Man's Land", O'Neil stepped down as editor and was replaced by [Bob Schreck](/wiki/Bob_Schreck).

Another writer who rose to prominence on the Batman comic series, was [Jeph Loeb](/wiki/Jeph_Loeb). Along with longtime collaborator Tim Sale, they wrote two miniseries ("[The Long Halloween](/wiki/The_Long_Halloween)" and "[Dark Victory](/wiki/Batman:_Dark_Victory)") that pit an early in his career version of Batman against his entire [rogues gallery](/wiki/List_of_Batman_Family_adversaries#Classic_Rogues_Gallery) (most notably [Two-Face](/wiki/Two-Face), whose origin was re-envisioned by Loeb) while dealing with various mysteries involving [serial killers](/wiki/Serial_killer) [Holiday](/wiki/Holiday_Killer) and [the Hangman](/wiki/Hangman_(DC_Comics)). In 2003, Loeb teamed with artist [Jim Lee](/wiki/Jim_Lee) to work on another mystery arc: "[Batman: Hush](/wiki/Batman:_Hush)" for the main Batman book. The twelve–issue storyline has Batman and Catwoman teaming up against Batman's entire rogues gallery, including an apparently resurrected [Jason Todd](/wiki/Jason_Todd), while seeking to find the identity of the mysterious supervillain [Hush](/wiki/Hush_(comics)). While the character of Hush failed to catch on with readers, the arc was a sales success for DC. As the storyline was Jim Lee's first regular comic book work in nearly a decade, the series became #1 on the [Diamond Comic Distributors](/wiki/Diamond_Comic_Distributors) sales chart for the first time since *Batman* #500 (October 1993) and Jason Todd's appearance laid the groundwork for writer [Judd Winick's](/wiki/Judd_Winick) subsequent run as writer on *Batman*, with another multi-issue epic, "[Under the Hood](/wiki/Batman:_Under_the_Hood)", which ran from *Batman* #637–650.

In 2005, DC launched [*All-Star Batman and Robin*](/wiki/All-Star_Batman_and_Robin), a stand-alone comic series set outside the existing DC Universe. Written by Frank Miller and drawn by Jim Lee, the series was a commercial success for DC Comics[[55]](#cite_note-55)[[56]](#cite_note-56) though widely panned by critics for its writing and strong depictions of violence.[[57]](#cite_note-57)[[58]](#cite_note-58) Starting in 2006, the regular writers on *Batman* and *Detective Comics* were [Grant Morrison](/wiki/Grant_Morrison) and [Paul Dini](/wiki/Paul_Dini), with Grant Morrison reincorporating controversial elements of Batman lore (most notably, the science fiction themed storylines of the 1950s Batman comics, which Morrison revised as hallucinations Batman suffered under the influence of various mind-bending gases and extensive sensory deprivation training) into the character. Morrison's run climaxed with "Batman R.I.P.", which brought Batman up against the villainous "Black Glove" organization, which sought to drive Batman into madness. "Batman R.I.P." segued into [*Final Crisis*](/wiki/Final_Crisis) (also written by Morrison), which saw the apparent death of Batman at the hands of [Darkseid](/wiki/Darkseid). In the 2009 miniseries [*Batman: Battle for the Cowl*](/wiki/Batman:_Battle_for_the_Cowl), Wayne's former protégé Dick Grayson becomes the new Batman, and Wayne's son Damian becomes the new Robin.[[59]](#cite_note-59)[[60]](#cite_note-60) In June 2009, Judd Winick returned to writing *Batman*, while Grant Morrison was given his own series, titled [*Batman and Robin*](/wiki/Batman_and_Robin_(comic_book)).[[61]](#cite_note-61) In 2010, the storyline [*Batman: The Return of Bruce Wayne*](/wiki/Batman:_The_Return_of_Bruce_Wayne) saw Bruce travel through history, eventually returning to the present day. Although he reclaimed the mantle of Batman, he also allowed Grayson to continue being Batman as well. Bruce decided to take his war on crime globally, which is the central focus of [*Batman Incorporated*](/wiki/Batman_Incorporated). DC Comics would later announce that Grayson would be the main character in *Batman*, *Detective Comics* and *Batman and Robin*, while Wayne would be the main character in *Batman Incorporated*. Also, Bruce appeared in another ongoing series, [*Batman: The Dark Knight*](/wiki/Batman:_The_Dark_Knight).

#### The New 52[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) In September 2011, DC Comics' entire line of superhero books, including its *Batman* franchise, was canceled and relaunched with new #1 issues as part of [The New 52](/wiki/The_New_52) reboot. Bruce Wayne is the only character to be identified as Batman and is featured in [*Batman*](/wiki/Batman_(comic_book)), [*Detective Comics*](/wiki/Detective_Comics), [*Batman and Robin*](/wiki/Batman_and_Robin_(comic_book)), and [*Batman: The Dark Knight*](/wiki/Batman:_The_Dark_Knight). Dick Grayson returns to the mantle of Nightwing and appears in his own ongoing series. While many characters have their histories significantly altered to attract new readers, Batman's history remains mostly intact. *Batman Incorporated* was relaunched in 2012-2013 to complete the "Leviathan" storyline.

Since the beginning of The New 52, [Scott Snyder](/wiki/Scott_Snyder) has been the writer of the flagship Batman title. His first major story arc was "[Night of the Owls](/wiki/Night_of_the_Owls)", where Batman confronts the [Court of Owls](/wiki/Court_of_Owls), a secret society that has controlled Gotham for centuries. The second story arc was "[Death of the Family](/wiki/Death_of_the_Family)", where the Joker returns to Gotham and simultaneously attacks each member of the Batman family. The third story arc was "[Batman: Zero Year](/wiki/Batman:_Zero_Year)", which redefined Batman's origin in The New 52. It followed *Batman* #0, published in June 2012, which explored the character's early years. The final storyline before the [*Convergence*](/wiki/Convergence_(comics)) (2015) event was [*Endgame*](/wiki/Batman:_Endgame), depicting the supposed final battle between Batman and the Joker when he unleashes the deadly Endgame virus onto Gotham City. The storyline ends with Batman and the Joker's supposed deaths. Starting with #41, Commissioner James Gordon takes over Bruce's mantle as a new, state-sanctioned, [mecha](/wiki/Mecha) Batman, debuting in the [Free Comic Book Day](/wiki/Free_Comic_Book_Day) special comic *Divergence*. However, Bruce Wayne is soon revealed to be alive, albeit now suffering almost total amnesia of his life as Batman and only remembering his life as Bruce Wayne through what he has learned from Alfred. Bruce Wayne finds happiness and proposes to his girlfriend, Julie, but Mr. Bloom heavily injures Jim Gordon and takes control of Gotham City and threatens to destroy the city by energizing a particle reactor to create a "strange star" to swallow the city. Bruce Wayne discovers the truth that he was Batman and after talking to a stranger who smiles a lot (it is heavily implied that this is the amnesic Joker) he forces Alfred to implant his memories as Batman, but at the cost of his memories as the reborn Bruce Wayne. He returns and helps Jim Gordon defeat Mr. Bloom and shut down the reactor. Gordon gets his job back as the commissioner, and the government Batman project is shuttered.[[62]](#cite_note-62) In 2015, DC Comics released [*The Dark Knight III: The Master Race*](/wiki/The_Dark_Knight_III:_The_Master_Race_(comic)), the sequel to Frank Miller's *The Dark Knight Returns* and *The Dark Knight Strikes Again*.<ref name=NYT>[The New York Times](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/1.1/23/arts/dark-knight-iii-the-master-race-comic-book-prompts-reflection-and-a-look-ahead.html?smtyp=cur)</ref>

During the Darkseid War Batman acquires the Mobius Chair and asks "What's the Joker's real name?" and the response causes him to say "No that is not possible.[[63]](#cite_note-63) At the end of the Darkseid War Batman reveals to Hal that the chair told him there were *three* Jokers[[64]](#cite_note-64) and during *DC Universe - Rebirth* #1 Batman confirms the existence of at least two Jokers: one who was in Civic City killing people while the other Joker had been caught just outside Baltimore three hours ago and was still in transit to Arkham Asylum. "(F)rom the looks of the artwork, it appears that the three jokers include the original, Jerry Robinson Joker; the Brian Bolland Killing Joke Joker; and the Scott Snyder/Greg Capullo "New 52" Joker."[[65]](#cite_note-65)

## Fictional character biography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

Batman's history has undergone various revisions, both minor and major. Few elements of the character's history have remained constant. Scholars [William Uricchio](/wiki/William_Uricchio) and Roberta E. Pearson noted in the early 1990s, "Unlike some fictional characters, the Batman has no primary urtext set in a specific period, but has rather existed in a plethora of equally valid texts constantly appearing over more than five decades."[[66]](#cite_note-66) [thumb|right|Bruce Wayne's family encounters Joe Chill in](/wiki/File:The_Wayne_Family_and_Joe_Chill_(Detective_Comics_-33_(November_1939)).jpg) [*Detective Comics*](/wiki/Detective_Comics) #33 (Nov. 1939); artwork by Bob Kane

### 20th century[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=13)]

#### Origin[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=14)]

The central fixed event in the Batman stories is the character's [origin story](/wiki/Origin_story).[[67]](#cite_note-67) As a young boy, Bruce Wayne was horrified and traumatized when he watched his parents, the physician Dr. [Thomas Wayne](/wiki/Thomas_Wayne) and his wife [Martha](/wiki/Martha_Wayne), murdered by a mugger with a gun. Batman refuses to utilize any sort of gun on the principle that a gun was used to murder his parents. This event drove him to train his body to physical perfection and fight crime in [Gotham City](/wiki/Gotham_City) as Batman. Pearson and Uricchio also noted beyond the origin story and such events as the introduction of Robin, "Until recently, the fixed and accruing and hence, canonized, events have been few in number",[[67]](#cite_note-67) a situation altered by an increased effort by later Batman editors such as Dennis O'Neil to ensure consistency and continuity between stories.[[68]](#cite_note-68)

#### Golden Age[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=15)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) In Batman's first appearance in *Detective Comics* #27, he is already operating as a crime-fighter.[[69]](#cite_note-69) Batman's origin is first presented in *Detective Comics* #33 (November 1939) and is later expanded upon in *Batman* #47. As these comics state, Bruce Wayne is born to Dr. Thomas Wayne and his wife Martha, two very wealthy and charitable [Gotham City](/wiki/Gotham_City) socialites. Bruce is brought up in [Wayne Manor](/wiki/Wayne_Manor), and leads a happy and privileged existence until the age of eight, when his parents are killed by a small-time criminal named [Joe Chill](/wiki/Joe_Chill) while on their way home from a movie theater. That night, Bruce Wayne swears an oath to spend his life fighting crime. He engages in intense intellectual and physical training; however, he realizes that these skills alone would not be enough. "Criminals are a superstitious cowardly lot", Wayne remarks, "so my disguise must be able to strike terror into their hearts. I must be a creature of the night, black, terrible..." As if responding to his desires, a [bat](/wiki/Bat) suddenly flies through the window, inspiring Bruce to take on the persona of Batman.[[70]](#cite_note-70) In early strips, Batman's career as a vigilante earns him the ire of the police. During this period, Bruce Wayne has a fiancée named [Julie Madison](/wiki/Julie_Madison).[[71]](#cite_note-71) In *Detective Comics* #38, Wayne takes in an orphaned circus acrobat, [Dick Grayson](/wiki/Dick_Grayson), who becomes his junior counterpart, [Robin](/wiki/Robin_(comics)). Batman also becomes a founding member of the [Justice Society of America](/wiki/Justice_Society_of_America),[[72]](#cite_note-72) although he, like Superman, is an honorary member,[[73]](#cite_note-73) and thus only participates occasionally. Batman's relationship with the law thaws quickly, and he is made an honorary member of [Gotham City's police department](/wiki/Gotham_City_Police_Department).[[74]](#cite_note-74) During this time, [Alfred Pennyworth](/wiki/Alfred_Pennyworth) arrives at Wayne Manor, and after deducing the Dynamic Duo's secret identities, joins their service as their butler.[[75]](#cite_note-75)

#### Silver Age[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=16)]

The [Silver Age of Comic Books](/wiki/Silver_Age_of_Comic_Books) in DC Comics is sometimes held to have begun in 1956 when the publisher introduced [Barry Allen](/wiki/Flash_(Barry_Allen)) as a new, updated version of [The Flash](/wiki/Flash_(comics)). Batman is not significantly changed by the late 1950s for the continuity which would be later referred to as [Earth-One](/wiki/Earth-One). The lighter tone Batman had taken in the period between the Golden and Silver Ages led to the stories of the late 1950s and early 1960s that often feature many science-fiction elements, and Batman is not significantly updated in the manner of other characters until *Detective Comics* #327 (May 1964), in which Batman reverts to his detective roots, with most science-fiction elements jettisoned from the series.

After the introduction of DC Comics' [multiverse](/wiki/Multiverse_(DC_Comics)) in the 1960s, DC established that stories from the Golden Age star the [Earth-Two Batman](/wiki/Batman_(Earth-Two)), a character from a parallel world. This version of Batman partners with and marries the reformed Earth-Two Catwoman, Selina Kyle (as shown in [*Superman Family*](/wiki/Superman_Family) #211). They have a daughter, [Helena Wayne](/wiki/Huntress_(Helena_Wayne)), who as the Huntress, becomes (along with Dick Grayson, the [Earth-Two Robin](/wiki/Robin_(Earth-Two))) Gotham's protector once Wayne retires from the position to become police commissioner, a position he occupies until he is killed during one final adventure as Batman. Batman titles however often ignored that a distinction had been made between the pre-revamp and post-revamp Batmen (since unlike The Flash or [Green Lantern](/wiki/Green_Lantern), Batman comics had been published without interruption through the 1950s) and would occasionally make reference to stories from the Golden Age.[[76]](#cite_note-76) Nevertheless, details of Batman's history were altered or expanded upon through the decades. Additions include meetings with a future Superman during his youth, his upbringing by his uncle Philip Wayne (introduced in *Batman* #208, January/February 1969) after his parents' death, and appearances of his father and himself as prototypical versions of Batman and Robin, respectively.[[77]](#cite_note-77)[[78]](#cite_note-78) In 1980 then-editor [Paul Levitz](/wiki/Paul_Levitz) commissioned the *Untold Legend of the Batman* [limited series](/wiki/Limited_series) to thoroughly chronicle Batman's origin and history.

Batman meets and regularly works with other heroes during the Silver Age, most notably Superman, whom he began regularly working alongside in a series of team-ups in [*World's Finest Comics*](/wiki/World's_Finest_Comics), starting in 1954 and continuing through the series' cancellation in 1986. Batman and Superman are usually depicted as close friends. As a founding member of the [Justice League of America](/wiki/Justice_League), Batman appears in its first story, in 1960's [*Brave and the Bold*](/wiki/Brave_and_the_Bold) #28. In the 1970s and 1980s, *Brave and the Bold* became a Batman title, in which Batman teams up with a different [DC Universe](/wiki/DC_Universe) superhero each month.

#### Bronze Age[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=17)]

In 1969, Dick Grayson attends college as part of DC Comics' effort to revise the Batman comics. Additionally, Batman also moves from his mansion, [Wayne Manor](/wiki/Wayne_Manor) into a [penthouse apartment](/wiki/Penthouse_apartment) atop the Wayne Foundation building in downtown Gotham City, in order to be closer to Gotham City's crime. Batman spends the 1970s and early 1980s mainly working solo, with occasional team-ups with Robin and/or Batgirl. Batman's adventures also become somewhat darker and more grim during this period, depicting increasingly violent crimes, including the first appearance (since the early Golden Age) of the Joker as a homicidal [psychopath](/wiki/Psychopathy), and the arrival of [Ra's al Ghul](/wiki/Ra's_al_Ghul), a centuries-old terrorist who knows Batman's secret identity. In the 1980s, Dick Grayson becomes [Nightwing](/wiki/Nightwing).[[4]](#cite_note-4) In the final issue of *Brave and the Bold* in 1983, Batman quits the Justice League and forms a new group called the [Outsiders](/wiki/Outsiders_(comics)). He serves as the team's leader until *Batman and the Outsiders* #32 (1986) and the comic subsequently changed its title.

#### Modern Age[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]

After the 12-issue [limited series](/wiki/Limited_series) *Crisis on Infinite Earths*, DC Comics [retconned](/wiki/Retroactive_continuity) the histories of some major characters in an attempt at updating them for contemporary audiences. Frank Miller retold Batman's origin in the storyline "[Year One](/wiki/Batman:_Year_One)" from *Batman* #404–407, which emphasizes a grittier tone in the character.[[79]](#cite_note-79) Though the Earth-Two Batman is erased from history, many stories of Batman's Silver Age/Earth-One career (along with an amount of Golden Age ones) remain canonical in the post-Crisis universe, with his origins remaining the same in essence, despite alteration. For example, Gotham's police are mostly corrupt, setting up further need for Batman's existence. The guardian Phillip Wayne is removed leaving young Bruce to be raised by Alfred Pennyworth. Additionally, Batman is no longer a founding member of the Justice League of America, although he becomes leader for a short time of a new incarnation of the team launched in 1987. To help fill in the revised backstory for Batman following *Crisis*, DC launched a new Batman title called [*Legends of the Dark Knight*](/wiki/Legends_of_the_Dark_Knight) in 1989 and has published various miniseries and one-shot stories since then that largely take place during the "Year One" period.

Subsequently, Batman begins exhibiting an excessive, reckless approach to his crime-fighting, a result of the pain of losing Jason Todd. Batman works solo until the decade's close, when [Tim Drake](/wiki/Tim_Drake) becomes the new Robin.[[80]](#cite_note-80) Many of the major Batman storylines since the 1990s have been inter-title crossovers that run for a number of issues. In 1993, DC published "[Knightfall](/wiki/Batman:_Knightfall)". During the storyline's first phase, the new villain Bane paralyzes Batman, leading Wayne to ask [Azrael](/wiki/Azrael_(comics)) to take on the role. After the end of "Knightfall", the storylines split in two directions, following both the Azrael-Batman's adventures, and Bruce Wayne's quest to become Batman once more. The story arcs realign in "KnightsEnd", as Azrael becomes increasingly violent and is defeated by a healed Bruce Wayne. Wayne hands the Batman mantle to Dick Grayson (then Nightwing) for an interim period, while Wayne trains for a return to the role.[[81]](#cite_note-81) The 1994 company-wide crossover storyline "[Zero Hour](/wiki/Zero_Hour_(comics))" changes aspects of DC continuity again, including those of Batman. Noteworthy among these changes is that the general populace and the criminal element now considers Batman an urban legend rather than a known force.

Batman once again becomes a member of the [Justice League](/wiki/Justice_League) during Grant Morrison's 1996 relaunch of the series, titled *JLA*. During this time, Gotham City faces catastrophe in the decade's closing crossover arc. In 1998's "[Cataclysm](/wiki/Batman:_Cataclysm)" storyline, Gotham City is devastated by an earthquake and ultimately cut off from the United States. Deprived of many of his technological resources, Batman fights to reclaim the city from legions of gangs during 1999's "[No Man's Land](/wiki/No_Man's_Land_(comics))".

Meanwhile, Batman's relationship with the Gotham City Police Department changed for the worse with the events of "Batman: Officer Down" and "Batman: War Games/War Crimes"; Batman's long-time law enforcement allies Commissioner Gordon and [Harvey Bullock](/wiki/Harvey_Bullock_(comics)) are forced out of the police department in "Officer Down", while "War Games" and "War Crimes" saw Batman become a wanted fugitive after a contingency plan of his to neutralize Gotham City's criminal underworld is accidentally triggered, resulting in a massive gang war that ends with the [sadistic](/wiki/Sadistic_personality_disorder) [Black Mask](/wiki/Black_Mask_(comics)) the undisputed ruler of the city's criminal gangs. [Lex Luthor](/wiki/Lex_Luthor) arranges for the murder of Batman's on-again, off-again love interest Vesper (introduced in the mid-1990s) during the "Bruce Wayne: Murderer?" and "[Bruce Wayne: Fugitive](/wiki/Bruce_Wayne:_Fugitive)" story arcs. Though Batman is able to clear his name, he loses another ally in the form of his new bodyguard Sasha, who is recruited into the organization known as "Checkmate" while stuck in prison due to her refusal to turn state's evidence against her employer. While he was unable to prove that Luthor was behind the murder of Vesper, Batman does get his revenge with help from [Talia al Ghul](/wiki/Talia_al_Ghul) in [*Superman/Batman*](/wiki/Superman/Batman) #1–6.

### 21st century[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=19)]

DC's 2005 [limited series](/wiki/Limited_series) [*Identity Crisis*](/wiki/Identity_Crisis_(DC_Comics)) reveals that JLA member [Zatanna](/wiki/Zatanna) had altered Batman's memories to prevent him from stopping the League from [lobotomizing](/wiki/Lobotomy) [Dr. Light](/wiki/Doctor_Light_(Arthur_Light)) after he sexually assaulted [Sue Dibny](/wiki/Sue_Dibny). Batman later creates the [Brother I](/wiki/OMACs) satellite surveillance system to watch over and if necessary, kill the other heroes. The revelation of Batman's creation and his tacit responsibility for Blue Beetle's death becomes a driving force in the lead-up to the [*Infinite Crisis*](/wiki/Infinite_Crisis) miniseries, which again restructures DC continuity. Batman and a team of superheroes destroy Brother Eye and the OMACs, though at the very end Batman reaches his apparent breaking point when Alexander Luthor Jr. seriously wounds Nightwing. Picking up a gun, Batman nearly shoots Luthor in order to avenge his former sidekick, until Wonder Woman convinces him to not pull the trigger.

Following *Infinite Crisis*, Bruce Wayne, Dick Grayson (having recovered from his wounds), and Tim Drake retrace the steps Bruce had taken when he originally left Gotham City, to "rebuild Batman".[[82]](#cite_note-82) In the [*Face the Face*](/wiki/Batman:_Face_the_Face) storyline, Batman and Robin return to Gotham City after their year-long absence. Part of this absence is captured during Week 30 of the *52* series, which shows Batman fighting his inner demons.[[83]](#cite_note-83) Later on in *52*, Batman is shown undergoing an intense meditation ritual in [Nanda Parbat](/wiki/Nanda_Parbat). This becomes an important part of the regular *Batman* title, which reveals that Batman is reborn as a more effective crime fighter while undergoing this ritual, having "hunted down and ate" the last traces of fear in his mind.[[84]](#cite_note-84)[[85]](#cite_note-85) At the end of the "Face the Face" story arc, Bruce officially adopts Tim (who had lost both of his parents at various points in the character's history) as his son.[[86]](#cite_note-86) The follow-up story arc in *Batman*, [*Batman and Son*](/wiki/Batman_and_Son), introduces [Damian Wayne](/wiki/Damian_Wayne), who is Batman's son with [Talia al Ghul](/wiki/Talia_al_Ghul). Although originally in [Son of the Demon](/wiki/Son_of_the_Demon), Bruce's coupling with Talia was implied to be consensual, this arc ret-conned it into Talia forcing herself on Bruce.[[87]](#cite_note-87)