



Batman: Knightfall, Part One: Broken Bat

Doug Moench , Chuck Dixon , Jim Aparo (Illustrator) , Norm Breyfogle (Illustrator) , Graham Nolan (Illustrator) , Jim Balent (Illustrator)

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This riveting book sets Batman on a path that will change his life forever. A mass escape from Arkham Asylum and the emergence of Batman's most threatening foe, Bane, sends Gotham City spinning into chaos and takes Batman to the limits of human endurance! Graphic novel format.

Every Man Has a Breaking Point...

EVEN THE BATMAN!

The Dark Knight's deadliest enemies have escaped Arkham Asylum! The Joker, Amygdala, the Mad Hatter, Poison Ivy, Zsasz, Killer Croc, the Firefly, the Riddler, the Ventriloquist and Scarecrow -- one by one, he must face them all in mortal combat! But lurking at the end of this seemingly endless gauntlet is the deadliest menace of all -- a mysterious man-mountain known only as...

BANE!

The first volume of the epic KNIGHTFALL story, this edition contains BATMAN #491-497 and DETECTIVE COMICS #659-663.

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**Dixon , Jim Aparo (Illustrator) , Norm Breyfogle (Illustrator) , Graham Nolan (Illustrator) , Jim
Balent (Illustrator)**

From Reader Review Batman: Knightfall, Part One: Broken Bat for online ebook

Sam Quixote says

The masked villain Bane arrives in Gotham with a plan to destroy Batman - release all of Batman's prisoners from Arkham Asylum and once he's gone through them all, he'll be at his weakest and then... then he will break him!

The first part of the Knightfall trilogy is overlong and a bit dull to be honest. It's a good storyline, Bane setting loose a ton of villains into Gotham and then sitting back, waiting for the perfect moment to strike, but all it means is that Batman has to go through each and every villain in a kind of rote, dull way as we slowly see Batman get weaker and weaker.

But why is he so worn out even at the start of the book? It's not explained in the book but the prelude to this is a fight Batman had with Black Mask and his gang which wore him out, along with a venom-juiced up Riddler, followed by what can only be described as a mid-life crisis (I know). Bruce can't sleep nor is he willing to take any rest so he's an exhausted wreck even before Bane sets free the inmates of Arkham.

Luckily Bruce has a new ally in Jean-Paul Valley aka Azrael, a graduate student in Gotham U, who discovers that he's been unconsciously trained from birth to be an assassin for an ancient religious order. While he plays a relatively low role in this book, he's being helped by Tim Drake (Robin) to overcome his conditioning to turn him from a would-be villain to an ally.

I felt there was a lot of crap in this book and a lot of it has to do with aesthetics. Jim Aparo's artwork looks very 90s and is bound to be a turn off to many new Batman readers who've been exposed to tremendous artists like Jim Lee, Tony Daniel, Yanick Paquette, Jock, Frank Quitely, Philip Tan, the list goes on. Joker's face looks ridiculously exaggerated, his mouth looks like you could fit a bowling ball in it, its so elongated, while Zsasz's eyebrows look so jagged they're jutting off of his face entirely. There's a Batman villain in this book I've never heard of and it's easy to see why - he's called "Film Freak" and his superpower is that he's got film reel earrings: that's it. Then there's the Batmobile which looks like a Blackberry Torch, Tim Drake's haircut looks very 90s while Bruce's do looks strangely like Superman's, then there's the 90s mobile phones and printers/computers... The book comes across as very dated.

Appearances aside, the story's not that enthralling either. The enemies that "sap" Batman's strength are all second tier villains like Mad Hatter, Zsasz, Poison Ivy, Cornelius Stirk, and let's not forget the incredible Film Freak. This bizarre line-up culminates with Batman vs Bane where Bruce actually looks scared of Bane, something I felt was very out of character.

The book has a solid overall story arc but it's a long dull slog to get to the conclusion until things get interesting. "Broken Bat" had its moments, I particularly enjoyed Batman's beat down of Joker for the murder of Jason Todd years before, but unfortunately these were few and far between. I'm going to read the rest of the trilogy but for those who're on the fence about reading this first book, I'd say take a look at the second to last page and you've basically got the book in a nutshell. "Broken Bat" is for Batman completists only, for more casual comics readers this book will be boring.

Michelle Cristiani says

Classic DC arc from the 90's, where superheroes are shown to be fallible. It's not fun to watch Batman like this, run-down and ill and throwing batarangs all wrong. But it does make for a great story, of course. This first volume is 'broken bat' and yeah, he pretty much gets broken. It doesn't really compute - because he's BATMAN - which is why it works so well. You kind-of can't believe what you're reading.

Typical of the character, Bruce Wayne keeps going when he should be resting. Something about 'as long as I'm still standing Gotham will be' blah blah blah. Batman doesn't have many faults, but like most superheroes, his perseverance is his downfall. Bane's a fine villain but doesn't have to be a genius to figure that out. If Bruce had actually done the unexpected - hidden out and actually gotten some sleep - he might not have ended up so broken here. He needs to have the long view. But hey, I'm one of about a zillion people who were telling him that throughout the story. And I don't have as cute an accent as Alfred, so why should Batman listen to me?

Charles says

It might be blasphemy to say this, but I found this volume to be just "okay".

Yes, I know it's regarded as a monumental event for Batman, but maybe it hasn't aged well over the years or it's truly a product of its time. Although at the time it was in the shadow of the Death of Superman arc, this one feels like it was trying to follow a similar model; Hero runs a gauntlet of brutal and unending violence to face a big baddy and ultimately fail.

Unfortunately for modern eyes, this story doesn't feel very original. Bane orchestrates a mass breakout at Arkham and Batman tries to find who's responsible and why. As a result, in each issue he takes on a specific villain (well...sometimes in pairs) trying to get answers as to why this all happened and find the "King of the Hill" if you will. Sure, it's a brutal slog for Bats and each fight wears him down even further. However, with each successive issue, I kept thinking "Ok, but what's new in this one? Do I care anymore?" I know it's meant to show his slow decline, his arrogance in his own abilities, and his turn to rage as opposed to logic, but in the end it felt very drawn out for an interesting but somewhat flat payoff.

Bane comes off as the more clever and cunning of the two which is a bit worrisome for the World's Greatest Detective. It doesn't end up feeling as iconic as Supes v. Doomsday. It ends up more like the premise for the Arkham Origins video game...Actually pretty much any video game with a mandatory series of bosses. It ends up being "Batman: Mega Man Edition" instead of something meaningful. Instead of an intriguing slow burn, it feels like a bunch of re-runs until the "season finale". The art is enjoyable, but again a product of its time. Quite stylized and peculiar, but this is indicative of the landscape in this era.

I guess it's impossible, but condensing this would have made it more palatable. I get that it couldn't have happened, since this was presented as a major event. Hoping that now that the Bat is broken, that volumes 2 and/or 3 will offer something a bit more compelling and interesting.

Jen says

I was pretty much gnawing my fingernails off out of fear for Bruce. He's perpetually the man of strength and

indestructible resilience and stamina, so it's frightening to see him crushed by another man. A shitty villain like Bane. Oh sure, he deduced Batman's true identity under a year or so, but that doesn't make him a worthy villain to me. At least Ra's al Ghul and perhaps even Hush (the villains who know that Bruce is Batman) has more charisma and showmanship than the steroid-glutting brute. Bane is boring. It'll be interesting to see how Bruce recovers, and how Gotham will react to the new Bat on the block ...

Rating: 3.5/5

Jeice says

This is one of THE classic Batman stories, if only because it is a story people like to re-tell in various forms of media. I've seen versions of Bane go up against versions of Batman in cartoons, books, videogames, movies, etc. With the menacing, hulking form of Bane and a story about a Batman who might not have an easy, assured victory, how could people resist? As far as classic "must-read" Batman stories go, however, this would rank pretty low on my list. The art is good, except for the hyper-stylized "Shadow of the Bat" issues, which tried too hard to fit the predominant 90's vibe for my taste, and it is mostly consistent. The writing is serviceable, but retains a lot of the dark, melodramatic style that was a staple of comics in the 90's. It's not laughably bad or anything, but it is full of heavy dramatic angst. All of the characters brood and whine extensively in interior monologues, and there is a tendency for the characters to overexplain the exact nuances on what is happening in a manner that occasionally got in the way of me immersing myself in and enjoying the story.

I also wasn't a fan of much of the characterization in the story. This was written during a period of Batman's life where he apparently was incredibly annoyed with Tim Drake (Robin), and so instead of an enjoyable partnership I found myself mainly annoyed by Batman and sorry for Robin. Also, I understand that I'm supposed to be seeing a Batman worn thin, partially by some mysterious sickness that's never fully explained within the graphic novel (though I assume it was in some comic before this collection takes place), but there is a certain level of whininess that I could never fully get myself to enjoy, especially since characters kept referring to Batman's awesomeness, tenacity, and nobility, which were on very limited display. Watching Batman whine, mope, and clumsily plod through most of this story made me feel more like I was watching some emo kid play as Batman than the man himself. Even still characters kept talking about this awe-inspiring Batman I was still waiting to see.

The other characters don't fare much better. Though given a sufficiently hardcore introduction in the beginning, Bane doesn't do much to show that he deserves the title of "Bat-breaker." There's very little to him that distinguishes him or any of his forgettable henchmen from any other two-bit mobster wannabe. Gordon appears to be a worthless whiner whose only role is to be yelled at by the one-dimensional obnoxious Mayor, Robin is a sad kid who is always told that he's in the way (despite being one of the only people in the trilogy who seems to be aware of all the horribly stupid decisions going on around him), and Jean-Paul is a bland, personality-less drone. There are a string of Batman villains thrown in the mix, including "winners" I've never heard of like Film Freak, who all give Batman a harder time than I would have thought possible.

All in all, though, the main draw of the story (the Batman vs Bane bit) was fairly enjoyable. It is unfortunately not the main PART of the story, however, as most of the book is the filler between Bane's intro and the main fight. For great "must read" Batman stories I much prefer other classics like The Dark Knight Returns and Batman: Year One.

Seth says

I missed *Knightfall* the first time around, because the series began right after I left for college and temporarily gave up my comics habit that was born from and raised on Batman. Nowadays a craving for superhero books boils up in me about twice a year, and the last one hit its peak just as I rewatched *The Dark Knight Rises*, giving me the irresistible urge to examine its primary source material. Turns out it's the first comic collection in years that made me embarrassed to be reading it. The light of even Nolan's worst Batman movie exposes everything awful about this series, which breaks out every superhero comic cliché. *Knightfall*'s overwrought dialogue and unrelenting dourness camouflage an almost total lack of imagination and a villain that would seem thinly drawn even facing off against Flash Gordon. But it was nice to see Norm Breyfogle's proudly goofy artwork again, and the final panel of Bane breaking Batman's back (<--spoiler) has become iconic, so I guess that's something.

John Yelverton says

Extreme shock value, but it's just trying to copy "The Death of Superman".

Rebecca McNutt says

It's been a while since I've read a Batman comic, but they never get old. Batman's style changes, but it's always classic stories, and this is no exception.

Brandon says

..and I thought I was excited for *The Dark Knight Rises* before.

I seriously had no idea that Bane could be this awesome. When he was announced as the villain in the new Batman film, I was really hesitant to get my hopes up. I mean, Bane?! That loser from *Batman & Robin* (note to self: never base anything on that garbage movie)?? All he did was grunt, scream and smash stuff. Other than brute force - he didn't seem like that much of a threat.

So when I was given this graphic novel for Christmas, I was pretty reluctant to even pick it up. However, it came with a pretty firm recommendation from a trusted friend, so I gave it a shot. It took a while for me to actually see where they were going with this arc but once it picked up and I began to understand, it blew me away.

Basically, Bane throws everything at Batman. Bane frees all the inmates at Arkham Asylum and exhausts Batman as he attempts to incarcerate them all. Already beaten up and apparently pretty sick, it doesn't take long for Batman to run out of gas and when that occurs, Bane will pounce.

I've never even been exposed to this side of Batman - he tries so desperately to maintain an image of endless determination against a task so enormous. Sure, you must imagine that at times his job can be pretty damn hard but it's rare that he shows it. There are even scenes where he's drawn with this look of fear, knowing that it may be his end.

Despite the fact that I spent the better part of this review gushing over the story, I need to give it a 3 out of 5. Why? I'm not crazy about the artwork. Jim Lee is my favorite Batman artist of all time and it's kind of unfair that I compare everything to him - he's a pretty high measuring stick - but a lot of it looked kind of ugly. There is some great stuff to be found in here but it's few and far between.

This is only *Part One*, so I need to get my hands on 2 and 3.

Jill says

I really did like this one.

Some drawbacks: Some of the characters and situations this one starts off with are kind of confusing if you don't know the back story on them. I really didn't understand some of what was going on until I looked up the prelude stuff on Wikipedia's Knightfall page. But it IS a comic book series, so that's probably to be somewhat expected. Also, some of the dialogue is a little too cheesy, to the point that I occasionally couldn't suspend my disbelief or felt that a line really didn't quite fit a character, especially the sections written by Doug Moench (in my opinion). But again, it's a comic book. That's kind of the nature of the beast.

Other than that, though, I really enjoyed the storyline. With all the inmates busted out of Arkham, you get to see a lot of Batman's rogues gallery, which is always a pleasure. Also, I didn't really know much about Bane before reading this one. It made me a lot more excited for the upcoming movie because he came off as a very compelling villain. I can see why Christopher Nolan picked him for the next plot (though that Catwoman casting will probably always leave me feeling disappointed).

So overall, an entertaining read. Maybe a little confusing for a beginner with little knowledge of Batman lore, but with a little help from Wikipedia you'll probably be fine. Now off to read part 2.

Krzysztof says

Not as good as I remember it from my childhood, but still pretty good.

The main gripe I have is that I remembered more Azrael in the background, and that apparently happened before this story arc? Also, Bane wasn't introduced here, there was some kind of side-story with the Riddler, Killer Croc and Bane before the action of this collection, so there are some blanks which this book doesn't cover. The complaint I'm making is that this is not the "comprehensive" Azrael/Batman/Bane story arc I thought it would be.

The entire story isn't particularly strong, but when you know what's coming in the climax, it kind of feels justified that what precedes isn't stellar. Some Batman foes picked for the roster are very much silly (The Mad Hatter and Amygdala, for example), others are a bit more menacing than you'd think (The Ventriloquist), others are kept in their less "serious" versions (Joker being a prime example) and are more cartoony... Not necessarily a bad thing, and rather a sign of the times when this comic was published originally (early 90's).

Bane doesn't really show to be an all that big mastermind - he has a good idea and executes it, but it doesn't seem like there's much for him to do in the time in between letting out the Arkham inmates and confronting Batman. The fact that he knows who Batman is in the end is also a case of "He's just that smart" instead of some action or analysis on his part, at least nothing we see.

So yeah, other than those final few pages, there's nothing here which is really groundbreaking, but it's a solid

Batman thread anyhow. The way Batman fights with exhaustion is gripping, but a bit overdone (he keeps saying he's out of juice, but it only really shows during "the gauntlet")... Dunno, I'm looking forward to Who Rules the Night to see some Jean-Paul/Bruce time - if I get it, as my memory may fail me again.

Michael Finocchiaro says

This was one of the inspirations of Christopher Nolan for the last Batman film with Christian Bale in the lead. It is where Bane is introduced. The main story is fantastic - it is absolutely captivating when...oh never mind, no spoilers - you'll have to read it yourself. Let's just say that the intervention of Azrael towards the end which is also the impetus for Knightfall Vol 2 did not really please me as much as the rest of the book.

Patrick says

I found this more interesting than really enjoyable. The comics in this compilation are over 20 years old, and the old version of the storytelling really isn't my style.

Also, I just have to say: most emo Batman ever. He starts this hefty collection hurt, and spends the entire thing being... well... not very Batman at all. Making bad choices. Being bitchy. Constantly hurt and sucking at his job....

Kinda took some of the fun out of it for me.

On the plus side, as someone who isn't a huge Batman fan (by which I mean I don't read the main comics, just a lot of the side stuff written by the A-list talent like Gaiman, Miller, Moore, Loeb, etc etc.) it was interesting to see the parade of villains in this collection. It's almost like a primer in Batman bad-guy lore.

But honestly, that's the only thing that even keeps this at the relatively low "meh" rating of three stars for me.

C. Varn says

Good, but not as good as I remember from the 1990s. Chuck Dixon really was trying to return Batman to form, but this run still can't decide if it is hardboiled or campy. Coming off some of the 1970s and 1980s, more adult Batman stories by Alan Moore and Frank Miller, the Dark Knight did seem a bit lost. This introduces Bane and also gives us the more gritty Azazel-turned-Batman, but much of the rogues gallery seems cheesy and under-developed. Dixon's Bane, however, is a great addition to the story and a very compelling character in the beginning. However, his motivations seem far too simple for a character written that intellectually. Furthermore, many of the problems with Azazel Batman are broadcast far, far too obviously. It's good, but many other Batman arcs are better and definitely seems to come from a time when D.C. was struggling to define the character.

Lashaan Balasingam (Bookidote) says

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

If you've seen *The Dark Knight Rises*, then know that what you see here is one of the many comics that inspired some of the great scenes that Christopher Nolan translated onto the big screen. As much as this volume is known as an absolute classic in Batman's universe, it however struggles to survive the test of time. Published in the 90s, written by both Chuck Dixon and Doug Moench, illustrated by Jim Aparo, Jim Balent, Norm Breyfogle and Graham Nolan, *Knightfall* is only the first part of a trilogy, and essentially the most memorable story arc. The great writers behind this volume introduces readers to Bane and his ultimate plan to take control of Gotham by first getting rid of the one and only Batman. While Bane manipulates the whole orchestra and devises a painful and exhausting trial for Batman, the story essentially leads to the one and only highlight hinted in the title of the volume. Is Bane's plan truly flawless? Will he be able to take down the Dark Knight? The crusader that no other villain has yet been able to put an end to?

Bane makes sure to drain out every single inch of energy of his target before he gets his own hands dirty. If that isn't cruel, I don't know what it; that's a lie, I can think of a billion things that are quite sadistic, mind you. Essentially, the story really begins when we find out that Bane plans on making a giant hole in Arkham Asylum in order to unleash every criminal that Batman had put behind bars to this date. Talk about a nasty leakage to your favorite aquarium. If having a vast and notorious cast of villains running freely and cooking up their own personal flavor of a plan to bring down the Bats isn't something to worry about, you're wrong. The whole volume showcases countless villains, whether its the Film Freak, the Mad Hatter or the Joker himself. You'll quickly realize that each one of them will make sure to drain a little something out of the Caped Crusader before the grand finale. Repetitive in nature, the story can easily bore a person that sees this as a *déjà vu* of Batman bringing down villains once again. *Knightfall* isn't exactly about digging deep into the villain's psyches and discovering a goldmine in their personalities, something that would blow the minds of fans. *Knightfall* is about putting Batman to the test without ever giving him the chance to breathe. It's a story that creates the perfect nightmare for the Caped Crusader. The one scenario where Batman has to deal with every crazy lunatic, one after the other, instead of being able to stand on his gargoyles preying on a villain who's looking for a high.

The artwork is a throwback to the era of comics right before the more accustomed modern artwork we see nowadays. I honestly didn't find it disturbing or lackluster, I actually swallowed it up fairly easily and was able to just enjoy the story afoot. I thought the characters were pretty well penciled and were done justice in the aesthetic department. Of course, with the plot direction that *Knightfall* has, the artists had a lot of things to work with. Every single villain had their own moments to shine and their main traits portrayed through the simple evil schemes they concocted. It was quite the fun to see them try and find ways to take down Batman. In all honesty, I didn't however feel like the artwork pulled me into feeling feelings; gosh, that made my brain fart. The only time that that the story actually had me captivated and intrigued is in the final act, the final chapter. Even though I knew where it was going, the execution was much more shocking and powerful than the rest of the story. Throughout the volume, you do see Batman realizing the plan little by little, while seeing how much its killing him. But the final chapter felt like the last straw. It felt like you could actually see that Bane's brains did an extremely heavy damage to the Dark Knight, but that the nail on the coffin would come from his brawn's.

The best part of this volume is obviously the last chapter. The writing became lyrical and focal to the panels that were building up to the famous scene. A lot of the stories presented before the main event could've been cut out just to avoid feeling the repetition in plot. Although the plot could be seen as Batman climbing a tower and being challenged by a different villain until he reached the top for the big bad boss, Robin's adventures on the side helped bring change and add subplots. Even Killer Croc had his own agenda, one that you don't exactly expect from the savage creature. The first part in the trilogy remains a classic in Batman's universe, but one that doesn't exactly have the same weight as other masterpieces. This is the volume where you meet with Bane and where you are shown what his motives and way of villainy are. Although the focus is around the downfall of Batman and the rise of Bane, you also get glimpses of another important character, Jean-Paul Valley. His role becomes a lot bigger in part 2 and 3, but his appearance sure can intrigue some of the connoisseurs of Batman's universe. Any hardcore fan should go through at least *Knightfall*. It's always

nice to see a Bane that isn't a growl-only slave of Poison Ivy. Am I right?

Yours truly,

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