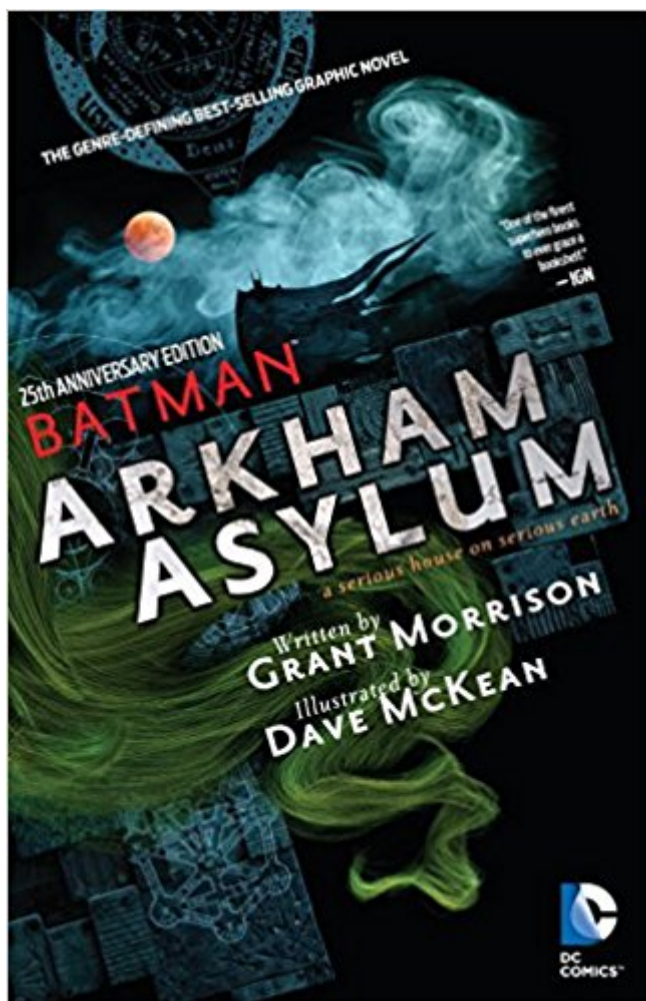


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# Batman: Arkham Asylum 25th Anniversary



## Synopsis

The inmates of Arkham Asylum have taken over Gotham's detention center for the criminally insane on April Fool's Day, demanding Batman in exchange for their hostages. Accepting their demented challenge, Batman is forced to endure the personal hells of the Joker, Scarecrow, Poison Ivy, Two-Face and many other sworn enemies in order to save the innocents and retake the prison. During his run through this absurd gauntlet, the Dark Knight's must face down both his most dangerous foes and his inner demons. This is the critically acclaimed Batman story that helped launch the U.S. careers of Grant Morrison and Dave McKean.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Morrison's first big commercial hit" and his first shot writing Batman, a character he would spend a great deal of time with over the course of his career" was this ground-breaking graphic novel featuring the grim, twisted artwork of painter Dave McKean. In this darkly poetic, psychologically rich tale, Batman faces off against the Joker, Two-Face, the Scarecrow and other villains inside Gotham City's house for the criminally insane." **ROLLING STONE** Grant Morrison and Dave McKean explore that connection in *Arkham Asylum*, one of the finest superhero books to ever grace a bookshelf." **IGN** "Between Morrison's esoteric writing and Dave McKean's gorgeous painting, this may very well be my nominee for the definitive Batman story. Yes, even more so than *The Dark Knight Returns*, *Year One*, or *The Killing Joke*. Exploring both Batman and his rogues equally through significantly different characterizations than typically seen in the

main DCU, Morrison boils these characters down to their essence while providing a chilling mystery story set within the confines of Gotham's home for the criminally insane." — CRAVE ONLINE

Grant Morrison has been working with DC Comics for more than twenty years, beginning with his legendary runs on the revolutionary titles *ANIMAL MAN* and *DOOM PATROL*. Since then he has written numerous best-sellers including *JLA*, *BATMAN* and *New X-Men* as well as the critically acclaimed creator-owned series *THE INVISIBLES*, *SEAGUY*, *THE FILTH*, *WE3* and *JOE THE BARBARIAN*. Morrison has also expanded the borders of the DC Universe in the award-winning pages of *SEVEN SOLDIERS*, *ALL-STAR SUPERMAN*, *FINAL CRISIS* and *BATMAN, INC.*, and he is reinvented the Man of Steel in the all-new *ACTION COMICS*. In his secret identity, Morrison is a "counterculture" spokesperson, a musician, an award-winning playwright and a chaos magician. He is also the author of the New York Times best-seller *Supergods*, a groundbreaking psycho-historic mapping of the superhero as a cultural organism. He divides his time between his homes in Los Angeles and Scotland.

You know honestly I don't hate it...but this doesn't flow as well as most Batman stories I'm used to. This for me is a back burner book. When you've picked up the best 10-12 Batman books...then consider this one.

It is not super easy to follow who is thinking in the narration, and the imagery is so literally dark that you will need to read this in bright light, and with good vision to be able to read the splatter paint font selected for The Joker's dialogue. This book reads like a riddle. However, I give it five stars for Dave McKean's underrated art alone, but the story was not bad. I think I just wanted a more final type ending, but I don't expect to get what I want, and I was enjoying how they wove the different narratives and timeframes together. This is more of an art book than a comic, except the pages very much read in the classic comic order.

Please note that the two stars are for the quality of the digital kindle copy of this book, rather than the story itself (which I'm sure would have been a decent read if I had been able to understand it). I should have read more of the reviews, because really half the of dialogue in this graphic novel is impossible to make out on my kindle fire hd. The panel viewing does very little to make reading easier, in fact I think that it subtracts from the beauty of the artwork by chopping bits of the page up and zooming in on them. This was my first time buying a graphic novel on my kindle (something I

had really been looking forward to was reading comic books on it), and maybe I'll try it again in the future, but you're better off buying a physical copy of this. I'm really disappointed with this purchase and am returning it for a refund, I'm hoping that maybe this is just a one-time deal and that other graphic novels will be easier to read and enjoy on my kindle.

"I see now the virtue in madness" begins Amadeus Arkham, locked in his own family home which he spent his life converting into a home for the mentally deranged only to later descend into madness himself. "I pity the poor shades confined to the Euclidean prison that is sanity. All things are possible here and I am what madness has made me. Whole. And complete. And free at last..." "Arkham Asylum: A Serious House on Serious Earth" is a nightmare vision featuring The Batman and some of his most deadly foes as you've never seen them before. Not a typical comic book by any means; this is art, plain and simple. A psychological exploration overflowing with oblique symbolism, jaw-dropping and stylish artwork, imagery meant to terrify, and prose meant to provoke. Some readers may be turned off by the out-of-character situations and reactions of some of their favorite characters or the mind-twirling nature of the story progression and art, but this is the creepiest and most avant-garde comic I've ever read and that alone makes it a must. This is not a superhero story; this is pure unadulterated psychological horror of the highest caliber. The story is actually two concurrent tales. One is an illustrated reading of the journal of Amadeus Arkham exploring his life, his death, his ambitions, and his succumbing to the very thing he dedicated his life to curing. The other follows the exploits of The Batman, called to the most storied sanitarium in all of fiction to face some of his greatest foes -and greatest fears- alone. The two overlap at times with Arkham's words adding symbolism to the events during Batman's journey into the heart of darkness. The look of this book is jarring. Outstanding. Amazing. It's like real life bleed into a classic painting to create this surreal abstract art style. I figured Heath Ledger's portrayal of The Joker in *The Dark Knight* would be the one to haunt my nightmares. I was wrong. From his very first frame here he looks positively demonic; not a man at all but a grinning atrocity with frightening eyes and a horrific countenance. The very embodiment of Satan himself: a fitting representation in this context. Clayface is not the shapeshifter we know here, but has become a living symbol of disease and corruption, a pathetic being like many of the other villains residing within Arkham's walls. After successful therapy, Two-Face has been weaned from his coin-flipping habit and now makes decisions based on tarot cards, offering him shelter from the black/white absolutes of his criminal past. The problem: he can no longer even go to the bathroom without relying on his cards to tell him what to do. The end result is messy. Scarecrow makes a brief, but frightening appearance, and The

Caped Crusader does battle with Killer Croc as well. The Mad Hatter shows up in true Lewis Carroll form (but with more pedophilic undertones) and offers up the solution to the mystery of this bizarre version of Batman's existence; confirming what I had suspected. If there is any chink in this book's armor, it's that the symbolism overpowers the story much of the time. Fans of David Lynch, David Cronenberg, and H. P. Lovecraft will eat this up, but anybody looking for a traditional linear good vs. evil story may want to think twice. This is an exploration of the psychology of Batman; his fear that he is the reason Arkham is overflowing with madmen, or worse: that he is no different from those he puts behind its walls. There are several recurring themes that are shared in the past experiences of both Amadeus Arkham and Bruce Wayne that are pretty fascinating. All of this insanity is held together by the outstanding art. "Arkham Asylum" is a complete package that requires multiple readings and a patient mind to unravel, but it is well worth the effort for those who want to get down to the elemental core of the Batman and gain insight into his thoughts and feelings. At first read, there is a lot that will be very off-putting to the Batman faithful, but once you understand the true nature of the book, it is an amazing work. This 15th anniversary edition features a real treat. The back pages are full of commentary by the creator of this beautiful mess who shares a ton of insight in entertaining fashion. But the real gem is the original script for the comic, which reads a lot like a screenplay for a film. Anyone still in the dark about writer Grant Morrison's intentions with this story would do well to give it a hard read. It really lays out the symbolism and references that would otherwise fly over most anybody's head and answers any remaining questions the reader may have about any given scene. A brilliant addition. Here's one little factoid for you: The Joker's mouth was originally to be drawn as a reference to the fabled vagina dentata. The concept never made it onto the page, but you're welcome for that mental image. Thanks, Mr. Morrison! So there it is. If you've ever questioned Batman's (or your own) sanity then this is the book for you. It's a nightmare of ink on paper and a deep, thoughtful look at the mind of one of the most iconic heroes of all time. It's dark, brutal, chilling, and downright gorgeous in the most disturbing possible way. It will change the way you look at the denizens of Gotham City, I can tell you that. 4 1/2 stars, rounded up for treating comics as an adult medium.

As a diehard Batman fan, I was expecting a lot from a title concerning Arkham Asylum. The premise of the story is that the asylum has been taken over by all of Batman's enemies and they demand Batman come inside or the Joker will start killing hostages if he doesn't. It also provides the back story/origins of Arkham Asylum and how it came to be. The artwork is dark, gritty and gothic and paints Batman and his enemies in a demented light. This piece relies primarily on storytelling and

pulling your emotional and psychological strings. This means there isn't much action like your typical comic book which is why I didn't give it 5 stars (Epic showdown against the Killer Croc though). But don't let the 4 star rating, this is definitely a must have for fans wanting to see the darker side of...well...the Dark Knight!

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