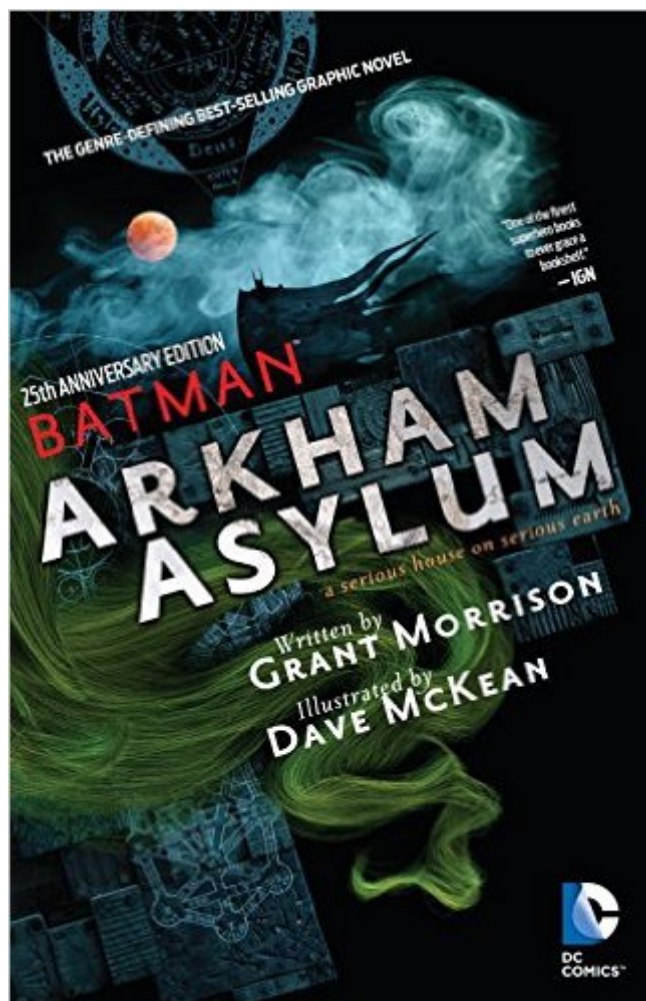


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Batman Arkham Asylum 25th Anniversary



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

First, there are two things anyone interested in purchasing or reading this title should know about it beforehand. One, that it is probably not for everyone's taste as it isn't your traditional Batman vs. the villain-of-the-week sort of story, but rather a darker, more disturbing kind of tale that focuses on a deep, complex exploration of madness, told alternately from three different points of view: that of Amadeus Arkham, founder of the asylum, that of Batman and his other persona, Bruce Wayne, and of course, that of all the madmen locked up at the asylum, including the super villains. Two, that it is "Suggested for Mature Readers" on the back cover as it's probably one of the most unnecessarily violent and ghastly graphic novels ever published under the Batman title, although, I definitely think - regardless of it being at times a bit too disgusting for my taste - that it's also one of the most original and beautifully illustrated narratives ever created for the genre. The superb artwork is perfect for the

story with its surreal, dreamy, and suggestive look, even if, on occasion, it gets a little difficult to follow, especially with certain clashing combinations of colors and typographies. Still, the lavish intricacy of the compositions and the broad range of techniques used by the artist are a spectacular visual feast worth the price of the book alone. The dual story, told in a nicely interwoven parallel, on one hand, explores Arkham's past and how his reasons for founding the asylum derived from decisions he made during the most crucial points of his life, and on the other, focuses on Batman's present day mission to go inside the asylum and, while confronting the insecurities about his own sanity, regain control of the facility after it's been taken over by the Joker.

"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.

If you're a true fan of Batman, then you know that the many villains he squares off against are completely and utterly insane. Of course, Batman typically has the upper hand through his extensive knowledge of martial arts and various high-tech devices, as well as knowing the intricacies of Gotham City inside and out. But what if you were to take Batman out of his comfort zone? What if, instead of having him face his rogues gallery on the streets of Gotham, where he's at

his prime, you take him out of his element and lock him inside a dark, scary asylum where he's on the run from villains such as the Joker, Killer Croc, the Mad Hatter, and more? Basically, everything I mentioned above is the premise behind Arkham Asylum. Batman has become the prey in a deadly game of cat and mouse, and whether or not he'll last the night rests on how far he's willing to go physically, mentally, and even spiritually. He encounters many different villains, each one exhibiting a different mental disorder vividly brought to life by Morrison's brilliant dialogue and characterization. These aren't the sarcastic, witty one-liner spouting villains you might expect; they're genuinely disturbed individuals who really do seem to require mental help. But the focus of the story isn't solely on Batman plummeting into the depths of madness; it also highlights the life of Amadeus Arkham, the psychiatrist who originally opened the asylum. Arkham's story, much like Batman's, is a dark tale that sees a once passionate doctor come to be broken in mind, body, and spirit by forces outside of his control. His story is one of occult practices (he actually hung out with Aleister Crowley and Carl Jung) being incorporated into psychology in an attempt to understand the twisted darkness that lurks in every human soul.

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