

Batgirl

The Series

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Batgirl: Silent Running (vol. 1)

ISBN: 1563897059

By Scott Peterson, Kelley Puckett

Art by Damion Scott

DC Comics, 2001

Batgirl reminding Oracle of Batman is probably not a ringing endorsement for the state of Batgirl's mental health. On the other hand, Batman is in awe of her fighting skills and she looks really good in a batsuit. Cassandra Cain, daughter of renowned/infamous assassin David Cain first appeared in the "**No Man's Land**" series. Cain raised her to be a killer. Deprived of speech, she relies solely on body language to communicate. It makes her a frighteningly efficient warrior, but she has turned her back on her father's training and with Oracle's blessing she has become the new Batgirl. Scott has managed to capture Cassandra's reliance on the unspoken. He uses her body language to convey what she is feeling, and even behind the mask her facial expressions are evocative. In this story Batgirl is coming to terms with who she was raised to be, and who she wants to become. The question, however, is whether Batman can allow her remain with his team as he reluctantly discovers more about her past.

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Batgirl: A Knight Alone (vol. 2)

ISBN: 1563898527

By Kelley Puckett

Art by Damion Scott, Coy Turnbull

DC Comics, 2001

I continue to be in awe of the art. He captures perfectly the essence of Batgirl's physicality, and the way in which she uses movement and body language to communicate. In the last volume Cassandra inadvertently had her brain reorganized by a well meaning metahuman. It gave her the gift of language, but it deprived her of her ability to fight. Speaking means that she no longer reads body language the same way, which means that she can no longer fight. Batman is trying to train her, but she is facing years of study after which she still won't be able to fight as effortlessly and as perfectly as she used to. Instead she makes a deal with Lady Shiva. Shiva teaches her to fight the way she used to, and in a year they battle to the death. Even after she regains the ability to fight, and the right to wear the batcowl again, she has to come to terms with what it means to be a part of the Bat-family. And, in case anyone needed any reminding, Batman can be a SOB

when he puts his mind to it, and he's really not a well adjusted human being.

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Batgirl: Death Wish (vol. 3)

ISBN: 1563899817

By Kelley Puckett, Chuck Dixon

Art by Damion Scott

DC Comics, 2003

James Jean (also known for his work on Fables) has started doing cover art for **Batgirl** and I'm in love. His Batgirl is seductively powerful, and despite her background oddly innocent. In **Batgirl: A Knight Alone** Batgirl made a deal with Lady Shiva - teach her how to fight like she used to and in a year Batgirl and Shiva will meet in combat to the death. Now Shiva is back to hold Batgirl to her promise. Oracle is worried that Batgirl has a death wish, and Batman doesn't necessarily think she's wrong, just that this is something that Batgirl needs to work out on her own. This book had a lot of interesting character growth particularly between Batgirl and the other younger members of the Bat-family like Robin and Spoiler. It was also interesting to witness the relationship between Oracle and Batman - despite originally having been a sidekick, she is more his equal than anyone else.

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Batgirl: Fists of Fury (vol. 4)

ISBN: 1401202035

By Kelley Puckett, Scott Peterson

Art by Damion Scott, Vincent Giarrano, Phil Noto

DC Comics, 2004

I am not as impressed by this volume as I have been by the previous three. The artwork remains excellent and a large part of why I love this series so much, but the story was disjointed. There was no story arc in this volume, instead it was comprised of a series of unrelated vignettes which never seemed to add up to anything. Coming from a series which has been so strong, and so interesting in terms of character development and what it means to be a part of the Bat-family, this was disappointing. I wanted more of each story line, particularly Batgirl's confrontation with the Joker. I would still recommend it, and if you are building a collection I definitely suggest that you buy it. This series is strong, and I think in the future it will return to its earlier quality (looking at the current issues of Batgirl and Poison Ivy I can't wait for the next trade paperback).

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