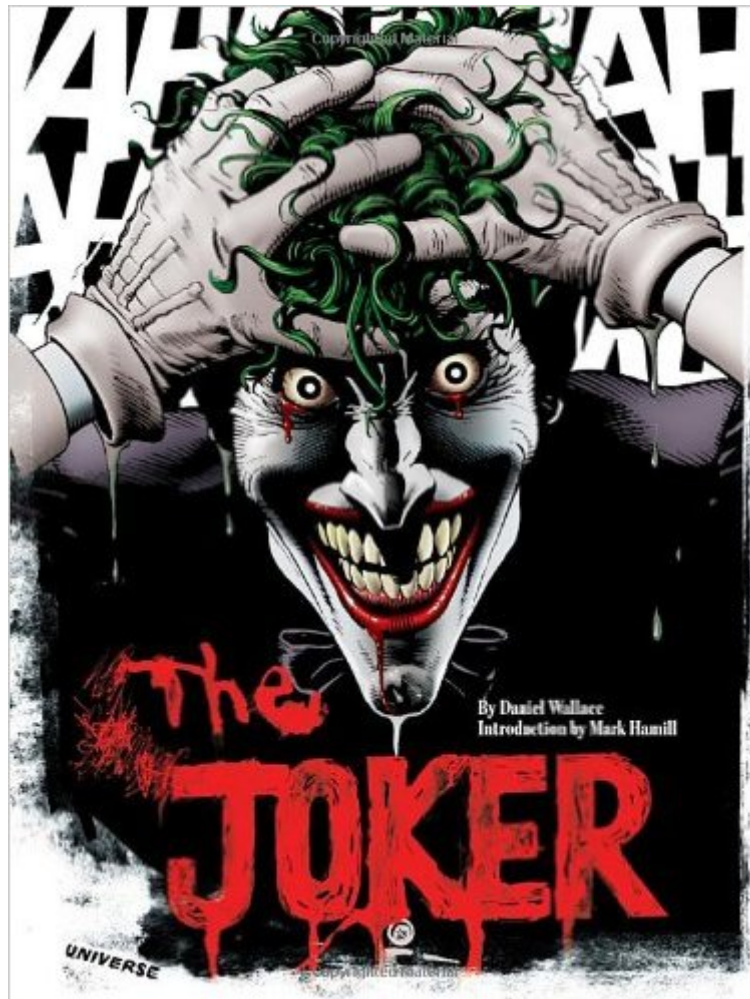


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# The Joker: A Visual History Of The Clown Prince Of Crime



## Synopsis

A comprehensive look at the greatest comic book villain . . . ever. Since his first appearance in 1940's *Batman #1*, the Joker stands alone as the most hated, feared, and loved villain in the DC Universe. Though his true origins may be unknown, the Clown Prince of Crime's psychotic appearances in hundreds of comic books has shaped the way we look at Batman, comic books, and ourselves. Indeed, a hero is only as good as his nemesis, so the Joker's heinous crimes, including murdering the second Robin and paralyzing Batgirl, have elevated Batman to the highest levels of crime-fighting, and we, the readers, to the finest levels of quality pop-culture entertainment. The Joker is the first retrospective chronicling one of the most groundbreaking and game-changing villains of all time, and contains images from his more than seventy years in comics by comic book artists and writers such as Bob Kane, Bill Finger, Jerry Robinson, Dick Sprang, Grant Morrison, Dave McKean, Neil Gaiman, Geoff Johns, Alan Moore, Brian Bolland, Brian Azzarello, Bruce Timm, and Paul Dini. Also included are images from his various film, television, animated, and video game incarnations, such as the timeless interpretations by Cesar Romero, Jack Nicholson, and Heath Ledger, who won his posthumous Oscar for his portrayal of the Joker in 2008's *The Dark Knight*. This book is a must-have for fans and anyone who wants to die laughing.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The Joker is generally considered to be the most visually arresting and best overall bad guy in

comic books. What is remarkable is that no one from the next tier of characters - Luthor, Doctor-Doom, Magneto, Red Skull - is even remotely close in impact. This may account for the decision by DC to feature the Joker in its first book devoted solely to a villain. The dominance of the Joker started early. While Lex Luthor did not begin to menace Superman until Action Comics 23, the Joker appeared in Batman number one as well as 9 of the first 12 issues of that book. He is introduced as a murderous villain who could have walked right out of a pulp story. During the Silver Age, however, the Joker is treated as a lighter character prone to themed robberies and little violence. This changed in the late 1980s. No comic book creation so characterized DC's transition into darker stories in that decade as the Joker. He shoots former Batgirl Barbara Gordon in "Killing Joke", leaving her a paraplegic, and murders new Robin Jason Todd in "A Death in the Family." As an even more twisted version of himself in the future portrayed in "The Dark Night Returns," the Joker snaps his own neck so that Batman will be blamed: "They'll kill you for this...I'll see you in hell." Even so, The Visual History argues that The Joker shares the same literary DNA as Batman, functioning as his dark mirror image. Both lack super powers in a comic book world where the extraordinary is normal. Both rely on their brains to play the role of underlord and overlord of DC's darkest city. Batman and the Joker are maniacal and obsessive in their relative efforts. At one point, the Joker admits that he is defined by his nemesis as he tells Batman: "You can't kill me without becoming like me."

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