

THE CAPED CRUSADER



DARK KNIGHT


IN MAY OF 1939, CLOSE TO A YEAR AFTER THE FIRST TRUE-BLUE SUPERHERO, SUPERMAN, APPEARED IN ACTION COMICS #1, WRITER BILL FINGER AND ARTIST BOB KANE INTRODUCED A SUPERHERO IN DETECTIVE COMICS #27 OF A MUCH DIFFERENT STRIPE: THE BATMAN!

A CALL TO ACTION

***WITNESSING THE MURDER OF HIS PARENTS
WHILE WALKING HOME FROM THE MOVIES, A
YOUNG BRUCE WAYNE VOWS TO DEVOTE HIS
LIFE TO FIGHTING CRIME.***



BAT IN FLIGHT



***AFTER YEARS OF STUDY AND TRAINING, HE DONS A CAPE AND COWL,
SECURES HIMSELF AN ASSORTMENT OF GADGETS, AND GOES OFF
INTO THE NIGHT TO DO BATTLE WITH GOTHAM CITY'S CRIMINAL
ELEMENT.***

BATMAN WAS BORN.

A CAPED CRUSADER

EQUAL PARTS SHERLOCK HOLMES, THE SHADOW, DICK TRACY, AND DOC SAVAGE, THE CAPED CRUSADER NEVERTHELESS EMERGED AS A WHOLLY UNIQUE ENTRY IN THE PULP HERO CANON, AND FOUND HIS PLACE AS THE PERFECT COUNTERPART TO SUPERMAN.



OPPOSITES IN FACT

SUPERMAN

- **STANDS FOR HOPE AND JUSTICE**
- **RAISED IN RURAL KANSAS BY A FAMILY OF MODEST MEANS**
- **BORN WITH SPECTACULAR POWERS**
- **HAS A MEAGER SALARY AS A REPORTER**

BATMAN

- **STANDS FOR FEAR AND VENGEANCE**
- **RAISED IN THE CITY OF GOTHAM BY A FAMILY OF EXTRAORDINARY WEALTH.**
- **A MERE MAN, WHO HAS PUSHED HIMSELF THROUGH RIGOROUS TRAINING TO BECOME AN EXPERT INVESTIGATOR AND FIGHTER.**
- **VASTLY WEALTHY FROM FAMILY MONEY**



GOTHAM CITY.

A PLACE TO CALL HOME

LOTS OF SUPERHEROES HAVE HOME CITIES THAT PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN MAKING THEM WHO THEY ARE. SUPERMAN'S METROPOLIS. FLASH'S CENTRAL CITY. SPIDER-MAN'S NEW YORK. BUT NONE PLAY QUITE AS CENTRAL A ROLE AS GOTHAM CITY DOES FOR BATMAN.

INSPIRED BY REAL CITIES?

- ***IS GOTHAM MEANT TO BE A FICTIONAL NEW YORK CITY? MAYBE.***
- ***ITS NAME IS BORROWED FROM WASHINGTON IRVING'S REGULAR USE OF THE TERM TO REFER TO NYC IN HIS 19TH CENTURY SATIRICAL MAGAZINE SALMAGUNDI.***
- ***THERE IS SOME ASSOCIATE GOTHAM WITH CHICAGO, THOUGH. IN PART THAT'S BECAUSE OF CHICAGO'S HISTORICAL CONNECTION TO THE MOB, ESPECIALLY TO MOBSTER AL CAPONE.***



WHAT IT REALLY REPRESENTS . . .



IT'S A BIT OF A MISTAKE, THOUGH, TO WORRY TOO MUCH ABOUT WHAT CITY GOTHAM IS "REALLY" SUPPOSED TO BE. IT'S NOT SUPPOSED TO BE ANY ONE OF THEM. RATHER, GOTHAM IS THE DARK REFLECTION OF ALL AMERICAN CITIES—THE SEEDY UNDERBELLY OF URBANIZATION.

IT DOESN'T JUST HAVE CRIME—IT'S RIDDLED WITH CRIME. IT DOESN'T JUST HAVE SOME CORRUPTION—IT'S WHOLLY CORRUPT. IT DOESN'T JUST HAVE INCOME INEQUALITY—IT'S DEFINED ENTIRELY BY THE HAVES AND HAVE-NOTS.



MAN OF JUSTICE

***BATMAN FITS INTO
GOTHAM IN A WAY THAT
NO OTHER SUPERHERO
FITS INTO HIS OR HER
SURROUNDINGS. HE IS A
CREATION OF THE CITY.***

A VIGILANTE IS BORN

WHEN ITS PERVASIVE CRIME GOT SO BAD THAT IT FINALLY IMPACTED THE CITY'S ELITE WITH THE MURDER OF THOMAS AND MARTHA WAYNE, GOTHAM SPAT OUT THEIR SON AS A RESPONSE: A BILLIONAIRE TURNED VIGILANTE WHO TARGETS EVERYONE FROM CORRUPT POLITICIANS TO POLICE ON THE TAKE AND FIGHTS EVERYONE FROM LOW-END BURGLARS TO MASTER CRIMINALS.



BARELY ACCEPTED?

FOR THEIR PART, THE PEOPLE OF GOTHAM ENDORSE THE CAPED CRUSADER IMPLICITLY IN THEIR HALF-HEARTED ATTEMPTS TO BRING HIM TO JUSTICE AND EXPLICITLY WITH THEIR REGULAR CRIES FOR HELP, SHOWCASED BY GOOD COPS LIKE JIM GORDON SHINING THE BAT-SIGNAL INTO THE NIGHT SKY WHEN BATMAN'S SERVICES ARE NEEDED.

