



## Showcase Presents: Batgirl, Vol. 1

*John Broome , Carmine Infantino (Illustrator) , Gil Kane (Illustrator)*

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**Showcase Presents: Batgirl, Vol. 1** John Broome , Carmine Infantino (Illustrator) , Gil Kane (Illustrator)

This value-priced collection features over 500 pages of classic comics starting at the height of the Batman craze of the 1960s Batman's circle of allies expanded when young Barbara Gordon, daughter of Police Commissioner Gordon, took up crimefighting as Batgirl In these fast-paced, fun stories, Batgirl learns what it takes to battle evil in the streets of Gotham City from the Dynamic Duo, while taking on a string of unforgettable foes.

## Showcase Presents: Batgirl, Vol. 1 Details

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# From Reader Review Showcase Presents: Batgirl, Vol. 1 for online ebook

## Robert says

If this is the best they could come up with for a collection, then the rest of the catalog must be epically bad. Sexist, Racist, Poorly Written and filled with shockingly pandering attempts at being 'relevant' and 'socially responsible', unless you are a fan of unintentionally comedy or a masochist, avoid this at all costs.

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## Jason Luna says

This book is largely published the same time as the latter Showcase era represented by Batman, late 60s and early 70s. Yet this book is MUCH better than Batman's collections, why?

I think, in part, it's gender sensitivity. I hesitate to call it sexism or anything else purely negative, because Frank Robbins and company don't seem to bear any ill will to the human species. But also, the stories are actually good. Babs Gordon, AKA Batgirl, has a personal stake in all the back stories in Detective Comics, which makes her way better than Batman. While Batman sees criminals and is like "what cookie cutter crime story can this be, THE END", Babs is either helping out her Dad, AKA police commissioner Gordon, or helping her criminologist boyfriend Jason Bard, or even running for congress, the audience is rooting for two outcomes, and it makes her seem like, if not relatable, than a character who has more at stake than the aloof Bruce Wayne. While I believe this is born out of a slight gender bias, that women are emotionally vulnerable than men, the stories got to me and made me care, so it worked.

The early stories by Gardner Fox are way better than what Fox usually writes, less cheesy, for similar female reasons. Frank Robbins is a solid crime writer, always finds ways for Babs Gordon to be pulled to new locations or to meet new criminals, the addition of Jason Bard adds depth. The issues of Superman she appeared in after her Detective Comics run ended are very good, Elliot S! Magin is a skilled writer and Curt Swan is the best Superman artist maybe ever. The art otherwise is pretty good, Don Heck of Avengers fame and Carmine Infantino of arguably every character ever in Marvel/DC do solid work throughout.

All in all, this is what people expect from a Batman comic, much less dated than the actual Batman. 5/5

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## Lee Houston, says

While Yvonne Craig was my introduction to the character, this volume was my opportunity to get to know the character from the beginning of her career.

Commissioner Gordon's only daughter Barbara, did not actually start out to be a super-heroine. She was dressed in a female version of Batman's costume on her way to a costume party when fate intervened. Realizing she could do more good, she skipped the party and continued as Batgirl up until "The Killing Joke".

While a mixed bag at times, depending upon the creative team involved, this volume chronicles most of Batgirl's career and life up to about a year before the aforementioned "Joke".

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## Maggie Carr says

Comics aren't "my genre" but I did it and can mark it off my #ReadHarderChallenge2017 from #BookRiot

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## Aaron says

The Showcase series by DC comics reprints old comics in large collections (this one is ~550 pages). They get to their sub \$20 price point by printing them in black and white cheap paper similar to newsprint. This series is by far the most economical way to experience these old stories.

But enough about the series, what about this volume? Covering stories from 1967 to 1975, this volume focuses on Batgirl, from her original appearance to her election to congress. My experience with the Batgirl character before this book primarily came from the old Adam West Batman TV show and the animated series from the 1990s. So, for me, getting to see Batgirl's original history was a real treat. Admittedly, some of the early stories have significant sexist elements to them, which in a few cases jarred me right out of the story. I mean, look at that cover. That is from an actual comic, and Batgirl "putting her face on" before a fight is actually part of one of the stories. Bizarre. Beyond that, though, there are some really entertaining stories in here. I enjoyed the reminder that back in the early days the creators felt comfortable being fairly silly with their heroes, and Batman wasn't all "grim-dark" like it tends to be these days. I really enjoyed this collection.

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## Korynn says

This cover has an atrocious splash page in which Batgirl is standing in the foreground working on putting on her lipstick with her Batcompact while the boys, Batman and Robin brawl it out in the background, doing men's work of course. As a Batgirl lover this really burns me (i know its from one of the stories). Her origin alone should explain why Barbara Gordon shouldn't be given such shoddy treatment, and even when some of the stories have abused the glamour and sexiness of Batgirl with run stockings in the middle of fights, these early stories also show a women ready to take on the bad guys on her own terms. Not Batman's terms, Batgirl's.

Why DC, did you have to choose this sexist portrayal as the cover to Batgirl's Showcase? Why? Some of the stories are quite hilarious because they are so shoddily plotted. I deeply enjoyed the Supergirl/Batgirl story where they together plot to make Batman and Superman look bad. But the Wonder Woman vs Batgirl story for the love of Batman is just so unbelievably bad it has to be read to be disbelieved.

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## Tay says

Other than the THREE times the writers have Babs flout her profession's code of ethics, I really enjoyed seeing the earliest days of Batgirl. Of course I rolled my eyes at each mention of Babs femininity as a detriment to her crime fighting, but that's to be expected - unfortunately. I don't really want to harp the comics writers inability to research librarianship and the importance to patron privacy, but as someone who

wants to become a librarian, that REALLY REALLY bothered me. The woman has a PhD in Library Science and you're really gonna tell me she conveniently missed THAT REALLY IMPORTANT PART OF BEING A LIBRARIAN.

Anyway, I love Babs and people need to feel less confident in their ability to just wing things instead of actually putting research into what they are talking about, but that's none of my business.

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## **Adam Graham says**

I always loved when the 1960s Batman TV show added Yvonne Craig as Batgirl when I was a kid, so this big book of 1960s and 70s Batgirl stories was a real treat. The Book traces Batgirl's history from her first appearance in Detective Comics #359 in 1967 through a 1975 appearance in Superman Family magazine.

Batgirl never had her own pre-Crisis comic book which makes a book like this so fun as we get to see Batgirl's appearances in several comic books written by several different writers with a variety of styles. Batgirl does guest spots in comics for the Justice League, World's Finest, Brave and the Bold, Adventure Comics, and of course, Batman.

The book sees Batgirl develop. Unlike other members of the Bat family, her taking on a superhero persona is tied to no personal tragedy. Simply put, she was going to a costume party in the costume, ran into trouble, fought some crime, and liked it. Thus, a legend was born.

Through these adventures, Batgirl is established as a (mostly) tough incredibly brilliant young woman who is a legitimate and serious crimefighter. The book really falls into three sections. Up to page 281, the book is dominated by Batgirl's guest appearances in other magazines, with a lot of appearances with Batman and Robin (August 1969). My favorite in this lot is a mind-twisting story in World's Finest #176 called the Supergirl-Batgirl Plot. The weirdest story in this section is Justice League #60 where the Justice Leaguers are shrunk and given wings by "the Immortal Queen." Batgirl didn't feature very much in the conclusion. Indeed, while most of the stories in this section are pretty good, my one complaint is that many of them have very little Batgirl-practically cameo appearances.

This section does include Batgirl's first solo stories as a back up feature in Detective Comics 384. The same issue features artist Gil Kane giving Barbara Gordon a gorgeous makeover from the original hair up and librarian glasses from the first issue as Batgirl jumps into action to find a missing attractive library patron.

The second section of the book is made up entirely of these back up features from page 281-491. These features ran from 7-10 pages in length and ran in Detective comics as an add-on to the Batman feature. Batgirl had six of these back up stories appear from October 1969-July 1970 before getting a regular monthly gig from October 1970-June 1972. The stories in this section were traditional detective and crime fighting stories with no costumed supervillains showing up.

The stories usually worked out okay, but sometimes due to length and recap requirements, the ending could seem rushed. An attempt at a Batgirl-Robin team up in these back up features didn't work out well for that reason. A two part back-up story is barely enough for one hero, let alone two.

Batgirl dealt with some more "female related" stories such as industrial espionage against the "best dressed woman in the world" who would decide what skirt length women would be wearing and a

blackmailer/murderer who made wigs that attached themselves to the wears head and induces a headache. The blackmailer then makes his demand and if the client doesn't pay off, he crushes her skull. However, all of them are quite enjoyable. The story ends with her running for Congress, which may be the most ignominious fate a superhero has faced.

The final three stories are guest spots in Superman and Superman Family Magazine which are some of the better ones in the book. Batman's Super partners get to show their stuff but so does Batgirl. Even while only making appearances as a part time superhero, she's treated as a serious crimefighter.

That's the case throughout the book with one big exception to this was Detective Comics #371 which had Batgirl's crimefighting constantly frustrated by her vanity and primping over her costume and make up. She proved her feminine advantage by "accidentally" tearing her tights and showing her legs, allowing Batman to knock out the bad guys.

Now, I'm the last person to complain about sexism, particularly in older material. But come on! That's just ridiculous, even for 1968. Perhaps the most unfortunate decision made by DC Editors in this book was to use an image from that issue for the cover of the book. It doesn't do Batgirl justice. The only other story that may offend some feminist is Brave and the Bold #78 which had Batgirl and Wonder Woman making fools of themselves to win the heart of Batman. At first, it was an act to lure Copperhead into a false sense of security, but then it became serious. However, I thought the story was just a comedy story.

Of course, there are inexplicable things that happen in the book such as Batgirl giving oxygen to a nearly drowned Supergirl by dragging her to a car, letting out the air and putting Supergirl's mouth on the tire stem. Also, they offer their parody of the Godfather called, "The Stepfather." However, for fans of classic comics, these sort of incidents are features not bugs.

Despite a few hick ups, this is a fun collection of Silver and Bronze Age comics.

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## **Stephen says**

The DC Showcase reprints are affordable, uncluttered with ads, and extremely enjoyable by our family. Good clean, fun comics. Great old-school role model hero for the girls (especially now that Superman and Woman are killing people).

And if any youngsters in your family have any artistic inclinations, these are invaluable! The folks who were making these comics back in the 1960s had mastered perspective, anatomy, how cloth drapes a body...etc. It's easier for kids to learn how to draw a line if they are not distracted by the colors surrounding the lines.

Highly recommended.

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## **Liz says**

Only made it to p 257. Really wanted to enjoy this, but it's so dated and sexist. I know, these comics are from

1967-75, what was I expecting? Guess I didn't expect it to bother me so much. Will try to finish it another time.

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## **Andy says**

When Batman was at the peak of his Sixties popularity a new, mod-influenced Batgirl was created to conform to the times. She was tough, sexy and funny.

Only problem was after a year she was just as dull and stodgy as Batman. Seems like DC got bored very quickly with her. Too bad, because she had boatloads of potential, but the comics industry is run by idiots anyway. These comics are pretty dated but that's half the fun. It's like watching old reruns of "Get Smart".

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## **Joseph says**

This review is part of a team buddy read with Shallow Comic Reader Club. This week's theme: comics featuring a female lead.

Did you know that Barbara Gordon was once a Congresswoman representing part of Gotham City?

Elected on a Fusion Party ticket, with the platform of prison reform, cleaning up the slums, creating new jobs, and stopping "dope-traffic," Barbara's election would pretty much put a stop to her career as Batgirl. She was elected in 1972, the year of Richard Nixon's re-election, so maybe he had something to do with it, but I think it was more a case of DC getting rid of a character who was pretty popular. It would be another three years before she appeared in a regular feature again, although she had three guest appearances with Superman in his own magazine, and with Supergirl in Superman Family.

Created at the height of the Batman TV show craze, Batgirl had some pretty great roots. Her creators were Gardner Fox, science fiction author and scribe of most of DC's Silver Age titles at one point or another, including a 60+ run on Justice League of America, and artist Carmine Infantino, who gave us the classic Silver Age Flash and introduced modern aesthetics (for 1956) into the DC line of titles. Both of these men were heavy weights in DC's Golden Age, contributing to stories about the Justice Society, Flash, Black Canary, and others. Pretty good lineage, if you ask me.

Barbara Gordon was on her way to a fancy dress party one night when she stopped after seeing an attempted abduction of millionaire Bruce Wayne during a highway robbery. Having a "Batgirl" costume in her trunk, she donned those threads and helped put a stop to the villains (Killer Moth, y'all), and rescuing Wayne in the process. Before long, Barbara, a mousy librarian type, was fighting alongside the Dynamic Duo, breaking up crime sprees left and right.

Early on, we learn that Barbara has a photographic memory, a PhD, and is a high level martial arts expert. Although she early on declares she has no romantic interest in Batman, this being the 1960s, she will find herself on the receiving end of Catwoman's jealousy, engaged in a cat fight with Wonder Woman over the attentions of Batman, and even joins a group dedicated to forcing Batman to choose a bride for once and for all. Of course, all of these things result in Batgirl going undercover or helping Batman with a ruse, so it's not

as ridiculous as it sounds (well, ok, yes it is). Fox also channels his inner Stan Lee by having Batgirl constantly refer to her “feminine intuition.”

Soon advancing to her own back up feature in Detective Comics, Batgirl really shines under the pen of Frank Robbins, who gives us a modern woman, a true detective as much as a Batman, and even a personal life, all in the space of eight pages a month. Artist Don Heck, who was the artist on Avengers for a number of years, turns in some of his best work here, although his art is not for everyone. The best plot line is the slow realization of Commissioner Gordon that his daughter is the Dominoed Daredevil. Although some of the stories are “female centered,” with Batgirl fighting off fashion thieves and a crazy wig-maker, they’re actually not at all as strong-fisted as the stories from the mid-60s.

Overall, I was pleasantly surprised at how much I enjoyed these tales. I didn't feel they were that badly dated, like many stories from that day. There’s less sexism, particularly as the stories progress, than I would have thought, also. With only one or two exceptions (that silly Batgirl vs Wonder Woman story in particular), I thoroughly enjoyed all the stories here.

One point about Barbara’s age. It’s pretty clear that the writers pegged her close to the age of Batman, which in the pre-Crisis on Infinite Earths was usually said to be “around 29,” same as Superman. She had a PhD and certainly had to be over the age of 25 to get elected to Congress (because of the Constitution), so she was definitely in her mid to late 20s. Robin, on the other hand, was definitely a teenager when Batgirl first showed up on the scene, and on the younger end of the teen-aged years at that. I don’t remember the first time Robin and Batgirl acknowledged some kind of romantic attraction, but it does mean that Dick Grayson likes his women older. I’m pretty sure it was when Robin was in college, so that means Barbara should have been in her early 30s. AT LEAST. Talk about robbing the cradle. Of course, in the New 52, Barbara is now around the same age as Dick. Oh, well.

Some of the other creators in this volume are Murphy Anderson, Gil Kane, Neal Adams, Curt Swan, Elliott S! Maggin, Denny O’Neill, and Mike Sekowsky. Long time comics fans will know who these guys are. Masters all.

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## **Leonor says**

A pretty good mix of serious and crazy early Batgirl stories, a fun read for any Barbara Gordon fan. The first stories were the best; Frank Robbins just writes horrible Batgirl stories and he was way too overfeatured here...

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## **Valentine says**

Usually I prefer my comics in pure color, but as a major fan of the Barbara Gordon Batgirl, I had to get this, just to have a good idea of what was going on with her character back then. The cover depicted is not the one on the collection though and is rather a campy cover that shows a scene from one of the most controversial Batgirl stories ever: "Batgirl's Costume Cut-Ups." I actually thought that taken as pure camp, that story was pretty good, but I understand why it would be controversial as well.

As far as other stories, I think Batgirl was portrayed rather well, for the most part she seemed to have her



wits about her and she definitely didn't need to always be saved by Batman and Robin.

So if you want to see how Batgirl's character changed from the Swingin' Sixties into the Seventies, give this one a try.

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### **Nicolas says**

I grew up on classic comics so I enjoyed this in spite of its major cheese factor. I particularly liked the issues where Batgirl teamed up with a classic DC Character (Wonder Woman, Superman, Supergirl, Robin, etc.). It was also interesting to see the changing tone of how the writers dealt with a lead female character. Batgirl starts out almost as comic relief, making girlie mistakes that Batman had to fix or falling in love with whatever male character she was with. As it progressed she became tougher and more independent. By the end of this collections she's gone from a ditzy, comic character to a serious Congresswoman. I liked seeing them giving her supporting characters as well, including her love interest/amateur sleuth Jason and Commissioner Gordon. This was a really entertaining set.

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