Life

THE PULL LIST: THE BEST BATMAN STORIES FOR THIS OCTOBER



Cover of Batman: The Long Halloween. This comic issue was released in 1996.

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by Samantha Brody
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
SHE/HER/HERS
sab23059@uconn.edu

In the wake of "Absolute Batman #24" topping the best-selling comics list of this past week, Matt Fraction's run on Batman passing its one-year anniversary and Sept. 19's Batman Day, it's clear this month belongs to the Bat. Bruce Wayne's been busy recently, so I think for the last issue of The Pull List this September, we ought to turn our attention to Vengeance himself.

Hello and welcome back to The Pull List, a biweekly column about everything DC! Today, I'll be running through some of Batman's classic stories and what I'd recommend you read as we approach Halloween.

Speaking of our spookiest holiday, "Batman: The Long Halloween" (1996-1997), written by Jeph Loeb and illustrated by Tim Sale, is considered by many to be the quintessential Batman story. Anyone who has ever read a Batman comic knows about this run — at this point, it's become a foundational text of Batman lore and history.

"Batman: The Long Halloween" details the fall of district attorney Harvey Dent and his rise as "Two-Face," one of Batman's most famous villains. The story follows the trail of blood left by the aptly named serial killer Holiday, who kills on every major holiday. Most notably, this includes Halloween.

The comic itself is wonderfully written and illustrated, with its most striking visual choice being its use of occasional black-and-white pages. Every time another victim of Holiday is killed, we're shown their murder in black and white in a simple six-panel page. A man standing on a sidewalk, a hand holding a gun, a bullet fired — Sale is ruthlessly efficient in his art, and Loeb ensures the story moves at a brisk pace with plenty of intrigue.

Furthermore, "Batman: The Long Halloween" is a great entry for anyone looking to get into Batman stories. The cast is stripped back, focusing on Batman, Jim Gordon, Harvey Dent and crime boss Carmine Falcone, and it's very early on in Batman's career. In fact, it's so early that Batman has yet to see some of his more impressive foes. "The Long Halloween" symbolizes the transition from organized crime to superpowered, costumed foes in the dawn of Batman's career, with Two-Face as the first new villain to rear his head.

Next up on my list is a recent read of mine: "Batman: Dark Patterns" by writer Dan Watters, artist Hayden Sherman and colorist Triona Farrell. With the first issue of the 12twelve-issue series released in December of 2024, it's certainly a young story, but I think it has the power behind it to become another foundational story of Batman.

"Batman: Dark Patterns" is a four-act story, each with a different villain and all of which connect to the story's major theme: pareidolia, which also happens to be the name of the comic's third story arc.

As described by Bruce Wayne himself in issue #7, "pareidolia is the name for how we perceive patterns where there are none. Seeing faces in clouds, or the man in the moon." Referencing this psychological phenomenon is a clever move by Watters, as Batman spends much of "Batman: Dark Patterns" wrestling with his own perception. He sees things that aren't there, hears sounds from the wrong direction and struggles to trust anyone around him.

"Dark Patterns" is directly inspired by "The Long Halloween" (it even says so on the back cover) but what makes it stand out is its incredible portrayal of Batman's psyche. After all, there's no one more obsessive, paranoid or mistrusting as the Bat himself, and "Dark Patterns" nails this point in time and time again. If you're interested in a spooky, more horror-driven story with a psychological twist to it, "Dark Patterns" is the book to pick up.

And now for the last item on my list: "Batman: The Court of Owls" by writer Scott Snyder and artist Greg Capullo. However, if we're going to discuss the Court properly, we need to jump back in time.

The original "Batman #1" released in 1940 and marked the beginning of Batman's first ever solo run — after first appearing in "Detective Comics #27" just one year prior, he was soon given his own series to star in. However, after 70 years of Batman stories, DC made the decision to reboot its entire superhero universe in 2011 and start every monthly superhero story back at the beginning with a new #1 issue. With 52 comics suddenly set back to the very start, this reboot is known as the New 52.

No matter your opinion on the New 52, its impact is undeniable. With it came "Batman (Vol. 2) #1" — the first issue of the Court of Owls saga.

Snyder and Capullo certainly had a monumental task before them when they took on the role of starting Batman's new era, but "Court of Owls" was certainly a slam dunk. While I personally believe the last act of the story begins to run out of steam, the entire tale is both exciting and creepy, and serves as a great example of an ideal Batman detective story.

The eponymous Court of Owls is a secretive cabal of influential Gothamites and their associates, who run Gotham City from behind the scenes by assassinating key players and securing power and influence to further their own evil yet vague plans. The Court sees themselves as the true breath and bones of Gotham — the essence of the city, if you will. The only trouble is that Batman sees himself in the exact same way, and the two sides will need to clash to decide who gets to make Gotham their own.

If you're a fan of mysteries, "Court of Owls" is the book for you. Watching Batman piece together the Court's extensive history and attempt to find their hideouts and members is an absolute joy. Layer by layer, Batman peels back each tier of Gotham history and finds that he continually comes back with more questions than answers. Even worse, the Court seems hell-bent on getting the Bat out of their city, and that it seems like Bruce is up against an enemy that even he can't prepare for.

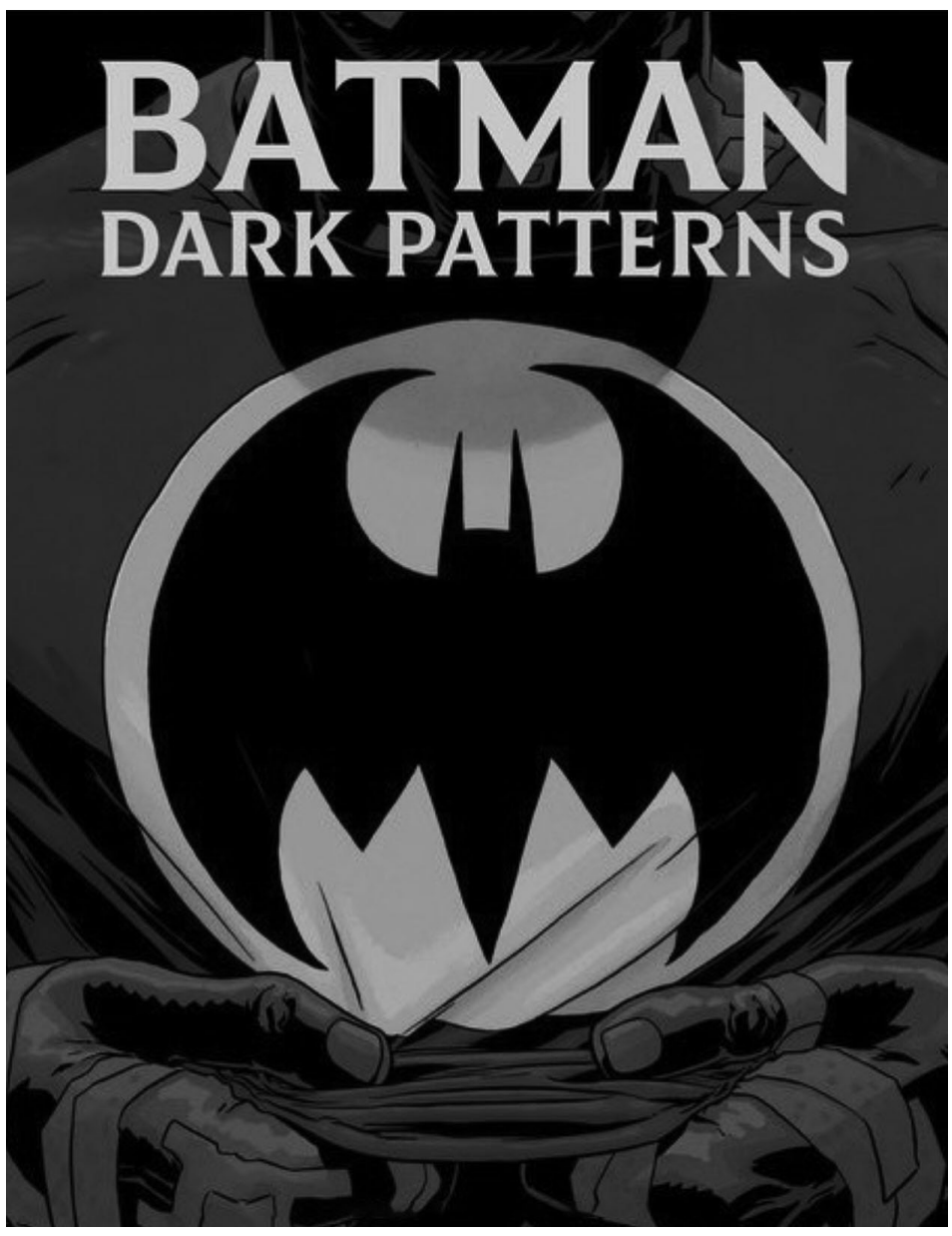
If you're interested in reading any of these stories for yourself, "Batman: Dark Patterns" and "Batman: The Long Halloween" are available in trade paperback format, typically both listed for $29.99. "Batman: The Court of Owls" is also available in trade paperback for a cheaper $16.99, and both "The Long Halloween" and "Court of Owls" can be purchased as compact comics for $9.99 each.

Finally, as for what's next on my own shopping list, here are my upcoming pulls!

Oct. 7 will see the release of "DC's Quoth the Raven... Whatever," a one-shot 80-page anthology series featuring heroes and antiheroes like Constantine, Zatanna, Deadman, Swamp Thing and Raven. It looks like DC is already preparing to start October off strong, and I'm hoping this will be a fun tone-setter for the season.

That same week will also bring "The Demon #1" by James Harren, which follows the story of Jason Blood, a demonology expert whose soul has been bound to Etrigan the Demon through Merlin's magic. Weird premise? Yes. A clear standout from the kinds of stories DC is known for? Also, yes. Still, I think this story will also be a nice tone-setter for the spookiest month of the year, and I'm hoping it will be a fun departure from the norm for DC.

Finally, the "Batman: Bad Seeds" event continues. If you've been following the storyline (which centers around the great Poison Ivy), you'll want to pick up "Poison Ivy #48" today and grab "Batman #14" next week. Happy new comic book day to all who celebrate!



Cover of Batman: Dark Patterns. This comic series was released on March 31st, 2026.

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SUBOG Weekly Events:

September 27th - October 4th

Homecoming Parade – 9.27 @ 1:30 PM along Hillside Road
Homecoming Carnival – 9.27 @ 2 PM at Founders Green
Homecoming Pageant – 9.28 @ 6 PM in the Student Union Theater
SUBOG x USG Voter Registration – 10.1 @ 11 AM at the SU Mall
Coffee House – 10.1 @ 4:30 PM at the Benton
Homecoming Lip Sync – 10.1 @ 7 PM in the Jorgensen Theater
Fan Fest Friday – 10.2 @ 1 PM at the SU Mall

Any questions? Email subog@uconn.edu