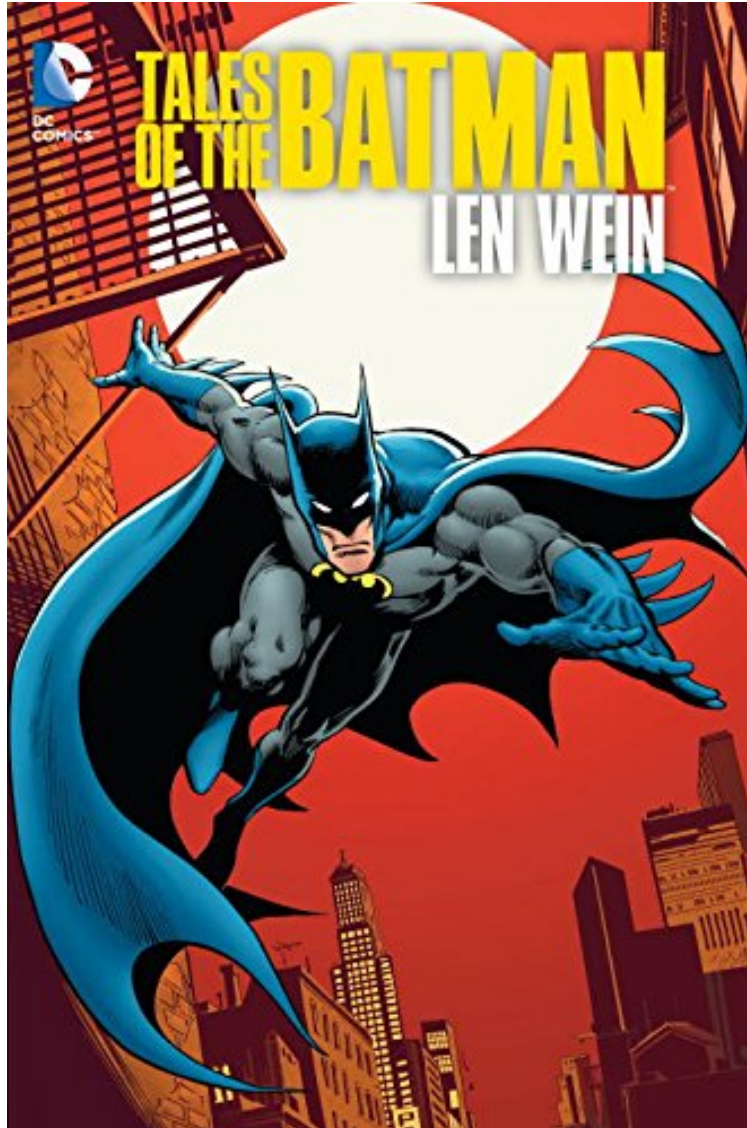


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Len Wein

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Len Wein : Tales of the Batman: Len Wein before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Tales of the Batman: Len Wein:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A fun and unknown era of the Batman mythos (for me, at least)By Adrian JenkinsAdding to my collection of reprints, I decided to buy Len Wein's Tales of the Batman recently. It filled in a gap in my Batman knowledge - I literally knew nothing of 70s and early 80s Batman. I was pleased that this volume based itself around an author, rather than an illustrator, as I could get complete stories. And on the whole, I am

immensely satisfied with my purchase. The physicals of the volume: the volume is a relatively cheap-looking hardcover with a decent enough dust jacket. I don't like the paper at all (a cheap glossy stock), although it is pretty light, allowing one to hold the book (containing 640 pages) relatively easily in hand. Nonetheless, I would have preferred a newsprint-type of paper like that found in, e.g., the Steve Ditko Omnibus (with a cheaper cover to match, although I paid nowhere near cover price). I was concerned about the glued binding, but I found that reading was remarkably easy, and "guttering" was pretty minor. The Batman universe is quite strange, differing vastly from Golden Age/ Silver Age Batman as well as from post-crisis Batman. But the change is not unwelcome. Batman is far more sociable in this volume - in fact, there's a good bit of Marvel in this DC title (particularly in its treatment of Catwoman and her relationship with Batman/Bruce Wayne). I thoroughly enjoy the villains in this volume. There are stories involving the Joker (who, for my money, reaches his best look here, with his elongated face and accentuated features), the Riddler, Catwoman and Ra's Al Ghul, as well as lesser known villains such as the Gentleman Ghost (one of my personal favorites!) and Firebug (TRIVIA! Did you know that Firebug is one of the bosses in the NES Sunsoft classic Batman?). I particularly like the disdain Batman shows for the criminals, often referring to minor costumed creeps as "two-bit". It's much better than the aura of respect now shown to the rogue's gallery these days, as if they are an irreplaceable part of the city (one of Scott Snyder's few missteps, IMHO). Many of the stories are multi-issue, which is welcome to me. I love some of the artistry on display here (and, for my money, the Catwoman of that day is still my favorite of all of them, with her hair falling from under her mask, and her ridiculous green cape). The storytelling is solid; I'm not as much of a fan of Len Wein as others, but I do enjoy his tales here. This is a marked improvement both from the ridiculous sci-fi nonsense of Silver Age Batman, as well as the inspired-by-the-show-but-not-nearly-as-good goofiness of Batman in the late 60s. Batman isn't the broody, one-trick pony often portrayed today. He is a human being, and an interesting one. Characters still explain every single thing in their minds here, but that small flaw doesn't detract much from the volume as a whole. All in all, for the prices these days, I think this is solid value, and I would recommend it highly.

15 of 17 people found the following review helpful. My Favorite Tome in this Collection By Elvin Ortiz This is my favorite tome of these Batman series, so far. I really enjoyed reading these stories, and I was able to reread a lot of the stories that I began reading back then in the 1970s. After reading Len Wein's entire literary oeuvre on the Batman I can safely say that he is among the top writers along with Steve Englehart and Denny O'Neill during this decade. This volume covers Wein's contributions to Detective Comics, Batman, the short mini-series titled "The Untold Legend of the Batman," one issue of The World's Finest, and two fresh contributions in DC Retroactive: Batman - the 70s, #1 in 2011 and Batman Black and White #4, 2014. Covering Wein's trajectory in Batman comics allows readers to get a sample of many Batman artists that he teamed up with: Neal Adams, Marshall Rogers, Jim Aparo, Don Newton, Irv Novick, Walt Simonson, and John Calnan. Reading Wein and admiring the artwork that often accompanied his stories, I enjoyed seeing the Batman doing detective work, meeting old foes and new ones, and constantly moving through the sky. This is the Batman I always remembered from those days. Although he is still the Dark Knight in these comics, Wein does tone down the moodiness that Steve Englehart developed under his tenure. Wein also presents Bruce Wayne's private life. Readers get to see this in the Batman issues of the late seventies and early eighties. While Englehart leaves Wayne brooding over the loss of Silver St. Cloud, Wein reintroduces in Wayne's life a new romantic interest, Selena Kyle, the Catwoman. Also, Wein gives Wayne a new assistant, Lucius Fox, the first African-American character with an important role in the Batman stories. Adding these "private life" elements creates a tight balance between the avenger of the night represented by Batman's constant fight against crime and a lighter side as presented by the everyday life of Bruce Wayne. Also, by reintroducing old foes, such as Mr. Freeze, Blockbuster, Calendarman, Crazy Quilt, Two-Face, Kite-man, and the Riddler, Wein departs from the gloomier tones of early issues by Englehart and O'Neill. There are fewer deaths or murders. These villains are more concerned with stealing property than with murdering people. As a result Batman fights twice with the Gentleman Ghost, a sort of cavalier foe. Yes, he tries to kill Batman, but his heart is in stealing, not terrorizing the community. Even the Joker's creepiness, deadliness, and sadistic tendencies from Englehart and O'Neill disappear. Yes, the Joker wants to kill Batman and all his friends, but the story focuses on this silly act of trapping Batman associates, tying them up around a big cake for his birthday, and setting up the Batman. Wein refuses to develop the Joker's sadistic tendencies initiated with O'Neil's reintroduction. This, however, is not a drawback for Wein. He manages quite well this balance. His Batman is still a dark knight, he still belongs to the night, and he is part of Gotham. Nevertheless, my favorite stories from this period by Len Wein, the ones I cherished the most, was that mini-series where Batman gets framed for supposedly murdering Talia and Ra's Al Ghul. Batman becomes an outlaw for five issues, from Detective Comics #444 to #448. This was one long unforgettable story for me, and among my favorite issues from this era. When I ordered this book, I had this story in mind. Wein's poetry is also a plus in his stories. Not that he writes poems. What I mean is that there is something about his word choices that makes his Batman quite epic. "He hovers over the straining steel towers of his city like a protective parent... which is in its way, most ironic! For in fact, this dark-cowled crusader is very much Gotham's child... born in the blinding blast of a single gunshot... and in the stilling of two loving hearts! Now he stalks these mean streets by moonlight, never allowing Gotham City to forget what its violence has spawned!" (Batman #315, September 1979, "Danger on the Wing.") I love this bit. Check this conclusion to the Untold Legend of

the Batman #3: "The Streets of Gotham City are cold at night, sprayed with shapes and shadows and unexpected sounds... but those who walk these mean streets by twilight do so unafraid, for they can sense the protective presence that watches over them, and they know they are not alone!" (September 1980) Thirty-one years later, Wein doesn't lose it: "...the aroma of roasting chestnuts mingled with the acrid stink of taxi exhaust, mixed with the odor of rising sewer steam, tinged with the perfume of the newly blossoming trees... but the dark-clad figure standing sentinel over the city he loves cares this night only about one particular smell... the intolerable stench of evil." (Batman Retroactive 1970s #1, September 2011). I may not have been able to call it poetic as a child, but it was the kind of writing that captivated me back then, and that shaped in my mind what the Batman was all about. Great volume! 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A nice collection By Gary Zenker 600+ pages of Batman stories. There are a number of good stories here, although the dialog in them shows some dating. That's par for the course with the 1980s and earlier. The included Bat Murder series was an earlier DC attempt at a continuing story and a good one. Reproduction is generally very good, with the exception of several pages with Marshall Rogers are that almost look like they were done from copies. The Neal Adams stories were recolored beautifully and reprinted in his own collections, so they are naturally gorgeous. On the glossy stock, they look much better than the originals ever appeared on newsprint. And the fact that DC included the covers for the comics gives the reader a fuller experience of the comic (they don't always do that).

These tales from the 1970s are written by Len Wein, co-creator of Swamp Thing and Wolverine and writer of BEFORE WATCHMEN: OZYMANDIAS. In this new hardcover, Batman battles the villainy of The Joker, The Riddler, Catwoman, Mr. Freeze, Ra's al Ghul and many others. Collects Detective Comics #408, #444-448, #466, #478-479, #500, #514, Batman #307-310, #312-319, #321-324, #326-327, World's Finest Comics #207, DC Retroactive Batman - The 70s, Untold Legends of the Batman #1-3, Batman Black and White #5.

About the Author Len Wein co-created SWAMP THING early in a writing career that has included work on every major hero and villain at both DC Comics and Marvel Comics. As a writer, Wein is also credited with co-creating Wolverine for Marvel and Lucius Fox for DC. Wein was one of the editors on WATCHMEN, and has also been Editor-in-Chief at both Marvel Comics and Disney Comics before settling in to a successful career writing comic books and animation. His recent work for DC Comics include DC UNIVERSE: LEGACIES and BEFORE WATCHMEN: OZYMANDIAS.