



## Batgirl, Vol. 1: Silent Running

*Scott Peterson , Kelley Puckett , Damion Scott (Illustrator) , Robert Campanella (Illustrator)*

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Exploding out from no man's land -- the all-new batgirl! In the midst of No Man's Land, Batman gave a nameless girl with a violent past the costume and title of Batgirl. Exceeding his expectations, the new, silent Batgirl quickly made the role her own, earning the trust of the Dark Knight's allies, including the first Batgirl, Oracle. Now, in post-No Man's Land Gotham, Batgirl struggles to learn the lessons of how to live a normal life, lessons she never learned from her mentor, the deadly assassin known as Cain. And when a mercenary from her past resurfaces, bent on revenge, can Batgirl bury her own violent tendencies and break the cycle of death and destruction that has dogged her since childhood?

## Batgirl, Vol. 1: Silent Running Details

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## **From Reader Review Batgirl, Vol. 1: Silent Running for online ebook**

### **Elizabeth says**

After I was so pleasantly surprised with that Supergirl book, I thought I'd try my hand at Batgirl, thinking, "It's written by the same bloke, if he can make one spin-off character work he can make another, and this time I actually like the original character so even more likely I'll like this". Hm. It didn't go down that way. The book itself was very meh. Just meh.

Also I'm not a fan of so-disabled-it's-like-being-better-than-abled. Daredevil, I'm looking at you. So I was disappointed that they just magically fix Batgirl's problems 5 minutes in. Here's the story: She was trained by her nutjob assassin father from birth and thus is a deadly killer but unable to speak, she has no language because she was not exposed to language during her critical period in infancy. This makes her a better killer because her only language is body language and therefore she can anticipate moves to greater degree. I thought that was gonna be really interesting to read, a real departure from standard superhero fare, where the writer and artist would really have to work to show intention and meaning without relying on speech balloons, or even thought bubbles, to do the explaining.

But no. 5 minutes in and a psychic falls out the sky and 'fixes' her. Because having any limitations is unacceptable and being any 'less' than normal is inconceivable. And it was less work for everyone all round. Ugh. Just lazy.

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### **Katie says**

There were some art issues - a fair number of times, usually in fight scenes, I couldn't really tell what was going on - but I really enjoyed the story as an introduction to Cass Cain. There was also a lot of Bruce being a weird but lovable asshole, which is always good.

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### **Lexxi Kitty says**

This is one of those wherein I'm unsure whether to give it 3.5 stars or 4. Due to the nature of everything and stuff, I'll just give it 3 stars. Because . . . reasons.

I have a feeling that I've run across Cassandra Cain before. Though, if I had, and I've a strong idea that I had, the appearance had been a cameo. I recall a strong silent Batgirl in a few scenes in something else.

The idea is somewhat absurd. Assassin believes he can train someone to be the best, to be 'perfect' by isolating them and having whatever part of the brain geared to learn languages, repurposed to learn . . . more fighting techniques. Or, specifically, to learning how to read your opponents body language and being able to be, I don't know, so super fast and 'perfect' that you can dodge bullets and react before anyone else even knew they were going to act. Or something. It's absurd because, how the hell does she get missions? She doesn't know languages. She does not have an internal voice. Just . . . confusion internally. So. Assassin dude would . . . um . . . put a collar on her, lead her on leash, point in a specific direction, and unleash her? He's not

going to be able to say any directions, or write them, or in any way, communicate what the mission would be.

The perfect weapon. Eh? Incapable of being used.

Right, so. Cassandra Cain was raised by this insane dude named Cain. Cain was/is an assassin. Book opens with Cassandra Cain the new Batgirl (there's a scene wherein Barbara Gordon, as Oracle, is moving files around, she calls her own files 'original Batgirl' and labels Cassandra Cain's file 'Batgirl'; I mention only because Barbara Gordon is not, in fact, the original Batgirl, but, whatever; there's even a series out now, as of 2015, in which the original Batgirl is doing missions. During WWII, I'm referring to, of course, Betty Kane; wait, no, maybe the one in that WWII series is only the aunt, Kathy Kane. Bah, I forget now).

So. That paragraph got away from me. Okay then. Cassandra Cain is the new Batgirl. The absurdity continues. Batman and Oracle tell her to do stuff. Several times one or the other make a comment like "but you don't even know what I'm saying, do you?" Perfect person to have join your team, eh? Someone incapable of knowing what you want them to do. Oddly, they seem to work beautifully out in the field, and as roommates (rooming, as she does, with Barbara Gordon).

An interesting enough way to pass the time, I suppose, reading this here. But . . . I kept tripping myself up on that absurdity part. Course, something happens near the end of the volume, but, that's something I'll pick up if I continue the series. Which I probably won't.

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### **Max Washington says**

10 trillion stars!....I've read the first three volumes so far, and it is brilliant.....so believable, I feel like it's really happening.....moving, funny at times, action packed.....Damion Scott is now one of my favorite artists ever....such a unique and strange style he has....and it conveys so much motion...and so much emotion.....he makes me care so much for Cassandra in the way that he draws her facial expressions.....I'm going to read the fourth volume soon.....I think she calls herself Orphan now, btw.....not Batgirl....

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### **Sam Quixote says**

Batgirl/Cassandra Cain was definitely the breakout star of the sprawling early '00s Batman storyline, No Man's Land. The full-face mask and the not speaking made her extra-mysterious and cool. It's taken me a while to check out her solo series but I kinda wished I hadn't bothered as unfortunately it's not very good.

Writers Scott Peterson and Kelley Puckett reveal her unremarkable, almost cliched, origins, and she goes up against some disposable goons to show us that she's a badass - which we already knew. Yawners.

Instead of using her solo series to develop her character, Peterson/Puckett are content to leave her as a one-dimensional deadly Asian ninja chick (think Miho from Frank Miller's Sin City). She was trained to be the ultimate killing machine by a heartless master, yadda yadda yadda, you've seen this dozens of times before.

Batman is written out-of-character as a complete dick/braindead detective and the foes Cass faces are utterly unmemorable nobodies. One of them is a metahuman whose contrived power takes away her silence which

was what made her unique as a character to begin with - d'oh! And speaking of the silence, the sequential storytelling is not well done and a lot of the scenes are awkward to read because artist Damion Scott just isn't good enough to make them work.

Batgirl: Silent Running is readable - it's just not very good.

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### **Molly says**

So far Casandra has spoken only through body language, but sudden events unleash words on her. With this new knowledge will Batgirl be able to continue as a perfect fighter and will Casandra be able to learn how to speak?

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### **Jessica Robinson says**

I love Cassandra Cain as Batgirl. I don't have a lot of fierce DC opinions because it's not my playground but if you put my back to the wall, I can talk a mean game about how they never should have made Barbara Batgirl again (she was perfect as Oracle) and they never, ever should have screwed over Cassandra so much before deleting her from reality in their stupid drive to reboot everything for a temporary sales bump. This is Cassandra Cain at her best—confused, compassionate, and capable—and I love everything about this comic except for the art, which is fairly lackluster to me. But it's worth a hundred looks, especially for Cass's awesome take on the Batgirl costume.

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### **thuy says**

Cassandra Cain is not your average teenager. Raised at a young age by the assassin David Cain, Cassie is a unique killer, one who was trained to read body movement as language. As such, she can predict her opponents' moves as they think them, making her almost unbeatable in a fight. Unfortunately this training stunted her verbal language skills. She can barely speak and only understands what others are saying by reading their body language.

In Silent Running, Cassie has been taken away from Cain and is living with Barbara Gordon (the original Batgirl). This arc focuses on Cassie's struggle to come to terms with her past and her transition as the new Batgirl. I did not know much about Cassie Cain before going into this and I found Silent Running to be a good primer on her origin story. It gives you a good look at Cassie's character and her struggle on how to live life now that she is no longer under her father's thumb. Gordon plays a mother figure and she and Cassie have to figure out how to relate to each other.

Batman plays a big part of the story as well. He's grooming Cassie as the new Batgirl and it is interesting to see how similar the two are. I did think Batman's reaction to a video of what could be a very young Cassie assassinating a bad guy to be a little odd. I might be wrong but I thought that he knew that Cassie had been trained to kill from a young age. While he might be shocked by the video, his outright denial that it could be real seems naive.

Cassie is non-verbal for most of the book, which did not bother me. It was pretty clear what was going on in

the story and with her character, even without her verbalization. There was a point in the story where a psychic "helps" Cassie with her problem, which I thought felt out place. It was really quite sudden and seemed too much like a quick fix. I would have rather seen Cassie work through the language barrier instead of getting a magic cure-all. It was interesting to see though what happened to her fighting style once she had linguistic skills.

The artwork in this wasn't really my cup of tea. This was the early 2000s and the popular style was very exaggerated and overdrawn. Everything felt a bit too cartoon-y for me and, was it me, or did everyone have huge chins in this?

While I wasn't in love with the plot in this volume, I did enjoy learning more about Cassie Cain. She is definitely a fascinating character that I want to learn more about. As a relative Batgirl newbie, this volume gave me an intriguing look into the new Batgirl. I definitely want to read more about her and see where her character goes from here.

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### **Meklit says**

the art was horrible but cassie was a gift bruce doesn't deserve her

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### **Shannon Appelcline says**

Cassandra Cain is a great character, appearing here in a very early state. There are also some nice plotlines in this comic, revolving around Barbara Gordon's evolving relationship with Cassandra and Batman's shocked discoveries about her (though I find it hard to believe that he didn't already know or suspect what he discovers).

Unfortunately, this volume has problems of muddiness in both the artwork and the storytelling, which sometimes makes it hard to follow. I also find the psychic who suddenly gives Cassandra the ability to speak *waaaaay* too convenient. Because this change in Cassandra didn't come about in some organic way, evolving from the rest of the story, it instead feels like a big *deus ex machina*.

So, great characters, great character interaction, and some flawed visuals and storytelling.

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### **J says**

The opening is a little confusing but then it finds its feet and the series moves pretty decently along.

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### **StoryTellerShannon says**

[image error]

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## **Nikki says**

I've been intrigued by the idea of Cassandra Cain as Batgirl ever since I heard about this series; I love the idea of a girl trained so intensively to be an assassin that she knows no language, but can interpret vast amounts from movement, even from tiny cues in body language. It's fascinating because it's to some degree possible; "feral children" without language who weren't exposed to language during their critical period for learning it have existed, and who knows? Maybe they do learn to pay attention to other cues, appropriate to the environment they live in, which would be missed by those who rely on words to communicate.

In practice, though, *Silent Running* is kind of an awkward place to jump in. It's not so bad for me because I know Barbara Gordon's story, why she became Oracle, who she is — and everyone knows at least a little about Batman. But it feels like jumping into the middle of a run, not the beginning of one. The art style doesn't greatly appeal to me either, and the storytelling is appropriately visual, which is never going to work that well for me (I just don't and can't think visually).

It's also a little awkward because that uniqueness about this Batgirl is wiped out almost immediately: a psychic man rearranges her thoughts and gives her language, taking away her preternatural combat abilities by changing the way she experiences the world. It makes sense, but it does lose the thing that intrigued me about the character.

Also, Batman being paternalistic and judgemental, all the time. Gah. He should have some idea of how Cassandra was raised, you'd think, but somehow he spends the book denying it, and having a really weird tension with Cassandra when they're working together.

I'm going to read the second volume, since I have it, but at the moment I'm not greatly enthused about following this version of Batgirl, which is a shame. (But might save me some money, since wow the TPBs can get expensive!)

Originally posted [here](#).

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## **Joseph says**

**\*\*Super-Woman Buddy read with the Shallow Comic Readers, criteria being a book headlined by a female character\*\*\***

This is the first volume of the Batgirl title that featured Cassandra Cain under the cowl. The daughter of an assassin, she was trained from an early age in various martial arts, and was taught to use the part of her brain normally reserved for speech to interpret her opponent's moves. What? OK, so she's mute, basically, and this plays a big part of the plot of the story.

Batgirl is watched over by Oracle (Barbara Gordon) and Batman, and trained by both of them. The inevitable showdown between Batman's no-killing policy and Batgirl's readiness to use deadly force also becomes a

major plot point. And that's about all there is to the book.

Artist Damion Scott has a cartoony style that I like a lot, but his storytelling ability was kinda sub par. I had to look closely at many panel sequences to get the gist of what he was trying to portray. Scott's art carries a lot of the book because there was very little dialog, relatively speaking. Author Kelley Puckett gives us lots of fight scenes and flashbacks that rely very little on words, so the art has to carry the story along. My slow-reading ass read this in about 15 minutes.

I'll continue reading the adventures of Cassandra, although the second volume is hard to get. I may end up having to skip some stories this go around. I had read a lot about the two Batgirls other than Barbara Gordon, so wanted to read about them and decide for myself. This title had a long run, so I suppose it was popular enough, but I doubt I would have stuck with it had I been reading it monthly.

2.5 stars overall.

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### **Justyn Rampa says**

I fell in love with Cassandra Cain in "No Man's Land". She is an incredibly awesome character who I have to think provided some inspiration for Damian Wayne. In "No Man's Land", Cassandra was incredibly well written and her origin story was cool. I definitely was looking forward to reading more Cassandra Cain Batgirl.

Unfortunately, this volume gave me little of what I wanted. Structurally, the story was very jarring and incoherent. I honestly thought that several pages were missing from the volume because the narrative would just abruptly change. Also, I did not enjoy the way Cassandra was written as much in this story but I REALLY DID NOT appreciate the way Batman was written. First of all, some of his dialogue was not even on par with the intelligence he possesses. I also found it difficult to believe his whole reaction to Cassandra's first assassination as a child. Holy Overblown Reaction Batman! She was 8 years old (or 10), the continuity was inconsistent with "No Man's Land". Finally, the artwork was a little too Sunday funnies for me to be taken seriously although I ADORE the design of Cassandra Cain's Batgirl costume.

So what did I like...well, I still love Cassandra Cain and her aesthetic as Batgirl. She is an incredible fighter and there were some elements of the story that were interesting. I know that she is eventually included in Grant Morrison's Batman Inc. so I look forward to seeing how he handles this character.

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