

# Holy diversity Batman!

## 'Batwoman' premieres on CW

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TV Media

I may or may not own an overflowing stack of comic books that's getting dangerously close to weighing more than its current shelf can handle, so it's safe to trust me when I say that Batwoman, a.k.a. Kate Kane, is a fantastic character with a ton of incredible story potential.

As someone who's already a fan, I'm very interested to see how CW's "Batwoman" recreates, reimagines or reinvents the title character, and luckily I won't have to wait long. With the beautifully androgynous Ruby Rose ("The Meg," 2018) at the helm (or cowl) and Rachel Skarsten ("Acquainted," 2018) playing the totally twisted Alice, CW's newest prime-time addition to its DC Comics-based Arrowverse — "Batwoman" — premieres Sunday, Oct. 6.

Not everyone seems to be as excited as I am about CW's "Batwoman." Many of the preemptively negative thoughts are likely the result of people being afraid. After all, Batwoman has a lot of fans, and people may be worried the show will portray the iconic and beloved character poorly. Much of the online negative sentiment about the show revolves around lead actress Rose, whose credits include a few less-than-stellar films.

Rose's castmate Skarsten is no stranger to caped crusaders. The Toronto native played the super-screaming Black Canary in "Birds of Prey" on the WB at just 16 years old.

Joining the two lead females are Dougray Scott ("Departure") as Batwoman's father, Jacob, Elizabeth Anweis ("NCIS: Los Angeles") as her stepmother, Catherine, and Sam Littlefield ("The Messengers") as Mouse. The cast looks fantastic, the trailers seem cool, and it seems hard to go wrong when you have such great source material with which to work.



Rachel Skarsten stars in "Batwoman"

The fact that Skarsten has been cast as the "Through the Looking Glass"-quoting psychopath Alice actually provides a big hint as to where CW's "Batwoman" creators Caroline Dries ("Smallville") and Greg Berlanti ("Titans") drew their inspiration for the show. Those who've read the divisive 2010 Batwoman comic "Elegy" by Greg Rucka probably know what to expect from Batwoman and Alice's on-screen relationship. For those not familiar with Rucka's work, just know that you're in for some of the "Batwoman" comic books' most outrageous, unexpected and disturbing twists and turns. The psychedelic imagery and mind-warping colors for which the comic is known don't seem

to have been carried over to the new TV series, but other such DC Comics television programs ("Arrow," "The Flash," "Supergirl," "Titans," etc.) really seem to love dark, gritty and grey post-processing, and the look feels right for the city of Gotham. Still, fans likely hope the show will attempt to pay some homage to the source material with a bit of outlandish cinematography at some point.

It's already become a topic of conversation when it comes to this series, so it's worth mentioning that both Batwoman and the woman who plays her on TV are gay. Somewhat comically and incredibly ironically, the original Batwoman (Kathy, not Kate) was introduced way back in 1956 solely to discour-

age a controversy that arose in the previous year regarding Batman's own perceived homosexuality. After the Batwoman character was written out of the DC Universe in 1964, editors refused to bring her back despite demand from readers, calling her a "hapless female" who would be "gone for good."

It wasn't until 2006, 50 years post-debut, that DC announced Batwoman's rebirth. In addition to swapping the old-fashioned name Kathy for the more modern Kate, editors revealed that today's Batwoman would be a Jewish lesbian. Far from the lipstick-toting Batman-iac she was in the 1960s, Kate Kane was a directionless party girl, lost in life after being discharged from the military under the don't ask,

don't tell policy that discouraged homosexual service members. Whether it was the murder of her mother, the loss of her partner, the thrill of breaking some bad-guy bones, or Batman himself, we may never know why Kate was inspired to put down her drink to pick up a cowl, cape and bright red wig, becoming the Batwoman fans know and love today.

The character's sexuality is more than just a gimmick or attempt at placation. Despite DC bigwigs saying Kate was made a lesbian for little reason other than differentiating her from other members of the "Bat-family," it meant enough to series writers Williams and Blackman for them to leave the job when DC refused to allow

Batwoman to get married to her longtime girlfriend, Maggie Sawyer. Long and storied character history aside, Batwoman is amazing, and you should think about adding her to your pull-list the next time you visit your local comic book shop.

If you've enjoyed CW's Arrowverse television adaptations of comic book characters so far, you'll likely want to keep up with "Batwoman." On Sunday, Oct. 6, "Batwoman" premieres on CW, and it will be interesting to see how online sentiment changes once the show has actually aired. CW is bringing a kick-butt LGBT+ icon to the mainstream of the small screen, and if you aren't a comic book fan already, you may very well become one.