

# *Batman Begins*

## **CHAPTER 1** **THE BLUE FLOWER**

Bruce Wayne was in prison in Bhutan, a country far away from his home in Gotham City in America.

One day, he was waiting for breakfast with all the other prisoners. They stood in lines. After a long time, Bruce got his plate of horrible food. He took the plate and walked to a table. A very big man stood in front of him.

'Give me your food,' said the man.

'No,' Bruce said.

The man hit Bruce in the face. Bruce dropped his plate and fell to the floor. When he got up, there were seven big men in front of him. Two of them took Bruce by the arms. He used his legs – hard – and they fell. Then –

***CRRAAACCCCK!***

At the sound of the gun, all the prisoners quickly got down on the floor. A prison officer took Bruce's arm.



'You're coming with me,' he said.  
'Why?' asked Bruce. 'So I'm safe?'  
'No,' said the officer. 'So *they're* safe!'



The officer pushed Bruce into a room and closed the door with a bang. It was very dark in the room, but Bruce saw that he was not alone. There was a man in the corner. He didn't look like a prisoner. He wore good clothes.

'My name is Ducard,' he said. 'I work for Rā's al Ghūl. Do you know him?'

'Is he a criminal?' Bruce asked.

'He is not a criminal,' said Ducard. 'He is a great man with very clever ideas. He knows that you're in trouble, Mr Wayne. He wants to help you.'

Ducard walked to the door and shouted. The officer came and opened it. Ducard turned to Bruce.

'There is a very special flower,' he said. 'It grows on the mountain near here. It's blue. Find it and take it to the top of the mountain. There you will find the answer to your question.'

'And what is my question?' asked Bruce.

""Where am I going?"" said Ducard. And he left.



'Why is Ducard interested in me? How does he know about me?' Bruce asked himself. He sat on the hard bed and began to think about his life. He remembered that terrible day in Gotham many years ago.

*He is a little boy. He is playing with his friend, Rachel. They are running in the garden at his home, Wayne Manor. There is an old well in the garden. Bruce climbs onto the well and laughs. 'Look at me, Rachel, I'm –'*

*Suddenly he isn't laughing. He's shouting.  
'Help! Help! I'm falling –'  
And he falls down and down and down into the dark well.  
He hits the floor with a bang!  
'Agh! My leg!' he cries. It feels terrible.  
Then he hears some strange sounds. He isn't alone in the well!  
Help! What is it? He looks up and sees a cloud of terrible black things. Bats! They are flying towards him and into him. Their teeth are like knives. He thinks he is going to die. He makes himself into a ball and shouts. 'Help! Help!' Then everything goes black.*



*The next thing he remembers ... he is in bed.  
The only person in the bedroom with him is Alfred. Alfred has always worked for the Wayne family.  
'You had a very bad fall, Master Bruce,' says Alfred. 'But you're going to be OK.' Alfred waits for a moment, then he asks, 'Why do we fall, Master Bruce?'  
Bruce knows the answer, but he can't remember it.  
'I can't remember,' says Bruce. 'Tell me.'  
'We fall,' says Alfred with a smile, 'so that we can learn to get up again.'*



Bruce started to climb the mountain. He found the blue flower easily. He climbed higher. Up and up he went. It got colder and colder. Soon he was walking on ice. It started to snow heavily. Bruce was cold and unhappy. And very tired.

‘I have to get to the top,’ he thought, ‘but I don’t know if I can.’

Then at last he saw a big building. He pushed open the heavy door and went in.

Rā’s al Ghūl was sitting in a big chair. Ducard was next to him. And there was a line of Ninjas with swords in their hands ... ready to fight.

Bruce was frightened. He quickly showed them the blue flower in his hand. Ducard took the flower.



'Are you ready to start?' he asked.

'Ready? Oh no,' Bruce said, 'I'm so tired.'

Ducard threw him to the floor. 'You must always be ready,' he said. 'Here we will teach you to be ready.'



One day, Ducard said to Bruce, 'You're not frightened of me, are you, Bruce? What *are* you frightened of?'

'Bats,' answered Bruce, and he told Ducard about the bats in the well. 'My father told me something important about the bats in the well.' He said, "The bats flew at you because they were frightened of you. All things are frightened of something, even scary things like bats." I didn't know that. My father was very clever. I loved him very much. But soon after that, he died. A criminal killed both my parents. His name was Joe Chill.'



*It's the evening. They are at a play. Suddenly there are bats in the show. They fly around above the singers and dancers. Bruce is frightened, so they leave early. But in the street outside, there is a man with a gun. He wants money. He takes their money but he wants more. And then – **BANG!** – he fires his gun. Bruce's mother shouts. Bruce's father falls to the floor. **BANG!** He fires again. Bruce's mother falls to the floor. This is the worst moment of Bruce's life. And it is all his fault.*



'It wasn't your fault, Bruce,' said Ducard. 'You were very young.'

He was giving Bruce a lesson on a river. It was thick ice. They were fighting with swords.

'You must always look very carefully at the things around you, Bruce,' said Ducard. Suddenly he hit the ice with his sword.

***CRRAAACCCCK!***

The ice broke and Bruce crashed into the black water below.





Bruce had lessons with Ducard for many months. He learned to fight with his hands and his feet. He learned to fight with a sword and climb tall buildings quickly and quietly. He learned many things. But most of all he learned to use his ears and eyes, and he learned how to think quickly.

‘It’s time to test you,’ said Ducard one day. ‘Today you must fight all the Ninjas.’

So Bruce fought all the Ninjas with his sword. It was a very long fight, but in the end he won.

‘You fight very well now,’ said Ducard. ‘I think you are ready.’

