

Since 1938 there have been many women that fought their way into comic book history, sadly most of these amazing crime fighters were forgotten. Lady Comic Book History attempts to honor and remember them. A lot of female comic book fans have a hard time dealing with oversexualized characters and improper representation. This is largely due to comic book creators for mainstream comics being men. This is rarely talked about because most prominent comic book historians are also men. Lady Comic Book History lends a feminist lens and a female voice to the fictional females of comic books past.

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There have been a few books that focus on feminism and specific heroes like Wonder Woman, recently Tim Hanley wrote a book tackling toxic masculinity in comics. But no books, documentaries or pieces of other media exist that both chronicle the history of female superheroes *and* analyze their role in the present day medium. There are also few analysis and history books that are written by women and informed by the female experience.

In order to get this book out there I will also be producing an indie docu-series, covering the broad strokes of the book and using interviewers with women fans and creators, that will be published on YouTube and my personal website. I will be doing interviews with Temple of Geek, Heroic Girls and other sites that will also do a review and feature for the book. Also TikTok and other social media will be used to promote the kickstarter, using all major comic book influencers I have connected with.

The book will take readers through time starting with Sheena Queen of the Jungle in 1937 and taking us all the way to the fridging of Kamala Khan and Maria Hill in 2023. Each decade will cover major heroes, commentary on their creation, sexist tropes that were developed and heroes that were cast aside. We will also be covering the worst and most horrifyingly misogynistic storylines and the men that wrote them.

“Not even girls want to be girls so long as our feminine archetype lacks force, strength, and power. Not wanting to be girls, they don't want to be tender, submissive, peace-loving as good women are. Women's strong qualities have become despised because of their weakness. The obvious remedy is to create a feminine character with all the strength of Superman plus all the allure of a good and beautiful woman.”
— William Moulton Marston

This quote is from the creator of Wonder Woman, the first character most people think of when they think about the first female superhero, however there are a few women that come before the Amazonian princess. Before there was a princess, there was a Queen.

Sheena Queen of the Jungle debuted in Wags, a UK comic in 1937. She was brought to the US in the first issue of Jumbo Comics in 1938. Sheena took the cover of Jumbo Comics immediately and in 1942 it was retitled for her.

Her inspiration was taken from Tarzan, our jungle Queen also sported animal pelts that left most of her skin exposed allowing her to move freely. Though some might see this as oversexualized Sheena was truly a female Tarzan, making her strong, independent and muscular. She was drawn to be curvy, but not unrealistically so. Even when her love interest was introduced Sheena remained the main character. In fact most of her stories centered around a role reversal, especially for the time. Her man, Bob Reynolds, was often the damsel in distress whereas Sheena was his savior. Sheena was the protector and provider, now this led to the writers and artists having Sheena act very sexually as to offset any emasculation male readers might feel by Bob being the bystander in Sheena's story.

The original comics though not very sexist did have racist undertones. Sheena was often depicted “ruling” over jungle natives, them being her even less “civilized” subjects. Her original run was actually ahead of its time in terms of gender relations, that said she goes down as a woman hero that got worse through time.