

Lady Comic Book History: The Beginning 1938-1960

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Section 1: The World Before Wonder Woman

Chapter 1: Sheena, The Real First Lady

Pg. 5

Chapter 2: Lois Lane

Chapter 3: Tigress, Doll Girl, and Bullet Girl

Chapter 4: Hawkgirl and Catwoman

Section 2: Wonder Woman and the Ladies of Liberty

Chapter 5: Wonder Woman

Chapter 6: Cheetah, Giganta, Queen Clea

Chapter 7: Miss America, Liberty Bell

Chapter 8: Nelvana, Phantom Lady, Wildfire, Spiderwidow, and Patsy Walker

Chapter 9: Mary Marvel

Section 3: Black Canary and the War on Comics

Chapter 10: Black Canary

Chapter 11: The War on Comics

Chapter 12: Star Sapphire, Vicki Vale and Gimmick Girl

Section 4: What Do Women Want?

Chapter 13: The Rise of Love Stories

Chapter 14: Lana Lang and Lorna the Jungle Girl

Chapter 15: Seduction of the Innocent and the Comics Code Authority

Chapter 16: Simplifying Staggering Sexism

Chapter 17: Supergirl and Saturn Girl

Chapter 18: Lucy Lane, Lori Lemaris, and Lady Blackhawk

Chapter 19: Batwoman

Section 5: Forgotten Women

Chapter 20: Arrowette, Lyla Lerrol, Sue Dibney, and Lena Luthor

Chapter 21: Phantom Girl, Saturn Queen, Elasta-girl, Rainbow Girl, Lightning Lass, and Night Girl

Chapter 22: The Women That Survived; Sif, Wasp, Betty Ross, Mera, Spidergirl

Chapter 23: Superwoman, Zatanna, and Carol Danvers

Chapter 24: Marvel Girl - Dark Phoenix
Chapter 25: The Girlfriends

Section 6 - Never Forget

Chapter 26: The Others
Chapter 27: Barbara Gordon
Chapter 28: Valkyrie and Talia Al Ghul
Chapter 29: Magic and Martial Arts
Chapter 30: Power Girl and Mystique
Chapter 31: Starfire and Jessica Drew
Chapter 32: Our Best Fighters

Section 7 - The Rape of Ms. Marvel and Other Crimes

Chapter 33: The Rape of Ms. Marvel
Chapter 34: The X-Women
Chapter 35: She-Hulk
Chapter 36: Elektra
Chapter 37: Chameleon Girl, Power Princess and Other Women of Power
Chapter 38: Monica Rambaueu
Chapter 39: Raven
Chapter 40: Catching Up
Chapter 41: Silver Sable

Section 8 - A New Generation

Chapter 42: Pantha, Bloody Mary, Squirrel Girl and Anne Weying
Chapter 43: The Birth of Fridging
Chapter 43: Women Focused Titles
Chapter 44: X, Empress and Girl
Chapter 45: Jessica Jones
Chapter 46: The New Girls
Chapter 47: The New Girls Part 2
Chapter 48: Black Alice, Bombshell and More
Chapter 49: Kate Bishop and Shuri
Chapter 50: Lyssa Grak, Lady Bullseye, Spiderbitch, Lyra and Jeanette
Chapter 51: Ms. Marvel, Hope Summers, America Chavez and Nadia Van Dyne
Chapter 52: Jessica Cruz, Silk, Moongirl, Gwenpool and Ironheart

Chapter 53: All Female Teams
Chapter 54: Lists and Statistics

Dedicated to my father for granting me my love of comic books. And for all the little girls that have ever been quizzed by a man on their interests simply because of their appearance. And to all the amazing women that write comics that keep us loving the medium; Kelly Sue DeConnick, Gail Simone, and Kelly Thompson, thank you for your work.

With the rise of comic book media comes the rise of comic book scholars and though there are a number of thesis and dissertations written on the representation of women comic book characters there aren't really any true chronicles of the history of these characters. There are few books, none with a thorough history, or with insightful observations written by a woman, that is what I am hoping to do here.

Though notable male writers and historians have tried their hand at analyzing sexism in comics, they will always be missing something. You can not truly write about or understand something you've never experienced, and you certainly can't comment on it. These men are trying and the effort is appreciated but these deeply ingrained issues need a woman's touch, so here I am. I've read these books, thesis and dissertations. I've studied them. Articles, podcasts, documentaries and the comics themselves. I wanted my thoughts to be well rounded, well informed and fully fleshed out. I truly believe that acknowledging and criticizing the media we consume is the only way to grow and change for the better, but more than that I believe it's important to understand the context of sexist, racist, bigoted content so that it doesn't happen again. We need to not only pick apart the issue itself, but get to its core and understand why the problem exists in the first place in order to truly affect change.

As an avid comic book reader and collector I have been exposed to and chosen to study many characters and publishers. These studies have shown me that though representation is on an upward trend it is still far from where we need it to be. So here I am, throwing in my two cents and hoping it reaches someone that needs to hear it. As someone who uses fiction to escape the darkness that goes on in my mind I hope to draw attention to flaws in comic book media and offer solutions so that the next generations of comic book girls will have fully realized, well rounded characters to look up to and find safety in.