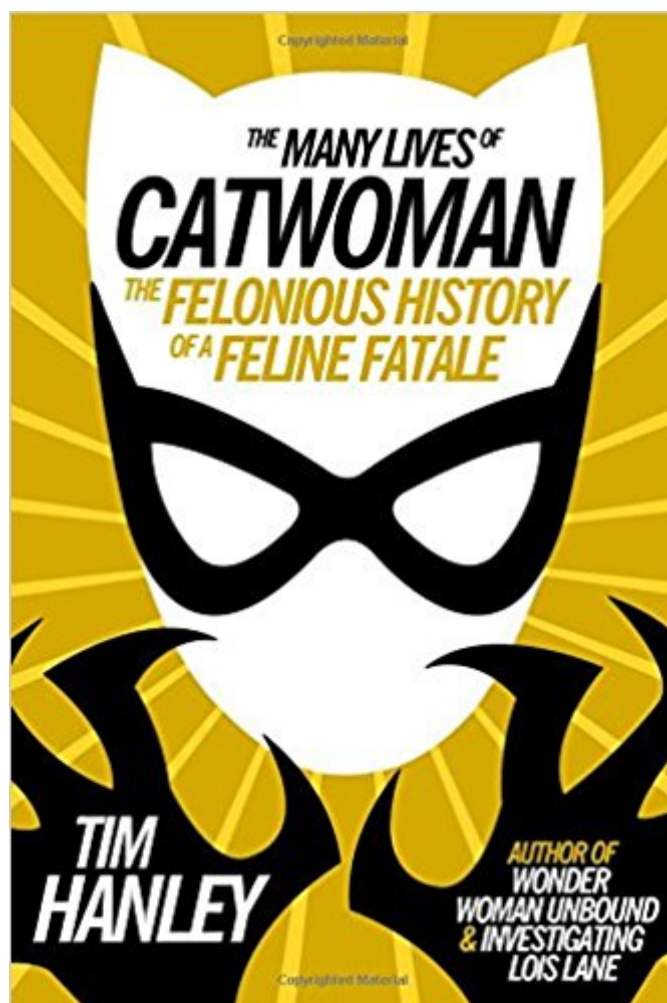


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# The Many Lives Of Catwoman: The Felonious History Of A Feline Fatale



## Synopsis

For more than 75 years, Catwoman has forged her own path in a clear-cut world of stalwart heroes, diabolical villains and damsels in distress. Sometimes a thief, sometimes a vigilante, sometimes neither and sometimes both, the mercurial Catwoman gleefully defies classification. Her relentless independence across comic books, television and film appearances set her apart from the rest of the superhero world. When female characters were limited to little more than romantic roles, Catwoman used her feminine wiles to manipulate Batman and escape justice at every turn. When male villains dominated Gotham on the small screen, Catwoman entered the mix and outshone them all. When female-led comics were few and far between, Catwoman headlined her own series for over 20 years. True to her nature, Catwoman stole the show everywhere she appeared, regardless of the medium. But her unique path had its downsides as well. Her existence on the periphery of the superhero world made her expendable, and she was prone to lengthy absences. Her villainous origins also made her susceptible to sexualized and degrading depictions from her primarily male creators in ways that most conventional heroines didn't face. Exploring the many incarnations of this cultural icon offers a new perspective on the superhero genre and showcases the fierce resiliency that has made Catwoman a fan favorite for decades.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Catwoman is the best known and longest running femme fatale in the comics world, with a history behind her creation as sensationally sordid as the feline temptress herself. Tim Hanley, with his

uncanny mind for digging out hidden trivia of popular comic characters brings out a side of Catwomen few know, with frank honesty of all her virtues and flaws. This book perfectly distills the complicated 70+ year history of DC's bad girl with a heart of gold. An engaging, entertaining and vastly enjoyable history!

• "Hope Nicholson, author, *The Spectacular Sisterhood of Superwomen*" "Feed your kitty now, because once you start reading, you won't be able to stop. Tim's words are as mesmerizing as Catwoman herself."

• "Adrienne Barbeau, actress and voice of Catwoman in *Batman: The Animated Series*, and author of *There Are Worse Things I Could Do*" "Tim Hanley has done it again! His comprehensive history of Catwoman is as engaging and enlightening as his masterworks on *Wonder Woman* and *Lois Lane*. As in his previous books, Hanley walks us from Catwoman's on-paper origin through her myriad film and TV incarnations to her modern place in comic books, pulling on cultural and political threads to reveal what makes the world's most famous femme fatale a truly unique feminist hero. Catwoman has outlasted the male artists and writers who have perpetually denied her agency and projected their sexual fantasies onto her. In Hanley, she finds a writer who finally succeeds in honoring her voice."

• "Heather Hogan, senior editor, *Autostraddle*" "Comic book fan or not, *The Many Lives of Catwoman* offers an interesting look at society's perception of women over the decades through a fictional avatar used by writers and artists to work through their own issues, misogynistic or otherwise."

• "PopMatters" "Hanley's writing is comprehensive and straightforward, and fans and newbies alike will take great pleasure in reading about Catwoman's journey."

• "Publishers Weekly

Tim Hanley is a comic book historian and the author of *Wonder Woman Unbound: The Curious History of the World's Most Famous Heroine* and *Investigating Lois Lane: The Turbulent History of the Daily Planet's Ace Reporter*. He also contributed to *Wonder Woman Psychology: Lassoing the Truth*, and his work has appeared in the *Atlantic*, the *Los Angeles Review of Books*, and the *Comics Journal*. He lives in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Product was released sooner than expected. Turns out to be an excellent read for cat woman fans. Very happy with purchase, service and packing.

Excellent book on every count. Serious analysis, complete in all media: books, films, TV, animation. The descriptions are perfect, I could see Catwoman in all her incarnations. The narrative voice is attractive, varied. An excellent book even for those who do not read comics.

I really liked this book and learned a lot I did not know.

From the first chapter, where author Tim Hanley disassembles the myth of Bob Kane's creation of the character (she was actually developed by Bill Finger, like much of Batman's early mythology), it's clear that he won't be pulling his punches. Hanley's theory is that Catwoman has a unique status in comics. She regularly outsmarted Batman. Because she's often a villain, she's an outsider, which allows her to escape the stereotypes placed on so many other female characters in the superhero genre. That also allowed her to be more independent. (And often sexualized, which is the negative flip side of being written and drawn by men.) Her history is so long-running that she's had a particularly varied past, which keeps her interesting. He calls her adventures a varied journey of empowerment and exploitation. We begin, of course, with her origin, with a necessary digression into Batman's beginning. Hanley makes a good case for Catwoman's differences from the start, from her prominence as a lead when other female characters were rarely even given names, speaking roles, or believable motivations to Batman's clear infatuation with her. Unlike other femme fatales, the serial nature of comics meant that she wasn't published by death or imprisonment. Post-war, with a pressure to reassert traditional gender roles, the Catwoman/Batman relationship flipped to make her the romantic seeking attention from her crush. At the same time, she got a Kitty Car, an elaborate hideout, more props, and henchmen, as comics became more exaggerated (and sometimes ridiculous). Then, during the Wertham scare era, she disappeared for over a decade, until the TV show resurrected her. Hanley thoroughly covers the various actresses and their portrayals over the seasons of the show and the spinoff movie, including how the attraction angle disappeared once Eartha Kitt was cast in the third TV season because of cultural concerns over interracial romance. The book continues with the checkered history of the character in the comics, from girlfriend for Bruce Wayne to the Huntress's dead mother and Frank Miller's post-Crisis sordid reinvention of her as an ex-hooker (in keeping with his sexist history of abuse towards women characters). Additional chapters focus on the Burton Batman movies, a history of the character in animated series, the launch of her solo comic book, the morbid darkness of Ed Brubaker's reinvention run, Catwoman's time as a parent, the disastrous Catwoman movie, and the various media she's appeared in since. By the end, I just wanted to go back to the beginning again, with more positive, entertaining stories than the morass the character has been left in. Hanley's history made me miss the kind of Catwoman we could have, but his emphasis on the ways the character has been reinvented across

her history gave me hope for another one to come sometime in the future. Because this is an independently written history, images are replaced with story descriptions and dialogue excerpts. That's an understandable but unfortunate liability in any such comic history. An interested reader will likely want to accompany this with *Catwoman: A Celebration of 75 Years* or *Catwoman: Nine Lives of a Feline Fatale* to see a few of the actual comics discussed. (The publisher provided a digital review copy. Review originally posted at [ComicsWorthReading.com](http://ComicsWorthReading.com).)

I can't say enough good things about Tim Hanley's comics histories and *Catwoman* is no exception. Highly Recommended.

Man, if he would had wrote it this year (2017), he could had included Batman marriage's proposal to Catwoman he just did in the Feb 2017 Batman comic! Great book!

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