



Vixens, Vamps, and Vipers: Lost Villainesses of Golden Age Comics

Mike Madrid

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Historically, the portrayal of women in comics has been a frustrating one, with female characters often relegated to the role of love interest, helper, or easily reformed adversary. However, Mike Madrid's insightful new work, *Vixens, Vamps & Vipers: Lost Villainesses of Golden Age Comics*, shows that wasn't always the case. Though early comics certainly didn't advocate equality of the sexes, they did portray women who were wickedly smart, independent, diverse, outspoken, and had consciously chosen a life of evil. Madrid writes "these villainesses made the decision to live their lives with the same freedom as a man. They weren't held back by society's rules or the need to act 'ladylike.' These women did whatever it took to succeed, even if they had to lie, cheat, steal, or even kill. And they were willing to pay the fatal price if they failed." Accompanied by Madrid's well-researched commentary, this fascinating collection provides much food for thought.

ALLYCE AMIDON (Fall 2014)

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