



Bad Girls: Sirens, Jezebels, Murderesses, Thieves and Other Female Villains

Jane Yolen, Heidi E.Y. Stemple

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From Jezebel to Catherine the Great, from Cleopatra to Mae West, from Mata Hari to Bonnie Parker, strong women have been a problem for historians, storytellers, and readers. Strong females smack of the unfeminine. They have been called wicked, wanton, and willful. Sometimes that is a just designation, but just as often it is not. "Well-behaved women seldom make history," is the frequently quoted statement by historian and feminist Laurel Thatcher Ulrich. But what makes these misbehaving women "bad"? Are we idolizing the wicked or salvaging the strong?

In *BAD GIRLS*, readers meet twenty-six of history's most notorious women, each with a rotten reputation. But authors Jane Yolen and Heidi Stemple remind us that there are two sides to every story. Was Delilah a harlot or hero? Was Catherine the Great a great ruler, or just plain ruthless? At the end of each chapter, Yolen and Stemple appear as themselves in comic panels as they debate each girl's badness—Heidi as the prosecution, Jane for context.

This unique and sassy examination of famed, female historical figures will engage readers with its unusual presentation of the subject matter. Heidi and Jane's strong arguments for the innocence and guilt of each bad girl promotes the practice of critical thinking as well as the idea that history is subjective. Rebecca Guay's detailed illustrations provide a rich, stylized portrait of each woman, while the inclusion of comic panels will resonate with fans of graphic novels.

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