

BEYOND THE CAPE OF SUPERHEROES

CREATING AN ICON - WONDER WOMAN

Wonder Woman



Wonder Woman's origins have her being born—sort of—on Paradise Island, among the Amazons of Greek mythology. The sort-of is because her mother, Hippolyta, crafted herself a baby girl made from the clay of the island, and members of the Greek pantheon of gods then imbued the baby with the soul of the unborn child of the first woman murdered by a man. This is how Diana came into the world.

The gods bestowed on her amazing powers, too: flight and strength, beauty and wisdom, courage and communication with animals among them. Oh, and she's basically invulnerable. Against her mother's wishes, Diana competed in a competition for the role of emissary to humanity and handily won. In addition to all of her amazing abilities, she came to us with a lasso of truth—a powerful weapon in its own right that can bind even super-strong beings and force any of those tied up with it to be honest. And from Zeus she received indestructible bracelets.



Arriving to comics in the early 1940s—her first cover was *Sensation Comics* #1 in January of 1942, a month after her first appearance—Wonder Woman began, like many of her fellow Golden Age superheroes, battling the Axis powers. Just as Dr. Marston wanted her to be used as empowering propaganda for girls, she also came to be used as positive propaganda in the war effort, much like Captain America. Indeed, Wonder Woman is literally clad in a star-spangled outfit. It's not subtle, to say the least.

Although a superhero of the first order, Wonder Woman is perhaps best known not so much for her role in comics as for her role outside it. Dr. Marston would be happy to learn that Diana has come to be strongly associated with the intergenerational feminist movement. Her standout moment on this front was appearing on the very first cover of Gloria Steinem's *Ms.*

Wonder Woman remains all-too relevant now, in the 21st Century, in the ongoing effort to promote gender justice and spread peace on our troubled planet.

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WONDER WOMAN

1. Explain Wonder Woman's origins.
2. What are her characteristics?
3. Who created her?
4. Who were her first enemies in comic books? Explain
5. How did her character evolve along the years?
6. Explain the last paragraph.

WITH HER AMAZONIAN STRENGTH HEIGHTENED BY HER CONCERN FOR HER COMRADE, WONDER WOMAN MAKES A SUPER-HUMAN EFFORT AND...



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