

Closing Note:

Each of these female comic book characters have similarities and differences. For starters, Penny Roll from bitch planet is an unapologetic woman who is punished for being herself. The other four popular characters are also completely themselves, regardless of how others may view them. They may be considered villains to others, but they stay true to themselves and simply do what they want. That statement in itself ties these women together to portray feminism in multiple popular comic books in society today. A major difference between Penny Roll and the other women is her appearance. It seems like Bitch Planet truly broke a barrier in the ever so popular task of sexualizing women. Harley Quinn, Wonder Woman, Cat Woman, and Medusa are all beautiful white women dressed in tight clothing- that alone separates them from Penny Roll. Although all characters symbolize feminism, they portray the word in different ways. Penny Roll being the only black woman out of the five characters really separates her from the rest of the group in being the most unique, ground breaking female comic book character. It's so important for characters to continue to differ and become even more unique as time goes on, because that's what is happening to our society as well. The world needs to know that it is good to be different!

Feminist Exploration in the Present-Day Comic World AS PENNY ROLL Stars in BITCH PLANET

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An editorial statement:

This zine will be focused on the combination of black culture and feminism in the comic world today. There are so many comic books in society that focus on events that are prominent in the world we live in. They can be much more informational than we often think. Bitch Planet focuses on the negative judgment black women often receive for simply being themselves. I will be focusing on one of the main characters, Penny Roll, and her symbolic meaning in the comic book. Digging further, I will also relate her to more well-known characters in the comic world. Each of these characters symbolize feminism in different aspects.



Medusa

- Created by Marvel Comics (Stan Lee and Jack Kirby)
- Has a psychokinetic control over her hair
- Her hair can pick locks, double in length, lift objects, and can be used as a rope.
- First appeared in the Fantastic Four
- Can be considered a tragic hero

“With her mane of deadly red locks, Medusa commands respect.”

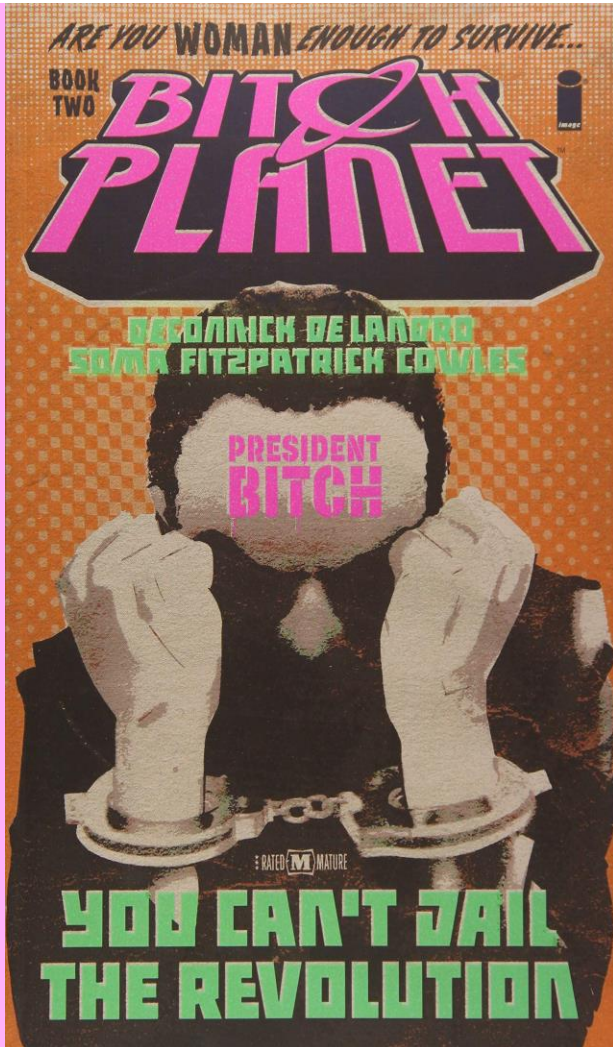
- Marvel.com

<https://www.marvel.com/characters/medusa/in-comics>

An Overview:

- Bitch Planet
- Penny Roll
- Significance and themes
- Harley Quinn
- Wonder Woman
- Cat Woman
- Medusa
- Conclusion





Cat Woman Quote

"This was one of the first female characters we saw on television that really spoke to empowerment," says Suzanne Colon, author of *Catwoman: The Life and Times of a Feline Fatale*. "Not only empowerment; a proto-feminism that was very sexy and pretty and female, and yet very take-charge. This woman had her own gang of men who wore little cat ears ... to please her."

- From Allison Keys' Article from NPR.org
<https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=88203149>



Cat Woman

- Created in 1940 by DC Comics
- Real name: Selina Kyle
- Batman's love interest (they have a love hate relationship)
- Often does the wrong things for the right reasons (kind of like Harley Quinn)
- Wears a tight, black one-piece outfit and uses a bullwhip as a weapon (sexualized) (unlike Penny Roll)
- Bob Kane created Cat Woman (A male, unlike Penny Roll who was created by a woman)

What Is Bitch Planet About?

The women of Bitch Planet live in a prison on a foreign planet. They are mostly black women who refuse to behave the way that they are "supposed to." The comic explains how the women act out in jail and each of the characters in the comic's stories. Basically, they get in trouble for being themselves. The stories include who the women are and what put them in the jail

More Facts

- Bitch Planet started in 2014
- It is still being produced today
- Kelly Sue DeConnick Is the creator of Bitch Planet
- The comic shows lots of nudity to show the most vulnerable and truest expression of women
- There are many different races and looks of characters to portray that everyone is beautiful, even though people may be put down for their appearance

Wonder Woman Symbolism

- Strength for females
- Power and achievement
- She may be beautiful (unlike Penny Roll) but regardless she is STRONG, like Penny Roll is.

“I’m willing to fight for those who cannot fight for themselves.”- Wonder Woman



Wonder Woman

- Created in 1941 by DC Comics
- Has no father, was created from clay by the Gods of Olympus
- Has a civilian identity of Diana Prince
- Superpowers are from the Greek Gods
- Uses her powers for good (rather than bad like Quinn)
- Powers include her durability, super strength, enhanced senses, and the power of flight
- Has her own movies

Fan's Reviews of Bitch Planet

“While the comic often comes off as a parody, it’s clear that the overt feminism expressed in DeConnick’s writing is no joke. The comic industry has been male-dominated for decades, but DeConnick is aiming to change that. Her work has been praised by publications and fans across the globe, and *Bitch Planet* deserves every bit of credit it’s received.”

- Kate Scott from thirdcoastreview.com

<https://thirdcoastreview.com/2018/02/15/bitchplanet/>



More Info;

- Feminine, but not objectified
- Has a lover
- Created by a man (Paul Dini and Bruce Timm)
- Strong, does what she wants but is still identified as psychotic
- Extremely gleeful and kind when she wants to be
- Looks beautiful and sexualized

Quote from Fan

Review;

“As an abuse survivor and free agent, Harley has become something of a feminist icon — magazines like *Bust* have praised her complexity, smarts and subversive sexuality — even as she revels in her own bouts of sadistic fun.”

- Robert Ito from the NY Times
<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/07/movies/harley-quinn-suicide-squad.html>

PENNY ROLL in BITCH PLANET

Penny Roll is one of the main characters in the comic *Bitch Planet*. Physically she is an overweight black woman, with a shaved head in prison. She was arrested for assault and for being overweight. It's not necessarily that she was arrested for her weight, but it was the fact that she does not *care* what she weighs. She is comfortable in her own skin, and she was punished for that.



Some photos of Penny Roll

Harley Quinn

- First created in 1992 by DC Comics
- A supervillainess who first appeared in Batman (Comic books, movies)
- Often known as the Joker's lover and accomplice
- Works as a psychologist (where she met the Joker as her patient)
- Also appeared in the movie Suicide Squad
- Her name is a play on the word "Harlequin"
- Has teamed up with Catwoman
- Some call her an antihero, others call her a supervillain

More Female Characters in the Comic World:

- 1. Harley Quinn**
- 2. Wonder Woman**
- 3. Cat woman**
- 4. Medusa**



Symbolism in Penny Roll

Penny Roll is a great example of feminism and defying all odds. She simply does not care what other people think, and she is happy with who she is. She does not have the ideal looks that society sees in the media constantly these days. She's not a skinny blonde with big boobs. She's an overweight black woman with a shaved head and she doesn't care. She is completely happy with who she is naturally and unapologetically. Unfortunately in the comic she's punished for this, as many black women are also judged and ridiculed for who they are in society daily.

More Inside Info:

At one point in the comic Penny Roll was asked what her ideal self was, and a mirror image of her current self showed up. This just goes to show she is 100% comfortable in her own skin. Penny Roll allows us to explore differences and strengths in women that should be celebrated, not put down. Women are women and they should not have to live up to a standard that shows up in so much media. Penny is happy with who she is, even if she must go to jail for it. The jail part of the comic can also represent how terribly our society treats women for being different. Although we may not literally put women in prison for being overweight, this representation goes to show how judgmental we can be to women that are different, or aren't society's idea of "perfect."

A photo from the scene explained on the prior page.

