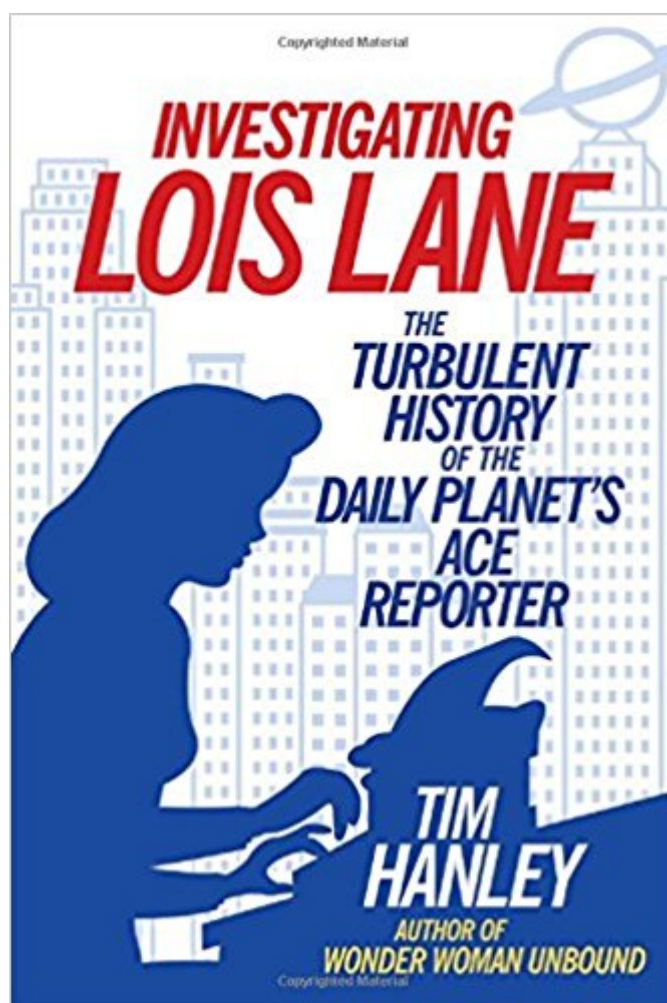


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Investigating Lois Lane: The Turbulent History Of The Daily Planet's Ace Reporter



Synopsis

In a universe full of superheroes, Lois Lane has fought for truth and justice for over 75 years on page and screen without a cape or tights. From her creation by Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster in 1938 to her forthcoming appearance in *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice* in 2016, from helming her own comic book for twenty-six years to appearing in animated serials, live-action TV shows, and full-length movies, Lois Lane has been a paragon of journalistic integrity and the paramour of the world's strongest superhero. But her history is one of constant tension. From her earliest days, Lois yearned to make the front page of the *Daily Planet*, but was held back by her damsel-in-distress role. When she finally became an ace reporter, asinine lessons and her tumultuous romance with Superman dominated her storylines for decades and relegated her journalism to the background. Through it all, Lois remained a fearless and ambitious character, and today she is a beloved icon and an inspiration to many. Though her history is often troubling, Lois's journey, as revealed in *Investigating Lois Lane*, showcases her ability to always escape the gendered limitations of each era and of the superhero genre as a whole.

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Customer Reviews

“A wonderful introduction to the character and history of Lois Lane, and how she has continually served as a canary in the coal mine for the treatment of women in comics in general.” — Kelly Sue DeConnick, writer of *Bitch Planet*, *Captain Marvel*, and *Pretty Deadly* “Hanley offers a timely and engaging look at Lois Lane’s cultural impact and

importance." **Booklist Online** "Hanley covers practically everything you need to know about the multi-media phenomenon that is Lois Lane and does so in a way that illustrates how the complexities of our culture's past assumptions about gender continue to shape our popular entertainment." **PopMatters** "Tim Hanley finally gives the iconic, enduring first lady of DC Comics the deep exploration and historical analysis she deserves. The result is a decades-long story as absorbing and filled with twists as any of Lois's front page scoops." **Gwenda Bond**, author of *Lois Lane: Fallout* and *Lois Lane: Double Down* "This smart, funny, and thorough biography of the long-suffering woman behind the Man of Steel and her world-renowned multimedia career will have you rethinking damsels in distress and their central role in Western media faster than a speeding bullet. If only I'd had this book as a young journalist and Superman fan!" **Anne Elizabeth Moore**, author of *Unmarketable* and cofounder of the Ladydrawers Comics Collective "Comic book historian Hanley has written a great follow-up to 2014's *Wonder Woman Unbound* in this exploration of the history and development (or lack thereof) of Lois Lane." and "An excellent entry in the history of graphic novels, this work should appeal to a wide range of readers including fans of Superman and DC Comics, as well as historians of popular culture." **Library Journal** "Hanley writes from an unapologetically feminist slant (his previous book was about Wonder Woman) and has an obvious, appealing affection for his heroine." **Toronto Star** "[T]his book is a reminder that our girl Lois has come a long way." **BUST** "Hanley's strength is in enthusiastically retelling each Lois Lane story as it rolls out. In Hanley's hands, even the most popular stuff feels fresh and alive." **Comics Grinder** "Fans of Lois herself and books like *Glen Weldon's Superman: The Unauthorized Biography* or *Jill Lepore's The Secret History Of Wonder Woman* will enjoy Hanley's engaging, affectionate telling of Lois's story, but it's worth picking up even if you've never read a comic book before." **The A.V. Club** "Hanley's strength is in enthusiastically retelling each Lois Lane story as it rolls out. In Hanley's hands, even the most popular stuff feels fresh and alive." **Comics Alliance** "Hanley's book does a great job of putting her highs and lows in a cultural and historical context. The book is useful and thoughtful and educational so just be prepared to get really, really mad on Lois Lane's behalf." **Smart Bitches, Trashy Books**

Tim Hanley is a comic book historian and the author of *Wonder Woman Unbound: The Curious History of the World's Most Famous Heroine*. His blog, *Straitened Circumstances*, discusses women in comics, and his column "Gendercrunching" runs monthly on *Bleeding Cool*. He has also contributed to several comic book sites, including *DC Women Kicking Ass* and *Women Write About Comics*.

Lois Lane has a spine of steel. With some of the treatment she's received in DC Comics' Super-titles through the decades, she's needed it. Tim Hanley follows his "Wonder Woman Unbound" with a well-researched, well-written history of the reporter usually thought of as Superman's girlfriend. More than that, though, she's been a paragon of journalistic integrity—which is far more than can be said of many real-world journalists. Hanley explores the tension between these roles that has existed throughout her history, from her earliest days in the Siegel-Shuster stories as the *Daily Planet*'s "sob sister," or advice to the lovelorn columnist, to the present. Though Lois eventually became a reporter, the primarily male creators of the Super-titles kept her role in the Man of Steel's titles limited to those of a damsel-in-distress and, eventually, a nuisance determined to prove Clark Kent and Superman are one and the same. Worse yet, she became the butt of Superman's frequently elaborate and asinine ruses to discourage both her ardor and her pursuit of his secrets, while her journalism was either diminished or ignored. Hanley treats the men involved in creating Lois' stories fairly without letting them off the hook for diminishing her, either intentionally or not. He also spotlights the efforts of female creators, such as Mindy Newell, to highlight her journalism and push her ties to Superman into the background. Hanley doesn't just limit himself to the Super-titles, though; he also explores Lois' history in films and live-action and animated television. In addition, he also spotlights Lois' younger sister, Lucy, and the similar tensions in her portrayal as both a career woman and as the girlfriend of Jimmy Olsen and, later, Ron Troupe. Through it all, Lois Lane emerges as a superheroine in her own right. She doesn't wear a flashy costume and isn't a member of the Justice League, but she's always been able to escape the limitations placed on her by both her creators and the superhero genre as a whole. "Investigating Lois Lane" is highly recommended.

I love Lois Lane, and this book is an excellent tribute to a character that has become a template for many other comic book love interests, as well as comic book romances. Tim Hanley is quite good.

Hanley gets the character and her various iterations thru the last 75 years. A really good read, and

not just for comic book fans.

My Superman fan of a husband is enjoying it.

As Greg Ruska makes clear in the introduction, "She's the woman Superman falls in love with--think about who that woman has to be." In the words of Bryan Q Miller, a writer for Smallville, "Lois Lane is Clark Kent's Superman." Tim Hanley chronicles the Yin to Superman's Yang, the ace reporter for the Daily Planet, Lois Lane. Thoroughly researching her origins it is discovered that Lois was based on a real-life high school crush of Superman co-creator Joe Shuster. Ultimately this woman ended up marrying the OTHER superman creator Jerry Siegel. No wonder Lois was the lynchpin in a triangle with only two sides! Over the years. Lois has changed with the times. From independent "girl reporter" to ardent feminist to various degrees of marital bliss with Clark and or Superman, all the while often serving as the damsel in distress. Tim Hanley covers Lois in all of her incarnations comic book, radio, television, and film. Every actress that assayed the role left their impression. Joan Alexander, who played Lois on the radio series, also loaned her voice to the Fleischer Studios cartoon shorts, still some of the best adaptations of the "Man of Steel" in any medium. The two television Lois' relationship to George Reeves and his mysterious death are examined. Each actress is given a bio and an assessment of their respective "ace reporters." Every phase of the comic book incarnation is described and placed in its proper social and chronological context. Lois has been drawn and written almost always by men. Sometimes, these men had rather patriarchal notions of a woman's place in both the work and home environment. Hanley demonstrates how that has changed with time. At times, Lois soloed or held the narrative together while the caped one was off planet, or dead. In describing her comic book exploits, Hanley comes to edge of completely geeking out. If you are not a died-in-the wool comic book nerd you may find some of the details a slog. For the most part, the narrative zips along with footnotes as illuminating as the text itself. Whether you are a fan of Lois Lane from the comics, television, radio, or the movies, this book is for you.

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