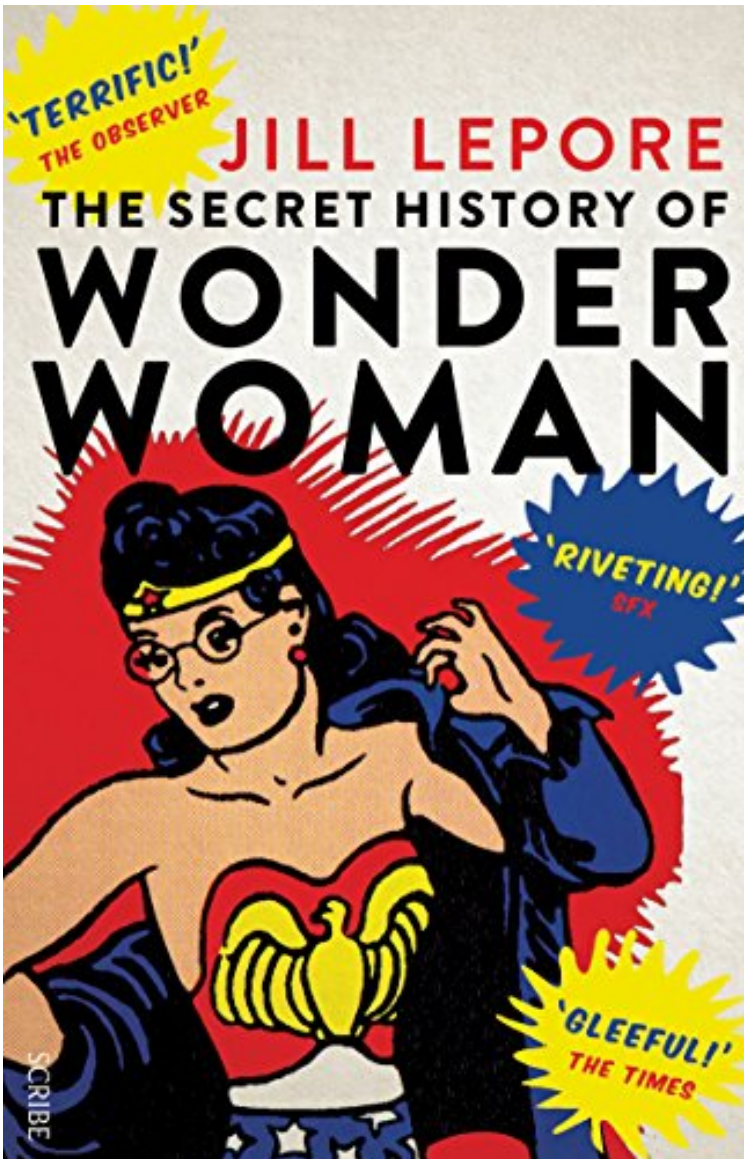


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The Secret History of Wonder Woman



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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurA riveting work of historical detection, revealing that the origins of one of the worlds most iconic Superheroes hides within it a fascinating family story and a crucial history of twentieth-century feminism. Wonder Woman, created in 1941, is the most popular female superhero of all time. Aside from Superman and Batman, no superhero has lasted as long or commanded so vast and wildly passionate a following. Like every other superhero, Wonder Woman has a secret identity. Unlike every other superhero, she also has a secret history. Harvard historian and New Yorker staff writer Jill Lepore has uncovered an astonishing trove of documents, including the never-before-seen private papers of William Moulton Marston, Wonder Womans creator. Beginning in his undergraduate years at Harvard, Marston was

influenced by early suffragists and feminists, starting with Emmeline Pankhurst, who was banned from speaking on campus in 1911, when Marston was a freshman. In the 1920s, Marston and his wife, Sadie Elizabeth Holloway, brought into their home Olive Byrne, the niece of Margaret Sanger, one of the most influential feminists of the twentieth century. The Marston family story is a tale of drama, intrigue, and irony. In the 1930s, Marston and Byrne wrote a regular column for Family Circle celebrating conventional family life, even as they themselves pursued lives of extraordinary nonconformity. Marston, internationally known as an expert on truth he invented the lie detector test lived a life of secrets, only to spill them on the pages of Wonder Woman. The Secret History of Wonder Woman is a tour de force of intellectual and cultural history. Wonder Woman, Lepore argues, is the missing link in the history of the struggle for womens rights a chain of events that begins with the womens suffrage campaigns of the early 1900s and ends with the troubled place of feminism a century later. PRAISE FOR JILL LEPORE Few historians handle weirdness as deftly or thoughtfully as Lepore [Her] brilliance lies in knowing what to do with the material she has. In her hands, the Wonder Woman story unpacks not only a new cultural history of feminism, but a theory of history as well. The New York Times Book Ms Lepores lively, surprising and occasionally salacious history is far more than the story of a comic strip. The author, a professor of history at Harvard, places Wonder Woman squarely in the story of womens rights in America a cycle of rights won, lost and endlessly fought for again Her superb narrative brings that history vividly into the present, weaving individual lives into the sweeping changes of the century. The Wall Street Journal Extrait The Splash Page Wonder Woman is the most popular female comic-book superhero of all time. Aside from Superman and Batman, no other comic-book character has lasted as long. Like every other superhero, Wonder Woman has a secret identity. Unlike every other superhero, she also has a secret history. Superman first bounded over tall buildings in 1938. Batman began lurking in the shadows in 1939. Wonder Woman landed in her invisible plane in 1941. She was an from an island of women who had lived apart from men since the time of ancient Greece. She came to the United States to fight for peace, justice, and womens rights. She had golden bracelets; she could stop bullets. She had a magic lasso; anyone she roped had to tell the truth. To hide her identity, she disguised herself as a secretary named Diana Prince; she worked for U.S. military intelligence. Her gods were female, and so were her curses. Great Hera! she cried. Suffering Sappho! she swore. She was meant to be the strongest, smartest, bravest woman the world had ever seen. She looked like a pin-up girl. In 1942, she was recruited to the Justice Society of America, joining Superman, Batman, the Flash, and Green Lantern; she was the only woman. She wore a golden tiara, a red bustier, blue underpants, and knee-high, red leather boots. She was a little slinky; she was very kinky. Over seven decades, across continents and oceans, Wonder Woman has never been out of print. Her fans number in the millions. Generations of girls have carried their sandwiches to school in Wonder Woman lunch boxes. But not even Wonder Womans most ardent followers know the true story of her origins. Shes as secret as a heart. In an episode from 1944, a newspaper editor named Brown, desperate to discover Wonder Womans secret past, assigns a team of reporters to chase her down. She easily escapes them, outrunning their car in her high-heeled boots, leaping like an antelope. Brown, gone half mad, suffers a breakdown and is committed to a hospital. Wonder Woman, taking pity on him, puts on a nurses uniform and brings him a scroll. This parchment seems to be the history of that girl you call Wonder Woman! she tells him. A strange, veiled woman left it with me. Brown leaps out of bed and, not stopping to change out of his hospital johnny, races back to the city desk, where he cries out, parchment in hand, Stop the presses! Ive got the history of Wonder Woman! Browns nuts; he hasnt really got the history of Wonder Woman. All hes got is her ian legend. This book has got something else. The Secret History of Wonder Woman is the result of years of research in dozens of libraries, archives, and collections, including the private papers of Wonder Womans creator, William Moulton Marston papers that have never been seen by anyone outside of Marstons family. I read the published material first: newspapers and magazines, trade journals and scientific papers, comic strips and comic books. Then I went to the archives. I didnt find anything written on parchment; I found something better: thousands of pages of documents, manuscripts and typescripts, photographs and drawings, letters and postcards, criminal court records, notes scribbled in the margins of books, legal briefs, medical records, unpublished memoirs, story drafts, sketches, student transcripts, birth certificates, adoption papers, military records, family albums, scrapbooks, lecture notes, FBI files, movie scripts, the carefully typed meeting minutes of a sex cult, and tiny diaries written in secret code. Stop the presses. Ive got the history of Wonder Woman. Wonder Woman isnt only an ian princess with badass boots. Shes the missing link in a chain of events that begins with the woman suffrage campaigns of the 1910s and ends with the troubled place of

feminism fully a century later. Feminism made Wonder Woman. And then Wonder Woman remade feminism, which hasn't been altogether good for feminism. Superheroes, who are supposed to be better than everyone else, are excellent at clobbering people; they're lousy at fighting for equality. But Wonder Woman is no ordinary comic-book superhero. The secrets this book reveals and the story it tells place Wonder Woman not only within the history of comic books and superheroes but also at the very center of the histories of science, law, and politics. Superman owes a debt to science fiction, Batman to the hard-boiled detective. Wonder Woman's debt is to the fictional feminist utopia and to the struggle for women's rights. Her origins lie in William Moulton Marston's past, and in the lives of the women he loved; they created Wonder Woman, too. Wonder Woman is no ordinary comic-book character because Marston was no ordinary man and his family was no ordinary family. Marston was a polymath. He was an expert in deception: he invented the lie detector test. He led a secret life: he had four children by two women; they lived together under one roof. They were masters of the art of concealment. Their favorite hiding place was the comics they produced. Marston was a scholar, a professor, and a scientist; Wonder Woman began on a college campus, in a lecture hall, and in a laboratory. Marston was a lawyer and a filmmaker; Wonder Woman began in a courthouse and a movie theater. The women Marston loved were suffragists, feminists, and birth control advocates. Wonder Woman began in a protest march, a bedroom, and a birth control clinic. The red bustier isn't the half of it. Unknown to the world, Margaret Sanger, one of the most influential feminists of the twentieth century, was part of Marston's family. Wonder Woman has been fighting for women's rights for a very long time, battles hard fought but never won. This is the story of her origins—the stuff of wonders, and of lies.

Revue de presse Alison Bechdel, author of *Fun Home* The Secret History of Wonder Woman is as racy, as improbable, as awesomely righteous, and as filled with curious devices as an episode of the comic book itself. In the nexus of feminism and popular culture, Jill Lepore has found a revelatory chapter of American history. I will never look at Wonder Woman's bracelets the same way again. Art Spiegelman, author of *Maus* Jill Lepore's obsessively researched book on Wonder Woman, the four-color embodiment of the women's rights movement, reveals that the life of the character's creator, Dr. William Marston, inventor of the lie detector, charming crank, ardent feminist and secret polygamist was waaaay more colorful than any comic book superhero.

Suffering Sappho! Chris Ware, author of *Building Stories* An absolutely unputdownable book. The life history of polymath charlatan and/or genius (I couldn't ever decide) William Moulton Marston, who worked his way through law, movie scenarios, lie detection, manages a troi, free love, BDSM and polygamy before creating the first feminist super-person had me saying wow practically every other page. And that's not even mentioning the tough-as-nails women he exalted, lifted from and, uh, shared who make up the molten core of this newly-revealed story. Rocketing from the suffragism of the 1910s to the ERA of the 1970s on a wave of home-spun pop culture righteousness, this story's head-spinning weirdness ultimately makes you question your own accomplishments, aims, and almost like a great modern novel your real motives.

Carol Tavis, *The Wall Street Journal* Ms. Lepore's lively, surprising and occasionally salacious history is far more than the story of a comic strip. The author, a professor of history at Harvard, places Wonder Woman squarely in the story of women's rights in America—a cycle of rights won, lost and endlessly fought for again. Like many illuminating histories, this one shows how issues we debate today were under contention just as vigorously decades ago, including birth control, sex education, the ways in which women can combine work and family, and the effects of violent entertainment on children. The tragedy of feminism in the twentieth century is the way its history seemed to be forever disappearing, Ms. Lepore writes. Her superb narrative brings that history vividly into the present, weaving individual lives into the sweeping changes of the century.

Laura Hudson, *Los Angeles Times* After years of sifting through unpublished letters and diaries, Lepore has written the authoritative work on William Moulton Marston, a Harvard-educated psychologist best known for two things: inventing the lie detector test and creating the world's most famous superheroine. Lepore's careful detective work reveals a man of fascinating contradictions. The Secret History of Wonder Woman is the fullest and most fascinating portrait ever created about the complicated, unconventional family that inspired one of the most enduring feminist icons in pop culture. In [Lepore's] hands, *The Secret History of Wonder Woman* is its own magic lasso, one that compels history to finally tell the truth about Wonder Woman and compels the rest of us to behold it.

Carla Kaplan, *New York Times Book Review* Few historians handle weirdness as deftly or thoughtfully as Lepore. [her] brilliance lies in knowing what to do with the material she has. In her hands, the Wonder Woman story unpacks not only a new cultural history of feminism, but a theory of history as well.

Etelka Lehoczky, *NPR* The Secret History of Wonder Woman relates a tale so improbable, so juicy, it'll have you saying, Merciful Minerva! an astonishingly

thorough investigation of the man behind the world's most popular female superhero. Lepore has assembled a vast trove of images and deploys them cunningly. Besides a hefty full-color section of Wonder Woman art in the middle, there are dozens of black-and-white pictures scattered throughout the text. Many of these are panels from Marston's comics that mirror events in his own life. Combined with Lepore's zippy prose, it all makes for a supremely engaging reading experience. Audrey Bilger, *San Francisco Chronicle* If it makes your head spin to imagine a skimpily clad pop culture icon as (spoiler alert!) a close relation of feminist birth control advocate Margaret Sanger, then prepare to be dazzled by the truths revealed in historian Jill Lepore's *The Secret History of Wonder Woman*. The story behind Wonder Woman is sensational, spellbinding and utterly improbable. Her origins lie in the feminism of the early 1900s, and the intertwined dramas that surrounded her creation are the stuff of pulp fiction and tabloid scandal. It took a super-sleuth to uncover the mysteries of this intricate history, hidden from view for more than half a century. With acrobatic research prowess, muscular narrative chops and disarming flashes of humor, Lepore rises to the challenge, bringing to light previously unknown details and deliberately obfuscated connections. Dwight Garner, *The New York Times* On the one hand, the story [*The Secret History of Wonder Woman*] relates has more uplift than Wonder Woman's invisible airplane or her eagle-encrusted red bustier. It's a yea-saying tale about how this comic book character, created in 1941, remade American feminism and had her roots in the ideas and activism of Margaret Sanger, the founder of Planned Parenthood. On the other hand, *The Secret History of Wonder Woman* is fundamentally a biography of Wonder Woman's larger-than-life and vaguely creepy male creator, William Moulton Marston. [Lepore] fully tells Marston's history for the first time, as well as the complete history of how so many crisp feminist ideas made their way into Wonder Woman comics. Its complicated material that she capably explores. There are many profitable detours in this book: the history of female cartoonists; the moral panic over comics and juvenile delinquency; a history of the feminist movement. Tim Hanley, *New York of Books* Lepore specializes in excavating old flashpoints forgotten or badly misremembered collisions between politics and cultural debates in America's past. She lays out for our modern sensibility how some event or social problem was fought over by interest groups, reformers, opportunists, and thought leaders of the day. The result can look both familiar and disturbing, like our era's arguments flipped in a funhouse mirror. Besides archives and comics Lepore relies on journalism, notebooks, letters, and traces of memoir left by the principals, as well as interviews with surviving colleagues, children, and extended family. Her discipline is worthy of a first-class detective. Lepore convinces us that we should know more about early feminists whose work Wonder Woman drew on and carried forward. A key spotter of connections, Lepore retrieves a remarkably recognizable feminist through-line, showing us 1920s debates about work-life balance, for example, that sound like something from *The Atlantic* in the past decade. New York Magazine Even non-comix nerds (or those too young to remember Lynda Carter) will marvel at Jill Lepore's deep dive into the real-world origins of the ian superhero with the golden lasso. The fact that a polyamory enthusiast created her partly as a tribute to the reproductive-rights pioneer Margaret Sanger is, somehow, only the fourth or fifth most interesting thing in Ms. Woman's bizarre background. Glen Weldon, *Slate* With a defiantly unhurried ease, Lepore reconstructs the prevailing cultural mood that birthed the idea of Wonder Woman, carefully delineating the conceptual debt the character owes to early-20th-century feminism in general and the birth control movement in particular. Again and again, she distills the figures she writes about into clean, simple, muscular prose, making unequivocal assertions that carry a faint electric charge [and] attain a transgressive, downright badass swagger. Tom Arnold-Forster, *Daily Beast* Lepore has an astonishing story and tells it extremely well. She acts as a sort of lie detector, but proceeds through elegant narrative rather than binary test. Sentences are poised, adverbs rare. Each chapter is carefully shaped. At a time when few are disposed to see history as a branch of literature, Lepore occupies a prominent place in American letters. Her microhistories weave compelling lives into larger stories. Melissa Anderson, *Newsday* In the spirited, thoroughly reported "The Secret History of Wonder Woman," Jill Lepore recounts the fascinating details behind the ian princess' origin story. [Lepore] seamlessly shifts from the micro to the macro. A panel depicting this labor unrest is just one of scores that appear throughout Lepore's book, further amplifying the author's vivid prose. Ariel Gonzalez, *Miami Herald* A Harvard professor with impeccable scholarly credentials, Lepore treats her subject seriously, as if she is writing the biography of a feminist pioneer like Margaret Sanger, the founder of the birth control movement which this book is, to an extent. Through extensive research and a careful reading of the Wonder Woman comic books, she argues convincingly that the story of this character is an indelible chapter in the history of women's rights. Colette Bancroft, *Tampa Bay Times* Wonderfully weird. astounding. Lepore is such a lively writer that

she sweeps the reader along in this strange tale. It's as much fun as a ride in Wonder Woman's invisible airplane, and just as revealing. Kait Calabro, allgeektome.com The most intriguing and positively mind-blowing book I have read this year. If you're looking for a basic history of Wonder Woman then this is not the book for you. This book is way better than anything basic. Not only does it give you the background of the development of Wonder Woman, it also documents the period of time and showcases the powerful women that dominated the Women's Rights movement. This book is way more than just a history book. This book is not just for comic book geeks or feminist, it is for both, and I personally highly suggest you give it a read. Nick Romeo, Christian Science Monitor Deftly combines biography and cultural history to trace the entwined stories of Marston, Wonder Woman, and 20th-century feminism. Lepore a professor of American history at Harvard, a New Yorker writer, and the author of *Book of Ages* is an endlessly energetic and knowledgeable guide to the fascinating backstory of Wonder Woman. She's particularly skillful at showing the subtle process by which personal details migrate from life into art. Elisabeth Donnelly, Flavorwire Lepore does a wonderful job. is spry and able as she draws parallels between the comics and the lives of Marston and his wives. a fascinating, wonderfully researched book, and Lepore sheds light on what had been a longtime secret for those in the know. *Cosmopolitan*, 12 New Books All Twentysomething Women Will Be Obsessed With Wonder Woman, everyone's favorite female superhero (bulletproof bracelets, hello!), gets the Lasso of Truth treatment in this illuminating biography. Lepore, a Harvard prof and New Yorker writer, delves into the complicated family life of Wonder Woman's creator (who invented the lie detector, BTW), examines the use of bondage in his comics, and highlights the many ways in which the beloved ian princess has come to embody feminism. Priya Chhaya, Fangirlblog.com The strength of *The Secret History of Wonder Woman* is that Wonder Woman is embedded in a broader historical context not just in terms of feminism and equal rights, but also the history of sexuality, psychology, police work, and comic book history providing readers with a history that is layered and complex. All this being said, the icing on the cake for *The Secret History of Wonder Woman* are the sketches of the costume in development. Panels from various issues illustrating Wonder Woman's evolution all add to this engaging and thoughtful book. Meredith Maran, *Good Housekeeping* This captivating, sometimes racy, charming illustrated history is one part biography of the character and one part biography of her fascinating creator, psychologist and inventor William Moulton Marston an early feminist who believed, way before his time, that the world would be a better place if only women were running it. In the process of bringing her superhero to life in this very carefully researched, witty secret herstory, Lepore herself emerges as a kind of superheroine: a woman on a mission as energetic, powerful, brilliant and provocative as her subject. Jeffrey Ann Goudie, *The Kansas City Star* This book is important, readable scholarship, making the connection between popular culture and the deeper history of the American woman's fight for equality. Lepore restores Wonder Woman to her rightful and righteous place. Elle Jill Lepore's generously illustrated *The Secret History of Wonder Woman* impressively links the iconic superhero's 1941 creation by William Moulton Marston (also the inventor of the lie detector) both to the aims of mid-twentieth-century feminism and to the influential Marston family's deep domestic intrigues. Booklist (*starred review*) Lepore restores Wonder Woman to her rightful place as an essential women's rights icon in this dynamically researched and interpreted, spectacularly illustrated, downright astounding work of discovery that injects new zest into the history of feminism. Kirkus s "It's an irresistible story, and the author tells it with relish and delight." Flavorwire, 25 Must-Read Books for the Fall Wonder Woman, feminist hero, was the creation of a husband and wife who led, on the surface, average existences. Behind the mask, however, they had extraordinarily unconventional lives. It takes Harvard professor and New Yorker writer Lepore to dig into the complicated story behind the lasso (of truth), and forgive me for sounding like Upworthy, but it's true: what she uncovers will shock you. Let's just say that Wonder Woman's SM subtext was there for a reason. *Library Journal* An engaging, well-researched look at the unconventional family behind the character and stories of Wonder Woman. Lepore handles her potentially thorny topic well and manages to avoid being salacious or gossipy. Fans interested in the background of the character and readers who appreciate well-written popular history will enjoy this thought-provoking volume. *Vulture*, 8 Books You Need to Read This October Relegated to second-class status in her kitschy later years, long overshadowed by her male colleagues in the Justice League, the exiled ian goddess is rescued and recast as the missing link of the feminist movement. She was created by William Moulton Marston: rogue psychologist, inventor of the lie-detector test, and head of a polyamorous household that included the niece of birth-control pioneer Margaret Sanger. In wartime, she was a Rosie the Riveter in actual combat. Its an origin story far deeper, weirder, and kinkier than anything a cartoonist ever invented. *Bookforum* The story

of William Moulton Marston, the Harvard-trained psychologist, inventor of the first lie-detector test, and creator of Wonder Woman for DC Comics, is at once inspiring and disheartening. His unlikely career shows us (among other things) that the qualities that make it possible to innovate—waggle, cleverness, tenacity—are the same ones that can render a person hopelessly out of sync with the reigning strictures of the times. Alden Mudge, *Bookpage* Fascinating often brilliant. Through assiduous research (the endnotes comprise almost a third of the book and are often very interesting reading), Lepore unravels a hidden history, and in so doing links her subjects' lives to some of the most important social movements of the era. It's a remarkable, thought-provoking achievement. *Entertainment Weekly* The Marston family's story is ripe for psychoanalysis. And so is *The Secret History*, since it raises interesting questions about what motivates writers to choose the subjects of their books. Having devoted her last work to Jane Franklin Mecom, Benjamin Franklin's sister, Lepore clearly has a passion for intelligent, opinionated women whose legacies have been overshadowed by the men they love. In her own small way, she's helping women get the justice they deserve, not unlike her *Tiarad* counterpart. It has nearly everything you might want in a page-turner: tales of SM, skeletons in the closet, a believe-it-or-not weirdness in its biographical details, and something else that secretly powers even the most serious feminist history fun. *Katha Pollitt, The Atlantic* Hugely entertaining Lepore calls Wonder Woman the missing link between the first and second waves of feminism, as they're known—that is, between the suffragist era that so inspired Marston and the 1970s women's-liberation movement. She's right that the imagery of waves and troughs overlooks the complicated ways that movements make advances even when no one's looking—even as daily lives seem stuck and society seems to be moving backwards.