



Harley Quinn: Mad Love

Paul Dini, Pat Cadigan

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The definitive story of Harley Quinn by her co-creator, Paul Dini, and Pat Cadigan, revealing the secrets of her history even as she seeks to kill Batman.

Dr. Harleen Quinzel grew up in an abusive household with a criminal and became a psychologist to deal with her own broken family. At Arkham Asylum, she attempted to treat the Joker and instead fell hopelessly in love with him, helping him escape and becoming a member of his organization. Quinzel became Harley Quinn, a bizarre contradiction of violence and mercy. She blames Batman for her inability to maintain a stable relationship with the arch-villain, and that causes her to have an abiding hatred for the hero, who she seeks to kill. Upon capture she becomes a violent inmate at Belle Reve Penitentiary, and is assigned to the group of government-maintained super villains known as the Suicide Squad.

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Harley Quinn: Mad Love Details

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From Reader Review Harley Quinn: Mad Love for online ebook

Baker St Shelves says

Joker and Harley Quinn have always fascinated me, ever since I watched the animated series years ago. This book is a retelling of Harley's origin done as a novel.

We see everything from her childhood in Coney Island, to becoming a doctor in Arkham Asylum, and to her infamous relationship with The Joker.

Any long time fan of these characters will fully appreciate this book since it's co-written by Paul Dini, who wrote for the animated series, the Arkham games, and created Harley Quinn; this book was definitely in good hands.

This book adds extra layers that were originally subtexts yet still doesn't retcon anything that's already established.

If you were disappointed by how Harley and Joker were written in the last few years like I was, rest assured this book will make you happy.

Lauren says

I really enjoyed this book. I had thoughts of what I thought the book would be like but I was completely wrong and was surprised more as I read it. I love the Joker and Harley Quinn and finding more about their love for each other was addicting (pretty much the same way they love each other) but sometimes troublesome to read. I was surprised by the end and I'm hoping for another one to follow on and carry on the story. I have the Batman novel Aswell so I plan on reading that at some point soon.

Emma Spence-Hirst says

4.25?

Mogsy (MMOGC) says

4 of 5 stars at The BiblioSanctum [https://bibliosanctum.com/2018/12/03/...](https://bibliosanctum.com/2018/12/03/)

My towering TBR and healthy skepticism for comic tie-ins be damned, as soon as I was sent a pitch for Harley Quinn: Mad Love I knew I had to read it. This beloved DC character has been a favorite of mine since my grade school days in the 90s, back when Batman: The Animated Series was pretty much a staple in every kid's TV repertoire. But what really sold me was Paul Dini's name on the cover, co-authoring with Pat Cadigan. As one of Harley Quinn's original creators, Dini's the only one I would trust to write the definitive origin story for the character.

Most fans are familiar with the broader details behind her transformation into the motley-clad femme fatale who is a frequent accomplice and love interest for the Joker. Before she became Harley Quinn, she was Dr. Harleen Quinzel, a brilliant young psychiatrist who fell in love with the Clown Prince of Crime while

treating him at Arkham Asylum, eventually throwing away her promising career to help him escape. But who was she before the Joker, before Arkham, or even before the medical degree? In this novel, Dini and Cadigan take readers back to the very beginning, with a look at Harleen's childhood growing up in a poor Brooklyn neighborhood as the daughter of a conman and his ex-surgeon wife.

A traumatic event introduced seven-year-old Harleen to death and violence, giving rise to her macabre sense of humor. From a very young age, she had also harbored a strong distrust for law enforcement figures, after witnessing the callous way a group of cops treated her father. This attitude followed her to college, which she attended on a gymnastics scholarship, and then to Gotham City, where she became disgusted with the people's strange hero-worship of Batman. At Arkham, she sympathized with her patients' hatred for the caped crusader, who was responsible for putting nearly all of them there in the first place. Of all the inmates, however, she was most fascinated by the Joker, and became obsessed with the idea of making him well. The rest, as they say, is history—though the exact events that took place and the words exchanged between them have always been a bit of a question mark. Until now.

As much as I adore Harley, her story has always struck me as one of the most tragic in the world of comics. Here was this bright, beautiful and talented young woman, who traded it all to be in a relationship where only one person is truly committed to the other. Meanwhile, the Joker, who keeps her close but treats her like garbage, never really seemed to care either way. Even as a child watching the cartoons, I sensed there was something deeply broken about her character, and I believe there's a good reason for this perception. In all the different forms of media in which she has been portrayed, most either paint her as an oblivious flake or a crazed sexpot. Rarely is she ever given any kind of real agency, as mostly she's there to play second fiddle to the Joker, to be kicked around and emotionally exploited.

That's why I think this novel is different. In a way, her manipulation and victimization by the Joker will always be a character-defining element of Harley Quinn, but at the very least, the authors made a real attempt here to explore her personality and give her the autonomy she deserves. In this origin story, Harley's a genuinely complex individual, not just a lovesick sidekick. The sections detailing her childhood show that the seeds of her deeply-rooted psychological issues were already planted there, long before she met the Joker. The book also takes great pains not to romanticize their relationship. Before Harley fell in love with the Joker, she fell in love with the idea of curing him, and it is this fixation that initially sends her down a dark path.

I guess one could say Harley's story is a cautionary tale against caring too much. Reading this book, I was reminded of how much I enjoy the duo nature of her character, which is also why I'll always have a soft spot for her original two-toned costume. She is both villain and victim, in a relationship that is a mixture of love and hate. And while her heart may be in the right place, all her actions are primarily driven by self-interest. The combination of her extreme ambition and her extreme sympathy to others was what ultimately led her to her downfall, and the fact that she severely underestimated the Joker's abilities as a master manipulator. Knowing exactly what to say and what buttons to push, he was able to use Dr. Harleen Quinzel's own traumatic past against her, bending her to his will in ways so subtle that even she, an expert in psychiatry, was unable to tell what he was doing to her, or realize what she was starting to become.

Granted, a lot of the story will be familiar if you've read the "Mad Love" Batman Adventures comic or have watched the 90s animated series, because then there will be several scenes in this novel you will instantly recognize. Still, the full story of Harley's origins including her childhood background makes this one worth it, not to mention with the well-rounded treatment of her character by Paul Dini and Pat Cadigan, she actually feels like a real person with real agency in a story that's all her own. For fans of Harley Quinn and comics in general, I can't stress enough how much you need this book in your life.

Eva Viktória "Evel" says

Surprised to say this, but I really loved it! They did the original comic justice and expanded upon it in a really sensible, often thoughtful and enjoyable manner. Would've given it a 5, but the last two chapters somehow lacked in capturing the spirit of the rest of the book. The pacing was a bit off.

But overall, it was great - pure original Harley as I always liked her. Nothing like the current Harley Quinn comics - and thank god for that.

Jess says

I loved this book. I thought it was awesome they pulled a lot of lines directly from the mad love comic but I also thought what they added was interesting. I liked getting to see Harley's slow transformation and manipulation and even the clues that even from a young age Harley might be destined for crime. Harley has had several origins but I love the original mad love one the most and this was very faithful. I enjoyed the writing and the new parts that were added didn't feel forced.

Lashaan Balasingam (Bookidote) says

You can find my review on my blog by clicking [here](#).

Novelizations are a tricky terrain to venture on. After my initial experience with the adaptation by Christa Faust of Alan Moore's classic masterpiece *The Killing Joke*, it was now time to check out DC Comics' latest novelization and it is different in the best of ways. How so, you wonder? It is different because the writer behind the original *Mad Love* comic book story arc is co-writing the novel with Pat Cadigan. In doing so, the idea of a novelization in itself became completely seductive as you can imagine that there is no better person to give you more out of a character than the creator himself. While it is difficult to completely single out Paul Dini as the reason for the crystal-clear authenticity that came with this novel, his contribution is non-negligible. And thus, *Harley Quinn: Mad Love* sets the example of a perfect novelization that every fan of the original piece would adore.

What is *Harley Quinn: Mad Love* about? It is the definitive origin story of the infamous villain and partner in crime of the Joker. In this novel, Paul Dini and Pat Cadigan co-write Harleen Quinzel's evolution from her days as a child when she learns the truth about her parents and the police to her days as a psychiatrist in the madhouse known as Arkham Asylum to her debut as the Brooklyn-accented, highly-spirited and extremely dangerous harlequin who finds herself charmed and enlightened by the Joker. With never-before-seen insight into the life of Harley Quinn before she became what she is known for today, the story broadens the reader's understanding of the character's tumultuous past and inevitable future.

Having read *Batman: Mad Love and Other Stories*, I had a feeling that it was going to be essential for the authors to look elsewhere if they were to add more juice to the story than just what was presented in the comics. This is where it would always feel risky beforehand as there's so much that would have to be taken into consideration if the newly-added content were to fit with the original tale. But Paul Dini and Pat Cadigan achieve the impossible and uses this opportunity to go all the way back into Harleen Quinzel's days

as a child growing up within an abusive household to dive deep into the character's personality and history. Without ever feeling like content was being shoved into our throats, every single moment managed to draw upon a trait that you'd quickly recognize in Harley Quinn today. In fact, even little Easter eggs were thrown into her history for fans to spot and recognize as key elements that would later characterize Harley Quinn and her sporadically-violent behaviours.

What I also found ingenious about this novelization is how the story would visit themes of rehabilitation and mental health. While Harley Quinn is known for pouncing on Batman and his allies with a hammer as well as her love-hate relationship drenched in excess with the Joker, she still remains a successful and beautiful psychiatrist before anything else. Throughout parts of the story, Paul Dini and Pat Cadigan makes sure to fully-exploit this facet of her character by showcasing her therapy sessions with other criminals as well as her beliefs and motivations in life as a professional psychiatrist. With the amount of insight we gain from these new story lines, the character quickly grows on the reader and her development becomes a beautiful thing we watch unfold. This is why having Paul Dini on board on this project seemed like the most brilliant idea ever as his understanding on not only Harley Quinn, the Joker and Batman is flawless, but also that his grasp on Gotham's culture is firm.

Harley Quinn: Mad Love is a magnificent novelization that not only stays loyal to its source material, it visits the iconic character's history with authenticity and brings every character to life with pure conviction.

Thank you to Penguin Random House Canada and Titan Books for sending me a copy for review!

Yours truly,

Lashaan | Blogger and Book Reviewer
Official blog: <https://bookidote.com/>

Savanna White says

I really enjoyed getting new content for Harley based on the original cartoon! All the stuff about her family, and growing up, and more in-depth view of her falling in love with the Joker was great!! However, while the book obviously wasn't afraid of making changes to the story, near the end it became word for word from the comic/episode without any insight or new detail and became incredibly boring. Also didn't care for the new ending. Great beginning and middle, end felt rushed and forced. Still recommend if you're a lover of Harley! Less of a recommend if you're a fan of the Harley and Joker relationship like I am.

nadine says

"hey pal, i ain't nobody's girlfriend" we stan an independent woman who doesn't need a man to be successful on her murder sprees

Laura says

Just a big no. Again, like with the killing joke novel what was added new was awful and did nothing to

enhance the story.

Kate (beautifulbookland) says

I've always been fascinated with Harley Quinn and the Joker, so I knew that I was gonna love this book.

In *Mad Love*, the story follows Harley throughout her life; from visiting Coney Island as a child and witnessing her father's arrest, through medical school, to landing a job at Arkham Asylum, where she has the opportunity to treat some of Gotham City's most dangerous criminals.

The pacing of this book is fantastic; we get plenty of background info on Harley's troubled childhood, but it doesn't drag and it doesn't feel overwhelming.

But, let's be real, Arkham is where the real fun begins.

We see Harley go from a take-no-shit graduate who smacks a rampaging inmate with a fire extinguisher, to a completely infatuated young woman, willing to put her career and the safety of herself and others on the line.

This book only fuels my love of Harley Quinn, and I would recommend it to every comic book and superhero fan.

Paul says

Although there is action, great action and yes, Batman does make an appearance... the greatness of this book lies in its dedication to the vile twist of a character's soul. So many calculating threads are laid at the beginning of the book that can be seen making their way through the entire narrative. Great nostalgia and a well-developed voice make *Mad Love* a must-read for fans of Harley Quinn and Batman.

For the full review: <https://paulspicks.blog/2018/11/27/ha...>

For all my reviews: <https://paulspicks.blog>

Lauren says

This was amazing!! 5 stars, full review to come
