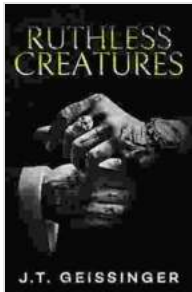


# Ruthless Creatures: Queens, Monsters, and the Culture of Fear in the Victorian Age



## Ruthless Creatures (Queens & Monsters Book 1)

by J.T. Geissinger

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

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The Victorian Age was a time of great social and economic change. It was also a time of great fear. The Industrial Revolution had created a new urban landscape that was often dangerous and unfamiliar. The rise of the middle class had created a new social order that was still in flux. And the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny had raised fears of a world in chaos.

These fears were reflected in the popular culture of the time. Gothic novels, such as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, explored the dark side of human nature. Sensation novels, such as Wilkie Collins' *The Woman in White* and Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret*, featured female criminals who were both alluring and terrifying.

These stories of female criminality reflected a real fear of women in Victorian society. Women were seen as both dangerous and seductive. They were believed to be capable of great evil, but they were also seen as objects of desire. This fear of women was often expressed in the depiction of female criminals as monsters.

### **The Monster as Woman**

In Victorian literature, female criminals were often depicted as monsters. They were described as having animalistic features, such as sharp teeth and claws. They were also often portrayed as being sexually deviant. This portrayal of female criminals as monsters served to justify the fear and violence that was directed against them.

One of the most famous examples of a female criminal who was portrayed as a monster is Mary Ann Cotton. Cotton was a serial killer who poisoned her husbands and children. She was eventually caught and hanged in 1873. Cotton's crimes were widely reported in the press, and she was quickly transformed into a monster in the public imagination.

Cotton was described as having a "wolfish" look and a "cruel and heartless" nature. She was also accused of being a witch. This portrayal of Cotton as a monster served to justify the violence that was directed against her. She was hanged in front of a large crowd, and her body was dissected after her death.

### **The Queen as Monster**

The portrayal of female criminals as monsters was not limited to working-class women. Even queens could be depicted as monsters. One of the most famous examples is Queen Mary I of England. Mary was known as

"Bloody Mary" because of her persecution of Protestants. She was also accused of being a witch.

This portrayal of Mary as a monster served to justify the fear and hatred that was directed against her. She was seen as a threat to the Protestant religion and to the stability of the country. Mary's reign was a time of great unrest and violence. She was eventually overthrown and imprisoned. She died in 1558.

## **The Culture of Fear**

The fear of female criminality was a powerful force in Victorian society. It shaped the way that women were perceived and treated. It also contributed to the culture of fear that existed in Victorian England.

The culture of fear was a product of a number of factors. The Industrial Revolution had created a new urban landscape that was often dangerous and unfamiliar. The rise of the middle class had created a new social order that was still in flux. And the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny had raised fears of a world in chaos.

These fears were reflected in the popular culture of the time. Gothic novels, sensation novels, and penny dreadfuls all played on the fears of the Victorian public. These stories depicted a world that was full of danger and uncertainty. They also offered a glimpse into the dark side of human nature.

The culture of fear had a profound impact on Victorian society. It led to a number of social reforms, such as the establishment of the police force and the creation of new laws to protect women and children. It also contributed

to the rise of the Gothic and the sensation novel. These genres offered a way to explore the fears and anxieties of the Victorian public.

The Victorian Age was a time of great change and uncertainty. This led to a culture of fear that was reflected in both the popular culture and the social policies of the time. The fear of female criminality was a powerful force in Victorian society. It shaped the way that women were perceived and treated. It also contributed to the culture of fear that existed in Victorian England.



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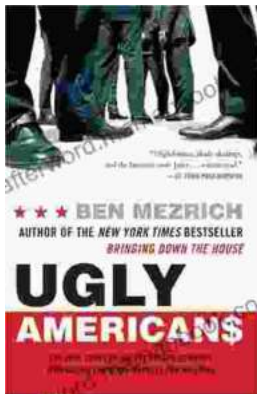
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