

- Why Is Johnny Depp Still Employed, You Ask?
- No, I Don't Want a Black *Buffy* Reboot and Here Is Why
- Rick and Morty's* Co-Creator Dan Harmon Deletes His Twitter After Gross Video Reappears
- The Season Two Trailer for *Star Trek: Discovery* Is ... a Lot
- Forbes Got Torn Apart by Library Twitter for Saying Amazon Should Replace Public Libraries

## There's Another Terrible *Beauty and The Beast* Trope We're Not Talking About

by [Lilli Petersen](#) | 10:55 am, March 12th, 2017 [0](#)

Tweet Share reddit



I'm not going to lie: I've been waiting with bated breath for the upcoming live-action *Beauty and the Beast* adaptation. Like many a nerdy little girl, Belle was my favorite of the Disney princesses, and I can't wait to see her brought to life in the shape of Hermione Granger: Emma Watson.

But there's one thing that I'm not so excited to see, and I'm not talking about the long-running accusations of Stockholm Syndrome. No—I'm talking, of course, about the fact that Belle is Not Like Other Girls. (Did your eye just twitch when you read that? It makes my fingernails hurt to think about, too.)

A backhanded compliment you may remember from your days as one of two girls in your high school video game club, You're Not Like Other Girls is both a narrative trope (so common it has its own [TvTropes page](#)) and a really frustrating type of benevolent sexism. It's often used when a woman displays interest in or excels at traditionally "male" things, like sports, or—*surprise*—nerd culture. In fiction, it's annoying as hell. In real life, it can shape the way women think of both themselves and the other women in their life.

Consider the *Bimbettes* (real names Paulette, Laurette, and Claudette, but collectively referred to in the Disney canon by the aforementioned name). The trio, apparently Belle's only age contemporaries in the village, are pretty obviously intended to portray the "Other Girls" part of the NLOG trope. And boy howdy, are they silly. They're man-crazy, ditzy, and easily distracted, obsessed with Gaston and oblivious to his myriad faults. The first time we see them in the movie, they're literally swooning to the point

Notably, we never see Belle interact with them, for better or worse. Belle in general doesn't seem to have any meaningful relationships with women, though we can see that she's friends with the town bookseller, and she quickly wins over Cogsworth and Lumiere at the castle. This is part of the problem with the NLOG trope in real life: it draws artificial lines between women, separating the "worthy" woman, who may have meaningful and honest relationships with male friends, with the rest of "women," who are frivolous, silly, and often catty (though to be fair, we never see the Bimbettes behave cruelly towards Belle. They seem like very nice girls).

So how could the live-action movie fix this? Well, for one thing, they could give Belle a female friend. I find it hard to believe that Belle is the only girl in town who's read Jack and the Beanstalk, or who thinks Gaston's socks need a wash. Belle is perfectly capable of being special without placing her totally apart from other women—if she isn't, she's not much of a heroine, is she?

In 1991, with modern feminism still fumbling through a world in which public sexual harassment accusations were groundbreaking and the United States Senate was a pathetic 2% female, it's maybe not surprising that an intelligent, respected woman had to be somehow *unique* from other women. But it's 2017, and even Taylor Swift has stopped comparing short skirts to T-shirts and started up a squad instead. The point is, we can do better.

Belle, shaped by scriptwriter Linda Woolverton with the explicit intent of being the first "feminist" Disney princess, is a lot of awesome things. Belle is clever. She reads books. She knows enough to give sentient slab of spare ribs Gaston the brush-off. But she's far from perfect, no matter how glowingly Disney wants to portray its heroines.

The older we get, the more cracks appear in the things we love, and, perhaps because so many of us love it so much, Disney has always been particularly ripe for criticism. (I'm looking at you, *Fantasia*.) But it is a company that *tries*, despite flubs. Hopefully, the new *Beauty and the Beast* is way ahead of me—IMDB lists Zoe Rainey credited as Belle's mother, and there are a number of credits for Village Lass and Debutante. Maybe one of them will prove to be part of Belle's pack. Either way, I'm glad to see that no one has been credited as a Bimbette.

Advertisement

(image via Disney)

*Lilli Petersen is a Brooklyn-based writer who has a lot of Feelings about politics, feminism, and proper sci-fi/fantasy worldbuilding. You can argue with her on Twitter at @LPonrecord.*

*—The Mary Sue has a strict comment policy that forbids, but is not limited to, personal insults toward anyone, hate speech, and trolling.—*

*Follow The Mary Sue on Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr, Pinterest, & Google+.*

**Follow The Mary Sue**

#### TOP STORIES

**No, I Don't Want a Black *Buffy* Reboot, and Here's Why**

**Why Is Johnny Depp Still Employed, You Ask?**

**Sean Gunn Pens Thoughtful Twitter Thread in Response to Disney Firing His Brother James Over Offensive Tweets**

**The Season Two Trailer for *Star Trek: Discovery* Is ... a Lot**

***Rick and Morty's* Co-Creator Dan Harmon Deletes His Twitter After Gross Video Reappears**

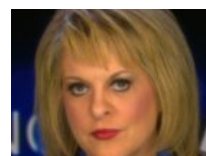
#### AROUND THE WEB



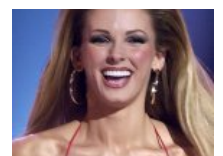
**An Era Comes to an End as Queen Elizabeth Names Her Successor**



**Fired 'Tonight Show' Staffers File Lawsuit**



**The Untold Truth of Nancy Grace**



**Science Says This Body Type Is the Most Attractive Now**

filed under [Beauty and the Beast](#), [Belle](#), [contributors](#), [tropes](#)

### Promoted Stories

Ads by Revcontent

**The Revolutionary 50-micron Filter Allows You to Avoid Cleaning Gutters for Life**  
LeafFilter

**Take a Peek at the New Honda CR-V**  
Edmunds

**Constant Fatigue is a Warning Sign - Here's the Simple Fix**  
GundryMD

**Hollywood Won't Cast Alyson Hannigan Anymore, Here's The Reason**  
90skidsonly

**3 Toxic Foods in Your Home (And 4 Simple Replacements)**  
Nucific

**"It Felt Like Someone Was Blowing Up a Balloon in My Stomach...now I Know Why"**  
ActivatedYou.com

**A Closer Look at the New Mavic Pro Platinum**  
DJI Buying Guides

Ads by Revcontent

Login

Recommend 40

Share

Sort by Oldest



Start the discussion...

LOG IN WITH

OR SIGN UP WITH DISCUS ?

Name

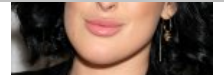
Be the first to comment.

Subscribe Add Disqus to your siteAdd DisqusAdd

0



**Emma From 'Friends' Grew Up to Be Gorgeous**



**Rumer Willis Is Barely Recognizable These Days**



**There's One Letter In The Alphabet That Almost No One Can Write**



**Why Shouldn't You Kill Spiders in Your Home**

MORE FROM AROUND THE WEB

Ads by Revcontent

**The Revolutionary 50-micron Filter Allows You to Avoid Cleaning Gutters for Life**  
LeafFilter

**2018 Honda Civic Pricing, Features, Ratings and Reviews | Edmunds**  
Edmunds

**1 Cup of This (Tonight) Will Burn Your Belly Fat Like Crazy**  
FlatBellyFix

TIPS



Have a tip or story idea? Email us. Or to keep it anonymous, click here.

---

[« Previous Post](#) [Next Post »](#)

MORE FROM ABRAMS MEDIA

**Bill Cosby & Roman Polanski  
Expelled from the Academy**

**Here's Captain America Smashing  
Some Fascists**

**Scarlett Johansson Responds to  
Trans Role Backlash**

**Anti-Immigration Racists Denied  
Entry to Other Countries**

**This 'Xena' Episode Fought the  
Stigma Around HIV/AIDS**

**Feminist Apparel Staff Fired for  
Confronting CEO About Abuse**

**Asian American & Mainland Asian  
are Different**

**How Avengers: Infinity War Fails Its  
Women**

by Revcontent

