

## TOP 10 KICK-A\*\* WOMEN IN MOVIES / BY DV BERKOM

I love to watch strong female characters in movies and read about them in books. When I was growing up, I read spy novels and watched a lot of James Bond movies. The Bond women were stunning but one-dimensional. I wanted to *be* the female equivalent of James Bond. I searched, but couldn't find much in the way of this kind of female character, so I contented myself with made-up stories of women pirates and spies. Fast-forward to 2012. Everywhere you look, there are more and more strong, capable and kick-a\*\* women.

I am **so** stoked.

When I wrote the first novella in my best-selling Kate Jones thriller series, *Bad Spirits*, I wanted to be sure to make the heroine tough, but I also wanted her to be flawed. She gains in her understanding of herself throughout the series and learns to trust, as well as take care of herself in dangerous situations. I have heard from as many male readers of the series as I have female, and consider that a compliment in so many ways. The fact that men enjoy a strong woman protagonist as much as women do speaks volumes about the shift in our society and the acceptance of strong, capable women.

In my novel, *Serial Date*, I consciously chose to make the heroine as capable and badass as possible, and she has a ton of flaws. I'd always wanted to write a book about a female assassin, and chose to have Leine Basso, the heroine of the book, opt-out of the business by choice and 'retire'. When Leine's estranged daughter is abducted by a man claiming to be a serial killer, she's forced to rely on old skills to find her, and must come to terms with who she really is.

Below is a list of my Top 10 Kick-A\*\* Women in Movies. The list is by no means exhaustive—in fact, I came up with 25 off the top of my head, but this is a blog post, not an epic ☺. I also didn't include the many television characters who have contributed so much to female kick-assity.

And now, for the Top 10 Kick-A\*\* Women in Movies (*In alphabetical order*)

- Captain Niobe – *The Matrix Reloaded* (Jada Pinkett-Smith) Awesome, competent, resilient and fierce. I definitely want her in my corner.
- Captain Trudy Chacon – *Avatar* (Michelle Rodriguez) I totally love Michelle Rodriguez and the women she portrays. Captain Trudy Chacon is one of the many characters she plays so well with a gnarly kick-butt attitude.
- Carolina – *Once Upon a Time in Mexico* (Salma Hayek) If Salma Hayek isn't the whole package, I don't know who is. She's gorgeous-sexy, intelligent and can wield a machine gun like a pro.
- Evelyn Salt – *Salt* (Angelina Jolie) Say what you like about Angelina Jolie-- I adore her willingness to take on the roles she does. She takes her image seriously when it comes to the message being sent to young women and I applaud her. Go, Angelina!
- Katniss Everdeen – *The Hunger Games* (Jennifer Lawrence) The character of Katniss tapped into the powerful belief that a person can win through effort, perseverance and ability. The awesomeness of this story is that she's also a young woman.

- Mallory Kane - *Haywire* (Gina Carano) I recently watched this movie and was struck by the pure physicality of Gina Carano in the lead role of Mallory. She's all woman with sex appeal to burn, knows her way around a firearm and totally owns her power. So refreshing.
- Ripley – *Alien* (Sigourney Weaver) What can I say? Sigourney Weaver is a total badass when she comes up against a freaking alien! Scifi/Fantasy delivers its share of kick-butt women, and Ripley's an all-time favorite.
- The Bride – *Kill Bill Vols. 1 & 2* (Uma Thurman) OMG. I love these movies. Uma's character has more determination than an army of Visigoths.
- Tina Turner – *What's Love Got to Do with It?* (Angela Bassett) Yes, Ms. Turner is a real person, not a character, but her tenacity and grace are so inspiring, I think she's a kick-a\*\* woman bar none and I had to include her. (Besides, Angela Bassett was amazing in the movie!)
- Trinity – *The Matrix Reloaded* (Carrie-Anne Moss) How can you have a top list of kick-a\*\* women without Trinity? Great emotional control and she knows her weaponry.

How about you? Which strong women characters do you love to see on the screen?