



M & M'S COMIC COMMENTS

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Industry News

ITEM! DC Comics will publish the first of the highly anticipated BEFORE WATCHMEN comic book prequels. BEFORE WATCHMEN: MINUTEMEN (ITEM 0137), written and drawn by Darwyn Cooke, will be the first issue released the first Wednesday in June, followed in subsequent weeks by BEFORE WATCHMEN: SILK SPECTRE (ITEM 0143) by Darwyn Cooke and Amanda Conner, BEFORE WATCHMEN: COMEDIAN (ITEM 0149) by Brian Azzarello and J.G. Jones (June 20), and BEFORE WATCHMEN: NITE OWL (ITEM 0155) by J. Michael Straczynski, Andy Kubert and Joe Kubert. The first issue of BEFORE WATCHMEN: RORSCHACH and BEFORE WATCHMEN: DR. MANTHAN will be released later in the summer. Every issue of BEFORE WATCHMEN will have a 1 in 25 variant cover drawn by a premier comic book artist: BEFORE WATCHMEN: MINUTEMEN #1 by Michael Golden, BEFORE WATCHMEN: SILK SPECTRE #1 by Dave Johnson, BEFORE WATCHMEN: COMEDIAN #1 by Eduardo Risso and BEFORE WATCHMEN: NITE OWL #1 by Kevin Nowlan. Each of the BEFORE WATCHMEN first issues will feature a 1 in 200 variant cover by legendary artist and DC Entertainment Co-Publisher Jim Lee (JUSTICE LEAGUE). The announcement that DC Comics will publish prequels to the bestselling graphic novel of all time has already generated international press coverage and widespread controversy, months in advance of the release of the first issue.

ITEM! Following up on the news that Brian Wood (DEMO, DMZ, NORTHLANDERS) and Kristian Donaldson (Supermarket) would be bringing their upcoming collaboration to Dark Horse's premier anthology, Dark Horse Presents, comes news that the three-part storyline will be continued in an all-new series THE MASSIVE (ITEM 0008). The Massive follows a group of direct-action environmentalists after the world has experienced a crippling ecological disaster. With society grinding to a halt and the planet itself in a state of rebellion, this group sails the world's oceans looking not only for its lost sister ship, the titular Massive, but for some sense of logic in all the chaos. What does it mean to be an environmentalist after the world's already ended. "The Massive is the next logical step in my creative output: the world-building and politics of DMZ with the humanity of Northlanders, amped up and truly global in scope" said writer, Brian Wood. "No one is pulling any punches here; Kristian Donaldson is turning in his best work I've seen in all our years of collaboration, and the crew at Dark Horse is giving this the five-star treatment."

ITEM! Fatima: The Blood Spinners (ITEM 0010), a new mini-series from Dark Horse Comics, succeeds on the strength of Gilberto Hernández's (creator of Love and Rockets) visionary approach. Rather than zombies from disease or government

conspiracy, the flesh eaters in his world become undead by choice. A new drug called Spin gives the ultimate high... followed shortly by death then becoming a zombie. Fatima's story in the first issue is just emerging, with a flashback to people and loves she lost during the outbreak still to come.

It's hard to gauge her as a protagonist this early, as much of this issue focuses on building the world and momentum. So far she's at turns Wonder Woman strong, Wolverine jaded, and Batman haunted. I'm hoping she'll put it all together and evolve into a completely original heroine, like Alan Moore's Promethea. The artwork is gorgeous, combining classic silver age bold shapes with an anxious energy, reflective of modern comics. That alone is worth giving this new series a recommend. It's worth the price, just to see strong, modern women like Fatima rendered in a unique '50s-style.

ITEM! Mover over Buffy, Drusilla is back! The first issue of DRUSILLA (ITEM 0015), will pick up "literally a panel after" Drusilla's final appearance in issue No. 9 of the Angel & Landau will write the new series.

ITEM! A monstrous plague has ravaged Europe, the old vampires have risen, and ancient horrors are returning to Earth. On the plus side, the worldwide chaos has caused the First World War to fizzle out, as soldiers and civilians alike brace themselves for even greater threats. For Lord Henry Baltimore, however, the horror is deeply personal, as a vampire he wounded on the battlefield took vengeance on his family; now, Baltimore hunts the scarred vampire Haigus across Europe, striving to kill the monster at any cost. Dark Horse Comics' "Baltimore" comics take place during gap in the timeline of Mike Mignola and Christopher Golden's novel "Baltimore: Or, the Steadfast Tin Soldier and the Vampire." Following on the success of the first two miniseries, "The Plague Ships" and "The Curse Bells," Golden, Mignola, and artist Ben Stenbeck return in May with Baltimore: Dr. Leskovar's Remedy (ITEM 0026).

ITEM! Author John Jackson Miller returns to the Star Wars universe with Escape (item 0036), the next chapter of his Knight Errant comic book and prose series. In this upcoming

five-issue comic miniseries — which is set 1,000 years before Episode 1 — Jedi heroine Kerra Holt must clean out an entire galaxy full of Sith, including a nasty band of Force-drunk cultists. Escape raises the stakes for Knight Errant. Not only is everything we know about the sectors under Sith domination is about to change, but we're going to find out a lot more about Kerra's personal history. We thought we knew her origin story before, but in Sith space, things are never quite as they seem!.

ITEM! Fans of the hit Vertigo comic American Vampire will get more of a good thing this summer as the title spawns a second mini-series by writer Scott Snyder. American Vampire: Lord of Nightmares (ITEM 0283), a five-issue mini that starts in June, will pick up some of the story threads from last summer's award winning miniseries American Vampire: Survival of the Fittest. Featuring art by Dustin Nguyen, the mini will give Snyder more room to expand the world of American Vampire, a series he launched two years ago with a little help from one of Snyder's admirers, Stephen King. Now that American Vampire is almost 25 issues strong, Snyder is also writing two comics set within the DC Universe: Batman and Swamp Thing. But it was the Vertigo series that won him initial critical accolades and an Eisner Award — and got the attention of Nguyen.

ITEM! Scalped (ITEM 0294), the Eisner Award-nominated crime series by Jason Aaron and R. M. Guéra, will end in with Issue 60 (ITEM 0294).

ITEM! You Wanted the Best, You Got the Best! KISS is back in an all-new comic series from IDW that will appeal to longtime fans and new readers alike! Four ordinary humans in 1920s Chicago find themselves caught up in a battle of epic proportions that will reverberate across time and space in "Dressed to Kill," part 1! Written by Chris Ryall (Zombies vs Robots) with art by Jamal Igle (The Ray). KISS #1-4 come with a special "solo album" covers by artist Michael Gaydos. IDW will also publish KISS Greatest Hits, Vol. 1: The Marvel Years (ITEM 0322), collecting the two classic Marvel KISS comics in one edition!

ITEM! Brian Michael Bendis and Sara Pichelli, the same duo that launched the current volume of Ultimate Comics Spider-Man and its new lead character, Miles Morales are behind the new series SPIDER-MEN #1 (ITEM 0603) and #2 (ITEM 0606). Also, Marvel has established that Spider-Men will be its own series, rather than an arc in an existing title. Given the involvement of Bendis and Pichelli, it seems like a relatively sure bet that the story will involve Miles Morales, but as to who the other Spider-Man might be — Peter Parker from the mainstream Marvel Universe, the Ultimate Universe Peter Parker back from a dead, or something entirely different — remains to be revealed.

ITEM! The tale of a marooned space pirate was solely available as a digital comic, but many readers were eager for a print option. Image Comics heard the call and contacted creator Ken Garing about bringing Planetoid to print. The first installment in the five issue



mini-series of PLANETOID (ITEM 0419) hits shelves in June!

ITEM! Debuting in June 2012, IDW's MARS ATTACKS (ITEM 0315) comic series will offer the first stories of an all-new Mars Attacks universe, bringing the brand's outrageous action and dark humor to a new set of tales. Writer John Layman, author and co-creator of the Eisner-winning series Chew, will pen the series, with art by John McCrea, best known for his collaborations with Garth Ennis, including Eisner-winner Hitman. Originally published by Topps as a series of trading cards, Mars Attacks was created by Len Brown and Woody Gelman, after Brown was inspired by the Wally Wood cover to Weird Science #16 (EC Comics).. MARS ATTACKS will include covers by McCrea and alternate covers by such comic-book luminaries as Sam Kieth, Ben Templesmith and Eric Powell. The first issue will also feature a unique approach to variant covers: It will ship with 55 different covers, each depicting one of the original trading cards from the debut set of Mars Attacks from 1962. A complete collector's set of the 55 covers in a box (ITEM 0317) that replicates the original card packaging will be offered separately as well.

ITEM! Steve Niles, Jimmy Palmiotti, Justin Gray, Kevin Mellon and Phil Noto are pushing the creator owned comics movement even further with CREATOR OWNED HEROES (ITEM 0420) from Image Comics starting in June. The series will feature two stories in pseudo-magazine/anthology format. Included in the first issue of the ongoing series is American Muscle from Niles and Mellon, an interview with Neil Gaiman and Trigger Girl 6 by Palmiotti, Gray and Noto. The series is set to focus on new creator owned properties from some of the tops names in the creator owned comics movement.

ITEM! LIBERTY MEADOWS SUNDAY COLLECTION (ITEM 0442) is described by Emmy Award-winning creator Frank Cho as "a 160 page hardcover of smut" is coming out from Image Comics this June, right before San Diego Comic Con. Which will be terribly handy for signing opportunities. Oh and it will be book one of two. Book One collects Liberty Meadows Sunday strips from years one to three, and Book Two, out in November, will collect year four and year five.

ITEM! Classic Spider-Man villain The Lizard will be vexing Peter Parker on the big screen in July's Amazing Spider-Man feature film, but he's also terrorizing the pages of the Amazing Spider-Man comic book starting in June. The four-issue "No Turning Back" arc starts in Amazing Spider-Man #688 (ITEM 0615), which is out a week before the new movie's July 4 release date and follows right after the multi-part "Ends of the Earth" story wraps. The story picks up where Amazing Spider-Man #679.1 left off, with the revelation that Morbius the Living Vampire has been working at Horizon Labs — also the employer of Peter Parker — on a cure for Dr. Curt Connors, who is currently physically and mentally dominated by his Lizard persona.

ITEM! The countdown to the end of the world begins in HULK #53 (ITEM 0637). As time keeps on slipping towards the Mayan doomsday in 2012, Red Hulk, A-Bomb and a group of other heroes will have more to worry about than building bunkers and buying up all the water. In this case, they'll have to contend with actual Mayan gods returning to Earth, attacking false deities in the

form of super people and clearing the way for their brand new world. And who better to bring this cataclysm than ongoing HULK writer Jeff Parker and incoming artist Dale Eaglesham? The daring duo have big plans for Red Hulk and his compatriots as they fight to stop Armageddon.

ITEM! From 1974 to 1975, legendary comics scribe Steve Gerber wove a series of macabre tales around one of Marvel's strangest and most unique creations, the muck monster known as Man-Thing. Following Gerber's death in 2008, fans mourned the reality that the writer would no longer be able to return to the character for one last story—until now. INFERNAL MAN-THING (ITEM 0649), a three-issue limited series beginning in June, will present the final Steve Gerber Man-Thing tale, a previously-unknown story that until recently remained only a wishful thought in the hearts and minds of his devotees. To illustrate such a landmark series, Marvel has brought in the equally-acclaimed Kevin Nowlan.

ITEM! Send your best suit to the cleaners, browse the registry at Crate & Barrel and get a babysitter for the kids, Marvel is strongly hinting at a X-Men wedding in June, in the pages of ASTONISHING X-MEN #51 (ITEM 0665) and though it was left vague as to who would be walking down the aisle, prevalent speculation has targeted Northstar and his boyfriend, Kyle. It makes sense — new Astonishing X-Men writer Marjorie Liu has established that Northstar will be part of the book's cast, and a same-sex marriage would show that Marvel is willing to take the same progressive step that Archie took recently, in marrying off Kevin Keller in their alternate future title Life with Archie.

ITEM! Todd McFarlane returns to Spawn as writer and cover artist with this issue, as Jim Downing, the current Hellspawn, finally realizes his destiny and begins to take control of the full might of his horrific, hell-born powers! Don't miss SPAWN #220 (ITEM 0409).

ITEM! In space no one can hear you scream. In the comic shop you will scream with delight as this classic science fiction story is once again made available for the first time in over 30 years. In the pre-VHS/DVD/DVR world of 1979, if you wanted to be part of a film or TV show your only way of doing so was with book novelizations and comic book adaptations. In some cases the creators were working off early screenplays and you got more than what even the films themselves showed. Now Titan Books is offering ALIEN: THE ILLUSTRATED STORY ARTIST EDITION (ITEM 1227) which showcases the art and storytelling of Walt Simonson in a 14" x 17" hardcover restored and remastered from the original artwork.

ITEM! Fans of the enduring legacies of the much acclaimed fantasy writer Douglas Adams and the always fantastical worlds inhabited by CLASSIC DOCTOR WHO will be thrilled with the new book adaptation release of a lost adventure from both forces, as Adams scripted but never completed production of the ambitious 1979 story Shada makes its publishing event landmark premiere. A very special story, finally given the liter-

ary life it deserves. This month we are offering DOCTOR WHO: SHADA: THE LOST ADVENTURE (ITEM 1393).

ITEM! Classic Comics Press presents THE ADVENTURES OF BUCK O'RUE (ITEM 0983) by legendary Disney-ites Dick Huemer and Paul Murry. On hiatus from the Studio in 1951-52, Huemer enlisted Murry to create this sendup of the great American Western. Compiled from multiple sources including original Photostats, The Adventures of Buck O'Rue encompasses the run of the strip from January 15, 1951 to December 7, 1952. The book features a forward by Don Peri, author of Working with Walt, as well as biographies, photos, promo art, creators' notebooks and sketches, and more.

ITEM! With new films on the way, it's no surprise new comic versions of The Crow and Judge Dredd are on their way as well (along with a re-release of the latter). IDW's Dirk Wood announced that the team on The Crow includes horror novelist John Shirley. He also wrote the first draft of the screenplay for the original Crow movie. Kevin Colden, an Eisner Award nominee for Fish Town, is doing the art. Wood says, "He does really dark, cool... it's reminiscent of what [Crow creator] James O'Bar did without being derivative of it. It's gonna be good. We're gonna have Ashley Wood doing covers for that. And James O'Bar is working on his own Crow series that will come out later in the next year or so." As for Judge Dredd, IDW will be launching new books and re-releasing the character's classic comic stories. Wood explains, "A lot of that material is actually a lot darker than people remember. So we're super excited about that. That's gonna be big. We're gonna do new stories and collections of the old material. We're gonna be doing a whole program, sort of like we're doing on Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles." Look for these new series to be offered soon!

ITEM! From New York Times bestselling author Joshua Dysart (Unknown Soldier, BPRD) and Harvey Award nominee Khari Evans (Carbon Grey) comes Valiant's HARBINGER #1 (ITEM 1252)! Read minds. Bend steel. Break all the rules! Teenager Pete Stanek is out of work, on the skids, and — unbeknownst to him — a psionically-powered "harbinger" with the potential to reshape the course of human history. Toyo Harada is a wealthy business magnate, a respected philanthropist and the most powerful harbinger of all — or so he thought. As they forge an uneasy alliance, will Harada offer Pete a chance for redemption -- or attempt to induct him into a secret network of conspiracy, subversion and control? When this super-hero comes of age, the entire Valiant Universe will have to learn the price of power.

ITEM! On its 25th-anniversary, Pure Imagination finally reprints THE BETTY PAGES (ITEM 1196) with commentary by its author, Greg Theakston. This digest charts the beginning of the worldwide fad for Bettie Page with original material and added observations. The first two issues are presented with upgraded images and remastered covers.

ITEM! Jeff Parker's THUNDERBOLTS run is over. Kind of. As of issue #175 (ITEM 0597), Marvel revealed, Thunderbolts will become DARK AVENGERS and incorporate some new blood into the book, including Ragnarok and Skaar! Parker and artists Declan Shalvey and Kev Walker are remaining on the book, so despite the title and casting changes, I wouldn't be too concerned about the quality or excitement dipping one bit.

