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M&M'S COMIC COMMENTS

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Previews Highlights

ITEM! Marvel's solicitations for August 2017 have finally shed some light on the highly anticipated Generations event, which will see some of Marvel's young and legacy characters teaming up with the forebears and mentors. Each issue of Generations is a 40-page one-shots story focusing on a single pairing of characters. August's Generations releases include *The Unworthy Thor & The Mighty Thor* (ITEM 0842), *Phoenix & Jean Grey* (ITEM 0848), *Banner Hulk & Totally Awesome Hulk* (ITEM 0852), *Wolverine & All-New Wolverine* (ITEM 0857), and *Hawkeye & Hawkeye* (ITEM 0865). There's been much speculation about how these team-ups would occur, with many fans wondering if this meant the return of characters like Logan to mainstream continuity. While the end result of these stories remains undetermined, the return of these original characters is not inherent in the plot. Instead, the modern and legacy versions of these characters will be traveling back in time to join their predecessors during their heyday. That doesn't mean that these stories won't have ramifications in the modern Marvel era. These one-shots are being written by the writer of each character's current ongoing series — Jason Aaron for Thor, Cullen Bunn for Jean Grey (*X-Men Blue*), Greg Pak for *Totally Awesome Hulk*, Tom Taylor for *All-New Wolverine*, and Kelly Thompson for *Hawkeye*. That means these means there's every reason to believe that these stories will have something to say about each characters current story. Some of the solicitations hint at additional story details and consequences as well. The *Mighty Thor* joins the original Thor in ancient Egypt to battle Apocalypse. Laura Kinney teams with Logan to fight ninjas in Madripoor. Kate Bishop joins Clint Barton in a competition to see who the greatest archer on Earth is.

ITEM! There is certainly a lot of anticipation behind *DARK KNIGHTS METAL #1* (ITEM 0232) as you'd expect — it's the reunion of writer Scott Snyder and artist Greg Capullo after their celebrated 51-issue run on *Batman* wrapped last year, it's the first major DC Comics event of the "Rebirth" era, and it's already known to kick off a new line of "Dark Matter" books, featuring new characters and fresh interpretations of existing concepts. The story, which launches in August and starts earlier this summer with prelude one-shots *Dark Days: The Forge* and *Dark Days: The Casting*, is a DC Universe-spanning event series that revolves around the discovery of "the Dark Multiverse," which propels the story forward. Snyder is remaining tight-lipped about the exact nature of the threat the Dark Multiverse will pose, but he's quick to state that it's not what you'd think. In fact, Snyder wants to make sure readers know that despite titles like *Dark Nights* and *Dark Days*,



the story itself is not "dark" in the way comic book readers might guess — it's about celebrating the wacky wonder of the DC Universe via battle armor, dinosaurs, robots and unexpected team-ups between DC superheroes you'd expect and plenty you wouldn't. As he puts it, the tone he and Capullo are aiming for is "Frazetta and Jack Kirby had a baby to a heavy metal soundtrack."

ITEM! The new ongoing series *REDLANDS* (ITEM 06261) — created by the all-female team of bestselling, Eisner award-winning Jordie Bellaire (*Vision*, *Batman*) and critically-acclaimed Vanesa R. del Rey (*Scarlet Witch*, *Constantine*) — will launch this August. "Redlands is my sick, weird love letter to Stephen King, Florida and Riot Grrrls everywhere but ultimately, hate mail for everything else," said Bellaire. "Inspired by the strange complexities of real world politics and crime, the characters of Redlands play victim and villain, attempting to understand themselves and others, through murder, magic and mayhem." Marrying

the sexy, witchy-goodness of Greg Rucka and Nicola Scott's *BLACK MAGIC* and Melissa de la Cruz's beloved *Witches of East End* with the deep-South atmosphere of Jason Aaron and Jason Latour's *SOUTHERN BASTARDS* and American Horror Story: *Coven*, *REDLANDS* is set to be the horror series of the summer.

ITEM! The Inhumans have a long, strange history in Marvel's comics — and it's about to get some new twists in a new miniseries, courtesy of some superstar comics talent. *Inhumans: One and Future Kings* is a new five-part miniseries, coming from the legendary writer Christopher Priest — currently working on DC's *Deathstroke*, but perhaps best known for his character-defining work on *Black Panther* — and artist Phil Noto. The book will chronicle the earliest days of the Inhuman royal family as we know it today — before they were actually the royal family at all, in fact. Following a childhood of isolation to hone control over his voice-shattering powers, Once and Future Kings will follow Black Bolt's quest to become ruler of the Inhumans, through to the meeting his future wife Medusa, the disposal of the then-current Inhuman King, and the downfall of his brother Maximus from loyal ally to mad-dedicated foe. On top of that — in what's probably going to be an incident of delightful tonal whiplash — each issue will

come with a two-page backup story from *Unbeatable Squirrel Girl*'s Ryan North, focusing on the Inhuman's lovable teleporting dog-creature, Lockjaw.

ITEM! With "ResurrXion" bringing the *X-Men* back to their heyday, it's no surprise that some classic characters would also be returning. In August's *X-Men: Blue #9* (ITEM 0890) no less than three classic X-characters seem to be returning, with *Polaris* and *Xorn* appearing on the cover, and the solicit text mentioning *Emma Frost* — who, from the sound of things, has



returned to out-and-out villainy. Then, in *X-Men: Gold #10* (ITEM 0988), 90s X-villain *Omega Red* is back in action taking on his fellow Russians *Colossus* and *Magik*.

ITEM! *Batman* writer Tom King has another twelve issue series in the tradition of *The Vision*, *Omega Men*, and *Sheriffs of Babylon*. King w reteams with *Sheriffs of Babylon* artist Mitch Gerads for the series *MISTER MIRACLE* (ITEM 0336). Though inspired by Jack Kirby's original masterpiece, King knows that trying to compete with it would be like "trying to make *Star Wars* again, or like trying to rewrite the *Iliad*." But they have another approach that just might work. taking a unique approach to dealing with the modern political landscape in a superhero comic, rather than hamfistedly shoehorn clumsy metaphors about it into a punchy kicky heroes vs. heroes slugfest, King and Gerads' *Mister Miracle* will reflect inward instead: "Kirby used a metaphor for his time, written in the late '60s early '70s when the world was going utterly insane," King explained. "We're going to use it as a metaphor for our time, the late 2010s, when once again the world is going insane. It's almost like we're holding up a mirror to that work, or internalizing it. We're going step-in-step with him."

ITEM! Bryan Hitch's *Justice League* (ITEM 0291) moves into a new storyline called "Legacy." At the middle of the story? The children of the *Justice League*, who travel back in time to get their parents' help. With the "Legacy" title, the mention of a "Sovereign" and a story about heroes from the future, the story has shades of *Marvel* to it — or maybe even *Kingdom Come*.

ITEM! Three titles will end in August — with differing degrees of hope for the future. *DC Comics Bombshells* will end with #33 (ITEM 0347), but series writer Marguerite Bennett has already confirmed that the series is merely re-launching and that she is continuing on.

ITEM! Legendary artist/writer Matt Wagner returns for the third and final volume of his epic fantasy trilogy — *MAGE: THE HERO DENIED* (ITEM 0617)! This first full-sized issue begins 10 years after the climax of *THE HERO DEFINED* and finds the everyman hero

Kevin Matchstick at an unexpected point in his life. It's been some time since he's utilized his powers as the reincarnated *Pendragon*, wielder of the mystical weapon *Excalibur*. Despite his reluctance to fulfill what two different *Mages* have declared as his destiny, dark forces have gathered to once again force Kevin into action. Throughout these events, Kevin keeps hoping for the same mystical guidance that has mentored him in the past.

ITEM! The crossover series featuring various *Hanna Barbera* properties is returning, with *FUTURE QUEST SHOWCASE* (ITEM 0334), a new series from writer Jeff Parker and artist Ariel



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Olivetti, starring Space Ghost and the Herculoids.

ITEM! IDW has a new Hasbro crossover on the way, and it doesn't sound like good news for the Transformers. First Strike starts with two issues in August, from the writing team of IDW

Transformers vet Maighread Scott & David Rodriguez and artist Max Dunbar, recently of IDW's "Micronauts" series. Following 2016's "Revolution" event — which saw IDW's licensed Hasbro properties united in one shared universe — "First Strike" picks up with Earth about to join the Cybertronian Council of Worlds. That peaceful event is interrupted by Cobra, as Baron Ironblood — historically the British counterpart to Cobra Commander — has targeted all Cybertronians for termination, putting the Transformers in serious jeopardy. The G.I. Joes, led by Scarlett, and the Autobots, led by Optimus Prime, stand in the way in the face of extinction — enlisting help along the way from, apparently, an unlikely ally in the form of Soundwave of the Decepticons. While this certainly sounds like the comic book equivalent of a blockbuster summer movie, Scott said it's also a "deeply personal character story." True to the "Revolution" spirit, it won't just be Transformers and G.I. Joe getting involved in "First Strike" — the M.A.S.K. team will also be involved. "First Strike" will run for three months, with six issues planned to ship on a twice-monthly schedule. Tie-ins to the event will be revealed at a later date. Covers for each issue will be illustrated by "Batman/Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" artist Freddie E. Williams II, along with multiple variants. **FIRST STRIKE #1** (ITEM 0430) and **#2** (ITEM 0438) are offered this month.

ITEM! Gotham Academy: Second Semester ends with August's #12 (ITEM 0353), although the series writers have said they expect to return as they did following the original "DC You" volume. And the surprise ending in August 2017's solicit is that Vertigo's Everafter: From the Pages of Fables is ending at #12 (ITEM 0417). The text "this is the end of the fairy tale" gives a sense of finality to the Fables franchise at Vertigo, but you never know where DC could take it next.

ITEM! Dick Grayson leads a terrifying new regime against superheroes in **NIGHTWING: THE NEW ORDER** (ITEM 0338), a brand-new miniseries coming from DC this August. From The New York Times best-selling **BATMAN: GATES OF GOTHAM** team, writer Kyle Higgins and artist Trevor McCarthy introduce an authoritarian future in an alternate universe in which superpowers have been eliminated and outlawed. The man responsible? None other than Grayson, the former vigilante Nightwing. But what happens when the system he has created targets his family as the next threat?

ITEM! Readers will get to see a secret history of Dick Grayson and Barbara Gordon in **Batgirl** #14 (ITEM 0246), with the copy hinting at a story that fans of the two characters — formerly a favorite coupling — will want to check out. Titled "Summer of Lies," the story hints that there's more to their relationship than previously suspected. And then over in **NIGHTWING #26** (ITEM 0301), Dick is being reunited with Huntress as the two are

ambushed by Spyril and reunited with their old friend Tiger. Nightwing sure gets around in the "Rebirth" universe (and we don't mean he runs fast).

ITEM! Mr. Oz makes his "final move against Superman" in Action Comics #985 (ITEM 0237) as "world events point to something dark on the horizon" and Superman finds himself "side by side" with Lex Luthor. Then in issue #986 (ITEM 0239), Lex confronts Mr. Oz alone, and "one walks away changed forever." That doesn't sound good for Lex. Add to that the sudden entrance of Suicide Squad's Rob Williams as writer of Action Comics, and there appears to be a shake-up to DC's flagship Superman title.

ITEM! When DC has a "Crisis" in the title, there's probably something big happening. But in this case, it's actually something small — really small. Justice League of America is finally getting to that year-old tease about Ray Palmer needing rescued from the Microverse. Readers will remember that DC Universe: Rebirth #1 showed the new Atom, Ryan Choi, communicating with his mentor and previous Atom, Ray Palmer. The latter said he was stuck in the Microverse and he needed Ryan to come save him. More than a year later, the "Crisis in the Microverse" story starts in Justice League of America #12 (ITEM 0295), and it looks like Choi isn't going alone to rescue Ray — the team takes a "shrink ship" and ends up needing the help of Shahn-Zi.

ITEM! Suicide Squad Black Files (ITEM 0340) launches in August with two stories through six issues, including a new team called the "Suicide Squad Black" that features supernatural characters. And over in Suicide Squad #24 (ITEM 0310), the title's overarching story reaches its climax as Amanda Waller's International Suicide Squads attack metahumans around the world. Only the original Task Force X can stop them.

ITEM! There's another creative change on Trinity, which is starting a new storyline titled "Dark Destiny" with issue #12 (ITEM 0327). The issue will be written by Rob Williams with art by Clay Mann. With Francis Manapul gone from the title again, and the Justice League Dark at the center of the story, is this creative switch permanent?

ITEM! Barry Allen's having a problem with his powers in The Flash (ITEM 0268 AND item 0270) — so much trouble that he's turned into villain who the promotional copy is calling the "Negative-Flash." This doesn't seem to be connected to the "Negative Speed Force" introduced a few years back, but in the story, Barry's negative turn will get the attention of the Rogues, who will take advantage of there being no hero protecting Central City.

ITEM! Weirdly enough, classic Marvel villain Taskmaster is all over August's solicitations with appearances in both Avengers #10 (ITEM 0897), where he's part of Steve Rogers' Hydra Avengers team, and Spider-Man II #2 (ITEM 0926), where he'll threaten Peter Parker and Miles Morales. Taskmaster has been a star in his own right, once headlining his own series in the early 00s. And, he was one of the few characters to deduce Steve Rogers' secret prior to Secret Empire. Could Marvel's top mercenary be headed for another starring role?

ITEM! Amazing Spider-Man: Renew Your Vows artist Ryan Stegman writing August's #10 (ITEM 0941), which features a spotlight on Harry Osborn's son Norman, with art from Nathan Stockman. It's unclear whether this is a single issue fill-in, or if Stegman's tenure as writer will continue. Regular series writer Gerry Conway



was solicited as the writer of July's #9.

ITEM! Hal Jordan & the Green Lantern Corps (ITEM 0281) features the New Gods in a big way, complete with a war between the powerful deities and a reference to Highfather himself. According to solicitations, Kyle and Hal end up protecting an injured Orion as the series kicks off a storyline titled, "Fall of the Gods." Add to that the New Gods Special #1 (ITEM 0370) by Shane Davis, and the Fourth World is all over August.

ITEM! August's Silver Surfer #14 (ITEM 0963) beckons readers to take "one final trip around the Universe" just in time to mark the month of what would have been Silver Surfer creator Jack Kirby's 100th birthday. With text that mentions the "end of a journey," and an extra-sized page count, it sure seems like this will be the series' final issue.

ITEM! The Mighty Thor writer Jason Aaron joked at C2E2 that he's "paid by the Thor" when discussing adding a third Thor — the so-called "War Thor" — to the title. But given that he may be adding yet a fourth with Mighty Thor #22 (ITEM 0921) — one he's calling "Ultimate Thor" — maybe he wasn't entirely joking. Before anyone goes about insisting there's now a quartet of Thors flying around the Marvel Universe, there could still be just three. With the true identity of the "War Thor" still a mystery, is it possible that he's really been the Ultimate Thor all along? His team, the Ultimates, will appear in ULTIMATES 2 #100 (ITEM 0911) in August to help the cosmic heroes take on Eternity, the embodiment of the Marvel Universe, though Thor has not yet been confirmed to be one of the returning characters.

ITEM! So far, everything we've seen of Deadpool's Secret Empire tie-in issues has involved Wade Wilson following his hero Captain America to the side of Hydra — but not anymore. The solicitation for DEADPOOL #35 (ITEM 0901) shows Deadpool standing victorious over the unconscious body of Steve Rogers, and the text says Deadpool is ready to turn on Steve and take him down. Does that mean we'll see a straight on Deadpool Vs. Captain America fight?

ITEM! Captain America and Deadpool aren't the only pair of heroes facing off in August, as Riri Williams will have to go head-to-head with the Tony Stark A.I. that has been mentoring her since she put on the armor. The solicitation for Invincible Iron Man #10 (ITEM 0915) calls the Tony A.I. the "biggest threat RiRi will ever encounter," but just how bad can a virtual Tony be?

ITEM! In Rogue One, we saw how Cassian Andor and K-2SO became legends of the Rebellion — and how their story ended. Now, we'll finally learn how it all began. Star Wars: Rogue One — Cassian & K-2SO Special #1 (ITEM 1012), coming in August from Marvel. Written by Duane Swierczynski with art by Fernando Blanco, the 40-page one-shot will reveal how Cassian, one of the top intelligence officers of the Rebel Alliance, met K-2SO, a reprogrammed Imperial security droid.

ITEM! Fans of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles will want to pre-order Dimension X, a five week event comic IDW is putting out beginning in August, with a different creative team for each issue, and connecting covers from Nick Pitara to help tie it all together, as well as variants for each issue by Kevin Eastman and an additional cover by the interior artist for each issue. August has five Wednesdays this year, so the entire event will be complete in a single month. Don't miss **TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES: DIMENSION X #1-5** (ITEM 0478-0489).

