

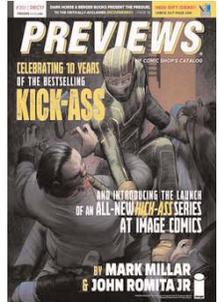


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M&M'S COMIC COMMENTS



Volume 23 Number 12

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December Previews Hghlighth

ITEM! MATA HARI (ITEM 0049) is the lesser-known, often tragic story of the woman who claimed she was born a princess, and died a figure of public hatred with no one to claim her body, is told by breakout talent writer Emma Beeby (Judge Dredd), artist Ariela Kristantina (Insexts), and colorist Pat Masioni drawing on biographies and released MI5 files. In this first part of a five-issue miniseries, we meet Mata Hari in prison at the end of her life as she writes her memoir—part romantic tale of a Javanese princess who performed "sacred" nude dances for Europe's elite, and part real-life saga of a disgraced wife and mother, who had everything she loved taken from her. But, as she sits trial for treason and espionage, we hear another tale: one of a flamboyant Dutch woman who became "the most dangerous spy France has ever captured"—a double agent who whored herself for secrets, lived a life of scandal, and loved only money. Leading us to ask . . . who was the real Mata Hari?



ITEM! BOOM! Studios' The Backstagers 2018 Valentine's Day Special (ITEM 1206) one-shot will reunite the creative team of James Tynion IV and Rian Sygh, for a 40-page romance-themed one-shot set during V-Day. The Backstagers, an all-ages series from BOOM! Studios' BOOM! Box imprint, tells the story of an all-boys private school theater crew — with a backstage door that leads to different worlds. The original miniseries ran for eight issues from August 2016 to March 2017, and issue #1 won the first-annual Prism Award for "Best Single Issue From a Mainstream Publisher."

ITEM! Then, in X-Men: Gold #21 (ITEM 0892), the team will "bid farewell to one of their own" — and something will happen to Rachel Summers. Whatever it is, it'll put her back in a version of her spiked 'Hound' gear in X-Men: Gold #22 (ITEM 0895), where the team "faces its most devastating loss."

ITEM! A page-turning thriller of racial divide, INCOGNITO: RENAISSANCE (ITEM 0048) explores segregation, secrets and self-image as our race-bending protagonist penetrates a world where he feels stranger than ever before.

ITEM! Mera: Queen of Atlantis (ITEM 0248) will be a six-issue limited series written by Dan Abnett (Aquaman, Guardians of the Galaxy) with art by Lan Medina (Fables). It will be set in the same time frame as the current storyline running in the monthly Aquaman book. Right now in the pages of Aquaman, the kingdom of Atlantis is caught in a bloody civil war after King Arthur was removed from his position as monarch. Now Mera is a queen in exile, and she is doing her best to keep the peace between Atlantis and the surface world.

ITEM! "Milk Wars" is built around RetCo, an interdimensional corporation that steals stories, reconfigures them and repackages them for new mar-



kets. JLA/Doom Patrol Special (ITEM 0229) by Steve Orlando, Gerard Way, and ACO has the Doom Patrol meeting RetCo's version of the Justice League, led by Milkman Man, the last son of Krypton raised by an evil dairy farmer. Jody Houser and Ty Templeton's Mother Panic/Batman Special (ITEM 0226) introduces Father Bruce, an orphaned billionaire who has turned the traumatizing orphanage Gather House into a school for future Robins. Cecil Castellucci and Mirka Andolfo's Shade The Changing Girl/Wonder Woman (ITEM 0227) Special makes Shade a servant of Wonder Wife. Jon Rivera and Langdon Foss' Cave Carson Has A Cybetic Eye/Swamp Thing Special (ITEM 0228) has the two horror-influenced heroes teaming up to infiltrate RetCo from within, and the event wraps up with Doom Patrol/JLA Special, teaming Orlando and Way with Dale Eaglesham.

ITEM! The British invasion is back in full force with PUNKS NOT DEAD (ITEM 0426), co-created by novelist David Barnett (Calling Major Tom, Gideon Smith series) and artist Martin Simmonds (Death Sentence). Fergie is a lonely, bullied teenager raised by a single mom who unexpectedly finds himself in search of the dad he never knew. But Fergie won't be traveling alone. For some reason a strange branch of MI5 is hot on Fergie's trail. Could it be the ghost of Sex Pistol Sid Vicious who becomes Fergie's ethereal companion and unlikely father figure? Bound to Fergie for reasons unknown, is Sid in search of redemption himself or out to prove that punk is alive and well 40 years later?

ITEM! In the year 956 AD, an unlikely group of Viking warriors in northern Europe face an even more unlikely adversary in the form of . . . Aliens! The debut graphic novel from Australian author Josh Vann and Italian illustrator Simone D'Armini, The Spider King (ITEM 0543), introduces a vicious and violent world of survival to an extra terrestrial threat unlike any mankind has faced before. Originally self-published in 2016 and funded with Kickstarter, The Spider King will make its serialized debut this February as IDW will release

the international hit to a whole new audience. Garnering early praise upon its release, The Spider King was nominated for Best Graphic Novel at the 2016 Aurealis Awards and went on to win Bronze at the 2016 Ledgers, which acknowledges excellence in Australian comic art and publishing.

ITEM! IDW Publishing and Dynamite Entertainment are joining forces to bring two iconic franchises together in January for a crossover between G.I. Joe: A Real American Hero and The Six Million Dollar Man (ITEM 0439).

The four-part crossover will be written by Ryan Ferrier (TMNT: Dimension X, Rocko's Modern Life) with art by G.I. Joe artist SL Gallant. Fans both new and old are going to be amazed at what this creative team is putting together. This series beautifully blends all the classic tropes of the characters while simultaneously creating something exciting and fresh.

ITEM! Husband-and-wife creative team of Gabriel Hardman and Corinna Bechko are rebooting Hal

Jordan's origin in the stand alone Green Lantern: Earth One Vol. 1 (ITEM 0239), which will also feature art by Hardman and colors by Jordan Boyd. The Earth One graphic novels exist outside of DC's regular continuity, which allows the creators to have greater freedom to re-imagine them. Given Hardman's experience as a storyboard artist on Interstellar, it seems appropriate that he and Bechko have given Jordan a new origin as an astronaut and a scientist working for Ferris Galactic.

ITEM! Superstar artist Esad Ribic (Secret Wars, Uncanny X-Force) will make his creator-owned debut, teaming up with acclaimed writer Ivan Brandon (BLACK CLOUD, DRIFTER) for the darkly satirical sci-fi series VS (ITEM 0585) this February from Image Comics. Painted colors from Nic Klein (DRIFTER) and design by Tom Muller round out the powerhouse creative team.

ITEM! Meanwhile, over in Amazing Spider-Man #796 (ITEM 0831), Norman Osborn's drawn-out quest to remove the roadblocks preventing him from becoming the Green Goblin once again appear to be coming to a close.

ITEM! Wolverine only just returned in Marvel Legacy #1, but the man who semi-replaced him in his absence may already be undergoing big changes. The solicitation for Old Man Logan #35 (ITEM 0904) says that the elder Logan will have "a opportunity to reclaim his healing factor — but at what cost?"

ITEM! Not content with a new comic book series with Netflix, Mark Millar is reviving two of his earliest creator-owned characters for new series with Image

Comics, but there's a twist: One of the new series will feature rotating all-star writers and artists, with Kevin Smith already scheduled to follow Millar as writer. Both Kick-Ass (ITEM 0560) and Hit Girl (ITEM 0576) will be ongoing monthly titles, with Millar and franchise co-creator John Romita Jr. working on Kick-Ass — which sees a new character take over the costumed identity — while Millar and artist Ricardo Lopez Ortiz launch Hit Girl before handing the title off to different creative teams. Future creators on the series will include 100 Bullets artist Eduardo Riso and American Vampire's Rafael Albuquerque, Millar teased. "There's an Asian artist I'm in



love with call Kim Jung Gi, and he's doing a big arc. It's very high end. We're spending a lot of money and just hiring people [I'm] obsessed with."

ITEM! Don't miss BRAVE AND THE BOLD BATMAN AND WONDER WOMAN #1 (ITEM 0238) the start of a new, six-issue miniseries written and illustrated by Liam Sharp (WONDER WOMAN). When a Celtic god's murder leads to a war between the fairy folk and a possible breach between worlds, Wonder Woman must find the murderer and keep the peace while Batman investigates strange occurrences in Gotham City. As Diana must turn to the World's Greatest Detective for help, the two heroes quickly learn their cases may be connected.

ITEM! Critically acclaimed writer Alex de Campi (MAYDAY, NO MERCY) teams up with some of comics' hottest artists for TWISTED ROMANCE (ITEM 0607), a four-issue weekly anthology miniseries with tales of love—love gone right, wrong, and everything in between. Each issue of this month-long romance event will feature 48 pages of content: a main comic story, a backup comic story, and a backup prose story. Within the pages of TWISTED ROMANCE, you can expect to find a wide variety of themes, including the commoditization of breakups, the love of a shy girl and a wildly famous guy, forbidden love on an intergalactic dreadnought, and the deceptive lure of childhood as seen by a princess who's afraid to grow up.

ITEM! After their team-up in Black Panther and the Crew, Storm and T'Challa seem to be back in each others' good graces. The solicitation for Black Panther #170 (ITEM 0857) says that Storm will be "back at T'Challa's side" to take on Ras the Exhorter—though it doesn't say if she'll simply be his ally, or something more.

ITEM! Loki bested Doctor Strange in a magical tournament to claim the title of Sorcerer Supreme, but the pair will have a rematch in Doctor Strange #385. And, it looks like the conflict has a clear winner, as the solicitation for Doctor Strange #386 (ITEM 0799) mentions the good doctor being back up to "full power."

ITEM! The Fantastic Four still have not officially returned to Marvel Comics, but it appears at least one of the Richards family (in some form or another) will be name-dropped even more heavily in February, with the solicitation for Marvel 2-In-One #3 (ITEM 0871) foretelling that Doom and the Mad Thinker "will square off over Reed Richards." Then, in the solicitation for Moon Girl & Devil Dinosaur #8 (ITEM 0879), the team-up of Lunella Lafayette, Ben Grimm, and Johnny Storm take on the name "the Fantastic Three"—at least unofficially.

ITEM! Avengers's "No Surrender" month two is shaping up to be quite a doozy, with characters coming and going—as well as a deeper look at the identity of Voyager. The solicitations for February's Avengers #679 - #682 (ITEM 0800-ITEM 0807) reveal that the team will "mourn the loss of one of their own," a "fan favorite" Avenger will return, and that the Grandmaster (an Elder of the Universe) will join the fray. The Grandmaster will go up against a seemingly-new character named The Challenger. While with that name he sounds like an Elder of the Universe, he's not—not yet, at least. He shares a name with a bygone Golden Age-era Timely character—who recently appeared



in one of the last issues of Occupy Avengers. Same character? Perhaps (or perhaps not).

ITEM! In She-Hulk #162 (ITEM 0813), Jennifer Walters starts on the journey that will restore her control of her Hulk persona—with the cover art summing it all up succinctly with an image of her pre-Civil War II look.

ITEM! February will bring the second part of the return of Adam Warlock in the newly solicited Infinity Countdown. Warlock's return originally planned for Guardians of the Galaxy #151 in January, but it seems that title will go on hiatus after #150, with the planned cover for the now-cancelled #151 now attached to a new one-shot, Infinity Countdown: Adam Warlock #1 (ITEM 0881). In that, Adam Warlock goes on a quest for the Soul Stone—with Kang the Conqueror as his guide. A second one-shot, Infinity Countdown Prime (ITEM 0883), is solicited for February 21 with no information attached. **ITEM!** In Astonishing X-Men #8 (ITEM 0890), the team are said to be mourning the loss of an ally as "one of the most terrifying adversaries they've ever faced" returns.

ITEM! Tony Stark's return has been teased since the onset of "Legacy,"—and it seems the question of his whereabouts will finally be answered in Invincible Iron Man #597 (ITEM 0809). Tony's return will seemingly have immediate implications for the people carrying his personal legacy, as the solicitation for the issue says "Ironheart rises, Doom falls and Tony Stark emerges from the shadows!"

ITEM! A celebration of the Spider-Man legacy, PETER PARKER: SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #300 (ITEM 0821) follows the reveal of Peter Parker's true identity as he goes up against the Tinkerer in what promises to be his biggest challenge yet! It's a Mighty Marvel story worthy of a 56 page epic as the webslinger is joined in his fight by several Marvel heroes, including Black Panther, Iron Heart, Hawkeye, Wasp and more! The issue will be written by Chip Zdarsky, with Adam Kubert providing art.

ITEM! The fantastic technology of Wakanda comes to Dubai! But when the villainous Klaw launches a plot to extort billions from the citizens of the city, T'CHALLA's diplomatic mission becomes a search and rescue for the BLACK PANTHER! Written and illustrated by industry legends Ralph Macchio and Andrea Di Vito, THE SOUND AND THE FURY (ITEM 0860) puts the Black Panther on a mission that will test his prowess against his long-standing nemesis, as well as three new villains—BLOKK, GARROTTE, and SHEN-YU! Featuring a special presentation of FANTASTIC FOUR #53, featuring the earliest conflict between T'Challa and Klaw, and the introduction of VIBRANIUM!

ITEM! You can't keep a good dog down, and that's certainly the case with Lockjaw of Marvel Comics Inhumans fame. The Royal Family's enormous canine protector will get his own four-part comic book miniseries from Daniel Kibblesmith and Carlos Villa. Lockjaw #1 (ITEM 0875) will release in comic book shops around the world this February. The story will find Lockjaw on the hunt for his imperiled, long-lost siblings in an adventure that will, naturally, involve a lot of teleportation and mind-bending acts of bravery.

ITEM! STAR WARS THROWN (ITEM 0922) comic will adapt Thrawn by Timothy Zahn, which detailed the origins of

the character, tracking how he rose through the ranks of the Imperial Navy. The comic will also include some additional material. This new series will be written by Jody Houser, who adapted Rogue One for Marvel, and illustrated by Luke Ross, who's worked on comics such as Spider-Man and Captain America.

ITEM! X-Men Red (ITEM 0785) will join the ranks of X-Men Gold and X-Men Blue as the next color-coded X-Men squad. This team is led by Jean Grey, who is returning from the dead in the pages of Phoenix Resurrection. Jean seems pretty okay with poaching mutants from other teams as Nightcrawler, who is currently a member Kitty Pryde's X-Men Gold team, is among the X-Men Red roster. Also joining the red team is Wolverine—Laura Kinney—and her clone Gabby, Namor the Sub-Mariner, the Wakandan mutant Gentle, and a brand new character called Trinary.

ITEM! Set in a semi-distant dystopian future, a military experiment goes wrong as the hybrid clone of an elite soldier escapes into the new American West. With the strength of thirty to three-hundred men (depending on his rage level), bulletproof Baby Badass aka Alphonse Omega is impervious to pain, possesses superhuman speed, agility, and unprecedented killing abilities. There's just one little thing—he's trapped inside the body of a baby, with some...shall we say, unique weaknesses. Teaming up with Joey, the sexy Cocktail waitress who saves him, they're on the run from M.O.T.H.E.R., a rogue military entity in a country gone mad. It's like nothing you've ever seen and everything you've ever loved all at the same time. BABY BADASS (ITEM 0997) is from Action Lab Comics!

ITEM! Jim Henson's beloved 1986 fantasy film Labyrinth is getting the comic book treatment. Boom! Studios imprint Archaia is publishing the first ongoing comic series inspired by the movie, from writer Simon Spurrier and artist Daniel Bayliss and concerns the origin of Jareth the Goblin King, the character played by David Bowie in the movie. In Henson's film, the Jennifer Connelly-played teenager Sarah travels through the Labyrinth to save her baby brother Toby from the clutches of Jareth. In the comic series, the Goblin King recounts his beginnings to Toby, introducing readers to Jareth's mother and father in 18th-century Venice. Issue #1 of Jim Henson's Labyrinth (ITEM 1194) will go on sale in February with a cover by Fiona Staples, a subscription cover by Rebekah Isaacs, and variant covers by Laurent Durieux, Jill Thompson, and Bill Sienkiewicz.

ITEM! Dynamite Entertainment is releasing a new series based on the cult classic Pumpkinhead (ITEM 1376) film franchise. Sixth Gun co-creator Cullen Bunn has been tapped to serve as writer for the horror tale. In the original Pumpkinhead film, a group of teenagers inadvertently kill a young boy in rural Appalachia, and his father seeks the powers of a backwoods witch to bring the child back to life. Instead, she invokes The Pumpkinhead—a monstrously clawed demon which, once reborn, answers only to Harley's bloodlust. As the creature wreaks its slow, unspeakable tortures on the teens, Harley confronts a horrifying secret about his connection to the beast—and realizes that he must find a way to stop its deadly mission before he becomes one with the creature forever.

ITEM! DEJAH THORIS #1 (ITEM 1362) from Dynamite Entertainment finds Dejah Thoris, obsessed with finding the legendary Gardens of Mars, recruits her own expedition team of scientists. But once outside the palace walls, things don't go as planned, and the Princess learns the hard way just how dangerous Barsoom really is.

