

# 741.5

## DC BAD GUYS STEAL THE LIMELIGHT **NAUGHTY** AND **NICE**

### MIGHTY MARVEL MASTERWORKS

DECEMBER 2022 NO. 85

PLUS...THE RETURN OF **SAGA!**

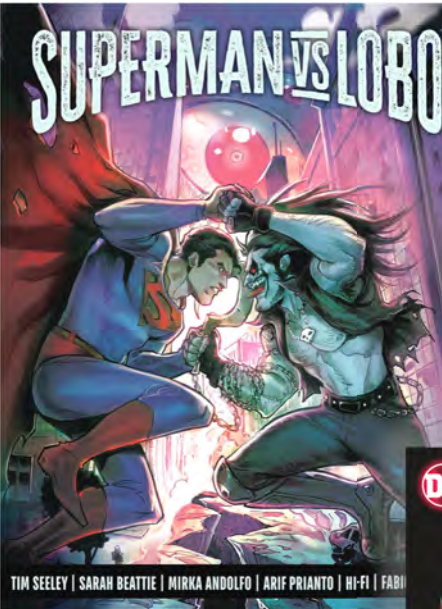


The Comics & Graphic Novel Bulletin of



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Reading Is Just the Beginning!

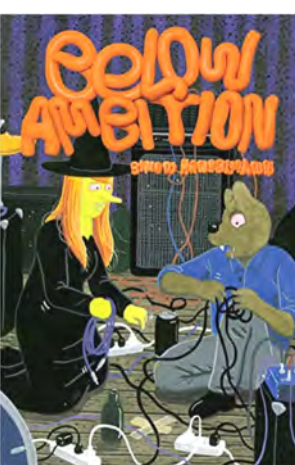


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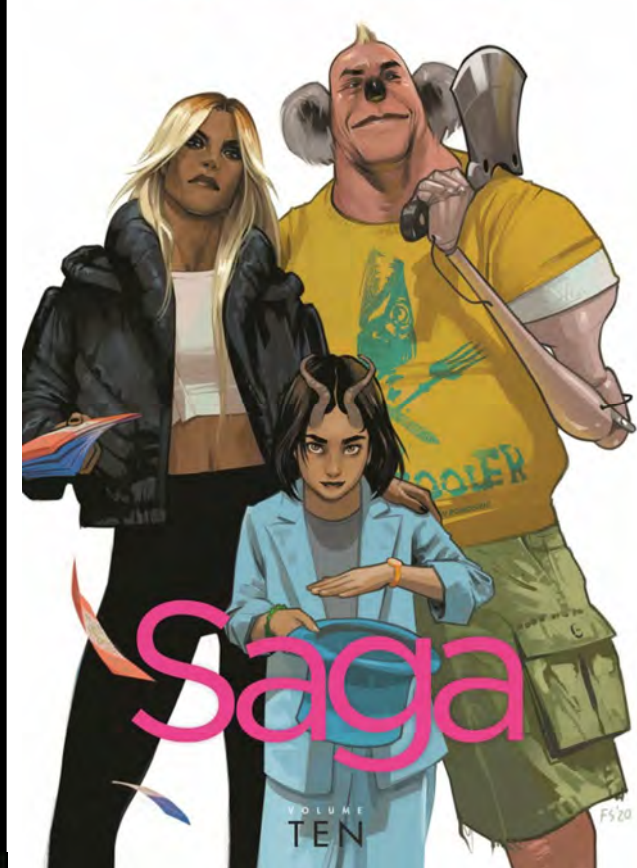
DC's multitude of villains have always had star power. The 70s saw the first titles starring bad guys (*The Joker*, *Secret Society of Super-Villains*). But the 90s saw the true birth of heel chic, with the Clown Prince of Crime's sidekick Harley Quinn becoming a beloved character while *Shazam!*'s Black Adam began his long flight to the silver screen. Another example is the long-running *Suicide Squad*, starring a rotating group of super-crooks under the thumb of super-spy Amanda Waller. The new Black Label hardback fol-

low a crew (panel above) wrangled by "the bad Robin", Jason Todd *alias* the Red Hood, as they try to *Get Joker!* J-Todd does such a bang-up job that he's put in charge of *Task Force Z*, a Suicide Squad made up of dead desperados. Meanwhile, Black Manta ain't feeling so good himself. Some mystic geegaw is putting the zap on him and other sea-faring folk thanks to the newest enemy of Aquaman's Atlantis, Devil Ray. It's pirate vs. terrorist with the Gentleman Ghost in the middle in the thriller *Black Manta*. Another Black Label



Alt-fans, rejoice—your favorite gang of ne'er-dowells is back! The Shutdown finally over, Megg the witch and her equally pilled-up pal Werewolf Jones get the band back together. They are Horse Mania, and they are the avatar of every godawful combo of drunken wannabes ever. The bar gig with the hostile audience...the hassles with other musos...the ill-fated "tour"...it's so real, you can smell the failure! Simon Hanselmann delivers another hilarious look at the underbelly of bohemia, complete with flexi-disc. Find *Below Ambition* at Beaumont and Central.

BRIAN K. VAUGHAN FIONA STAPLES



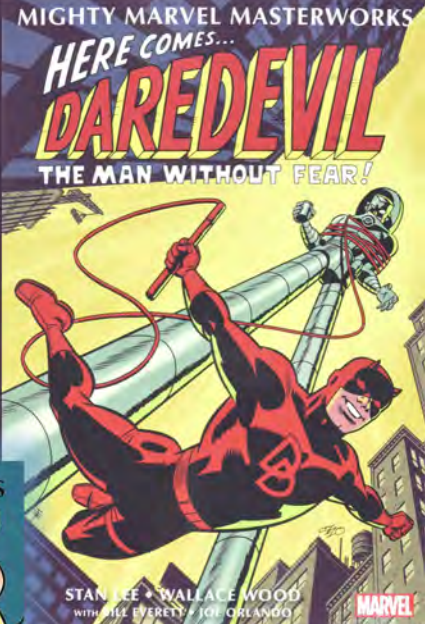
Hazel, our tween heroine, got the wings from her mom, the horns from her dad. It was a whole Montague/Capulet thing that ended up with him dead and the gals on the run. Joined by her adoptive robot brother and a kindly koala-man with a sketchy past, Hazel and her makeshift family work the fringes of an interstellar empire riven by political machinations and race war. But there's still time for rock'n'roll! The long-awaited tenth volume of the global hit by Staples and Vaughan will please old fans while affording new readers the chance to get into this fierce, funny fantasy that's like a drunken fistfight between L. Frank Baum and George Lucas or Narnia if the fauns kept dropping the F-bomb. Get *Saga* V10 at all LPL locations!



Marvel has been doing an stellar job in the reprint market the last few years. In addition to the established line of Epic Collections and the lap-busting Omnibus format, we now have the MIGHTY MARVEL MASTERWORKS series! Printed in the smaller size favored by younger readers of our day, these full-color compilations give the kids a chance to watch and wonder as the Marvel Universe explodes into being! Go to [lexpublib.org](http://lexpublib.org) for reserves!



The second *MMM* volume of *The Incredible Hulk* covers the Green Goliath's solo series in *Tales to Astonish*. With its complicated plots and thuggish Hulk, the first half of the book shows the influence of its artist, Steve Ditko. When Jack Kirby takes over, action becomes paramount and we see the more familiar monstrous man-child. Before *Astonish*, the Hulk had knocked around the Marvel Universe making trouble where he could find it...like the first several issues of *The Avengers*. A founding member of Earth's Mightiest Heroes, Ol' Greenskin's bad attitude got him pink-slipped, especially once the Red, White 'n' Blue Avenger was defrosted. Volume 1 includes the debut of Kang the

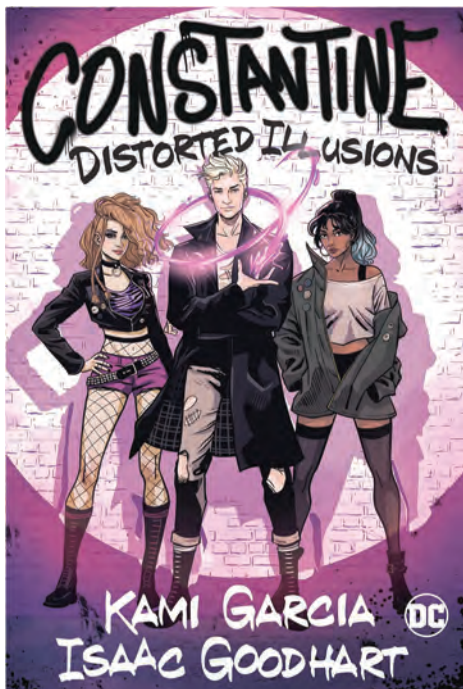


Conqueror (*below*), the new Big Bad for the Marvel Cinematic Universe. V2 follows the second group of Avengers: Captain America, Hawkeye, Quicksilver and the Scarlet Witch (*see cover*). *The X-Men* showcase the original students of Xavier's School for Gifted Youngsters, with V2 introducing the Sentinels and leading up to the *X-Men Omnibus* seen in 741.5 #78. Supplementing the Epic Collections of his early issues, V3 of *Amazing Spider-Man* is packed with plot and action as Spidey gets caught between the Crime-Master and the Green Goblin while facing off with the Scorpion and the Molten Man (left). Ditko's art really shines in the smaller size. And coming soon: DAREDEVIL! Make Mine Marvel!

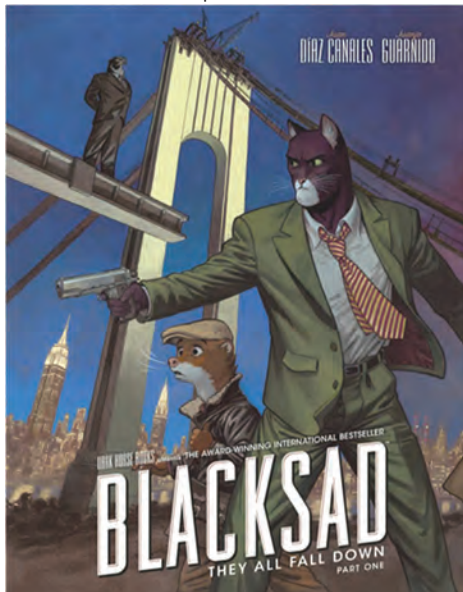


As the artist behind *Sarah's Scribbles*, the indefatigable Sarah Andersen has been a one-woman meme factory. Unsurprisingly, her latest strip has taken the internet by storm. *Cryptid Club* takes a hilarious look at weird beings both classic (Nessie, Bigfoot, the Greys) and contemporary (Slenderman, the Fresno Nightcrawlers). Rendered in full color, *Cryptid Club* features the same sweet-natured, down-to-earth humor as her other hits found at [lexpublib.org](http://lexpublib.org)!





I had been a fan since his introduction in *Swamp Thing*. But when *Hellblazer* hit its 200th issue, I stopped buying it. It just felt like if you've read one John Constantine story, you've read them all. I returned to the fold soon enough, riding it out to the final 300th ish, and keeping up with the subsequent series. But I was reminded of my original beef when I read the new DC YA release, *Distorted Illusions*. It's JC recast for These Kids Today. Which means John's the same snarky, cig-sucking pansexual instigator he's always been, he just spends more time on his celly. This Constantine's parents are alive, and they have connections to the magic underworld, which John exploits to get a ride to the USA where his galpal Veronica eagerly awaits the new vocalist for her band. That's where things get hinky. Looking to spice up their show, John and his mates use magic. It all goes wrong, of course, with a demon on the loose and Veronica acting weird. The young Constantine must swallow his pride and reach out to the very people he doesn't trust in this occult romance available in TEEN. Trust is at a premium in the hard-boiled

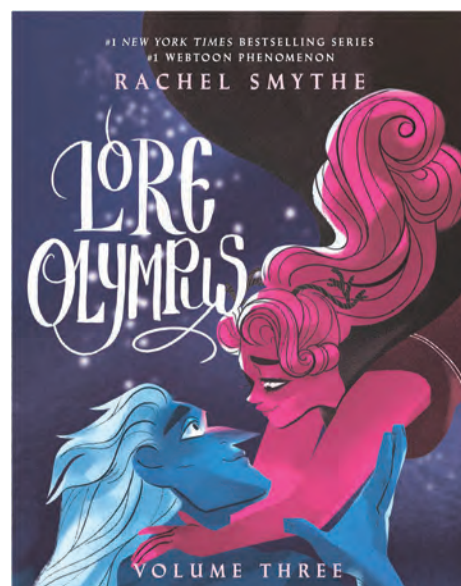


## MEANWHILE

world of that cool cat, *Blacksad*. Volume 6 of the globally popular series finds private eye John Blacksad on the wrong side of the street. Or road, actually—the network of roads and bridges being forced upon the city by its “Master Builder”, Lewis Solomon. Based on the infamous career of New York City's Robert Moses, *They All Fall Down* is a replay of the postwar machinations that changed the Big Apple for good, if not the better. Except in this telling, everybody's animals. The subway workers are moles, the Mafia are literally weasels, and Solomon is a hawk, seeking his prey from his perch high above all other citizens. Part One of this story is classic noir thanks to writer **Juan Diaz Canales**. **Juanjo Guarnido's** drawing and coloring are exquisite, so full of personality and life. A shining example of how Europeans turn something as derided in the States as funny animal comics into real art, *Blacksad: They All Fall Down* is available at all LPL locations. “In all honesty I cannot testify that I saw anything exactly,” states our narrator, Ruthye Marye Knoll. “All I knew is that first



there was a botheration. Then there was Supergirl. Then everything was peaceful once again.” Knoll is an alien farm girl on a mission of vengeance against Krem of the Yellow Hills, the man who murdered her father. It's during her manhunt that Knoll stumbles across the Girl of Steel, out on an interstellar bender to celebrate her 21st birthday. Krem makes an enemy of both women — don't shoot arrows into a Kryptonian's dog, just saying — and the game is afoot in *Supergirl: Woman of Tomorrow*. **Bilquis Evey** draws like the love child of **Vince Colletta** and **Kevin O'Neill**, in a style both delicate and grotesque. **Tom (Rorschach) King's** script is typically cynical, but still maintains a sense of wonder appropriate for such a star-spanning space fantasy, with some fascinating insights into a character too often lost in her cousin's shadow. But family can be a burden. Just ask Kore. Or Persephone, since that's her new name now that she has a job working in the Underworld. But her mother Demeter isn't too happy about it. Especially when the rumors fly about Persephone and her new boss, Hades, God of the Dead. And they fly fast, given wing by jealous nymphs and vicious co-workers, as the already tumultuous relationship becomes complicated by workplace politics. Volume 3 of **Rachel**



**Smythe's** hit webtoon *Lore Olympus* continues to delight with its 21st Century take on Greco-Roman mythology. Placing the hypersexual Olympians within the context of contemporary mores enables **Smythe** to discuss issues of love, sex and power dynamics while crafting a modern romance story full of sweetness and beauty. Now return with us to those thrilling days of yesteryear. 2003, to be exact, when dragon fever first broke out across the land. That's the year both *Eragon* and *How to Train Your Dragon* caught fire with young readers. **Kurt (Marvels) Busiek** tried to jump on that serpentine bandwagon with *Arrowsmith*, an alternate history series set during a World War One being waged with magic. Werewolves, zombies, gillmen—all are faced by Allied agent Fletcher Arrowsmith. But the greatest danger is dragons, Von Richtofen's triplane now replaced by winged firebrakes. Though a middling success when first released, *Arrowsmith* is back at LPL. Northside, Tates Creek and Village already have Volume 2 of this entertaining historical fantasy while V1 is on the way. Damn supply chain!



Back issues of 741.5 are available at [lexpublib.org](http://lexpublib.org) under the **COLLECTIONS** tab!