

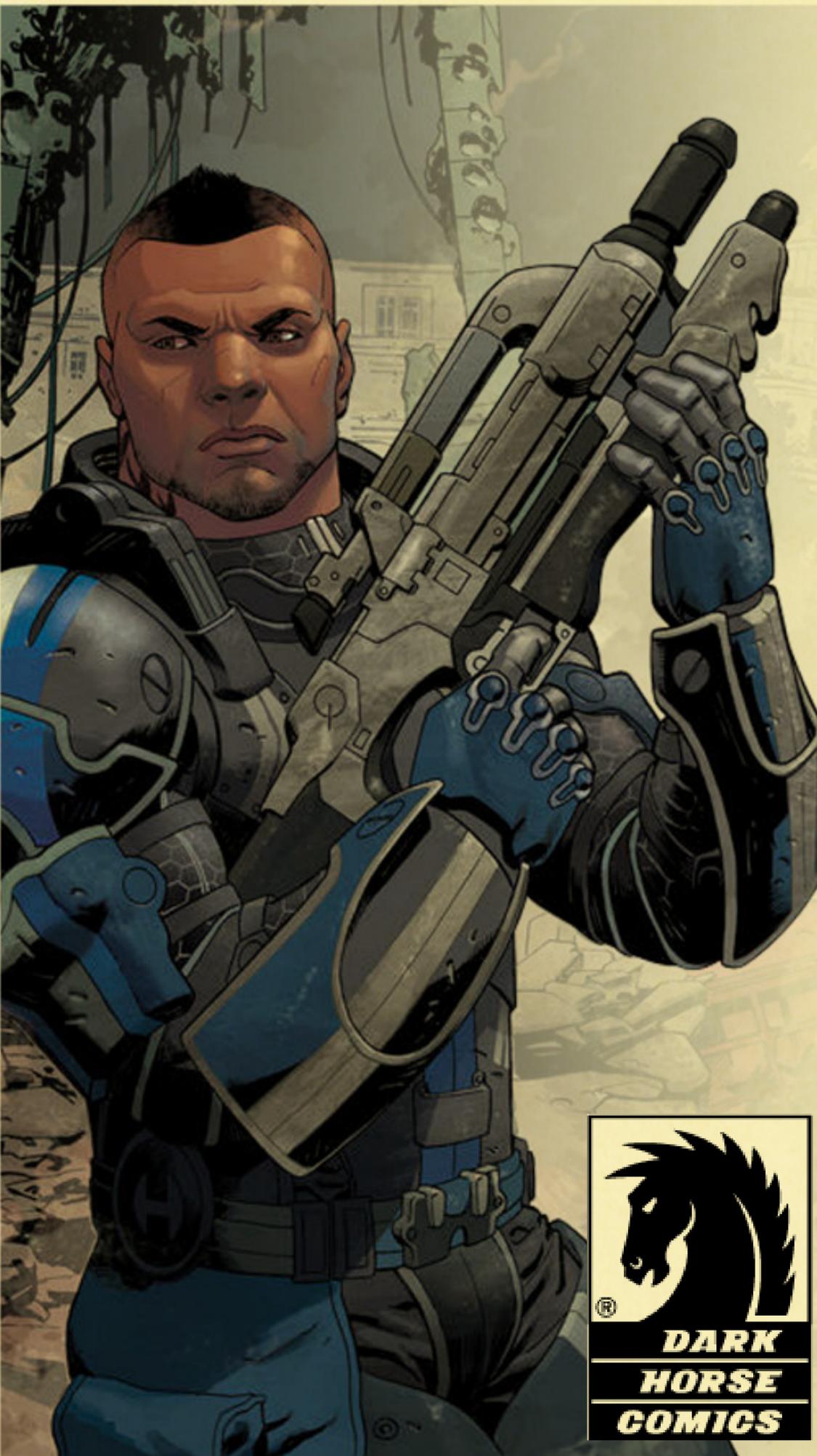


ACE
COMICS

ILLUMINATIONS

FEB 2012

In this issue:
Brand New Comic Titles
Staff Picks | History Books
Biff's Bit



Welcome to the first in a new series of Ace Comics' magazine 'Illuminations', relaunched for the digital era.

The magazine serves as a taster for brand new titles solicited this month, along with some valuable input from the team here at Ace Comics.

So without further ado, we kick off with the new offerings from Dark Horse, available in April...

NEW TITLES SHIPPING IN APRIL



STAR WARS: BLOOD TIES - BOBA FETT IS DEAD #1

Taylor / Scalf

The news spreads from one end of the galaxy to the other like wildfire: Boba Fett, the galaxy's

most feared bounty hunter, is dead.

But when members of the team that killed Fett are themselves picked off one by one, Connor Freeman--the son of one of Jango Fett's clones--gets pulled into the action in a most unexpected way!



ALABASTER: WOLVES #1

Kiernan / Lieber

International Horror Guild Award winning author Caitlín R. Kiernan brings one of her most enduring and popular creations to comics!

For nearly as long as she can remember, Dancy Flammarion has fought monsters, cutting a bloody swath through the demons and dark things of the world, aimed like a weapon by forces beyond her control or questioning.



MASS EFFECT: HOMEWORLDS #1

Walters / Francisco / Atiyeh

Mass Effect 3 lead writer Mac Walters kicks off a new series of single-issue stories

featuring heroes and adventures essential to the story of BioWare's latest blockbuster!

Each issue will star one of the main characters of Mass Effect 3 in a story written by the BioWare writer who wrote that character in the game—beginning with a Mac Walters-penned tale of brash young gun James Vega!

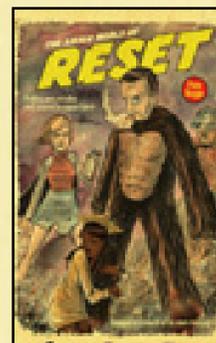


RESIDENT ALIEN #0

Hogan / Parkhouse

Surviving a crash landing that ruins his spaceship, a stranded alien hopes to quietly live out his life in the sleepy town of

Patience, USA, masquerading as a semi-retired doctor. He has some alien powers of empathy and the ability to mask his odd appearance from most people - but how long can he last undercover? After three long years of living below the radar, something in Patience is about to pull him out of hiding and into an uncomfortable spotlight!



RESET #1

Bagge

If you could relive major events in your life, would you take a stab at making things better - and would your best attempts only make things worse? Or

would you use your second chance to put your most twisted, perverted fantasies in motion? These are questions washed up actor and comedian Guy Krause asks himself after he signs up to be the main research subject for a virtual reality experiment.



NEW TITLES SHIPPING IN APRIL



BATMAN: ARKHAM UNHINGED

Fridolfs / Miller

This new series explores the world behind the hit video game 'Batman: Arkham City' in stories focusing on

both heroes and villains and their roles. A prequel to the game, this first issue explores the Catwoman/Two-Face rivalry and how it leads them into the clutches of Hugo Strange.



BATMAN: DETECTIVE COMICS Vol. 1: FACES OF DEATH (HC)

Daniel / Winn / Florea

In the first seven hard-hitting issues of Detective Comics, Batman sets his sights on the

Gotham Ripper, who in turn has his sights on Batman. But time is running out as Commissioner Gordon and Batman work to uncover the secret of the dread Dollmaker!



BATWOMAN Vol. 1: HYDROLOGY (HC)

Williams III / Blackman / Reeder

Batwoman's new series begins with this title collecting issues #0-5!

Who or what is stealing children from the barrio, and for what vile purpose? Will Kate train her cousin, Bette Kane, as her sidekick? How will she handle unsettling revelations about her father, Colonel Jacob Kane? And why is a certain government agency taking an interest in her?



CATWOMAN Vol. 1: THE GAME (SC)

Winick / March

Collecting the first six issues of the new 52 series, meet Selina Kyle, also known as Catwoman. She's addicted to the night. Addicted to shiny objects. Addicted to Batman. Most of all, Catwoman is addicted to danger. She can't help herself, and the truth is - she doesn't want to. She's good at being bad, and very bad at being good. But this time, Selina steals from the wrong man, and now he's got her. He wants his stuff back, he wants answers and he wants blood.



ANIMAL MAN Vol. 1: THE HUNT (SC)

Lemire / Foreman / Huet / Leon

In these tales from issues #1-6 of the new series, Buddy Baker has gone from "super" man to family man - but is

he strong enough to hold his family together when Maxine, his young daughter, starts to manifest her own dangerous powers? As these new abilities continue to terrify Buddy and his wife Ellen, things take a turn for the worse as Buddy and Maxine begin a journey into the heart of The Red.



JUSTICE LEAGUE INTERNATIONAL Vol. 1: THE SIGNAL MASTERS (SC)

Jurgens / Lopresti / Ryan / Castiello

Collecting the first six issues of the new series, the United Nations brings

together Batman, Booster Gold, Green Lantern Guy Gardner, August General in Iron, Fire, Ice, Vixen and Rocket Red to form a new group called Justice League International! But can they discover the mystery behind the giant alien Signalmen who are appearing all over the globe without killing each other first?

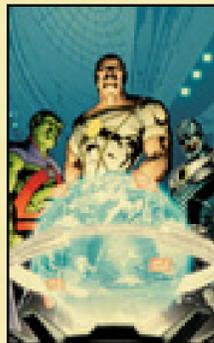


GREEN ARROW Vol. 1: THE MIDAS TOUCH (SC)

Krul / Giffen / Jurgens / Perez / Mccarthy

In the first six issues of the New 52 event, Oliver Queen is armed with cutting-edge

weaponry and illegally gained intel (courtesy of his team at QCore)! As Green Arrow, he's shooting first and asking questions later as he travels the world to bring outlaws to justice... and breaking every law there is in the process.

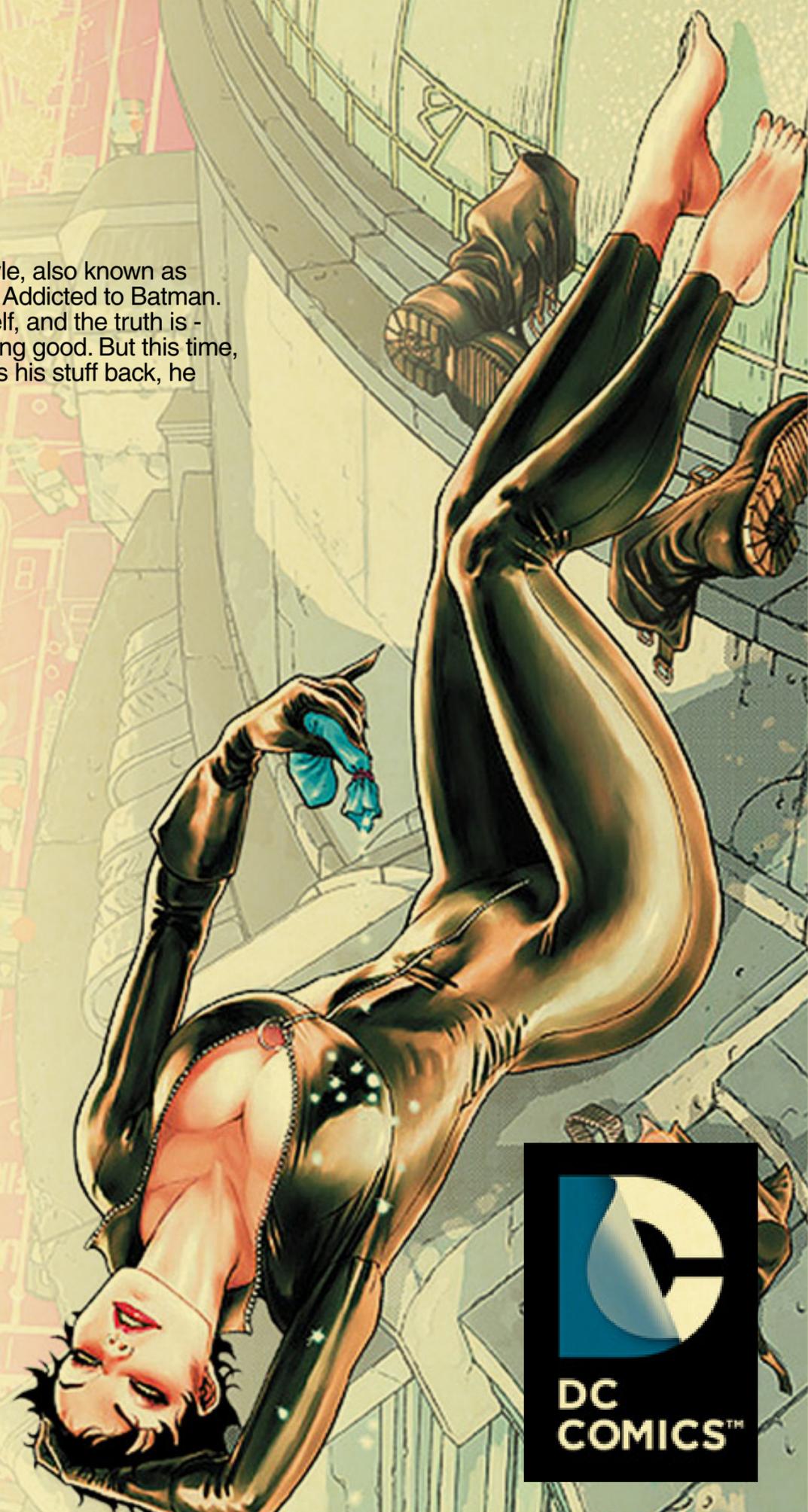


STORMWATCH Vol. 1: THE DARK SIDE (SC)

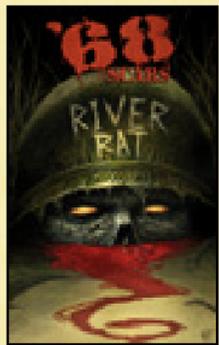
Cornell / Sepulveda / Barrionuevo

Stormwatch returns in this collection of the first six issues of the team's new series!

Jack Hawksmoor, Midnighter, Apollo, The Engineer and Martian Manhunter comprise a dangerous super human police force whose existence is kept secret from the world. This covert team of sci-fi super heroes must battle the Earth's moon itself and find a way to hide its monstrous metamorphosis from the rest of the Earth!



NEW TITLES SHIPPING IN APRIL



'68: SCARS #1

Kidwell / Jones / Fotos

Saigon is in flames. Private Kuen Yam is alone and screaming. A handful of human survivors maintains a weakening hold on the only gateway

to the skies and escape from Vietnam...and the muddy waters of the Mekong Delta churn like a hellish river Styx as the bloated dead rise from the depths.

Few will survive the nightmares of 1968...and those who do...will bear its mark.



DANGER CLUB #1

Walker / Jones

Faced with the deadliest peril the universe had ever known, the world's greatest heroes left the Earth to battle a nightmarish evil... and they never

came back. Now only their teenage sidekicks remain. Will the Danger Club unite against this unknown cosmic menace, or will their struggle for dominance destroy them?

The critically acclaimed creative team of LANDRY Q. WALKER and ERIC JONES (Supergirl: Cosmic Adventures In the 8th Grade, Batman: Brave and the Bold) reunite to tell the apocalyptic tale of these titanic teens.

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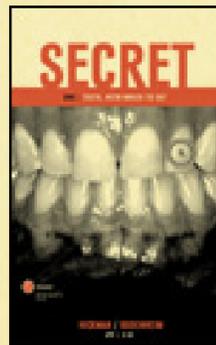


AMERICA'S GOT POWERS #1

Ross / Hitch

Welcome to AMERICA'S GOT POWERS! It's the biggest TV show on Earth, where the chance to win fame, fortune and get laid

are dangled in front of a generation of super-powered teens. All they have to do is WIN. Who is the fastest, the strongest or the greatest? Who survives? Young Tommy Watt's dreams of being the greatest hero of them all might just be shattered when the greatest show on the planet begins to reveal its dark heart.



SECRET #1

Hickman / Bodenheim

"Teeth, with which to eat"

A man gets shot in London, a law firm gets broken into in Washington, an accountant gives away the password

to his computer, and something put to sleep 20 years ago awakens. What is the unsavoury relationship all these things share, and how could it bring down two of the largest governments in the history of the world?

SECRET, a brand new, ongoing, monthly comic from the creators of A RED MASS FOR MARS, is an espionage thriller that takes a deep look into the shadow world existing between the government and private security firms.

Need comic bags, boards and other supplies? Visit acecomics.co.uk



DEJAH THORIS AND THE APES OF MARS #1

Rahner / Antonio

On the way to an archaeological dig at an ancient battle site at the 'face' of Mars, Dejah Thoris and her party are

stranded. They take shelter in a dead, ancient city - infested with killer white apes. Hungry ones.

The most harrowing horror story in the annals of Barsoom!



For a full list of everything released in April, order **PREVIEWS**



MERCILESS: THE RISE OF MING #1

Beatty / Adrian

Visit scenic Mongo before Ming's rise to power! In this prequel to the critically acclaimed and best-selling 'Flash Gordon: Zeitgeist', Prince Ming begins his

rise to dominion over the entirety of Mongo! But who (or what) was Ming before he was 'Merciless'?

Find out here as the origin of one of science fiction's pre-eminent villains is presented in all its diabolical details.



THE SHADOW #1

By Garth Ennis

Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men? The Shadow knows!

The Shadow returns to comic stores written

by the man born to write him - Garth Ennis. The artist joining Garth will be Aaron Campbell.

Featuring covers by fan favourite artists Alex Ross, Howard Chaykin, Jae Lee and John Cassaday.

The Shadow hits stores in April 2012!

In the first issue of the ongoing series, it's 1938 and The Shadow returns in a tale of blazing action and deadly intrigue, as a night of carnage on the New York waterfront plunges the mysterious vigilante into a conspiracy involving the fate of the world itself. As storm clouds gather across the globe, American Military Intelligence meets with a certain Lamont Cranston, determined to beat a host of spies and assassins to the greatest prize of all... but what that might be, only the Shadow knows.

"The Shadow is probably the last established character I like that I haven't gotten around to writing yet, certainly on this side of the Atlantic," says writer Garth Ennis. *"It makes a kind of bloody, bullet-riddled sense: I always had a feeling our paths would cross sooner or later."*



VOLTRON: YEAR ONE #1

Thomas / Cermak

Before they were known as the legendary Voltron Force, they were Space Explorer Squadron #686 of the Galaxy Alliance

- four young men, led by Commander Sven, and tasked with keeping the Earth safe and the skies clear in a universe growing more and more dangerous every day. So it was no surprise that Central Command came to them first with an impossible rescue mission and an enemy even they didn't truly understand. One that threatens the fragile coalition of planets they've risked their lives to maintain. Unbreakable bonds and intense rivalries are formed in the first chapter of 'Fearless Leader'.

NEW TITLES SHIPPING IN APRIL



AVENGERS 1: THE COMING OF THE AVENGERS! #1

Lee / Kirby

Relive the story that started it all - digitally remastered and recoloured in modern style.

Loki hatches a plot against his hated stepbrother Thor, drawing Earth's mightiest heroes into the fray.



AVX: VS #1 (OF 6)

Aaron / Immonen / Kubert / Immonen

The premier tie-in to 'Avengers vs X-Men'!

All-out action featuring cover to cover battles, each issue expanding on fights from the main AvX

book in ways you can't imagine!



AVENGERS vs. X-MEN #1 (OF 12)

Bendis / Romita Jr

It's no longer coming - it's here!

Does the return of the Phoenix to Earth signal the rebirth of the mutant species?

That's what the X-Men believe. Unfortunately, the Avengers are convinced that its coming will mean the end of all life on Earth.

The stage is set for the ultimate Marvel showdown in this oversized first issue!



AMAZING SPIDER-MAN: HOOKY #1

Putney / Wrightson

Spider-man vs. the horrific Tordenkakerlakk in the dimension of Cloudsea! Can Spidey and the

spirited Spindrifter overcome a foe that becomes more powerful - and more terrifying - each time it's defeated? A macabre masterpiece illustrated in disturbing detail by horror master Bernie Wrightson!



ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN ADVENTURES #1

Man of Action / Slott / Templeton / Plati

2012's most anticipated TV show is now the comic book you can't miss out on!

By day, he's Peter Parker, mild-mannered high school student. But by night, he's the ultimate in super heroics - Spider-man! And he's just the beginning of a super-hero universe...



DAREDEVIL #10.1

Waid / Pham

If you haven't climbed on board the Daredevil express yet, this is a perfect jumping on point for the best reviewed series of the year!

Pitting the man without fear against a cabal of villainous secret societies sworn to bringing Hornhead to his knees and setting the stage for this month's Daredevil / Spider-man / Punisher crossover 'the Omega Effect'!



THE SECRET SERVICE #1

Millar / Gibbons

From the writer of Kick-Ass and the artist of Watchmen comes a collaboration decades in the making.

Says Mark Millar:

"Secret Service is the ramifications of [how] America is struggling on the world stage, funding is being seriously undercut to balance the books and some people are trying their best to take advantage of The Fragile Global Situation."



THE MIGHTY THOR #12.1

Fraction / Larraz

The god of thunder, back on Earth and ready to make up for lost time!

His father in exile, his mother on the throne - Thor's world

is upside down. But if Thor is here then... what is Dr. Donald Blake doing here, too?

The stunning tale of the man inside of the god - and the god inside of the man - in the merry Marvel manner!



NEW TITLES SHIPPING IN APRIL

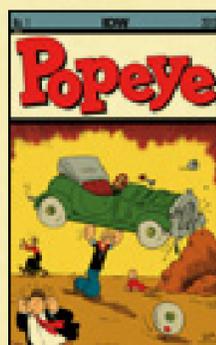


DUNGEONS & DRAGONS: FORGOTTEN REALMS #1

Greenwood / Ferguson / Buscema

Forgotten Realms creator Ed Greenwood opens

the adventures of an unlikely new band of heroes who get into a bit more trouble than usual in the fabled port city of Waterdeep, but soon discover some of the seedier corners of the wider Realms - the hard way! This new series kicks off a deadly tale with a kidnapping that is more - and less - than it seems...

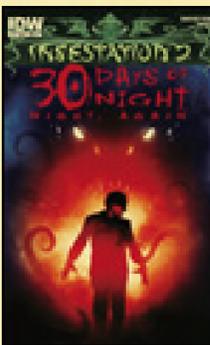


POPEYE #1 (OF 4)

Landridge / Ozella

Popeye the Sailor Man sails again! E.C Segar's classic creation is back, with his first original comic in over 30 years! Written by the Eisner Award-

winning Roger Landridge (The Muppets), with pitch-perfect art from rising star Bruce Ozella, it's a new take on the classic character that's true to its roots! With a rare incentive cover from legendary Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist Jules Feiffer!



INFESTATION 2: 30 DAYS OF NIGHT ONE-SHOT

Swierczynski / Sayger

December 1952. An Air Force pilot and civilian photographer embark on a top-secret mission to investigate a possible

Russian installation near the North Pole. They discover they've been beaten to the punch by another team, and they're not Russian. But they do have a fondness for red...



HERO COMICS 2012

Fraction / Ryall / Eastman / Wood / Kuhn / Campbell / Jusko / and more...

A comic to benefit the Hero Initiative, featuring all-new stories by some of the best creators in comics! Fantastic features

include: An original Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles short story, a Zombies vs. Robots extravaganza, a new Rex Mantooth Kung-Fu Gorilla story, plus more! And this book will also present single page stories by comics creators who have personally benefitted from the Hero Initiative!



IDW PUBLISHING

STAFF PICKS

We're often asked to recommend something fresh for our customers to read at ACE Comics, so we've decided to throw a few ideas in here...

GHOSTBUSTERS (IDW)

As an absolute Ghosthead, it's a real treat to have some new Ghostbusters material to get stuck in to. The appointment of Fan-Favourite Dan Schoening has really brought this title to life. I found the previous limited series lacking when the characters were depicted realistically, but with generic Faces (I want Bill Murray, not Bill Smith), but Schoening has just the right element of caricature to make them identifiable, without straying into animated Ghostbusters territory. Add in some snappy dialogue and we have a winner! - Marc



SECRET (IMAGE COMICS)

Jonathan Hickman does it again, a comic to stretch the imagination and not involving costumes. This is an espionage comic set in the shadow world existing between government and private security firms. Gritty art from Ryan Bodenheim caps off the opening issue which involves dark secrets hidden by both the UK and American governments. - BIFF

SUPREME #63 (IMAGE COMICS)

Initially an awful series by Rob Liefeld. Supreme is the Superman of the Image universe and Liefeld showed why he should never write for DC comics. The series was transformed when Alan Moore took over the writing with issue 41 who showed once again that he is the master of how to write superhero comics. It is not clear how long this will continue but it is a definite must read. Art is by Erik Larsen, so a well drawn comic too. - BIFF

ROGER LANGRIDGE'S SNARKED VOL.1 (#1-6) AND SERIES #7

This is action adventure comedy by a man at the top of his game. Beautifully drawn, lovely clear smooth lines bringing to life the Walrus and Carpenter as they outwit villainous royal advisors and then set to sea to rescue the Red King. A wonderful truly all ages comic that works on every level. I cannot recommend more highly. - BIFF

THE SHADOW (DYNAMITE)

One of my all time favourite pulp characters that for some reason never quite made it to a continuing comic series, despite previous series shaving the likes of Mike Kaluta and Howard Chaykin on art.

This is relaunched by Dynamite with Garth Ennis on scripts, a better choice I couldn't think of. He always brings dark and gritty violence to his comics and The Shadow demands just that. Aaron Campbell is on art and as long as he hit's the right 'mood' this series should be a winner. - BIFF

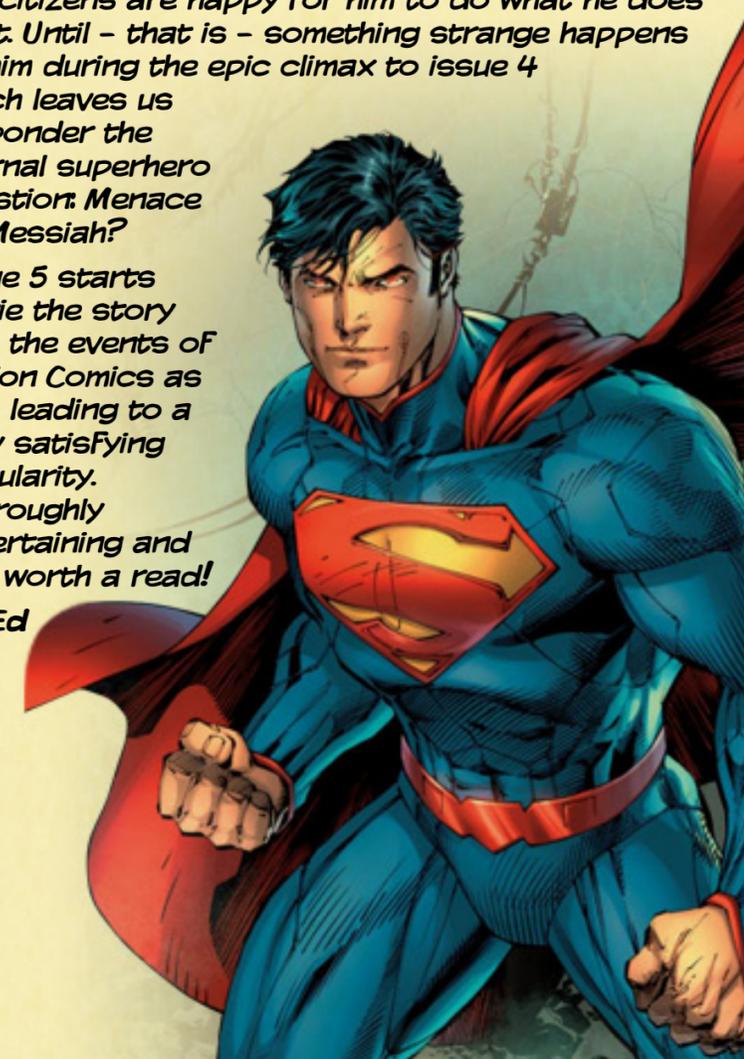
SUPERMAN (DC)

DC New 52 Superman Focuses on the present day version of the reinvented Man of Steel, as featured in Grant Morrisori's new take on Action Comics.

Superman is still an unknown quantity in Metropolis, but as long he keeps thwarting the elemental alien forces that threaten the city on a regular basis, the citizens are happy for him to do what he does best. Until - that is - something strange happens to him during the epic climax to issue 4 which leaves us to ponder the eternal superhero question: Menace or Messiah?

Issue 5 starts to tie the story into the events of Action Comics as well, leading to a very satisfying circularity. Thoroughly entertaining and well worth a read!

- Ed



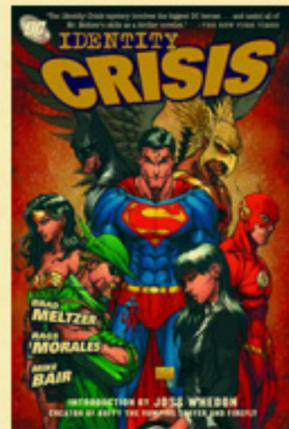
HISTORY BOOKS

With the huge volume of titles released each week, it can be quite easy to overlook the rich history of comic books available in the form of back issues and graphic novels, so we're going to take this opportunity to showcase some gems in Illuminations, that you previously might have missed.

IDENTITY CRISIS (DC, 2004)

Brad Meltzer / Rags Morales / Mike Bair

This controversial title originally appeared as a seven issue miniseries and was both hailed and reviled at the time of its publication.



Featuring mature content and a few shocks, the story is a murder/mystery revolving around a dark secret kept by a number of Justice League members.

There is real weight in the content and ramifications of the heroes choices and how they have affected non-central DC characters.

Brad Meltzer, a 'New York Times' bestselling author known for thrillers, carves a rich and gripping tale high on emotion, genuine peril and moral dilemmas.

Rags Morales supports the story with some beautiful artwork, eerily capturing the terror of some scenes. The title also marks the beginning of his continued working relationship with inker Mike Bair.

While the controversy raged over the treatment of some characters and whether or not certain elements should have been introduced to Justice League lore, the title stands up well on its own and was selected by the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) for its 2007 recommended list of Great Graphic Novels for Teens.

We think it's great and well worth a read if you are a fan of epic thrillers and mysteries.



BIFF'S BIT

Email Biff at martin@acecomics.co.uk

Welcome to ACE COMICS!!

I recently received an e-mail which reminded me of how my early love of comics felt. This is from one of our youngest Acers...

"Thank you for my The Stone Keeper book I read it all in one day. I liked the book so much I have to ask you to tell me how many books in one series and how much it is. Even though I loved The Stone Keeper I also read Bone and I also have to ask you how many in a series and how much it is. If so I will have to come down to your shop and buy as many as possible.

Thank you once again. Loads of love and wishes, Amber (aged 10)"

The Stone Keeper is book one in the Amulet series and, as attested above, is a fabulous all ages graphic novel. This coupled with my reading of the Stan Lee Universe book that came out in December 2011 has invigorated me beyond words.

The beauty of the comic medium is that it is a shared experience. One you can share with people across the world, across a bar and across the internet to name but a few ways to communicate with fellow enthusiasts.

Everyone that works at Ace Comics has a genuine love and interest in various aspects of the medium and I think it is about time I introduced the merry Ace crew line up for 2012.

Martin 'Biff' Averre. That's me, the boss, comic aficionado of 40 plus years but still only 18 in mind and soul.

Tina 'Queen Of Décor' Averre. Our accounts manager, payer of bills and wages, so everyone is nice to her.

Kerrie 'New Boots' Williams. Our toy buyer and Colchester store manager. She is our go to gal when things need doing fast and efficiently.

Glenn 'The Sportsman' Richardson. Our Amazon manager and the Colchester gaming club overseer. Don't play him at Magic The Gathering if you don't like losing.

Marc 'Mellifluous' Williams. He is the new old boy. He left 5 years ago to pursue a career in IT and design and has returned to jazz up the Ace web site and bring us firmly into the forefront of the internet and technology.

Guy 'The Gurl' Barnes. Our packing office and mail order manager. Jazz, Will Eisner and comic expert plus the man who puts customers first.

Colin 'Cosplay' Ellesley. Our E-bay manager and self styled Cosplay king. Check out his web site: www.comicbookcosplay.tumblr.com.

Victoria 'Queen Vic' Ellesley. Our Mail order office manager. She is the voice at the end of the phone, but never the tether. Even the Flash could not put on customer orders quicker than her.

Ed 'The Shred' Mehen. Our Economic comic second in command. New to comics 3 years ago, now a convert and currently working through Habibi, the latest work from Craig Thompson.

Evil Stu. No surname just plain Evil. He is the horormeister and indie DJ master. Evil mans the Colchester store and packs 90% of all E-bay orders!

Joe 'Gamesmaster' Hill. Our Colchester gaming club manager. This is the man to sort out the finer points of Yu-Gi-Oh, Pokemon, Magic The Gathering and more. He is also a bona fide Yu-Gi-Oh national judge.

Briony 'The Elf' For some reason when not packing she sits crossed legged on the packing counter and reads! She came for her two week work experience and never found the exit door!

Matt 'Stone Face' Stone. Colin's able E-bay assistant. He fled the chaos of Waterstones to work for a proper bookshop.

Well that's the Colchester crew introduced. Next week I will reveal the names and characters who bring Southend, Richmond and Glasgow to life.

Motto For the month, the year even, is PASS IT ON. If you have a favourite title then give a copy to a non believer and just ask them to pass it on once read. Comics are FUN.

HAVE YOUR SAY...

“ ... ”

Illuminations always used to feature a letters page and this is a tradition that we're keen to continue. It's always great to hear from enthusiastic, fellow comic book lovers everywhere and we wholeheartedly encourage healthy discussion of the titles and their topics.

So if you have something to say about DC's 'New 52', Marvel's upcoming 'Point One' or even just what the deal is with J. Scott Campbell and ladies hips(?), mail us at martin@acecomics.co.uk, marking your email 'Illuminations' and you could find yourself immortalised in cyber-print.



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