

741.5

BLACK COMICS MATTER

AFRICAN-AMERICAN SCI-FI AND FANTASY

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PLUS...BELL AND BRONTES



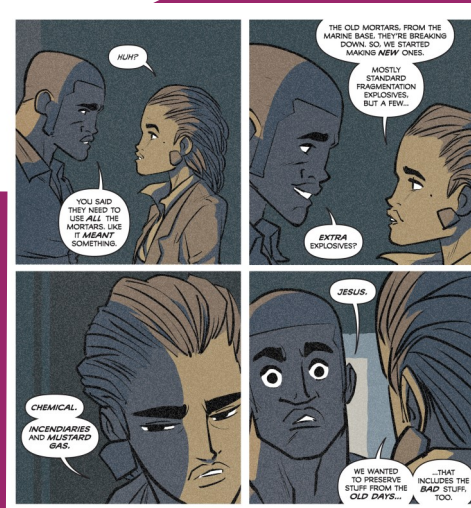
The Comics & Graphic Novel Bulletin of



Lexington Public Library
Reading Is Just the Beginning!



That ol' black magic is beautiful indeed in the urban fantasy series *Excellence* from Image and Robert (Walking Dead) Kirkman's SkyBound combine. **Spencer Dales** is the reluctant hero destined to follow his father into the secret society of mystics known as the Aegis. The rebellious Spencer has plans to change a system which he sees as sclerotic and self-serving. But his father's protégé has something to say about that, and the sorcerous throw-down begins. An exclusive crew of creators of color puts the *black* in *magician* with *Kill the Past*. Popular cartoonist Khary Randolph brings to life a wild world both real and fantastic with his dynamic layouts and humane characterization.



One day, all the grown-ups die. A plague sweeps the earth clean of adults. Twenty years later, the now-grown children of that dead age of TVs and iPhones and SUVs have re-established society, if not civilization. But as community leader Lindy says "We've survived. That doesn't mean we know what we're doing." Now her city is under siege by the zealot army of the New Church. But the key to a better future might lie with a little girl on the lam named Princess. Now hundreds may die for the sake of one child. **Ted Anderson's** eerily relevant tale of tomorrow *Orphan Age* (AfterShock) is brought to life by the eye-pleasing art and masterful coloring of **Nuno Plati** and **Joao Lemos**.



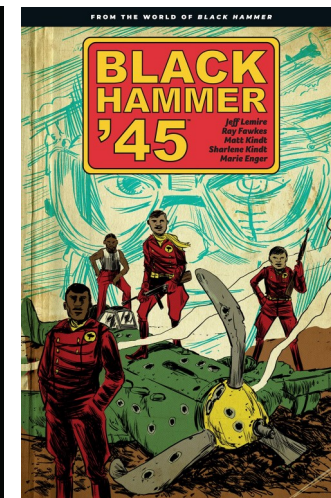
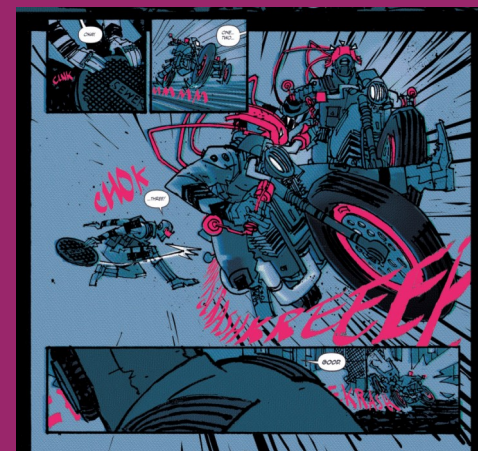
Conan, Aragorn and Harry Potter, LOOK OUT! A new generation of African-American creators bring the noise in an eruption of black-centered comics dealing with urban sorcery, post-apocalyptic struggle, cyberfunk spycraft and senses-shattering superhero sagas. Go to lexpublib.org to reserve these new classics of science fiction and fantasy.



A young black woman is found dead at the base of the **HOLLYWOOD** sign. In the face of official indifference, her uncle, a shady psychic known as the "Conjure-Man", takes up the investigation. Her past is yet another sordid story of racial and sexual exploitation. But behind the human monsters are the supernatural kind. The Conjure-Man is calling on the Reaper of Vengeance to aid his crusade. The newest volume in the popular *Pretty Deadly* series, *The Rat* is a dream-like read thanks to the hallucinatory art of Emma Rios and Jordie Bellaire.



"Thumbs" is the player name of Charley Fellows, the hero of *Thumbs*, a new cyberpunk opus from Image. Thumbs was raised with his sister Tabitha by a humanoid app called MOM™ because their parents were too overwhelmed by work to actually be parents. Thumbs and Tabby aren't alone; there are a lot of post-industrial latchkey kids reared by screens and consoles. Those best adapted to tech, like Thumbs and his competitor/colleague Nia, are recruited to be soldiers in a new American Revolution. Then everything goes to hell and Thumbs and MOM hit the streets to save his sister, his soul and, just maybe, his nation. Set in a far-too-near future, *Thumbs* showcases the action-packed art of **Hayden Sherman**, which, to be frank, would benefit from a larger format.

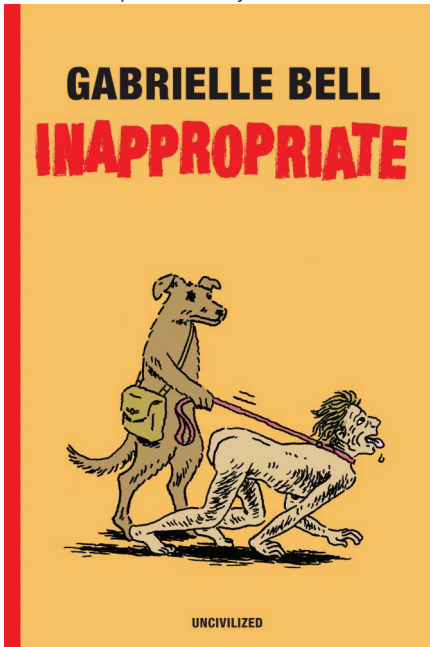


A gang of funnybook archetypes —the space hero, the street-level bruiser, the alien avenger, the spooky chick — are stranded on the Farm. Their past a mystery, their present a prison, the only hope for rescue is a young black woman. She is the heir to the mission of one of the greatest heroes of Spiral City, **Black Hammer**. That's also the name of the offbeat superhero series written by superstar scribe and scribbler **Jeff Lemire**. Meanwhile, a spin-off set during a robot-and-raygun-wracked World War Two foregrounds the racial subtext of the series. The rough-hewn *Black Hammer '45* imagines that the Blackhawks, best-selling sky jockeys from the Golden Age of Comics, were actually black.



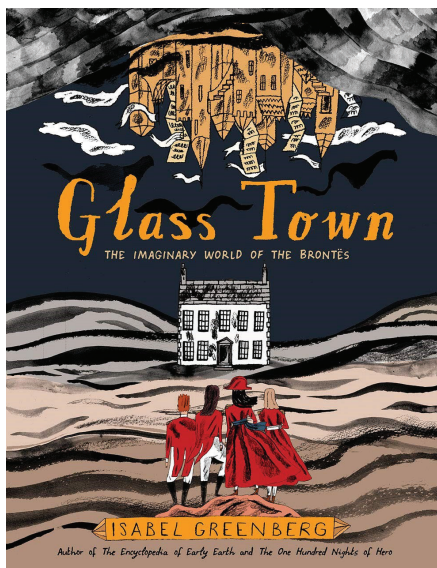


What a drag — Aster’s parents have moved her and her brother out to the middle of nowhere because of their mother’s new job. Mom is building giant robot birds to trick the flocks of crows set to migrate any time now. That said “crows” are the size of horses and look like a cross between the NBC Peacock and one of those “drinking bird” novelty items is one clue this is a slightly different world than ours. Like such kiddie hits as **Luke Pearson’s** *Hilda* (see 741.5 no. 35) and cartoons like *Adventure Time*, RH Graphic’s *Aster and the Accidental Magic* takes place in a world both familiar and strange. People still have cell phones, but watch out for the trickster in the glade. And kids play video games, but try not to get mixed up in the tussle between the aged Queen of Summer and the magic fox who would be King of Autumn. **Thom Pico’s** script is charming while staying dangerous as good kids’ stuff should. Artist **Karensac** does her first graphic novel proud, with simple but expressive line work, dynamic layouts and beautiful coloring. Kids of all ages should reserve a copy at lexpublib.org! Kids of no ages should read the appropriately named *Inappropriate*. This compilation of short pieces by award-winner **Gabrielle Bell** was published by Uncivilized Books



MEANWHILE

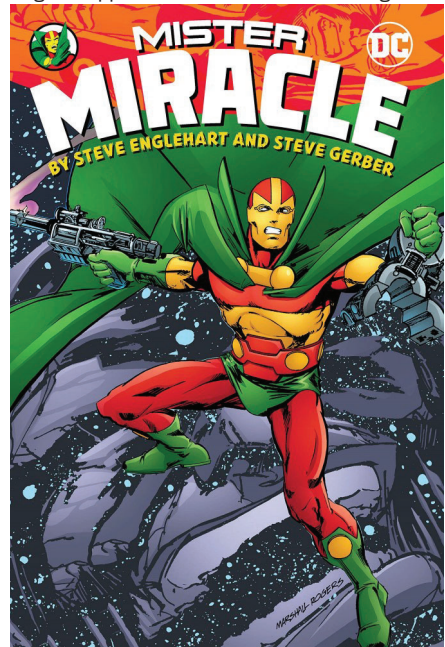
and concerns uncivilized things. Bedbugs, the Big Bad Wolf, bears, a constantly naked neighbor, more bears, and a totally inappropriate physician go through their manic motions rendered in **Bell’s** homely, scratchy style. Not all the stories are about uncomfortable things; in fact, “The Nicest Dog” is so sweet and sad I’m tearing up just thinking about it. *Inappropriate* is available at all LPL locations. Even scratchier than **Gabrielle Bell** is **Isabel Greenberg** and her new book, *Glass Town* (Abrams Comic Arts). **Greenberg** follows up her critically acclaimed *Encyclopedia of Early Earth* (still available from Central) with a fanciful biography of the **Bronte** family. Her style, a charmingly child-like mix of sketchy figures, scrawling lines and inky smudges, captures the raw enthusiasm of youthful creativity that is the heart of the novel. Stranded by circumstances in their sprawling manse at the boundary of the endless moors, **Charlotte**,



Emily, Anne and the lone **Bronte** boy **Branwell** spin increasingly complicated tales of their imaginary *Glass Town*. “Places and plotlines were abandoned as soon as they appeared,” says the narrator. “New ones emerged...faster than you could dip a pen into ink.” Himself a character, **Charles Wellesley** retells, among other stories, the saga of the love/hate triangle involving his villainous brother **Zamorna**, their adoptive sibling **Quashia Quamina**, rightful king of the oppressed **Ashante**, and the brilliant **Lady Zenobia**. “The ruins of abandoned stories are quite interesting things to explore,” says **Charles**, and **Greenberg** proves it with *Glass Town*. Meanwhile, prolific avant garde cartoonist **Michael DeForge** has a new novel out from *Drawn & Quarterly*, a wild and woolly rumination on the ever-escalating rate of social change wrought by the internet. In *Familiar Face*, reality itself, the world of streets and buildings and jobs and lovers, is constantly updated—or “upgraded”, to use the vernacular of *Doctor Who’s* malevolent **Cybermen**. Why, and by who, no one really knows. “The hallway you were walking in would come to an abrupt end. A door that previously led to a public washroom would suddenly open to a swimming pool, or tapas restaurant, or your parents’ bedroom.” The first person narration



follows the protagonist as she tries to adapt physically and psychologically to unceasing change. A love story underlies the madness, one tied to a cabal of rebel cartographers who have seized the means of “optimization”. Between the heroine’s colorful pages are black-n-white excerpts from the “complaint department”, each a different person caught up in the maelstrom of updates and downgrades. **DeForge’s** art is way more lucid than usual, his layouts simple and stark to best show off his squiggly style that looks like **Miro** and **Tanguy** jamming with **Prohias** and **Peter Max**. A background in architecture is what made the art of **Marshall Rogers** stand out in the crowded spinners of the 1970s. Along with other young guns like **Walt Simonson** and **Howard Chaykin**, **Rogers** brought to mainstream comics a new emphasis on design, of both the page and the drawing of figures, backgrounds, even sound effects. He was therefore an odd choice to handle the art for the return of **Jack Kirby’s** *Mister Miracle*. A new collection available from Central, Eastside and Northside shows how these stories written by ex-Marvelmaniacs **Englehart** and **Gerber** were the bridge between the brawny age of **Kirby** and the slick, angular approach that dominated the Eighties.



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