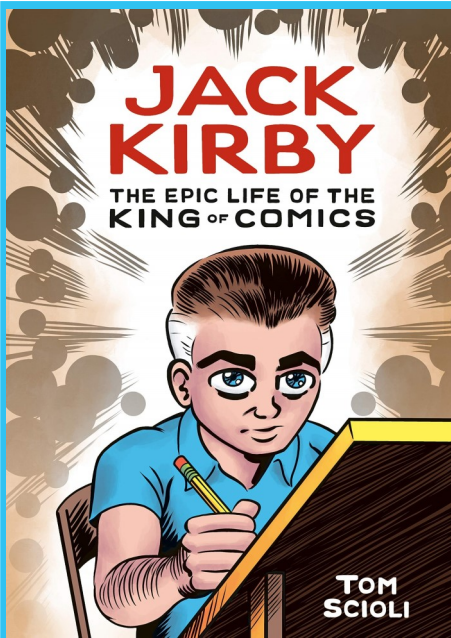




The Comics & Graphic Novel Bulletin of



Lexington Public Library
Reading Is Just the Beginning!



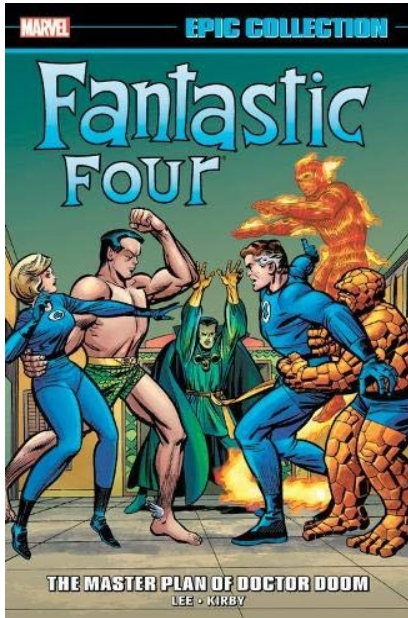
If, as Shelley said, poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world, what does that make Jack Kirby? His characters and the universe they inhabit are now global icons, a new mythology for the 21st Century. Yet the man himself was and still is overshadowed by "The Man", his co-creator, Stan Lee. Tom (Godland) Scioli's graphic biography aims to fix that. Told in the first person, the ups and downs of Jacks' life were those of the comics industry itself. To his credit, Scioli includes the perspective of others. *The Epic Life of the King of Comics* is available at all locations.

Fantastic Four: Grand Design builds on the success of Marvel's previous *Grand Design* trilogy dedicated to the X-Men (see 741.5 #18). Published in the Oversize "Treasury" format, Volume 1 covers the history of the Cosmic Quartet from their initial outings against the Mole Man, Doctor Doom and the Skrulls up to the celestial showdowns of the 1980s. Produced with the "aged" look of old comics, *FF:GD* includes developmental materials and a reprint of a FF classic!

TOM SCIOLI FANTASTIC FOUR



DR. DOOM...THE SKRULLS...SUBMARINER...BLACK PANTHER...RONAN THE ACCUSER...THE SENTRY...THE FRIGHTFUL FOUR...THE WATCHER...SUBATOMICA...THE SUPREME INTELLIGENCE...THE PUPPET MASTER...RAMA-TUT...WAKANDA...THE INCREDIBLE HULK...MOLECULE MAN...KLAW...THE NEGATIVE ZONE...DIABLO...ANNIHILUS...THE SILVER SURFER...THE MAD THINKER...ADAM WARLOCK...DRAGON MAN...THE INHUMANS...GALACTUS...



A nameless company on the edge of extinction...an editor sick of his job...an artist with nowhere else to go...All came together in one desperate attempt to save the day: THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE! Cover-dated November 1961, the first issue of *Fantastic Four* was a tossed-together mess that sparked an artistic, commercial and cultural revolution. Editor/writer Stan Lee and artist Jack Kirby had nothing to lose. So they did a comic book the way they wanted. Wildly imaginative but with roots in the real world, *Fantastic Four* rewrote the rules for superheroes. Reed (Mr. Fantastic) Richards, Sue (Invisible Girl) Storm, her brother Johnny *alias* the Human Torch, and Ben Grimm, the Thing, didn't simply have powers. They had something stronger: *personalities*. Those personalities provided the framework on which Lee & Kirby hung an ever-expanding tapestry of costumed fantasy. Including the characters and concepts listed at left; many have gone on to inspire complex sagas of their own. Due to the vagaries of show biz, the founders of the Marvel Universe have been left behind at the box office by their successors. Now the Fantastic Four join the Marvel Cinematic Universe. Beat the crowds and read the truly EPIC comics that started it all!



The 1960s were an amazing time to be a kid. Saturday morning cartoons, comic books everywhere, and all the gimmicks sold at the candy store and gumball machines: *Mars Attacks* cards, Big Daddy Roth Weird-o stickers, and...Marvel Comics Mini-books! If you've never experienced or even heard of these, that's okay. They were mostly distributed through the Northeast and West Coast, as explained in Mark Evanier's history

in the first volume of *Marvel Comics Mini-Books Collectible Box Set: A History and Facsimiles of Marvel's Smallest Comic Books* (Harry N. Abrams). Published in 1966, these 5/8" x 7/8" comics were smaller than a postage stamp and hardly bigger than the penny they cost. They featured several of the headliners who made that decade the Marvel Age of Comics: the Amazing Spider-Man, Captain America, the Mighty Thor, the Incredible Hulk, WW2 super-soldier Sgt. Fury, and Marvel's "Blonde Bombshell", Millie the Model. They were written and drawn by Marvel staffers, including former EC colorist Marie Severin; her work on these was the beginning of a long career at the House of Ideas. The first volume also includes reprints of the mini-books at their original size (right). The actual facsimiles are a whopping 4.5" x 6.5" inches. Both stories and art are fascinating in their simplicity. Many of the drawings would make kickass tattoos, especially those of Thor and Captain America. Split up into separate volumes, these messages in a plastic egg from a simpler time are available at all LPL locations.



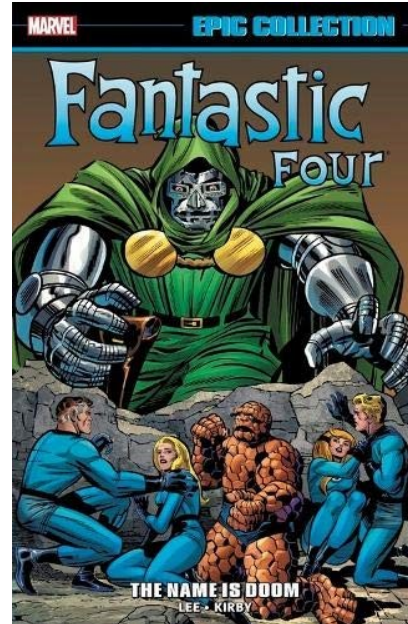
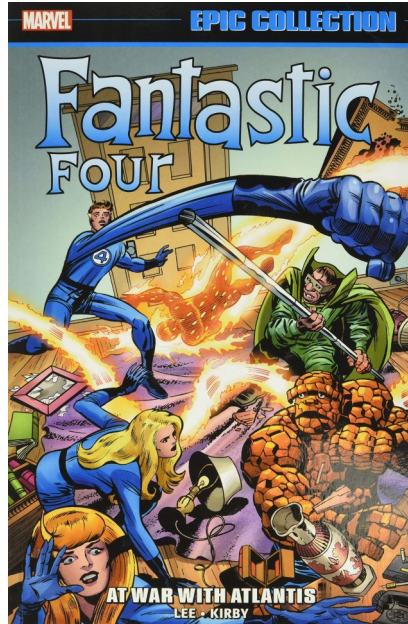
BELOW: Examples of the Marvel mini-books printed at gumball size. Top-to-bottom: Spider-Man, Millie the Model, and the Incredible Hulk.



THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

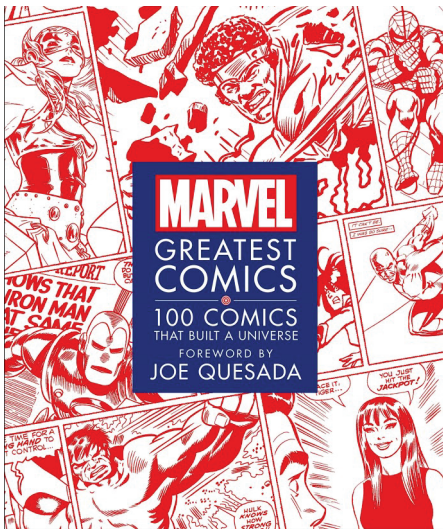
THE FANTASTIC FOUR

AND THE ORIGINS OF THE MARVEL AGE OF COMICS



The splash page above, from *Fantastic Four* #36 Mar 65, is a prime example of how Marvel superheroes lived in the real world, where the marriage of two celebrities like Mr. Fantastic and the Invisible Girl would make headlines. The ultimate expression of that fundamental Marvel trope was *Marvels* by Kurt Busiek & Alex Ross. A news photographer for the *Daily Bugle*, Phil Sheldon is our stand-in as he watches the Marvel Universe burst into being. *The 25th Anniversary Edition* (right) comes with extras and is available from Beaumont, Central and Northside.





The Marvel Universe—and here we refer to the locus of the myriad comic books—is a big place. A newcomer can find it intimidating. The following items will serve as introductory material for those who, having had a slice of Marvel goodness thanks to the movies and TV shows, now want to taste the whole pie. *Marvel Greatest Comics* is a big, beautiful book dedicated to the 100 Comics That Built A Universe. There are the obvious choices—those issues launching the characters, from 1961's *Fantastic Four* #1 to the debut of Moon Girl & Devil Dinosaur in 2016. There are the series highlights: the Galactus trilogy, the climax of the struggle between Dr. Strange and Dormammu, the death of Phoenix. Those comics that changed the company and the industry get a nod, such as Spidey's Comics Code-busting “drug” issue, *Giant-size X-men* #1, the rise of auteurs such as **Frank Miller**. One of those trail-blazing issues was *Avengers* #93, cover-dated November 1971. Exquisitely drawn by **Neal Adams** and inker **Tom Palmer**, the tale of Ant-Man's journey



MEANWHILE

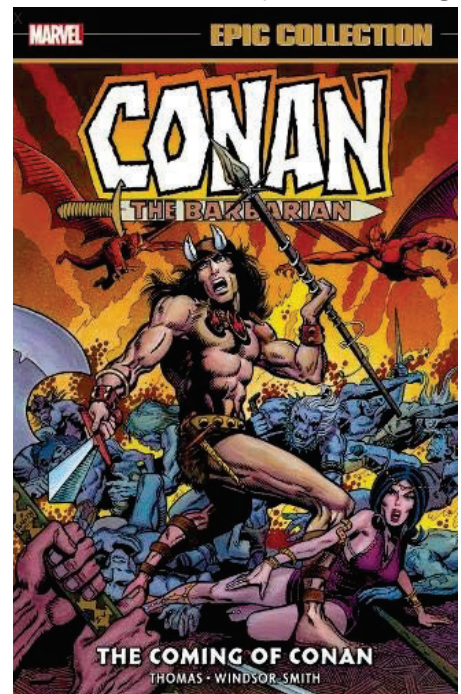
inside the synthetic body of the Vision was amazing in itself. Yet it was but one chapter in a longer story that became known as the “Kree-Skrull War.” Running from *Avengers* #89-97, this serial was the inspiration for all Big Events to come. *Avengers* #93 holds a special place in this writer's heart: it was the first ish of my subscription to arrive in the mail. 11-year-old Billy Widener realized something monumental was happening and didn't want to miss an issue. This was the point that I stopped being a comic book reader and became a comics fan, leading to these very words you read now. It also lends its title to the new Epic Collection. Available from Central, Beaumont and Tates Creek TEEN, *This Beachhead Earth* reprints in full color *Avengers* #77-97, featuring the debuts of Red Wolf, Valkyrie, the Squadron Sinister, and Man-Ape, who



nearly walked away with the *Black Panther* movie. With **Roy Thomas** on scripts (plus a fill-in by **Harlan Ellison**) and the bravura pencils of **John Buscema**, this was Earth's Mightiest Heroes at their most furious and fun. But if all that's too many funnybooks to read, get the lowdown on the ups'n'downs of this four-colored cosmos of conflict by reading *The History of the Marvel Universe*. The Oversize 10" x 14" tabloid format, which Marvel used for its fondly-remembered “Treasury” collections of the 1970s, is a boon to the reader as the ornate art of **Javier Rodriguez** has room to breathe. Dozens of characters representing as many storylines fly and fight, loom and love on every page. But it never seems messy thanks to the artist's gift for composition and personality. He colors right purty, too! **Mark (Marvels) Waid** brings his usual deft touch, framing the sprawling narrative as a conversation between a dying Galactus and Franklin Richards as they wait for the Marvel Universe to end and a new macrocosm to begin. Franklin is the eldest child of Reed and Sue Richards of the *Fantastic Four*. He's also one of the wild cards of the MU, with such potential power that even the Celestials fear him. If you don't understand what a big deal that is,



get a copy of *Marvel Myths and Legends* from your favorite LPL location. Written for a younger audience, *MM&L* details how the Marvel Universe majestically integrated classical legends—Atlantis, Camelot, various pagan pantheons, especially the Norse and Greeks—with Marvel-made myths, such as **Kirby's** Celestials and Eternals (see 741.5 #50), Wakanda and K'un-Lun, the mystical worlds explored by Dr. Strange. That mythology now includes Conan the Barbarian. Marvel regained the rights to **Robert E. Howard's** iconic adventurer and dragooned the Cimmerian into the MU as a member of the *Savage Avengers* (available from LPL!) Many fans call the 1970 arrival of Conan the beginning of comics' so-called Bronze Age. He did have an impact, as described in the liner notes to *The Coming of Conan*. The full-color Epic Collection of the first thirteen issues is noteworthy for the art of **Barry pre-Windsor Smith**, as the ambitious creator mixed the pop fury of **Kirby** and **Steranko** with *beaux arts* influences like the *Pre-Raphaelites*. Get a copy at lexpublib.org/!



Back issues of 741.5 are available at lexpublib.org under the COLLECTIONS tab!