

# 741.5

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## RETURN OF THE KING **JACK KIRBY** AND HIS TUMULTUOUS TENURE AT MARVEL IN THE SEVENTIES PLUS...THE SHIELD OF SAM WILSON



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Reading Is Just the Beginning!





A perfect record of these ups and downs, *The Man Who Sold the United States* includes the end of **Steve Englehart's** vaunted run as writer of *Captain America* and his replacement by the character's co-creator, **Jack Kirby**. An example of Marvel's dependence on older talent, **Englehart's** artist on most of that run was **Frank Robbins**, former newspaper man. Freed from the constraints of daily strips, **Robbins** work was flamboyantly physical and manically emotional. Seriously, nobody rants and raves like a **Robbins** villain, especially the former Madame Hydra, **Viper!** One of the first overtly sexy characters in the Marvel Universe, **Viper** was followed by **Deadly Nightshade** (below right). A prime



example of Blaxploitation's influence on Seventies culture, this poisonous batch of brown sugar ruled through lust, with a mob of sex-struck menfolk willing to do her baneful bidding. Including Mr. Sam Wilson, AKA the Falcon; under **Nightshade's** spell, Falcon nearly kills Cap, and vice versa. Then, suddenly, out in the real world, **Englehart** was off *Captain America*, and *The Avengers*, too. The King was back! Finally fed up with DC and its broken promises, **Jack Kirby** returned to **Mighty Marvel**. But he wasn't greeted with open arms by all. Many fans and staffers still considered **Kirby's** departure from the House of Ideas as a betrayal, one not so easily forgiven. Image right, drawn by **George Perez** for *Fantastic Four* #242, showing **Perez** in discussion with **Stan Lee**, **Roy Thomas** and, "in from the (West) Coast," **Jack Kirby**,

The mid-1970s were a tumultuous time for the Marvel Comics Group. Having attained market dominance, the question was how to keep it. The new breed of fans-turned-creator was flaming out, its artistic ambitions foundering on the reefs of the Dreaded Deadline Doom. They were replaced by industry vets like **Jack Kirby** and **Gil Kane** (who drew the cover above) and exuberant newcomers such as **George Perez** and Canadian whiz kid **John Byrne**.

Then Captain America died. Seemingly assassinated by his longtime rival **Crossbones**, **Steve Rogers** passes, leaving the world to ask "WHO WILL BE..."

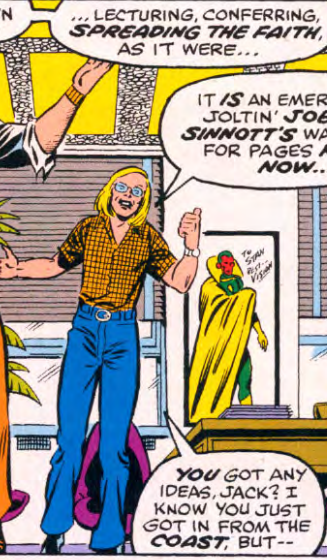


CAPTAIN AMERICA?" Rogers' erstwhile partner, **Sam Wilson** AKA the Falcon, takes on the mantle of the First Avenger. Written by the controversial **Nick Spencer**, Wilson's adventures are available at [lexpublib.org](http://lexpublib.org), and continued, even after **Steve Rogers** returned from the dead, as *Captain America: Symbol*

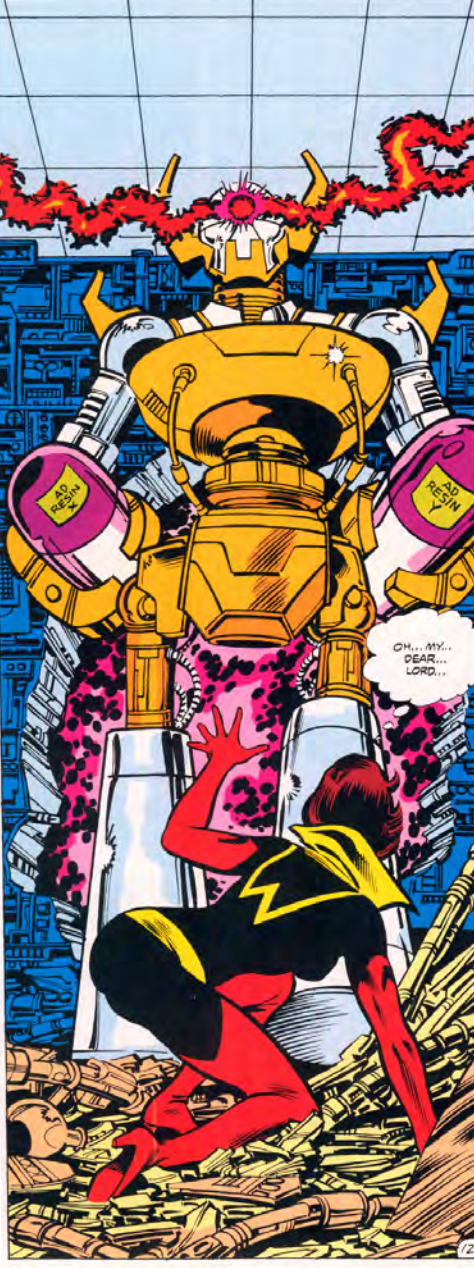
Of Truth. **Sam Wilson** continues to appear in various formats, from **Golden Books** for kids (left) to the new hard-back collection of short stories below!



was sheer fantasy. Kirby wanted little to do with "the Bullpen", and the feeling quickly became mutual. And then there were the issues with the work itself. Unedited and thus unaided, Kirby's scripts lacked the sophistication of his predecessors **Englehart** and **Don MacGregor** (see **Falcon** panel far left) and his art was seen as old-fashioned by younger readers weaned on the likes of **Adams** and **Steranko**. But, re-reading these comics after a pause of several decades, they still possess that Kirby **Kharrisma**, including the double-page spreads he brought over from his DC books, with lots of Big Machines and stuff blowing up real good. That's especially true of the 1976 Marvel Treasury Edition, *Captain America's Bicentennial Battles*. Cap travels

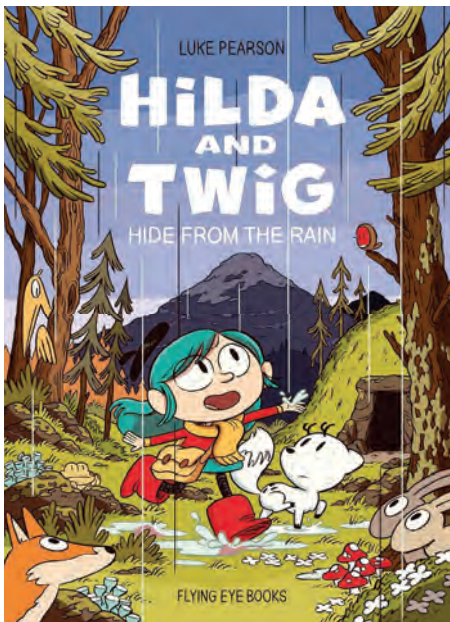


through time, confronting the good, the bad and the ugly of American history (image top center). Meanwhile, the comic **Kirby** flat out refused to work on, *Fantastic Four*, got back to the mix of cosmic conflict and domestic drama that made the FF so special. In *Counter-Earth Must Die*, **Galactus** rumbles the High Evolutionary even as a dastardly doppelganger from the other side of the sun supplants **Reed Richards**. **George Perez** got his start on *Fantastic Four* before becoming the regular artist on *The Avengers*. As shown in *The Evil Reborn*, his work combined inventive layouts with intensely detailed rendering (below right). This era of *Avengers* also featured the debut of both artist **John Byrne**...and G-man gadfly **Henry Peter Gyrich** (below)!

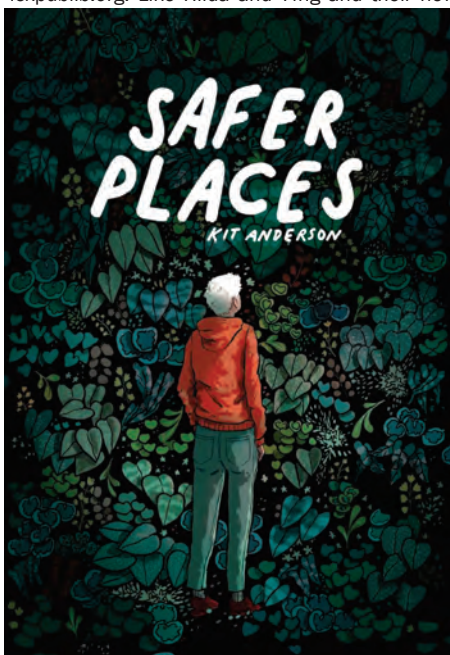


The **Mighty Marvel Masterworks** series continues apace as we enter the late Silver Age. Marvel's success enabled the company to get better distribution, so those heroes who shared a split title each went solo. **Captain America** jumps from *Tales of Suspense* to his own book, tussling and teaming with the **Black Panther**. Who'll soon enough join the **Mighty Avengers**, "Cap's Kooky Quartet" gaining some muscle with the addition of **Goliath**. Meanwhile, **Ditko's** out and **Romita's** in, just in time for **Spider-Man's** life-or-death struggle with the **Green Goblin**...and **Peter Parker's** first meeting with **Mary Jane Watson**! Excelsior!



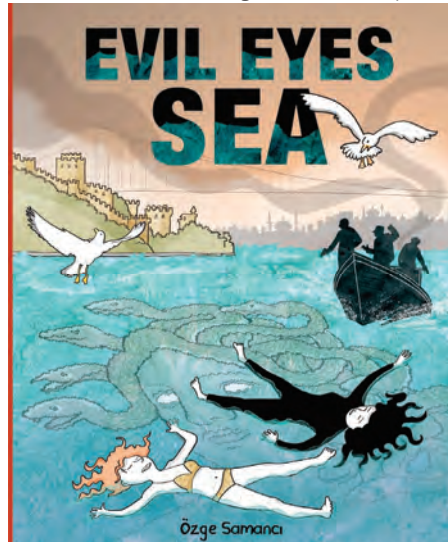


That brave little girl with the blue hair is out and about again as *Hilda and Twig Hide from the Rain*. Published by Flying Eye Books, the larger format gives author **Luke Pearson** room to breathe. Pearson also opens up the page with a simpler layout and bigger panels than before. It befits the story he tells as Hilda and her pet deer-fox Twig do indeed get caught in a sudden rain storm while rambling the forest. They find a nice big hole in a hillside, only to find it *occupato* by a mob of woodland critters. One of them is a fox, who takes umbrage when introduced to Twig. “Rubbish!...I’ve never heard of any ‘deer fox’.” Under pressure from the storm, the animals start to lose their cool, not knowing the real danger waiting for reclaim its hidey hole. Twig does, though, and leads the owner on a merry chase, both physical and philosophical. Fun for all ages, *Hilda and Twig Hide from the Rain* is available at [lexpublib.org](http://lexpublib.org)! Like Hilda and Twig and their new



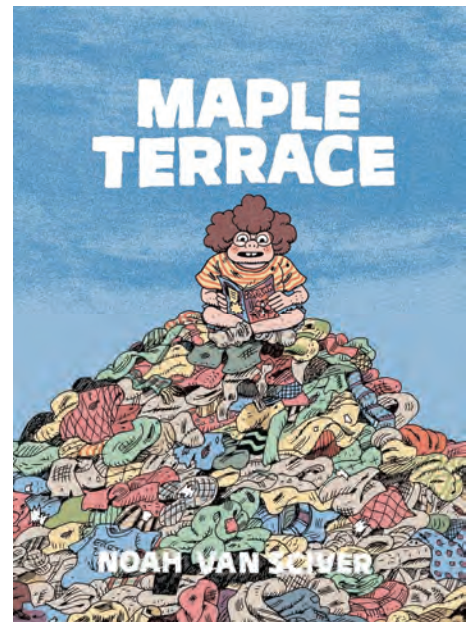
## MEANWHILE

pals, the protagonists of **Kit Anderson's** new book are looking for *Safer Places* (Avery Hill). Chapters from a full color story featuring a wizard act as a fanning device, the mage's quiet quest a reflection of Anderson's other characters search for refuge, relief or just some simple peace and quiet. **Anderson** renders her quiet fables of alienation and self-awareness using a variety of media—colored pencil, pencil and wash, ink and watercolor, and mixtures of all those. Ye Ed especially liked the green washes used on “Fallow” and the smeary carbon copy blue of “Weeds”, the only other color the bright red of the flowers growing from the body and head of our heroine Jane. *Safer Places* will find someplace to creep under skin once you get the book from Beaumont or Eastside. Marksbury Family Branch is the only place you'll find the latest from Turkish cartoonist **Ozge Samanci**. *Evil Eyes Sea* (Uncivilized Books) is a coming-of-age novel involving two college roommates at loose ends during the 1990s. As Turkey fractures over over a heated election, Ece the redhead and Meltem the brunette just want some respite from their awful dormitory and the girls who share it. They find their bliss in skin diving. But their safe space is

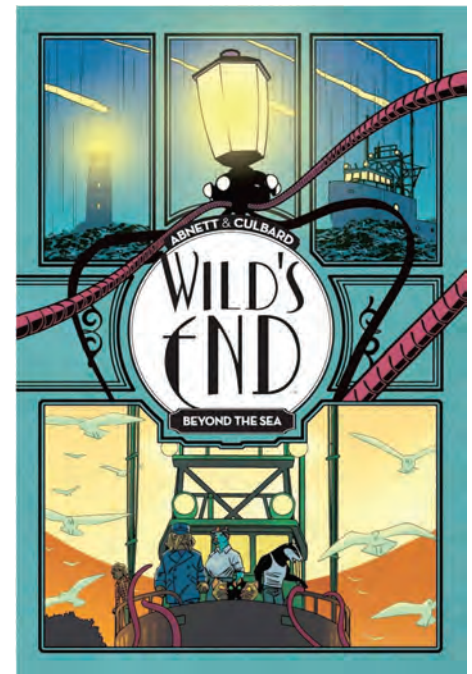


violently invaded when a Cadillac comes crashing ocean. The girls watch helplessly as the car plummets to the bottom of the Bosphorus. Shock turns to horror when they realize their mysterious school chum Selen is in the car. Dead. Trying to get on with their lives after the incident proves harder than they wish, as they fall under the influence of political fixer Aslan. He needs a tutor for his sissy son; Ece takes the job. Then he needs divers to retrieve a sunken safe; against her basic instinct, Meltem takes the job. Our heroines end up back in the water, but will they come up for air? It's a mystery where the political gets personal, rendered with a sprightly line that brings Ece and Meltem and their homeland to life. Meanwhile, back in those same heady days of the Nineties, when comic shops were crammed full of suck...um, readers eager for the next chromium-plated cover special edition issue of the Next Big Thing, whether the “Death of Superman” or the latest Image boondoggle, young **Noah Van Sciver** is jonesing to read the new issue of *Spawn*. So, against all the laws of God (his father, who tells Noah “Todd McFarlane is for boys, son. Barry Windsor-Smith is for men.”) and Man (his older brother Ethan, who's picky about who gets to touch his stuff), **Noah** reads, then damages his brother's copy. But God, that Old Man in the Sky, provides for his wayward child, and

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**Noah's** out of the woods in more ways than one. Or is he? A classmate grasses on **Van Sciver**, and now boss bully Big Belly Martelli is out for blood. *Maple Terrace* (Uncivilized) is both satire of the comic book gold rush and memoir of a life surrounded by boys. Filthy little beasts, all of 'em, if Yr. Ed recalls correctly. But if you're in the market for some nice clean beasts, look no further than *Wild's End* by writer **Dan Abnett** and artist **I.N.J. Culbard**. The fourth collection of the Boom! Studios series, *Beyond the Sea* finds the doughty crew of the *Merry Beet*—the aging hound-dog Captain, the ambitious badger First Mate, and other well-spoken, well-dressed animals, including the skipper's ne'er-do-well nephew— stumbling across an alien invasion when they return to port. Gorgeously rendered with crackerjack characterization, *Wild's End* is a bold step forward in the funny animal genre. Get your copy via [lexpublib.org](http://lexpublib.org)!



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