

741.5

SEPTEMBER 2025 NO. 145

COUNTRY LIFE

ALISON
BECHDEL'S
SPENT

THOMPSON'S
GINSENG
ROOTS

PLUS...INSECTOPOLIS

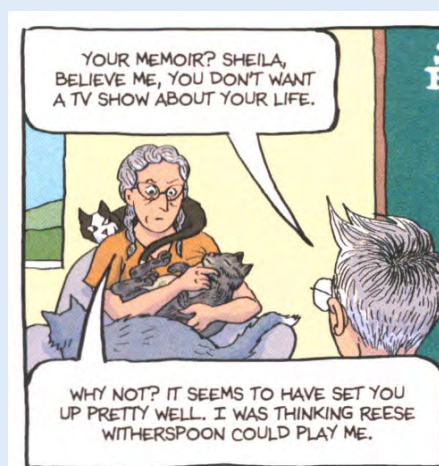
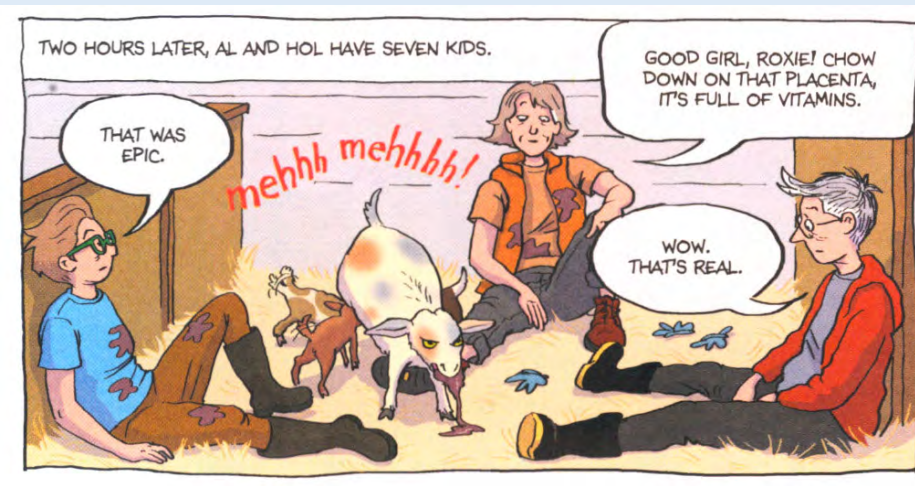


The Comics & Graphic Novel Bulletin of



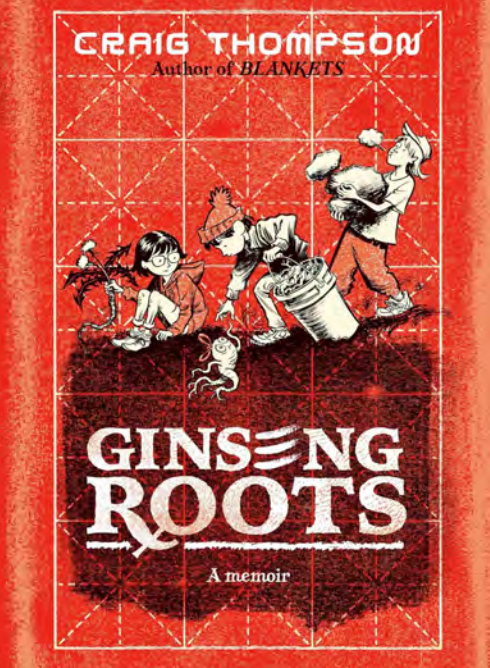
Lexington Public Library
Reading Is Just the Beginning!

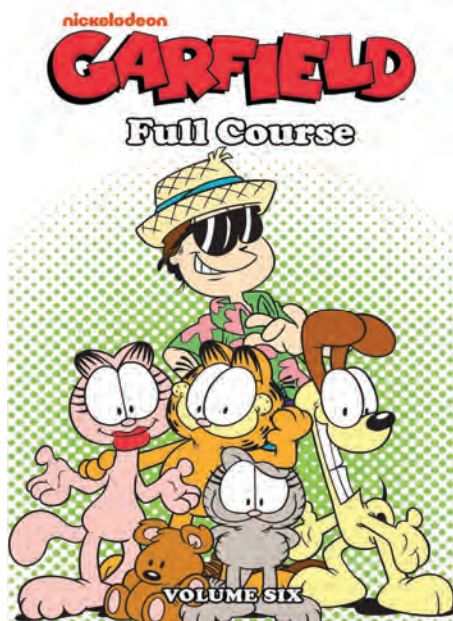
A return to form by Craig (*Blankets*) Thompson, *Ginseng Root* is an impossibly rich graphic novel about the special little root that grows only in certain places across the world, from the highlands of China to the farmlands of America. Ginseng is central to not just his family's history, but that of Wisconsin and the Midwest, China and the Far East (as when a Korean TV show pays for Thompson to visit Asia to research ginseng), the Hmong tribes who fought in and fled from Viet Nam to become workers for Asian-American ginseng growers, and so much more. Get this masterpiece of two-color cartooning via lexpublib.org!



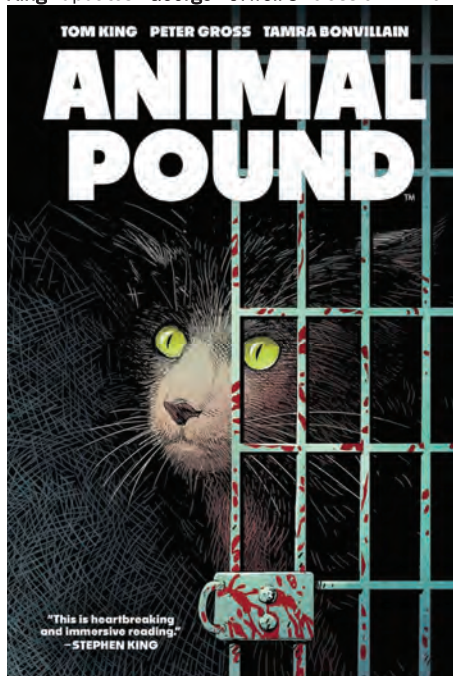
That wolf peeking out from behind the trees is one of the six angry wolves of the week. Why only six? Because Sunday is missing. And that makes life so much harder for everyone residing in the dusty little town ruled by the wolves. Especially young Nina: She works her fingers to the bone, helping the other citizens keep up and clean up after the Plantwolf and Ashwolf and Tremblewolf. She longs for a day of rest. Nina tries to fake it, tries to force it, but there's no solution but to confront the witch who has Sunday locked away. Can Nina free herself and her fellow townspeople by freeing Sunday? Romanian superstar **Ileana Surducu**n spins a new fairy tale for an age of overwork and burn-out. Get this utterly charming and inventive graphic novel for kids of all ages under J 741.5 at Central, Eastside, Beaumont and Tates Creek.

Above left: Nina performing one of several harsh tasks to rescue Sunday.



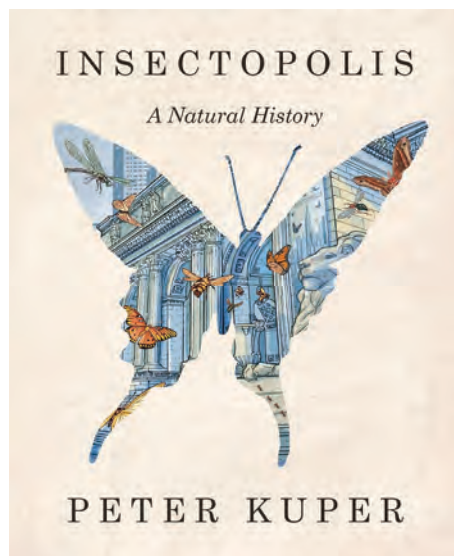


It just occurred to Ye Editor: I own a copy of the first *Garfield* collections, signed by none other than **Jim Davis** himself, back when he did the strip all by his lonesome. That was a long, long time ago; since then, like most successful cartoonists, Davis has been aided by a small army of assistants. Many of these contribute to the comic book adventures of *Garfield* published by Nickelodeon/Kaboom. Kiddie comics maven **Scott Nickel** scripts alongside **Jack Kirby's** long-time assistant **Mark Evanier**. Maybe that's why there's so many **Kirby** riffs in *Full Course* Volume 6. There's also parodies of both Superman and Batman, not to mention *Alice in Wonderland*. My fave stories are the ones featuring *Garfield's* true nemesis, the Lasagna Monster; **David Degrand's** wild and wriggly art stands out among the **Davis** doppelgangers. *Garfield: Full Course* V6 is available under J at all LPL locations. Far from the comfortable if chaotic lives of *Garfield*, *Odie* and *Nermal* lies *Animal Pound* (Boom Studios). **Tom King** updates **George Orwell's** classic *Animal*



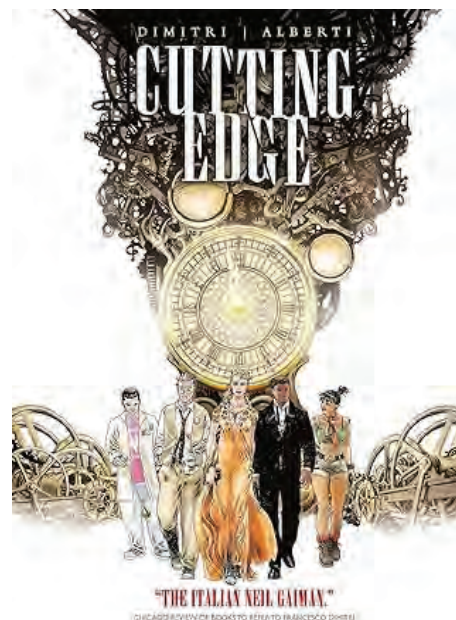
MEANWHILE

Farm for the Trumpocene. Like **Orwell's** fable, animals revolt against their masters, in this case an animal shelter. Cats, dogs and rabbits become free citizens of the Pound, with elections and everything. The first few administrations keep the cages open and maintain equality among the species. Then a bulldog named Piggy, who always put on a big show for the humans, wins his election. Piggy slowly but surely begins to renege on all the promises made by the Revolution, even as he uses the rhetoric of freedom to undermine liberty. We watch all this unfold through the eyes of *Fifi*, a cat who's never known any world but the Pound, a feline who tries to act as conscience for the community, for all the gratitude the community shows her. Artist **Peter Gross** captures the golden mean between humanistic expression and realistic depiction of animal behavior. Like its inspiration, *Animal Pound* is a harsh read, so caveat lector. Such mammalian power struggles are rendered moot by whatever cataclysm befalls the world in the next book's opening chapter, leaving the ruins of civilization a burgeoning *Insectopolis* (W.W. Morton). Having adapted **Kafka**, author **Peter Kuper**



knows well the symbolic meaning of insects. *Insectopolis* allows him to delve into the science and history of arthropods, from the ginormous millipedes of the Permian Era to the tiny bugs from which mankind derives shellac and carmine. Our struggle with insects has often been a mirror of our relationship with nature, as shown in this exquisitely drawn *Natural History* at Central, Eastside and Bates Creek. As the pipeline for new material slowly unclogs, let's peruse an older item worthy of notice. 741.5 missed *Cutting Edge* when it was released in 2021. Written by "the Italian **Neil Gaiman**" **Francesco Dmitri**, this four-part graphic novel comes on like a Eurotrash *Challengers of the Unknown*. A quintet of experts—a scientist, a mathematician, an award-winning photographer, a polymathic Poor Little Rich Girl and the mysterious muscle—take part in a contest held by the global corporation Leviathan. They must complete a series of Herculean tasks—finding a long-lost musician and his mystic muse, stealing the magic mirror of Queen Elizabeth's astrologer, confronting a minotaur—which turn out to be manifestations of a much larger conspiracy. **Mario Alberti's** inventive layouts and deft touch for physical expression move the complicated plot along. Feel that *Cutting Edge* at Central and Eastside. A huge influence on European cartooning was **Alex Raymond** and his newspaper strip, *Flash*

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Gordon. A visual phantasmagoria influenced by the planetary romances of **Edgar Rice Burroughs**, *Flash Gordon* was a global sensation. Like his fellow King Features, the Phantom and Mandrake the Magician, Flash was shouldered out of the limelight by superheroes and *Star Wars*. Various creators are trying to bring Flash and his pals back, with new comics comps coming available. That's what I thought I had ordered for LPL, but that ain't what we got. *This* Flash Gordon has been aged down and gender-swapped, becoming *The Girl from Infinity*. Dale Arden is now a refugee from a dead Earth, and a boy. Like the **Art Baltazar** comic starring Flash (see 741.5 #135), Mongo is no longer Mongo. Ming the Merciless has been replaced as top heel by a tawny young lad damn near as pretty as his sister, Princess Aura. It's...actually pretty bland, in that willfully harmless fashion of contemporary kid's stuff. But this *PaperCutz* book could make a good introduction to classic sci-fi for young readers, so get *Girl from Infinity* at Beaumont, Eastside and Bates Creek.

