

741.5

ZATANNA
AND THE HOUSE OF SECRETS
GRAPHIC NOVELS FOR KIDS & TEENS
DC'S NEW YOUTH MOVEMENT

SPRING 2020 - NO. 40

PLUS...KIRBY AND KURTZMAN



MATTHEW CODY · YOSHI YOSHITANI

The Comics & Graphic Novel Bulletin of



Lexington Public Library
Reading Is Just the Beginning!



MAN AND SUPERMAN AND OTHER STORIES



ILLUSTRATED BY HARVEY KURTZMAN

Harvey Kurtzman always stood apart from his colleagues at the legendary *Entertaining Comics*. True, he shared the same Caniffian influences as Johnny Craig and Jack Davis, the thick swirl of brushwork, the expert placing of solid blacks. But Kurtzman was a humorist at heart, and a realist. Thus he wasn't fond of EC's horror comics and his work for the company's renowned science fiction titles was far more

satirical than the romantic visions of Williamson and Wood. Harvey's sci-fi stories often centered on an ordinary shmoe caught up in extraordinary circumstances, from the titular tale of a science nerd and his musclehead brother to "The Man Who Raced Time" to William of "The Dimension Translator" (below). Other tales involved arrogant know-it-alls who learn they ain't so smart after all. The star of "Television Terror", the vicious despot in "The Radioactive Child" and the title character of "Atom Bomb Thief" (right)—all pay the price for their hubris. Fitting that Kurtzman's first EC assignment, reprinted in this *Fantagraphics* volume, was a public health giveaway comic about a randy rodeo star who catches VD. Hints of both Kurtzman's famously real war comics and his magnum opus *MAD* lie within these beautifully drawn comics, now available at Central and Tates Creek.



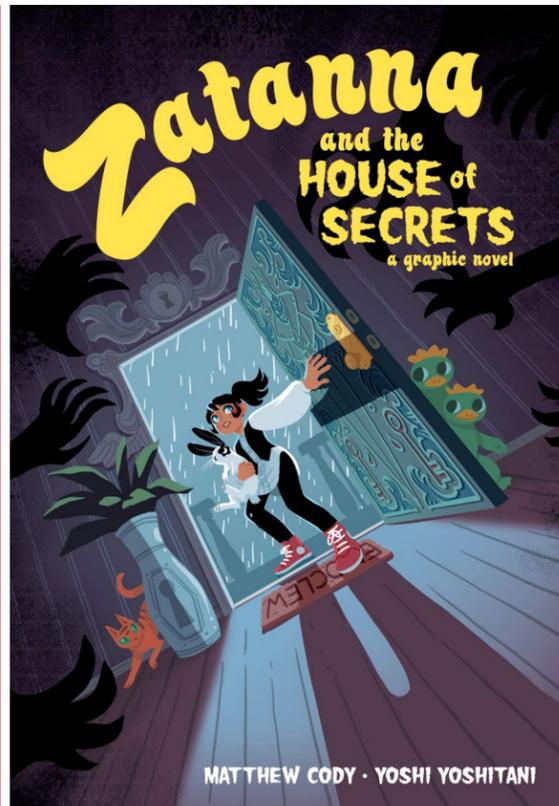
WILLIAM DASHED BACK TO THE LAB AND PLACED THE STEREOPTICON PICTURES OF THE GIRL OF HIS DREAMS INTO HIS DIMENSIONAL TRANSLATOR!



ATOM BOMB THIEF!



W-WHERE AM I? WHAT HAPPENED TO PITKIN AVENUE? STEP DOWN, MY DEAR! YOU'RE ALL MINE!

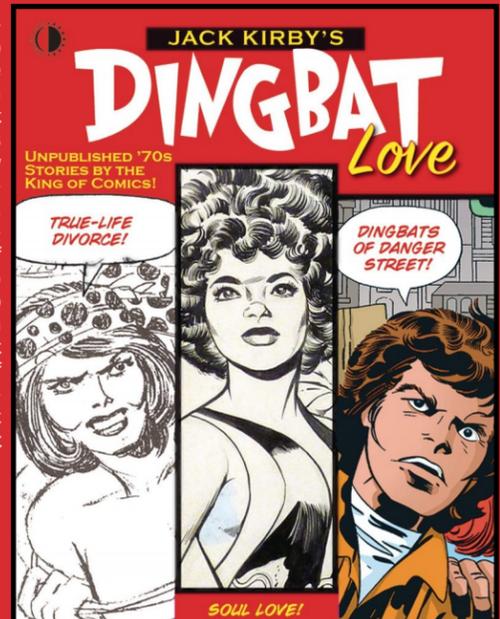


ZATANNA, Mistress of Magic, stars in the latest of DC's graphic novels for Young Adults of all ages!

MATTHEW CODY · YOSHI YOSHITANI



DC Comics is in peril. Again. The ever-struggling publisher has put its eggs in so many baskets, from Grant Morrison to the "New 52" to the recent attempts to get hip with Brian Michael Bendis, there's hardly a one left uncracked. The first time DC tried to hitch its wagon to someone else's star was the early 1970s. Jack "the King" Kirby was largely responsible for the success of hated rival Marvel. He was lured to join DC with promises of greater freedom and authority. Kirby was tired of being treated like a hired hand. He wanted to be the idea man, the boss who would come up with characters and concepts, then pass them off to others to complete under his guidance. It didn't work out that way. To the detriment of both creator and company, Kirby was undermined by DC management's timidity and short-sightedness. Examples of this dysfunction at



the junction can be found in TwoMorrow's latest, *Dingbat Love*. The *Love* part showcases work Kirby intended to compete with Marvel and Warren's black & white comics for mature readers. The titles actually released were buried by the company. *True Divorce Stories* and *Soul Love* didn't even make it to the presses. Despite his discomfort with being a fifty-something white guy writing for a black audience, Kirby still brought his trademark mix of power and humanity to *Soul Love*. *True Life Divorce* is more personal, as the happily married artist tried to make sense of love and matrimony at the height of the Sexual Revolution. Avatar of the rage that always simmered within the ghetto-born Kirby, "Good Looks" was the leader of *The Dingbats of Danger Street*. This throwback to his kid gang comics of the Forties was one of Jack's last strips for DC. Even Kirby's failures were fascinating, as shown by *Dingbat Love!*



Zatanna, Mistress of Magic, has been a long-time fan favorite among DC's heroines. The first legacy superhero, Zatanna followed in the footsteps of her father, Golden Age great Zatar. True, much of her appeal is the sassy riff on the traditional magician's outfit (image left) that's made her a cosplay fixture. Zatanna stars both solo and with the Justice League in graphic novels and animated cartoons available via lexpublib.org.

Zatanna Zatar is the daughter of the World's Greatest Magician. She and her father live in the House of Secrets, which is filled with all kinds of tricks, puzzles and mysteries—foremost being the fate of Zatanna's long-lost mother. The sudden disappearance of her father leads the young mystic-to-be into the heart of



both the House of Secrets... and her family's secrets! Zatanna is joined by Pocus the rabbit, about the only friend Zatanna has left after she alienates her nerd pals and the popular kids. Then the new boy in school turns out to be Klarion the Witch Boy! Magical hi-jinx abound in this rollicking YP novel!

I'm biased; after all, from where I sit as I type this, I can see three Zatanna figurines. But *Zatanna and the House of Secrets* is one of the best of the DC graphic novels for teens and kids. Described below, the books for older readers are rendered in a two-color palette, eg. The lovely aquamarines of *Mera: Tidebreaker*. Full color and a smaller format make the likes of *Black Canary: Ignite* a pleasure to read. Get 'em all at lexpublib.org!



The daughter of the Devil yearns to live like an ordinary girl in this novel about the popular Titan.

Princess Diana breaks Amazon law and unleashes chaos in the most intense of the DC YA releases.

Harleen Quinzel arrives in Gotham City and joins a troupe of drag queens against a cruel developer.

Fleeing an abusive home, teenage Selina Kyle lives, loves and fights on the mean streets of Gotham.

This upcoming novel stars one Barbara Gordon, alias Batgirl, left anything but helpless when evil strikes.

Mera of Atlantis makes landfall and meets a boy named Arthur in this gorgeously drawn YA novel.

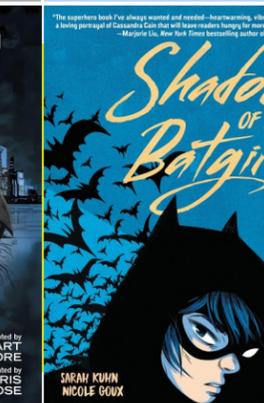
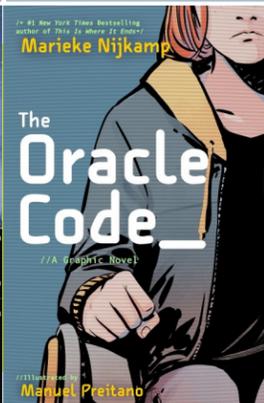
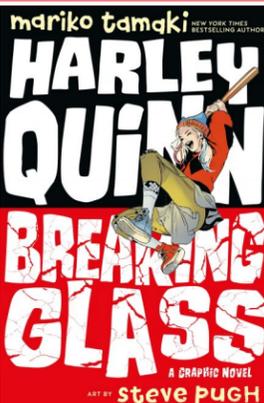
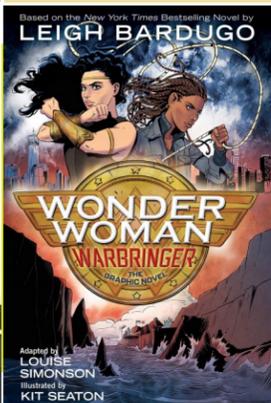
Rich or poor, good or bad, cat or bat, the students of Gotham High chase grades and follow their dreams.

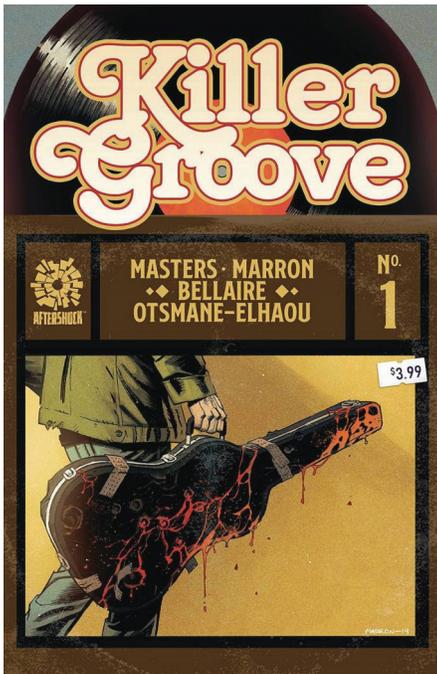
Coming soon, this novel follows big top star Dick Grayson before he became Robin the Boy Wonder.

13-year-old Dinah Lance wants to be 1) a rock star, and 2) a cop-- if she doesn't get kicked out of school!

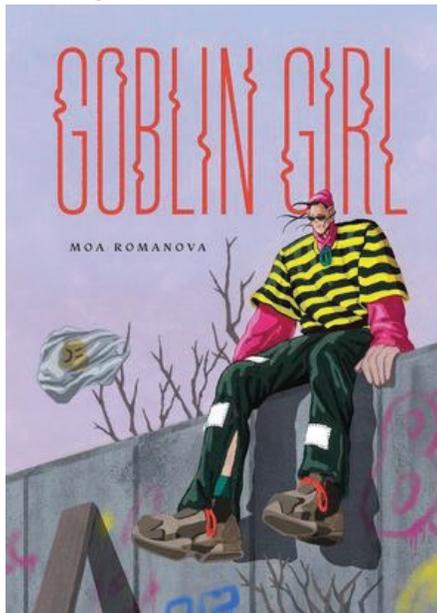
Young Bruce Wayne gets his first bad girl crush when he's swept away in a clandestine class war.

Teenage assassin Cassandra Cain lives in the public library, a refuge from the brutal past hot on her trail.



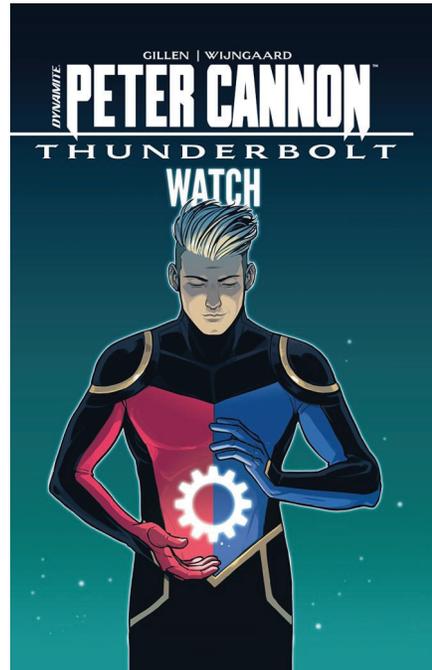


Summer of Love, and the killing is easy. Well, two summers past, actually. 1970, the year the Fab Four fell apart, and they weren't alone. "This dark cloud over the city," as Johnny the guitarist says. "Like the dream died." But Johnny's dreams of being a star do come true. His songs are hits. Literally— they're based on the murders Johnny's done for hire. Meanwhile, Johnny's bar buddy Jackie the private eye takes on a case and cops a cig from juvenile delinquent Lucy. Once Jackie's Uncle Raul shows up, everyone's locked in the *Killer Groove* (Aftershock). Fans of *100 Bullets* and **David Lapham** will grok this hard-boiled hippie *noir* by **Masters** and **Marron** and its jaundiced look at the waning of the Love Generation. Bohemia never dies, though. It just mutates. Moa is a modern girl in the modern world and it's

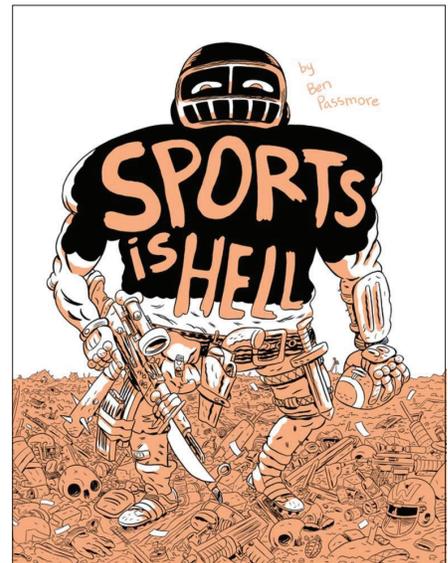


MEANWHILE

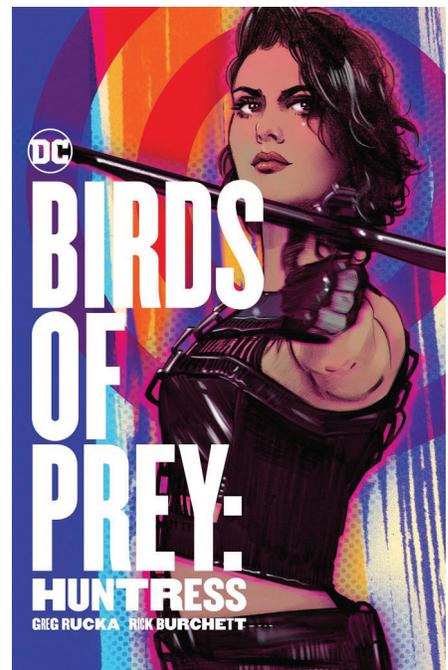
bringing her down. She's chasing all the latest thrills and taking all the latest pills. Panic is her addiction, anxiety her art. Sadly, that doesn't get her into art school. Happily, Moa swipes her way into the affections of a famous TV star. Most of *Goblin Girl* (Fanta-graphics) concerns Moa's on-again/off-again relationship with the older man who would be her lover, but settles for being her patron. But all that action takes place offstage and online. We see the affair blossom and wilt in a series of texts hilariously dissected by Moa and her galpals. Moa the character is a hot mess moving through **Moa Romanova** the cartoonist's wiggly world. **Romanova's** art comes on like a manga version of the film *Yellow Submarine*, a loopy deco style with a creative balance of color and black & white.



A Silver Age footnote, *Peter Cannon, Thunderbolt* was created by ex-cop cartoonist **Pat Morisi**. The character stood out on the crowded stands of the Sixties thanks to **Morisi's** stylish artwork and the hero's stark, stylish costume. But the character's real claim to fame is that he, along with his colleagues in Charlton's "Action Heroes" line, inspired the game-changing graphic novel *Watchmen*. Moore & Gibbon's wizardry transformed Peter Cannon into Ozymandias. Both commentary and rebuke, the outsized influence of *Watchmen* provoked further meta-fictional takes on costumed heroes, to the point that now most comics are about comics. The snake chews up a few more feet of tail with *Peter Cannon: Thunderbolt—Watch* (Dynamite). Written by **Kieron** (*Wicked & Divine*) **Gillen**, it's about the OG Peter Cannon rumbling with his Ozymandian doppel-ganger, a despotic representation of "the dangers of unrelenting deconstruction." I second that emotion, with hope that *Watch*



is the last of its kind. At least it's pretty to look at, the larger European format giving **Caspar Wijngaard's** art and **Mary Saffro's** colors room to breathe. **Ben Passmore's** got no problem smothering the page with detail and action in the tradition of his underground forebears. **Passmore's** hyperactive style shows just how much *Sports Is Hell*. As an after-game riot explodes into revolution and reaction, the creator of *My Black Friend* jumps head first without a helmet into the mad vortex of tribalism, sadism and capitalism that is sports in America. Helena Bertinelli ain't playin'. Waging a vendetta against the gangsters who murdered her family, the former Mafia princess takes on the guise of the Huntress! The canonical origin story, this tie-in with the *Harley Quinn* movie reprints the mini-series by **Rick Burchett** and mystery maven **Greg Rucka**. Reserve it from [lexpublib.org!](http://lexpublib.org/)



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