

OGDEN WHITNEY
♥ **RETURN TO** ♥
ROMANCE

CLASSIC LOVE COMICS WITH A MODERN TWIST

FEBRUARY 2020 - NO. 38

PLUS...KRAZY + IGNATZ 4EVER



The Comics & Graphic Novel Bulletin of



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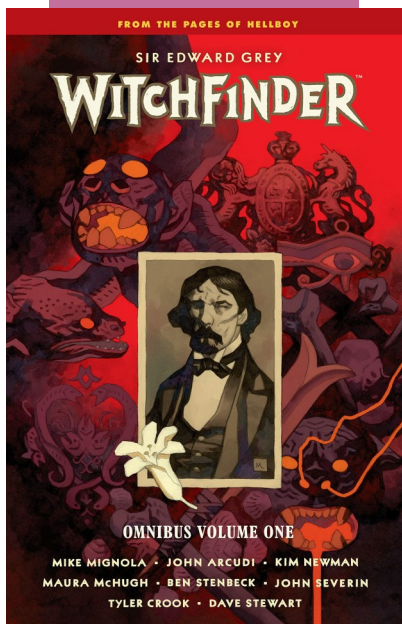
NEW SERIES NOW

The first volumes of several new series are arriving this month. *Sea of Stars Volume 1: Lost in the Wild Heavens* (image left) follows the down-n-dirty adventures of a space trucker named Gil. Recently widowed, Gil takes his son Kady on a lucrative long haul across the universe. Things don't go as planned, and father and son are separated in the cold vastness of space. This blue collar space opera was written by Jason (Southern Bastards) Aaron and Dennis Hopeless with art by Steven Green and Rico Renzi. Another star-crossed collection from Image is *Space Bandits*. Rival crime queens of the cosmos are forced to team up when their crews betray them in this slam-bang series by Mark Millar and Matteo Scalera. Meanwhile, *The Queen of Bad Dreams* has broken loose from Slumberland. Known as "figments", these psychic runaways are chased down and either returned to the land of Nod or gifted autonomy in the waking world. A figment named Ava leads her erstwhile captor into a maze of questions and conspiracies



The latest from other SERIES includes the second volumes of fantasy thrillers CODA, THE ETHER, MIDDLEWEST (image left), OBLIVION SONG and the gamer drama DIE; the third of SNOTGIRL, HEAD LOPPER, GIDEON FALLS and the creepy horror series ICE CREAM MAN, with a fourth on the way; plus PAPER GIRLS v6, LAZARUS v6, RAT QUEENS v7, WICKED & DIVINE v9 and the eighth collection of the TV hit, DEADLY CLASS. From the world of HELLBOY comes WITCHFINDER while ASCENDER is the sequel to DESCENDER. Find them all at [lexpublib.org!](http://lexpublib.org/)

in this hard-boiled oneiric thriller by Lore, Perez and Kelly. Back on earth, Kyle Strahm, author of gruesome horror series *Spread*, is one of the creators of *Unearth*. A disease that turns victims into vile mutations breaks out in the remote reaches of Mexico. As a team of scientists dig for the source of the infection, they uncover further mysteries. Writer of *Crowded* (see 741.5 #32) Christopher Sebella, joins artist Jen Hickman for *Test*, a near-future novel of survival and resistance as a teched-up child of tomorrow fights for her life.

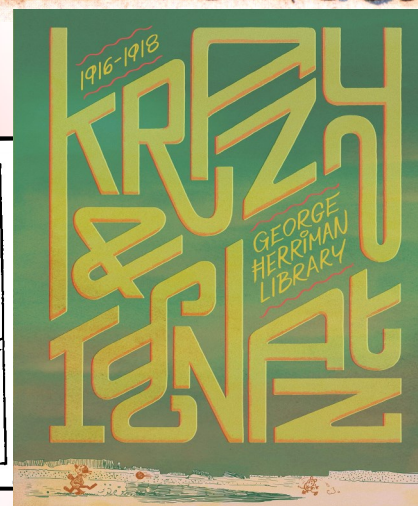
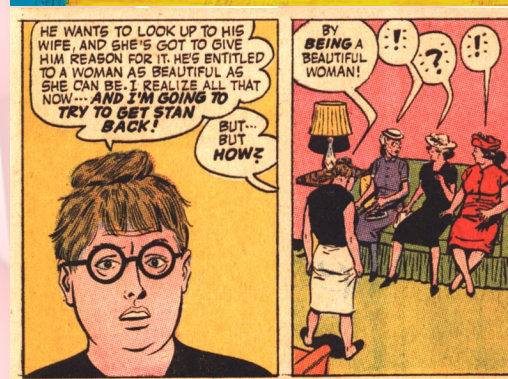
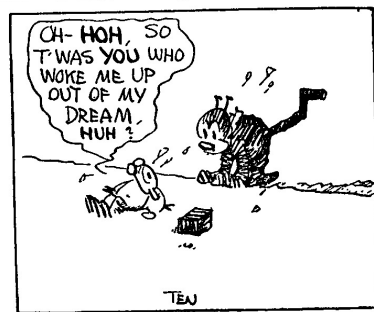


The set-up was simple: kat loves mouse, mouse hates kat, dog loves kat and hates mouse. But the creator of this eternal triangle, **George Herriman**, turned that basic set-up into poetry, visual and verbal. Long hailed as one of the great achievements in the global history of comics, Herriman's strip *Krazy Kat* has influenced generations of artists. None have truly duplicated Herriman's cheerful combination of slapstick and surrealism. Reprints have been many. LPL has a few. But *Krazy & Ignatz 1916-1918*, the new oversize volume

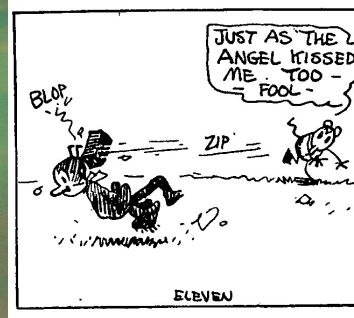
From their introduction in 1948 to their sad end in the '70s, every comics company, from the top flight to the bottom of the barrel, published at least one romance comic. Founded in 1946, the American Comics Group survived the post-Code crash that wiped out so many other publishers.

ACG specialized in genre anthologies; in fact, its *Adventures into the Unknown* was the first regularly published horror comic. ACG's romance titles were like their other books: competent, if somewhat bland, riffs on standard plots drawn in the cleanly realistic style of the era. That brings us to **Ogden Whitney**. Whitney was a veteran of the comics biz known for his sleek line work and graceful compositions. He

OGDEN



WHITNEY



wrote and drew his own material, including the stories compiled in *Return to Romance: The Strange Love Stories of Ogden Whitney* (New York Review). Originally published in the early 1960s, these romance comics are indeed "strange" in comparison to others of the era. The complicated plots flip the script on romance comics clichés. A dowdy wife transforms herself into a Bettie Page lookalike to save her marriage (image left); a boxer on the run from his past gets a job as whipping boy for a dress-maker; a distaff daredevil breaks it off with her wimpy boyfriend. A loving look at a genre teetering on the brink of social change, *Return to Romance* is available at Central and Tates Creek.

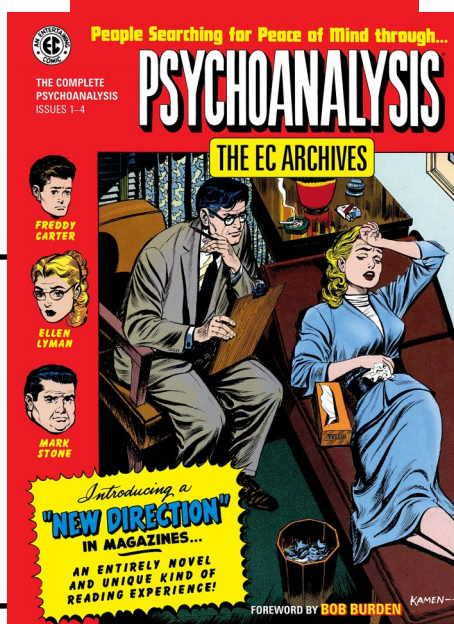
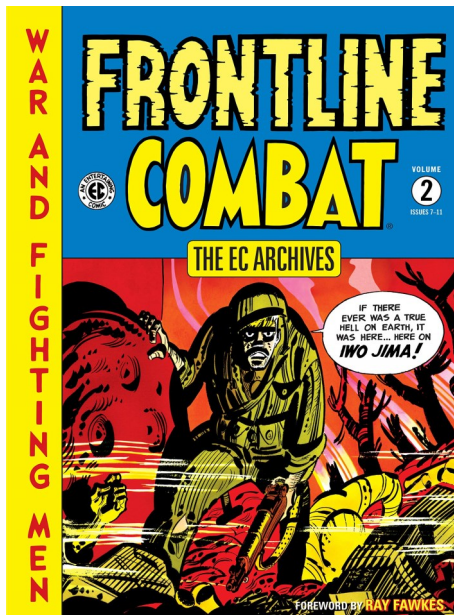
EC FOR THEE, SEE?

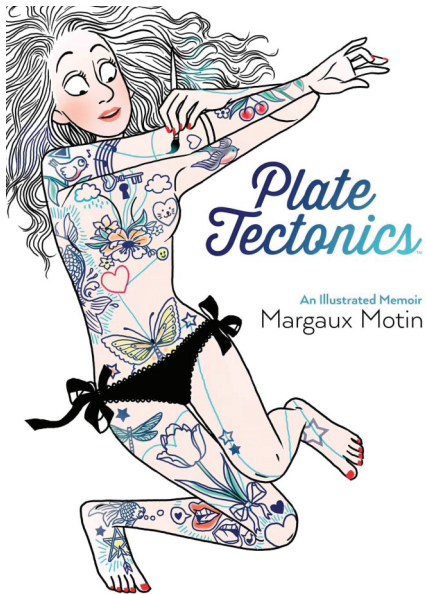
A longtime leader in independent comics, Dark Horse Comics has become one of the prime movers of this, the Golden Age of Reprints. One of their best series has been the oversize, full-color reprints of the esteemed Entertaining Comics. EC to its fans, Entertaining Comics was a small 1950s outfit that, through artistry and ambition, changed the art form. The latest EC offerings from Dark Horse Archives include the second and final volume of *Frontline Combat*, available at Northside. Edited and written by the great Harvey Kurtzman, these true-to-life tales of "WAR AND FIGHTING MEN" are among the best combat comics in the biz. Outstanding issues include the cover feature, #7 (July-Aug 1952), which describes the WW2 battle for Iwo Jima; each story continues from the last, so the reader sees the action from all the angles, including the experiences of the Japanese. *FC* #9 (Nov-Dec 1952) was the first of several special issues covering the Civil War, each a perfect example of the EC crew's dedication to their art. That high-mindedness was put to

Those poor souls as yet unexposed to the glory of EC comics now have a perfect gateway to EC's exceptional brand of thrills and chills. **CHOKE GASP! THE BEST OF 75 YEARS OF EC COMICS** handpicks from EC's horror, sci-fi, crime and war comics. Arranged by artist, this big, thick tome features full-color reprints of such EC classics as Johnny Craig's "And All Through the House" (image right), "Mars Is Heaven", "Foul Play", "Carrion Death", "Air Burst" and so many more. **CHOKE GASP!** is available at Central and Eastside.

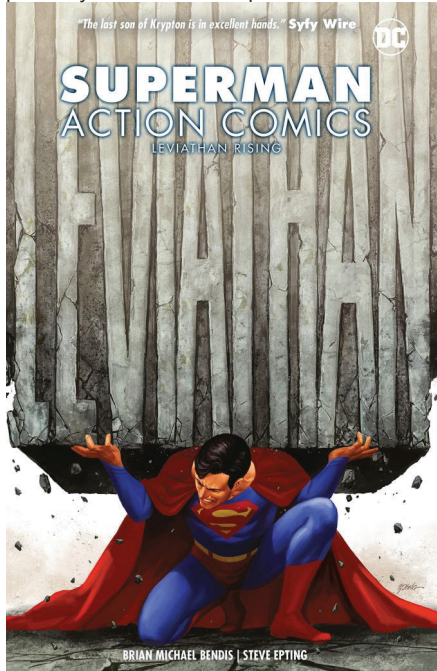
test after the Comics Code outlawed most of EC's output. EC's "New Direction" titles tried to do for doctors and journalists what the "New Trend" did for vengeful zombies and murderous housewives. A failure in the marketplace, the New Direction did produce one of the oddest comics ever published. *Psychoanalysis* follows three people from issue to issue as they "search for peace of mind." Entirely drawn by Jack (Daddy Lost His Head) Kamen, *Psychoanalysis* is a strange time capsule of mid-20th Century anxiety, available at Central.

from Fantagraphics, starts from the beginning. A throwaway gag in a cute but inconsequential daily strip explodes into a full page extravaganza chockful of characters, jokes, puns and delightfully weird scenery. Intended as a regular full color Sunday page, *Krazy Kat* was too outre for the folks. Yet its biggest fan, media magnate William Randolph Hearst himself, kept moving it around until it finally found its audience. Join those "heppy, heppy pipples" by reserving this impressive tome from Beaumont and Central.





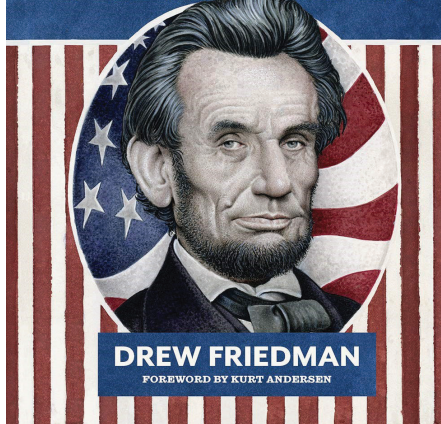
"After a divorce, you go through a kind of breakdown where you become a teenager again," writes cartoonist **Margaux Motin**. "And set out looking for all the selves you sacrificed at the altar of couple-hood...No matter how old you really are, after a divorce, you're 14." The rest of *Plate Tectonics* (Archaia) follows the 35-year-old Parisian inkslinger and her daughter as they navigate the changes wrought by the simultaneous loss and freedom afforded by divorce. Drinking too much, finding new love with an old friend, moving to Basque country—Margaux does it all with a mix of dread and glee. A feminine take on the oh-so-French "clear line" style, **Motin's** art is airy and slick, enlivened by gorgeous yet tasteful colors and a real gift for physical and facial expressions. *Plate Tectonics* is currently available from Central, though it's such a good book, we'll probably order a few copies for other loca-



MEANWHILE

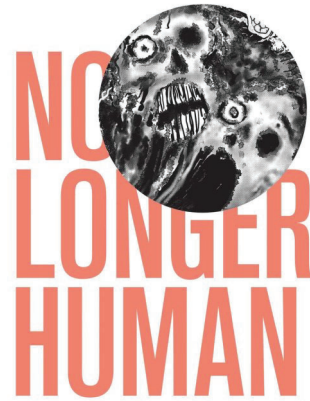
tions. All locations of LPL have a copy of *Superman: Action Comics—Leviathan Rising* in their TEEN sections. Now written by superstar scribe **Brian Michael Bendis**, the Man of Steel finds himself swept up in the kind of double-dealing black ops hi-jinx **Bendis** has made his specialty. "Leviathan" is the name behind the devastating attacks on the intelligence infrastructure of the DC Universe. Checkmate, ARGUS, Spyril, the Department of Extranormal Operations, the cult of Kobra — all get blown up real good by big blue blobs. Superman goes undercover with Lois Lane to suss out who or what is Leviathan, even as Leviathan stalks them. It's a deadly game of snakes'n'leaders that may be more than "truth, justice and the American Way" can survive. Artist **Steve Epting** avoids the worst habits of current DC product, producing detailed yet very readable pages that moves the story along at a quick pace, even with all the palaver for which **Bendis** is notorious. Readers looking for less

ALL THE PRESIDENTS



verbiage should check out *All the Presidents* (Fantagraphics). This Oversize book is the latest from the great caricaturist of the age, **Drew Friedman**. Like his previous book *Heroes of the Comics*, which celebrated creators of the funnybook biz in Friedman's "warts-and-all" style, *All the Presidents* presents each Prez in a full-page drawing, with his basic information on the facing page. Of course, being based on what is often a limited number of visual sources, some of the portraits look quite familiar. Yet each, from the Founders to the world-beaters of the Progressive Era to the titans of the TV age, are rendered with **Friedman's** trademark humanity and humor. He really captures the personalities of our Commander-in-Chiefs, from the doom-sodden **Franklin Pierce** to the defiant cool of **Barack Obama**. *All the Presidents* can be found at all LPL locations. Beaumont, Central and Northside are home to the latest novel by manga superstar **Junji Ito**. *No Longer Human* (Viz) is a graphic adaptation of **Osamu Dazai's** final novel before he and his lover committed suicide in the exact way his characters tried. *No Longer Human* is the first person account of Yozo Oba. Born alienated, the haunted Oba stumbles into one bad

Junji Ito
Original novel by Osamu Dazai



situation after another, all complicated by his constant lying, his feckless self-interest. A classic Beautiful Loser, "an obscene and indecent air...clings to you," says Oda's roguish pal Horiki. "That...puts dreams in the heads of women." Oba leaves a trail of broken hearts and bodies in this psychological horror novel in which the monster is the narrator. The narrator of *Cover* is not a monster, but a freak of a different kind. Max Field is a comics creator. That job leads to a secondary career as a spy for the CIA. "Who better," says his recruiter, "...than the men and women who travel around the globe, convention to convention...and make up stories for a living?" The reality and risks of espionage become clear soon enough in this Jinxworld series gorgeously illustrated in mixed-media by **David Mack** and written in full Mamet-in-spandex mode by **Brain Michael Bendis**. Get it at lexpublib.org/



JINXWORLD

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