

741.5

GILBERT HERNANDEZ
CHILDREN OF PALOMAR

PLUS...SIDEWAYS

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COMICS



The Comics & Graphic Novel Bulletin of



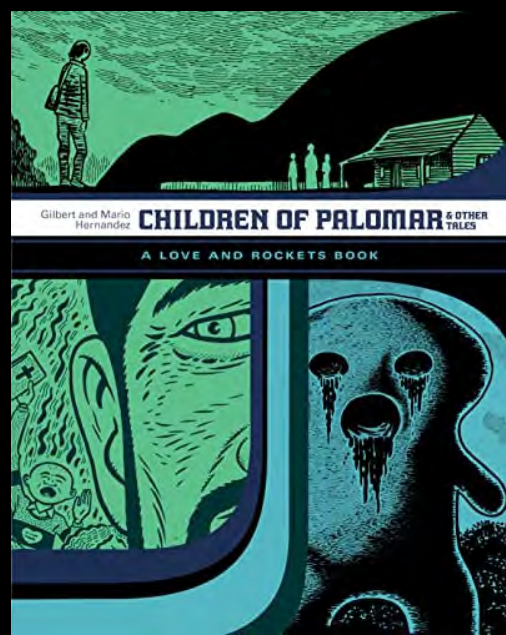
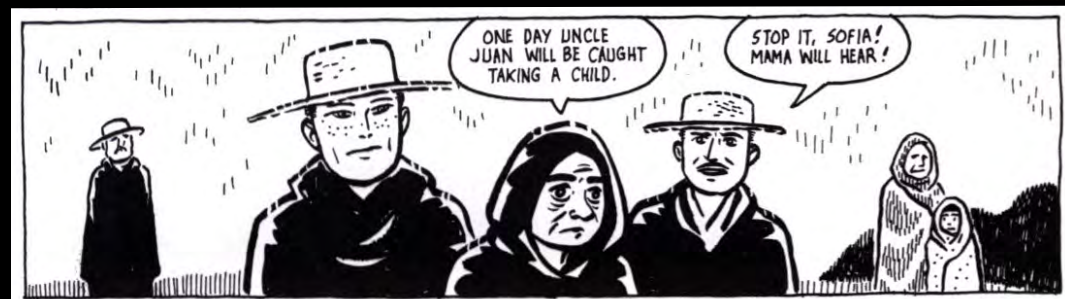
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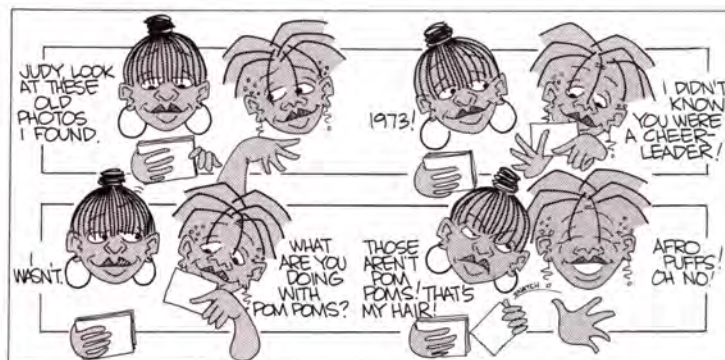


CHILDREN OF PALOMAR
 (FANTAGRAPHICS)
 BEAUMONT — CENTRAL
 VILLAGE

One of the justly idolized Hernandez Brothers responsible for the long-lived and ground-breaking *Love and Rockets*, Gilbert, AKA Beto, is the one who doesn't draw pretty. His cartooning is raw, spontaneous, physical. Huge areas of Tothian darkness fill the frames through which his characters, everyday people caught up in extraordinary circumstances, live lives we all can recognize, despite the foreign lands in which they reside. The first third of Beto's latest reprints the manic political drama "Me for the Unknown" written by Mario, the "third Hermano." The novel *Julio's Day* follows its eponymous hero from birth to death but his story is one of many told in its pages. And "Children of Palomar" returns to that fabled Central American community for a strange adventure in scientific imperialism, with some serious ass-kicking by Sheriff Chelo! (right) Deeply weird, richly humane, *Children of Palomar* is another quiet classic from Gilbert Hernandez!



Poor Charlie. Poor little guy. Just an average boy with average interests and average parents. But something's wrong with Mom and Dad. Especially Mom. She's sad all the time, mad all the time, drunk all the time. Mom can't be bothered with Charlie or his sister or even Dad. And Dad keeps calling him "Tommy". Who's "Tommy"? The answer to that question only deepens the mystery at the heart of *Why Don't You Love Me?* (Drawn & Quarterly). Memory becomes both anchor and burden as the protagonists, unwilling wife and mother Claire and befuddled husband and father Mark confront a life they suddenly don't want to live anymore. But why? What did they expect in its place? Right when the pain and confusion get too much, a great white light wipes it all away. Once again, Claire is the first to realize that something is, if not wrong, then different. That's when the novel becomes something more than another grim domestic drama. Laid out like individual pages from the Sunday funnies, the story Paul B. Rainey tells with simple, expressive brushstrokes and well-placed blocks of black is a chronicle of love lost and found in the heat of history. *Why Don't You Love Me?* is available at Beaumont, Central and Eastside.



As seen in 741.5 #89, the list of cartoonists of color is a short one. Shorter still for women of color. Into that void stepped Barbara Brandon-Croft. 1991 saw the debut of her comic strip *Where I'm Coming From*, distributed by Universal Press Syndicate, home of *Garfield* and *Doonesbury*. Lasting until 2005, the strip featured a rotating cast of African-American women talking about the personal and the political...and being Black women, the two were often inextricably entwined. Men, work, hair, babies, bosses, cops — all are fair game for Brandon-Croft's fearless femmes. Sometimes dizzy, sometimes dour, but always honest, *Where I'm Coming From* has been collected by Drawn & Quarterly in a lovely hardback edition available at Central, Northside and Tates Creek.

You could, I suppose, trace it all back to Marvel. That company was the first to "cross the streams" of pop culture, creating a universe where the Two-Gun Kid meets the God of Thunder or the star of a long-dead teen comic returns in a snazzy costume and joins the Avengers before hooking up with the son of the Devil. Not to mention Howard the Duck. So now there's *Hellboy's* mix of Lee and Lovecraft, the mosh pit of tropes swiped from epic fantasy and space opera called *Saga*, *Love & Rocket's* decades of magical realism dressed in punk rock leathers. But when it comes to syncretistic fantasy, *Echolands* outdoes them all. The heroine is Little Red Riding Hood, the villain the Wizard of Oz if he ripped off Saruman's staff, his daughter a vicious Vertigo version of Poison Ivy. Meanwhile, there's a Hagrid-hefty bruiser, a guy who should be pals with Tintin, another who looks like a He-Man figure designed by Kirby, and many more. A hundred different worlds of if blend and battle on the rectangular pages of this Image release, rendered with typical mastery by the astounding J.H. Williams III!



The artist: "I want write a story about my grandmothers." Her grandmother: "Why don't you write a love story instead?" The artist: "There are plenty of love stories, but not so many grandma stories." The artist is Ana Penyas, mamaw's name is Aruja, and the latter saw some things during her youth in Franco's Spain. *We're All Just Fine* (Fantagraphics) moves from the 21st Century of old ladies (left) and ungrateful grandkids to the 1970s of bad marriages maintained by the heavy hand of the dictator's theocratic regime. Drawn in an engaging scrawl of blacks and oranges, *...Fine* is a chronicle of how women's lives have changed and yet not changed. Go to lexpublib.org!

From Werewolf Hunter to Elsa Bloodstone, with Doc Stearn in between, there have been comics heroes dedicated to the eradication of monsters in our midst. But what if our darling protagonist...liked monsters? Even protected them from the most vicious creature of all, Man? Meet Margo Maloo. The smart and sassy South Asian tween acts as a buffer between the human citizens of Echo City and its inhuman denizens. Banshees, goblins, kappas, ogres: hainchyboogers of all kinds from around the globe reside in the dark corners and abandoned spaces of Margo's metropolis. But the winds of change are beginning blow exceedingly hard. Urban renewal is on the agenda, like the demolition of the old sugar factory where the giant spiders live. In the latest from the *Creepy Case Files of Margo Maloo*, *The Tangled Web* ensnares not only Margo but her would-be assistant "monster mediator" Charles. His attempts to get other kids into the biz have backfired, endangering not just Chuck and the other children, but the monsters, too. And they ain't happy about it. A Barksian blend of humor and adventure, the third volume in the series wryly written and delightfully drawn by Drew Weing is available at Central, Eastside and Tates Creek!





The original sold literal millions of comics back in the Golden Age. But by 1968, the only Marvel that mattered was Mighty, and the company insiders always called Timely had embraced brand awareness with evangelical fervor. So when the trademark on Fawcett's Captain Marvel lapsed, the House of Ideas jumped on it. Already burdened with another hero's name, the new Captain Marvel wasn't very original. Mar-vel was an Adam Strange in reverse, an alien invader sent to Earth to punish our paltry mudball for its heroes whooping on previous representatives of the interstellar Kree Empire. In that, he was something new: a character based on an already prodigious Marvel mythology. Mar-vel would go through a lot of changes, most notably during the "cosmic" period which involved Thanos the Mad Titan. But it all starts here, with his boss green-and-white uniform, the love triangle with evil authority Yon-Rogg and space nurse Una, some dashing slapdash art by **Gene Colan** and **Don Heck**, and the woman who

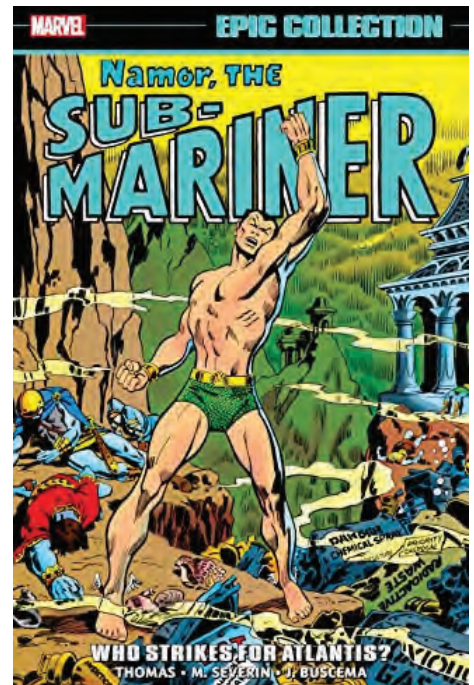


MEANWHILE

will inherit the mantle of Captain Marvel, Carol Danvers. Find this dandy little compilation in TEEN at all LPL locations. Speaking of teens, graphic novels aimed at the YA (Young Adult) market have been around long enough to develop their own visual paradigm, a smooth combination of romance manga and Archie comics. For fresh examples, check out *Hollow* and *Incredible Doom*. Honestly, it can get pretty bland. Which is why 741.5 recommends *Forest Hills Bootleg Society* (Simon & Shuster). Artist **Nicole Goux** kinda draws in the prevailing style. But there's a quirky approach to both figures and storytelling, like how **Giroux** describes her characters with labels like an **Alex Schomburg** cover for a wartime issue of *Captain America*. Her backgrounds are also intensely detailed, more so than most YA comics. That makes sense given how important the locale is to the story. A tiny community surrounded by fields and woodland, Forest Hills, California, is, essentially, a company town dependent upon the Christian boarding school attended by our quartet of heroines. Unfortunately for the girls and the school, only one of them, sweet, quiet Maggie, is a believer. Brooke, Kelly and Melissa are not. In fact, Brooke and Kelly are carrying on a clandestine affair. And it's Kelly, the anime freak, who gets the other gals in-



scam to make money: selling bootleg anime DVDs to the kids at school. It's a sweet grift at first. With money comes status, and with status comes entry into the world of the cool kids. But they turn out to be not so cool after all, and the small world they live in starts closing in on the girls. The stress of being criminals in both thought and action frays the bonds of affection between the original members of the *Forest Hills Bootleg Society*. Sure to be banned somewhere sometime soon, grab your copy from TEEN via lexpublib.org! Walter's having some serious issues with his friends, too. He goes to all the trouble of saving them from the end of the world and putting them up at *The Nice House on the Lake*. And what does that get him? Nothing but grief. Especially when that one friend he's had to quarantine for her bad attitude breaks the cone of silence and hips the others to what's what. The second volume of this hit horror series from DC Black Label by **Tynion**, **Bueno** and **Bellaire** is as creepy as the first (see 741.5 #75). Other horror comics include new chapters of *Department of Truth* and *That Texas Blood* and a new series, *Grim*, in which a troubled emo chick becomes Death. Destiny is the name of the villain sought by Namor, the Avenging Son. The Sub-mariner's quest to find the heel who robbed him of decades pro-



vides the background for *Who Strikes For Atlantis?* Available from Central TEEN, the latest Epic Collection features throwdowns with Attuma, Tiger Shark, Orka, and other oceanic baddies, as well as a rumble with Doctor Doom, Namor's first meeting with future fellow Defender Dr. Strange and an unfortunate misunderstanding with the new kid on the block, Captain Marvel. Like Mar-vel, the Sub-Mariner has a *Mighty Marvel Masterwork* comp out, along with Daredevil's second MMM. In contrast to those sleek little volumes, the second Compendium of *Starman* is a beast of a book. We follow Jack Knight into outer space, where he meets n'grets DC sci-fi heroes like Adam Strange, Space Cabbie and Ultra the Multi-Alien. After the hunt for the Eighties Starman, Jack solves the mystery of the Starman of 1953, right before his beloved Opal City blows up real good. A high point of Nineties comics, *Starman 2* includes Jack's team-up with Hellboy along with the complete series starring the Shade!



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