
Subject: Dave's Comics Capsules for September 2021
Posted by [dvandom](#) on Thu, 30 Sep 2021 16:21:33 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Dave's Comicbook Capsules Et Cetera
Intermittent Picks and Pans of Comics and Related Media

Standard Disclaimers: Please set appropriate followups. Recommendation does not factor in price. Not all books will have arrived in your area this month. An archive can be found on my homepage, <http://www.eyrie.org/~dvandom/Rants>
Looks like this COVID surge is ending, time for the next one?

Items of Note (strongly recommended or otherwise worthy): Way of the House Husband vol 6, Wayne Family Adventures

In this installment: Black Widow (BluRay), Wayne Family Adventures, Way of the House Husband vol 6, Earth Boy, Shang-Chi #4, Moon Knight #3, RWBY/Justice League #6 (of 7), Vampirella #24 (of 25), Norse Mythology II #4 (of 6), Save Yourself! #4 (of 4), Scoot Frontiers #1, Impossible Jones #1, Kaijumax Season 6 #3 (of 6), Transformers Halloween 2021, Transformers: King Grimlock #2 (of 5), Transformers: Shattered Glass #2 (of 5), Transformers Beast Wars #8, Transformers #34-5.

Current Wait List (books either Diamond didn't ship or my store failed to order): Soulstream GN. It didn't ship release week, so my store re-ordered it...and got a copy of the \$1.99 preview comic instead.

"Other Media" Capsules:

Things that are comics-related but not necessarily comics (i.e. comics-based movies like Iron Man or Hulk), or that aren't going to be available via comic shops (like comic pack-ins with DVDs) will go in this section when I have any to mention. They may not be as timely as comic reviews, especially if I decide to review novels that take me a week or two (or ten) to get around to.

Black Widow: Marvel Studios - I keep calling this Red Widow, partly because the BluRay box is red, but mostly because I wrote a faux-golden age heroine named Red Widow for some of my amateur fiction. :) Anyway, some have compared this to the Roger Moore era of James Bond in terms of "Spies with all the wonderful toys" stuff, but really it's Steranko SHIELD on the big screen. With a touch of Kirby. While it opens with a childhood flashback scene and ends with a post-Endgame epilogue, most of the action is between Civil War and Infinity War. It finally explores what Natasha and Clint did in Budapest, but only as setup for a final-and-we-mean-it-this-time confrontation with the Red Room project that turned Natasha into the (well, a) Black Widow. It also brings in Yelena from the comics, the replacement

Black Widow that Marvel tried to push for a while before bringing Natasha back, and a host of other Black Widows, thereby ensuring that even though Natasha died in Endgame, they can still have a Black Widow in future movies. Along for the ride is the Red Guardian, who is largely comic relief...a counter to Captain America who has never met Captain America and who was only a costumed patriotic hero for a few years in the 1980s when there weren't really any other costumed heroes for him to encounter. So he's kinda bitter. Overall, it's a pretty good Super Spy flick, ending in a sufficiently large and explosive set piece battle to justify its budget. A few of the plot points are a bit forced, but that's only a problem if you're expecting gritty realistic spy thriller stuff (to the extent that the phrase isn't a massive contradiction in terms). It also has a touch of heist flick structure in the final act, where they flashback on the planning just before revealing how things are actually going to plan. If I have one substantive complaint about the movie, it's that they're reusing a Shock Reveal plot device from another MCU movie. Once is clever, twice is starting to become a cliché. Recommended. Price varies by format and store. Will be free on Disney+ streaming in early October.

Digital Content:

Unless I find a really compelling reason to do so (such as a lack of regular comics), I won't be turning this into a webcomic review column. Rather, stuff in this section will generally be full books available for reading online or for download, usually for pay.

Wayne Family Adventures: DC/Webtoons - https://www.webtoons.com/en/slice-of-life/batman-wayne-family-adventures/list?title_no=3180
As noted above, I don't generally review webcomics here. but this is a notable exception. There's a lot of "slice of life" Bat-family fanfic out there, and some of the best comes from a writer who goes by the Tumblr username unpretty. Is the writer of this comic, CRC Payne, also unpretty? I have no idea, but the feel is very similar, and that's a big compliment. While maybe compatible with regular comics continuity, that's not really the point of this strip. It's the Bat-Family being...you know...a family. If I have a complaint, it's that the strip is too heavily optimized for reading on a phone app, I have to manually shrink the tab to about 70% in order to see an entire panel on screen at once. Updates Thursdays (or late Wednesdays). Strongly recommended.

Trades:

Trade paperbacks, collections, graphic novels, pocket manga, whatever. If it's bigger than a "floppy" it goes here.

Way of the House Husband vol 6: Viz - The world around the Immortal

Dragon is starting to get a bit more Yakuza-flavored, but it's hard to say if that's just his perceptions coloring the storytelling or if his presence in the story is starting to affect his community. Anyway, the rough patch of vol 4 is well behind us, and I laughed out loud many times while reading this volume. Strongly recommended. \$12.99/\$17.99Cn/#9.99UK

Earth Boy: Dark Horse - Okay, I decided to pick this up because it was advertised in Dark Horse's FCBD offering, and because I usually like Paul Tobin's work. The basic story, a sci-fi version of the experiences of a quota student, is solid. But there's a lot of sloppy science in places where it's not even needed for the plot. A frequent problem I have with space travel comics is that the writers have no sense of the scale of things, and while eventually the story settles down into talking about vague numbers of megaparsecs, early on it's implied that a mere fraction of a light-century would get one out of the galaxy entirely (one light-century won't even get to all of the stars visible with the naked eye in a suburb). And then he tosses in a fantasy element of "Oh, and time flows differently on every planet," which never actually has narrative relevance. It was...irksome. It's like Tobin remembered some science from other reading, but didn't bother with any research before writing this, as if kids interested in space won't know he's getting it wrong. Ron Chan's art is okay, if a bit crowded at times. I'm not sure who I'd recommend this to...people who like thinly veiled allegories for surviving racism and like sci-fi but don't worry about science? I mean, I at least managed to finish it, which I wasn't sure I'd do after the quarter-way point. Neutral. \$12.99/\$17.50Cn

Floppies:

No, I don't have any particular disdain for the monthlies, but they *are* floppy, yes? (And not all of them come out monthly, or on a regular schedule in general, so I can't just call this section "Monthlies" or even "Periodicals" as that implies a regular period.)

Shang-Chi #4: Marvel - It's #4, that means Fantastic Four as Shang-Chi finds reasons to end up at loggerheads with various Marvel heroes. This time, he needs to rescue someone he has reason to believe is in the Negative Zone, but by this point he's put enough noses out of joint that Reed Richards won't just let him use the portal (if that seems hypocritical, this IS Reed Richards we're talking about). So, fight scene to get in, fight scene once inside, surprise rescue, and more heroes Have A Concern. Structurally, I can see why this arc needs to be as long as it is, but it's starting to feel draggy. Mildly recommended. \$3.99

Moon Knight #3: Marvel - MacKay has definitely decided that his hook for Moon Knight is "Interesting," very much in the "Oh god oh god we're all gonna die" sense. Embracing his problematic past and present, as it were. Last issue he faced a pawn of one of his two new antagonists, and he initially

thinks that Hunter's Moon (the other priest of Khonshu introduced in #1) was behind it. In an inter...um, amusing subversion of the usual "heroes fight over a misunderstanding, then team up" trope, Moon Knight and Hunter's Moon fight over a misunderstanding, clear up the misunderstanding, and then fight harder because HM is your stereotypical "stick up the butt" Paladin type who considers Marc to be evil for consorting with vampires and other bits of ethical flexibility. To some extent, this series so far has been about clarifying what Moon Knight is NOT. He's not just regular crazy (but he is that too). He's not an uncompromising moral terrorist (but he is terrifying). Recommended. \$3.99

RWBY/Justice League #6 (of 7): DC/Rooster Teeth - The big fight begins, seems to be going well, then it all goes horribly wrong and a desperation Plan B is enacted. So, you know, the usual. Very little actual character stuff...a moment of bonding over speed powers between Flash and Ruby, a perfunctory "messing with everyone's heads over past trauma" scene, but for a big climax is kinda feels like padding. Mildly recommended. \$3.99

Vampirella #24 (of 25): Dynamite - Welp, looks like #25 is the final issue. This whole wedding arc does feel like it was supposed to be built up over a longer time, but was always intended to be Priest's endgame...it just sort of gets sprung on the reader hot on the heels of the Drakulon arc. A lot of this issue is flashback (with kinda iffy art) to backfill the motivations of all involved, and it feels a bit clumsy. Ah well. Mildly recommended. \$3.99

Norse Mythology II #4 (of 6): Dark Horse Comics - The second half of the Utgard story, pretty well executed. Recommended. \$3.99

Save Yourself! #4 (of 4): Boom Box! - In classic Saturday serial tradition, the cliffhanger is resolved by rolling back the clock and showing how the heroes (and villain) got out of it in the nick of time. From there, it's almost entirely denouement, with a strong implication that if there's going to be a volume 2, it'll need to start from scratch. No particular dangles, it's happily ever after. The climax ends up being pretty anticlimactic in terms of an action story, but it works out okay in terms of a romance story. Recommended. \$3.99

Scout Frontiers #1: Scout! (Scout) - I debated putting this up with trades, since it's magazine-sized. 72 pages on thick matte paper, a mix of TPB previews (part of the standalone Soulstream #1 is reprinted here, for instance), introduction stories, and standalone shorts, plus activity pages aimed at the kindergarten age range, give or take a year. The coloring pages are a bit high-detail for little kids, maybe more for the 7-9 range? The stories themselves mostly skew older, I suspect that any kids engaged by the activities will find the stories a bit advanced, and kids whose level is even with the stories will find the activities to be boring kiddie stuff. Anyway, it's hard to say much based on the first issue, since I'm aggressively

outside the target audience and my pedagogical training does not extend to early childhood and grade school. Still, I'll give it another issue to see where it's going, and see if it settles on a niche. If you have little kids it's worth checking out. \$9.99 (72 pages)

Impossible Jones #1: Scout - This was another of those impulse buys I try to make each month, spurred by Karl Kesel (and several of my friends) flooding my facebook feed with it the day it came out. My rough impression of the title character is, "Plastic Man, but a woman, and with her origin in Physics rather than Chemistry." I'm sure some parallels to the Mask will be drawn, in the sense that she's a Toon in a standard superhero setting (see also Slapstick). She's still basically a crook, but recognizes it's more fun to do the hero thing than be on the run from the heroes. The story bounces (pun intended) between the "present day" in which Jones foils a heist by a Christmas-themed villain, and her origin story. Jones exists in a world that has had superheroes and villains for a while, but the reader just has to catch up along the way...no Silver Age style captions or even thought bubbles to fill in the background. In a weird inversion of the otherwise pseudo-Silver Age tone of the book, the cover is matte and the pages are glossy. Overall, it feels like I was expected to have already read the Kickstarted graphic novel before picking up this comic, and I'm more annoyed by that feeling than interested in picking up the GN. Mildly recommended. I may or may not pick up #2, I didn't add this to my pull. \$3.99

Kaijumax Season 6 #3 (of 6): Oni Press - Whoogh, a lot of irons in the fire, not just advancing the multiple plot threads (fighting the invasion, Electrogor's personal life, the heist by the cryptids, Taekwon and his girlfriend's not exactly healthy relationship), but also tossing in some flashbacks to the last big war against these invaders, during which several of the series regulars got to develop bad PTSD. Certainly, on its own this is a bit too scattered to make for a good read, but when you're tying up six volumes' worth of plot threads, a bit of "writing for the trade" is unavoidable. Mildly recommended. \$3.99

Transformers Halloween Special 2021: IDW - Starscream hunts down an old ghost story, and finds a ghost from his own past in the process. It's hard to place it exactly in continuity, since it's pretty much all Decepticons and the main comic focuses on the Autobots (well, I guess Bumblebee isn't an Autobot yet, but neither is he really a Decepticon). While the actual horror part doesn't really kick in until near the end, that's not too unusual for horror vignettes, where it's the twist at the end that turns them into horror. Recommended. \$5.99 (30 pages of story, 14 pages of ads and variant covers.)

Transformers: King Grimlock #2 (of 5): IDW - Okay, it's going beyond just recapitulating the G1 episode here, and Grimlock ends up in the odd (for him) position of trying to be a balance point rather than being the most bloodthirsty jerk on the block. The art still bugs me, though, in part

because the style seems to be "if there's an open space, throw in some random scratchy lines and call it texture." Like a super lazy version of the Dreamwave-era "armor plating cracks like rotten concrete" style of surfacing. Very mildly recommended. \$3.99

Transformers: Shattered Glass #2 (of 5): IDW - Starscream finds Megatron and they chat about old Starscream finds Megatron and they chat about old times and future plans. While everyone else is different from their "regular universe" counterparts, Megatron is the same person he started out as in the IDW1 continuity: an idealistic rebel determined to win freedom for the common Cybertronian. But just about everyone else is different. Starscream is loyal. Shockwave suffers from too many emotions. Orion Pax is hopelessly corrupt, but manages to hide it from Megatron in the early years. times and future plans. While everyone else is different from their "regular universe" counterparts, Megatron is the same person he started out as in the IDW1 continuity: an idealistic rebel determined to win freedom for the common Cybertronian. But just about everyone else is different. Starscream is loyal. Shockwave suffers from too many emotions. Orion Pax is hopelessly corrupt, but manages to hide it from Megatron in the early years. (Presumably this continuity lacks all the weird time loop stuff that Shockwave did in IDW1, since this Shockwave is such a nice guy.) So, a more nuanced setup than just "everyone has flipped ethically," although most characters are still just jerks Because. (Also, coloring error, Bumblebee is portrayed in Bug Bite colors in one flashback which is meant as a sort of reference to movie continuity...Megatron blows BB's face off, resulting in the Goldbug rebuild.) Recommended. \$3.99

Transformers Beast Wars #8: IDW - Speaking of bad art, now that the relief over getting rid of the previous artist has faded, the new artist is starting to bug me too. Is IDW trying to save money by no longer hiring anyone with experience? Art aside, this is very much Blackarachnia's issue, as she deals with both the Maximals and the Predacons, to her own advantage (or so she hopes). Optimus Primal complains a bit about how stupid the plot has been so far, and swears to not do more idiot plot...good luck with that. Mildly recommended. \$3.99

Transformers #34-35: IDW - The two regular covers are similar in composition, with Termagax rising behind the foreground, and the foreground indicates the struggle for the Enigma of Combination (which is very much a Chekov's Gun since Pyra Magna and her girls are involved in the story). Basically, the Autobots send a mission to make contact with Termagax (spiritual mother of the Decepticon cause, but she renounces what they became) in her high tech Baba Yaga's Hut and try to convince her to do more to keep the Decepticons away from the Enigma. #34 is more talky aside from swatting an Insecticon swarm, but then the Decepticons arrive in force in #35 and it's more fighty. Along the way, some Deep Lore is dropped about how the galaxy at large seems to see Cybertron as a cancer that needs to be excised, and at least some of their big problems historically may have been sent by

hostile aliens. Mildly recommended. \$3.99 each.

Dave Van Domelen, "But know THIS. Before you decide to come after FRIGHTENED CHILDREN under my protection AGAIN -- whomever and WHATEVER they might be -- you better have what it takes to KILL ME FOR GOOD. Because when I COME BACK -- AND I ALWAYS DO -- I'll DO YOU like they did OSIRIS. They'll NEVER find all your pieces." - Moon Knight, Moon Knight #3
