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Subject: Dave's Capsules for October 2021  
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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> Truth, Justice, and a Better Tomorrow. Because we need one.

Items of Note (strongly recommended or otherwise worthy): None this month.

In this installment: Adventure Finders Book 3 Chapters 3-4, Avatar the Last Airbender: Suki, Alone, Soulstream, Animorphs: the Visitor, Tuki: Fight for Fire, Shang-Chi #5, Moon Knight #4, RWBY/Justice League #7 (of 7), Norse Mythology II #5 (of 6), The Orville Artifacts #1 (of 2), Kaijumax Season 6 #4 (of 6), My Little Pony Friendship is Magic #102 (of 102), My Little Pony Generations #1 (of 5), Transformers: King Grimlock #3 (of 5), Transformers: Shattered Glass #3 (of 5), Transformers Wreckers: Tread & Circuits #1 (of 5), Transformers Beast Wars #9, Transformers #36.

Current Wait List (books either Diamond didn't ship or my store failed to order): Nothing this month.

"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.

Nothing this month.

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.

Adventure Finders Book 3 Chapters 3 and 4: Patreon.com - OOPS. I

totally forgot to cover #3, which did come out last month. The abuses of the Arokians are made even more manifest (in case you thought they couldn't get worse) in the prison that they have largely taken control of and turned into a way to punish uppity women by putting them at the mercy of men imprisoned for actual crimes. There's gonna be a LOT of PTSD from this trip, especially on Clari's part. Some of Neshalla's (the necromancer) background is revealed in flashback, but it doesn't make her more sinister, just differently sinister. Both recommended. \$1/month on Patreon.

Trades:

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

Avatar the Last Airbender: Suki, Alone: Dark Horse - This is basically Suki's origin story, told in flashbacks while she copes with life in Boiling Rock Prison. While the nature of the "meanwhile" story meant that Suki couldn't actually break out on her own, Faith Erin Hicks does manage to give her more agency, so she's not just a damsel in distress. And, as noted, her past is explored in flashback, providing a parallel structure between her earlier life and her current situation. Recommended. \$12.99/\$17.50Cn

Soulstream: Scout Comics/Scoot - Okay, finally got this in my hands. Creator Saida Woolf started working on this in high school (well, her high school years...the bio in back says she's homeschooled), and at first glance the art looks very rough and amateurish. But after a while it becomes clearer that this is a deliberate stylistic choice, as she's trying to get away from the generic manga style that the design pages in back demonstrate she'd managed to become competent in. Without being specifically a Jhonen Vasquez riff, it does feel like an artistic relative, the "creepy but cartoony" look. The story itself is a bit more standard shojo mahou fantasy adventure stuff, with this volume having the usual "get the items of power, become magical girls/guys/enbies, face a few threats and make some allies before fighting the first miniboss," progression. A bit of isekai tossed in, as the fight is mostly in a fantasy world reached through a gateway, but the magical powers work in the "real" world too. A strong freshman effort (by a senior). Recommended. \$14.99

Animorphs vol 2: the Visitor: Scholastic/Graphix - This installment is heavily focused on Rachel. The kids have had a rough time and the Yeerk invasion looks too big to do anything about, and spend a bit of time milling about uncertainly. Rachel decides that something small needs to be done, and of course it turns out to be a lot bigger than she'd expected. The limitations and abilities of the kids are further explored, and the bad guys are shown to be both more inhuman and more human than they had thought. A good continuation of the story, and the pacing worked well as a comic. (That's always a hazard when adapting stories from one medium to another...

even with two examples to go by, the books and the TV show, Grine needed to do the work to make it flow as a comic.) Recommended. \$14.99

Tuki: Fight for Fire: Cartoon Books - I'm not sure when this will be available in stores, I got it through a Kickstarter. A few years ago, Jeff Smith started this story as a webcomic (and I failed utterly to notice this), but as the process notes in back show, most of the actual pages were redone. The Kickstarter is actually for two volumes, but they're shipping as they're ready. The high concept is that Tuki, a Homo erectus man, is searching for the MOAB, Motherherd Of All Buffalo. Along the way, he runs into other humans of various species (a Homo habilis shaman, some H.erectus kids, and a pack of Australopithecines) as well as foes both natural and supernatural. The fantasy elements are similar in feel to those in Bone, with shamanistic magic, monsters both talkative and not, and the presence of a Hidden World (that Tuki doesn't initially believe in). There's some disclaimers here and there about scientific stretches for the sake of drama, but it is set back when it's plausible that multiple human species could have interacted. One bit of artistic indulgence is that the book is in landscape mode, 9" (23cm) tall and 11.5" (29cm) wide. A bit awkward for storage or shelves. Recommended. \$20.

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 #5: Marvel - The sting operations are starting to get too twisty for anyone to follow, it's entirely possible that no one who thinks they're pulling the strings is completely free of strings upon themselves. Either Shang-Chi himself is going to be in for a rude surprise, or he's actually aware of more of the machinations than he's letting on and is playing Xanatos Roulette. On the one hand, every issue is contributing to the plot, and yet it FEELS like padding. Mildly recommended. \$3.99

Moon Knight #4: Marvel - Three main things happen this issue. Tigra shows up (as seen on the cover), the mysterious enemy tries another attack vector on Moon Knight, and most importantly the question of "why does he always wear a mask these days?" is posed repeatedly and finally answered. MackKay has a heavy burden to bear, in that he's actually dealing with all of Moon Knight's crap instead of shoving it aside and trying for a clean slate. And I think he's been up to the challenge so far. Recommended. \$3.99

RWBY/Justice League #7 (of 7): DC/Rooster Teeth - A few loose ends get tied up, but Starro was defeated last issue. But, to be honest, that's a good thing. One weakness of comics writing tends to be the inability or

unwillingness to write a satisfying epilogue, just moving on to the next arc and letting any epilogue-y stuff work in as subplots. That's not really a good plan on a miniseries using a licensed crossover that might never get more issues...that sort of comic has a habit of cramming all the epilogue into a page or two. Here, though, Bennett manages to resolve or at least advance the bits of character development raised in the previous six issues, in such a way that there's room for a sequel, but also not a NEED for one. Recommended. \$3.99

Norse Mythology II #5 (of 6): Dark Horse Comics - At last, a Jotun who wants a goddess and it ISN'T Freya. This is the story of Thiazi and how he got Loki to help him kidnap Iduun and her apples of immortality. That story in itself is told in full this issue, but its fallout (Thiazi's daughter Skadi coming to get payback) is reserved for the final issue of the volume (wherein the tables will be turned). Recommended. \$3.99

The Orville: Artifacts Part 1 of 2: Dark Horse - Man, they really want to drive inventory keepers nuts. The last two-parter was at least listed as #3-4, but now we're back to "The Orville #1" in the indicia. The Obsessed Academic is a staple of science fiction, and now it's Orville's turn to play that card, with a bonus of "graduate students are maybe slaves" metaphor. An interesting start, although it seems like a bit of a large bite to take for a two-parter. Mildly recommended. \$3.99

Kaijumax Season 6 #4 (of 6): Oni Press - In a change from the usual, this issue focuses almost entirely on a single plot thread. Go-Go Space Baby's saucer-invasion clean-up duties take her to the "suburban" neighborhood inside a time singularity...where she sees her son, given up for adoption a few seasons ago. Thanks to the time singularity hijinks, she's able to see him and even meet him at various points in his life. For him, she abandoned him years ago...to her it was weeks ago. So she's totally not ready for that. Nor is Mecha-Zonn, who is on duty with her and has his kill protocols engaged by infant Zonn Junior (renamed Zyna-Seven by his Ultraman-ish new parents). As part of the story, the usual "prejudice against ex-cons" themes extend to more general racism, and how non-white kids adopted by white families end up as outsiders, not really accepted by the only world they've known, and not even remotely connected to the world everyone wants to put them in. Recommended. \$3.99

My Little Pony Friendship is Magic #102 (of 102): IDW - The Elements of Patriotism (and if there's proof no one at Conservative Media reads this comic, it's that there hasn't been an explosion of fake outrage over them being the baddies) are defeated in detail, come back for a doomsday sort of plan, and then, well...the Season 9 cartoon climax is kinda repeated. But I suppose that makes sense. A few last gags from Andy Price (Katie Cook doesn't write the story, but her pony version does get one last appearance, being herded by cats). Some of the pages look a bit rushed, especially compared to the rich backgrounds Price was responsible for in the earliest

issues, but some of his signature bits do get worked in. Recommended. \$5.99

My Little Pony Generations #1 (of 5): IDW - This is a crossover between G4 and G1, set after the final season of the cartoon (and probably after #102, but they don't really address those events here). Other than the cover, though, none of the G1 ponies appear yet, just a few of their villains. Yes, it's another interdimensional invasion crossover. The ostensible plot on the G4 side is the need for more teachers at the School of Friendship, something that was already a stressor in season 9. It feels like a few pages got left out, though, the transitions between some of the scenes are abrupt and it almost feels like they're even out of order, although as far as I could tell from scrutinizing them they're in order. Just missing bits. Mildly recommended. \$3.99

Transformers: King Grimlock #3 (of 5): IDW - Grimlock fights zombies, faces the Red Wizard and discovers his true nature (which is basically the same as in the Madman's Paradise episode this series is based on, although this time he doesn't even get his real name mentioned, or his background). Y'know, Madman's Paradise was 22 minutes and yet it seems to have contained more actual information than a five issue series. So much "shadowy figures gloating" padding. Neutral. \$3.99

Transformers: Shattered Glass #3 (of 5): IDW - The main plot only advances a little, this issue is almost entirely told in flashback (with convenient rounded panel boundaries to make it clear) with Starscream and Jetfire's shared origin story and how Starscream knows of the plot device the Decepticons pursue. Recommended. \$3.99

Transformers Wreckers: Tread & Circuits #1 (of 5): IDW - In the new continuity, the Wreckers are a covert(ish) ops team that plays the part of a stunt show team for their cover. They're a motley crew taken from various original continuities, including Minerva (Masterforce) as the team medic, Aileron (IDW1) as the planner, Circuit (Actionmasters) as the cameraman, Thunderclash (nothing like the IDW1 version, but his late G1 toy never got any other real characterization) as leader, and Generations Hot Shot and Ricochet as the rest of the show. They're looking to foil a terrorist/revolutionary attack on the Speedia 500, but also have some personal business cropping up that may or may not be related. Kind of a mix of spy actioner and heist movie...like Leverage or A-Team if they had a consistent cover rather than making up a new one for each job. Recommended. \$3.99

Transformers Beast Wars #9: IDW - Burcham is back on art. I guess he's not just bad, but also slow enough to need fill-in help? Bleh. At least Burnham's story is pretty good. It focuses almost entirely Skold and newly emerged Razorbeast. As one of the two new characters created for the comic, we've previously only known her to be strong and lacking on confidence. This story explores more of why she's like that, and why she joined Megatron's crew...it's a toxic and possibly parasocial relationship, but she believes

it's the best she can get. Recommended. \$3.99

Transformers #36: IDW - The battle for the Enigma ends, or at least is put on hold, and Skywarp's role in the coming darkness is resolved. Decent action-oriented installment, but I don't really have much to say about it. Mildly recommended. \$3.99

Dave Van Domelen, "I am a PRIEST. And no wealthy priest has ever been good." - Moon Knight, Moon Knight #4

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