



The MANGAVERSE

Number 10

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The National Fantasy Fan Federation's zine of
Science Fiction and Fantasy in Anime, Manga, and Other Comics.

70th ANNIVERSARY RESURRECTION ISSUE!





ART:

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Submission Guidelines

I accept just about any and all SF/F fannish material pertaining to anime/manga/comics, including movies that were originally in one of those categories. Some ideas are (but are not limited to): art, fan art, flash fan fiction (about 1000 words) comics (original shorts or one-shots), con-reports, reviews, letters of comment, etc.,

The only thing I will not accept is hentai (pornographic) material. If you are unsure if something is hentai, ask me.

If you have any questions please email me at qualtree@ruthiechan.net

What lies within

What the!?	3
The X-Men Primer Part 3	4
X-tra Coolness	17
Reviews (with the occasional touch of ranting)	18
Zombie Come Lately: An Interview with Bob Fingerman	24
Comment Letters	27
Ah My Goddess: Belldandy's Origin.	27

The MANGAVERSE News and Fan-talk, Number 10
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This issue was completed on 08/20/10, Ruth R. Davidson; qualtree@ruthiechan.net your editor/bureau head. Please send your submissions and questions to her. ***All opinions herein are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Bureau Head, members of The MANGAVERSE, or N3F, except where so noted.***

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What the!?

The MANGAVERSE has risen from the dead! MWAHAHAHAHAHA.

But . . . what is up with the freakin' butterflies?

I have no idea. Really. I don't know where my mind was going with those. Maybe it was a spoof off the broken butterfly-like wings of the cover art. Which art, by the way, is most appropriate. I feel that if this zine could express emotions it'd look like that. Stunned and cold from being left in the proverbial basement. Maybe the zine had terrible visitations from the basement cat. Evil meow.

Why did you leave the butterflies!? Lame! Mundane! El stupeed-o.

Well, let's see, I've had this in the makings for how long now? Three years? And I've never managed to finish it. That's more lame than the butterflies. I figured, if I tried to redo the layout in an effort to make it less fruity, well, I'm doomed. It'd be another year before I got it done, and who wants that? Well, okay, the people who think this zine is a crud zine. Okay okay, so some issues weren't all that great, but I was newbie, trying to figure things out. (Oh, sorry, neo fan. Wait, I'm not sorry, nevermind. It amounts to the same thing anyway.)

Ya know, I like butterflies. Butterflies are neat and some varieties are very cool (transparent wings anyone?). Maybe, that's why the butterflies. They're also featured a lot in anime, especially black butterflies to symbolize some sort of spiritual omen. Example, the anime Bleach.

Kimonos look somewhat butterfly-esque, and are a sign of maidenhood and marital happiness, and of transitions. So, maybe it's not as eyebrow raising as it seemed to be.

Anyway, I hope you enjoy this back-from-the-grave issue. We have some very cool stuff present. Special thanks to Heath Row for interviewing Bob Fingerman (saved the best for last, yo, okay, I didn't wanna redo the already done layout), and to Priscilla Johnson. Thanks to everyone who contributed and your patience, or is that we gave up and are now (hopefully pleasantly) surprised?

I am considering nixing the url. Not sure if it's worth paying the money for it, especially since I can just use tmv.ruthiechan.net or mangaverse.ruthiechan.net without it costing me anything extra. So, if you end up getting an error message try one of those.

Also, I've decided to change the numbering system. After this long hiatus, I now know why the majority of the SFF fannish world uses plain ol' sequential numbers; to avoid going, gee, not much of volume and numbers because of the huge publishing gap. Stupid newbie! >.< It's also easier to keep track of.

So this issue is Number 10, or Volume 3 Number 1.

— Ruthiechan :)



This rabbit is wearing a kimono, giving it a butterfly-bunny look.





The X-men Primer part 3

By Priscilla Johnson

New Team, 1975-1990

(Errata: I stated that the first mention of a chakra was in Morrison's New X-Men. Nope; it first occurred in the second issue of Marvel UK's "Hell's Angel.")

And the name of the shuttle is actually the **Starcore** Eagle. The orbiting platform is called **Starcore** proper.)

But to continue—

The **Starcore Eagle** enters Earth's atmosphere, skids through Kennedy Airport, and hits Jamaica Bay, sinking beneath the water. All the X-Men and Corbeau make it out---except Jean Grey. Cyclops turns back to the sunken wreckage, intent on rescue.

The water over the **Eagle** bubbles, then erupts. Jean rises, resplendent in a new costume of green and metallic gold. "Hear me, X-Men," she shouts. "No more am I the woman you once knew. Now and forever, I am Phoenix!" But at the peak of her flight, she passes out, and falls back into the water. Cyclops catches her, and the group swims to shore.

Fire trucks and ambulances await them. The X-Men swiftly alter the unstable molecules of their clothing to appear like that of **Starcore** uniforms.

Jean Grey is whisked to a nearby hospital. The X-Men wait there until the doctor tells them that Jean will recover.

Since Jean can best regain her health in peace and quiet, under the care of Prof. X and Scott Summers, Prof. X sends the X-Men off on a vacation. Sean Cassidy suggests that they take it in Ireland, at his family castle, Cassidy Keep, which is in County Mayo and faces the Atlantic. There are few people around—perfect for the mutants. Little do they know that certain others wait at that castle, waiting to set a sinister plan in motion, at the behest of Eric the Red (Davan Shakari) the Emperor's secret agent. These others have blackmailed the Keep's caretaker by holding certain families hostage. They set up a containment area designed for the X-Men.

First the X-Men go sight-seeing in Dublin for a week, and then go to County Mayo. Just as the X-Men get ready for a party, they are confronted by Juggernaut and Black Tom Cassidy. Storm is hit by a claustrophobic fugue, which renders her unable to help her teammates combat the villains. She undergoes a flashback to her childhood. The combined powers of Colossus, Banshee, Wolverine, and Nightcrawler aren't enough to stop Juggernaut. Juggernaut knocks Nightcrawler into a patch of shadow.

When Nightcrawler comes to, he's greeted by some Little People, perfectly proportioned types less than a foot high. While Black Tom and Juggernaut's attention is elsewhere, they hustle Nightcrawler away to safety. An elf notices that Kurt goes invisible when he's in shadow.

Nightcrawler resolves to rescue his teammates, with the help of his image inducer.

Meanwhile, Black Tom and Juggernaut think themselves on top of the world---until Prof. X rolls up.

What the---? Juggernaut charges him, but Prof. X mocks him, jumps out of his wheelchair and kicks him in the helmet. "He's sticking to the wall!" cries Juggernaut.

"Which means that no matter what he looks like---it's got to be that blue-skinned, two-toed freak!"⁽¹⁾

Juggernaut throws a punch at the disguised Nightcrawler, but the mutant leaps out of the way. The punch demolishes one of the stone walls of Cassidy Keep. The light of the outside world shines in.

Seeing the sky breaks Storm out of her fugue. Freeing herself, she soars into the sky. The battle is joined, with very different results. While fighting his cousin, Black Tom ends up falling off the castle into the ocean below. Juggernaut dives in after him. Of either there is no sign.

The X-Men next go for a vacation in Scotland, where they rent a hovercraft from a Scottish skin

(1)X-Men #101





flint, old **Angus McWhirter**. He tries to cheat them, but Banshee prevails, to McWhirter's rage.

Muir Isle is nearby, where Moira McTaggart has her Mutant Research Center. The MRC "is a complex designed to cage the most dangerous mutants in existence—and perhaps, cure their hatred for humanity."⁽²⁾

Where Eric the Red and his mind-controlled pawns arrive. He, Polaris, and Havok zap the hapless **Jamie Madrox**. They then go to Magneto, who is still in the form of a toddler.

Using another setting on his techno-suit, Eric the Red restores Magneto to adulthood. Magneto and Eric the Red both want Prof. X's hide.

Magneto goes in search of the vacationing X-Men, and begins his attack by destroying their hovercraft. The inexperienced team takes Magneto on, one at a time and are defeated. Only the late arrival of an attacking Cyclops drives Magneto away.

As the X-Men leave in the Blackbird, Cyclops puts together the pieces of recent events. He deduces that Eric is after Prof. X, so the X-Men head for home.

Jean Grey recovers and leaves the hospital. She holds a tea party for her parents and her roommate, **Misty Knight**,⁽³⁾ in a Greenwich Village apartment.

Meanwhile, the X-Men return to Xavier's and are shocked to see Eric the Red waiting inside. Unhesitatingly, memories of the battle at the airport fresh in their minds, they attack.

Unfortunately, someone else is watching as well. That someone is **Firelord**, former Herald of **Galactus**.⁽⁴⁾ He wields the Power Cosmic via his flaming rod. Eric the Red has deceived him about Prof. X's true intentions, claiming that Xavier wants to conquer Earth. Firelord defeats the X-Men, then blazes a path in the sky as he heads for Jean and Misty's apartment.

Out in space, a starcruiser⁽⁵⁾ chases a small scoutcraft, into Earth's solar system. The crew is multi-alien, but headed by a Shi'Ar. Checking with their planetary agent on Earth, they are shocked to learn that Earth has faced Galactus four times before, and defeated him.

Deciding that his ship is overmatched, the captain orders a final salvo of photon torpedoes at the scoutship. Just before the torpedo hits it, the armored pilot transfers out of the doomed ship. The pilot has a mindlink to a certain Earthly telepath, and knows exactly where to go. The pilot materializes in the apartment, which startles a scream out of Prof. X, as he comes face to face with a nightmare. Removing the bug-eyed helmet, a delicately featured face is revealed, with black feathers where hair should be. After saying a few words in an alien tongue, she collapses.

Jean and Misty remove her space armor, and put her on the couch. Prof. X gives her a telepathic crash course in English. They learn that she is Lilandra Neramani, Imperial Princess, former Grand Admiral and loser of an interstellar war. Lilandra led a revolt against her mad brother, the Emperor, who wanted to use a weapon known as "The End of All That Is." She's fled to Earth in search of allies.

Next thing they know, Firelord destroys the entire wall of the apartment, demanding Prof. X's life. Jean Grey faces the former herald. "Take care of my folks, Misty," she says. "I'll handle this." Transforming into Phoenix, she hits Firelord with a power blast that blows him out of the apartment, staggering him. Later, she blasts Firelord so hard, he's hurled **twelve miles** west, across the Hudson into the New Jersey meadow.

To Jean's amazement, she's flying, not just levitating, and filled with unbelievable energy. The battle ends when Prof. X calls her telepathically, and she obeys, though she wants to finish off Firelord.

Eric the Red arrives at the apartment, where Lilandra recognizes him. He lays Mr. and Mrs. Grey and Misty Knight unconscious with a zap, then kidnaps the Princess. As he is constructing a Star Gate

(2) Moira McTaggart, X-Men #104, page 14.

(3) Misty Knight is a character in one of the other books that Chris Claremont writes, "**Iron Fist**." Iron Fist is an American who learned martial arts in a hidden city in the East, **K'Lun Lun**. She is a detective with a bionic arm who sometimes undertakes tasks in international espionage. Together with her partner, swordswoman Colleen Wing, they are the **Daughters of the Dragon**. Since Iron Fist found her the most beautiful woman he ever saw, he and Misty became lovers.

(4) Galactus is a cosmic giant who travels the galaxy looking for planets to devour. He started off as an antagonist of the Fantastic Four. His first herald was the Silver Surfer. All three are creations of Jack Kirby and Stan Lee.

(5) Claremont and Cockrum insert a Star Trek homage here—the Shi'Ar commander, Captain K'rk, looks like the captain of the Enterprise, but with a feathered head, and his multi-species crew wear Starfleet-type uniforms.





on the roof of the apartment, the X-Men draw near in a craft. But Eric destroys it with a blast from his armored hand. Nightcrawler arrives first, traveling over the rooftops and flagpoles. He tries but fails to stop Eric the Red from absconding with Lilandra.

The rest of the X-Men arrive, those who fly carry those who can't. Prof. X thinks it's too late, but Jean Grey simply powers up the Star Gate, thus opening it. "We'll be back with the lady, Charles, never fear," says Banshee before they go through the gate. After they leave, Firelord, having finally regained consciousness, returns to the apartment.

Beyond the Farthest Star

And then---a fill-in story is used, since the creative team missed the deadline. The fill-in was written and penciled a long time ago, and had a similar plot to number 101.

The next issue continued with the story.

The X-Men arrive in a galaxy far, far away, on an ancient planet with no name. They're greeted by the Imperial Guard.⁽⁶⁾ Behind the Guard is the gigantic M'Kraan Crystal, mounted on a dais. On the dais are Emperor D'ken and Shakari, who's holding Lilandra prisoner.

Strangely enough, the two groups can understand each other. Cyclops tries talking to them, but the Imperial Guard is adamant. They obey only the Emperor. The fight begins.

One of the Imperial Guard, Starbolt, zaps Wolverine, destroying his uniform. Wolverine attacks a guard, **Fang**, who corresponds to the Legion of Super-Heroes's **Timber Wolf**.⁽⁷⁾ The Canadian mutant then appropriates his costume.

The X-Men are outnumbered twice over, and Phoenix is drained after shooting the group from the Milky Way Galaxy to the Andromeda Galaxy. Cyclops sees D'ken ready to sacrifice Lilandra to an other-dimensional monster, the Soul Drinker. Since Cyclops lacks a clear shot, Nightcrawler steps up to the plate. He failed to save Lilandra once. Not again. Kurt teleports to the dais, breaks Lilandra's chains, and teleports with her to safety—the first time he ever did so with a passenger. He collapses from the effort.

Fortunately, someone else was watching events on the planet with no name. That someone are the Starjammers, and they make landfall, joining the X-Men against the Imperial Guard. With their help, the Imperial Guard is defeated.

Above their heads, the nine deathstars move into alignment. An energy spears down from them, striking the Crystal. It pulses with greater and greater energy. It glows, then flares with unholy light and "In that instant, all existence goes **BLINK!**"⁽⁸⁾

The result disrupts the material Universe, propelling it into non-existence for that instant.

Back in Earth's solar system, Dr. Corbeau up on the **Starcore** platform and Reed Richards down on Earth are observing this phenomenon. "We registered a total disruption of the nuclear and gravitic lines of force that bind all matter together...I can tell you what will happen if these cosmic blinks" keep up or get worse. The fabric of time and space will tear itself apart. The universe---as we know it---will die."⁽⁹⁾

Behind The Scenes

The "X-Men" caused a great sensation in fandom, provoking demands for it to go monthly. Artist Dave Cockrum's ability to deliver dazzling scenes that Steven Spielberg or George Lucas could only equal with millions of dollars in special effects was a major part why. Also, writer Chris Claremont's ease with writing strong women characters, and coming up with dramatic, imaginative stories were the other reasons why. Finally, in Storm and in Phoenix, female fans had terrific heroines of their own—A-list char-

(6) The character designs and powers of the Imperial Guard are an affectionate version of Cockrum's old team, the Legion of Super-Heroes, plus an alien version of Superman.

(7) Fang's costume would fit Wolverine better—it's brown and gold in color, and is better for camouflage. The fang necklace and additional rings of fangs at wrists and calves would also characterize Wolverine better than a garish blue and gold costume.

(8) X-Men #107





(9) X-Men #108

acters, who could carry a story. Cover #101 has an iconic power that will never be surpassed---that of Phoenix rising from the waters. It's more than just a comic book—it would make an amazing subject blown up to poster size. Cover #108 was another stunner—that of the X-Men being hurled into the air by the monstrous fist of a giant robot hitting the ground. Storm, however, has not lost control, and in midair she seems to be dancing.

However, Cockrum had other commitments, so he left and was replaced by John Byrne, who was also penciling “Iron Fist.” Byrne had a style that fandom had never seen before—cartoony but serious.

Since the Imperial Guard were defeated, a new protector arrive. The dwarfish Jahf is another Guardian of the Crystal, and a robot. Wolverine thinks he's a pipsqueak pushover—until Jahf puts him into orbit with **one punch!**

Fortunately, Wolverine is retrieved by the Starjammers's AI, Waldo, and taken to Sickbay. Down on the nameless planet, nothing seems to stop Jahf. It takes a concentrated blast of sound from Banshee to destroy the little menace.

Then a new Guardian arrives, fifty feet tall. The blue and gold robot Modt has a thousand times the strength of Jahf, and if the X-Men and Starjammers manage to defeat *him*, another Guardian with a thousand times the strength of Modt will take his place.

Raza has had enough. The cyborg reaches the Emperor, lifts him above his head, and flings him into the Crystal. Abruptly, the X-Men and Starjammers find themselves within the Crystal. Within are the ruins of an ancient city---and a field of nightmare, unleashed by the heart of the Crystal. Each person finds his mind ravaged by his or hers worst fears. Jean Grey finds out that Corsair's nightmare involves the murder of his wife by D'ken. Further scanning his mind reveals that he is Scott Summers's father.

Cyclops loses control of his eyebeams and one strikes the heart of the Crystal. It shatters, unleashing the neutron galaxy within. Jean Grey uses her powers to contain it, but it isn't enough. She taps the cosmic level of her power, but it isn't enough. Only with the help of the rest of the X-Men can she repair the heart of the Crystal. Doing so means that Phoenix and the X-Men transcend their terrestrial identities, contacting the deepest level of reality in existence. These levels of reality are identified in the Kabbalah, an ancient Jewish “doctrine of esoteric knowledge concerning God.”⁽¹⁰⁾ “The Jewish mystical tradition....is distinguished by its theory of ten creative forces that intervene between the infinite, unknowable God and our world”.⁽¹¹⁾ Each of the X-Men corresponds to a different part of the Tree of Life. Phoenix corresponds to Tiphereth—Glory and Beauty---the heart of the X-Men.

After saving the Universe, the X-Men return home. Corsair asks Phoenix to keep his secret. Lilandra joins them, since the problem of succession needs to be resolved.

Characters/Groups

Sebastian Shaw (The Black King) Chairman of the Hellfire Club. Since he is one of the Inner Circle, he wears the distinctive costume of those members. The ranking positions in the Inner Circle are all named after chess pieces. Looks like Ernest Borgnine.

Shaw is an engineering whiz. At the age of 40 he was a billionaire. He's an intimate of countless government and corporation heads. He also heads Shaw Industries, which has a contract with the US government to build new Sentinel robots for **Project Wideawake**. Project Wideawake's mission is to find, capture, and study mutants. A mutant, he has the power to absorb kinetic energy or energy bolts, and thus becomes stronger.

Tessa—At the time, very much a background character. She's Shaw's aide, but she's actually an agent of Xavier's, reporting on the Hellfire Club's activities to him. She has a computer-like mind.

Hellfire Club— Outwardly, a social club for the wealthy and powerful people in the world. Starting somewhere in the 1790s, it supplied its members with frequently immoral pleasures, and gave them a place to plot the fate of the world. The Hellfire Club has enormous resources, high technology, and an

(10) Wikipedia, “The Kabbalah.”

(11) “The Ten Sefirot of the Kabbalah,” Eliezer Segal.





army of mercenaries who dress in red and black costumes.

Unbeknownst to the non- Inner Circle members, (The X-Men's Warren Worthington and his father are members) the goal of the Hellfire Club is to take over the world. The members of the Inner Circle wear 18th century type costumes, reflecting a time when a man's fate was made with his own two hands. It was previously known as The Council of the Chosen. It was a White King of the Council who supported Dr. Steven Lang's Sentinels program, by supplying him with money and technology. When the Sentinels failed, Sebastian Shaw and the White Queen teamed up against the White King and forced him to abdicate.

Emma Frost (White Queen): A mutant telepath, the child of a rich Boston family. She has three other siblings. Rather than accept her father's money, she left home at 16 to make a living off her powers. She tricked her way into wealthy people's parties, scanning minds for information on the stock market and the like. She ended up very rich and she opened a private school the **Massachusetts Academy**, where she's the Headmistress.

Mastermind (Jason Wyngarde): Shows up again, usually wearing the mental illusion of a handsome man with thick hair, mutton chop whiskers and a moustache. His telepathic powers are formidable, since he can read Jean's mind without her notice. He intends to lure Jean Grey to the dark side, and use her powers to achieve the Hellfire Club's goals.

Harry Leland (Black Bishop): A fat gentleman, he can increase the weight of people or things. Looks like Orson Welles, but with red hair.

Donald Pierce (White Bishop): is a cyborg, and is Shaw's rival. He looks like Donald Sutherland.

Moses Magnum: A name redolent of Blaxploitation movies, previously appeared in "Power Man," "Spider-Man," "Iron Fist." He's super-strong and fires force bolts. An Earth-sensitive, he can focus an infinite amount of energy anywhere in the Earth, thus generating earthquakes. He's one of the agents of Apocalypse, who gave him his earth-powers. **Those Who Wield Power**, a trio who secretly sought world domination, gave him the **Mandroids**.

Jamie Madrox (The Multiple Man): First appeared in the pages of the Fantastic Four. A Kirby creation, he can multiply himself up to a thousand times. He works for Moira MacTaggart on Muir Isle, He wears a special suit with yellow bands. Created by his scientist father, the suit prevents inadvertent duplication.

Mutant X-- (Kevin MacTaggart): Since he hit puberty, the intensity of his powers wore out his body. He needs host bodies for his mind to inhabit. Without a host body, he exists as an energy being that will dissipate unless he has a host body to reside in. Moira kept him within energy fields that sustained him. He can also alter reality at a whim. His flaws—he uses up bodies at a supernal rate and he is vulnerable to metal.

The X-Men relax at home for a while, until trouble erupts again. Sebastian Shaw sends **Warhawk** to test the X-Men's mettle. Warhawk first appeared in the pages of "Iron Fist" and an army surgeon mutated him so that his skin resembles steel. Posing as a phone repairman, he breaks into the mansion and puts a tap on the X-Men's computer. attacks the X-Men. The X-Men prevail over this "Colossus gone wrong" and turn him over to the authorities.

The book "Iron Fist" was to be cancelled, so Claremont and Byrne send it off with the X-Men guest-starring. Wolverine mistakes Iron Fist for an intruder and demolishes his apartment. The X-Men, not knowing Iron Fist, attack him one on one, until Jean and Scott arrive to clear up the misunderstanding.

Canada's Ministry of Defence want Wolverine back. As far as they are concerned, Wolverine is their personal property. They can't just let him go. As Wolverine puts it, "I probably cost too much flamin' money!" So they send one of their agents, **Weapon X**, after him. Weapon X is a non-mutant, a scientist who built a super-technology suit to fly around in.

He's kind of like Canada's answer to **Tony Stark (Iron Man.)**

His suit is red and white, like the Canadian flag, and has a maple leaf on it.

Weapon X arrives when the X-Men are having a picnic. During the struggle, Weapon X accidentally





hurts Moira, and Banshee nearly nails him with a sonic scream so intense it atomizes the trees around the Canadian.

Outmatched, Weapon X takes a powder.

Mesmero puts the X-Men under his mind control, making them think they're circus performers. The Beast's arrival is the catalyst that breaks the spell. The X-Men confront Mesmero in his office/covered wagon, but it's revealed that he's merely Magneto's puppet.

Magneto flies the wagon to his Savage Land HQ, in the heart of a volcano, amidst lava. The lava is held back by some alien technology, by the same beings who created the Savage Land, where the X-Men fight and lose. Magneto imprisons each one in a chair that negates their powers, reducing them to the state of infants. He leaves.

But when she was a baby, Storm had the coordination of a young girl. Hidden in her headdress are a set of lockpicks. She gets it off, puts a pick in her mouth, and frees herself and then the rest of the X-Men. A returning Magneto is hit by the combined forces of the X-Men. During the battle, the machinery that keeps the lava at bay is damaged. It erupts into the chamber. Magneto simply flies away, abandoning the X-Men to their fate. Phoenix and the Beast are cut off from the other X-Men by lava.

Phoenix and the Beast make it to the surface, which is Antarctica. Eventually they're rescued by a passing helicopter. Believing the others to be dead, Phoenix and the Beast go to Prof. X to tell him the bad news.

Meanwhile, the others make their way to the Savage Land, where they meet a Stone Age tribe and later, Sauron. They also meet the Petrified Man, who serves as a sun god for the Savage Land. The Savage Land's tropical climate is cooling. With the help of the X-Men the Savage Land is saved, but there are earthquakes and Petrified Man falls down a shaft a mile wide. Storm tries to save him, but her claustrophobia hits and she flees back to the surface.

The X-Men, on a makeshift raft, sail away from the Savage Land. The weather at sea is ferocious. It is beyond Storm's ability to control it. Luckily, they're rescued by Japanese ship, learn that Wolverine speaks Japanese, and go to Japan.

Back home at the X-Mansion, Jean Grey takes her leave, and Lilandra listens as Charles tells her about the event that led him to form the X-Men—his meeting with Amahl Farouk, the Shadow King.

The X-Men meet Sunfire, Misty Knight and Colleen Wing in Japan. Wolverine meets Sunfire's little cousin, Mariko Yoshida, and falls instantly in love. Colleen is attracted to Scott Summers.

But Japan is threatened by a super-villain, **Moses Magnum**. He threatens to sink the islands unless a ransom is paid.

Magnum intends to use a mechanical amplifier of his power in order to sink Japan. But Banshee counters the amplifier with his sonic scream, matching the energy frequency exactly. The Magnum force is diverted elsewhere to a bunch of tiny islands, sinking them all, and re-arranging the ocean floor. Banshee, his sonic powers used up, has to go to a hospital afterwards. The X-Men wait until he recovers well enough to walk out, then they leave Japan.

Jean Grey vacations in Greece, then goes to spend Christmas in Scotland with Moira MacTaggart, Alec, Lorna, and Jamie Madrox the Multiple Man. Then they go on to Muir Isle, home of Dr. MacTaggart's Mutant Research Center.

Unfortunately, old Angus MacWhirter has set bombs in the Center to pay the X-Men back for the destruction of his hovercraft that he rented out to them. But he runs into an unexpected antagonist, who's escaped his cell. Eric the Red shut off the power when he rescued Magneto. Of MacWhirter, "He doesn't even have time to scream."

Members of Canada's Ministry of Defence view a video of the X-Men battling the Mandroids. The Prime Minister orders **Weapon X** to get Wolverine back. Weapon X assembles a team of metahumans for the mission—**Snowbird**, a flying shapechanger, **Shaman**, a Sarcee Indian sorcerer, **Sasquatch** (who changes into one) and the flying twins **Aurora** and **Northstar** (who have super-speed and visual overload powers when they hold hands. This power stuns antagonists.) Northstar is Marvel's first gay superhero.

The X-Men's plane intended to go back to America, but a blizzard prevents that. Little do they





know that the storm was summoned by Shaman. Even Storm finds this weather phenomenon more than she can handle. She senses that someone is behind the aberration. The blizzard always keeps them from landing in airports in the USA.

The plane is forced to land at Calgary, where it's met by Weapon X and Sasquatch. stops the plane from taking off again and throws it into an empty hangar.

Storm manages to seize control of the blizzard, increasing its savagery and blanketing the port. This shocks Weapon X. Shaman is unable to alter it. Over cover of the blizzard, the X-Men, Misty Knight, Colleen Wing, and the pilots escape.

First, Weapon X tries going after Banshee and Storm alone, without his team. On seeing Weapon X, Banshee tries to scream and collapses. Enraged, Storm blasts Weapon X through a store wall, and he flees, out, knowing himself bested. "So much for my macho pride," he thinks. "No way can I handle that woman alone."⁽¹²⁾

The rest of his team succeed in capturing Wolverine and Nightcrawler. The X-Men shed their street clothes for their costumes. Storms detects the energy trail left behind by Weapon X. She leads the X-Men right to them.

The two teams start fighting. Because of the unstable weather, Storm won't manipulate it to fight Snowbird. But Shaman does, conjuring up a wind to ride on. He also seals them within a magical field of force.

The weather patterns can't take the strain. "Suddenly the core of the storm explodes, winds of over 200 mph thundering out, its snow turning to ice and falling like knives or rifle bullets.⁽¹³⁾" Some of it even gets through Shaman's force field, and it is way beyond his control. Storm senses this, wraps Snowbird in her cape, and soars higher. She thinks, "If unchecked (the blizzard) may not blow itself out until next summer---if then."⁽¹⁴⁾ She expands her perceptions...until she sees and feels (it) not as clouds and wind and snow...but as patterns of energy." Storm spreads the intensity out over Alaska, Canada, and North America. It takes her all night to do it.

Rather than continue the battle, Wolverine surrenders. Later, he gives his captors the slip and rejoins the X-Men.

Storm returns to Harlem and visits her childhood home. Unfortunately, it's become shooting gallery for drug addicts. She is rescued by Power Man and Misty Knight.

Ever since he thought that the X-Men were dead, Xavier has been with Lilandra at the Shi'ar Imperial City. But Lilandra has little time for him, since she has to run an entire galaxy.

Feeling neglected and alienated, Prof. X visits the branch of the Interstellar Library. When he reads about his X-Men's exploits and the neutron galaxy. Jean Grey's new powers are mentioned. It's obvious to him that she has acquired more power than she can handle.

Wolverine and Colossus work out in the Danger Room. Elsewhere, Jean Grey meets Jason Wyngarde, Black Tom and Juggernaut meet Arcade, and they mean the X-Men no good.

Jean Grey is much recovered, thanks to all the nice people she met on her vacation. Little does she know that all those nice people were actually one person—Mastermind, using his telepathic powers to read Jean's mind, and don the illusionary guise of different people. Mastermind thinks, "I tried to fill the emotional void within you, until I came to know you better than you know yourself...You instinctively trust me. Soon, that trust will turn to love..". At the Mutant Research Center, Moira studies Phoenix's abilities and is alarmed at her potential. And in the shadows, a malign presence watches them.

Moira discovers that one of her patients has left his cell—a dangerous one. Jean Grey detects Moira's response, and changes into Phoenix. She flies around a corner—and finds herself in the 18th century, wearing a lace-trimmed pink and white dress from that period. Her psionic senses only confirm this.

The spell is broken when Something tackles her from behind. Jean Grey turns to see it, and screams.

The Beast arrives in an Avengers aircraft to check on the X-Men. He discovers that the rest of

(12) X-Men #122

(13) X-Men #122

(14) X-Men #122





the X-Men are alive. Cyclops calls Muir Island, and is answered by Lorna—who's surprised that he's among the living. Just then, she's attacked by that Something. She reacts with shock.

The X-Men rocket over to Muir Island sans Beast. They find an unconscious Moira with a mummified body lying on top of her. The body is that of Angus MacWhirter.

The X-Men's search of Moira's complex reunites them with the others. Moira tells them that Mutant X has fled his cell. He would have attacked Lorna, but one of Jamie Madrox's duplicates arrived to stop him. Mutant X then possessed the duplicate, killing him in the process. He then took MacWhirter's boat and left Muir Island.

Moira reveals that Mutant X is her son.

Mutant X took McWhirter's boat to another island, where he prepared to find a new host so as to throw the pursuing X-Men off the track. Mastermind passed by, but Mutant X couldn't possess him—he's got a psionic shield up. He waits, and possesses another.

From a safe distance, Mastermind watches the X-Men hunting Mutant X. He focuses on Phoenix—who abruptly finds herself part of a group of red-coated hunters on horseback, following a pack of hounds. One of the hunters, Sir Jason Wyngarde, is the love of her life. The hounds run the "stag" to ground. He dismounts, and goes to the prey. Jean joins him. "It was a master stroke of yours—suggesting we hunt a man playing the role of a stag, rather than the animal itself," says Sir Jason.

Reality changes again, as Phoenix sees the image of a naked man with stag horns fixed to his head lying at her feet, change into the mummified body of Mutant X's last used up host.

Nightcrawler and Wolverine are in a car. Wolverine's noticed that each host body has a unique scent. He finds Mutant X, now wearing the body of a policeman. Mutant X tries possessing Wolverine—but flees in a panic—because Wolverine's skeleton is adamantium. Wolverine charges—and Mutant X warps reality around him. "Call me Proteus," says Mutant X. Wolverine is seriously freaked out, and Nightcrawler tries to help him.

Storm arrives, throwing a lightning bolt at Proteus, driving him away from Wolverine and Nightcrawler. She also blows up the police car that Proteus was using.

Proteus turns the sky into the ground, twisting reality, hitting Storm with it.

Storm generates a tornado-force wind, but even this doesn't stop Proteus. Only Moira's shooting him with a high-powered rifle makes him stop, and escapes in the car used by Nightcrawler and Wolverine.

Wolverine is withdrawn and shaking. Seeing this, Cyclops picks a fight with him. Seeing this, Nightcrawler and Storm join Wolverine's side. Cyclops stops, and explains that he attacked Wolverine in order to snap him out of it, as well as testing the other two.

Their portable Cerebro won't help them either Proteus or Moira. Proteus doesn't show up and Moira's not a mutant.

Proteus changes host bodies again.

Moira goes to Edinburgh, to Parliament, to visit a politician. It's her husband, Joe, who's ambitious. He won't grant her a divorce—Moira's Nobel Prize is something the politician uses.

Moira is estranged from him because years ago he not only put her in the hospital, he got her pregnant. Until now, she's never told him he has a son. Moira thinks Proteus is heading toward Edinburgh in order to kill his father.

It takes Colossus in his armored form to destroy Proteus. Afterwards, Sean and Moira re-unite.

X-Men Vs. The Hellfire Club

Mastermind continues his subtle turning of Jean Grey to the Dark side via more time-slips and mind control. He's replaced Scott Summers in her affections—or so he thinks. But Scott and Jean reaffirm their love.

The X-Men return to Prof. X and resume training in the Danger Room.

The Hellfire Club has a plant on Cerebro, planted by Warhawk, that lets them know everything the X-Men know. So when Cerebro detects two new mutants, the Hellfire Club aims to reach them first and recruit them.

One mutant is a 13 and a half year old girl who walks through walls. She's Kitty Pryde, who's





Jewish and curly-haired. She's also a dance student and a genius.*

The members of the Hellfire Club spring into action. The White Queen in civilian garb, gets to the Pryde house first, and talks to Kitty's parents about the Massachusetts Academy. The three X-Men pass by her as she's leaving. Colossus, Storm, and Wolverine take Kitty to a malt shop to discuss her future with the X-Men. But the White Queen zaps the three of them with a mindforce bolt. Her henchmen load them into a vehicle and into captivity. They catch Xavier as well. Kitty Pryde sneaks into the Hellfire Club's van by walking through the machine's wall.

Phoenix, Cyclops, and Nightcrawler go to meet the other mutant. They're monitored by some Hellfire flunkies at their HQ. Behind them, the captured X-Men are in cages. The White Queen talks to Shaw over the viewscreen. She's sure she can get Kitty's father to transfer her to her Massachusetts Academy.

Kitty reaches the X-Men whilst the White Queen's back is turned. Storm gives her a phone number-- and the White Queen sees her. Taking a deep breath, Kitty dives through the floor...

The mini-Cerebro leads Cyclops's team to a disco dive. Scott and Jean are in civilian clothing. Nightcrawler stays behind in the Rolls Royce. At the disco, Mastermind is waiting there for them. He sends Jean into a timeslip where she feels total love, trust and lust for Sir Jason. She and Sir Jason Wyngarde are married. The new mutant, Dazzler, takes the stage. She is a singer, and she has the power to transduce sound into a colorful lightshow.

Kitty's call reaches Nightcrawler, and then a Hellfire mercenary does. More Hellfire mercenaries hit the disco where Scott and Jean are. The two X-Men change into their costumes, and amid pyrotechnics (and with Dazzler's help) they defeat the mercenaries.

They leave and first rescue Kitty, who's been chased by Hellfire goons all afternoon and night. Then they go to Frost Enterprises, where Frost is putting Storm through a painful telepathic interrogation. Kitty frees Wolverine, who deals with the Hellfire guards.

The rest of the X-Men arrive. Phoenix stops the psionic torture. She and Frost throw down, and Phoenix wins. A part of Frost Industries is destroyed during the battle.

The X-Men return Kitty to her parents. Mr. Pryde is furious, about to ream Xavier out over his daughter's long absence—until Jean Grey did something out of character for her—she changes the Prydes's memories of how Kitty spent her time away from them. Both Scott and Ororo are alarmed by this. Ororo thinks it's almost "someone was helping the wrongness to grow."⁽¹⁶⁾

The X-Men infiltrate the Hellfire Club under false identities. Wolverine and Nightcrawler sneak into the building via the sewer.

Unfortunately, Shaw, Leland, and Wyngarde are watching them from cameras. Shaw orders Wyngarde to have Jean Grey turn on the X-Men, since "You've been boasting for weeks that Miss Grey is yours—body and soul."⁽¹⁷⁾

On the ballroom floor, Mastermind sees Scott and Jean dancing together. Cutting in, he dances away with her. And Jean Grey finds herself back in the arms of Sir Jason, the love of her life, and she's Lady Jean Grey, **his wife**.

Mastermind takes Jean upstairs. Scott starts up after them—but at the top, Jean Grey hurls a force bolt at him. She now wears the costume of the Black Queen.

Storm and Colossus change into their costumes and run upstairs. Shaw bests Colossus. Storm beats a strategic retreat, and goes looking for Nightcrawler and Wolverine.

Nightcrawler and Wolverine enter the basement, where they're beaten by Pierce and Leland. Wolverine, his weight increased by Leland so that he falls through three floors back into the sewer, unconscious.

Shaw eventually catches up with Storm and defeats her too. He puts her in a room with the other unconscious X-Men. There, the Inner Circle and the Black Queen toast their victory.

(15) Kitty Pryde was the first 'girlfriend' for many male comics fans, including "Buffy the Vampire Slayer's" creator, Joss Whedon.

(16) X-Men #131, page 30.

(17) X-Men #132, (TOS) page 14.





Only Wolverine is free. He wakes up, climbs back up, takes out several guards and goes to find the rest.

Jean Grey is still living in a time slip. “Her eyes are lit with a cruel wanton passion she’s never shown before.”⁽¹⁸⁾ She sees Colossus, Nightcrawler, and Cyclops (his head in a helmet) as captured rebels against the British Crown, and Storm as a slave.

What Mastermind doesn’t know is that Jean established a permanent psychic unity with Scott. He decides to use it.

The Inner Circle intend to keep the X-Men as laboratory rats, studying their genes so they can manufacture mutants to order.

Scott enters the astral plane, which presents itself as a blank space. His clothes change into that of a rebel during Revolutionary War times, a sword slung by his side. He sees stairs leading up to double doors, where Mastermind and the Black Queen wait.

Things worsen as Mastermind and Cyclops engage in swordplay, while Wolverine nearly makes it all the way to the ballroom. He runs into more trouble.

Just as Jason runs Cyclops through with his sword on the astral plane, the X-Man screams and passes out.

Wolverine, with two costumed guards clinging futilely to him, crashes through the closed door. The shock of what happened to Cyclops shakes Jean Grey partially out of the mind control, and thoroughly out of the delusive time-slip. She is herself enough to free Cyclops and the rest of the X-Men. But not entirely. Even as her teammates battle the Lords Cardinal, she loses control, the dark side of her soul consuming her.

She grants Mastermind his wish for power—by stretching his soul out to infinity, “his brain flooded with all the myriad absolute contradictory truths of existence.”* It sends him into insanity. Jean suppresses the psi bond with Scott so that he doesn’t know what’s going on inside of her. While leaving in an X-Aircraft, Jean loses control. She destroys the craft telekinetically, and the green of her costume turns dark red.

Dark Phoenix

The X-Men fight her, but Dark Phoenix defeats them all, and rockets away to the stars. Her power registers on the Fantastic Four’s machines. Spider-Man sees the giant firebird, and his spidey-sense screams danger. Dr. Strange thinks, “I sense images of great mystic power...passion...evil.”⁽¹⁹⁾ And near Earth orbit, the Silver Surfer senses a spirit like his, a star-child, but with tragic flaws. Dark Phoenix’s energy also shows up briefly on the **Starcore** sensors. She creates a Star Gate and leaves through it, into the Andromeda Galaxy. This depletes her, so she stops, dives into a yellow star—and devours it. But the star D’bari had planets; the fourth one was inhabited. The star goes supernova and incinerates its planets.

A Shi’ar battle cruiser is passing by, seeing Dark Phoenix destroy D’bari. Since this planet’s folk were citizens of the Empire, the cruiser must take action. It fires on Dark Phoenix, who evades the plasma bolt and destroys the battle cruiser.

But the cruiser sent a final image to Lilandra—that of the firebird, Phoenix, which the Empress knows. Lilandra prepares to take action. She’d feared that Phoenix’s powers would overwhelm Jean Grey all along.

The psi-link lets Cyclops know that Dark Phoenix is headed back toward Earth.

The space station picks up the same energy matrix it spotted earlier, only far more energized. Dark Phoenix arrives on Earth, at her parents’s home.

The X-Men distract Dark Phoenix from doing something fatal to her family. Nightcrawler slaps a mind-scrambled on her, which makes her vulnerable—temporarily. Cyclops tries talking to her. Just as he’s reaching her, Prof. X attacks. They struggle amid cerebral pyrotechnics. Prof. X binds Dark Phoenix

⁽¹⁸⁾ X-Men #133, (TOS) page 10.

⁽¹⁹⁾ X-Men #133.





“within an unbreakable network of psionic circuit breakers.”

The Fate of the Phoenix

Power flares about Jean's body, atomizing her costume, leaving her in the nude.. At the end, the good part of Jean Grey helped Prof. X defeat Dark Phoenix.

Cyclops catches her as Jean's family hastens to her. Prof. Grey gives Jean his bathrobe.

The next moment, the X-Men are teleported away in a flash of light.

The X-Men, including Angel and Beast, materialize on the deck of a Shi'Ar dreadnought, with armored guards everywhere. Empress Lilandra, the Prime Minister and Gladiator are also present. Since Jean became Dark Phoenix and consumed the star D'Bari, the Shi'Ar want to prevent that from happening again. Prof. X tells them that he's put Jean's power under control—but the Empress can't take the chance of him being wrong.

Xavier declares a Duel of Honor for Jean Grey's life---X-Men vs. the Empress's champions. The Empress agrees.

The X-Men are granted suites to rest in. In the morning, the dreadnought lands on the Moon for the duel. There's a Blue Area on Earth's satellite an atmosphere over some alien ruins—and that's where the duel will be held. Beyond it is the airless environment of the Moon.

The Empress monitors things from orbit on the dreadnought.

The X-Men fight the Imperial Guard. Cyclops has them using guerrilla tactics—hit and run, X- and they split up. Scott and Jean are together. They get attacked by six of the Guard at once...

The dreadnought registers a flare of energy that illuminates half the Moon. “A plasma bolt of monstrous proportions, punching through the starship's defensive force fields like they don't exist.” The Empress is screaming orders: “Captain---alert the Grand Fleet! Burn this world, this system, this entire stellar cluster!”⁽²⁰⁾

On the Moon, Prof. X concurs. He orders the X-Men to kill Phoenix, before she destroys again.

During the battle, Jean Grey's green costume turns dark red again. She's at war with herself, fleeing so that she won't fight back. Cyclops catches up with Jean Grey, just as she telekinetically activates an alien weapon that disintegrates her.

Cyclops deduces that Jean read the minds of the observers, let the fight deplete her energies so that the ancient weapon could indeed destroy her.

Lilandra gives Prof. Grey a holoempathic crystal. It has recorded Jean Grey's personality and shows her three-dimensional image.

A funeral service is held and Scott Summers is the viewpoint character. It's the graphic equivalent of a TV clip show. On the last page, Kitty Pryde arrives in a cab at the X-Men Mansion.

New Characters

Wendigo (Paul Cartier) Faced with a choice of starving to death or eating his deceased partner, Cartier chose the latter---with horrendous results. The Wendigo is a giant white-furred hominoid that has talons, a long tail, and a mane. It has red eyes glaring out of a brutal face. It is powerful enough to take on the Hulk.

The Brotherhood of Evil Mutants—Mystique (Raven Darkholme) A Dave Cockrum design. The leader of the group, Raven is a shapeshifter. She looks a lot like Nightcrawler, except her hands and feet are normal, has no tail, and her hair is straight and dark red. She debuted in “Ms. Marvel” as a villain. She has a cover identity as Director of Weapons Tech in the Pentagon. She's much older than she looks, since she had complete control over her physical appearance, no imperfections will appear unless she intends them to do so.. She can impersonate anybody. At first, there were limits on the weight of the person she could impersonate--- when she impersonated Nick Fury she wore a puffy jacket to disguise the thinness of her body-- but that was deemed uninteresting and now, she can even dupli-

(20) X-Men #137 (TOS), page 39.





cate the appearance of someone twice (or more) her weight.

Destiny (Irenie Tobler) A middle-aged lady, the blind precog is Raven's good friend and partner in crime. It is possible that they are more than friends, since Mystique can change her gender as well.

Pyro (St. John Allardyce): He's an Australian; has the power of generating and wielding fire.

Avalanche (Dominc Petros): He has the ability of manipulating the Earth under his foes' feet.

Blob (Fred J. Dukes) Joined the Brotherhood after breaking out of prison.

Carol Danvers (Formerly **Ms. Marvel**): Once upon a time she was a super-heroine.

Being a capable writer, Chris Claremont wrote several Marvel books at once. Not only did he write "X-Men", he also took over the writing on "Ms. Marvel," about a Air Force officer who becomes imbued with the powers of an alien device. Her genes were enhanced, bestowing upon her the power of flight, a clairvoyant Seventh Sense and superhuman strength.

Carol Danvers knows Wolverine; in her capacity as a spy, she and the Canadian mutant went on missions together. He once rescued her from a Moscow prison when no one else would. They are very good friends.

Dave Cockrum designed a new costume for her. He joined him as the artist for two issue. (In those issues, Cockrum designed wonderfully craggy lizards mutated by nuclear testing into larger-than-human sentients, who develop a civilization of their own.)

He also designed Deathbird, and Mystique, who was a recurring character in the book.

After her Air Force career, Carol worked as a writer and a magazine editor.

But "Ms. Marvel" was cancelled, and the heroine joined the Avengers. Unfortunately the writers weren't fond of her—(though artist George Perez was.) Her super-strength was downplayed, and she suffered a mysterious accelerated pregnancy, giving birth a few days later to a child.

The child's prescience in the world was accompanied by temporal anomalies appearing dinosaurs, Roman soldiers, World War II tanks, etc. The child grew up in a short time. When he can speak for himself, he reveals that his name is Marcus and that he's from another time, where he observed Ms. Marvel and fell in "love" with her.

Since the only way for the temporal anomalies to cease was for Marcus to return to his time, he did so—asking Ms. Marvel to come with him. She agreed.

Her removal smacked of misogyny, and the fact that Carol fell in love with the child she bore was positively incestuous, so Claremont decided to rectify it. In the "Avengers Annual" of that year, he had Carol Danvers return, her memory completely gone. Spider-Woman sees her falling off the Golden Gate bridge and rescues her. She calls Prof. X, who restores much of her memories. It turns out that a psychic vampire stole her memories and her super-powers, then dumped her off that bridge. However, Carol was left with the enhanced genetic structure.

But before that, after returning to Marcus's timeline, Carol found her would-be paramour to be very manipulative. He used machines to compel her to fall in love with him.

Unfortunately, Marcus continued aging at an unnatural rate. He died of old age not long after. Carol used his machines to return to her own time.

Back To The Story

Angel rejoins the X-Men and works out with them in the Danger Room. Prof.X has made Storm team leader. Kitty watches them Prof. X in the control room. She's not comfortable wit Nightcrawler, findng his appearance well, demonic. Glowing yellow eyes, blue fur and a tail--yup.

The X-Men discuss a code-name for Kitty. They decide on "Sprite." They also get a dance teacher for her named Stevie Hunter. She was once a ballet dancer until her accident.

Wolverine decides to return to Canada to straighten out his status with them. He invites Nightcrawler to go with him.

Wendigo Attacks

But in Canada, Shaman tells them about a monster that eats people. And the two X-Men agree to help. "According to legend, the Wendigo is a man who turned cannibal. The ancient curse of the North





woods transformed him into the Wendigo.”*

Wendigo killed a man and stole the man’s wife and family in order to eat them later. But the little boy escapes to tell the authorities. The two X-Men and Alpha Flight track it down. Wolverine’s berserker rage slow Wendigo down long enough to rescue the mother and baby. However, stopping the Wendigo is not easy. The curse that created him shields him from the total effect of the super-powered members of Alpha Flight. Shaman’s spells won’t affect Wendigo while he’s awake. Only physical force affects him. Unfortunately, Wendigo knocked Wolverine out cold.

So Snowbird changes into the meanest animal of the North—the wolverine. In this form, she injures Wendigo so severely the monster will be out for hours.

But Snowbird is trapped within the savage unthinking intensity of the wolverine. She intends to eat Wendigo. Ironically, it is Wolverine who talks her into turning back into a human, since he’s been to the dark place in the human soul himself.

Shaman then casts spells that turn Wendigo back into a man, Paul Cartier. Cartier is then arrested for murder, since he became Wendigo *voluntarily*.

Elsewhere, the blob, using a technique that his “lawyer” taught him, escapes from a maximum security prison in Washington.

Days of Future Past

A dystopic storyline wherein the Sentinels take over America. The Kitty Pryde of 30 years into the future is one of the surviving X-Men. Mutants live in camps patrolled by Sentinels. Magneto, now a paraplegic, leads the X-Men. They wear collars that neutralize their powers.

Ordinary humans fare no better outside the camps. America is one big Third World country from coast to coast—everything is broken, and nothing works.

The rest of the world fears the Sentinels and is preparing a final nuclear strike upon the United States. To prevent this, Rachel sends Kate back in time to change the future. The assassination of Senator Kelly sets in motion the turn of events resulting in Kate’s nightmarish future.

The Brotherhood of Evil Mutants do their best to kill Senator Kelly, but the X-Men intervene. Because Kate remembers that horrible day, and because Destiny can’t detect her, she can act to stop Destiny from killing Senator Kelly.

Sebastian Shaw meets with the President, Senator Kelly and Henry Peter Gyrich. They start “Project Wideawake,” run by Gyrich. Shaw Industries will design a new batch of Sentinels.

It’s Xmas. A demon from the cursed cairn escapes, heading for the X-Mansion. The X-Men leave on vacation, leaving Kitty to spend Hanukkah alone. But Scott does phone in to wish all a merry Xmas.

Scott goes to work on a fishing boat with Captain Aleytys⁽²¹⁾ Forrester of the “Arcadia.” To his surprise, Aleytys is a woman. He finds himself attracted to her. He lets down his hair down, even playing pool at a hall.

The demon enters the mansion, pursuing Sprite. But Sprite proves more than it can handle. Quick-witted, fast on her feet, and strong, she uses a technological means to stop it cold.

The demon named D’spayre enters the picture. He takes Lee’s terminally ill father, and he’s after Cyclops. He undergoes a psychodrama involving betrayal and sabotage. He defeats D’spayre.

Man-thing guest stars.

Wolverine and Nightcrawler tease Sprite about the damage done to the X-Mansion during the last issue. She leaves and Kurt goes to her later and apologizes. Brent Anderson is the guest star artist.

Doctor Doom and Arcade

In #145, Dave Cockrum returns. The symbolic cover shows Dr. Doom with the defeated X-Men at his feet, an unconscious Storm in one arm. He’s hoisting a goblet in triumph with the other.

(21) Named after the heroine of the Diadem SF novel, by the late, great Jo Clayton.





Arcade and Miss Locke return to give the X-Men a hard time. Arcade has kidnapped Moira MacTaggart, Candy Southern, Amanda Sefton, and Illyana. Doom captures the X-Men, makes Storm into a living silver statue, and keeps a robot double of her as a servant. But the weather around Doom's castle worsens, until Storm breaks free.

The "Arcadia" is hit with a freak storm, stranding Lee and Scott on an island in the Bahamas. Since Scott loses his glasses in the storm, he rips his shirt to make a blindfold of it, to prevent his eyes from opening accidentally and destroying something.

The X-Men split into two teams in order to rescue Arcade and their loved ones. Kitty can't go because she's in bed with a cold.

Arcade reveals he really wasn't a hostage. Some missing friends and family have android duplicates. Arcade captures several X-Men in traps designed just for them. But the captives work their way out and join forces.

Storm breaks free, transfigured into an imminent destroyer. The X-Men recognize it--the "Dark Phoenix" track. Only Colossus's words reach her. He bids her remember Phoenix. After fighting with her dark side, Ororo triumphs. She gets Arcade to apologize to Doom. Doom then apologizes to her.

Scott and Lee explore the island. Lee tells him that another piece of land has inexplicably appeared overnight. It has strange buildings on it. . .

END PART THREE!

X-tra coolness!

Priscilla Johnson has brought to my attention a very cool thing; "40 years of the X-men" DVD! It contains in .PDF format the first 461 X-men comics, which is about 17,500 pages. They are straight scans of the comic books so ads are still intact. Retail is \$49.99, though I've seen it about \$20 cheaper on Amazon.com.

According to various reviews that I've read, this only includes the Uncanny X-men and, I believe, the annuals. The cross over stories will not be present, like the Mutant Massacre, X-Factor, Age of Apocalypse and many others. Hopefully Marvel will put these out on a second DVD set.

The only thing that concerns me is that there didn't seem to be a lot of hype about it before it was released. Hopefully this won't make it a hard sell, as I would love to have it sell well enough to continue to do this with other comics (which is already beginning to happen on a small scale).

Sample taken from: <http://www.netmynder.net/xmen.html>





REVIEWS

Reviewed by Ruth R Davidson

Elfen Lied

I started reading what looked to be a Korean comic (which now seems to have turned out to be a Japanese comic that was translated into Korean, then into English with the first few volumes) called *Elfen Lied* by Lynn Okamoto. The basis for the story is that the human race is mutating and the only way you can tell is if someone has horns, however, there's one little problem. Most of those who mutate have an innate desire to destroy the lesser beings – meaning we humans. So they use their powers to destroy us if given a chance.

We humans however aren't taken down that easily so we, of course, find these horned people and kill them when they are young. Some are kept in a special facility for research purposes (some of which are quite brutal). However there's a faction that's all for the Diclonii.

Our main horned character, A Diclonius named Lucy, escapes from this research facility (if you get two meters in front of her she can, and will, kill you). There's a mad dash to kill her before it's too late. A sniper got in a shot but instead of killing her it knocks her helmet off, and she falls into the sea.

Along the sea shore two college students, Kouta and Yuka, come upon a naked girl (yes, she was naked except for the helmet that got knocked off during impact) with horns (that look like ears, there's only one short-lived character whose horns actually look like horns) who can only say "nyu."

Of course, she is taken in by Kouta who is staying at a family apartment/dormitory/house (all terms are used for the roof over their heads – which is conveniently empty except for the two of them). Yuka invites herself to live there to help out (she of course is in love with Kouta, which is kind of icky since they are cousins!).

Nyu (what Lucy is now called) ends up with a dual personality. The stupid innocent girl, Nyu, and the killer, Lucy. We find out later that when she was a little girl she just wanted someone to care about her, she found someone, Kouta, but became jealous when she saw that he cared about other people too – especially if that someone was a girl. This led to his entire family being murdered in front of him and as a way of

coping he's forgotten everything.

So far, it sounds like it could be an interesting story, and it could have been, but there are quite a few things wrong with it. Let me go through them.

1: The story is choppy, and sometimes is hard to follow because of that.

2: The dialog is cliché, repetitive, and lacking originality.

3: The character development is forced, backgrounds and motivations aren't seen much, and what there is, is grasping at straws.

4: More on characters: The love between Kouta and Yuka seems out of place.

Mayu is basically a useless character. She acts as a danger zone (someone who could reveal Nyu's whereabouts), but there's very little depth, though her tragic background is supposed to give her said depth.

Bandou is an illogical psychopathic killer, he wants to kill people legally so he won't go to jail but his actions make very little sense.

Nana is a Diclonii who actually doesn't want to hurt anyone – except Lucy – and has a father complex. She'll do anything to make her papa happy.

The actions the Chief (of the facility that does the research on the Diclonii), Nana's father, are contradictory and make little sense. The Director's (the head honcho of said facility) actions also make little sense. He's just another maniac in charge.

Nozomi is another useless character, who pees when she's nervous and always wears a diaper. She's learning a German song called *Elfen Lied*.

Then there's a whole passel of minor characters and extras.

5: There are way too many unnecessary panty shots. They're all over the place, along with lots of nudity. There's even some lesbian action between Nyu and Yuka and even Nozomi! Nyu is the instigator of these scenes. There's some sexual things with Kouta as well of course. With all of this it made Mayu's past, – being raped repeatedly by her step father, running away, her mother choosing him over her – seem like just one more sexual thing even though it's a very serious subject.

6: There are panty shots even of little girls! This annoys me to no end. In manga, panty shots are there purely for fan service. For example, in real life girls sit on their skirts when riding a





bicycle, so if you see a panty shot of a girl riding her bike in a manga, or anime, it's purely a fictitious occurrence. So, why on earth is this sort of sexual, oh yeah, female ass, kind of service being dished out with child characters? Do we really want our young men to think sexual thoughts about children? I feel that this promotes pedophilia by saying "it's okay, see?" Lynn Okamoto (male) should know better.

7: The art is awful (it seems to improve a little later)- arms are too long, improper proportions, overly simplistic. It feels like art that a teenager who never took lessons would draw. It looks cool to other kids, but is really very amateur. While some errors are to be expected, ones as egregious as these should not occur in a professional comic.

8: For a visual medium, it is odd that more things are told to the reader via bad dialog than shown. It reads very fast, but that probably has something to do with it not being very visually appealing (unless all you're into are panty shots).

Elfen Lied is a waste of time and money. I will not be finishing the series and I am very glad I did not spend any money on it (I downloaded what I read). I can hardly believe that I read as much as I did, but I had this hope that there would be something redeeming about it. I was wrong.

It has an interesting premise, but the execution is bloody awful.

Naruto: Dubbed Style

I previously reviewed Naruto (see TMV vol. 2 no. 3), stating it had a lot of really good life lessons, great fighting sequences and an interesting story – but to beware of stupid Naruto fans. Well, on Cartoon Network, they show Naruto. Merciful heavens, how on earth did it become so popular through this horrible-horrible dub!? Not only is the voice acting lousy (rather reminds me of the over the top 80's cartoon acting – only worse) but the translation is horrendous.

Naruto sounds like a whiney kid instead of a determined one. Inner Sakura (the part of Sakura that we see, but the other cast of characters don't) sounds like a girl trying to be cool but fails, and then there's everyone else. Ugh. I think part of the problem is that unless it's Disney real actors don't voice act (apparently it's not a bad career move to voice act for Disney but it is for anyone else). This saddens me because good voice acting is imperative in any animation.

The producers changed the names of some attacks, which is completely unnecessary when there are no lip synching issues. I wouldn't mind a shortened version for the name of an attack if they had lip synching issues, but when the renamed attack is as long as the original name, I have a problem.

However, worse than this is that they add entire lines that never existed in the anime. Yes, that's right, whole lines that never went there. What? They didn't think that we American's would get it without a little "help"? The lines added are thought lines, so when you see two people significantly looking at each other, instead of drawing attention to the expressions and getting the meaning from that, they add thought lines instead. This is terrible since it ruins the reflective moment and makes everyone, especially Sasuke, sound horribly cheesy.

They also edit out blood in an attempt to make it less violent/gory. This is silly, it's a *ninja fighting anime* of course there's going to be blood and violence! The fight sequences are an integral part of the story/world.

My conclusion? Avoid the dubbed version of Naruto at all costs.

Naruto and Filler Episodes

Now, there's one more thing that's annoying about the Naruto anime, but that's present in both the original and dubbed versions. This annoying thing is the filler episodes. The problem with creating an anime based on an ongoing manga is that when the anime catches up to the manga there's no more story to animate until the next manga comes out. So, filler episodes are written and animated instead. These episodes do not serve to forward the story, since it can't. The animators don't know where the story is going. Most animated series based on an ongoing manga will have filler episodes. However, what makes Naruto's particularly bad is that there is an *entire season's worth of filler episodes!*

Yep, an entire season's worth, 26 episodes of mission adventures, of story that doesn't belong. From the end of the arch where they find out that they have three years to find Sasuke before Orochimaru will be able to transfer his spirit into Sasuke, all the way up till now. The filler episodes were dated to end back in March of 2006. The next season jumps three years into the future with a sixteen year old Naruto and Sakura, etc..

Basically, anything that happens between





those two points do not matter. You can totally skip them. The other crazy thing about it all is that there are many filler eps interspersed and just think of how many DVD's in the complete box set will be nothing but filler eps once that box set becomes available. What a horrible thought.)

However, the new episodes of Naruto are out! To mark the return of the main story line and note that Naruto is older, Naruto is now called Naruto Shippuuden.

Naruto Shippuuden

Finally the new episodes are out! YAY! Or wait, maybe not yay. They did very well with the art. Everyone is clearly older, yet still recognizable. However, there are still lots and lots of filler episodes. Seriously. Fight sequences last too long. The scenes where Team Gai has to fight copies of themselves is mostly filler. In the manga, they manage to beat the copies, it's not some big deal (though I do like the quote at the back if that came out of it, but sorry guys, you can't magically become stronger in two seconds).

Then, two things made me lose my interest in the anime. The first is that the fight scene between Sasuke and Orochimaru was elongated. The whole point of it being short was that Sasuke really did seriously surpass his mentor! Something all of Team Kakashi do, surpass their mentors.

The other killer was the whole giant sequence with the crystal user. There is no crystal user. Orochimaru had NO interest in the Bijuu (the tailed monsters). If he did he would have stayed a member of the Akatsuki. He wanted to know all techniques and cheat death.

I did like the fight scene between Akatsuki member, Deidara, and Gaara. Gaara is awesome. You can see the awesome on crunchyroll.com where you can watch it for free. But, watch sparingly to avoid wasting your time.

Read the manga. It is awesome. It used to be up on onemanga.com, but alas, publishers decided they didn't like scanlations and so that portion of the site shut down. Maybe you can still find them some place else. The manga moves at a faster rate. Sasuke will piss you off because he's a bloody moron. Shikamaru uses his superior mind to trick a Akatsuki member, Hidan, an unkillable foe. You find out more about Naruto's



From: <http://www.otakucenter.com/my-wallpaper-t2257.html?p=175933>

parents, and about devious plots that began before Naruto was born. Good stuff.

Naruto – Anime vs Manga

I got my hands on the Naruto Manga. It's interesting to see the difference between the manga and anime. What I like best about the manga is that the story is in it's original form (no filler!). What I like the most about the anime is watching the fight scenes. They are easier to follow in the anime than in the manga.

I also like reading the manga artist notes. For example, Sasuke is Kishimoto Masashi's favorite character because he is the hardest to draw. According to Kishimoto it is difficult to draw a child with such adult eyes without making him look like an adult.

The art style in the anime seems to be based off the second part of the manga series (which is better in my opinion).

Here are a few differences that I have noticed from the manga to anime:

In the manga the eyebrows comment is not present between Gai and Lee.

The Konohamaru introduction is short in the manga (about 10 minutes worth anime-wise) not long. You see him only one more time after that, not several. This explains why most of the parts with Konohamaru seemed like filler scenes.

The other team characters are introduced later during the exam instead of sooner like in the anime. However, most of the early introductions





seems to work well in the anime.

The fight between Ten-Ten and Gaara's sister, Temari, is very short, you don't get to see any of the fight in the manga. However, I liked seeing some of the action in the anime.

Sakura mentions her intention of getting Sasuke's first kiss before Naruto gets bumped and kisses Sasuke.

Some of the wording was changed. This might be due to translation differences.

The toad scene with the Boss toad is much shorter - no running around antics of doom - and he didn't actually believe that Naruto summoned him until he saw the contract scroll. In the anime he knew but was giving Naruto a hard time.

There was no scroll shown to Neji, the story was told by the head of the main branch of the Hyuuga family. I like the scroll idea better. It makes Neji's father more thoughtful of his son.

The paw conversation with Takkun and Shikamaru when Takkun was first summoned and introduced into the story is not present. Only the bite is there. It was a silly conversation anyway and seemed out of place in the anime.

The big fight scene between Jiraiya, Tsunade, and Orochimaru is shorter. I think I prefer the longer version in the anime. More spiffy cool eye candy fighting sequences.

The episodes where Naruto, Jiraiya, and Sakura go out to find Sasuke, do not exist.

There are more differences, but I'll probably never find the time to continue the side by side comparisons. Alas.

Conclusion: Both anime, ultimately, do not do Masashi Kishimoto's work justice.

The Last Airbender

My daughter saw the previews to the Last Airbender. It looked pretty neat (especially the Fire Nation ships) so my husband and I were swift to promise her that we could see it when the movie came out. Oops.

Before I go on, let me explain the original animated series a bit, called Avatar: The Last Airbender. There are four elements, water, earth, fire and air. Each nation is based off an element and many of the peoples bend the element of their nation. Balance needs to be maintained between the elements and to do that we have the Avatar, Master of all four elements. The Avatar is reborn over and over again, in an elemental cycle, being born as a waterbender first, then an

earthbender, to firebender to airbender. However, at the start of our story, there's a problem. The Avatar disappeared one hundred years ago, the Airbenders are extinct courtesy of the Fire Nation. The Avatar is thought to be no more, and war between the Fire Nation and the other nations is still going on. However, a brother and sister from the water tribe, Sokka and Katara, discover the whereabouts of the new Avatar. A twelve year old airbending boy, named Aang. Now, the poor kid, has to Master water, earth and fire, and not only that, but during the course of their travels, they find out something horrible, he's short on time. The anime takes place within a year. (I love how you can see them get older, especially since these are kids! Of course they're gonna grow!)

Each of the characters have some sort of shtick. Our main heroes care about people, and about fixing what's wrong in the world. All characters display complexity and personal growth.

Sokka is the meat and potatoes sarcasm man. He is hilarious, a good thinker, and a pro at the boomerang. He is not a bender.

Katara is the waterbender. She's the motherly type, headstrong, passionate, and looks on the bright side.

Toph, the blind earthbender who "sees" with her feet via vibrations. She's the tomboy who shows affection by punching you, but, if she doesn't like you, she punts you into next week with her earthbending. (Though she doesn't enter the story until season two and is thus not in the movie.)

Aang is the determined, in over his head, fun loving, airbending, goofball; aka: the Avatar.

Zuko, the guy hunting the Avatar for the Fire Lord, his father, in order to regain his honor. He has a serious personality complex. His role in the series changes over time. His character makes the greatest personal growth.

This series is *American made*. It is originally in English. Yes, it has Kanji above the name, but that's for flavor since the creators drew a lot upon Eastern belief systems, and Japanese anime influence. Appa, the eight legged flying bison and Aang's constant companion, is a direct hat tip to the cat bus in Miyazaki's "Totoro."

The movie is based off the series and encompasses only the first season called Water. Each season in the series represents the next element in the cycle, and the element that Aang has to master. There will probably not be another movie, and if there is, may it not be directed M.





Night Shyamalan. I can forgive casting white actors as Sokka and Katara. I can forgive Zuko's Uncle Iroh not being as awesome as the tea loving wise sage type sinceno one can do Iroh like Mako Iwamatsu – may he rest in peace. Though, it's odd that actor playing the uncle is awfully white looking compared to the Indian casting of the other fire nation characters. But, oh well.

No, little things like that were minor compared to the egregious errors and idiocy. The names were pronounced wrong. Yes, really. Examples, Aang became Ung, and Sokka to Soak-a. Eh!? This was originally in English! How could they get it wrong!?

They didn't have enough time for everything that happens in the first season, but what do they do? Exposition. There was a LOT of exposition. Let's just tell you things that happened in the exact order of the animation. Wait what? And Aang, automatically and serenely telling Katara why he was frozen in a block of ice for a hundred years in the Avatar state was so out of character and badly done, it was literally made me feel sick to my stomach.

They cut out the Kyoshi warriors, and left in the oppressed earthbenders. The earthbenders in the animation were on Fire Nation ships where the only earth were the coals far down below the ship where they weren't able to reach it. They couldn't bend. In the movie, the earthbenders were simply cowed into not earthbending and were kept on land, and that encounter was used to spread the word about the Avatar's return. Stupid! They should have kept the Kyoshi warriors, who don't bend, instead and use that encounter to spread the word of the Avatar's return.

There was also, strangely enough, a lack of bending. They didn't bend enough, and when they did bend it was so slow, it was like having entire minutes of watching the bionic man slowly moving fast or having to make a bunch of fancy moves before he could do anything amazing.

Then we have characterization issues. Sokka was not funny in the movie. He's supposed to be funny. Aang was far too lah dee dah, I'm the Avatar, but wasn't fun loving. Zuko was wooden, and his scar was barely there. He still had an eyebrow. All this is just the tip of the iceberg. It'd take too long to point out all the stupid things that ruined the movie.

The worst part was, there were a few moments, and these were the moments where they did not engage in exposition and where they actu-

ally deviated from the anime (gee, fancy that), they got it right. They got the feel, the characters, right. Those handful of scenes made me realize what it could have been. These actors COULD have played the roles given them, and done it well. If only they had been given good material to work with. Thus I mourned.

By the way, my seven year old daughter was also disappointed with the movie.

Reviewed by Heath Row

20th Century Boys Vol. 1

Naoki Urasawa
Viz Media, 2009

Much of the manga I've read in translation in recent months—such as Bleach and Death Note—has been aimed at younger readers. This manga by the artist and writer behind Monster is aimed at a slightly older reader. I really enjoyed this first volume, which has a little more meat to it than the standard manga paperback. At base, it's the story of a group of childhood friends who are brought back together because of the death of one of their pals—a boy nicknamed Donkey who's a little bit of an outsider. One of the gang, Kenji, becomes intrigued by a series of coincidences surrounding their friends death, including a missing family and the stabbing of a religious leader, and the mysterious use of a symbol the group used to signify their secret hideout when they were kids.

It's also the story of The Friend, an Enlightened Master-like spiritual and self-help leader who trafficks in "tranquility CDs," seminars, and apparently the assassination of other spiritual leaders. (That's not made explicit in this volume, but my guess is that that's the direction in which the story's going.) Signs indicate that the two plot-lines will intersect—and not in a nice way. Add to that jumping between the modern day and flashbacks of the past, a recognition of the 1969 moon walk, and a Stephen King's Stand By Me-like mood, and it makes for an excellent read. We'll see if the library has the next volume!

Urasawa's artwork is also excellent, reminding me more of Harvey Kurtzman and Will Eisner than Rumiko Takahashi or Masakazu Katsura, my primary manga touchpoints. That, too, makes it a slightly different manga read for me. Recommended all around.





Election Daze: What Are They Really Saying?

Stan Lee and Lauren Victoria Burke
Filsinger Publishing, 2008

Fumetti, or photonovels or photo comics, are largely popular in Italy, Spain, and Latin America. They've never really caught on in the United States, although Marvel Comics took a stab with the Marvel Fumetti Book in 1984 and National Lampoon magazine worked them into its pages as photo funnies. More recently, to capitalize on the 2008 election and access to photographs taken by photojournalist Lauren Victoria Burke, Stan Lee and presumed book packager Tom Filsinger collaborated on this effort. The resulting book is a slim volume of almost 100 images of electoral hopefuls, incumbents, and their colleagues, paired with ostensibly clever and humorous speech bubbles. Given that these are effectively single-panel gags, they're more akin to the old Cracked Lens gags from Cracked magazine in which stills from horror B movies were mixed with comedic captions than the more modern Twisted ToyFare Theatre photo comic strips from ToyFare.

Now, halfway through 2009—and six months into Barack Obama's presidential term—the book falls a little flat. Burke's black-and-white photography from the primaries and campaign trail is an interesting snapshot of who the important players were, but at this point, Lee's "funnies" don't really do justice to the photos. Some of the pairings make light of political foibles such as Dick Cheney's accidental shooting of Harry Whittington and how it's challenging to spell the last name of Iran's president, but others are vaguely racist. In one, New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson pointedly says, "It wasn't me! He's the guy who's been eating beans!" In another, actor Don Cheadle looks doubtfully at someone who might be Lindsey Graham, thinking "He's bragging! Nobody's is that big." In the end, that's basically what this book trafficks in: stereotypes. George W. Bush is dumb. Hilary Clinton is a careerist. Michael Bloomberg is wealthy. Henry Kissinger is old. And Obama is polished.

The book neither secures Burke's photography in the historical record nor elevates Lee's humor writing to political commentary. That might not have been the goal. But if the goal was provoking laughter, there were as many funny jokes here as there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Perhaps more importantly to

comics fans, it's another example of how the fumetti can be misused, perhaps even abused, which helps ensure that the form will continue to be unpopular in the United States.

The New York Four

Brian Wood and Ryan Kelly
DC Comics/Minx, 2008

Launched as an imprint of DC two years ago, Minx specializes in inexpensive graphic novels for teenage girls. This 152-page book-length story was one of the first handful of titles released and features writing by New York resident Brian Wood and the artwork of Ryan Kelly, who's also collaborated with Wood on the comic Local. At times, the book reminded me of Jessica Abel's book *La Perdida*, which is also about a group of young adults finding their way in a new city as they form and explore new relationships. In this book, the main character is Riley, freshman at New York University who lives with her parents in Brooklyn and spends more time texting on her mobile phone than she does hanging out with friends.

Riley falls in with a group of three other young women, reunites with her estranged older sister, and flirts—via SMS—with an indie rock-loving hipster who slipped her his email after a show on the Lower East Side. The story explores several tensions: the pull of her sister and the pain of her being disowned by their parents, the pulse-pounding what if of the secret boyfriend, the allure of virtual versus real-life relationships and the messiness they can bring, and the approach of adult and the responsibilities that brings. The book leaves those tensions open, largely, leaving the potential for a follow-up volume depending on how these characters are received by readers.

All in all, I enjoyed the book, even if I'm a bigger fan of other work by Wood (see the review of *Northlanders*, below). At times, Kelly's heavily inked and dense panels felt a little cluttered and hectic for my tastes—occasionally reminding me of Paul Pope as well as Abel—and I wonder what a softer approach to the art would have lent the writing. I haven't read any of the other Minx books, so I don't know how they compare, but if you have a teenage girl in your life and you'd like to introduce her to comics—or New York or indie rock or the challenges of growing up—The New York Four wouldn't be a bad place to begin.





Northlanders #1-7

Brian Wood and Davide Gianfelice
DC Comics, February-August 2008

This review will be relatively devoid of spoilers because, wouldn't you know it, DC only sent me the first seven issues of this eight-issue story arc. The arc, "Sven the Returned," was collected in a trade paperback published last October, so you can read what I haven't been able to yet—and I was pleasantly surprised that the series has continued. Issue #18 of the series was published in July, and I hope that the comic series continues. If these first seven issues, sans conclusion, are any indication, it's a good one—and the kind of comic active readers deserve to have on the shelves.

At first, I pegged *Northlanders* as a sword and sandals comic, but it's really a viking comic, as the action opens in the year 980 in the Bosphorus Straits. The bulk of the tale takes place on the Orkney Islands, which lie off the northern tip of Scotland. After a series of misadventures and adventures—the hero ends up leading an OK life in Constantinople following a family tragedy partly his own making—the hero returns to his homeland. Not surprisingly, an evil and superstitious uncle has laid claim to the community once led by the hero's father, now dead, and the comic unfolds partly as the storyline of the heir striving to reclaim his family's position.

The story takes a turn, however, as new enemies are introduced, old friends are reunited, and the full complexity of the situation—and the community's challenges—becomes clear. That said, I don't know how it ends because I didn't receive #8, the conclusion of this arc. I'll have to check out the TPB, just like you should. Brian Wood's maturing into an excellent comic writer. His ideas are large, and his implementation skilled. He combines period pieces with occasionally modern-day diction that could be more jarring but seems to work well together. And Davide Gianfelice's artwork, combined with Dave McCaig's well-chosen palette, is wonderfully lush in its density while still strict in its sharpness, capturing the potentially dark and desperate tenor and tone of the times perfectly. The covers are all beautiful, and I particularly appreciated the single-panel pages that book end most issues. That approach doesn't just give readers a chance to fall into Gianfelice's artwork, it encapsulates each issue as a singular unit, rather than a link in the chain of the overall arc.

I'm bummed I wasn't able to read the full storyline, but I thoroughly enjoyed the seven eighths DC sent me. That should be enough to encourage you—me, all of us—to seek out more of this wonderfully done series. A comic about vikings. Who'da thunk?

Zombie Come Lately

An Interview with Bob Fingerman

By Heath Row

New York City-based comic book artist and writer, and author Bob Fingerman has been making comics since the early '80s. A former student of and collaborator with Harvey Kurtzman and parodist for the European series *RanXerox*, Fingerman has also produced work for *Cracked*, *Penthouse*, and the *Village Voice*. For the last two decades, following a run on *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* and other comics work for hire, Fingerman's been focusing on his own work. By turns personal and semi-autobiographical—and dark and fantastic—the resulting comic books, graphic novels, and novels have explored a number of themes.

Most recently, that theme has been zombies. And their ilk. In May, IDW began publishing Fingerman's miniseries *From the Ashes*. Set in a post-apocalyptic New York City, the book considers how Fingerman and his wife would go about the business of day-to-day survival. As of this writing, two issues have been published, and the title is slated to run a total of six. I reached out to Fingerman for an email interview after reading the first 24-page issue, which ends in a confrontation with a group of cannibals. "We're so boned," says Michele, Fingerman's wife.

My conversation with Fingerman centered on the increasing use of monsters in pop culture, the possible causes of the apocalypse, and the ideas behind the concept of the "speculative memoir." Here's what he had to say.

Mangaverse: I first became aware of your work with the *Beg the Question* collection of the *Minimum Wage* miniseries and your semi-autobiographical work. Then, your work seemed to take a turn toward the supernatural with *Recess Pieces* and your novel *Bottomfeeder*. The new comic, *From the Ashes*, seems to bridge the two. Was that trajectory conscious? How has your work evolved thematically over time?

Bob Fingerman: That's a complicated question.





I'll no doubt have a disappointing answer, but I'm not really sure how it's evolved thematically. I think it's gotten darker and more socially conscious, maybe. I address some hot-button topics in *From the Ashes*, but that comes midway into the series. Still, end of the world is a bit dark—although I play with it lightly. *Bottomfeeder* was also pretty dark. My upcoming novel, *Pariah* (Tor, 2010) is rather dark.

In direct contrast to how decent my actual life is—and it's pretty sweet, by and large—my work has gotten darker. Even *Recess Pieces*, a straight-up humorous take on zombies, involves an awful lot of carnage, but involving children. Always with humor. I like my humor tinged by the gallows. How pretentious.

The trajectory wasn't so much conscious as natural. Ideas just come to me, often unbidden—or in reaction to things. I was thinking a lot about the end of the world during the Bush years. I was also annoyed by the trend in graphic "novels" to actually be graphic memoirs. So, I slammed them together and added a phrase I think I coined, "speculative memoir."

Mangaverse: Zombies appear to be tremendously popular in culture and media in this century, perhaps even moreso than in the past. Having done several zombie-themed works, including the *Zombie World* collection in addition to *Recess Pieces* and the new comic, what do you think it is about zombies that makes them so appealing? Why now?

Fingerman: My forthcoming book, *Pariah*, is a zombie novel, even. But I'm not a zombie-come-lately. My first pitch for *Pariah* was as a graphic novel, actually, back in '94, for *Vertigo*. But zombies weren't the "it" monster back then. I was ahead of the curve. In retrospect, I'm glad *Pariah* had to wait because it evolved into a more substantial piece of work than it would have been as a graphic novel. It needed to be a novel.

I think zombies are appealing because they're not super powered or glamorous. They're us, in a nutshell—only dumber (if that's possible). They just consume without thinking and shamble through un-life. Not that different than us. That's also what makes them scary. They're kind of the "there but for the grace of God" creatures.

They're not evil. They didn't ask to be that way. Zombies are just one piece of bad luck removed from humanity. We can relate.

Mangaverse: How are zombies different than, say, vampires or other monsters? Can you use them differently as plot devices, protagonists, or antagonists?

Fingerman: They're different in that they aren't malign. They're brain dead. They don't mean you harm, they just shamble along—or run, if you prefer the modern idiom—but they're not evil.

Having written both vampires and zombies, both have their charms. My vampire protagonist, Phil Merman, wasn't evil, either. He was conflicted and—by and large—pragmatic. But zombies? They're hungry dopes. The zombies in *Pariah* are there as the ultimate obstruction of our most basic needs.

Mangaverse: In *From the Ashes*, you and your wife seem pretty well equipped for the apocalypse. Do you really think you'd handle it so well? What would you miss the most?

Fingerman: I'd be pathetic. I'd spend a lot of time going through adult diapers and complaining.

I don't know. Maybe I'd do really well. But it seems unlikely. Michele would do great. She's made of sterner stuff than I am. I'd miss convenience. Everything that makes contemporary life livable is how ridiculously convenient it all is. Running water. Electricity. Easy.

I'd especially miss the creature comforts. Toilets and showers would be top of the list. I'd miss my Xbox 360. Sure, I could still read books, but DVDs? I love my DVDs.

Wait—was my first answer supposed to be "people"? Um, I'd miss them, too. But not as much as my DVDs and shower. I'm being flip-pant. I'd miss my friends and loved ones most. Then, definitely the shower.

Mangaverse: Many New Yorkers involved in comics did their apocalypse books shortly after Sept. 11, 2001. Yours is being published after the Barack Obama election and in the midst of a major global economic crisis. What inspired the book at this time?

Fingerman: Eight years of Bush. I was actually worried it wouldn't seem in step with the times, but if anything, it's more topical than ever. Kim Jong Il, that crazy SOB, is nuke happy. Iran is also pretty scary—although their reaction to the





obviously stolen election is refreshing and heartening; I wish America had been that vigorous in protesting the results of the Bush "election."

But, Bush is the answer. The book was inspired by my sheer horror at those eight years of that vile cretin and his despicable administration.

Mangaverse: Really? The comic doesn't seem overtly political. Do you think comic books can play a political role in society?

Fingerman: It gets more political later. I don't get soap boxy—I hope—but there's definitely some satire with a sociopolitical edge.

As for comics playing a political role, I'm not sure. Maybe. They can definitely influence people. Look no further than Jack Chick's evangelical tracts and comics. They shape some rather weak, malleable minds. Political cartoons shape opinion, or at least they have—like Thomas Nast, back when print was king. Pogo was pretty political and might have influenced some readers. I don't think *From the Ashes* would, but who knows?

Mangaverse: So much of what IDW publishes seems to be licensed comics properties or media tie ins: Obama, Angel, G.I. Joe, Star Trek. How'd you land *From the Ashes* there?

Fingerman: An editor friend, Scott Dunbier, started there last summer. It seemed like a good idea to pitch it to him because he was there to bring in new, creator-owned projects. My friend, Dean Haspiel, suggested I hit Scott with it. Good call, Dino.

Mangaverse: One of the things that struck me about *Beg the Question* was how heavy the inks were. *From the Ashes* seems a lot softer, almost as though it were done in water colors or some kind of wash. What techniques did you use for the book?

Fingerman: I didn't think the inks were that heavy in *Beg the Question*. The line work was rather fine, in the European "clean line" tradition. But there was a lot of black—maybe that's what you mean.

Anyway, I gave up inking altogether, so that's what you're seeing. I thought a lot of spontaneity was lost in the inking process. So, it's all

pencil now. I think it looks a lot better. Livelier. The tonal work is done digitally, but in a process I came up with that looks organic. I didn't want it to look computery.

Mangaverse: You and Dunbier describe the comic as a "speculative memoir." Why not just do a genre comic or an autobio book? What's your intent for the speculative memoir form? Were there other examples that inspired you to take that approach?

Fingerman: None that I'm aware of. I think I might have coined that phrase. If not, whatever. It was new to me when it popped into my head. I wanted to do something totally personal but not something that had actually happened.

I prefer genre entertainment in general, but my take is to ground it as much as possible in what I know in reality. Philip K. Dick is my favorite author because he took regular schlubs and thrust them into fantastic situations. I'm not in his league and never will be, but I like that approach.

Mangaverse: What do you find appealing about regular schlubs in fantastic situations?

Fingerman: I'm a regular schlub, I guess. Although, not really. Regular in a very New York way. I leave the city, and it strikes me how alien I am to American norms. Being in New York really insulates me from that.

But I'm regular enough to relate to characters that aren't particularly heroic, or fit, or hyper-intellectual. Philip K. Dick put normal schmucks in space. That's beautiful. He pitted them against insane situations and kicked them in their teeth, and they got through it and persevered and made good. That's great.

I remember reading about how David Cronenberg was attached to direct *Total Recall* at one point, and how his lead was going to be Richard Dreyfuss. Can you imagine how much closer that would have skewed to Dick's sensibility? I liked the actual movie, but Schwarzenegger was an übermensch. Who could worry about him? But whiny, nebbishy Dreyfuss? In space?

Everyone wants to be Neo in *The Matrix*, but we all know we're really Joe Pantoliano's character. That's fine with me.

You can learn more about Fingerman and his work online at <http://www.bobfingerman.com>.





概字 Comment Letters

From Priscilla Johnson

Dear Ruthiechan: Wow! I'm glad to see the new issue of "The Mangaverse" come out! I liked the way you formatted the "X-Men" article--especially that photo of the Sun in its solar flare phase. Very appropriate, considering what happens to Jean Grey.

By the way--I made a mistake about chakras. I thought that the first mention of them in "X-Men" was with Grant Morrison. That's not so. I was skimming through a British comic book called "Hell's Angel" (published some years ago) in which the X-Men guest star. They are scanning the character Hell's Angel with their machines and one of her chakras is of significance to them. I'll make a note of this error in the next chapter.

I enjoyed the jokes and the Japanese-English dictionary as well.

I'm glad to hear that you're cutting "The Mangaverse's" frequency down to quarterly. It'll give me time to type up "X-Men Primer Three."

I am sorry to hear that you and your husband are breaking up. Sometimes you just can't catch a break. I'm very glad to see that you are dealing with it, and not letting it get the better of you.

*[Priscilla, I am glad that reducing the frequency of The MANGAVERSE is helpful to you! Though, it seems this year it's more annual than quarterly. *sweat drop* Alas, such is life. Hopefully next year I will have more time, if not, well, maybe it will be semi-annual. Anything else would be very sad indeed me-thinks. Okay, so it ended up being less than annual. Eh heh.*

My husband and I are doing much better. We managed to get back together two years ago. Yay! —Ruthiechan]

Ah My Goddess Belldandy's Origins

Eric Glasgow

Hello, I'm back after a long silence. But okay, I'm here now, and I'm going to talk about one of my most favorite female characters, Belldandy. It's the month of Love so who better to talk about?

Now how did she and all the other Goddesses come to be? From actual mythology!

Belldandy like the manga is a Keeper of Fate and/or Time; like her sisters from the Norse myths or the Viking tales. So Urd is the Keeper of the Past, Belldandy is the Watcher of the Present and Skuld is the one who holds the Future.

Now Belldandy's name is actually Verdandi, so why the change? The change is due to the fact that the Japanese have no letter V so their B is the replacement of the V. As for the L's, the Japanese have no L's so why? Well the Japanese R's a lot of the times sounds like L's so when you hear it in Japanese it sounds a lot like Belldandy.

So that's how Belldandy came to be, and for the character's design, that's a different story. The writer got that from a previous art piece he did a while ago for some commercial project or something of that sort.

Well, I can go on and on about Belldandy and all the other Goddesses but I don't think there can be a big enough space for that.

So until the next time we meet. See ya later and bye-bye.

With Lots of Love for Belldandy, Eric Glasgow

[I hereby grant you permission to go on and on! Write more about it! People wanna know! —Ruthiechan]



“Become stronger than you were yesterday.”

-Rock Lee, Naruto Shippuuden Episode 22