
Subject: Dave's Capsules for June 2024

Posted by [dvandom](#) on Fri, 28 Jun 2024 02:33:54 GMT

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Dave's Comicbook Capsules Et Cetera

Generally Monthly Picks and Pans of Comics and Related Media

Standard Disclaimers: Please set appropriate followups. Recommendation does not factor in price. Not all books will have arrived in your area this month.

An archive can be found on my homepage, <http://www.eyrie.org/~dvandom/Rants>

I passed the stress test, but did not enjoy the experience.

Items of Note (strongly recommended or otherwise worthy): Nothing this month, another of those "lots of good, no great" months.

In this installment: Justice League Crisis on Infinite Earths Part 2, Adventure Finders Book 3 Chapter 19, Third Imp: Percy in the Lands Between, This Is Screwed Up, But I Was Reincarnated As A Girl In Another World vol 1-2, Kaiju No. 8 vol 10, The Great Cleric vol 9, Delicious In Dungeon vol 2-4, Magilumiere Magical Girls Inc. vol 2, The Deep Dark, Barda, Bad Dream: A Dreamer Story, Fantastic Four #20-21, Vengeance of the Moon Knight #5, My Adventures With Superman #1 (of 6), Vampirella/Dracula Rage #6 (of 6), Vampirella #669.

"Other Media" Capsules:

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

Justice League Crisis on Infinite Earths Part 2: DC - The first half hour or so focuses on the origins of Supergirl/Harbinger and Psycho Pirate (many AKAs in this version), then it's time for the Shadow Demon attacks as the vibrational towers turned out to only be a stopgap solution just as in the original comics. The crosstime Bat-Family gets a lot of time as well, but mostly it's an excuse for fight scenes and recriminations (Tomorrowverse Batman dropped Dick off at an orphanage in Central City and has been aggressively solo). Just as part one had the advantage of hindsight to construct a more satisfying role for Barry Allen in Crisis, both Psycho Pirate and Supergirl get much more reason to do what they do, rather than being plot devices explained with a few panels here and there. Other elements that seemed just sort of "wouldn't this be cool?" in the original are also more smoothly integrated, both into versions of the original Crisis story, and also linked to the rest of the Tomorrowverse and even before

(e.g. fleshing out why Atlantis was working with the Nazis in the JSA movie). It doesn't have the strong narrative thread that part one did, but it's still pretty solid storytelling. Recommended. Price varies by format and store. Note, part 3 is coming out on streaming in July, but I'll be waiting for BluRay again. (There's a very short preview of part 3 in the extras on this disk, and they're definitely doing the "Dinosaurs in Metropolis" thing from the original Crisis.)

Digital Content:

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

Adventure Finders Book 3 Chapter 19: Patreon.com - The battle continues, and while there's a few brief setbacks or apparent setbacks, this is mostly a forwards grind against multiple enemies, with a few moments of character stuff amidst the attacks. This is definitely a "wait and read the whole battle at once" sort of thing, though. Mildly recommended on its own. \$2/month on Patreon.

Third Imp: Percy in the Lands Between: JohnnyWander.com - Just a collection of quick comics chronicling the efforts of Barbarous's artist Yuko Ota to play Elden Ring. It's a mix of single panel bits and short strips, and the tone is definitely comedic given that Yuko was not very good at the game (unlike McNostril, whose Elden Ring comics reflect a somewhat more skillful playthrough). As indicated by the full title, the Tarnished was modeled after Percy, one of the leads of the Barbarous webcomic. Now, to be honest, all I know about Elden Ring I learned from McNostril's comics, but you don't really need to know the game to be amused by this zine. Recommended. Pay what you want, \$5 is the recommended price on itch.io (and what I paid).

Note, I have been poking around more at the LibraryPass system, since the vagaries of Media Mail meant my floppies might not have arrived until July. One thing I found is that Marvel and DC are not available, either in general or on the version my local library licenses. There's some DC content through Capstone, which does Early Reader prose (with some DCAU-style pictures) DC superhero books. Dynamite is fully participating, though, which let me read this month's Vampirella books while waiting for my shipment.

Trades:

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

into manga and non-manga sections.

This Is Screwed Up, But I Was Reincarnated As A Girl In Another World vol 1-2: Seven Seas Entertainment - When I first saw this title while scrolling through releases, I got the impression that this would go for a lot of sex jokes. However, I saw some positive comments about the book online, so I decided to give it a shot, grabbing the two volumes that were on the shelf. Yeah, not getting more. It's not that there's nothing good about it, but most of the stuff it does well is done better in Great Cleric or Kuma Kuma Kuma Bear or Enthusiastic Lord. The first volume is really rough, and feels like someone just drew the outline rather than fleshing out the story. Second volume is a bit better in terms of actually telling a story, but both are rather heavily focused on the main character spending time masturbating. (Nothing graphic, the running gag is a "cut away to show pictures of nature while she does it" thing, and the occasional naked breasts are nipple-less.) Neutral. \$12.99/\$16.99Cn, rated Older Teen 17+.

Kaiju No. 8 vol 10: Viz Media/Shonen Jump - The fight scene started in volume 9 keeps going and will continue into at least vol 10. No. 9's True Plan kicks in after what seems like progress made on the part of the humans, with new Numbered kaiju showing up that are tailored to fight each of the number-suit humans, and in the fight of No. 15 vs. Shinomiya (daughter of the now-deceased former director) the volume really begins. There's shades of Evangelion here, with Shinomiya having a fair amount of Asuka in her personality, and No. 15 turning out to be like one of the Angels that gave Asuka the hardest time. The front and back cover mirror-style art of Shinomiya and No. 15 is pretty effective at setting up expectations, too. Recommended. \$11.99/\$15.99Cn/#8.99UK rated Teen.

The Great Cleric vol 9: Kodansha - Luciel wraps up his work cleaning up the Healers' Guild in his adopted hometown, and runs into a Big Mystery that he...just sort of sets aside because he can't do anything about it. The mystery involves the magic that binds slaves, and while he shelves it he can't shelve the issue of magically bound slaves in general, since his next stop is territory where slavery is perfectly legal (as opposed to the sort of gray market in his old stomping grounds). This happens to also be a free city of beastfolk, and you'd think that after all he did for them in previous volumes he'd be welcomed with open arms, but it turns out beastfolk have politics too and the faction that likes him is not in charge. Those who are in charge can't quite make him go away, but they do what they can to make things difficult for the Healer delegation, providing a good single-volume challenge to resolve. Along the way, Luciel also picks up some rather unique slaves, one of whom might as well have a "Player Character" icon over his head. "Who IS this guy?" is a common thought Luciel has about the guy. To sum up this rambling and lightly-spoilery set of comments, Broccoli Lion spends a lot of this volume setting up intermediate quests that Luciel will need to deal with before he can resolve the whole grand Save The Dragons arc. Oh, and Luciel's list of potential romantic partners gains a few members,

some new, and some "yeah, only a matter of time, really." Potential, because most of them still treat him like a little brother. Recommended. \$12.99/\$17.99Cn Rated Older Teen 17+ (but "wholesome" according to the back cover...yeah, in this case while there's a little ribaldry here and there, the rating is almost definitely more for the slavery stuff and some consequences of violence).

Delicious in Dungeon vol 2-4: Yen Press - I recently read that Ryoko Kui got to spend much longer creating this than the usual mangaka schedule, and it's almost as if the current online obsession with the series is because readers can tell when a creator isn't being worked to death on a book. Speaking of death, the inciting incident of vol 1 is more or less resolved by the end of vol 4, but there's a larger plot set up by the time that happens. I know from online fanposting that a big chunk of the cast hasn't even been introduced yet, even the core team is still missing a member. Where I've left off for this month, the party has resolved its quest for now, but they're still broke and at a bit of a loss what to do next. There's the implication that they might seek out some treasure on deeper floors before heading back out, plus a couple of other groups have agendas coming into play that might make "go deeper" a desirable plan for reasons beyond profit. I'd say, if you can get through volume 4, you'll know if the world setting and characters interest you enough to go through to the end of the series, and if not it's a decent breaking off point. Personally, I'm in it for the long haul. Recommended. \$15.00/\$19.50Cn rated Teen with notation for Language and Violence.

Magilumiere Magical Girls Inc. vol 2: Viz Media/Viz Signature - One thing that stands out is that there is now officially a running meta-bit here: whenever the antagonist corporate types treat an employee or potential hire poorly, the reader is assured that they got a better job elsewhere. "Magilumiere Magical Girls Inc. supports a kinder world!" The antagonist corporate dude plot continues to be on slow burn in the background, along with the mysteries of MMGI CEO Shigemoto's connections in the worlds of business and government. The first story in the volume has the protagonist (Kana) learn by doing that her job isn't just about taking down Kaii quickly and efficiently, it's also about considering the people and places that she protects. The second, shorter piece, is a company karaoke night, amusing fluff as one might expect but also reinforcing a lot of the personality quirks of the cast. The volume ends on the first part of a bigger story, with Kana doing a short term team-up with a magical girl from a giant cosmetics company, by the name of...Lily Aoi. This, too, is yuri, as they say. Lily is in many ways the opposite of Kana's usual partner, refined and elegant and so forth. By the end of this volume, though, there's hints that Lily rude and crude Koshigaya are a lot more similar "under the hood," as it were. The plan is to show Kana how to be a more PR-conscious magical girl, but this might backfire. Recommended. \$14.99/\$19.99Cn/#10.99UK Rated Teen (monsters, mainly)

The Deep Dark: Scholastic/Graphix - The latest original graphic novel by Molly Knox Ostertag, this 470+ page epic plays around with the use of color...most pages are in black and white with some grayscale, but spot colors show up here and there, and occasionally the story shifts into full color for emphasis. This is its own thing, not explicitly tied to the Witch Boy or Girl and the Sea worlds, but not inconsistent with their modern magical realism tone. This story hews more closely to the realism than the magical for much of the pagecount, to the point I was starting to wonder if the Deep Dark magic thing was actually a symbolic representation of hereditary mental illness like schizophrenia. Of course, Ostertag's works regularly have things be both Actually Magic and also Metaphors For Something, so no reason that can't continue here, yes? There's multiple overlapping shared secrets among the cast, family members unable to cope with secrets, temptations to just run away from it all competing with obligations. Oh, and plenty of dysfunctional romantic relationships to go around. Amusingly (to me, anyway), the inciting antagonist who shows up in the final act doesn't appear to be motivated by any of the several sorts of bigotry that could have come into play, just an unhealthy amount of "it's all about me and my feelings." Looking back, there's a general lack of identity-based prejudice in the story, any negative reactions people get or fear they might get are due to their actions (which, um, are kinda problematic for the protagonists too...flawed characters all around). Recommended. \$16.99/\$22.99Cn/#12.99UK (unrated, but assume Teen)

Barda: DC Graphic Novels for Young Adults - This is basically a retelling of Big Barda's origin story by Ngozi Ukazu, working in some of the post-Kirby additions like Auralie's expanded role in Barda's life (she's a Kirby character, but her membership in the Furies is a later thing). A lot of it involves Barda trying to figure out what love is, or means, or can be on Apokalips. To some extent, I've read this story before, notably in Byrne's Fourth World comic of the late 90s, but it was always interspersed with other stories, and the focus tended to drift more onto Scott Free. He's here too, of course, but the camera stays on Barda from beginning to end. If it doesn't really do much new with the story, that can be seen as a credit to the strength of that story...it just needed to be given its own space. Recommended. \$16.99/\$22.99Cn

Bad Dream: A Dreamer Story: DC Graphic Novels for Young Adults - This was previewed in the back of Barda, or I might not have noticed it at all. One of my ongoing complaints about the DC YA line has been that only established IPs ever seem to get more than one book. Primer, Anti/Hero, I Am Not Starfire, Galaxy the Prettiest Star...a bunch of good origin stories with no followup, or at least no followup I ever saw on the shelf. But while this is a YA-ification of Nia Nal from the CW Supergirl series (complete with Metropolis having a sort of alien ghetto), it does bring back a previous "only an origin story" character, which is why I decided to pick it up. (The preview in Barda is basically from the very middle of this book.) Anyway, this is mostly thematically consistent with Nia Nal's background from TV,

although adapted to a different universe. If you're unfamiliar with Nia, she's part of the family tree that gave us Dream Girl of the Legion of Super-Heroes (and Nia does criticize a Nura-style costume early in this volume), part of a refugee alien community on Earth and also a transwoman, so she gets prejudice from all sorts of angles. Her experience is similar to that of Galaxy (the aforementioned returning character), but also quite different. And this book does bring in Galaxy for more than just the "trans alien" angle, setting up a somewhat darker non-Terran universe overall and explaining indirectly why Earth has so many refugees from other worlds...it's not just the badguy Vane aliens from Galaxy's origin, it's also neglect from those who might have stood against the Vane. On both the personal and the galactic scales, "your birth family may abandon you, found families are important," is a recurring theme. This story also leans a lot harder into the "marginalized aliens in Metropolis have a lot in common with marginalized LGBTQ+ communities in big cities" idea than the CW show was either interested in doing or allowed to do. Recommended. \$16.99/\$22.99Cn

Not a lot expected next month. More volumes of Delicious in Dungeon as I catch up on that, Cat + Gamer early enough in the month I'll definitely have it in time, and another manga I'm thinking about maybe getting but only if I see it on the shelf (and despite coming out the last week of June, I did not see it on the shelf yet). A few others are coming out near the end of July, so may or may not get to me in time for the July column (not to mention the release dates might change): Kuma Kuma Kuma Bear vol 9, The Book of Bill (Gravity Falls), and The Great Cleric vol 10. Not getting more of This Is Screwed Up.

Floppies:

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

Fantastic Four #20-21: Marvel - #20 is a single issue story focusing on Thing and Torch, and it's a twist on the Poverty Plot that I find acceptable. Namely, Johnny and Ben are bored and don't want to completely sponge off Alicia while their assets are frozen, so they try to get jobs. And get very competitive about it, of course. I still find the "people who could make millions legitimately with their abilities doing minimum wage jobs" plot to be annoying, but North manages to keep it from being too bad and gets in some good character stuff. Also, Thing with a pencil taped to his finger so he can operate a cash register. #21 starts off nicely as a bit of art appreciation with Alicia and Reed, but then gets sucked into a Mega-Event ("Blood Hunt") that it doesn't even admit is happening until the house ads at the end of the issue. Vampire plague, yawn. Also, given how many times vampires have run amok in Marvel, it's REALLY playing the Idiot Skeptic card

hard to have Reed insist they don't really exist. Like, the first few pages have North slowly backing away from how he's Flanderized Reed, only to dive right back in. #20 is recommended, #21 is eminently missable. If I didn't have to make changes months in advance, I'd probably just skip #22. \$3.99 each, rated T+ but that's probably because Marvel's main line defaults to that rating. The vampire bits do more to earn the rating, I guess.

Vengeance of the Moon Knight #5: Marvel - And in that vein, this and the next two issues are also Blood Hunt tie-ins, but at least "there's something going on with vampires" is business as usual for Moon Knight, so I don't expect too much annoyance. Plus, this entire arc building up to who the fake Moon Knight was gets a chance for an emotional resolution while also dumping straight into what appears to be a key part of Blood Hunt. I guess that Mackay was read in on Blood Hunt pretty early on due to all the darkness and vampires and stuff, so he had room to make it fit. Meanwhile, Fantastic Four just sort of gets dumped into it...North probably could've avoided it, just reference the event at the start of an issue as something that happened off-screen, but he certainly didn't lay any groundwork. But, back to this actual comic, 8-Ball gets his turn on the therapy chair interspersed with flashbacks to the fight with not-Moon-Knight, and it's a good sequence. Recommended. \$4.99, rated T+ and probably pushing the boundaries of that.

My Adventures with Superman #1 (of 6): DC - A tie-in to the Cartoon Network "Superman anime" series, set between seasons 1 and 2. In fact, the title page has Superman helping clean up after the kaiju rampage at the end of S1. Also, some of the S2 running gags get prequels, like a "Days 'til Jimmy is solvent" counter instead of the "Jimmy's net worth" countdown. This issue is, as one might expect, all about setup. Setting up the main menace (that has to be completely resolved since it's not related to the S2 plot) as well as a B-Plot For Clark, in addition to the running gag elements. Lois's focus is mostly guilt over finding out her father's role in things, something I guess is just going to simmer for six issues, but she might make some progress on it even if it's still a live matter in S2. A promising start, anyway. Recommended provisionally. \$3.99 rated ages 13+ (probably for the story as a whole, nothing this issue seems to need it)

Vampirella/Dracula Rage #6 (of 6): Dynamite - Okay, delay upon delay stacked up, but finally I get to read the end of the series that #666 picks up after. Vampi finally gets a chance to cool down a bit and start thinking for the first time in this rage-fueled series, and it leads her to some unpleasant conclusions, plus a trip back to the old home stomping grounds to get some resolution. Unfortunately for the reader, this is one of those "miniseries" that ends on a cliffhanger because it was never intended to be a complete story. Not really Priest's fault, Dynamite is one of those publishers that is almost allergic to ongoing titles, so every arc is a miniseries, regardless of whether it tells a complete story. Mildly recommended, and it gets summarized in #669 anyway. \$3.99 rated T+ which may be a little low.

Vampirella #669: Dynamite - Well, this starts off with a summary of the climax of Rage #6, which barely came out the same month thanks to all the delays (and which internally has a note claiming #667 came out the same month, but the Dynamite Dispatch in Rage #6 claims this issue, #669, is up next. So...time is out of joint for the real world publication schedule too). And then it's another two trips through the time loop, but at this point Vampi is remembering the most recent loops and can try to avoid making the same mistakes over and over again (although at one point it's made quite clear she has no idea how many times she went through the loop before "waking up" to it, admitting that what she's trying might have failed already). The loop itself is clearly not deterministic or stable, as demonstrated by how Benny and Victory are having a different (still annoying to Vampi) conversation every time she restarts, but given the revealed nature of the time loop in this issue, it's surprising that it's not way more unstable. Recommended, but as noted last time probably best to wait for the arc to finish and read it all at once. \$4.99 also rated T+.

Next month, Gatchaman should be starting, although Vamp/Drac is over, so my total number of titles remains unchanged and low. Also, "Teen+" covers a LOT of ground in the ratings, doesn't it? I suspect Marvel and DC don't want to go finer-grained though, sticking with all-ages, Teen+, and the occasional Mature Readers.

Dave Van Domelen, "Oh hell no. Having a reason isn't the same thing as having an excuse. Just because they're unhappy doesn't mean they get to make YOU unhappy." - Yvette, Bad Dream: A Dreamer Story

Subject: Re: Dave's Capsules for June 2024
Posted by [Anonymous](#) on Sun, 30 Jun 2024 15:00:07 GMT
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Originally posted by: candycanearter07

Dave Van Domelen <dvandom@eyrie.org> wrote at 02:33 this Friday (GMT):
[snip]

> Dave Van Domelen, "Oh hell no. Having a reason isn't the same thing as
> having an excuse. Just because they're unhappy doesn't mean they get to make
> YOU unhappy." - Yvette, Bad Dream: A Dreamer Story

Words to live by.

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