

COMICS I'VE BEEN GEEKING OUT ON

written by Maxi Kim | October 26, 2015



1. **NEW MGMT / MIND MGMT (No. 1 / No. 36, Aug 2015, Dark Horse) – Matt Kindt**

If the nip in the October air and the imminent end of yet another year has left you wistful and in a contemplative mood, writer and artist Matt Kindt's beautiful "last" issue of MIND MGMT may just rekindle the smoldering ashes that was once your faith in humanity. Hyperbole aside: To have drawn and written a series this poetic for all these many years without resorting to so many of the tried and true tricks of the trade is a feat, a genuinely novel feat that may just inspire you to want to draw, write, and create with a level of intellectual clarity that actually respects the reader's sense of probity. Kindt's injunction to all the would-be makers: Isn't this the least the artist can do? An excerpt from Kindt's farewell letter:

It's been four years since I started MIND MGMT. / 1,028 pages later, I'm done. I made an average of twenty-eight penciled, inked, painted, and lettered pages a month for three years straight, which ends up being nearly one finished page a day, every day, for three years. . . . Three years ago was the last time I cried. I sat in front of my drawing board, having just finished issue #3 of MIND MGMT. I was staring out the window wondering what I was doing with my life. I'd just been told that MIND MGMT needed to debut with sales of eight thousand to keep going. I sat thinking, "This is it." If I couldn't reach that number, I was going to find another vocation. I wouldn't know the sales numbers until issue #3 came out. So I wrote and penciled an alternate ending to the entire series and held my breath until issue-order numbers came in. / We ended up hitting way over that number, to my great relief. . . . Thank God. I don't know how to do anything but comics.

2. **We Are Robin (No. 4, Nov 2015, DC) – Lee Bermejo, James Harvey, Diana Egea & Alex Jaffe**



My favorite single-issue Bat title in quite awhile, Bermejo's melancholic characterization of a bemused Korean American teenage fangirl who wants nothing more than to dress up as Robin and emulate her hero Batgirl will exceed all of your expectations – and then some. Can't recommend this single issue highly enough. Every aspect is pitch perfect: From James Harvey & Diana Egea's Warhol-inspired color palette . . . all the way down to the atmospheric noir, Bladerunner characterization of Gotham. Bermejo, being the literate guy that he is, even alludes to William Golding's Lord of the Flies to hint at the sociopolitical irony of Gotham's "hoodlums and vigilantes" running amuck. The message: A revolution – especially in its eventual Badiouian sense – requires the intellectual dynamism of young people. Without it a fundamental change in social relations between the intersections of the proletariat class is nearly impossible.

3. Ms. Marvel (No. 18, Nov 2015, Marvel) – G. Willow Wilson, Adrian Alphona & Ian Herring



Both issue #18 & #19 will make you want to go back and reread the new Ms. Marvel series from the very beginning. Writer G. Willow Wilson reminds us yet again why we fell in love with Kamala Khan in the first place as our young heroine finally teams up with her hero Captain Marvel to save what is left of Jersey City. Particularly exciting in this issue is how Wilson treats Kamala's relationship with her brother Aamir: "I don't aspire to all this sci-fi stuff everybody is into now. I don't read the Avengers gossip in the tabloids. / I do my own thing. I go to the mosque. I volunteer. I read books. Why doesn't anybody believe I'm happy the way I am?" Kamala: "Okay. Okay. I get it. But you've still gotta figure out what to do. You can't just randomly force-field-up. You'll put people in danger." Aamir: "I'll figure out how to control it. 'Allah never burdens a soul beyond its capacity.'" The fact that this single issue exists at all with the kind of dialogue it has between two Asian American siblings cheers me up to no end. I'm hopeful that Wilson will continue to spend cultural capital on such cross-cultural/familial antagonisms as Marvel relaunches the series in their "All-New, All-Different" initiative.

4. *Plutona* (No. 1, Sept 2015, Image) – Jeff Lemire, Emi Lenox & Jordie Bellaire



*Twin Peaks if Twin Peaks was set in an alternative reality where superheroes existed. The analogy is apt: Lemire's newest comic opens with the fresh corpse of a female superhero, lying in the woods of what looks to be a small town in the Pacific Northwest. A group of beleaguered kids, deftly crafted and characterized by Lenox and Lemire, discover *Plutona's* body only to conclude that they should keep the discovery a secret as letting the cat out of the bag would only empower the superheroine's foes. A remarkably moody and atmospheric read, *Plutona* is a must-read if you're at all curious about where Jeff Lemire's head is at these days.*

5. All-New Hawkeye (No. 5, Nov 2015, Marvel) – Jeff Lemire, Ramon Perez & Ian Herring



Though certainly not Matt Fraction's much acclaimed Hawkeye, Lemire & Perez's take on Clint Barton & Kate Bishop will certainly satisfy and scratch the itch of fans of the previous incarnation. Surprisingly somber and simultaneously poignant, the last issue of the five part miniseries is bound to whet the appetite of longtime Hawkeye fans as the last few panels hint at the premise of the relaunch of Marvel's "All-New, All-Different" Hawkeye. Spoiler: Old Man Barton & Old Woman Bishop.