

HOW WE CAUGHT THE HEROINE BUG

by
Harlan Noriune

The Comics Heroines Fan Club's first fanzine, appeared in September 1974; it was, of course, THE HEROINE ADDICT #1. As editor Albert Tanner pointed out then, the purpose was not to produce "just another comics fanzine"--instead, he and the other people involved from the start (including Scott Gibson, Mercy Van Vlack, Ted Delorme, Dwayne Best, and Scott Taylor) had something different in mind: the publication of the USA's only regularly issued fanzine devoted entirely to readers, writers and artists who are interested in comics heroines and their counterparts in other media.

Restrictive? Well, not really. "THA" may be limited to the heroines, but the other magazines both in America and the UK devote so little space to the fascinating females that the Comics Heroines Fan Club (or CHFC) has the field to itself. Can you remember any articles on heroines in fanzines you've read lately? The only one I can think of was in the June '75 issue of Fantasy Unlimited, a short appreciation of Lois Lane in Martin's own "Enter the Heroes" series!

Issue 2 of THA was a month late--which isn't unusual in fan publishing circles. However, what is unprecedented is that all subsequent issues have been on time! The current issue is now #9, and in addition to these regular THAs, two issues of a fiction magazine called "The Adventuress" have been published, a set of 4 "Fabulous Fems" 13 1/2" by 9 1/2" posters, and "The Heroine Addict's Art Portfolio". That's pretty good going by any standards.

How do they manage this? Well, a lot of fans are involved, now; besides Al Tanner, editor and publisher, there's an assistant editor, an art editor, and ten department editors who are all responsible for preparing a certain number of pages for an issue. They may write them, or draw them, or be sent somebody's article to illustrate, lay out and type--but this breadth of available talent out-classes other fanzines where "assistant" or "contributing" editor can mean almost anything -- or nothing. While many of them have other interests, from Teen Titans to Mission Impossible, the amount of between-issue communication, including a cassette tape chain and regular staff bulletins on the new projects and assignments, gives the CHFC first call on their loyalty.

If you enjoyed this special trans-atlantic collaboration, let either Al Tanner or Martin Lock know -- maybe we will arrange something similar for next summer, how would that be?



Since THA #1, a lot of heroines, and quite a few villainesses, have been dealt with; Shanna the She-Devil, the Enchantress, Wonder Woman, Rima, Star Sapphire, Moondragon, Nightshade (the Charlton version), Nyoka, Emma Peel, the first Supergirl, Catwoman, Thundra, Valkyrie, Red Sonja, Marvel Girl, the current Supergirl, Polymer Polly (from Dell's "Superheroes"), the Cat, Dolphin, Aquagirl, Modesty Blaise, Mantis, Vampirella, the Bionic Woman, Zephyr, Poison Ivy, Golden Girl, Isis, and Fly Girl have all had articles devoted to them, and pieces with general titles like "The New Heroines", "Star Trek Heroines", "Escape From The Vault of Villainesses", "The Fantastic Femmes", "The Avengers Women", and "Robert Kanigher -- Maker and Breaker of Heroines" have covered a lot of ground, too, while an assortment of regular columns have covered more fighting females than we've any right to know about. If that's a plain, uninteresting list of meaningless names, you're in a bad way, fella--bring a few more young ladies into your life with THA! And how's that for an advertising slogan?

But THA and the other CHFC publications do, I feel, do a lot for fandom-- and their start towards international status is a fine sign of what can be done.

"At times", wrote Rich Morrissey in THA #2's lettercol, "I feel that the original spirit of fandom has been vanishing -- as a co-operative venture between fans... 'Zines like THA are really what fandom's all about!"

Once you've caught the "heroine bug", you're unlikely to find any cure--you're an addict!

THE U.K. HEROINE ADDICT



contributing department editors: Dwayne Best, Ted Delorme, Scott Gibson, Kirk Hastings, Tom Luth, Chris Padovano, Robert Rodi, Carol Strickland, Jeff Thompson, Mercy Van Vlack.

other contributing artists: Larry Heller, Trevor Phoenix, Leslie Stannage, Superswipe, Scott Taylor.

MEMBERSHIP AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscribing members of The Comics Heroines Fan Club receive all subscription material produced by the AHPA, including THE HEROINE ADDICT and THE ADVENTURESS and special publications, at club rates as announced. Our publishing, mailing, and general operating costs are met through subscription payments, minimal charges to advertisers, and the sale of original artwork and other special-order material. Charges for the U.K. for THA are 80 pence by air mail or 60 pence by surface mail. Newcomers may send a payment of £2.00 or more to become subscribers, to Martin Lock, 33, Chester Road, Northwood, Middx HA6 1BG, England--all cheques must be made payable to Martin Lock, the AHPA British Agent--this applies to the U.K. only, in the U.S.A. rates are as announced in the regular copies of THA.

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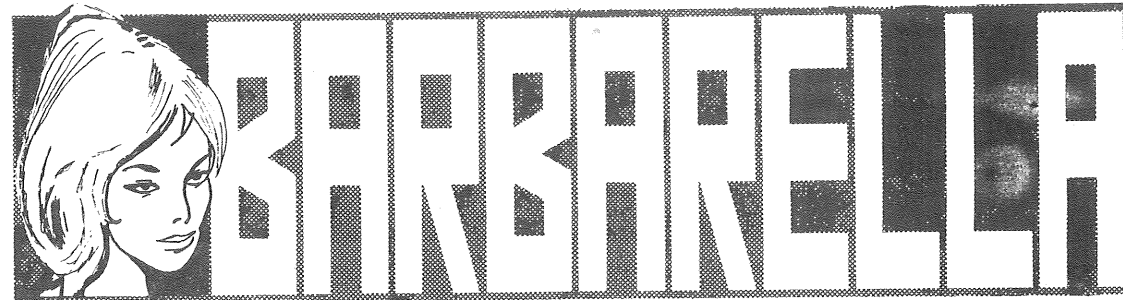


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If Bemusing Magazine's editorial rejoices in the name of "Bemusings", ought this one to be called "THAughts"?

Well, I hope this 16-page section, designed for and written, drawn and edited by both U.K. and U.S.A. fans, is interesting for everybody. In Britain, it's the second section of a double issue of Bemusing, while in America it's being sent out to all C.H.F.C. (Comics Heroines Fan Club) members. Bemusing regulars involved are Leslie Stannage, Ruan Lanihorne, Bill W. Ryan, Rich Morrissey, Superswipe, Mercy Van Vlack, Jonn Hay, and Howard Stangroom, while almost all the C.H.F.C. department editors (including Mercy!) have joined in, too. My thanks to all the contributors to this special collaboration, and especially to Steve Johnson for collecting and forwarding the American material--and Al Tanner of course, for giving the go-ahead and generally helping and over-seeing "THA/UK", as this publication has been code-named.

The mixture of articles, features & artwork found herein will need no introduction for our American readers; to "Bem" readers, may I say that, in our selection of short articles, you will find covered an assortment of present and past, dynamic and passive, heroines. Should you become captivated by these fascinating females, please read the "Membership and Subscriptions" paragraph to the left, or check out a special offer outlined on page 13. Due to the current state of the pound sterling, and the higher printing costs in America, CHFC fanzines aren't cheap, unfortunately, by British standards. But they are...addictive?



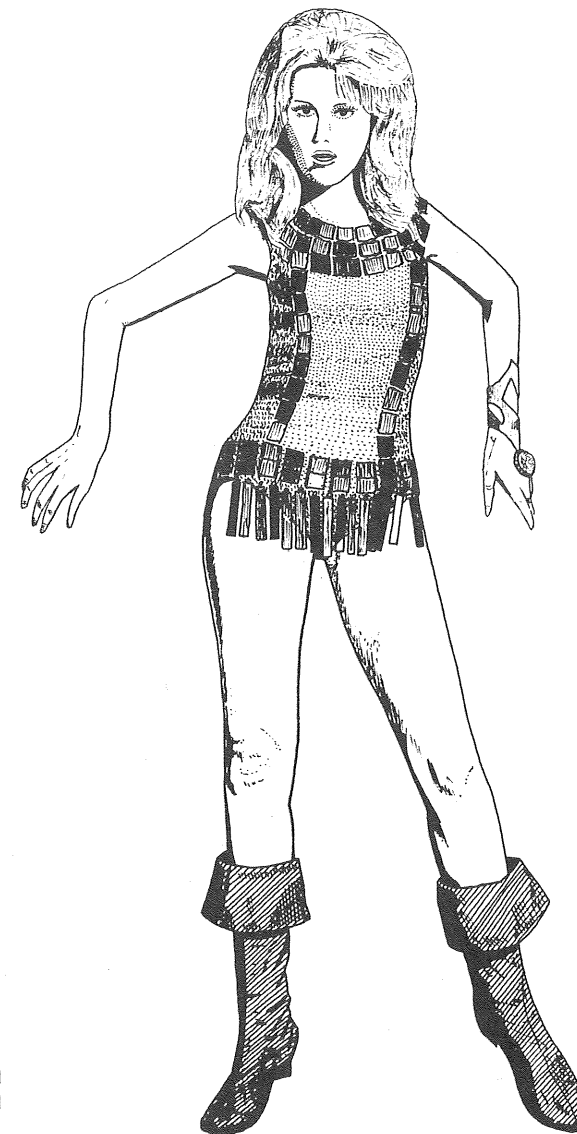
by Martin Lock

The Barbarella film, starring Jane Fonda, is based, rather loosely, on a comic book by Jean-Claude Forest. The story was serialised first in a French magazine, Le Terrain Vague, in 1964; it was issued as an English-language hardback in 1966, and in paperback in 1968, the year the film was made.

In eight chapters of 8 or 10 pages each, we follow our heroine through many adventures. A spaceship crashes on the planet Lythion, into a greenhouse run by Dianthus, and the pilot, Barbarella, stumbles out. Saved in the nick of time from wildly slashing rose bushes ("It's really too poetic a death!" she comments--a remark used in the film for a different peril) by Dianthus, she finds that Lythion is divided into two factions--the civilised greenhouse-dwellers, and a race of savages who live out in the desert. Barbarella volunteers to try to reconcile them--and, two pages later is half-naked and being stoned to death! Her rescuer receives the customary reward, and, she finds, is the man she was told to contact. Returning to the greenhouse city with a drug to use on the faction opposed to reconciliation, she finds that Dianthus has been discovered--but, using weapons from her spacecraft, victory is soon theirs, and Barbarella is soon hitching a lift from a passing space captain.

Well, that's the first ten-page chapter. In chapter four, some of the elements that Terry Southern used for the screen-play come in--the twin princesses, Stomoxys and Glossina, who capture Barbarella and set flesh-eating dolls on her in a wrecked spaceship, and then the underground journey ending up, in the fifth chapter, in the labyrinth of the city of Sogo. Durand (Professor Ping in the film) meets her, and introduces her to Pygar, the blinded last of the ornithanthropes, who soon flies her to the city. She meets the slinky one-eyed wench--who is, we find shortly, the queen of Sogo. The cage of carnivorous birds...the excessive machine...the queen's room of dreams...the end of the city...and Pygar flies Barbarella and the queen to safety.

continued...



Barbarella's adventures on the screen are a good deal different, inside this basic plot, bringing in Dildano the revolutionary leader, and the Concierge to the Great Tyrant--they do have equivalents in Forest's original tale, but not of the same importance. Of course more can be fitted into a ninety-minute film than into forty pages of comics, so the main story becomes more elaborate. No longer is Barbarella a wanderer, thrown by fate from encounter to encounter...now she's a girl with a mission!

Sent by the President of Earth to investigate the disappearance of a young scientist who has invented a dangerous weapon, Barbarella crash-lands on planet 16 in the system Tau Ceti. She is quickly captured by Stomoxys and Glossina, young girls we find later are nieces of the great tyrant, and taken to a wrecked space-ship to be set upon by flesh-eating dolls. In the nick of time, however, the nieces and friends are netted by Mark Hand, the catchman, who sets our heroine free and attempts to repair her space-craft after claiming his reward, a quaint old custom long replaced on Earth by, would you believe, holding hands? However, since the repairs are done in reverse, her ship crashes into the ground, boring into the planet and coming out in the labyrinth of the city of Sogo -- the place any inhabitants of the city who show any goodness or decency are exiled to. She meets Pygar, the blinded angel, and Professor Ping, who volunteers to repair her ship properly; after an encounter with the tyrant's Black Guards, and reviving Pygar's will to fly, she is flown (by Pygar) to Sogo itself. She and Pygar soon get separated... a little one-eyed girl kills two men who attacked her, and makes advances to her, but she escapes, and finds Pygar once more. Just as they are about to be fed to the Matmos, a strange form of liquid life that thrives on the city's evil thoughts and deeds, the Concierge to the Great Tyrant intervenes, and leads Barbarella to the great tyrant--who is revealed as the one-eyed wench! After an unsuccessful attempt to take control, Barbarella is thrown into a cage full of carnivorous birds. Before any permanent damage can be done, though, a trap-door opens, and she falls through, down a chute to the headquarters of the resistance movement. Dildano, who is its leader, is there; after a demonstration of the "hand-holding" method of love-making, he gives her the key to the Black Queen's chamber of dreams, and she sets off to capture her and find out about that young scientist (remember him? Durand Durand, creator of the positronic ray, no less).

However, on the way there our heroine falls into the clutches of the Concierge once more, and is put into "the excess machine", a kind

of keyboard instrument that can kill a girl--kill her with pleasure! However, Barbarella out-lasts, overloads and destroys the machine, and, discovering that the middle-aged Concierge is actually Durand Durand, as affected and aged by the Matmos, tells him she has the key to the Black Queen's chamber of dreams. She takes him there, unlocks the door--and he pushes her in, grabbing both her key and the queen's, and, having trapped both Barbarella and the Black Queen, hurries off to take control of Sogo.

However, aided by weapons from Barbarella's spaceship, the people from the labyrinth have joined forces with Dildano's men and begun an attack on Sogo. As Barbarella and the Black Queen watch helplessly, Durand Durand unleashes the power of the positronic ray on them...and the queen decides to do the only thing she can do, set the Matmos free...

It is the end, the apocalypse, as the waters of the Matmos surge through the doomed, evil city. Durand Durand, still firing his useless positronic ray, is raving mad as all his plans fall apart, and the city collapses. The queen's bed, however, floats unharmed, as the Matmos has put a shield around it to protect itself from Barbarella's innocence, and at last both women are washed onto an island, where they find Pygar too, whom the Matmos had also found indigestible. The only escape is to fly, so Pygar carries them away...

"Pygar, what are you saving her for, after all the horrible things she's done to you?" asks Barbarella from under one of his arms.

"An angel has no memory."

And so ends "Roger Vadim's colourful comic strip extravaganza", as Britain's Radio Times once billed it, commenting on another page "all healthy chauvinist pigs will love it". Anita Pallenberg played the petulant, perverse but always attractive Black Queen, be she one-eyed wench or Great Tyrant; John Phillip Law played the blind angel Pygar competently, while Milo O'Shea gave a suitably colourful performance as the renegade scientist, Concierge, and all-round power maniac Durand Durand, and David Hemmings, in really a cameo performance, makes Dildano an intriguing mixture of incompetent bungler and efficient leader. But it is Jane Fonda's picture, she makes the character of Barbarella her own through her professionalism and her personality, making this "five-star double-rated astronavigatrix" and sex symbol into a heroine, somebody who could easily keep the episodic tale together. While the original comic was based on Brigitte Bardot, there's no doubt that Ms Fonda was the right actress for the film--there was talk of a sequel, but when Jane Fonda refused to be in it, the plans were very sensibly shelved.

-ML

I AM SPEAKING TO YOU TELEPATHICALLY, MIND TO MIND, TO INTRODUCE THIS *Spotlight on* INRA ARDEEN, MYSELF. SOME PEOPLE CALL ME... **SATURN GIRL!**

FIRST APPEARED IN ADVENTURE COMICS #247, WITH THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES, AND BECAME LEADER TWICE.

THIS 30th CENTURY LADY HAS THE ABILITY TO READ MINDS, PROJECT HER THOUGHTS, AND SEND TELEPATHIC COMMANDS. SHE COMES FROM TITAN, ONE OF SATURN'S MOONS, WHERE THEY ALL HAVE SIMILAR TALENTS. SHE'S HELPED SUPERMAN (ISSUES #165, 272) AND STARRED WITH THE LEGIONNAIRES IN ACTION, ADVENTURE, JIMMY OLSEN, SUPERBOY, AND WORLD'S FINEST COMICS. SHE SPEARHEADED THE LEGION'S NEW LOOK, IN SUPERBOY #184 WITH THE COSTUME ON YOUR RIGHT. SCIENTIST, MENTAL MASTER, LEGION LEADER, DESTINED TO BECOME THE WIFE OF FELLOW CHARTER MEMBER LEGIONNAIRE, LIGHTNING LAD. HER COOL HEAD AND IRON WILL HAS PULLED THE LSH OUT OF MANY A SUPER-SCRAPE. FOR MORE INFO, SEE The Amazing World of DC Comics #9, by Neal Pozner.

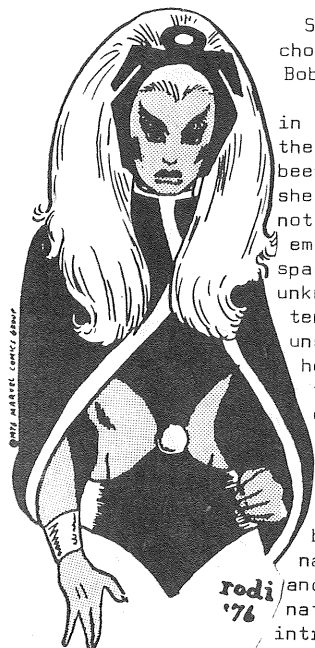
ANY HEROINE OR VILLAINESS YOU'D LIKE TO KNOW MORE OF? DROP A NOTE TO Merry Van Vlack % THIS MAGAZINE, AND I'LL "SPOT LIGHT" YOUR FAV FIGHTING FEMME! OR SEND ME A "HERSTORY" FOR FUTURE COLUMNS.

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SATURN QUEEN, ANOTHER NATIVE OF TITAN, FIRST APPEARED IN SUPERMAN #147, WITH THE LEGION OF SUPER-VILLAINS AGAIN THE SUPER-HERO LEGION. ALSO FOUGHT SATURN GIRL AND HER TEAMMATES IN ADVENTURE 331, 355, AND SUPERBOY #147. * SUPER-HYPNOTIST *

THE HEROINE PARADE

The assignment, to heroine addicts in Britain & America, was "Nominate for THA's new British Edition your favourite comics heroine!" And the next few pages show the response we got...



STORM Stormis, in chosen by all probabil- Bob Rodi ity, the most powerful woman in comics. Her control of the elements has only been touched on, and yet she has shown control of not only the earthly elements, but those of space. Her limits are unknown, perhaps nonexistent... she herself is unsure of the extent of her powers. After all, they are overwhelming, cosmic...and Ororo is not. She is sensual, and bewitching in a way that only one so close to nature can be. And yet, unlike nature, she is rational and calm, almost supernaturally so. She is intriguing... compelling...and fascinating.

ROSE & THE THORN chosen by Scott Gibson

The Thorn remains an enigmatic and a refreshing character, even now,

five years after her last appearance. Like many heroes and heroines, she was born out of a tragedy and a solemn oath of vengeance. When Rose Forrest's detective father was murdered by a criminal syndicate, The Thorn was born, vowing to destroy every member of the crime cartel before she would rest. Unlike most heroes and heroines, Rose is totally unaware that she is a heroine. The Thorn is a violent and stubborn outlet of Rose's personality, who emerges only when Rose herself is asleep. As The Thorn's career began to develop, the two personalities within the single mind began struggling for dominion, making the green-garbed crimefighter a heroine to the rest of the world, but something of a menace to Rose herself. Just as the psychological warfare was reaching its peak, the series was dropped, thereby "nipping in the bud" so to speak, what might have become the most interesting problem a super-hero has ever encountered.



BATWOMAN It's rather difficult to name your favourite heroine on the spur of the moment, as I was forced to do in writing this, so I chose one of my many favourites, the brightly-clad Batwoman. Kathy Kane, a former circus star, first donned the yellow-and-red costume in DETECTIVE #233, in her desire to imitate the Batman, her favourite hero. It is at this point that male chauvinism in its highest form entered her life. After he'd figured out her secret identity, Batman forced her to retire, saying that crime-fighting was no job for a woman, and if he had figured out her identity, others could, too. Needless to say, his logic was somewhat faulty, but after a brief re-appearance in BATMAN #105, she "retired" again, and it was not until after WORLD'S FINEST #90 that she was allowed to stay in the business. Unfortunately, it was a short career, lasting only until 1964 and a total of 47 appearances, after which she vanished completely. The World's Greatest Detective didn't even bother to search for her.



continued...



THE BLACK CANARY chosen by Kathleen Glancy

As scripted by Elliot S! Maggin, I should specify. Some of her earlier writers had a tendency to make her moan on a bit about boring old-- er, poor old Larry Lance. She has quite credible combat abilities-- not so exaggerated that the girl in the street couldn't, with training, equal them--and her ultrasonic super-power is, most refreshingly, not over-used, not in fact used at all if it isn't really necessary. And her relationship with Green Arrow is a peculiarly believable one, far from the conventional "love interest". Finally, she has no need to go about proclaiming "I'm liberated" all the time -- because she really is.

THE BLACK WIDOW chosen by Bill W. Ryan

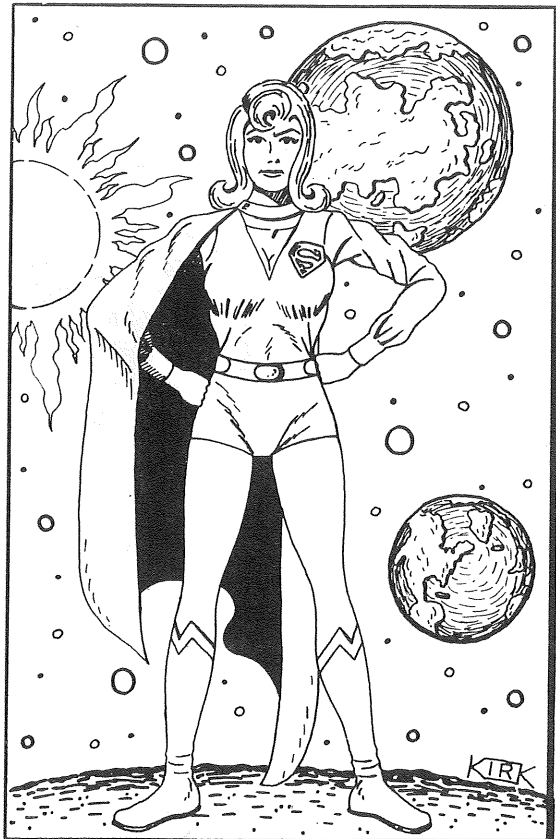
Unlike most of the current DC heroines, a number of the Marvel girls have led complex (and realistic) lives in the last dozen years. It was Tales of Suspense #52, April 1964, which introduced into the Iron Man strip "the breath-taking beauty of the mysterious Black Widow", and she's been around ever since, bringing romance and heart-break into the lives of such Marvel stalwarts as Hawkeye and Daredevil. A Russian spy, and then an agent of SHIELD; a slinky, veiled femme fatale, then a jump-suited adventuress; a heroine. And how well Gene Colan drew her in Amazing Adventures! Yes, an exciting girl -- my favourite.

BATGIRL chosen by Rich Morrissey

Why am I selecting Batgirl as my favourite comics heroine? For one thing, because Martin told me to-- but also because of the incredible resiliency she's shown through the years. Her genesis was at best questionable-- written into the comic books at the request of the TV people, who wanted an answer to Emma Peel -- but Gardner Fox built her into a most unique, independent, and memorable heroine.

Frank Robbins treated her rather badly -- subordinating her more and more to Jason Bard, who eventually took her spot in DETECTIVE itself away from her--but ironically Elliot Maggin, not previously noted as very liberated in his treatment of women, came along and handled her properly in her new rôle as an Elizabeth Holtzman-parallel Congresswoman. He wrote her into Superman's stories entirely on his own, and she was rewarded with her own strip once more in BATMAN FAMILY. Although sometimes weak in plotting, Maggin's heart is in the right place--and I have high hopes for the Batgirl strip in his hands.

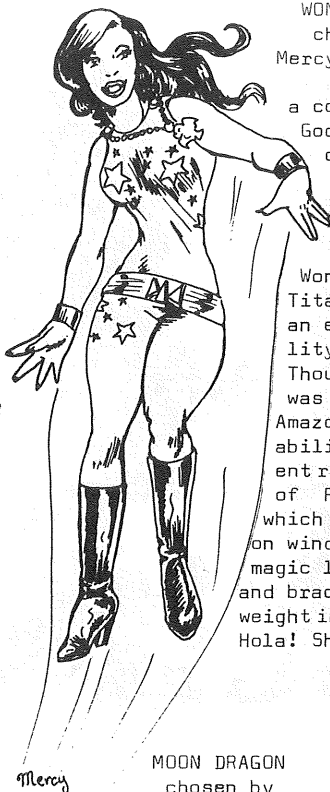




SUPERGIRL I choose as my favourite comic magazine heroine Kara Zor-El, chosen by Kirk Hastings otherwise known as Supergirl. My reasons for my choice would be more difficult to explain, but I would probably number among them the fact that when I started reading comics (about the time that I started reading!) I immediately developed an affinity for Superman, having been an avid viewer of the Superman TV series. So naturally I would also feel somewhat "at home" with his female counterpart, Supergirl. Also, I feel, she is one of the more attractive heroines in comics today, and her personality has been better developed than most other current heroines--giving her a greater sensitivity to the plight of her fellow humans.

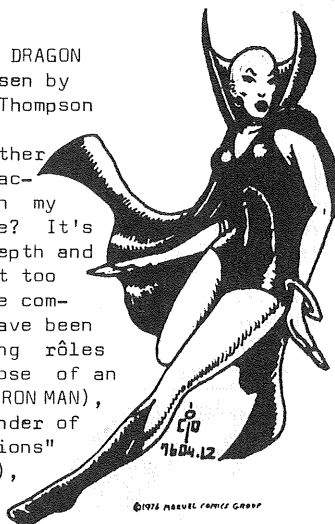


SHADOW LASS I like Tasmia chosen by Malor of Talok 8, Jonn Hay that well-known shady lady -- but then, Mon-El is bigger than I am, so perhaps I'd better keep my feelings to myself...



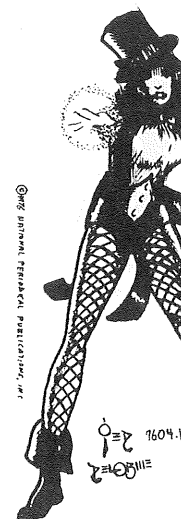
MOON DRAGON
chosen by
Jeff Thompson

Why is Heather Douglas/Madame Mac-Evil/Moon Dragon my favourite heroine? It's because of her depth and flexibility. Not too many other single comics characters have been seen in enticing rôles ranging from those of an anti-hero(ine) (IRON MAN), an obsessed commander of her own "creations" (early DAREDEVIL), and a love-smitten woman (later DAREDEVIL) to those of an interplanetary warrior-adventuress (CAPTAIN MARVEL), a valuable team member (THE AVENGERS), and an able verbal sparring partner (and possible love interest?) for Thor (THE AVENGERS)! With a unique appearance, an imaginative origin, and a complex make-up, Moon Dragon can't lose! Until she marries Lex Luthor, she'll be my favourite heroine!



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WONDER GIRL What chosen by do you Mercy Van Vlack search for in a comic book heroine? Good looks, a snazzy crime-busting suit, intelligence, and powers & abilities far beyond those of mortal men. Wonder Girl of the Teen Titans has it all, with an extra spice of equality and wit thrown in. Though an orphan, she was adopted by the Amazons and given the abilities of that ancient race through the use of Paula's Purple Ray, which enables "WG" to fly on wind currents, wield a magic lasso, play bullets and bracelets, and pull her weight in every titan task. Hola! She's faberool!



ZATANNA My primary reason chosen by son for choosing Ted Delorme Zatanna is not what she's done, but what she can do. Anything! During her short stay in Joe Orlando's Adventure Comics, she faced demons enough for all the sorcery fans out there, but she performed equally well when Bob Kanigher and Cary Bates returned her to Earth. The art by such talented folks as Morrow, Giordano, Mortimer, and Calnan didn't bother me a bit, either! Once she was just a guest star, now she's gone; but, you know, for a while there, she was sheer...MAGIC!

THE SCARLET WITCH It was in March 1964, in chosen by the fourth issue of X-MEN, Diana Richmond that the Brotherhood of Evil Mutants first appeared --and the Scarlet Witch debuted as a reluctant member of that group, along with her brother Quicksilver. Since then she's come a long way, shaking off the influence of Magneto and becoming one of the more regular members of the Avengers. Her powers have been refined and



redefined in a most realistic way over the years --and she has even, like very few other heroines, fallen in love, and got married to a hero--The Vision no less. She got her man--though I hear that there is still no little discussion over whether or not Vision is...er...fully operational? If not, I suppose that would explain his red face! Powers, potential and personality this girl has -- all she needs now is a new costume!

NOVA KANE It didn't chosen by take me long Ruan Lanihorne to decide my favourite of the gleaming galaxy of comics heroines; there are many that I like, but there's only one that I'm madly in love with --Ms Nova Kane. As Emlock commented in his review of E-Man #1 back in the first issue of Bemusing "you look at her, and you feel no pain, believe me". She's beautiful, she's a well-rounded personality, she's working her way through college as an exotic dancer...even after she gained E-powers in E-Man #8, she's still the same practical, magnificent gal. And what a costume that is! Who said one-piece bathing costumes were going out of fashion?

What a shame that Charlton backed out of the superhero field! If only they'd gone ahead with giving Nova a comic of her own, assuming Nick Cuti and Joe Staton had been the creative team, it would have been the best heroine comic ever. But then, looking at the other contributions to this feature, only one heroine in it ever had her own book...



THE ORIGINAL BATGIRL
chosen by Tom Luth

Hmm, my favourite heroine? Well, that is sort of a toss-up as I have several favourites, but probably #1 would have to be the original Batgirl. The preference for this younger Batgirl is because I have always liked Bob Kane's Batman stories, as opposed to the "new look" Batman, and Batgirl, of course. Also, I've always gotten a kick out of seeing a kid like Batgirl, Robin, or the Legion of Super-Heroes tackle the world's problems. It allows us to fantasize we don't have to become adults and work, monotonously, within the system to arrive at solutions, but to dive into a problem with both fists swinging! I feel I can get into these non-super heroes so much more than someone like Superman or Green Lantern, who have unhuman powers, because they're just like us, but with masks and capes.

SUPER-LOIS!

BY BOB RODI

"But, Lois, darling, if I were to marry you, my enemies would take revenge on me by harming you." Ring a bell? It's the chorus of the saddest song in comics..."Lois Lane's Wedding Bell Blues."

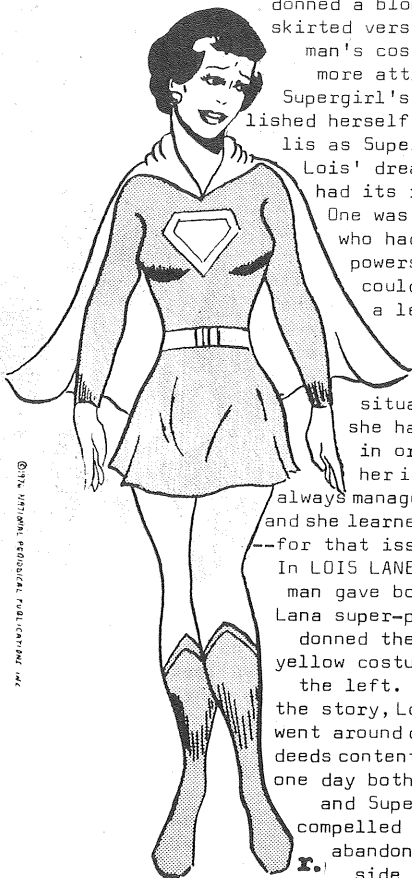
Of course, it was most popular during the fifties, before women's growing awareness removed the social stigma from being an unmarried working girl. During those years, Lois did everything possible to find a way around Superman's reasoning, and, more than once, this found her playing the rôle of super-heroine.

The first time she gained super-powers was in LOIS LANE #8, in a story called "Lois Lane...Superwoman." Superman, sick of Lois trying to find out his secret identity, gave a gift to Lois...powers comparable to his own. Lois

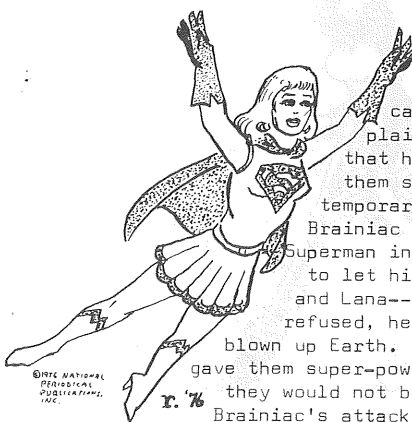
donned a blond wig and a skirted version of Superman's costume (though more attractive than Supergirl's) and established herself in Metropolis as Superwoman. But, Lois' dream-come-true had its rough spots.

One was Clark Kent, who had given Lois powers just so he could teach her a lesson. Clark manipulated Lois into all sorts of situations where she had to squirm in order to save her identity. She always managed, however, and she learned her lesson -- for that issue, anyway.

In LOIS LANE #17, Superman gave both Lois AND Lana super-powers. Lois donned the green-and-yellow costume shown to the left. For most of the story, Lois and Lana went around doing super-deeds contentedly, until one day both Super-Lois and Super-Lana were compelled to go to an abandoned mill outside Metropolis.



When they arrived, the mill blew up. Superman came, and explained to them that he had given them super-powers temporarily because Brainiac had tricked Superman into agreeing to let him kill Lois and Lana--if Superman refused, he would have blown up Earth. So Superman gave them super-powers so that they would not be harmed by Brainiac's attack.



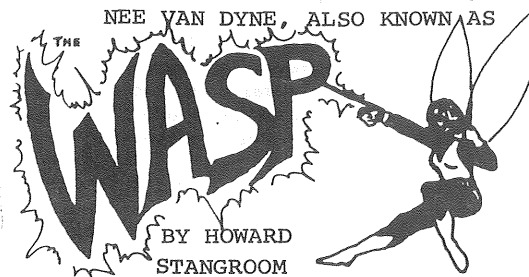
Later, Lois and Lana would again don these super-costumes, after bathing in a cavern stream which was said to give any bathers super-powers. After becoming super-women again, Lois and Lana spent the whole story fighting over who would marry Superman, each trying to impress him. However, their powers soon wore off, and they could not rejuvenate them because the cavern had earlier been destroyed.

The third time Lois would don her green-and-yellow costume was in ACTION #274. A Superman robot, masquerading as his master, gave Lois super-powers, and then pretended to lose his own. He then proposed to Lois, who handed him the same old "my-enemies-would-harm-you" line. Later, the robot's circuits began to fail, and as he died, Superman returned. The robot explained, to Lois' horror, how Lois was a hussy who only loved him for his powers. The robot died, but Superman didn't seem to care much and patched things up with Lois.

In LOIS LANE #87, Cor-Lar, a Kandorian criminal, gave Lois super-powers, and Lois donned a new super-costume. But Cor-Lar tricked Lois into super-heroing in Kandor. Lois was at a loss on how to get out, until Cor-Lar taunted her by flirting with Superman. An angry Lois got out and disposed of her enemy, and, as usual, her super-powers were gone by the end of the story.

Aside from her various Super-Lois incarnations, Lois has had other identities. Borrowing Jimmy Olsen and Lana Lang's secret identities, she became Elastic Lass and Insect Queen, but neither was powerful enough, or ATTRACTIVE enough, for Superman's wife. Now, in the '70's, it is a safe bet that when and if Superman marries Lois, she'll have no powers. But who knows? Lois already has a wardrobe of three super-costumes, so maybe one day she'll get the powers to match them.

A MONOLOGUE ON JANET PYM,
NEE VAN DYNE, ALSO KNOWN AS



BY HOWARD
STANGROOM

Whenever I'm asked who my favourite comics character is, and I tell them "The Wasp", their reaction is usually one of two things, either (a) "Who? Oh her! Be serious, for heaven's sake." or (b) hysterical laughter, and then "Very good, Howard. Now seriously, who is your favourite comics character?"

Well, I am being serious; my main reason for reading comic books in my youth (circa 1965-6; I was advanced for my age) was that kids in my circle seemed to regard them as the next best thing to Playboy, and they spent hours in the playground at Infant's School (yes, it was that long ago) leering at the ladies in kinky boots, tights, etc. Thus, my initial impulse towards comics was curiosity; and while I didn't find many of the comic heroines any more captivating than my companions did, I did become enamoured with the Wasp. She had a sharp wit, and was verbally the equal of her male compadres; she had fantastic courage (it's easy to face hordes of evil-doers when you've got Amazon strength, Amazonian bracelets and tiara, a magic lasso, and are pretty near invulnerable anyway -- but when you're only able to shrink to two inches in height and fly about a bit, it's a different matter); she was independently wealthy; and her apparent flightiness was balanced by a deep maturity -- despite her sometimes almost juvenile attitude, I got the feeling that she took, for instance, being an Avenger as seriously as Thor or Iron Man did. And she was light-years away from Sue Storm, Marvel Girl, and all the other tear-shedding, coffee-making, weak-kneed "token female" ilk.

She was the weakest Avenger, in terms of physical power, ever; yet to me this makes her struggles on their behalf seem all the greater. Mostly she specialised in stop-gap measures, and running interference, giving the boys a chance to take a breather -- for example, her "blinding" of the Sub-Mariner and the Melter, in Avengers #4 & 6 respectively, her struggle inside the Hulk's ear in FF #26, and the job she had done in tracking him, and her small, but crucial, rôle in the defeat of both Hulk and the Lava Men in Avengers #5, amongst many others.

And in between whiles, she was coming on like Gangbusters in Tales to Astonish, frequently rescuing her prissy and one-dimensional boyfriend/husband, Hank "Master-Of-Many-Clichés" Pym, most notably from the malevolent Madame Macabre in Astonish #66.

When she eventually married him, in Avengers #60, I was thoroughly disgusted. In fact, my only happy memory of that issue is the scene in which Jan, resplendent in white bridal lace, delivers a terrific right hook to Princess Python's jaw as partial retribution for the Circus of Crime having gatecrashed her wedding -- simply beautiful in its iconoclastic impact.

My disgust proved to be justified; Hank's wet-blanket attitudes dampened the lady's personality considerably in later Avengers issues. Oh, there were a few nice moments, such as her confrontation in Avengers #74 with the bogus Black Panther, and her old fire returned almost completely in Avengers #83, with the Lady Liberators and sans Henry. But the Wasp had lost her sting -- she was never quite the same, even in the revamped Ant-Man strip of three years ago.

She (along with her klutz of a husband) has since appeared only fleetingly -- the cosmic occurrences in Captain Marvel managed to over-shadow even her personality.

So, what does the future hold now for the first of Marvel's heroines to break the token female barrier? The Scarlet Witch, the Invisible Girl, and Marvel Girl have all changed with the times -- should the Wasp be denied this chance?

--No. On behalf of the most sadly misused heroine in Comicdom, I wish to petition the Marvel editors for a divorce!

Or then again, I've always thought Jan would look kind of nice in black...



Golden Age Girls



FEATURING: The Black Angel
IN: "The Bells of Notre Dame" - 8 pages
FROM: Air Fighters Vol.1
No.11 - August 1943

"The Bells of Notre Dame must ring again!"

Throughout the besieged city of Paris is whispered the legend that Quasimodo the hunchback of Notre Dame, will return to ring his famous bells to signal a mass revolt against the hated Nazi oppressors. And the Black Angel is given the order to make the legend come true!

Departing from the Office of British Intelligence, the Black Angel, "The Greatest Flyer in England", and the Black Prince, "Ace of the R.A. F.", make their way to occupied France and meet with the French underground.

As the word spreads of her mission, the Avenging Aviatrice is soon leading hundreds of people towards Notre Dame. But, at the very portal of the cathedral "an odd sight

brings the mob to a halt." A hunchback sitting on the parapets! Quasimodo!?

"Halt!" pronounces the figure. "Let no one come further. The Bells are the sacred task of Quasimodo. Go back to your homes."

The stunned crowd quickly disperses, despite the Black Angel's pleas to remain and watch Quasimodo ring the bells.

Time passes, and the bells do not ring. Alone, the Black Angel and the Black Prince charge the Cathedral, only to be subdued by Nazi soldiers who had set up the hunchback Malvino as their "Quasimodo" stooge.

Securely tied back to back to the clapper of one bell, the Black Prince tries to offer a few tender words to the Black Angel before the Nazi officer carries out his threat to use their bodies as human mutes to quiet the bells of freedom.

But in the dark belfry that once knew Quasi-

modo, the mis-shapen Malvino watches. "Ah... she is so beautiful. Quasimodo loved Esmeralda. Now Malvino has princess. Malvino save... Me not let princess die..."

"Shot after shot tear into the hunchback's body...but he pursues his purpose", overcoming the Nazi officer, freeing the two victims, and with his last ounce of energy he begins to toll the bells.

In the streets, the aroused French people respond to the bells with shouts of "Arise, Men of France! It's Freedom's Song!" and "Death to all Nazis!"



With the round of bells and voices, and the spirit of the hunchback permeating the air, the Black Prince tries again to share some of his feelings with the Black Angel, but again she gently turns him aside. And soon they are winging their way to England, with the message "Long Live France" silhouetted in the evening sky over Paris. The words remain unspoken, but perhaps the meaning is understood.

As the "harmless sweet girl" Sylvia Manners, the Black Angel lived in Fleetwood Castle in England with her doting aunt, Lady Lawton. And beneath the castle, in a secret underground hanger, her ebony Hawker Hurricane pursuit plane was stored.

While the Black Angel is particularly remembered for her close fitting costume, the story and art prove her to be second to no heroine. She is athletic, modest and sensitive, but still a commanding figure -- in any situation

continued...

she is in complete control of herself and those around her.

The art in this story by John Cassone is excellent, though fans will spot his "borrowing" from Crandall's Blackhawk as a model for the Black Prince. Well drawn figures with careful consideration for expression, and excellent backgrounds denote his work.

With romance held aside, action at a maximum, and an eerie mixing of present and past, this is the finest of the 20 Black Angel stories. The price of \$12.50 to \$25.00 for this book is high, but not outrageous for a Golden Age comic.

Available to heroine fans is the black and white Comic Reprint of Air Fighters vol. 1 #2 which includes the introduction and first appearance of the Black Angel (available from Bud Plant or Comic Reprints for \$2.00). Obviously the book was not reprinted for the Black Angel story alone, but it is a classic issue to have in your collection. The story is good, though the art is crude and unflattering.

* * * * *

"Death on wings, and wrapped in dazzling beauty", the Black Angel flew her way through World War II in the pages of:

Air Fighters vol. 1 #2-12; vol. 2 #1-8, 10
(March 1942 - Fall 1945)

* * * * *

Steven R Johnson, 16385 Two Bar Road, Boulder Creek, CA 95006, U.S.A.

SPECIAL OFFER — FANZINES

For UK readers, a special introductory offer to The Heroine Addict. Just send 50p (cheque, postal order, or a 50p stam), and we'll send off a copy of the current issue of THA, which has a wrap-around Mercy cover, and lots of features and articles (see page 12 of Bem's first section). Send your money to Martin Lock at 33, Chester Road, NORTHWOOD, Middx HA6 1BG. It's in stock now, and will be sent off to you right away--or, if we sell out, the next issue will be sent off to you as soon as it arrives, which will probably be late July.

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Guardian), 15; 16
(Modesty Blaise)
Scott Taylor: 6 (The Thorn)

ART CREDITS:
Ted Delorme: 8 (Moon Dragon), 9 (Zatanna)
Dave Edge: 13
Kirk Hastings: 8
(Supergirl)
Larry Heller: 12
Tom Luth: 9 (Batgirl)
Trevor Phoenix: 2
Bob Rodi: 6 (Storm),
10 (Lois Lane)
Leslie Stannage: 7
(The Black Widow), 9
(Nova Kane & Scarlet Witch)
Carol Strickland: 11
Superswipe: 1, 3, 6
(Batwoman), 7 (Black Canary), 14 (the Red



Mercy Van Vlack: 5,
7 (Batgirl II), 8
(Wonder Girl & Shadow Lass), 16 (Bug!).

The cover reproduced at the top of this column is of the first issue of STARFIRE, a new heroine title edited by Joe Orlando, scripted by David Michelinie (although Elliot Maggin is soon due to take over from him), and drawn by penciller Mike Vosburg and inker Bob Smith-- though the cover, of course, is by Ernie Chua. "A World Made of War" is the title, and it apparently mixes sword-wielding barbarians with super-science. Sounds promising... And the second cover's for the latest Wonder Woman issue--we have to mention her somewhere, yes? After all, she is "Super-Heroine Number One". Strange she wasn't nominated for The Heroine Parade! -ML

"COLOR HER... THE RED GUARDIAN!"

MARVEL'S
NEWEST
HEROINE

a short
article
BY
Martin
Lock

It was in Avengers #43, back in August 1967, --soon that the original Red Guardian was introduced to us, as a communist answer to Captain America; in the following issue, he died a hero's death. But it seems that his name did not die, as almost nine years later, in one of the switches of scene that Steve Gerber delights in, a new bearer of that name is found swinging to the rescue of a hold-up victim in a snowy city somewhere in Russia. This is obviously just a routine patrol for her, she goes into action smoothly and professionally; within seconds the old knife-wielding "mugger" is out of the running. And then the police arrive...

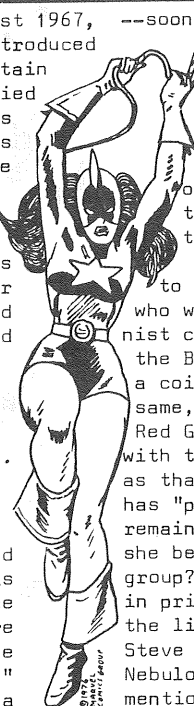
"It's she -- we've found her! Halt, you! Halt!"

The girl she has rescued is amazed. "Comrade--wait! Why do you take flight? You've done no wrong!"

But she's already running for dear life, and her voice drifts back, mixed with the sound of police gunfire -- "As you see, sister--my guilt or innocence is a matter of controversy. There are those in Russia who disapprove of the very existence of -- the Red Guardian!"

An intriguing start, I feel -- it's a welcome change to discover a fully-fledged new heroine. She has, it seems, no special powers beyond fighting skills and agility--she wishes to contribute more to the world than just the work she does as Dr Tania Belinsky. The Russian authorities may not like having a costumed vigilante stopping crime they'd rather ignore, but, she muses, "my concept of what my life can be embraces more than the niche the Party has made for me".

But we soon find out why Steve Gerber chose to start Defenders #35 in beautiful down-town Russia, as Dr Strange puts through a telephone call to Dr Tania, and by pulling a few dozen diplomatic strings enables her to come to the USA to perform an operation only she can do--the replacing of Kyle Richmond's brain in his head. As his house-guest in the following issue it isn't long before she discovers that there is more to Stephen Strange than meets the eye



she is following him, and, despite putting up a good fight, is like him captured by the nefarious Plant-Man!

Well, popular opinion had been calling for Steve Gerber to create a new heroine for the Defenders, and that's what he has done -- to use the name of a "heavy" of the mid-sixties is a typical Gerber touch, and should make for some interesting developments.

Such as? Well, how did Ms Belinsky get to know about the original Red Guardian, who was a military secret in an asian communist country, though a Russian by birth (and the Black Widow's husband)? It can't just be a coincidence in names, as the costume is the same, if better filled. And what was the new Red Guardian's origin? She looks set to stay with the Defenders for a few issues at least, as that well-known master of the mystic arts has "persuaded" her escorts that she should remain in the United States for a time...will she become a member of that illustrious non-group? With the Valkyrie out of action (she's in prison), they certainly need a heroine in the line-up--in fact, with the many plots that Steve Gerber's got going, from Headsmen to Nebulon to the Eel and the Porcupine, not to mention a certain homicidal elf, they need all the help they can get!

It would certainly be pleasant if she does become a full-time Defender -- the only other candidate would be the villainess from the Headsmen, the orb-headed Ruby...after all, we all know this remarkable tendency that Marvel villainesses have to suddenly see the error of their ways, and reform! But the Red Guardian would give an international flavour to the most flexible super-team around, whereas a gal with a red glass globe as a head is just a bit too...unusual?

Anyway, don't miss the May and June issues of the Defenders, and see what you think of Russia's latest export, and Marvel's latest heroine. It's early days for Tania Belinsky as yet, but she seems to have the skills and the personality, the costume and the looks, of a successful heroine. Let's hope Steve Gerber keeps the spotlight on her!

READ MISTY FOR ME BY RUAN LANIHORNE

Hardback novels in comic form are very rare -- and very seldom successful. Until the two recent books masterminded by Gil "Blackmark" Kane, the only such efforts of this decade by Americans were Burne Hogarth's adaptation of "Tarzan of the Apes", and James McQuade's book "Misty", billed quite accurately as "an adult fantasy in visuals". Both were published in 1972, and while the Tarzan book's success was assured by Hogarth's international following, plus the thousands of Burroughs enthusiasts in America and Europe, "Misty" was much more of a gamble... a gamble that didn't quite come off as well as its creators hoped, perhaps.

James McQuade, in 1969, was a commercial artist, drawing paperback covers, brochures, and advertisements; Gil Porter, his friend and Misty's co-creator and scripter, was an editor and copywriter. They, especially McQuade, had become interested in the type of graphic novel being published in Europe, and had also got into the world of fandom -- soon the idea of a book project began to form, and "Misty" was born. In 1972, the book was published.

Briefly, in 121 pages, we follow our heroine across a strange future world, as she tries to escape from the computer-ruler GODD, whose dictatorship is modelled loosely on religion. In a world of transplants and artificial limbs and organs she is perfect--this offends GODD. And then her lover refuses a computer-ordained marriage to another, for her sake. At once, a liquidation machine guns down the man, and an innocent girl it mistook for Misty--she is on the run! GODD's "very intimately personal secretary" Mary, a brunette who specialises in wearing small amounts of black leather, and the Censorship and Death Legion's Headsensor Kleezie, an ugly and wrinkled fellow with a taste for (other people's) death, are hot on her tracks, as Misty is forced to fight for her life in an arena, escapes, is caught in an undersea city ruled by a decadent sea-queen,

escapes, is captured by a fat, sadistic old pirate and taken to his castle, escapes...and in the end is the final confrontation with the dictator. "There is no ending", intones the computer's Voice of Prophecy on the last page.

What else? Well, there are nice men and not-so-nice men, plus two or three women, who all get to know Misty very, very well, sometimes in reality and occasionally in illusions. We find space-craft and 1918 warplanes, computers and viking ships, noble sacrifices, monsters, people perverse, foolish, content and empty. Misty carelessly keeps losing all her clothes, and few of the other girls fare much better. In short, there are a lot of clichés borrowed from SF involved, and almost as many taken



from "soft-core" pornography and underground comics. The drawing is painstaking, but not always well-proportioned; the writing relies too much on capture and escape, and adds too little to a basically hackneyed idea of a girl fleeing across a bizarre future world. "A deft combination of exciting drawing, adventure, scathing satire, warm sex, social comment and suspense", it calls itself on the back cover; I find a distinct lack of most of these six qualities. How about "A fairly competent mix of sometimes reasonable drawing, unconnected incidents, lightweight clichés, warmed-over sex, self-congratulation and sadism"? It may be an imitation Barbarella, but it's fairly readable -- try again sometime, James. -RL