

A "KING"-SIZE  
68-PAGE ISSUE  
ON JACK'S FEMALE  
CHARACTERS!!

A RARE 1975  
**KIRBY INTERVIEW**

INTERVIEWS WITH  
**DAVE STEVENS &  
LISA KIRBY**

UNPUBLISHED TEN-  
PAGE STORY FROM  
**TRUE LIFE DIVORCE**

A CLOSE LOOK AT  
**ROMANCE COMICS**

JACK'S ORIGINAL  
SCREENPLAY FOR  
**CAPTAIN VICTORY**

DOUBLE-  
CENTERFOLD OF  
**GALAXY GREEN**

SPECIAL FEATURES:  
**JACK'S WOMEN  
FROM THE '40S  
TO THE '80S**

**UNPUBLISHED ART**  
INCLUDING PENCIL  
PAGES BEFORE  
THEY WERE INKED,  
AND **MUCH MORE!!**



THE  
**JACK KIRBY™**  
COLLECTOR

ISSUE #20, JUNE 1998



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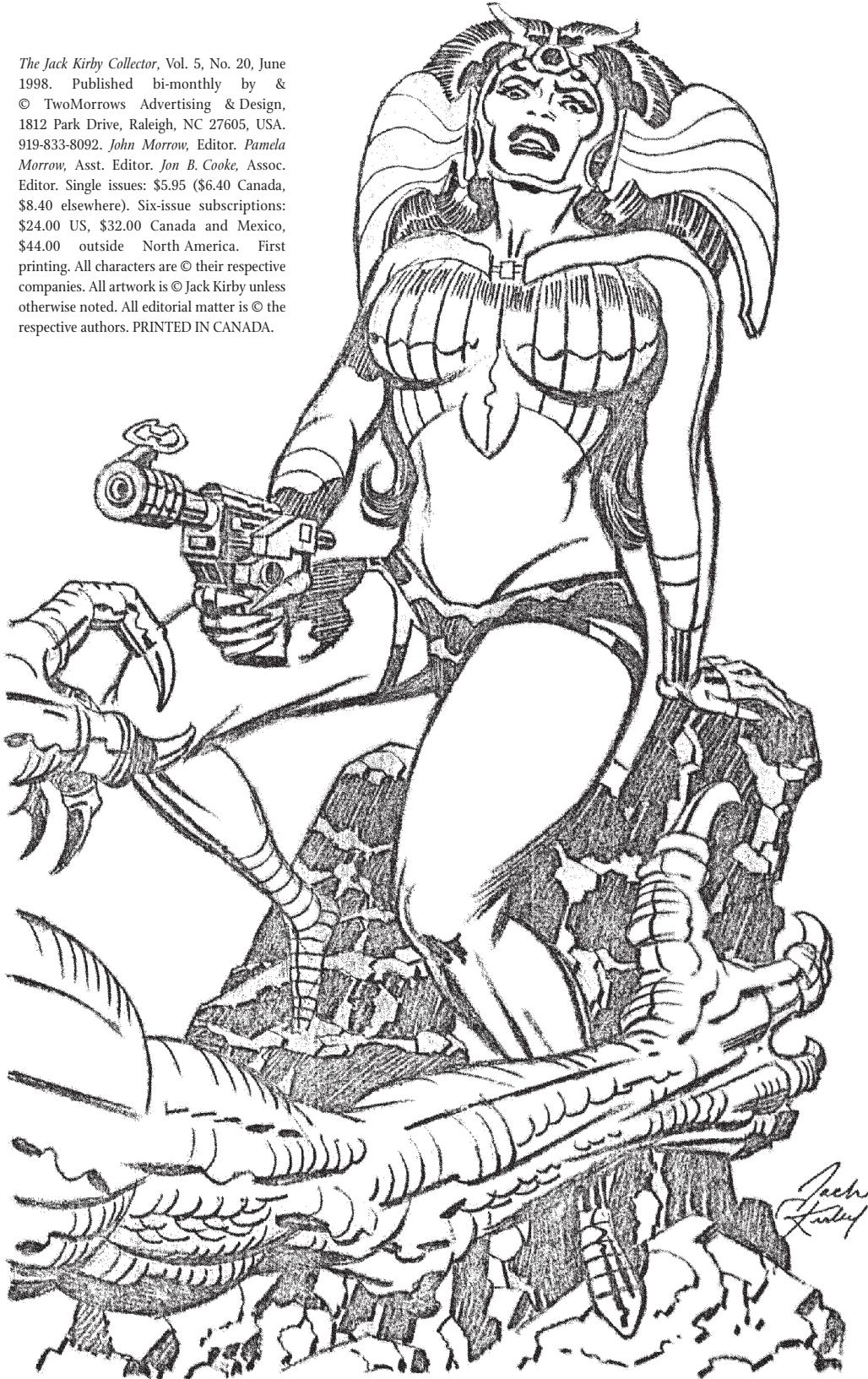
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# THE JACK KIRBY™ COLLECTOR

ISSUE #20, JUNE 1998

THE ONLY 'ZINE  
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# THE KID FROM LEFT FIELD

*Jack & Roz's youngest daughter Lisa interviewed by John Morrow*

(Lisa Kirby, whom Jack dubbed "The Kid From Left Field" in the Jimmy Olsen #133 text page, was born September 7, 1960 in Brooklyn, NY. As the youngest of Jack and Roz's four children, she grew up during her father's most prolific creative period in comics. She now serves as Co-Executor—with cousin Robert Katz—of her parent's estate, overseeing usage of Jack's creations. This interview was conducted by phone on April 6, 1998.)

**THE JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR:** What do you remember about living in New York? Did fans stop by the house at all?

**LISA KIRBY:** I was so little... I'm sure they did. My dad always had people in and out. I remember more from when we moved to California; when we lived in Thousand Oaks, I always remember people being there. It was kind of a constant thing; it was the norm for me.

**TJKC:** The story we've all heard was that you had asthma problems, and that's why the family moved out to California. Is that correct?

**LISA:** Right. It was really bad; I was a really sickly kid, actually. I was in the hospital a lot, I missed a lot of school. My mother had asthma too.

They thought it would be better to move to a warmer climate.

**TJKC:** I don't know if you realize it, but indirectly, you're responsible for the San Diego Comic Convention! (*laughter*) Fans should be grateful to you for getting your dad out there where they could meet him.

**LISA:** I never thought of it that way. (*laughter*)



*Lisa's proud parents in the 1990s.*

**TJKC:** How old were you when you moved to California?

**LISA:** I was about eight.

**TJKC:** Did the kids at school know who your dad was, and what he did?

**LISA:** Yeah, it was really neat. I have fond memories of it. He always came to my classroom. When we had parties, he'd draw. He'd take the letter of a child's first name, and turn it into a super-hero. (*laughter*) Everybody was enthralled; it made me a very popular kid, (*laughter*) which was great because I was sick all the time, and I was really shy. I never uttered a word to anybody. I don't know what happened to me; now I can't shut up. But in the early years, it really helped me, because otherwise I probably wouldn't have had any friends! (*laughter*) It made me really popular.

He always did that, even as I got older. I was a preschool teacher for awhile, and he came to my classroom, and did the same thing. So there's some parents out there with very valuable momentos! (*laughter*) I wonder if they know they have them.

He was always really good about giving back, y'know?

**TJKC:** Did your classmates pester you, wanting to know, "What's your dad going to draw next issue?"

**LISA:** Everybody would always ask me, and what's so funny is I never really knew that much. I lived with it, but I never knew that much about what he was doing, I guess because it was just something Dad did; it was his job, and I thought of it that way. Everybody was like, "Were you in your dad's studio? What is he doing?" (*laughter*) To me it was like, "Who cares? (*laughter*) Daddy's working." I had a different view, I guess.

We just did everyday kid things. I didn't think anything of it. I saw my father, and I knew that was his job, that's what he does. I knew it was definitely different than someone else's father, (*laughter*) but I just had the attitude of "That's what he did." Then I got older and went, "Wow, look at this stuff!" Even today, I'm going through all this work, inventorying everything, and I'm just in awe. I'm almost ashamed of myself; I can't believe what I missed and did not pay attention to.

**TJKC:** I take it you weren't a comic book reader.

**LISA:** No, I wasn't at all. In fact, I didn't really get into it until I was older, and noticed, "Wow, this is really good stuff!" When I was younger, it just really didn't appeal to me that much.



*Pencils from a FF Annual #5 pin-up. Note Stan Lee's misspelling of Crystal's name.*

TJKC: Would it be a fair assessment to say your dad was *always* working?

LISA: Oh, yes. He worked all the time. He wasn't the kind of dad who took us camping or things like that. He was a workaholic. As I was growing up, I was involved with horses; I went to horse shows, and he always came to all my horse shows. He was always really supportive of what I did. But his schedule was: He woke up late, and I'd see him for a little bit in the morning, and then the afternoon hit, and he was working. He was in "the room." (*laughter*)

TJKC: So he was home all the time, but you didn't see a whole lot of him?

LISA: No, unless I went in to see what he was doing. He'd come out every so often, but he worked quite a bit. He worked all night long; he'd work till 2:00 in the morning most of the time, then sleep, then start work again at 1:00 or 2:00 in the afternoon.

TJKC: Did he work on holidays as well?

LISA: No, we always had pretty good family gatherings. I'm sure he probably worked part of the time, but we usually had company and relatives. He was a pretty social guy, so he definitely participated during that time.

TJKC: Did all the relatives gather at your place on holidays, or did you take trips?

LISA: Once in a while we'd take trips upstate when we lived in New York. When we moved to California, we didn't have that many relatives in California at the time. Everybody kind of took turns.

TJKC: Was it really tough being the youngest child?

LISA: Not really, because I was a spoiled brat. (*laughter*) I think I was "Daddy's Girl" to tell you the truth. I hate to admit it. He was very overprotective. I was the baby.

TJKC: Which of you four kids was the most into what your dad was doing?

LISA: Probably my brother [Neal]. My sister Susan was a singer, and she was always involved in music, and traveled around a lot. But my brother was home a lot, and he probably read more comic books than any of us. I think he was more into reading them, and got into the whole thing more than the rest of us.

TJKC: Roz talked about how often you had people over.

LISA: (*laughter*) We always had people over. She forgot me at school once because there were people over. (*laughter*) They were just really good that way; they'd open their doors to everybody.

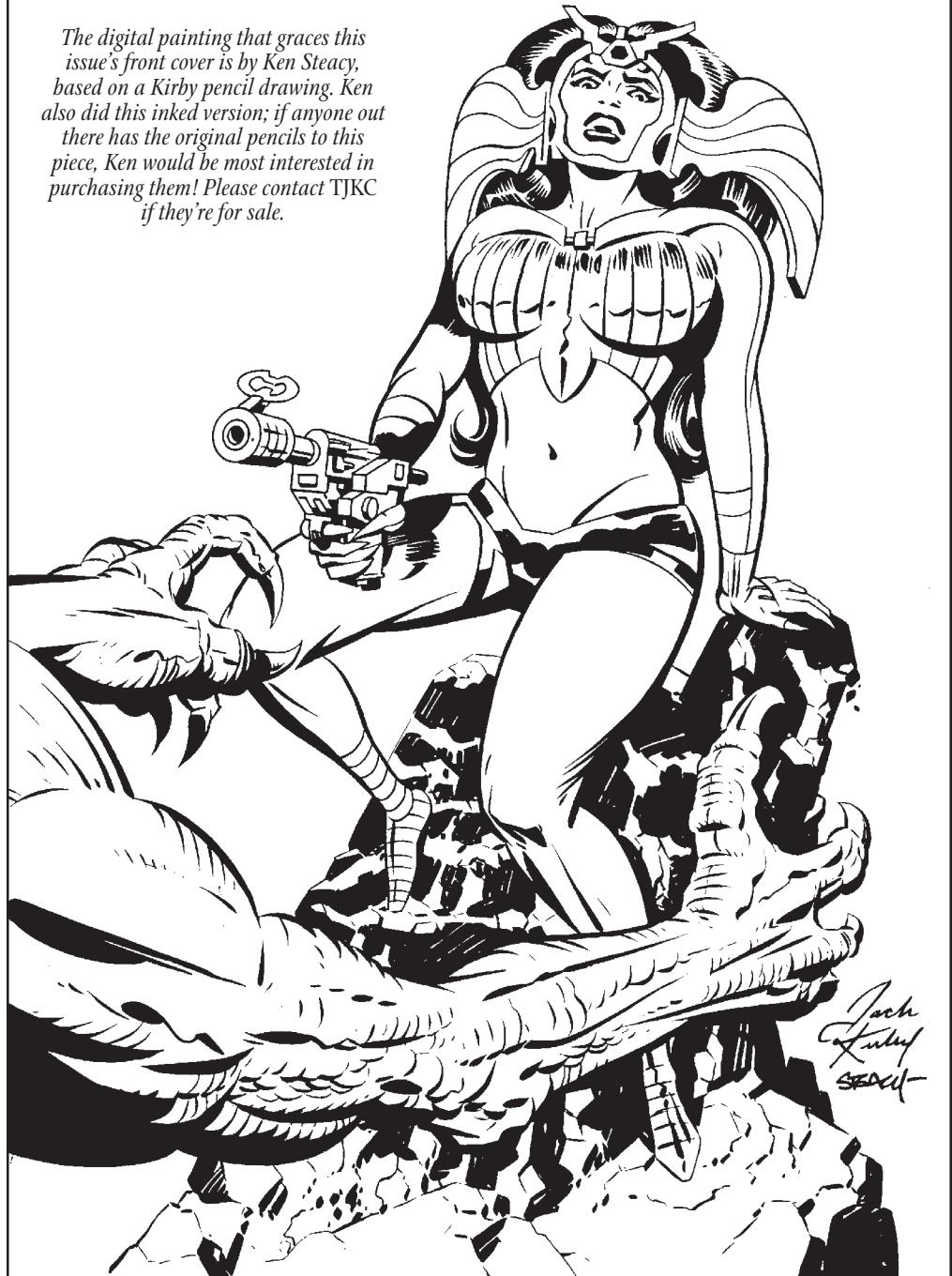
TJKC: Didn't that get really annoying for you as a kid, to constantly have strangers over?

LISA: I guess I was just content. It was something that was always there and that I was used to. It didn't really matter to me; I was always out riding my horse, and had a lot of friends I hung out with. I just got used to people coming in: "Oh, who's here today?" (*laughter*) Then my friends would come over and disappear into "the room" and I'd never see them again, either.

TJKC: Was anybody ever friends with you just to meet your dad?

LISA: I don't know. It could've been that way, but if it was I didn't

*The digital painting that graces this issue's front cover is by Ken Steacy, based on a Kirby pencil drawing. Ken also did this inked version; if anyone out there has the original pencils to this piece, Ken would be most interested in purchasing them! Please contact TJKC if they're for sale.*



really notice. I think they thought it was really cool. They'd come over and say, "Wow, this is what your dad does? Can I see the studio? Can I meet your dad?" We'd go in there, and of course my dad would go into his stories—you know how he is. They'd go into, like, some kind of hypnotic state. (*laughter*) They'd hang out in there for a while, and it was neat; then they'd come out. But as I got older, my boyfriends started to venture in there, and I'd never see them again—then I got a little resentful! (*laughter*)

TJKC: What did your dad think of your boyfriends?

LISA: In the era I grew up and started dating in—the late '70s—most of them had long hair and were kind of hippie-ish. He made the comment: Why couldn't I meet someone that had shorter hair? (*laughter*) I heard that a few times. They were really good about my friends. Sure, they got scrutinized, and before I went out, they had to know where I was going, and what time I'd be home, and this and that, like any other parent.

TJKC: Was your mom more strict with that kind of stuff than your dad?

# SOILED & SWEET & SOMETIMES GREEN!

Simon & Kirby's Women of the Golden Age, by R.J. Vitone

You know that Jack Kirby was there at just about the very beginning, don't you? In 1938, when *Action #1* began the Golden Age of the comic book super-hero with Superman, Jack was settling in for a short stint at Eisner & Iger's "Universal Phoenix Feature Syndicate." The staff there churned out newspaper strip-style continuities to be packaged and sold to feature-hungry publishers. Kirby's efforts, *The Count of Monte Cristo*, *The Diary of Dr. Haywood*, and *Wilton of the West* first saw print in about May of 1938, in a British comic named *WAGS*. Not long after, Fiction House came knocking, and those strips showed up in the oversize (10" x 14") *Jumbo #1, 2, and 3*. These pages were his first published American comic book work, and his style, the power, the perspective, the basic storytelling flow of visual narrative, were already there in a crude, unpolished form. Also there was another vital component: The women.

Women in comics during those formative days generally had little to do. Not much was asked of them other than to provide some



Some early Kirby women.

decoration and direction, or to stumble into obvious traps in order to be rescued, then provide sexless companionship for the oblivious hero. This wasn't always by formalistic design. The artwork of the early Golden Age, though produced by enthusiastic young penmen, was mostly slapdash and crude. In some cases, the only means of identifying the heroine was by the fact that she was drawn wearing a dress, and was called by a girl's name! (By contrast, many of the popular adventure newspaper strips of the day were peopled by a host of clearly-defined, incredibly feminine gals drawn by talents like Foster, Raymond, and Caniff!) Jack studied their work, absorbing their art styles into his own. Even in his early work, women stand out on his pages. Crisp, round faces, upswept hair, and bared shoulders were the norm. This was still the '30s, after all, the height of the Hollywood glamour period. Actresses struck feral poses in carefully-crafted films designed to showcase the talent. Almost always in shimmering black-&-white, on 30-foot-high silver screens, personalities like *Dietrich*, *Garbo*, *Crawford*, *Hepburn*, and scores of others burned their images into Kirby's artistic memory.

These women, their clothes, their poses, often found their way into his work. Pace was the key, however. Telling a story in 3 or 4 panels, or on one page, or even in a 6-page format forced restrictions. The

girls became blurry parts of the whole. "Plot device" best describes their use. In strips like *Blue Beetle* (1940), Kirby plowed his narrative full speed ahead. His females became bridges to the next gunfight, the next fist-fight, the next... well, fight. Always the beautiful daughter, the wealthy socialite, the faithful secretary, the childhood sweetheart—always left behind, almost forgotten in the rush. She'd be on hand at the end, dot-like eyes fixed squarely on the triumphant hero. (A notable exception came out of the early Eisner/Iger shop: *Sheena, Queen of the Jungle*. As Jules Feiffer wrote in *The Great Comic Book Heroes*, "Sheena was a voluptuous Tarzan who laid waste to wild beasts, savages, and evil white men in the jungle of her day..." ) Jack stuck to the popular trend, and even when futuristic sci-fi concepts like "Cosmic Carson" (*Science Comics*) and "Solar Legion" (*Crash Comics*) afforded women roles of almost equal status with the heroes, the girls were shown wearing formless, sexless space suits! Although his art and storytelling style had matured greatly by 1940, Kirby was still a diamond in the rough. When Joe Simon entered his professional life, things began to change.

## SHE'S LEAN, MEAN, & GREEN

Simon quickly recognized Jack's talents, and knew the profit potential of the artist's speedy penciling. They "teamed" for the first time in *Blue Bolt # 2* (July 1940). Simon had sold the sci-fi feature to Novelty Press, and when Kirby joined the mix, the strip found new vistas. The *Flash Gordon*-ish series seemed tailor-made for Jack, who had trod similar ground in his own "Solar Legion": Rocketships, ornate

weaponry, cosmic encounters in space, and right there—engulfing it all—was the baleful menace of the beautiful Green Sorceress. She was the first dominant female character in the Kirby lexicon, and as such she wielded tremendous power. A magician who could teleport anywhere via her "green aura," she ruled the Hidden Empire, commanded vast armies of subservient men, and lusted for more lands to conquer... and Blue Bolt. (Her inner conflict usually amounted to soulful stares into her televisor showing her unattainable lover.) He admired her as well, always hoping she'd reform. Over the nine issues S&K produced, the Green Sorceress was the driving force behind the



(here and top) *Blue Bolt's* Green Sorceress.

storylines. Speed was still the key in Jack's work, but Simon added some twisting bends to the plots.

The Blue Bolt/Green Sorceress relationship became a roller-coaster ride of brinkmanship. She'd save his life. He'd put down a military coup that threatened her rule. She'd threaten him. He'd save her from mutant squid creatures. She'd thank him. In *Blue Bolt* #6, he rescued her from the cross-breeding plans of a demented evil dwarf. She reformed... but not really. Get the idea? By the final two stories S&K worked on, the Sorceress had found her way to our own Earth and Blue Bolt had to block her plans to invade and conquer that as well. Had the series continued under Jack & Joe, the (eventual) teaming of the two color-coded protagonists may have produced some multi-hued sparks and some strangely colored offspring. But the lure of other projects moved the team to another publisher, where another strong female would spring to life.

## "AIN'T SHE PRETTY, CAP?"

Early in 1940, Simon secured a sweet position at Timely. He assumed the duties as Editor of the comics line, but retained the right to freelance work at other publishers.

Kirby moved into the Timely bullpen with Joe, and they began to brainstorm new concepts. *Red Raven* #1 was the first package they produced, followed quickly by "Marvel Boy" (*Daring Mystery*), "The Vision" (*Marvel Mystery*), plus a handful of spot illos for Timely's line of pulps. Their main efforts were directed at what would be their greatest creation: *Captain America*. All the familiar elements were in place from the first issue—dynamic Cap, puny Steve Rogers, plucky kid sidekick Bucky, blustering Sgt. Duffy, a military camp as a background, colorful villains, and one special lady: Betty Ross.

If Kirby's women thus far had been mere plot-pointers and decor, or a powerfully different Green Sorceress, then Betty Ross stands as a combination of all those things. Timely's house style headed into the early 1940s was more starkly horrific than most of the other major comics publishers. Sure, women were easy targets in those days, but at Timely, women became victims more often than not—and not just by simple means! Sparked by a parade of classic Alex Schomburg covers, the gals were roasted over fiery pits, impaled on spiked tables, smashed into iron maidens, threatened with red-hot branding irons, tossed into shark tanks, dipped into boiling wax or acid, tied to rockets, or locked into cages with every type of wild rabid beast imaginable. To emerge from that carnage and still be functional, a woman had to be made of stern stuff! Betty was introduced in the very first *Cap* story in issue one (although that is arguable—the young dark-haired lady who

greets the government envoys disguised as an old woman is called



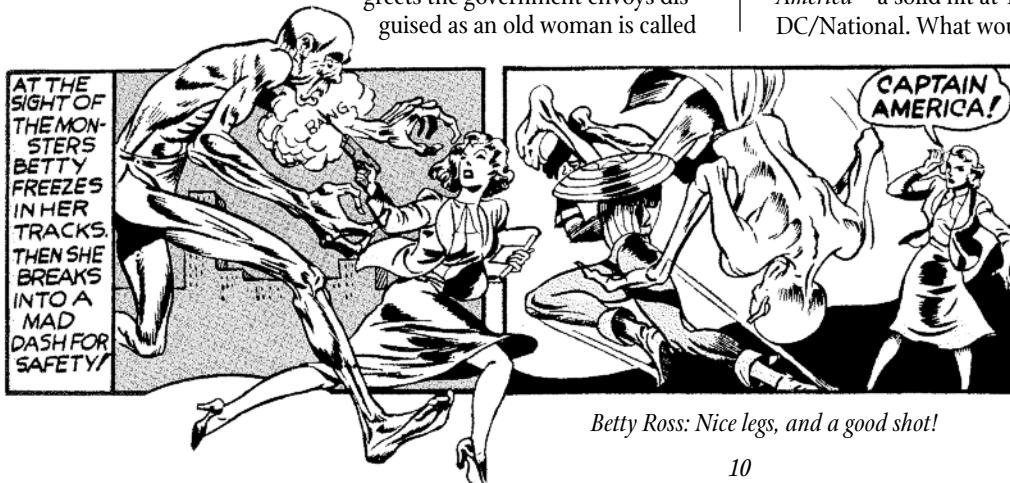
only Agent X-13. The next time we see her in the second story, she's blond, and introduces herself as Betty Ross). Maybe she'd have liked to buy back that intro, because from that point on, whenever the plot called for a damsel in distress, Jack and Joe drew poor Betty into the story. Her status as a government secret agent (in the '40s? Her training alone would have made an interesting series) cast her in a more than functionary role. She was cool under duress, trained to be an investigator. She could handle a gun and wasn't afraid to fight, either. Cap treated her as an equal, and except for some comic relief "romantic" horseplay with hopeless Sgt. Duffy, the hint of S-E-X was barely on hand. But what a victim she made! She appeared in all ten issues that S&K produced, sometimes in more than one story! (She just made #3. The Red Skull is calmly tying her to a rocket-bomb on the cover.) The boys put her through Timely house-style paces at every turn. Evil Orientals, mad Russians, zombies, murderous mummies, crazed elephants, even the Red Skull had their shot at her. In one memorable exchange, a deranged doctor asks her, "Do you have good blood?" But she survived and excelled via brains and two-fisted toughness. It would have been interesting to see her grow as a character under Kirby's pencil, but just as with the Green Sorceress, it was not meant to be. S&K left Timely, and headed over to DC.

## "A VERY NICE SONG, RIP DARLING"

Imagine the chaos and upheaval. Over the matter of a few short months, America plunged into global warfare, S&K left *Captain America*—a solid hit at Timely—and moved with some uncertainty to DC/National. What would they do? No one seemed sure at the time.

(Oh, yes... and Jack Kirby married Rosalind Goldstein on May 23, 1942. You could almost see it on a splash page: "Against the backdrop of a world in flames, two star-crossed lovers find each other amid the ruins of war! Could their love endure? NOW IT CAN BE TOLD!... the story without an ending... The Queen Crowns Her King!")

While a real-life woman was making life interesting for Jack, the move to DC sparked a creative avalanche from his drawing board. The combination of producing fresh new series and stacking inventory features in expectation of key



Betty Ross: Nice legs, and a good shot!

# THOSE MARVEL-OUS KIRBY WOMEN

by Mike Gartland

*"Yes, I like strong women. I respect women in general. Women have always had great potential. They're continuing to become prominent in their own way."*

Jack Kirby, *Comicscene Magazine* interview, 1993

Jack Kirby did indeed like strong women, and this does include the ones that he created for Marvel in the '60s. There are those who dispute this—they criticize the women of Marvel (we're talking Silver Age '61-'70 Kirby) for being loaded with stereotypical, male chauvinistic condescension—but as this article hopes to show, it wasn't as it appeared, as much as how it read.

Just as with the majority of the male super-heroes at Marvel at the time, Kirby was responsible for the co-creation of virtually all of the female characters (excluding only the ones co-created by Steve Ditko)—and since Kirby was definitely established as the major character consultant, he probably had some input into the characters that he didn't directly introduce as an artist (like The Black Widow for example).

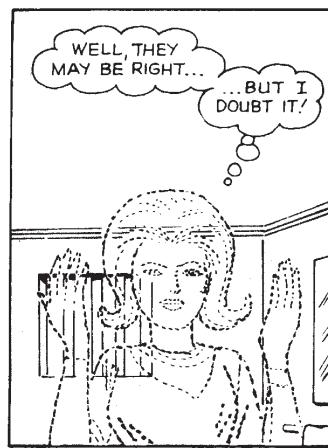


Pin-up from FF Annual #1. Evidence on the original art suggests Jack wrote all the copy, indicating his overwhelming conceptual input.

Besides creating the major female characters for *Fantastic Four* and *Thor*, he also contributed important ladies to *X-Men*, *Hulk*, *Avengers*, *Captain America*, and *Sub-Mariner* storylines. Some of these were created as full-blown major characters; others started out as supporting characters whom Kirby would increase in importance as time went on. In researching these ladies it is easy to see that Kirby imbued each of them with their own distinct personality, and it becomes evident that they all start out as strong women—if not physically, then most assuredly characteristically. Whether Kirby used anyone as inspiration, I can only speculate.

I would like to stress that in order to see what Kirby may have intended, the reader must not read. You have to review Kirby's '60s Marvel comics like picture books, disregarding the dialogue because one cannot be sure if it was following Kirby's plots. You will then notice that nearly all of the major female characters are drawn as self-assured and level-headed women.

This is evident in the very beginning with Sue Storm in FF #1. She appears to be just as strong emotionally as the other three, and this confidence in characterization continues throughout the series. She



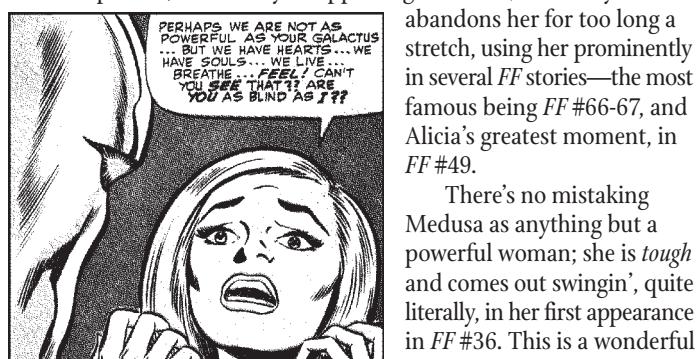
(left) Sue appears brave and strong in FF #1, but faints after battling the Hulk (wouldn't you?) in #25.

did her part as a member of the team. Some people point out that all she ever did was cook, shop, and faint—which she did, too—but these are present-day minds passing present-day judgments on a character created in the early '60s. Sue is introduced as a socialite-type person; later on she gets married, has a child, and tries to settle down into a family environment. To me, at least, this seems like average, normal behavior for a lady in the early '60s (people like to shop and cook; what's so stereotypical about that?). If she fainted, it was generally because she was battling a force beyond her abilities, like the Hulk, for example; if you had to fight the Hulk, you might find yourself fainting too!

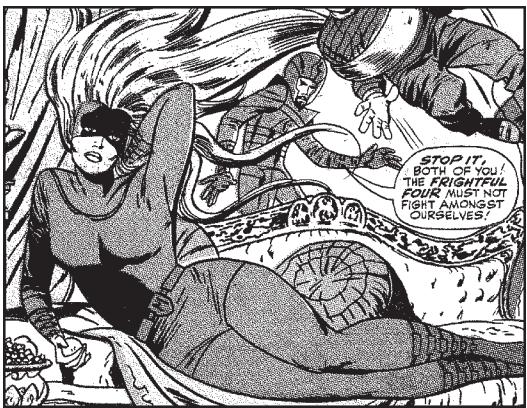
Readers at the time apparently protested that she wasn't contributing as a member of the team. Personally I can't see a reason for it; she prominently adds to the stories in the first ten issues. If anything, I guess it just came down to the fact that there was a predominately male readership at the time (in super-hero and monster comics anyway), and that her three companions were a little more colorful.

In the early '60s there were many blonde personalities prominent on TV and in the movies—Marilyn Monroe, Jayne Mansfield, Connie Stevens, Dorothy Provine, etc.—and perhaps Jack molded Sue after some of them. He certainly drew her from a contemporary point of view, so Jack was obviously keeping an eye on the times; you'll notice that before she was costumed, Sue was always rendered fashionably.

Alicia was introduced in FF #8 and I'm wondering if she was created for the story itself—as a one-time character—or if as the story went on it was decided to develop her as a love interest for Ben Grimm. She was drawn to resemble Sue Storm for the sake of the story, but later developed her own look (of note is the fact that on page 16 she is depicted by Kirby as holding her hands to her head, in a mentalistic E.S.P. fashion, and dialogue is conspicuously absent from the large empty space overhead; was Kirby trying to imbue her with a sixth sense or other power?). Definitely a supporting character, but Kirby never abandons her for too long a stretch, using her prominently in several FF stories—the most famous being FF #66-67, and Alicia's greatest moment, in FF #49.



There's no mistaking Medusa as anything but a powerful woman; she is *tough* and comes out swingin', quite literally, in her first appearance in FF #36. This is a wonderful



Kirby imbued Medusa with plenty of power, confidence, and sex appeal—at least while she was a villain.

no guff from her male co-horts in the Frightful Four and appears to be quite confident and ruthless (and sexy). With no given origin, Kirby later incorporates her into his Inhumans storyline; when he first created her, Kirby hadn't thought up the Inhumans yet. She fit in perfectly of course, but sadly, it is there that she begins to languish as one of that group, whereas she stood out with the Frightful Four.

With the introduction of the Inhumans, Kirby introduced his next major FF female

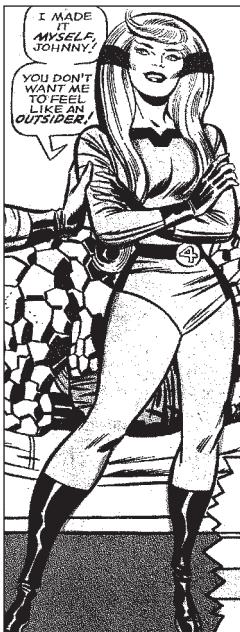


personality, Crystal—the only one of them with a human-sounding name. She's introduced, much like Alicia, to develop as a love interest for

one of the FF, and it becomes apparent that she has the temperament and ability to handle the Human Torch. In her initial appearance she appears almost elfin in looks, like a young child; perhaps Jack used one of his daughters to draw from—or Bridget Bardot, since Crystal appears very much the sex-kitten, very much the vixen. As time went on Jack would use Crystal more and more, finally making her a part of the team when he gave Sue Storm "maternity leave"; by this time, however, Crystal lost her elfish face in favor of a

more standard one, but her shape remained the same—thanks Jack!

For Thor, Jack introduced us to Jane Foster in the second issue and she immediately is used not only in intrigue, but to establish the old love triangle between two people (the Lois-Clark-Superman type of triangle). Jane loved Thor, and would've loved Blake if she knew he cared; Blake loved Jane but couldn't



Crystal went from elfin (left) to vivacious (above).



Jane picks up Hercules in #125.

example of Kirby's ability to modernize mythology. In all frankness, the reason she was so popular with the then-predominately male readership was that, although she was obviously female, she fought like a man. She takes

because the shadow of Thor stood in the way. This didn't stop Jack from getting Jane involved in most of the stories, though. In the early stories it's usually Thor who rescues Jane, but later in the series, where

it's evident that Kirby is doing the plotting solo, we see Jane become an integral part of the stories involving the other characters Jack is introducing at the time. Rather than being threatened by them, she is interacting with them. Jack has her go for a quick drink with Hercules, room with an alien, and tutor a group of evolved animals—things not covered under general nursing practice. In fact, Jane may have been originally drawn from the proliferation of medical shows on TV at that time, all strong on human interest drama to be sure.

Kirby resolves the two-way love triangle by introducing a new love interest for Thor (perhaps because by this time, Kirby was leaving the world of humans far behind, as far as Thor was concerned anyway). So

in a nice little segue story, Thor tries one last time with Jane, but she can't cut it as an immortal, so exit Jane (no, she wasn't killed) and enter Sif (for you youngsters out there, this takes place in *Thor* #136). Sif comes on the scene with kinda a chip on her shoulder; she's just loaded with confidence. She's sure she can do anything a warrior of Asgard can do and then some. Sif looks like she might have been inspired by Sophia Loren, a very dark, full-figured girl; she figures prominently in most of the stories thereafter as a fit battle-companion for Thor. Of note is that Jack hinted at a possible triangle involving Balder in issue #143-144, but this is never developed, perhaps because Kirby decided to involve Balder with another female down the line.

The Thor storyline had its share of villainesses also; in the early part of the run there was The Enchantress, introduced in issue #103. Kirby had drawn attractive women up until that point, but The Enchantress was drawn specifically to be attractive. Jack looks like he took Marilyn Monroe, Jayne Mansfield, Carroll Baker, and some of the bombshells from his generation—Lauren Bacall, Veronica Lake, and Betty Grable for good measure—and poured



Was Jack consciously—or unconsciously—using phallic imagery to introduce the Enchantress?



The stunning Sif—a precursor to Big Barda?



## SUE'S 'DOS CONTEST

Over Jack's 100+ issues of *Fantastic Four*, the Invisible Girl went through quite a few hairdos. Be the first to send us the correct issue numbers for each hairstyle, and we'll award you a free issue of *TJKC*!



Jackie-oh



Teased



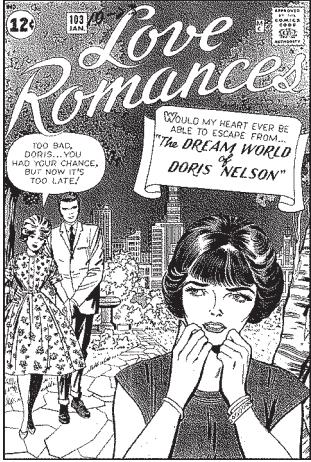
Bad hair day



Big hair



Short 'n sassy



# THE DREAM WORLD OF DORIS NELSON/WILSON

Examining an Oddball Kirby Comic, by Scott Shaw!

*Love Romances* #103 (January, 1962), published by Male Publishing Corp. (a.k.a. Marvel) Cover and lead story (7 pages) penciled by Kirby, inked by Paul Reinman or Sol Brodsky.

Doris Wilson (referred to on the book's cover as "Doris Nelson") is a loner who would rather dream about romance than live it. She simply hasn't met a boy who interested her, but she does have one source of love... romance comic books! (She's even pictured reading an issue of *Love Romances* itself!) Yet for all her four-color fantasies, Doris tearfully laments, "Maybe I'll never meet the right man! Maybe I'll never fall in love!"

Pleading a headache, Doris turns down the offer of a date with "Jazzbo," a fun-loving boy who's supposedly "a million laughs." She counters, "If I just want to laugh, I can always watch Jerry Lewis!" (Obviously, Doris is of French descent!) Trying to ignore her girlfriends' taunts ("Doris would rather cuddle up with some silly romance stories, than with a real, live boy!"), she seeks out the solace of a nearby park bench, where Doris retreats into the welcoming world of her beloved love comics.

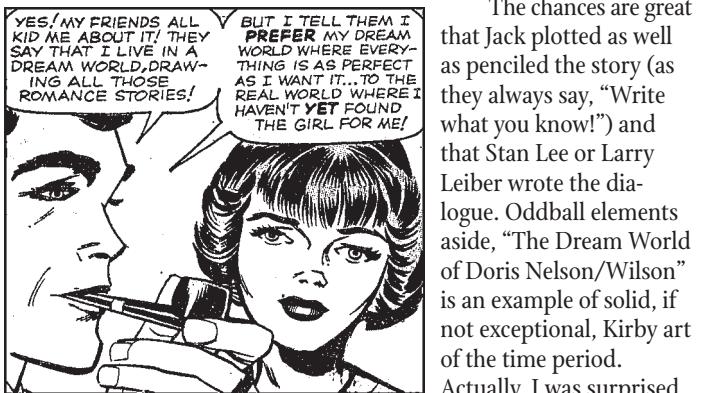
There, she immerses herself in another pulp-induced daydream, not noticing the funnybook (wouldn't you know it, another issue of *Love Romances*) as it slips from her fingers. Unexpectedly, the publication is retrieved by a handsome young stranger, Joe Marlowe, who just happens to be a comic book artist, one who specializes in drawing romance stories! He points to Doris' magazine: "In fact, I illustrated that one!" (Talk about coincidences... but you haven't seen anything yet!)

It turns out that Joe also dwells in a dream world; one of his own making as he draws all of those romance stories. "...I prefer my dream world where everything is as perfect as I want it... to the real world where I haven't yet found the girl for me!" Not surprisingly, Doris understands Joe's philosophy completely, and this makes Joe glad "because I noticed you the moment I saw you sitting here! You see, I've drawn so many pretty girls, that I always study them in real life... searching for the perfect one... like you!" But instead of running for her life like most normal women, Doris responds in kind. "The look in our eyes and the touch of our hands said it all!"

Later\* (although the caption reads "And so it came to pass..."), Doris' catty girlfriends are checking out the latest issue of *Love Romances* (there it is again!) where they're amazed to discover a story featuring a heroine named "Doris Nelson" — who looks just like their daydreaming friend! (Notice Doris' bizarre mid-story change of name from "Wilson" to "Nelson"!) As Doris and her new beau, Joe, approach arm-in-arm, the gal-gang



asks just how Doris came to be in that comic book. Doris' answer: "There isn't much to tell, except that a dream isn't so bad after all—because there is always the chance... that your dream will come true!"



The chances are great that Jack plotted as well as penciled the story (as they always say, "Write what you know!") and that Stan Lee or Larry Leiber wrote the dialogue. Oddball elements aside, "The Dream World of Doris Nelson/Wilson" is an example of solid, if not exceptional, Kirby art of the time period.

Actually, I was surprised to learn that Jack was still working in the romance genre at this time, one he and partner Joe Simon originally created over a decade earlier. This is especially surprising, considering Jack was already carrying an increasingly heavy workload due to Marvel's expanding lineup that relied so much upon his creative spark. The inks (by either Reinman or Brodsky), although cleaner than the embellishment in early issues of *Avengers* and *X-Men*, do their job but add nothing special to the art.

But in my opinion, its lead story makes *Love Romances* #103 a classic example of an Oddball Comic. Not only is its inclusion of comic books and cartoonists an unusual one, but the story's structure and references to the very comic book title in which it appears makes it the storytelling equivalent of an "infinity cover." Additionally, the story's lead character's name weirdly changes twice (!) from the cover to the story's end. But on top of all that, the characters of Doris and Joe immediately reminded me of nothing more than idealized versions of Roz and Jack Kirby themselves! At first I thought I was reading more into this story than was intended, but when I mentioned this story (and its lead characters' supposed resemblance to the real Kirbys) at the Kirby Tribute Panel at San Diego's 1996 Comic-Con International, Roz herself immediately began chuckling and nodding her head in obvious recognition of this obscure, decades-old story. Hey, we always knew that Jack was a romantic type at heart... now we have proof.

Best of all, I found this obscure gem, which also features a second Kirby 5-pager, in a box of \$2 love comics. Great Kirby stuff is still out there... you just have to know where to look!♥

\* In fact, it would have to be months later for Joe's comic story of their romance to be written, drawn, lettered, inked, colored, separated, published, and distributed! Jack Kirby was a fast draw-er, but not that fast!



# DAVE STEVENS INTERVIEW

Interviewed by Jon B. Cooke

(Dave Stevens was born in 1955 in Los Angeles, CA. Through his involvement in southern California comics fandom during the early 1970s, he formed a close relationship with Jack and Roz Kirby. Dave got an early break inking the Tarzan newspaper strip for Russ Manning, and went on to a successful career in animation, working with Doug Wildey. Dave eventually came back to comics, where in the 1980s he created the Rocketeer, which was made into a feature film by Disney, and became known for his "cheesecake" cover art, featuring some of the sexiest women ever to appear in comics. This interview was conducted by phone on May 10, 1998.)

**THE JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR:** What's the earliest Kirby work you remember reading?

**DAVE STEVENS:** The first Kirby work that I remember seeing was early *Tales of Suspense* covers, featuring the original Iron Man in the golden armor. The first Marvel that I bought was the two-part story, featuring the Sub-Mariner/Iron Man fight (*Tales to Astonish* #82-83), and it just knocked me on my butt! (laughter) It was action, drawn like I'd never seen before. I was immediately aware of this totally energetic approach to the dynamics of storytelling. That was the first time I was really aware of an artistic "style."

**TJKC:** What got you into comic books?

**DAVE:** I was your typical kid; I loved exotic subject matter: Dinosaurs, spaceships, monster movies, that kind of stuff. I was a huge cartoon nut; I grew up on the Fleischer brothers. (We're talking from age four to ten). Then *Jonny Quest* hit the airwaves. I remember that was the show; everybody watched! It definitely whet my appetite for similar-looking reading matter—and super-heroes were just beginning to make a comeback.

**TJKC:** When did you decide to make a living drawing?

**DAVE:** When I was about seven, I think. I started honing my skills, because I wanted "to draw Goofy for Mr. Disney." (laughter) My best tool for cartooning was this little boxed instructional set (it was originally my dad's), done by Jack Cole. It was produced, I guess, in the late 1930s, made up of several little "how to draw" booklets on cartooning, in a little blue box with an illustrated cover. It was the most delightful trainer for kids on how to cartoon that I've ever seen. It was in that classic "squash and stretch" style of the 1930s. I luggered that thing around with me for probably ten years.

**TJKC:** After you discovered Kirby, did you become a bona fide Marvel fan?

**DAVE:** Absolutely. I refused to read DC at all. (laughter) In those days, Stan Lee indoctrinated readers to be very faithful, and DC just wasn't giving me what I was getting at Marvel, which was all this really over-the-top, melodramatic, teenaged stuff, bubbling with angst. Kids nearing that age love drama and angst—and coupled with secret identities and radioactivity... I was hooked!

**TJKC:** Drawing is obviously a solitary act. When you went through adolescence, did you continue to draw after you discovered girls?

**DAVE:** Well, I was trying to do both. I tried to incorporate drawing into my whole "seduction" routine. (laughter) "I'll draw you!", that kind of thing. I carried a sketchbook around with me, did caricatures of girls, did psychedelic designs on their arms and legs; I was shameless.

**TJKC:** Were you actually trying to do sequential comics stories?

**DAVE:** Mostly I was just trying to learn how to draw. I didn't start attempting continuity until I was about fifteen or sixteen, and that was purely because by that time we'd moved to Portland, and I'd met up with guys like Chris Warner, Randy Emberlin, and others (some of

whom are now working at Dark Horse). We had a clique of maybe a dozen people; some of us wrote, some drew. We'd get together and have these all-night marathons of drawing in a room together, just trying to challenge each other. I was more of a single illustration guy. The sequential stuff kind of bogged me down. Although I loved to tell stories, I found I had a lot of problems when laying it out on a page. We moved back down to southern California in the Spring of '72. That was the first year I was able to get to the San Diego Con. That was a huge experience; it was also the first time I met Jack; total sensory overload.

**TJKC:** Did you contribute to fanzines at all? Were you doing any "cheesecake" drawings?

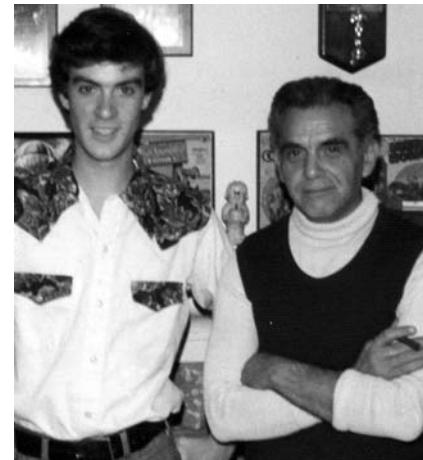
**DAVE:** I submitted to a lot of them, starting in '69, and it was pretty crude stuff. The first few female figures I attempted were at school, in art class, and they didn't look like much. The one or two times I'd drawn nudes for some of my greasy little friends, they would immediately trot it right up to the teacher! I got pulled out of class a couple times for that, so I just stopped. (laughter) I couldn't deal with the humiliation.

**TJKC:** Were you regularly reading comics all this time?

**DAVE:** Up until about age sixteen, which was around the time Steranko left Marvel. Other than Gil Kane and Joe Kubert, and one or two other people, there really wasn't a lot of incentive for me to keep buying comics at that point. After about 1971 I really just stopped.

**TJKC:** What about Jack's Fourth World stuff?

**DAVE:** That was something I hung in with. I loved the *Demon*; I bought



Dave at the Kirby home in the mid-1970s.

Jimmy Olsen because it was bringing back the Newsboy Legion, which I loved. I made sure I got every copy of Jack's new stuff.

TJKC: When you met him in San Diego in 1972, he was really at the apex of his career in many ways.

DAVE: Yeah, he'd only been out in California for two or three years, and it was a huge deal that he'd come down to the San Diego show. I met him with Scott Shaw!, who had just done this knock-off of an old Kirby monster cover. Scott had drawn this giant phallus on the monster, (*laughter*) who was basically terrorizing the world with this giant thing! He proudly showed it to Jack! (*laughter*) Scott was so pleased with it, and he wanted to get Jack's approval. I remember Jack's reaction was just priceless; he thought it was funny, but he definitely didn't want Roz to see it, (*laughter*) so it was: "Geez, don't show that to my wife! Hide it!" (*laughter*) Jack soon dubbed him "the dirtiest man in comics." You should get Scott to tell you the whole story, because he tells it really well [*see sidebar below*]. It was a defining moment in comics fandom: The Underground Meets Kirby! (*laughter*) Scott was part of the Five-String Mob in San Diego; we were all sort of a pesky bunch, nosing around for any kind of an "in" into the industry.

TJKC: Did you establish a relationship with Jack early on?

DAVE: Not immediately, because I was just a face among several others that year. The following year, 1973, was the first time I went up to the house with some of the other guys. I was just happy to be along; I initiated a couple of other visits after that, once I was sure it was okay that we come up. I had no idea what the protocol was, whether they would even be happy to see our scruffy faces. But after that first visit,

it was obvious that Roz was like everyone's den mother. She kind of treated us all as the neighborhood kids down the street. We became sort of like an extended group of nephews or something. They were very gracious and funny; Roz always liked to embarrass me about putting me together with one of her daughters. (*laughter*) She'd tease me about that for years.

TJKC: Did you go down into the studio?

DAVE: Always! It was a big, spacious rec room off of the pool. They were pretty high up on a hill, with a nice big outdoor pool that they made available to all of us, much to their chagrin, I'm sure. (*laughter*) Some of the guys used it, but I mostly just wanted to talk to him, and listen to stories.

TJKC: Do you remember specifically what he was working on?

DAVE: Fourth World stuff, but he would always stop work when we got there. There might be something on the board, but generally it was just show-and-tell, talking about the industry, and us wanting to know all the latest; what he was about to do in the next couple of issues. He was always more than happy to tell you about the workings of a Mother Box, (*laughter*) or what the Boom Tube was; that was generally the way it went. (*laughter*) I didn't ask too much of that kind of stuff; I wanted to know about the nuts and bolts—what kind of tools he used, etc. He was always really, really generous with me as a young scribbler. I finally got up the nerve in 1974 to drag up this gigantic, cardboard portfolio filled with loose pieces of art to show him. He opened it up, and the first few things he pulled out were product illustrations: Cars, appliances; samples for the commercial market that I'd done at city

### SIDEBAR BY SCOTT SHAW!

I look back in disbelief when I realize what a (purely unintentional) pain-in-the-butt I was to Jack, and how graciously he accepted my usually misjudged attention during the early years of our friendship. Since I was already writing and drawing stories for underground "comix" at the time, I saw nothing wrong in doing a countercultural (read: dirty) parody of one of Jack's covers for an old pre-hero issue of Strange Tales. It depicted a gigantic ape/bulldog-like alien facing an arena crowd, proclaiming "No Human Can Beat Me!" My version, appropriately entitled Deranged Tales, was faithfully similar, except for the equally gigantic tumescent phallus that adorned the proud-as-punch alien's crotch, and the added word "off" that now ended the creature's statement.

However sophomoric this was, it definitely was not created with any malice toward Jack or Marvel. Marvel represented the "establishment," so to my ill-formed judgment, the company presented a suitable target for parody, however grotesque my efforts might be. As if all this weren't bad enough, to make matters worse, San Diego fan publisher Mike Towry decided to print my masturbatory masterpiece as a – Good Lord! (chokel!) – poster! I'll never forget the look on Jack's face when I tried to present him with his very own copy. "B-but I can't hang this on my wall... I've got a wife and kids!" Jack protested, trying not to hurt my feelings while simultaneously trying not to encourage me any further. "Well, maybe you could hang it up inside a closet," I helpfully suggested.

A few years later, following one of my customary apologies for my past indiscretions, Jack off-handedly acknowledged my somewhat reformed behavior by observing, "Next thing I know, you'll be singin' in the boys' choir!"

Dave inked this drawing from a xerox of Jack's pencils, and used it as a portfolio piece.



# KIRBY'S ROMANCE WOMEN—TOUGH ENOUGH?

by Richard Howell

Jack Kirby is quite deservedly regarded as comics' "Action King"—master of visual dazzle, raw, kinetic energy, and the most effective illusionist of motion on the static, printed page.

How, then, to reconcile this two-fisted action impresario with the measured, sedate charms of the romance comics genre—commonly perceived by comics readers by its restrictions—no action, no violence, no stylized exaggeration?

The answer to this, going in, is that Kirby's approach to romance comics—a genre he co-created with Joe Simon in 1947—is in no way a degradation of the commitment and stylistic expertise that he brought to any other comics genre. His command of storytelling and panel composition in his romance comics work is—at its best—as good as it is in any single example of his work from *Captain America*, *Boys' Ranch*, *New Gods*—even *Fantastic Four*. Better still, Kirby's instinctive grasp of iconography—the ability that enabled him to create or co-create the ultimate patriotic hero, the most successful "monster" hero, the ultimate super-hero "family," and several versions of the ultimate fusion of super-heroes and pantheic gods—also allowed Kirby to envision the romantic heroine as a symbol of individual female empowerment, and render her as such.

Simply put, Jack Kirby approached translating emotional power to the comics page in the same way he performed similar magic with other types of power: With insight, sensitivity, graphic inventiveness, and raw, kinetic energy.

In 1947, Joe Simon and Jack Kirby introduced the world to romance stories told in comic form, with their ground-breaking *Young Romance* #1 (Sept./Oct. 1947). The first issue, cover-billed as "For the more Adult readers of comics," was a huge hit, and soon it was joined by two companion titles (*Young Love* and *Young Brides*). The comics publishing industry took note of these series' success, and soon released a raft of derivative romance titles, none of which duplicated the excellence of either the sales or artistic level of the Simon & Kirby material.

In story after story during the runs of the S&K romance output, the lead character's quest for happiness and fulfillment involved an agenda of self-awareness and responsibility in the face of social change, respect between equals, and personal independence as a necessary facet of romantic completeness.

To spearhead these narratives, Kirby developed a new, more focused version of his "super-heroine" archetype; retained were the strong features and jaw, the solid shoulders, the athleticism, and the casual grace showcased in previous examples of Kirby-esque femininity, like Betty Ross (in *Captain America*), and Sandra Sylvan (from *Stuntman*). Added to their already-admirable selection of personal recommendations was a higher quotient of intelligence, purposefulness, and clear-headed

determination. The women of the S&K romance comics would have to face different conflicts than the relatively straightforward threats of the Hollywood Hunchback, Black Michael, or Agent Axis.

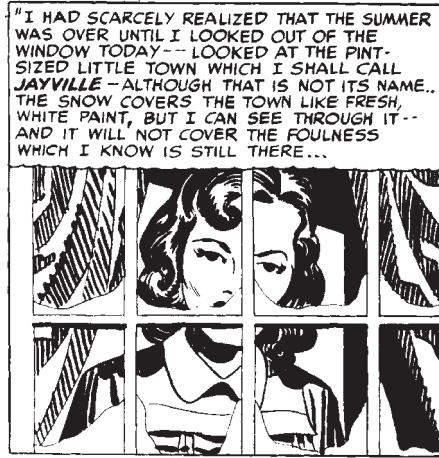
No, the Kirby romance heroine moved through a rough-hewn, stylized milieu of post-War American society, coping with a specific level of real-world drama—and doing it with strength and style.

Ruth Monroe, the heroine of "Fallen Idol" (*Young Love* #40) is a young wife who not only has to cope with the realization that her husband—a college basketball star—has been taking bribes to throw games, but has to impress upon him that the respect and hero-worship he enjoys from the neighborhood kids is nothing if he hasn't earned it honestly. (Ralph: "I'm a ray of hope to those boys! I'm the guy who came out of the slums to make the *headlines*... what I can be—they can be! Every kid on this stinking street!" Ruth: "Well, I'm not from this neighborhood! I only know what I was taught! *Right from wrong!*") Kirby's depiction of Ruth is as a slight woman, tiny next to her athlete husband—but through her moral uprightness, she grows more substantial and forceful as the story progresses.

Irma Williams, in "Different" (*Young Romance* #30), is a cute, button-nosed blonde who has to face down a different type of moral rot: Prejudice. When the Williams' original family name—Wilhelm—is revealed by Irma's visiting grandfather, the town's bigotry rears its very ugly head. Not only does Irma's upper-crust boyfriend pull away from her, but the town's avoidance of the "foreigners" threatens to cause her father's business to fail.

Julie Decker, the heroine of "Mama's Boy" (*YR* #10) is a study in strength and confidence. Kirby's delineation of her growing resignation in the fact of her medical student/fiance Orin's constant capitulation to his mother's whims and strictures is highly affecting, as is Julie's explosion of resentment ("I suggest you wait until mother finds a suitable milk-sop for you who'll knuckle under to Mama! *I'm not the type!*") Later, Orin's mettle is tested during a suspenseful roadside emergency operation—with his younger brother's life at stake—while Julie assists by holding the flashlight on the grisly doings. The famous S&K woodcut-like inking is thrillingly effective here.

Betty Marlowe, the lead character in "All Work and No Love"



"Different"



(here and below) "Mama's Boy"





# DON'T READ THIS STORY!

IF YOU HAVE ANY PRE-CONCEIVED NOTIONS ABOUT DIVORCE SITUATIONS--IF YOU PIGEON-HOLE AND CLASSIFY PEOPLE ACCORDING TO POPULAR STEREOTYPES, THEN YOU MAY BE IN FOR A RUDE SHOCK!

THIS CASE CONCERNED THAT CLASSIC PRINCIPAL IN EVERY MARITAL TRIANGLE BROUGHT TO JUDGEMENT!--SHE IS THE ONE MOST DEEPLY INVOLVED! SHE IS THE ONE WHO STANDS ALONE IN THE NAKED LIGHT OF THE ARENA TO FACE THE WRATH OF MORAL SOCIETY! YOU SEEN HER--BUT DO YOU KNOW--

# THE OTHER WOMAN!

ARNOLD! ARE YOU STILL ON THE PHONE? CAN'T THE FIRM FUNCTION FOR A SHORT TIME WITHOUT YOU?

FOR TIME WITH YOU?

WITH ALL THE EXPENSIVE HELP I HAVE ON MY STAFF, ON WOULD THINK SO!

THE ONE MAN I'M TRYING TO CONTACT CAN'T BE FOUND!



# JACK KIRBY & DON RICO DISCUSS WWII, THE MAFIA, WATERGATE, & COMIC ART

(Our thanks to Barry Alfonso for allowing us to reprint this 1975 interview from his fanzine Mysticogryfil)

**MYSTICOGRYFIL:** I'd like to ask you two what it was like working back in the early days of comics. I've gotten the impression that in the studios back then, it worked like an assembly line, where an artist would be assigned a pre-written script and would draw it and then pass it on to several inkers, and so forth.

**RICO:** It was exactly like a movie studio set-up. The work was divided; there were script writers, there were some artists who were better or faster at penciling. There were inkers who were able to pick up a style, leaving the original penciler free to do more penciling, because he could work faster. The inkers were slower. Therefore one penciler like Jack could keep two or three inkers busy at a time. So it worked like a movie studio, except for a few artists who did everything from scratch, the way Jack is doing now. In those days you had your independence. If you worked for a house like Timely, then naturally Jack couldn't spend his time inking—it would be a waste of time for him.

**M:** How many pages did you turn out a day then?

**KIRBY:** Well, listen—looking back on that I'm gonna get tired! There was a time when I was really energetic. There was a time when I once turned out six a day.

**M:** I've heard you talk about the "pressure cooker." What is it like to work under a tight deadline? Is it something that helps you to work better?

**KIRBY:** Of course. If you have to deliver at a certain time, you're going to deliver that thing. At one stage or another you say, "I don't give a damn how this comes out. I'm going to get it done." And for some strange reason, you eliminate all the scratching around. I think Don will verify that.

**RICO:** All the afterthoughts vanish.

**M:** Jack, do you remember the first time you worked with Stan Lee?

**KIRBY:** No, I don't remember.

**RICO:** Jack's early days were with Victor Fox. Jack and Joe (Simon) were in charge of all their own books.

**KIRBY:** (to Rico) Remember when Fox used to walk up and down the aisle looking at the artists and he'd chomp on his cigar and he'd say "I'm king of the comics!"?

**RICO:** Yeah... Fox found out I was also a painter. So he commissioned me to do a mural for his home and he kept me prisoner in his house.

**KIRBY:** Al Harvey was in charge of the keys.

**RICO:** The thing about Fox was that we were freelancing for him. I don't know what Jack and Joe did, 'cause they were in the office at the time, and I freelanced from the outside; but on Friday night, I would plant myself in the outer office and would not leave until I got my check. Fox would come out and say, "Are you still here?" I'd say, "Yep, I'm still here"—and he'd go back inside again.

**KIRBY:** Don was wise because that was very prevalent

in the industry. In other words, you had to make sure you got paid because these guys were only too willing—.

**RICO:** And remember the rates, Jack?

**KIRBY:** Oh yeah. 5 bucks a page.

**RICO:** \$7.50 was a high rate. One time Joe said to me, "You want someone to do your lettering? It'll cost ya 50¢ a page!"

Let's say a word, Jack, about the most underestimated group in the whole industry: The letterers.

**KIRBY:** I can't say enough about them. The comic letterers were matchless. Howard Ferguson was great. The layout, the kind of ads they did, they were just magnificent. You say, "Young people don't look at these things," but they do.

**M:** Why did you never put a finish to the *New Gods*/*Forever People* thing? Did you purposely leave it open-ended?

**KIRBY:** No... it just happened that way. It had to end at that point, there was nothing I could do about it. For the *New Gods* it was unfortunate, but I had no time to make a finale for it. When I do write the finale for the *New Gods*, it'll be something spectacular.

*MOBSTERS ABOVE ALL, WERE PEOPLE!!! NOT THE BEST, BY MANY STANDARDS!!! BUT IT'S ASTOUNDINGLY DIFFICULT TO CATEGORIZE, ANALYZE, OR OSTRACIZE*

## THE COLORFUL, BEAUTIFUL, PRAGMATIC, INSCRUTABLE, LADIES OF THE GANG!



*Unpublished page from In The Days Of The Mob #2.*



# CAPTAIN VICTORY & THE LIGHTNING LADY

The Original Screenplay © Jack Kirby and Steve Sherman

(The concept of Captain Victory began in the mid-1970s as this movie screenplay by Jack and Steve Sherman. This first draft story treatment was initially submitted on March 11, 1977, and while a number of things changed when Jack produced it in comic form, the character of the Lightning Lady is remarkably well-defined.)

Our thanks to Steve Sherman for sharing this rare gem with us.)

**T**he film opens with a weirdly-diffused lighting effect which leaps busily across the screen, accompanied by a soft, droning, musical hum, the strange embodiment of what is happening on the screen. The formless, shifting light begins to resolve itself in more meaningful terms to the viewer. The humming sound has grown louder. It is recognizable as a human chorus imitating the collective buzzing of an insect swarm. In effect, what we are witnessing, as the image is brought into sharper focus, is the human equivalent of a beehive in the heat of furious activity. Men and women, in sharply animated condition, jostle past each other in endless haste to accomplish some nameless task in an alien structure, which is not unlike the natural environment of a bee colony as visualized by the average audience.

This, in fact, is just what a larger overall shot of this scene communicates to the viewer, as the sound, having reached crescendo, blends with the devastating impact of the entire image: A sight, similar to the startling and intriguing sensation achieved by one who has sliced away the section of a hive to reveal the massive turmoil within. The people, in a far shot, ape the seething movement of an insect horde, in tightly packed numbers, diligently engaged with some universal purpose, undefinable and alien to the human mind.

We begin to rise above this scene, for a larger view of the structure, as it breaks through the surface of the Earth in an ugly lumpish design, like some monstrous mouth emerging from the soil, its giant, bony teeth poking through the cracked surface of the wide circular heap caused by the force of its thrust.

On the surface, the buzzing has subsided and become a tolling bell which echoes in the deserted streets of a fair-sized town. The buildings and stores look unoccupied. Traffic vehicles are not to be seen. A rooftop shot of the surrounding countryside accents the complete absence of life. It is a place sucked clean of all moving things—an empty husk, a past tense existing in the present.

We are now on a road, moving like a car, past billboards leading out of town. It is on the progression of these signs that the film's title and credits are brought into view. This is accompanied by appropriate music, which increases in pace as the speed of movement accelerates with each passing sign. The last billboard rushes out of view as the road and billboards become a moving blur, hurtling at the audience at breakneck speed.

The lighting starts to fade as we barrel through the growing darkness. We hear the roll of thunder, and the first flashes of lightning make an eerie web of the sky. A moment later, the sky becomes alive with the continuous traces of fiery brilliance, which now forms a permanent curtain of lightning across the black horizon. As this ele-

ment draws rapidly closer, it becomes more violent in nature, until we find ourselves swept into its blinding fury. When we are inside its chaotic core, our senses are assaulted by naked light and frightening, unbearable sound. This nightmarish experience ends at its most terrifying peak and, abruptly, we plunge through to face a startled policeman and a crowd of onlookers.

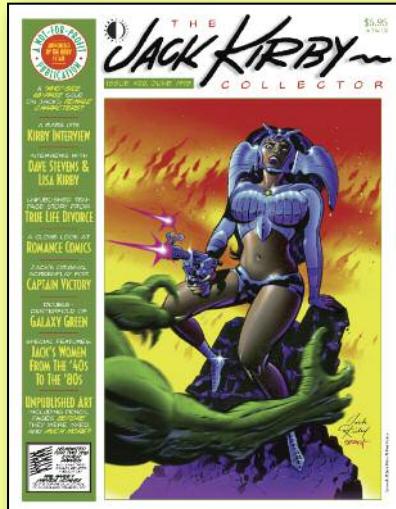
The viewer begins to understand what this movement through the barrier represents when we see the policeman confronted by a smiling young man attired in a costume—a costume common to the super-hero genre. Although it is apparently of some kind of fabric, it has a dull, metallic sheen and is molded extremely well to his body. This man is capable of guided levitation and it was his flight through the barrier the viewer experienced.

"How did you get in there?" asks the policeman. "How did you get out of there?"



Pencils from Captain Victory #3.

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