

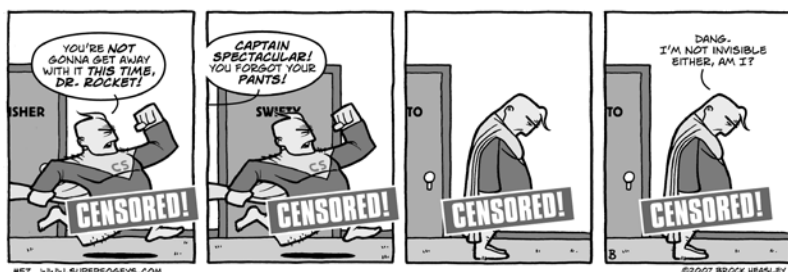
Undefeatable foes

The old, the bold, and the downright dirty

by KRIS MANTY

The great thing about webcomics is the huge variety of subjects and themes, and this month we look at the old, the bold, and the downright dirty.

Members of the super-team Society of Heroes once battled an assortment of forces of evil and were renowned for saving the world, but now they face the one foe they will, unfortunately, never defeat: old age.



SuperFogeys (www.th3rdworld.com)

In *SuperFogeys* (www.th3rdworld.com) by Brock Heasley, old age has put these retired super-heroes in Valhalla, a “Home for the Supertired” (in Florida, naturally).

At the core of *SuperFogeys* is Captain Spectacular. Once the greatest hero of all, he is now content with retirement and more interested in power naps than saving the world; he also has an aversion to pants. With him at Valhalla are Spy Gal, his former flame and now fiancée; his ex-wife Star Maiden, once the most powerful superheroine in the galaxy but who has now lost a great deal of mind power; former sidekick Jerry, who is secretly in love with Spy Gal; once super-speedy Swifty, whose now-failing legs force him to use a walker; ruthless bruiser Tangerine; and villainous Dr. Rocket, Captain Spectacular’s old arch-nemesis and one-time friend. Another popular character is Valhalla’s anesthesiologist, the cute little Space Pig, whose powerful urine can knock out a person for hours.

SuperFogeys could have been a simple satire about aging super-heroes and mined for easy jokes, and it did start out being more of a gag-a-

day type comic. However, as the feature progressed, Heasley grew as a storyteller and turned it into something much more. There’s still plenty of funny found in the situation and characters themselves, such as Star Maiden’s hilarious random babblings and Space Pig relieving himself on unsuspecting victims. Nevertheless, since these characters have a long history together, there are different layers of interaction to discover, and the plotline is well-rounded with action, drama, mystery, and big reveals. There’s also a measure of poignancy with super-heroes now past their prime, best exemplified by Swifty’s bitterness about being trapped in a broken body.

Loyal readers are so passionate about this comic that Heasley created a spinoff, *SuperFogeys Origins*, which provides characters’ backstories. He writes this one, as well, but the art is by T.L. Collins.

It’s obvious Heasley has deep affection for these characters and it’s easy to become fond of them yourself. The *SuperFogeys’* universe is an endearing one.

Th3rd World Studios is host and publishes print collections of the strip, now entering its fourth year. It’s updated Tuesday and Thursday.

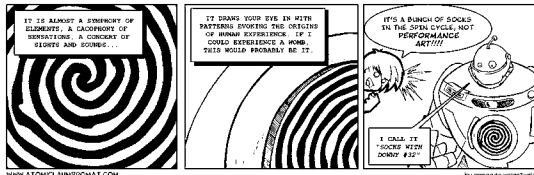
Grumps (www.grumps.ca)

If you like geriatric-related humor, there’s also Chris Jones’ now-concluded **Grumps** (archives at www.grumps.ca), a wildly different view of life at a retirement community. This takes place at Shoddy Pines, where the seniors are bawdy to the max, the staff is corrupt, nurses are scary, and the executive director is sex-starved. Depravity runs rampant, and there’s naked wrinkly flesh, so those with delicate sensibilities may want to shy away. There are things that, once seen, can never be unseen.

Atomic Laundromat (www.atomiclaundromat.com)

Super-heroes battling monsters and mutants are bound to get such nasty stains as alien blood and ectoplasm on their costumes: stains that they

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can't Shout out. Besides, could they be bothered to do as menial a task as laundry?

Enter the specialized services of David and Bob in **Atomic Laundromat** (www.atomiclaundromat.com) by Armando Valenzuela. *Atomic Laundromat* is described as being like *The Hall of Justice* from the animated *Super Friends* series, except with smelly underwear.

The Harry Potter-resembling David is the owner and manager of the laundromat. Bob is a 9-foot robot who transforms into a washing machine. He likes kittens and late-night snacks of detergent. Another major character is Angela, a hotshot defense lawyer whom super-beings hire to protect them from property-damage lawsuits.

The premise of a laundromat catering to super-powered people naturally provides the opportunity for a host of heroes and villains to drop by. One of the appealing aspects of the series is the opportunity to meet such characters as Captain Amish, Discozilla, and The Mighty Cowman (who has an udder). There's opportunity for all kinds of mishaps, as well, such as putting too much starch in a hero's cape and experiencing accidental shrinkage.

The comic also expands beyond the walls of the laundromat to such locales as The Lair of Evil Diner, where a former evil psychic overlord telekinetically prepares the food. Just don't ask him for a veggie burger.

Valenzuela takes full advantage of his creative premise and has created a fun world with likable characters and cheeky humor. I just hope we eventually find out whether Batman wears boxers or briefs. (I would like to know, at least.)

The comic started in July and updates Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

Rival Angels (www.rivalangels.com)

She wears spandex, has a name that sounds like a super-hero's, and vanquishes foes, but Sabrina "Ultragirl" Mancini doesn't care about saving the world so much as she does pile-driving her way up the professional wrestling ranks.

In **Rival Angels** (www.rivalangels.com), created by the Wisconsin-based Alan Evans, Sabrina is a wrestler who is one day bumped up from the developmental league to the women's pro-division Rival Angels after management realizes her money-making potential. She joins three

fellow rookie teammate-roommates: Sun "Lil Dragon" Wong, Krystin "Definition of Technician" Moline, and bombshell Brooke Lennox.

The strong-willed, brassy Sabrina not only has to prove her athletic prowess and maneuver her way around members of the premier heel stable, the Hell's Belles, but also Brooke, who takes an immediate disliking to her and schemes to sabotage her career.

Scenes of life outside the ring can sometimes be a little awkward and some of the dialogue is stilted (given the subject, it still works), but inside the ring is where Evans is in his element. He's knowledgeable about wrestling, the commentary is spot-on, and the matches are engaging and full of such moves as Sabina's ultrasplash split-legged moonsault and vertebreaker. Matches aren't choreographed, winners aren't predetermined, and getting slammed in the head with a chair is really going to hurt. Wrestling here is *real* (not to imply real-life wrestling is fake or anything).

Evans' art is also energetic and done in a way that indicates high-flying movement. As a whole, his art continues to improve, as the comic develops.

Part sports action, part melodrama, there are entertaining matches, catfights, backstabbing, double crosses, boozy escapades, cleavage ahoj, and secrets that threaten to tear romance and friendships apart — all wrapped up in a giant ball of cheesy goodness.

Rival Angels, around since December 2007, updates Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. ☐



Rival Angels.com by Althone Story by Lora Innes © Alan Evans

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