

Ascot Smith  
Published on: Examiner.com  
Date: Jul 8, 2009

**Defying Sense and Defying Death:**  
*Tales Designed to Thrizzle vol. 1, Captain America: Reborn # 1*

Michael Kupperman has a scholarly understanding of nonsense. His work exists in a realm of the utmost silliness aimed at the most intelligent humor aficionado. This is only further evident when Kupperman's comics were listed at #8 on Conan O'Brien's Must List in a recent issue of Entertainment Weekly. (Martha Stewart's cupcakes were number one.)

*Tales Designed to Thrizzle vol. 1*, Kupperman's recent collection, is brimming with such a dense compilation of dada-inspired plots, fake ads and comic book covers that it takes a repeated read-through to absorb the book's potent aura of absurdity. This concoction of super-smart dumbness makes for describing the book's encyclopedic array of wacky vignettes and one-liners seem rather pointless. Because much of the fun is perusing the collection and finding the madcap adventures of Pablo Picasso or a fake advertisement soliciting a robot for men tired with "unnecessary foreplay". Reading *Thrizzle* is an expeditious experience, and like all treks you will feel exhausted and somehow improved by this entire gut-busting experience.

As an illustrator who has regularly graced the pages of *The New Yorker* and *McSweeney's*, Kupperman's images have the studious look of a commercial artist who has labored to replicate the rushed and sloppy look of cheaply made pulp magazines from the 40's and 50's. The success of his incomparable style will only be clearer when his adapted work is soon to air on Cartoon Network. *Thrizzle* may have missed Adult Swim's non-sequitur animation revolution in 2001, but his work will fit nicely among the nonsense driven humor of Aqua Team Hunger Force and Sea Lab 2020.

*Tales Designed to Thrizzle* is beyond recommendation, especially if you are the aforementioned comedy know-it-all, but if your tastes are too mild Kupperman's recent atlas of the absurd may simply blind your senses.

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The corpse of Steve Rogers has been floating in the icy seas of the Arctic North. This appropriate burial site for Captain America (he was assumed dead after WWII, but was found floating in a chunk of iceberg years later), acts as a refrigerator unit to freeze and then later unthaw, plucking the blond-haired blue-eyed super-patriot into an unknown era. Captain America has always been a character ripped from time, leaving him a man out of touch yet still devoted to the country whose ideals he fought to defend. But a man who is a moral and ethical paragon can make for a dubious premise considering his origin as an image of propaganda. However, for the past five years Ed Brubaker has brought a unique realism to *Captain America*. This new Cap struggles still with the remaining ghosts of WWII, but there is a sense that his actions affect a political and global struggle, filled with corporate espionage and emerging consequences from the cold war.

Rogers's replacement, Bucky Barnes, then child sidekick turned USSR assassin, embodies a new symbol of America- one redemptive of its past cloaked in government secrets. (Its worth noting, Barnes carries a gun along with his unbreakable star-spangled shield.) This contemporary plight to uphold a country's idealism without succumbing to moral darkness makes Brubaker's *Captain America* more than a simple adventure story, but an essential tale for the post 9/11 era.

*Captain America: Reborn # 1* recaps how Steve Rogers died (shot by his brain-washed girlfriend, Sharon Carter) then follows the new Buckey Barnes as the new Captain America, Carter, and a group of local superheroes as they brainstorm on how to resurrect the deceased Rogers. Aiming to make a more friendly issue for new readers, Brubaker leaves the weighty thematic issues behind, as the heroes shoot off into the night without question to save their friend frozen in time. The book goes even further to be more accessible, replacing Steve Epting - the series' usual artist whose visuals gives the book a dark and moody edge - with Bryan Hitch the comic book equivalent to Michael Bay.

Released just in time for the Forth of July, *Captain America: Reborn # 1* fits comfortably among the weekend's simple celebrations filled with barbeques and fireworks. It's unclear if Hitch and Brubaker aim to deliver a series more compelling as the events of summer pass by.