

MARK MILLAR · JOHN ROMITA JR.

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THE BEST JUST GOT BETTER.





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PREVIOUSLY:

Hit-Girl and Kick-Ass have a deal: She trains him as her sidekick, while he teaches her to be...normal.

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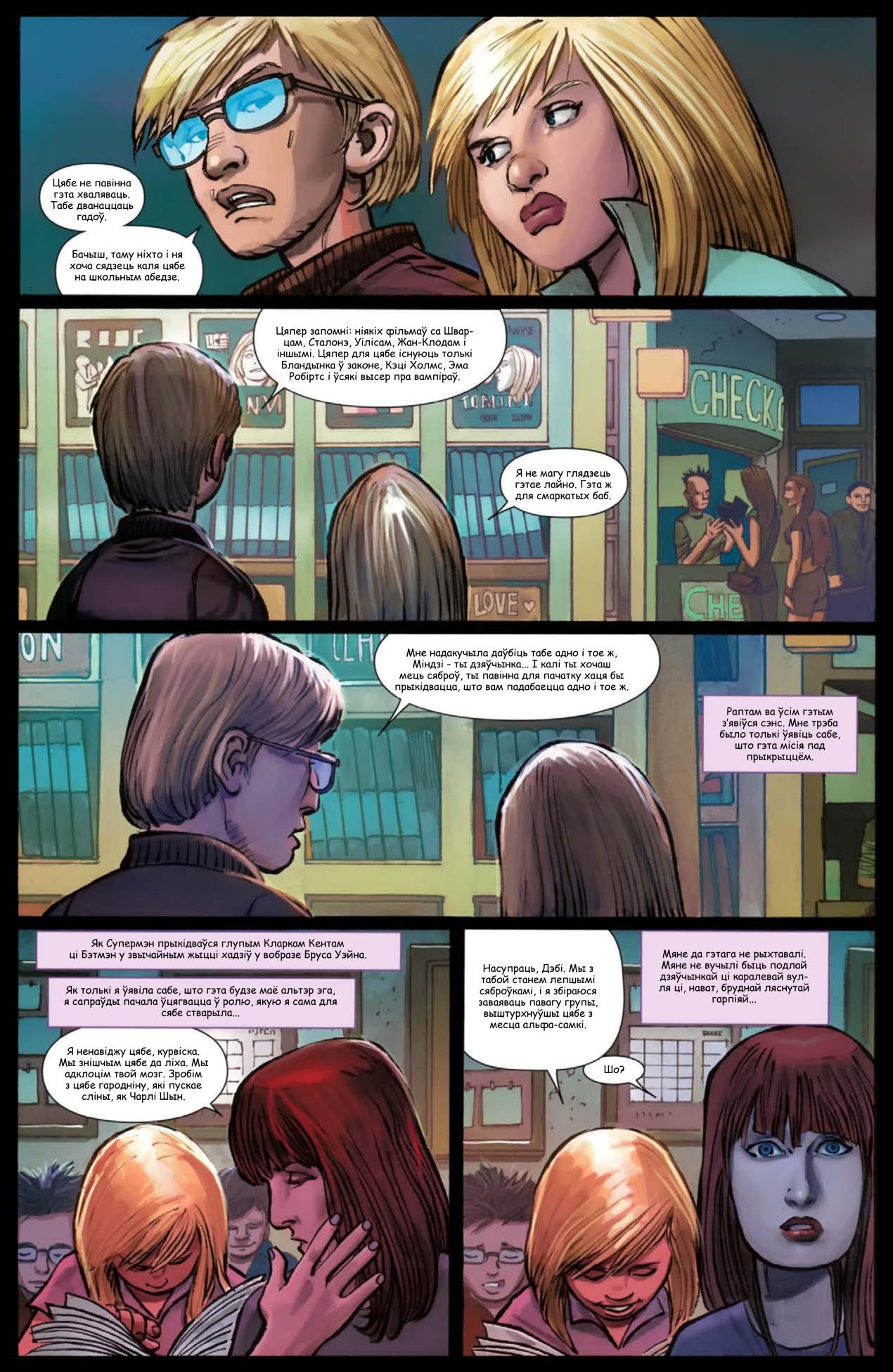








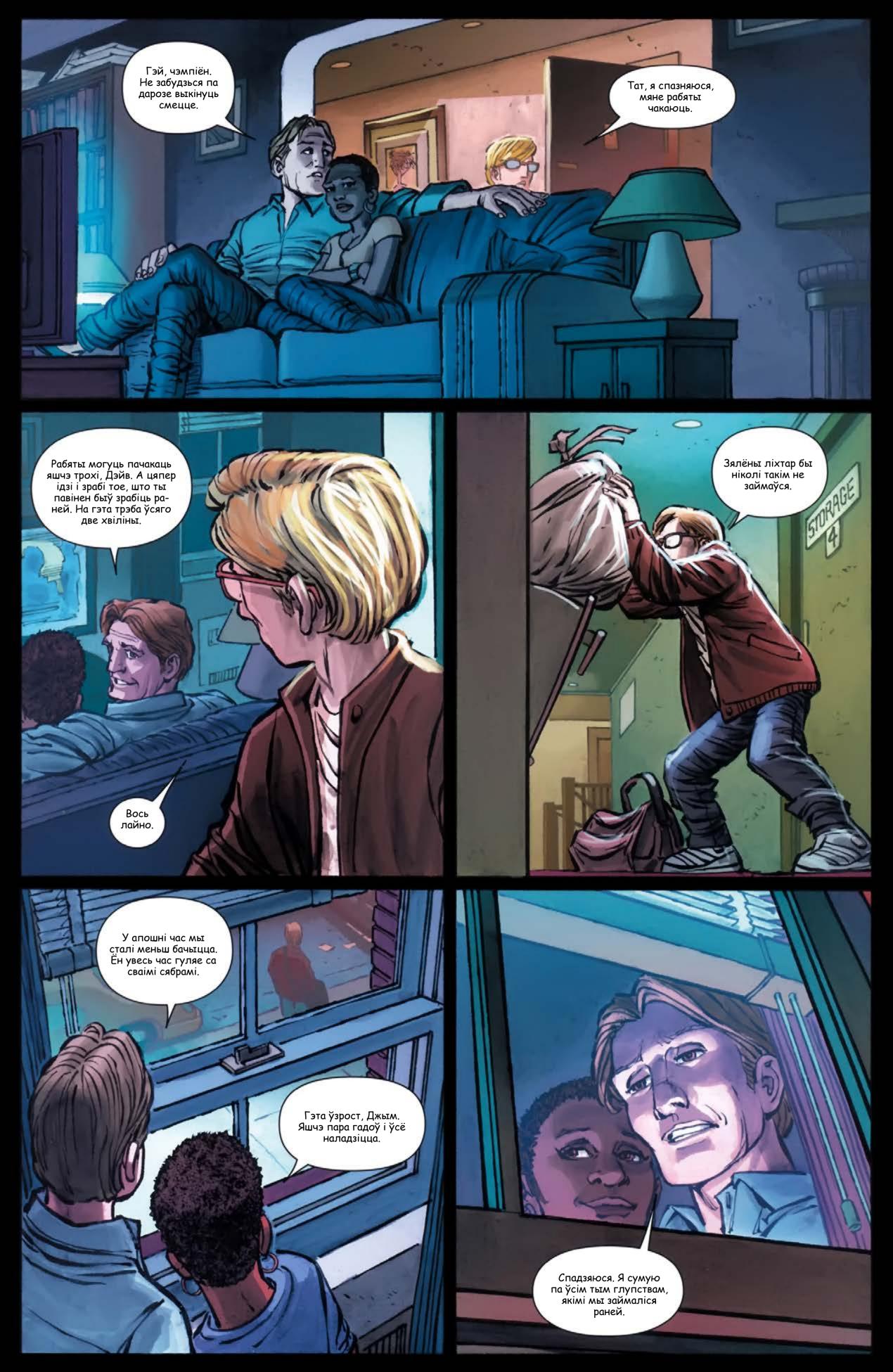












































THE TRAVEL DIARY





Dear Readers,

As promised, my travel diary from "The Milla in Manila" signing in May 2012.

Wednesday, May 23

Just back home in Glasgow from Kapow! Comic-Con in London. What a brilliant weekend. Weird thing about going with a baby is that you wake up without a hangover. Sure, you wake up six hours earlier than you PLANNED to wake up, but still... This is the first convention I've been to since I was seventeen years old where I didn't arise stinking of booze and looking like a bomb had gone off in my head. It feels nice.

Off to London and spending the night in an unsexy airport hotel so I can catch an early flight to Hong Kong in the morning. How come? It's my route to the Philippines. What am I doing in the Philippines? Why, pimping my new book, of course. I had an online competition where I promised to do a signing at whichever comic store ordered the most copies of SUPERCROOKS #1, completely on my own dime. This was a calculated risk as I was sure London, LA or New York would order the most copies and I was going to be in each of those places at least once over the coming months anyway. But Land o' Goshen! National Book Store in Manila ordered more copies than anyone ever dreamed and so I'm heading for Southeast Asia. Can't wait!

My SUPERCROOKS cohorts Leinil Yu and Gerry Alanguilan hail from this part of town and Colorist Supreme Sunny Gho is flying in from Jakarta too. All we need is SUPERCROOKS director Nacho Vigalondo and Asia could have the full set of SUPERCROOKS creators. Sadly, Nacho is unable to leave Spain until they have working airplanes again. Thanks, Angela Merkel!!

Thursday, May 24

Took longer to get here than I expected. Crappy Radisson hotel at the airport had overbooked, so when I arrived at 11 p.m. they had to arrange a taxi for me and some old Italian guy in the same situation. They shipped us to a sister hotel almost an hour away, but luckily the Italian turned out to be great company. So we propped up the bar together when we finally arrived at some place near Teddington. He heads up a pharmaceutical company in the States and gave me his business card, saying I should bring the family to his Cedar Rapids home and crash for as long as we liked. How nice is THAT? Bed at 2 a.m. and check-in at 7a.m. Groan.

Flight was long, but great. Twelve hours to a change at Hong Kong, which for some sounds a chore, but I see that as two movies, a documentary and a big chunk of JUPITER'S CHILDREN #2, my big upcoming project with Frank Quitely for Image Comics. The documentary was a really lovely biography of Stan Lee, mostly shot in his California home, and absolutely brilliant. The movies even better: Game Change which I hadn't seen, and Young Adult, which I also somehow missed. I'm slightly obsessed with Julianne Moore and seem to be more into her the older she gets. She's the greatest living American actress, but Ed Harris literally BECOMES John McCain in this picture. It's the most amazing performance and a great script. Weird to see Jay Roach as director as it's not what you'd expect at all. This is everything The Iron Lady wanted to be and so deftly handled. But nothing can touch Young Adult. From a beautiful script by Diablo Cody to a career-best from Charlize Theron, this is a perfect movie. After only three days' work on The Road in four years, Theron blazes back into cinema with three great-looking movies in the last six months. Loved seeing Patrick Wilson in here too, an actor whom director Joe Carnahan and I rave about to anyone who will listen. If you missed Young Adult – and you probably did – get the DVD ASAP. It's up there with Chronicle, The Grey, and Mission: Impossible 4 as one of the four 5-star movies I've seen in the last two years.

Quick change at Hong Kong and I land in Manila to find a very official-looking woman waiting for me and ushering me through security. The security guys all nod and give a little smile. What the hell is going on? I'm taken to a special VIP area in the airport where two lovely PR girls from National Book Store are waiting with a limo to take me to the hotel. This is not what I was expecting. Usually, when I do a signing I show up, bleary-eyed, do a couple of hours in the store, grab a few drinks with some local pals and shoot back somewhere in a cab. But two armed guards take us to our car in the airport and the girls pass me a PR itinerary for the next few days. As we drive through the sunny streets and they run through the TV channels we're talking to tonight, I glance out the window and see Millarworld banners hanging from the street lights all over the center of town. This is clearly not going to be an ordinary signing.



Photo courtesy of National Book Store



Photo courtesy of National Book Store

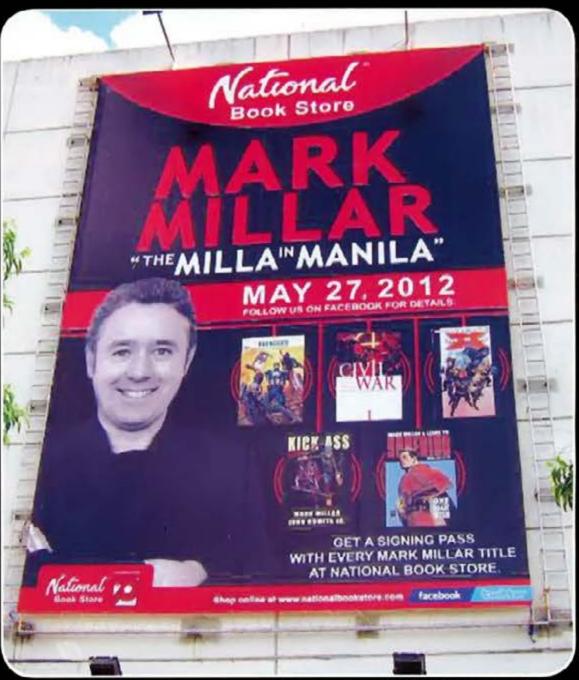


Photo courtesy of National Book Store

As my brother said when I sent him these pics, Manila had been turned into a terrifying, nearby parallel Earth where I had won World War 2.

Friday, May 25

Did a bunch of interviews last night and went to bed around 11 p.m. Had been awake over thirty hours and so expected to crash, but my body was still stubbornly on British time and so I lay awake until 6 a.m., bright as a button and watching Filipino soaps. I couldn't quite tell what was going on in my favorite, but it seemed like some girl wanted to be a hip-hop artist and her conservative parents were refusing to support her. As I emptied the minibar, it rapidly became the best show I had ever seen.

Two hours sleep and I was into another series of interviews, a combination of TV stuff and online and print mags like GQ and Esquire Asia. Everybody was absolutely lovely and I finally got to meet the legendary Flipgeeks, whom I instantly became best friends with. My favorite guy from the week had to be Jiggy Cruz, mainly because I think it's the best name I've ever heard in my life, and I promised I'd use it in some upcoming Millarworld book. Really began to flag as the day went on, but out for a cracking meal with National Book Store Supremo Miguel Ramos and a gaggle of brilliant Filipino artists. Special guest at the dinner was my old pal Leinil F(uck) Yu and it was brilliant to see him. We talk every day, but only really see each other maybe once a year. Great to catch up with him and his wife. Dinner was a blast as you can see from the photo at the bottom of the page.



Photo courtesy of Carlo Pagulayan

The guy in the picture above is Jason Paz and he's Bryan Hitch's new inker on various upcoming projects. Leinil and I may or may not have forced him to hold up this message we wrote for Hitchy.

Saturday, May 26

Jet lag getting way worse. Didn't get to sleep until 6 a.m. again and spent most of the night wide awake and on Twitter to pass the hours. Guys picked me up at 9 a.m. for another few hours of

interviews and then off to Komikon, the rather fantastic Manila comic convention where I finally got to meet the legendary Gerry Alanguilan. Gerry, of course, writes and draws the Eisner awardwinning ELMER, but you will also know him as Leinil's greatest inker, notably on SUPERIOR and our new SUPERCROOKS series. I'm a massive fan of Filipino art and have been since I was a kid, when DC brought a wave of these guys: Alex Niño, Alfredo Alcala, Tony DeZuniga, Rudy Nebres and, my favorite, Nestor Redondo. There's been a great lineage of amazing artists from these islands running through Whilce Portacio to guys like Leinil, Gerry, and Francis Manapul today and I was absolutely in my element when I got a look around Komikon. They wheeled me in for ten minutes to promote tomorrow's big SUPERCROOKS signing and I phonetically wrote out a short speech in Filipino, trying to pass myself off as a local faking up the whole Caucasian thing to get more work in American comics. I'm not sure they believed me, but you can see the video here:

http://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=3742664639699

More interviews after, including one with the brilliant Jessica Zafra, who writes the blog JessicaRulestheUniverse.com. This was scheduled for twenty minutes and ended up running over two hours once the four of us got the wine flowing. Great night. Now: Bed. Big signing tomorrow. Need my sleep.

Sunday, May 27

My God. I slept eighty minutes last night. Didn't nod off until after seven and up early for some interviews before a special signing at the hotel at 10 a.m. The main signing is this afternoon, but I'm wrecked. Literally about eight hours of sleep in the past four days. Need to come back and nap before signing.

Later:

Nap worked. Got forty-five minutes and that was enough to power me up for the day. And what a day! Suddenly, it all made sense why we'd been doing all those interviews for three days and the special appearance at Komikon yesterday. The signing is absolutely crazy, tickets capped at 1,000 people but more on the three upper levels of the shopping center and watching the pre-signing talk down below. I've never seen anything like this. I feel like a visiting dictator, with armed guards dotted around the center and a giant forty-foot sign behind me. We seem to have commandeered the entire mall. Leinil, Gerry, Sunny, and I chat onstage before we begin this marathon and I'm delighted to see that the entire hall speaks perfect English. It could not have gone better and the signing itself was the biggest and most fun signing I've ever done. What absolutely lovely people! Big thanks to everyone who brought me gifts or artwork. I've brought them all home and am eating them all now, including the drawings! A sampling of the pics on the next page should give you some idea of the scale this thing was taking place on. Leinil and I were absolutely floored by the enthusiasm for SUPERCROOKS and Matthew Vaughn resolutely refused to believe it until he saw the pictures. He called immediately, asking if I had spiked the local water with the mind-altering drug Rohypnol.



Left to right (top row): Ruben Nacion, Heubert Khan Michael, Leinil Yu, Mark Millar, Max-C Cubacub, Harvey Tolibao, Miguel Ramos, Jay Tablante, Jiggy Cruz, Jonty Cruz.

Bottom row: Jason Paz, Carlo Pagulayan, Ian Sta. Maria



Photo courtesy of Jessica Zafra



Photo courtesy of National Book Store



Photo courtesy of National Book Store

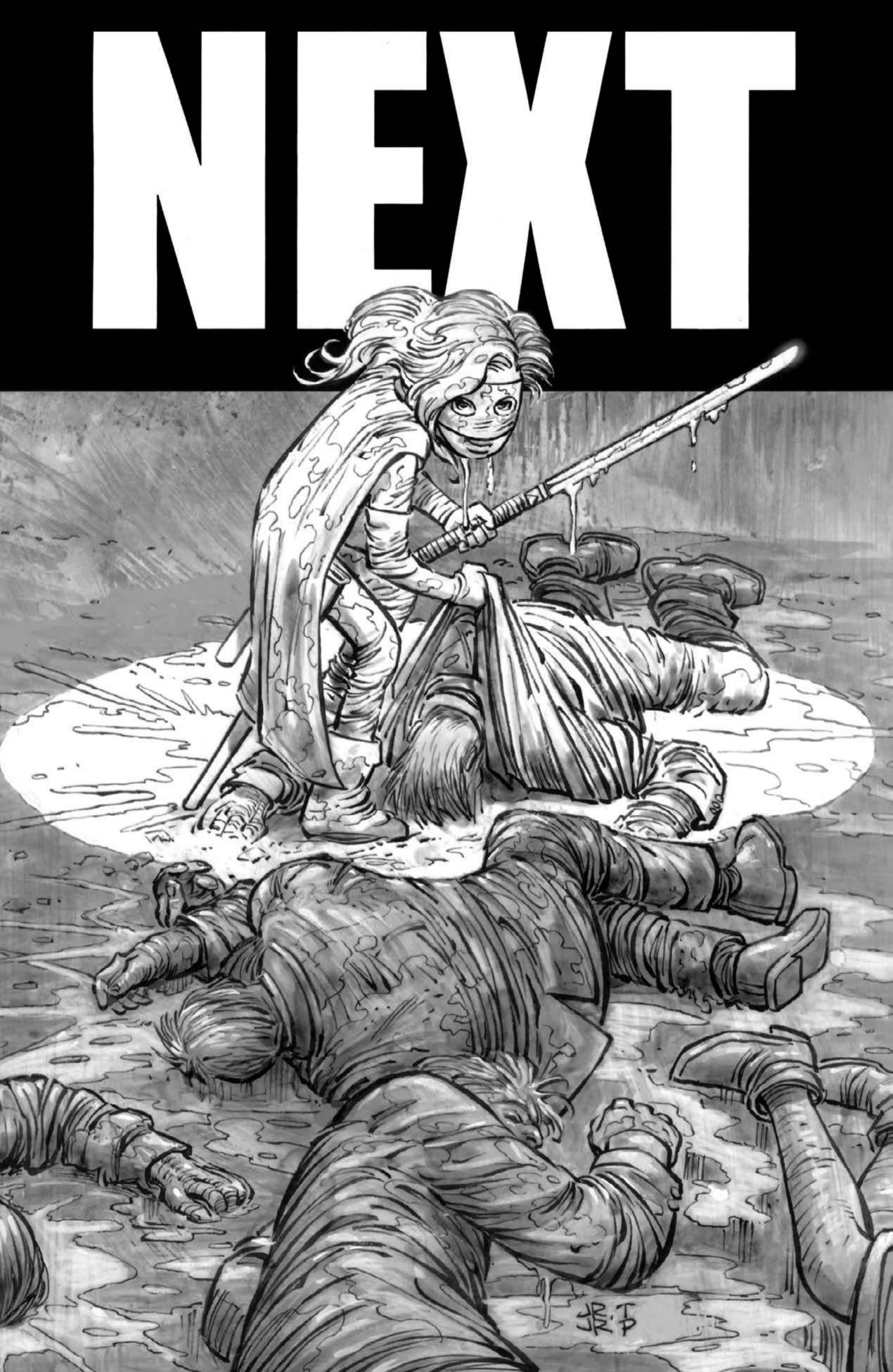


Photo courtesy of National Book Store



Photo courtesy of National Book Store

We signed until the last person and disappeared at 9 p.m. My car was picking me up at 3:30 a.m. so sleep was unlikely, but my brain was so frazzled by this point it didn't matter. Went for a goodbye dinner with Miguel, Leinil, and the guys, but horrified to find my credit card had been stopped as I was checking out. Why? My stupid bank does this every time I leave the country, even when I warn them beforehand, as a security measure. The minute I withdraw cash anywhere outside Glasgow they lock the place down and can the cards, and have left me stranded on more than one occasion. I literally didn't have a penny, but luckily the lads chipped in and took care of everything. My entire bill...



"She'll never be the victim – and she's got a mouth like a sailor ta boot!"

-Harry Knowles, aintitcool.com



She can take down a SWAT team, build a bomb with drain cleaner, and has a body count higher than her GPA...but Hit-Girl's greatest enemy yet may be the Queen Bee at middle school. Lucky there's a new mafia boss to distract her, and her new protégé Kick-Ass to train!

The breakout star of *Kick-Ass* takes center stage in this limited series bridging the gap between *Kick-Ass* and *Kick-Ass 2*.

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