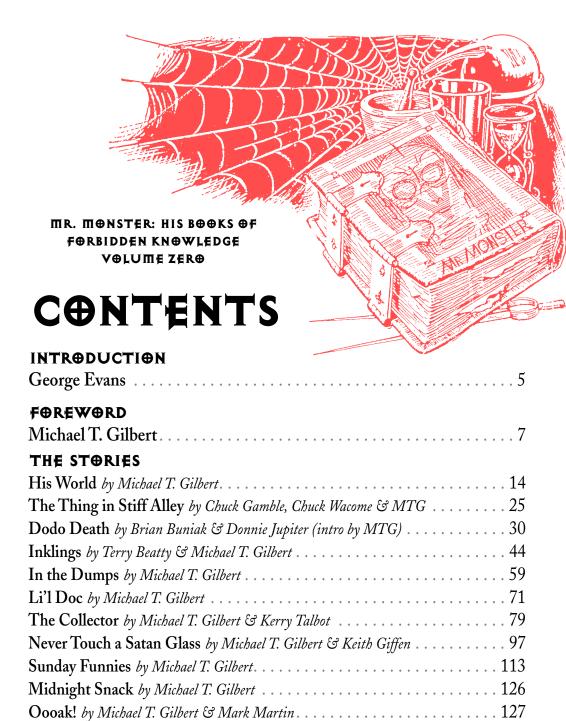




HIS BOOKS OF FORBIDDEN KNOWLEDGE
VOLUME ZERO



Paul Chadwick & Denis Kitchen

SPECIAL FEATURES

THE STORIES!

Let's start with a quick rundown of the four Mr. Monster tales published in *Dark Horse Presents*—beginning with...

"His World" (Dark Horse Presents #14, January 1988). This was my first Dark Horse story, and a good warm-up for "Origins." Though lighter than either "Cafe" or "Origins," "His World" was still done with a straighter face than most of my previous stories—and served as re-introduction of Mr. Monster to his new Dark Horse readers.

his clean, retro-1950s cartooning was perfect for the story.

"Inklings!" was right up my alley, featuring a thinly
disguised take-off of legendary EC artist Graham Ingels—the
godfather of comic book horror! Ingels' gruesome art for *Tales*

godfather of comic book horror! Ingels' gruesome art for *Tales* of the Crypt and similar titles set the standard for the genre.

A terrible binge-drinker during his EC days, Graham

I drew detailed layouts for the story, expanding it in the

process. As always, the art Terry delivered was a delight—and

A terrible binge-drinker during his EC days, Graham Ingels eventually beat his problem—and promptly quit comics! He vanished into the wilds of Florida, painting and teaching until his death in 1991. Like Terry's "Grisly"

Graham Griswald, "Ghastly" Graham seemed haunted by his past life. To the end, Ingels refused to even discuss his comics career. Strange, but true!

"The Thing In Stiff Alley" (Dark

Horse Presents #20, August 1988). I began working with other artists and writers during my Eclipse run. It was fun, and helped during tight deadlines. At Dark Horse, the artistic "give-&-take" of my DHP collaborations became a welcome change from my solo "Origins" work. "Stiff Alley," was one of these.

This funny four-pager began as a "blind" fan submission from cartoonist and Mr. Monster fan Chuck Gamble. I loved Chuck's story and passed it on to Charles Wacome, another long-time Mr. Monster fan, for penciling. Then I inked the strange beast! The results? A story only a true rat-lover could love!

"Inklings!" (Dark Horse Presents #28, March 1989). This began as another fan submission. But this "fan" was a seasoned pro—and one of the nicest gentlemen in the business! The gent in question was Terry Beatty, co-creator of the tough-asnails private eye, Ms. Tree.

The strip, written by novelist Max Collins and drawn by Terry, has long been a favorite of mine. Naturally, I was surprised and delighted when Terry's frightfully funny "Inklings" script landed in my P.O. box. Needless to say, I loved it!

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"Dodo Death!" (Dark Horse Presents #33, September 1989). This tale comes to us courtesy of cartoonists Brian Buniak and Donnie Jupiter. Brian's known in the comics field for his beautiful art on Marty Greim's Thunder-Bunny in the mid-'80s, and his work for

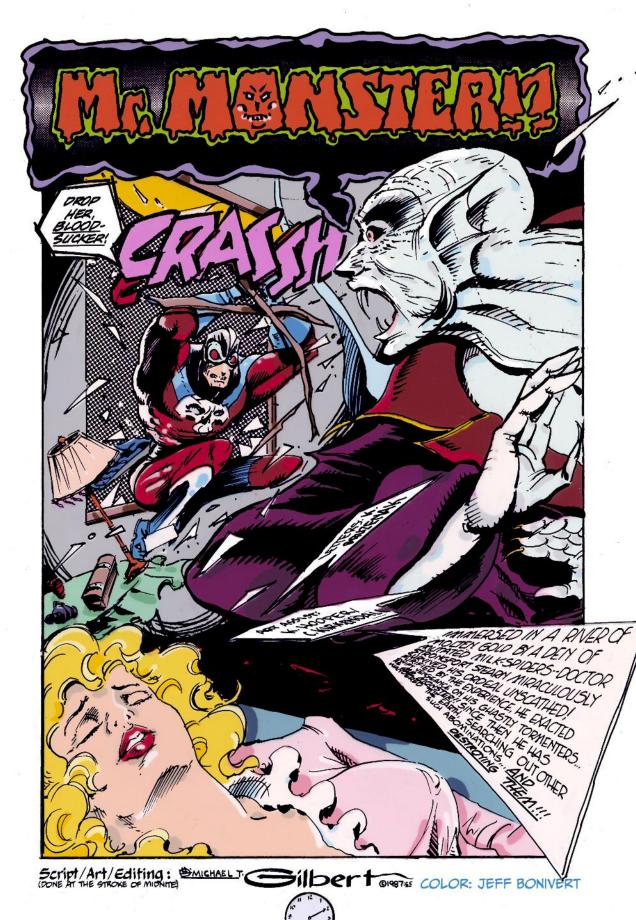
Cracked and Mad magazine.
I first became friends with
Brian in 1974, when he
submitted a wonderful
"Spirit" parody to my
underground comic,
New Paltz Comix.

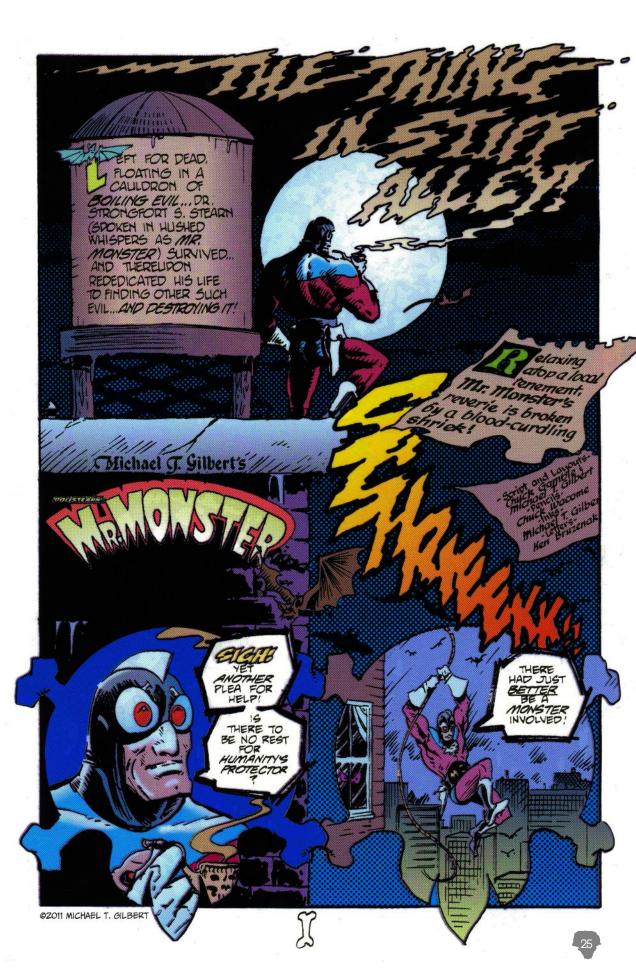
Brian sent me
his "Dodos!" script
during my Eclipse run,
but it was actually drawn a
couple of years later—primarily as a

showcase for the Frazetta-inspired art of his friend, Donnie Jupiter. Their beautifully-illustrated story was the last *Dark Horse Presents* Mr. Monster tale. My cover and three-page "framing sequence" completed the package.

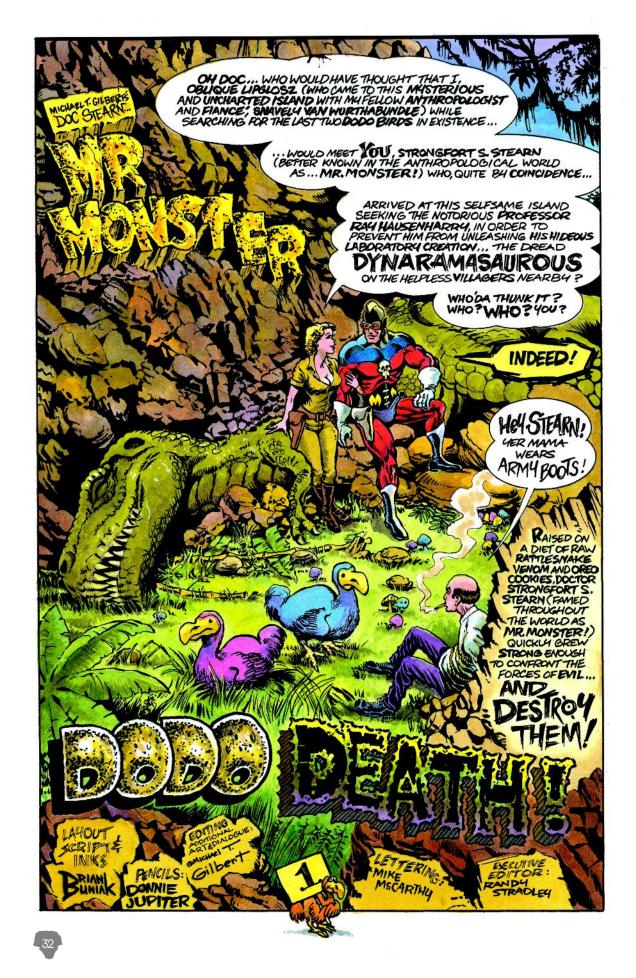
Michael T. Gilbert and Paul Chadwick jam on this cover art to Amazing Heroes #133 (Jan. 15, 1988), the 1988 Preview Special, featuring their respective characters. Concrete ©2001 Paul Chadwick. Amazing Heroes ©2001 Fantagraphics, Inc.































MORE STORIES!

And that takes care of *Dark Horse Presents*. But don't worry, knowledge-fiends—we've got lots more terror-tales coming! Keep your eyes peeled for...

"Eel's Well That Ends Well!" (*Crack-A-Boom!* #2, 1997). This was my second story featuring a six-year-old Mr. Monster. Young Strongfort Stearn had already appeared in "Origins" in a more serious context. Here, I tried for whimsy.

Inspired by the old *Little Archie* comic books, I tried to picture Mr. Monster as a silly 1950s kid comic. Tundra commissioned it in 1992, and Caliber Press published it five years later.

"Oooak!" (previously unpublished). "Oooak!" is my loving tribute to the great old Stan Lee/Jack Kirby monster comics that grew like weeds in the late '50s and early '60s—shortly before the duo created the Fantastic Four, Thor and the Hulk. It's also a warm "tip-of-the-hat" to Harvey Kurtzman's hilarious *Mad* comic books.

I wrote and laid out the story in 1992, for the humor/horror anthology, *Crack-A-Boom!* The absurdly talented Mark Martin drew it back then, and recently added gray-tones for this printing. Those of you who enjoy weird humor should check out Mark's nutty website at:

http://www.markmartin.net/



"The Collector" (Crack-A-Boom! #1, 1997). Looking for a story with a neat snap ending? Don't miss this one! "The Collector" comes to us courtesy of cartoonist Kerry Talbot, with script and layouts by yours truly. Kerry's a professional newspaper illustrator for the Richmond Times-Dispatch in Virginia and a long-time Mr. Monster fan.

A few years back, Kerry sent me copies of some beautiful Mr. Monster pin-ups he'd painted—and I returned the favor by creating a story for him. "The Collector," was Kerry's first comic book story—and a great one!

"In The Dumps" (A-1 True-life Bikini Special, 1990). This story was a sneaky little trick on my part. My editors needed a sexy story for their Bikini Special—but I wanted to draw a silent story featuring cute little kids. With a little slight-of-hand, I managed to do both!

A color version of the story (without the pin-ups) appeared in Tundra's *Mr. Monster Attacks!* Full-page pin-ups from the story (without Mr. Monster!) saw print in an Eros title, *Vegetable Lover*. I've relettered and reworked the art slightly for this printing.

"Midnight Snack" (previously unpublished). This silly one-page wonder was drawn in 1992 for Kevin Eastman's Words And Pictures museum.

Paul Chadwick and I jammed on this cover for Dark Horse Presents #14.



TUNDRA

"The road to hell is paved with good intentions." That warning pretty much sums up Tundra—the little company that couldn't.

Around 1990, Kevin Eastman, flush with millions from his phenomenally-successful Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles franchise, decided to publish comics. His company was to be utopian and creator-friendly—with state-of-the-art facilities and great pay. The best creators in the business would do their comics the way they always dreamed. It sounded too good to be true. Ultimately it was. But I'm getting ahead of myself...

By 1991 I'd completed my stint with Dark Horse. With the last of "Origins" 200 pages now in print, my never-ending project was finally over.

My first story after that was a nine-page horror tale for Hamilton Comics. After the behemoth I'd been battling for almost four years, something "short and sweet" was a real treat! I also produced comic scripts for Disney and a one-shot comic for Fantagraphics' Eros line. Additionally, Dave Elliott commissioned a couple of short Mr. Monster stories for *Blast!*—a British comic anthology he was editing for John Brown Publishing.

My newfound freedom was great, but I still needed a home for Mr. Monster. Dark Horse was a growing company—growing a bit too fast for my tastes. I wanted a smaller, more personal company.

Sometime in '91, Steve Bissette told me about this amazing new company that just started, and suggested I pitch Mr. Monster. It sounded great—good money, creator ownership and control. Top creators like Steve, Dave Elliott, Rick Veitch, Bernie Wrightson, and Simon Bisley were already on board. I'd previously met Kevin, and liked him. Better yet, Tundra was publishing few titles, and could give Mr. Monster the attention

he deserved. I won't get into all the details of my Tundra experience—it could literally fill a book. However...

For dozens of creators, it started out as a dream and quickly became a nightmare. As Kevin kept signing up more and more creators to produce more and more books, things rapidly spun out of control. No expense was spared making Tundra's comics, but selling them was strictly an afterthought. Sky-high production costs and poor sales eventually doomed the company. Kevin himself dropped an incredible four million dollars in the three or four years the company existed.

Still, it was fun while it lasted. Tundra money made it possible to hire the cream of the cartoon world to work on Mr. Monster. *The Mr. Monster Attacks!* mini-series featured stunning art by Simon Bisley, Dave Gibbons, Sam Keith, Dave Dorman and Bernie Wrightson.

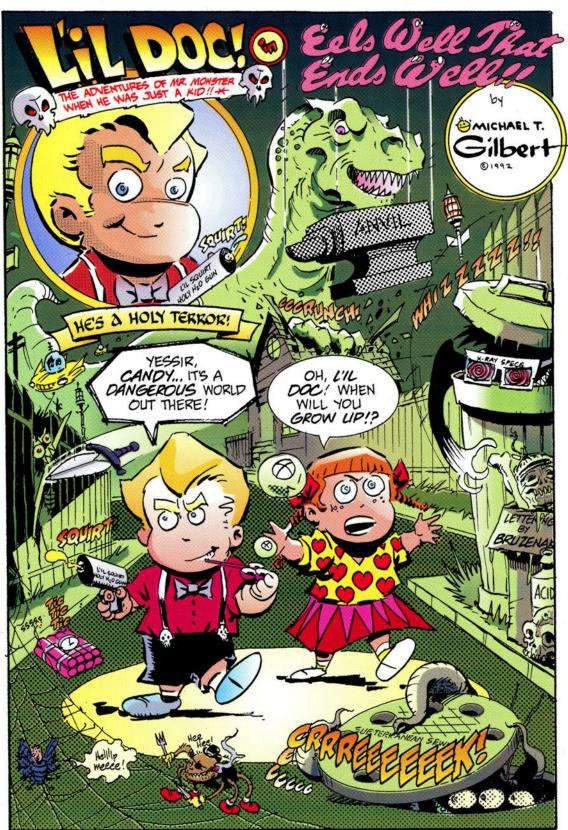
And these weren't the only projects! The Forbidden Knowledge collections began at Tundra. Crack-A-Boom! (a goofy three-issue horror/humor anthology, fronted by Mr. Monster) was another. For the gals there was Kelly—a three-issue miniseries devoted to Mr. Monster's gal Friday. Alan Moore, Alex Toth and Trina Robbins were among the contributors.

All of it came to an end in early '93, when Kevin essentially pulled the plug. Tundra just wasn't fun any more.

When Tundra died, only the three-issue *Mr. Monster Attacks!* had come out. All three issues of *Kelly* were at the printers, and most of the *Crack-A-Boom!* stories were complete. Two volumes of *Mr. Monster: His Books Of Forbidden Knowledge* had been handed in, with work on a third underway. But we were suddenly without a publisher.

It had been a wild ride, and an incredibly creative time. But now it was over.





*NOTE: THIS IS HOW HE REMEMBERS IT!







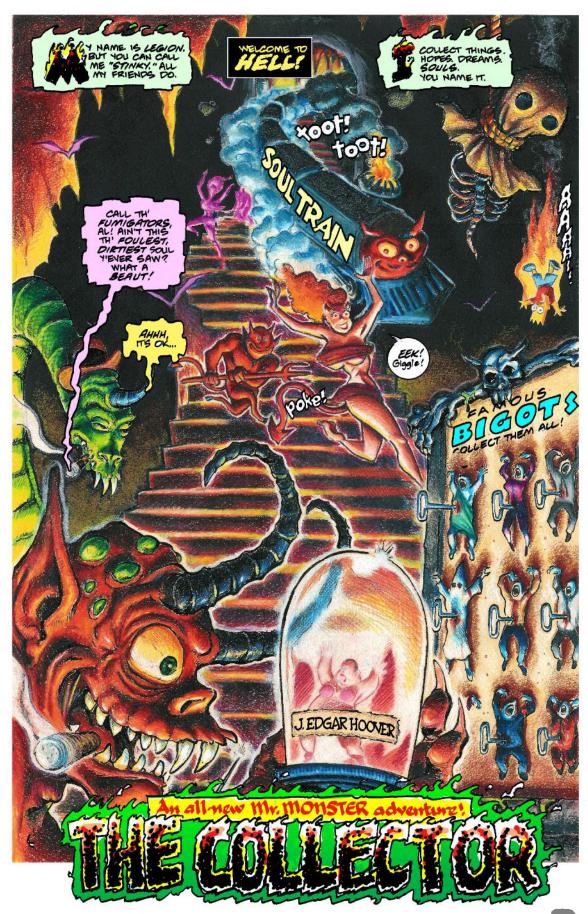


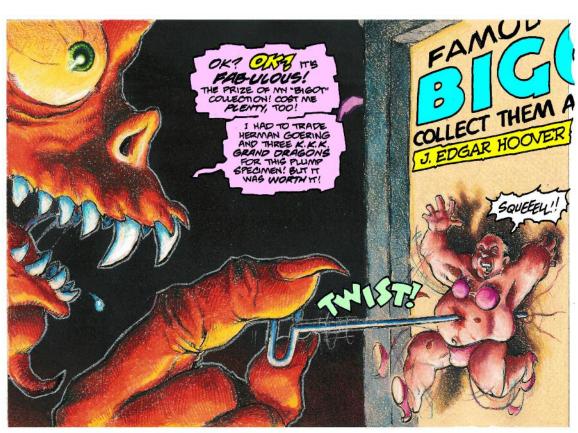


















ART: MICHAEL T. GILBERT & KEITH GIFFEN STORY: M.T.G. COLORS: KEVIN HORN

MR. MONSTER ® & © 2001 MICHAEL T. GILBERT

TRENCHER ® & © 2001 KEITH GIFFEN



YOU WON'T TELL MR. MONSTER THAT JOEY

NEVER TOUCH A SATAN

GLASS! IT'LL SUCK YOU IN, AND DROP YOU OFF





M&VING &N...



Dave Elliott landed on his feet after Blackball's crash. He became editor-in-chief at *Penthouse Comix* magazine, and a few years later created his own comic series, *Sharky*, for Image Comics (Mr. Monster appears in a cameo role in #4). Meanwhile, I was busy working on projects for a number of publishers.

For DC, I drew my very first Batman story for Showcase '94—working with writer Peter David and my old Elric art partner, P. Craig Russell. This was followed by a solo Batman story, "Stories," for Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #94. On the latter I had the pleasure of working with a truly wonderful editor, the late, great Archie Goodwin. That was a dream-come-true for this aging fanboy! And just last year I

Above: Twins! My 1993 card celebrating the birth of Blackball Comics and the Elliott family's first baby, Amy.

fulfilled yet another childhood fantasy with the publication of my first Superman story, the graphic novel *Mann & Superman*.

In between DC assignments, I kept busy scripting Disney comics. I'd first started writing the characters in 1989, for the first issues of *Mickey Mouse Adventures*. From there I went on to create Mickey and Donald stories for *Disney Adventures*, and later, Gladstone Publishing.

Eventually my wife and I landed at the Danish publishing house, Egmont—where we've written about two thousand pages of Disney comics since 1992. Those stories are printed throughout the world by scores of publishers. Back in '93, it was a welcome source of income.

Beyond Disney, I made my first sale to *Cracked*, scripted a couple of *Power Rangers* tales for Gladstone, and even adapted Harlan Ellison's short story "Rat Hater" for the Dark Horse *Harlan Ellison Dream Corridor Special*.

I enjoyed stretching my wings on these projects, but I missed Mr. Monster. I still had a ton of MM art gathering dust in my files and I was beginning to wonder if they would languish there forever.

Things began looking up in 1995, thanks to my good friend Bob Chapman. Bob is the owner of

Graphitti Designs—and one of the most generous, creative and creator-friendly publishers in the business. His company has produced exquisite limited-edition graphic novels, and high-quality t-shirts, action figures and the like since the early-'80s.

I first met Bob at the 1984 San Diego Comicon. After spotting my first Mr. Monster story in a "hot-off-the-presses" copy of *Vanguard Illustrated*, he offered to print some MM T-shirts. Two years later he published a limited-edition hard-cover featuring the sword-and-sorcery anti-hero, Elric Of Melnibone—another strip I'd illustrated for Pacific Comics. He produced three *Elric* collections from 1986 to 1991, each better than the last.

In 1995, Bob offered to produce a signed, limited-edition *Origins* hardcover. From the start, I'd conceived my story as a thick graphic novel, and I was thrilled by the offer. Having



STORY OF OOOAK! ... THE TERROR FROM BEYOND THE STARS!

IT ALL BEGAN IN MY SCIENCE LAB ...



B-BUT VELMA! I CAN'T GO NOW! I'M ONTO SOMETHING BIG BIG BIG! A SCIENTIFIC BREAKTHROUGH THAT WILL ADVANCE HUMAN KNOWLEDGE FOR CENTURIES! FOR THE SAKE OF MANKIND I MUST FORGE ON!



BUT IF MY CALCULATIONS ARE CORRECT, THIS NEW ADDITIVE I'VE INVENTED WILL EXTEND THE EFFECTIVE SHELF LIFE OF DEODORANTS 2 FULL DAYS! THINK OF THE BENEFITS TO MANKIND! I CAN'T STOP NOW, I TELL YOU!

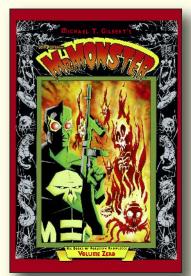
ONE MORE DROP OF MY SECRET INGREDIENT GARDOL WITH AT-7 AND...

GIVE MY REGARDS TO THE LABRATS, RAT!



MR. MONSTER HIS BOOKS OF FORBIDDEN KNOWLEDGE, VOLUME ZERO

This long sold-out collection of Michael T. Gilbert's MR. MONSTER is back in a newly-remasterd Digital Edition, gathering twelve twisted tales of Forbidden Knowedge, collecting all the hard-to-find Mr. Monster stories from A-1, CRACK-A-BOOM! and DARK HORSE PRESENTS in color for the first time! But that's not all! Volume Zero also includes over 30 pages of ALL-NEW MR. MONSTER art and stories! Can your sanity survive our Lee/Kirby monster spoof by



Michael T. Gilbert and Mark Martin? Or how about the long-lost 1933 Mr. Monster newspaper strip? Then there's the terrifying TRENCHER/MR. MONSTER slug-fest, drawn by KEITH GIFFEN and MICHAEL T. GILBERT! Can you stand the horror as titans (and art-styles!) clash!? Talk about Forbidden Knowledge! All this and more will be revealed in MR. MONSTER: HIS BOOKS OF FORBIDDEN KNOWLEDGE. Read it at your own risk!

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