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JAN 2018 — NO. THIRTEEN

SHEENA, JUNGLE QUEEN,
Outwits the thousand-year-old
WITCH-MAIDEN of the
BURNING GLADE.

No. 86
APRIL
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SHEENA...TIGER GIRL...FIREHAIR:
FICTION HOUSE
AND THE FEMALE FURIES OF THE GOLDEN AGE
PLUS...HEAVEN LIVES AND HELL RISES
IN PORTUGAL AND SATANIA

The Comics & Graphic Novel Bulletin of
Lexington Public Library
Reading Is Just the Beginning!
The aptly named Fiction House was one of the leading publishers of pulp magazines in the 1930s. The line was famous for its liberal use of “cheesecake” art to sell such titles as Fight & Jungle Stories. That emphasis on sex appeal carried over to the burgeoning comic book market of the late 1930s. The line’s costumed characters flopped, so Fiction House leapt into the comics Katchor has compiled a volume of cartooning as out- side art. Dapper Bruce Lafferty, Sienna Cittadino, Gerone Spruit and William Tyler can barely draw a line, but in the end, their stuff is as much comics as that of more technically accomplished, though no less bizarre, contributors like Dan Zettwoch, Sami Awami and Eli Valley. The Best American Comics 2017 is not an easy read, but it is fascinating. You can find a copy at Central Beaufort or Hemp2h3r.org.

Cyril Pedrosa’s Portugal is the semi-autobiographical story of cartoonist Simon Muchat. Simon’s hung up, creatively, romantically, emotionally. So he takes a trip to Portugal, homeland of the family he hasn’t seen in decades. Like real life, the story meanders, unspooling like Pedrosa’s deceptively loose, thready pen line. It’s his use of color that mesmerizes the reader. The shadowy teal of Muchat’s self-image as a man submerged contrasts to the sullen tinge of his guilty memories; the ochres and olives of afternoon sun give way to the luminous plums and purples of twilight. Like the graveyard scene at right, every page is so alive. Portugal is a visually rich book that demands re-reading. Go get it at Village Voice! The Hollow Earth story is as old as humanity. Most cultures located the Land of the Dead in a Literal underworld. Now NBM presents a new take on that ancient belief from the creators of Hidden City of Ultima Thule and Sacco, writer Fabien Vehlmann twists Hollow Earth tropes like the Hidden City of Ultima Thule and the horned beast our heroes name “Satanians” so the hoary colonialist clichés of adventure are transformed into the semi-radical fables of Satania. A gray, fleshy mess, playfully cartoonish and madly psychedelic. You can find it at our Tates Creek branch!
Boone Diaz repeatedly takes the plunge into the otherworld, even as his earthly life—and the wife and kids that come with it—is swept away in the furious flow of terrene time. Death of the Last Golden Blaze drops us in the middle of Boone’s story while introducing the charming and terrifying universe of the Ether. It’s a maniacal candy-land of snail cabs, streetwise minotaurs and the tentacular cherubs called “dewies” who work for the Bad Guy— an evil librarian! Daniel Rubin does pencils, inks, colors, the total package, and it is phenomenal. An amazing job of world-building also showcases Rubin’s grasp of comics storytelling. He knows how to use multiple panels and when to hit you with a full page of pizazz. The use of splash pages as a storytelling device was a trademark of Jack Kirby from the beginning of his career. But it was in the pages of The Mighty Thor that the King really started to swing with the big picture. The latest Epic Collection from Marvel compiles work from the period during which Thor transformed from a pompous superhero title into pure epic fantasy, a funnybook Lord of the Rings. Tana Nile and the Colonizers of Rigel, Ego the Living Planet, the war between Asgard and the Trolls, Ulik and the Wrecker and Replicus—astounding concepts come flying at the reader on every page. The breakneck pace is slowed only by the half- and full-page drawings of cosmic tech and vengeful dragons and hordes of humanoid antibodies. And Odin. Many big, awesome pages of Odin. As befits The Wrath of Odin, the All-Father looms large over the action, rewarding Thor, punishing Thor, manipulating Thor, as the God of Thunder faces the choice between his mortal life and love and the call of the Realm Eternal and his new ally, Lady Sif. To be honest, I rarely read Thor as a kid—it could be overwhelming for such a sensitive lad. I mean, that full-page shot of the Enchanters still makes me want to hide under the covers! Meanwhile, on the opposite side of America in more ways than one, Spain adapted the tropes of adventure comics to the radical ends of the underground. Like Kirby, Spain revealed in big battle scenes and lovingly rendered machines. Except in Spain’s case, the battles are between mobs of anarchists and cops and the machines are motorcycles, the big hogs favored by biker gangs like the Road Vultures. Rodriguez ran with the RVMC in his youth and his comics about those years are included in Street Fighting Men (Fantagraphics). Some still show pencils beneath the inks. Spain kept drawing even as he was dying of cancer. Now that’s one tough dude. So is Trace Morales. The former Special Forces man was one of the guardians of the Ghost Fleet that carries a cargo of secrets...until the day he looked in the back of the truck. The wild art of Daniel Warren Johnson explodes in motor-driven mayhem in Donny Cates’ The Whole Goddamned Thing (Image). Get it at lexpublib.org now!