

741.5

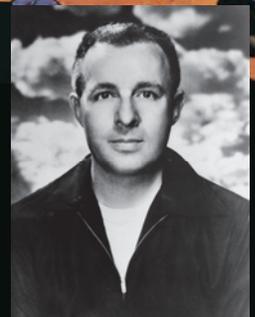
APRIL 2024 NO. 117

OTHER PLANETS, OTHER PLACES



INCREDIBLE **SCIENCE-FICTION** STORIES!

Featuring... "MARS IS HEAVEN" and
OTHER CLASSIC TALES OF TENSION BY
RAY BRADBURY

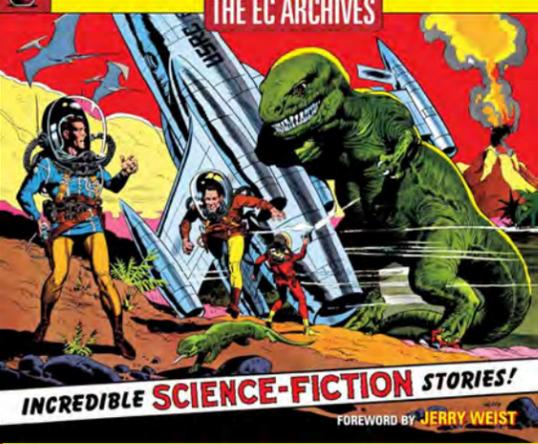


The Comics & Graphic Novel Bulletin of



Lexington Public Library
Reading Is Just the Beginning!

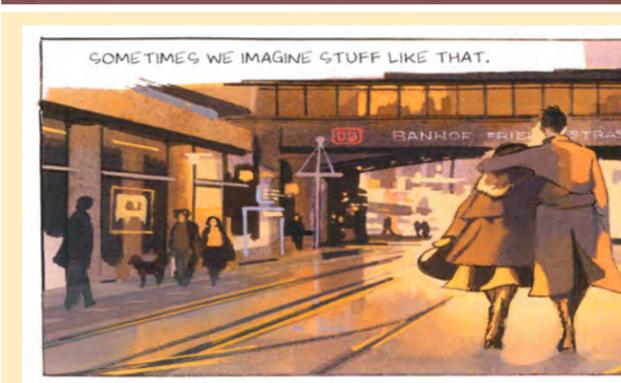
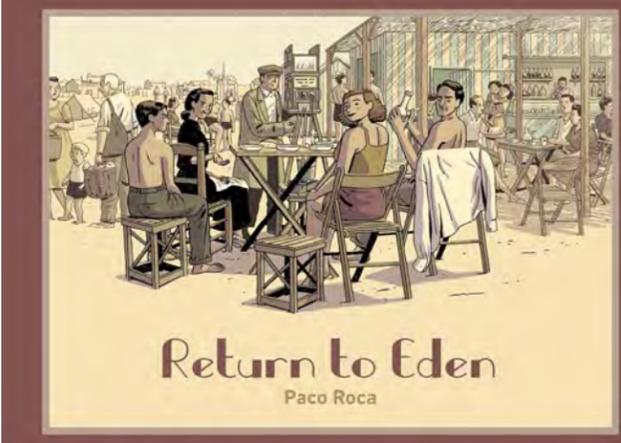
WEIRD SCIENCE



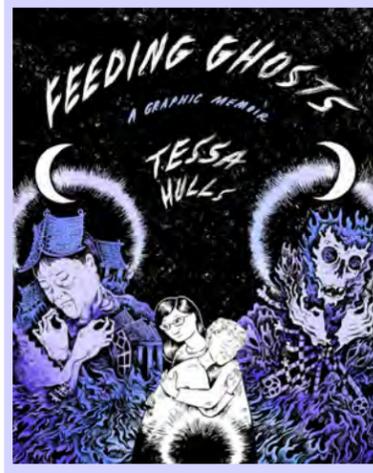
looked like Wood, eg. Joe Orlando (below). With the exception of the domestic dramas of the indefatigable Jack Kamen, *Weird Science* was Wood Science, especially once EC began its official adaptations of Ray Bradbury. A life-long funnies fan, the author loved Wood's work on the likes of "Mars Is Heaven!" (panel right). A special thrill is seeing how tropes now common in UFO culture (above) were first explored in these comics, available at all LPL locations!



The years covered by Volume 3 of *Weird Science*, 1952-1953, saw the legendary EC at the height of popularity and creativity. The roster of artists was established, with editor Al Feldstein assigning stories that played to each creator's strengths. That's why Wallace Wood stopped drawing horror comics—between his work for Kurtzman's war books and his status as the main man for Feldstein's sci-fi titles, Wood had no time for vampires and zombies. So dominant was Wood's style, most of his co-workers on the SF comics even



Much like his classic *5,000 KM Per Second* (still available at Central), Manuele Fior's latest novel is the story of a love triangle. But in *Hypericum*, the third person coming between our archeologist heroine Teresa and her new beau Ruben is quite the older lover: King Tutankhamen. Fior elides Howard Carter's discovery of Tut's tomb and Teresa's struggle between her footloose relationship and her work on a new exhibit dedicated to the young Pharaoh in this exquisitely rendered rumination on time and love set in Berlin.



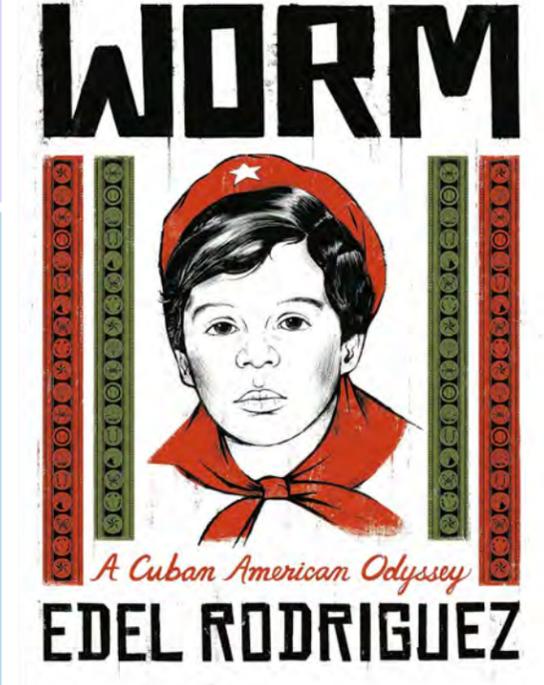
The cover of the book is the heart of the mystery. It is a family photo taken at a beach in Valencia, Spain, in 1946. But two important members are missing: Father, and Antonia, the youngest daughter for whom this photograph becomes a talisman haunting her into her old age. Why? That's the question asked by this graphic novel that is both intimate and worldly. One of Spain's leading cartoonist, Paco (*Memoirs of A Man In Pajamas*) Roca looks at the harsh reality of Franco's Spain through the lens of Antonia's life and the strictures forced upon women by the marriage of Church and State. It can be a grim read, Roca's art replicating the grayness of life under despotism via monochromatic color schemes. But his cartooning is so smooth and expressive, so detailed yet light-handed, that the humanity of his subjects shines through the gloom of history.

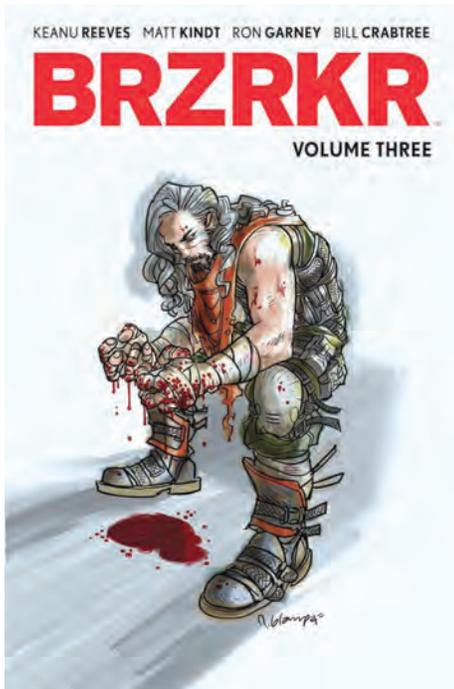
The amount of preparation necessary for this graphic biography was intimidating even before author Tessa Hulls put pencil to paper. Central to Hulls' effort was a Cold War memoir written by her grandmother. Hulls had to get a grant to have it translated. See, Hulls (Chinese name He Renxin) didn't speak Chinese. The biracial daughter of a mixed race mother, Hulls never embraced the Asian part of her heritage, a kind of self-protection. The mother tongue separated Tessa from her mother and grandmother and their overwhelming relationship. Excluded from their damaged dyad by language and history, it's not until Hulls reads her grandmother's side of the family story while experiencing contemporary China that the woman, so long a figure of mystery (right) that floated through Hulls' life, becomes a real person. The harm done to the proud and independent grandmother by the Reds reverberates through the generations in this astonishing epic of personal and historical rediscovery.

A coming-of-age story set in what is currently a warzone, *Good Girls Go to Hell* is a confessional written and drawn by Israeli Tohar Sherman-Friedman. She's also a tattooist, which, if you know the rules that bind Orthodox Jews, really goes to show just how much the author has rejected her upbringing. Raised in one of the Jewish settlements occupying the West Bank, Tohar loves her family, especially her rabbi father. But she increasingly chafes at the demands made by her faith and her culture. The zealotry of Zionism wears her out, the limitations of women's lives under Orthodoxy piss her off, and then she meets a boy who's as fed up with it all as she is. Sherman-Friedman and her work, honest, humane and plain pretty to look at, demands attention.

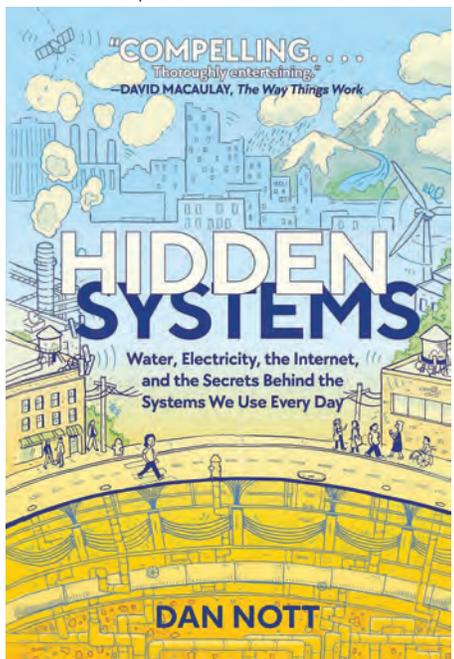


Decades later, one of Spain's former imperial possessions went through its own revolution. Regardless of ideology or intent, Castro's Cuba suffered many of the same problems as Franco's Spain. The only difference was the excuses made by the authorities. Edel Rodriguez was happy to be a typical Cuban kid. His dissident father had other plans. The family joins the 1980 Mariel boatlift, becoming part of a new wave of immigrants. Edel slowly but surely becomes an American, growing up to be one of the nation's foremost political artists. Rodriguez comes full circle when the ascension of Trump stirs bad memories. Go to lexpublib.org to reserve!



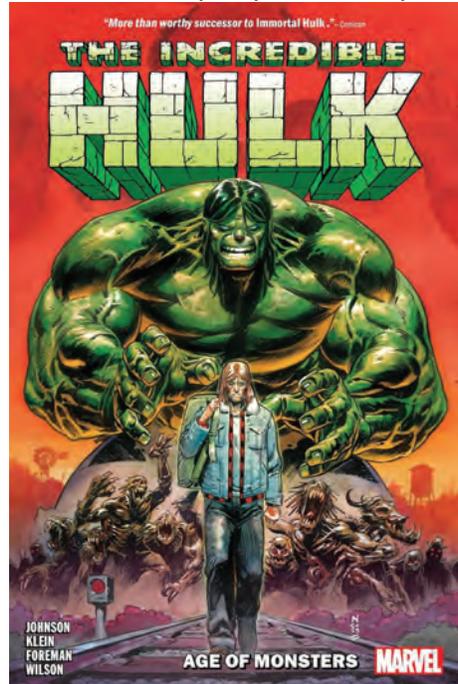


741.5 has been meaning to talk about Keanu's comic since the first collection came out a few years ago. But it kept getting lost in the dogpile, like *Social Fiction*, a dystopian novel with a hard late-70s *Heavy Metal* vibe by **Chantall Montellier**, or the second volume of the vampire epic *The Night Eaters* from **Marjorie Liu** and **Sana Takeda**, whose nocturnal yet luminous watercolors are lovely and creepy, or the dozen YA graphic novels gazing doe-eyed with longing from their shelves...anyway, there's a lot of comics to read. And one of them is the climactic volume of the collaboration between Hollywood Buddha **Keanu Reeves** and the industry's favorite weirdo **Matt Kindt**. It's the Eternal Warrior bit, the eponymous BRZRKR the super-soldier slashing and smashing his way toward the truth about his origins. There's blood and guts and stuff blows up real good. Whaddaya expect from a comic book called BRZRKR? The previous volumes are available via



MEANWHILE

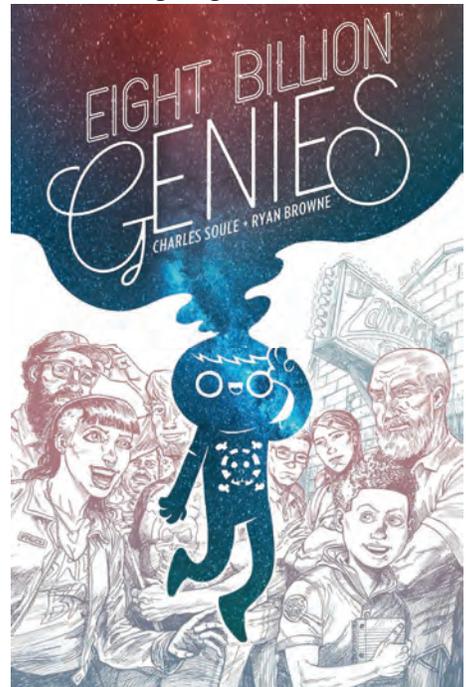
lexpublib.org. Concepts and titles like *BRZRKR* fascinate Your Editor. As a lifelong student of popular culture, I've read many of the studies concerning violence and media, including Dr. Wertham's. One of my favorite theories concerning the prevalence of violence in our entertainments is that our civilization has been successful at overcoming the physical struggles inherent in nature while psychically we crave those dangers, that thrill. Well, as recent events increasingly inform us, we shouldn't get too comfortable. The infrastructure upon which modern society is mighty complex, as revealed in the non-fiction funny-book *Hidden Systems* (Random House), **Dan Ott's** graphic explication of *Water, Electricity, the Internet, and the Secrets Behind the Systems We Use Every Day*. Using a blue-based palette, Ott's simple artwork is obviously influenced by **Box** (*Is This Guy For Real?*) **Brown**, though Ott is much better at drawing technical details. An easy and informative read for young and old, *Hidden Systems* is available in TEEN at Eastside and Central. Meanwhile, the modern icon for the Savage Within continues to move steadily away from humanity. Fol-



lowing the events of *The Immortal Hulk* (see 741.5 #44), Bruce Banner and his alter ego are alienated from one another as never before. Banner is, of course, obviously and always exhausted by his double life. But Ol' Greenskin's had enough of Bruce and his bull, too. The Hulk endeavors to drive away his human half by making Banner's life unbearable. Any human contact Bruce makes results in the Hulk wrecking whatever refuge Banner has found, whoever has dared extend a helping hand to the hapless vagabond. Meanwhile, an ancient evil, like Satan-was-just-an-intern ancient and evil, has returned, looking to establish an *Age of Monsters*. So while the Hulk tries to kill his host, Marvel monsters across the world are on the hunt for the Hulk. Featuring some cool new creatures alongside guest appearances by the Mole Man and the macabre Man-thing, *Age of Monsters* is available in TEEN at Central and Northside. Our next item almost made the inside pages, dedicated as this issue was to the idea of the graphic novel as travelogue. But the low key black & white art didn't really fit in with the likes of **Fiore** and **Rodriguez**, and the story, set behind the scenes of the manga industry, a mite insular compared to the



global concerns of **Sherman-Friedman** and **Hulls**. But the first volume of **Taiyo Matsumoto's** series is indeed an up close and personal look at *Tokyo These Days* (Viz). The story of disgraced editor Mr. Shiozawa and his attempts to restart his career obviously reflect the experiences of the author of *Cats of the Louvre*. From the old hand who's seen better days to the young artist and his long-suffering collaborator-cum-nemesis—and the only woman in the bunch, bless her heart—**Matsumoto** tells the tale of this ragtag band of misfits against the lovingly detailed background of plain, ordinary, day-to-day Tokyo. Read it at Central, Marksbury and Tates Creek. The plain, ordinary and day-to-day cease to exist once the wishes of every human being on Earth are granted by *Eight Billion Genies* (Image). The larger size of this Marksbury hardback gives plenty of room for artist **Ryan Browne** to portray the utter madness predicted by writer **Charles Soule**. Kudos for basing the genies' look on their hosts!



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