

# 741.5

# SANTA'S GRAB-BAG!

DECEMBER 2024

NO. 130



**COMICS  
WE  
OVERLOOKED**

**The Comics & Graphic Novel Bulletin of**



Lexington Public Library  
Reading Is Just the Beginning!





Just the way 741.5 looks better online than IRL, so do webcomics often look worse on paper. Then again, given the extent ugliness is an intrinsic aspect of John Pham's aesthetic, his new book *J & K* looks cruddy on purpose. There's that fuzzy quality of Risograph art, the bright and blown-out colors used in

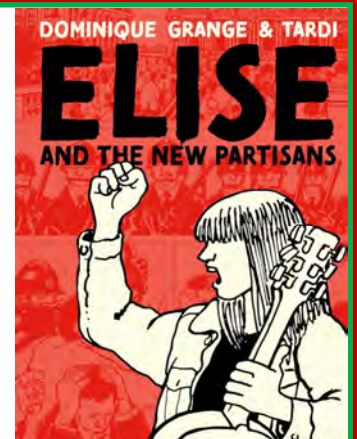
Service of Pham's lachrymose absurdism. In comparison, Mike Birchall's digital art is more classically computerized, though just as exorbitant with its palette, as his big-headed kitty-people meander through murder and mayhem.



A magic song transports a mid-Nineties punk band across space and time, into a past where they're already legends, into a present where they never existed, into a future they may not want to admit. Nate Powell captures the raw spirit of community that



Survivors battle vampires in a nuked New Orleans...a dying B-girl must challenge the Grim Reaper to a dance-off...a Klansman finds himself outmoded by changing times and outnumbered by the living dead...while the Removers and monster-buster Ezra the Hunter ply their trade in terror...these tales and more await you in *SHOOK! A Black Horror Anthology* at Central and Marksbury Family!



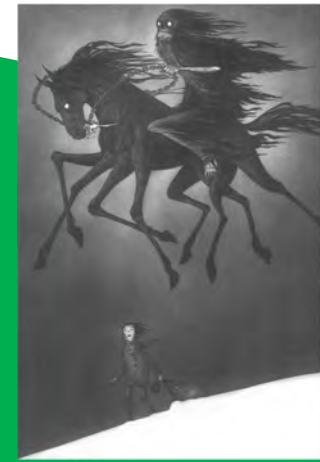
makes punk rock special while questioning his participants' true intentions. Meanwhile, in the mid-Sixties, France shudders under the stress of the revolt among youth represented by *Elise and the New Partisans*, the true story of folkie-turned-freedom-fighter Dominique Grange beautifully drawn by Tardi!



*A Christmas Bestiary* actually came out last Christmas, but was yet another victim of them supply chain blues. So stuff a belated stocking this year with this creepy compendium of Yuletide terrors from Fantagraphics. BENNI BODKER is our guide to the various magical monsters, most hailing from Northern Europe, who celebrate the birth of the



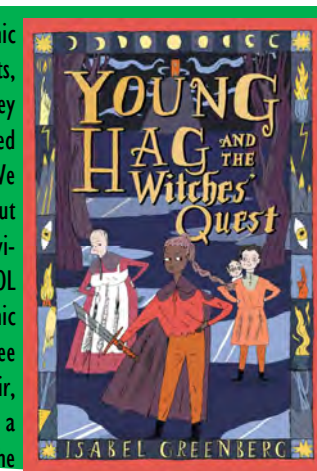
Saviour with sinister savor. Drawn with gruesome vitality by JOHN KENN MORTENSEN, some are old competitors moving in on the new kid's holiday, like Wotan and his fellows in the Wild Hunt (right). Others, like Krampus, Frau Perchta and Knecht Ruprecht (far left), play their own role in the season's mix of morality and mortification!



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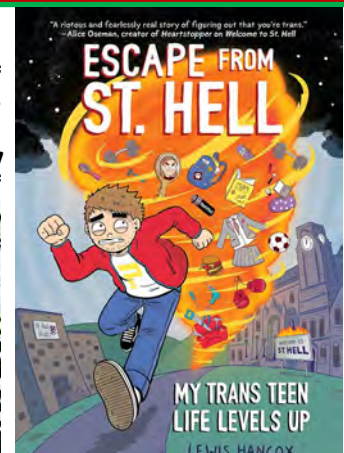
Given the sheer number of graphic novels for kids and Young Adults, ye Editor has argued that they should have their own dedicated monthly hand-out like 741.5. We try to keep up with the best, but good stuff does slip by while navigating the torrent. VERA BROSGOL authored my favorite YA graphic novel of 2018, *Be Prepared* (see 741.5 no. 19). Unlike that memoir, *Plain Jane and the Mermaid* is a medieval fantasy where Jane, the



very opposite of a damsel in distress, must deliver her true love from the mermaids, who, like the legends, are a mean bunch of critters. ISABEL (Glass Town) GREENBERG returns with *Young Hag and the Witches' Quest*, a pilgrimage rendered in Greenberg's trademark scratchy fauvism. The lovely drawing and even prettier colors of CHRISTOPHER LINCOLN propel his first adventure starring twins Page & Turner and the Night Librarian!

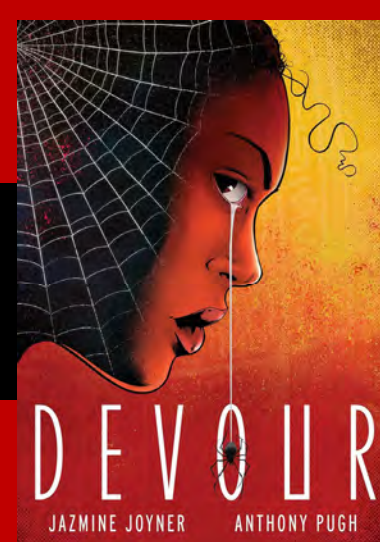


Traumatic tales of teenage transformation, one fictional, one autobiographical, showcase the struggle of youth to be themselves while becoming themselves. As evidenced by the title, *The Strange Case of Harleen and Harley* uses the framework of



the Stevenson classic to retell the origin of everybody's favorite bad girl, Harley Quinn. Lewis Hancox flexes visual confidence in the second volume of *Escape from St. Hell* as our ex-heroine finally learning who to be a hero, one fun date and awful ass-kicking at a time.

Shelob meets Anansi in Jazmine Joyner's epic of African-American arcana, *DEVOUR* (Harry N. Abrams). Like Lovecraft's antiheroes, Patsy Turner discovers her family history is a lot more tangled than she thought, as a secret curse comes closer to light...and Patsy closer to darkness. Anthony Pugh's art brings fanboy ferocity to this modern horror story from Marksbury and Northside.



The most minimalist comics this side of Chester Gould's "Sawdust", *The Cartoons (and More) of Ed Subitzky* first gained notice in the "Funny Pages" section of *National Lampoon*. Some of his work are single panel gags, others multi-level strips where dialogue unspools

In a torrent or the panels begin to disappear or some other post-modern mishegoss. Plus sex! The epic *Mollusc Rampage* unfolds one big, blocky page at a time as the two-fisted trio known as the Masters of the Nefarious embark on an expedition into the inexplicable and inane!







I admit it: I'm often envious as the astonishing array of comics-based gimmicks and merch available to today's youth. Sure, I enjoyed my Captain Action dolls (see 741.5 #82) and Major Matt Mason space junk, but compared to contemporary spin-offs, my *Fantastic Four* Big Little Books looks pretty meager. For example, check out the latest version of *LEGO Marvel Character Encyclopedia* (Marvel/DK), available at all locations under NEW J688.725 L5251ma. I don't collect Lego figurines — I think they're kinda ugly, to be honest. But I do admire the attention to detail, from the Scorpion's segmented tail

Of the three heroes featured on this issue's cover, only one, Wonder Woman, is familiar to average readers. The other two are the original versions of the Green Lantern and the Flash from the Golden Age. Copped from the cover of *Comic Cavalcade*, the 100-page quarterly starred the characters belonging to the All-American Comics division of DC *alias* National, which included most of the members of comics' first super-team, the Justice Society of America. The JSA is back, as discussed in 741.5 #119, part of the recent



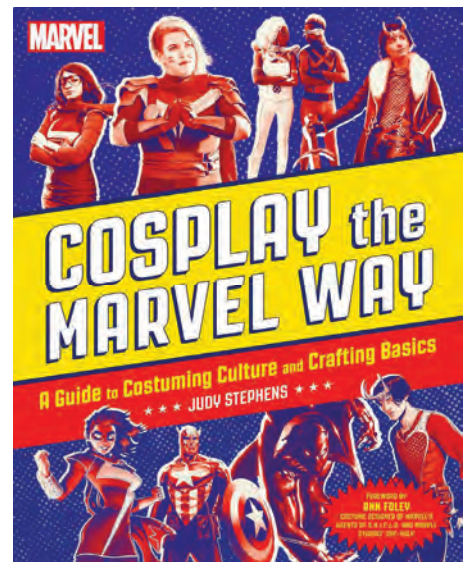
to the graphics laid on the figures' blocky little chest. You could lost in Mysterio's tunic! Nice facial expressions, too; compare M.O.D.O.K.'s maniacal leer and Mary Jane Watson's sweet smile. Meanwhile, all those arguments over who's stronger, Thor or Hulk, now have a text to guide them. *MARVEL Incredible Records* compiles the rabbinical wisdom of generations of creators and fans into a big, pretty and handy-dandy collection of *Amazing Powers and Astonishing Stats*. Speaking of M.O.D.O.K., that big ol' head, with the flying chair, weighs 750 pounds!



## MEANWHILE



*Dawn of DC* program. Three limited series starring JSA members have been released, with, one hopes, more on the way. Two are set at the beginning of the heroes' careers in the late 1930s. Drawn with a solid grasp of page dynamics and historical verisimilitude by **Cian Tormey**, *Alan Scott: Green Lantern* is the tale of both a man and a hero trying to find their place in an often hostile world. Driven to danger as much by his shame over his forbidden sexuality as by the need to do right, the original



Given gimmicky books like *MIR* are put together every few years, they are a good way to see which way Marvel is leaning thematically, depending on which characters get a push; eg. ten years ago, Monica Rambeau or Hela would not have gotten such a large slice of limelight. But the influence of the Marvel Cinematic Universe is strong not only on current Marvel comics, but on the outlying edges of comics culture. *Cosplay the Marvel Way* blew up in popularity with the debut of *Iron Man* in 2008. Now veteran costumer **Judy Stephens** gives the details on how to become one of several Marvel icons in this lovely volume available via [lexpublib.org](http://lexpublib.org)!

Green Lantern fights the Muscovite menace of the Red Lantern. Less bombastic but no less intense, *Wesley Dodds: The Sandman* lurks through the fog-shrouded pages of **Riley Rossmo**. Dodds confronts his shadow self in an case that bridges the Vertigo series and the beginning of the JSA. Set in modern times, *Jay Garrick: The Flash* shows how Jay is dealing with the new reality of a daughter he never had. The Boom was one of the Lost Children, and now she and dear old Dad are on a run for their lives!

