

COMICS I'VE BEEN GEEKING OUT ON

written by Maxi Kim | October 16, 2014



1. **The Li'l Depressed Boy: Supposed To Be There Too (No. 1, Oct 2014, Image)** – Shaun Steven Struble & Sina Grace

After 18 months on hiatus, Li'l Depressed Boy is back – bemused but also in a better place. If you've never read LDB, I liken it to a more life-affirming version of Adrian Tomine's Optic Nerve. Like a lot of indie titles LDB can be accused of being too faint at times, too precious, too preoccupied with capturing the minutia of alt scenes to the detriment of story or plot. But, I think, what rescues LDB from the indie gutter is the way that [S. Steven Struble](#) and [Sina Grace](#) have managed to balance the overwhelming sense of familiarity with a punctuated, deceptively gradual, sense of surreality. Just the mere fact that LDB is depicted as a giant rag doll in a world that is decidedly indifferent to his appearance adds a poetic rawness to his [mental health status](#) that would otherwise be dismissed as "cute" or "cringe-inducing" if it were depicted in a more straightforward style. I found myself feeling much more sympathetic towards LDB than any of Adrian Tomine's "realistically portrayed" lost causes. An excerpt of LDB's lachrymose disclosure to his new girlfriend Spike:

Jazz and I's relationship is awkward. We met early last year. / We hung out for awhile, and in my mind we were dating . . . / . . . But, to her, we were not. / She introduced me to her boyfriend in the middle of what I thought was a date. It made me second guess myself for a long while. / I thought I was over it by now. But I've been avoiding her so it was kind of easy to put it aside. / It still hurts.

2. **Rat Queens (No. 8, Oct 2014, Image)** – Kurtis J. Wiebe & Roc Upchurch



My friend [Gina Clark](#) has me convinced. Whether it's the bow-and-arrow-toting girl heroines in movies like *Hunger Games* and *Princess of Thieves* or the current iteration of sword-wielding badasses in *300: Rise of an Empire*, women by and large aren't really being served by the big studio's current fare of women warriors. BoxOffice's Inkoo Kang said it best: 'Girl heroes don't need to be—or look—strong. [For instance] Archery requires a great deal of upper body strength. An adult beginner bow typically has a "pull" of 40-45 pounds, while older models, like the medieval English longbow, have a "draw weight" in excess of 100 lbs. But you'd never glean that from watching female archers on the big screen, who tend to be as thin as the arrows they let fly. With the exceptions of, Jessica Biel and MMA fighter-turned-actress Gina Carano, actresses seldom possess the bulging muscles of athletes. Thus, female strength gets redefined as determination, cunning, and compassion, rather than, you know, being strong.' The fact that comic books like *Rat Queens* and *Wonder Woman* are doing a superior job of depicting physically athletic Amazonians speaks volumes about how far comic books have come in the last 10-15 years.

3. Gotham Academy (No. 1, Dec 2014, DC) – Becky Cloonan, Brendan Fletcher, Karl Kerschl, Geyser & Dave McCaig



If you're like me and finding Fox's new series Gotham a little too by the numbers, you may just want to try [Becky Cloonan](#) and [Brenden Fletcher's](#) fresh take on what is arguably comic's most uninhabitable city. Don't dismiss it just on the grounds that you may not be in the target demographic. What makes the title such a breath of fresh air is the sense of hesitant camaraderie developed between older sis Olive and first year student Maps. It's not as if the two want to be BFFs; however, the circumstances of having to cope with the first day of school in Gotham Academy naturally brings out the best in each other. In a similar measure, Olive's roommate Lucy leans on Olive, again, not so much because they have the most in common, but because they necessarily have to be there for each other. It's unlike the interpersonal relationships in the indie comic Lumberjanes where the camaraderie is the byproduct of contrived adventures and fantastical obstacles that almost never feels earned or developed. Gotham Academy has that same sense of adventure in a mythic, magical environment too – without the patronizing sense of idealized girl power.

4. Thor (No. 1, Dec 2014, Marvel) – Jason Aaron, Russell Dauterman & Matthew Wilson



Don't buy this book if you're looking for the next female Thor. The smidgen of Lady Thor you do get in this issue is literally just a single splash page on the very last panel. Though I'm not one of those readers who thinks that the cover of a comic book necessarily has to reflect what's inside, Thor #1 reminds me of why certain comics are and ought to be alternatively marketed (e.g., numbered a #0). Without those practices ensuring a level of truth in advertising, Marvel risks alienating would-be future readers. Why even go through with the months of build-up and media hype, if you're going to shit in everybody's mouths at the last second? 'Nuff with the cash-grabby bait and switches Big Two. Please. As for how I feel about the new Thor, I can't say. No one can. We haven't seen her in action yet.

5. Silver Surfer (No. 6, Dec 2014, Marvel) – Dan Slott, Michael Allred & Laura Allred



Need a smile on your face? [Dan Slott](#) and [Michael Allred's](#) charming and hilarious space adventure of a series will cheer you up, and then some, as Dawn Greenwood and [our favorite herald](#) from the planet Zenn-La travel the spaceways to destinations unknown. Especially endearing in this particular issue is the look of irritation on the Silver Surfer's brow as Dawn asks for the umpteenth time to stop at a planet to go number one and get a bite to eat: "Um. I said I was hungry, can you find us a planet? Y'know, somewhere to eat. / Um... Norrin? Can we make a pit stop? I gotta pee. / Norrin? Can we get something to eat? / Silver Surfer: 'Again? You just ate.' / I'm human. We eat three time a day."