

COMICS I'VE BEEN GEEKING OUT ON

written by Maxi Kim | September 24, 2015



1. **Giant Days (No. 6, Aug 2015, BOOM! Box) – John Allison, Lissa Treiman & Whitney Cogar**

If there was but one saving grace in the vast arid wasteland that was the month of August, it'd have to be John Allison & Lissa Treiman's Giant Days. By far and away the funniest and most relatable new series of 2015, issue #6 in particular will cheer up continuing readers as Esther and Daisy spend their Christmas break to venture into parts unknown to track down the whereabouts of their dear friend Susan who has suddenly and quite inexplicably disappeared. If you're a new reader to the series, come on in – the water's absolutely fine. No real prior assembly required; in fact, the newest issue may just convert you as it dishes out the kind of labor-of-love characterization and laugh-out-loud humor that Giant Days fangirls have come to expect. High nigh impossible not to fall in love with these characters. An introductory snapshot to whet your appetite:

DAISY: Why is Susan so late? She's never late. I keep thinking I see her, but then it turns out to be someone else.

ESTHER: Everyone in Northampton has that hunched, angry look. Must be something in the water. / I've sent her forty unanswered texts now. Her phone must be off.

DAISY: She told us to come because of an "emergency," maybe the emergency . . . has consumed her. / Susan wouldn't just abandon us.

ESTHER: Maybe she's bored of us. Maybe she's out with her O.S.M.s.

DAISY: Ordnance Survey Maps? She's orienteering?

ESTHER: Old School Mates. She's having fun we wouldn't understand.

DAISY: But she said this was a danger town full of enemies. She said that she was going to "hide for the holidays."

ESTHER: Yes. As Bing Crosby sang so memorably.

DAISY: Esther, stop looking at your phone. What are you looking at?

ESTHER: It's an app for when you're freaking out. It superimposes the words "Stay Calm" over extremely chill animated GIFs.

2. Age of Reptiles: Ancient Egyptians (No. 3, Aug 2015, Dark Horse) – Ricardo Delgado & Ryan Hill



The ideal counterprogramming to Jurassic World's hyperinaccurate portrayal of dinosaurs, Ricardo Delgado's glimpse into what life may have been like for a certain Spinosaurus in prehistoric Africa will rekindle your faith in the medium and might just make you reevaluate the perceived limitations of comic books as an artistic medium. Without resorting to the tried and true tricks of the trade (e.g., speech bubbles, motion lines, etc), Delgado reminds us of how underexplored the medium actually is. Fawn over the golden era writers and artists if you must, but the creative gauntlet that Delgado has recently thrown down can't be easily dismissed. Whereas our eminent predecessors so often treated comic books as a literal dustbin for preadolescent flights of fantasy, contemporary writers and artists are relishing the challenge to take the form seriously and honestly – with astounding results.

3. Hank Johnson, Agent of Hydra (No. 1, Oct 2015, Marvel) – David Mandel, Michael Walsh & Matthew Wilson



One of the peculiar features of comic books that differentiates itself from most other forms of entertainment is the perennial degree to which it deals with totalitarianism. Hydra being the principal fascist proxy in the Marvel universe, it's no great surprise that writer David Mandel has found the fictional totalitarian multinational ripe for satire. Particularly poignant, and simultaneously hilarious, in the debut issue is how Mandel & Walsh have juxtapositioned the quotidian, everyday drudgery of being a typical family man and a faceless henchman in a giant corporation with the uncanny ideological and moral frisson of participating in the daily operations of a fascist movement. Of course, the point here is not that there is no gap between the totalitarian regimes of the twentieth century and the multinational corporations of today, but that both share a liminal threshold, or an "in between" space, a kind of teleological horizon where one can't help but ask, "Now what?" What more is there to life than the promise of tomorrow and the seemingly endless travails of menial labor?

4. Prez (No. 3, Oct 2015, DC) – Mark Russell, Ben Caldwell, Mark Morales & Jeremy Lawson



Philip K. Dick meets his political doppelganger in writer Mark Russell's satiric vision of the not too distant future where in which a teenage viral video star is inadvertently elected president. A timely ideological rebuke given that we live in a sociopolitical clime where a former reality show host (i.e., Donald Trump) is leading in the polls as the frontrunner of the Republican presidential nominee. If there is but one take-away from Russell's new series, it is one of emancipation. Namely, how much emancipatory power does any given elected official have in our current political framework? As our newly elected teenage protagonist puts it in her inaugural address: "I know I don't deserve to be here. That this whole situation is backwards. I suppose I should feel guilty about that. But then, so much about this country is backwards. / People with real problems don't have the money to fix them. And the people with money don't have any real problems. Our wealth has gotten bored. / It's gone on permanent vacation at offshore banks and in China, while the work at home goes undone. . . . I may not know what I'm doing, but so what? Everything started with someone who didn't know what they were doing."

5. We Are Robin (No. 3, Oct 2015, DC) – Lee Bermejo, Jorge Corona & Khary Randolph



*If you're going to pull only one Bat-title this [Batman Day \(Sept 26\)](#), let it be writer Lee Bermejo's *We Are Robin*. Issue #3 in particular really picks up steam and delivers the goods as the idealistic gang of loosely organized teenagers face their first real encounter with "Batman" followed by an unexpected and heartwrenching tragedy. If you'll be in the Los Angeles area during Batman Day this Saturday, be aware that many retailers will be celebrating our favorite caped crusader with special events. FYI: Jim Lee is scheduled to appear at The Grove Barnes & Nobles at 2:00, while *Batman: The Animated Series*' Paul Dini is scheduled to sign at Vroman's Bookstore at 11:30 AM. Can't wait!*