



Satanie

Fabien Vehlmann (Text) , Kerascoët (Illustrator)

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Aventure, étrangeté fantastique, sensualité, *Satanie* propose un récit haut en couleur, palpitant et émouvant.

Charlotte – alias Charlie – une jolie rousse, organise une expédition afin de retrouver son frère.

Ce jeune scientifique, qui a disparu sous terre depuis plusieurs mois, affirmait– au plus grand étonnement de tous – pouvoir prouver l’existence de l’Enfer en s’appuyant sur la théorie de l’évolution de Darwin !

Le petit groupe conduit par Charlie s’enfonce donc sous terre et découvre au fur et à mesure de sa progression que les entrailles de notre planète pourrait bien abriter une autre forme de vie pour le moins inattendue...

Satanie Details

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Author : Fabien Vehlmann (Text) , Kerascoët (Illustrator)

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From Reader Review Satanie for online ebook

Chad says

A Journey to the Center of the Earth type story with a bit of existentialism thrown in. Gets really weird in places.

Received a review copy from nbm and NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Steve Cooper says

Kerascoët's art is always above-average, but I prefer it tight like in *Beauté*. Here, it feels sommaire and, even with nice touches of organic inventiveness, a bit disappointing.

The story is fresh and unpredictable, but the message is nihilistic: we must have hopes and dreams in order to get us through hard times, but don't kid yourself thinking they'll come true. And if they do, they'll be undermined in some horrific or depressing way. Anti-hollywoodienne for sure, but a bit bleak. Maybe it's a non-striving, life-is-suffering sort of Buddhist message, but where is the transcendence?

Nate D says

The cover image here is perfect: a tiny, innocuous human figure lost in a grotesque yet beautiful underworld alive with horrible creatures. Don't be deterred by the lightness of the character design -- we're informed almost immediately that this is a spelunking expedition in search of hell itself, but the moral expectations that might accompany such a premise become swiftly unpredictable. It's essentially an adventure story, but also a coming-of-age set against a backdrop of natural and unnatural chaos, and towards the end becomes increasingly unexpected and borderline metaphysical, with a little Junji Ito thrown in for good measure. With the artwork and color becoming increasingly lurid the deeper the story descends.

David Schaafsma says

Charlotte, or Charlie, wants to find her brother, who went on an expedition into the center of the Earth to find Hell, which he thinks exists based on his study of Darwin's theory of evolution. This is not elaborated on in the written narrative, which is really not elaborate in any respect, but it does provide what seems to be the real occasion for this book, an opportunity to imagine and enact a fantasy universe, not Hell but Satania. It's an adventure book, a trek with a group of quirky, smart people who encounter all manner of strange creatures and places. This is a 2 star story and a 5 star art project featuring cartoony characters and elaborate landscapes in a large book format.

For other work by these two see *Beautiful Darkness*. Kerascoët, the artist, also did *Beauty*, and *Miss Don't Touch Me* (set in a Paris twenties brothel), which in part might explain why the young Charlie must suddenly be topless for a portion of the book (because they are two young men collaborators, and because they can!).

Nevertheless, the world-making in this book is visually impressive.

Devann says

I received a free copy of this book from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review

I did not realize this was the same person that did Beautiful Darkness, but now that I know that it definitely makes more sense ...in a way. I mean, I'm still not entirely sure what the point of the entire thing was but in the same way that I wasn't entirely sure what the point was in Beautiful Darkness so I guess at least it's consistent.

The plot was kind of confusing and weird to me, or maybe it just wasn't what I was looking for. At first it seemed like it was going to be a Journey to the Center of the Earth kind of thing but then it got all existentialist and completely lost me or else just had me rolling my eyes. Also I don't really like the way the people are drawn because I feel it just looks childish and reminds me of comics in the Sunday newspaper, but the landscapes and backgrounds were absolutely gorgeous once they got really far underground.

There were some good parts I guess, but overall I could have definitely skipped it.

Rod Brown says

An unsuccessful but interesting attempt to mash up evolution and theology, spelunking and a tour of hell, Conrad's Heart of Darkness and Dante's Inferno. I gave this a go because I was fascinated by the creators' previous work, Beautiful Darkness, one of the creepiest fairy tales I've ever read. But this phantasmagorical tour of an underworld that supposedly evolved over thousands of years and then inspired our vision of hell is just too odd, weird, perverse and pointless for me.

Nancy says

This review can also be found on my blog: <https://graphicnovelty2.com/2018/05/0...>

Macabre. Unsettling. Gruesome.
I loved it.

My introduction when I reviewed Beautiful Darkness, also by Vehlmann and Kerascoët, had the above words and they prove true in this unique graphic novel too. At first glance, the story line seems to be simply a dark fairy tale- yet, it goes deeper than that.

The story begins with a cave exploration gone wrong. Spelunker Christopher has gone missing, and experienced guide and priest Father Monsore can not find him. Another recovery team sets out to find him that include's Christopher's younger sister Charlotte. Monsure tries to save this group too when poor planning on smug team leader Lavergne's part traps them in the cave and a spring flood pushes them deeper into the caverns.

Once the six characters are established, we find out the real reason for Christopher's exploration- he was writing a book to prove the existence of Hell by using Darwin's theory of evolution. Lavergne, a believer of Christopher's theories, expounds further by explaining that perhaps Neanderthals moved into the cave's depths and evolved to combat the heat, over thousands of years, to resemble demons of folklore.

Soon time begins to bend, and hallucinations occur for some of the team, so it's hard to know if what they are experiencing or seeing is true. Some of the team disappear or go crazy and only three remain- Father Monsore, Charlotte and Lavergne. The three find some clues that Christopher might still be alive and they push deeper finding grotesque creatures and other-worldly landscapes. They encounter some demon looking beasts, and one seems to take a liking to Charlotte. I will not spoil the end of what happens to everyone in the land of Satania, but the last few pages were perfectly disturbing.

The illustrations are lush and detailed with special attention to the subterranean landscapes. The world created is strange and lovely, with vivid coloring to help bring each part of Satania to life. The art is credited to Kerascoët, which is actually a pseudonym for the husband and wife team of Marie Pommeuy and Sébastien Cosset. These two have also worked with the writer Hubert to create the graphic novel *Beauty*. While their illustrations may seem suited for children's tales, read further in and you will see why all their books are only meant for mature audiences.

If you like your fairy tales dark, pick up this book and the others by Kerascoët, to experience thought provoking, haunting and allegorical tales.

Alex Sarll says

A fabulous, grotesque and lurid vision of subterranean life, recalling *A Voyage To Arcturus* or *Veins Of The Earth* in its determined strangeness. Alas, there are people here too, many drawn in a caricature style which would be fine for an editorial cartoon but gets trying at length. Nor are their stories anything new, with the rivalry of science and religion, religion and desire all following well-worn paths (and desire in particular is present in that distinctly French fashion which may give even non-religious readers pause). Still, well worth a look just for its caverns and creatures.

(Netgalley ARC)

Lola says

I recommend you read this for Halloween, or whenever you are in the mood for something dark and terrifying.

Usually, when I read fantasy books, a part of me wishes for what I read about—witches, werewolves, vampires, fairies, superpowers—to become reality.

But I really, really hope no element featured in *SATANIA* ever does. I don't know about you, but I wouldn't want to end up living among devils.

This is a story that will make you feel very tiny. Humans generally think they can do anything and

everything, because they have a developed brain and two hands. Well let me tell you that human or not, someone living in this satanic world controls absolutely nothing.

I even felt claustrophobic. The characters are stuck under the earth, deep into caves, where there is water... and a complex civilization living next to little evil devils. I couldn't imagine being in Charlotte's place. Feeling imprisoned... underground... with no path to the exterior world.

The only thing that would keep me going is hope, and that is why the characters do not give up. They have a mission they must complete. Charlotte will not leave without her brother. Then again, is there even a way for them to go back?

Right now I'm in my brother's bedroom because my light is dead and he's away at college so he doesn't mind. You know what, it might not be ideal, but my goodness am I happy not to be stuck in this satanic world.

Unfortunately, it's true that you only realize how good you have it when you compare yourself with people in a worst situation than yours. Granted, I am aware in my case the people are fictional, but shhhh they seem real enough to me.

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n says

has much the same feel of beautiful darkness, somehow, and is, of course, gorgeous.

Anthony Vacca says

An uneven journey into the subterranean tropics of "hell," informed by Werner Herzog's philosophy toward nature, and rendered in small, unappealing panels that feature artwork reminiscent of Hergé on psychotropics. This reader counts *Aguirre, the Wrath of God* as one of his favorite films, but the attempts of other directors and artists to achieve something similar almost always fall on their faces, with the noticeable exceptions of *Blood Meridian*, or the *Evening Redness in the West* and *Blacklung*. *Beautiful Darkness* is a delightfully wicked deconstruction of the safety net beneath fairy tales that Disney has coddled viewers with for the past eighty years, but *Satania* suffers from a tedious first half before the drugs kick in and has the tiny drawings of our protagonists fleeing from horned baboons and behemoth lampreys. There is a nice freak-out scene briefly at the end, but the rest of this graphic novel is existential horror at its most ho-hum.

[Shai] Bibliophage says

Satania is a graphic novel of **Fabien Vehlmann** that was first published in French on 2016. It is about the expedition of Father Monsore, Lavergne, Legoff, Michael, and Charlie underground to search for Charlie's brother Christopher who was missing for more than two months. Christopher had a theory that there is an ancient colonization that went underground, thus he decided to prove it and he still hasn't appeared since he left.

The story sort of reminds me of *Verne's Journey To The Center of The Earth*, but *Satania* is rather weirder because of the creatures they had encountered while going deeper on their journey. What's more peculiar is the copulation of Charlie and a demon while they were in Satania, and the hallucinations of Charlie that her mother was talking to her since they went underground.

As a whole, *Satania* is okay, but not that remarkable; the only notable thing that I can recall after reading this is that there's a probability that demons can love after all.

Cody says

Haunting, just like I like em!

Molly says

I'm not sure I fully understood the plot of this particular graphic novel, but it was definitely interesting. A small party of adventurers works their way below the earth in an attempt to find a long-lost brother. Many strange inhabitants of the underworld - Satania - cause problems for our intrepid explorers. The ending provides an interesting twist, which I enjoyed, but I came away overall befuddled at the purpose of this story.

Maggie Gordon says

Satania is a rehash of Journey to the Center of the Earth, but with more superfluous boobs. I usually adore books from this illustrator/writer combo, but this one felt underdeveloped and sexist. The story lacked substance. It touched on themes of humanity, but then did little with them. There are some great landscapes and imaginative worlds in these caves beneath the Earth, but there's also some really gross sexualisation of the main character. I kept wanting the story to say something profound, but it remained a golden age-esque speculative tale that added little to the genre than pretty art.
