

MY NEW HOBBY CRAVES VIOLENCE

REVIEW

By Kathryn Hemmann

Kristyna Baczynski is an award-winning artist known for her gently stylized illustrations of plants and nature, and her standout 2022 book *The Wild Year: A Field Guide for Exploring Nature All Around Us* is a reference for outdoor explorers interested in the history and folklore of the plants they discover. The wholesomeness of Baczynski's nature illustrations stands in contrast to the creeping uncanniness of her 2025 minicomic zine *My New Hobby Craves Violence*. Who better to plunge the reader into the dark soil of botanical horror than an experienced observer of the inhuman impulses of the natural world?

My New Hobby Craves Violence follows the misadventures of a young woman named Pip, who recently moved into a new apartment after breaking up with her girlfriend. Pip's life is a mess, and she's so tired that she can barely make it through the day. While walking home from work one evening, she spots a potted plant left on the sidewalk in front of a newly empty house. Pip feels sorry for the little plant, so she picks up and takes it home with her.

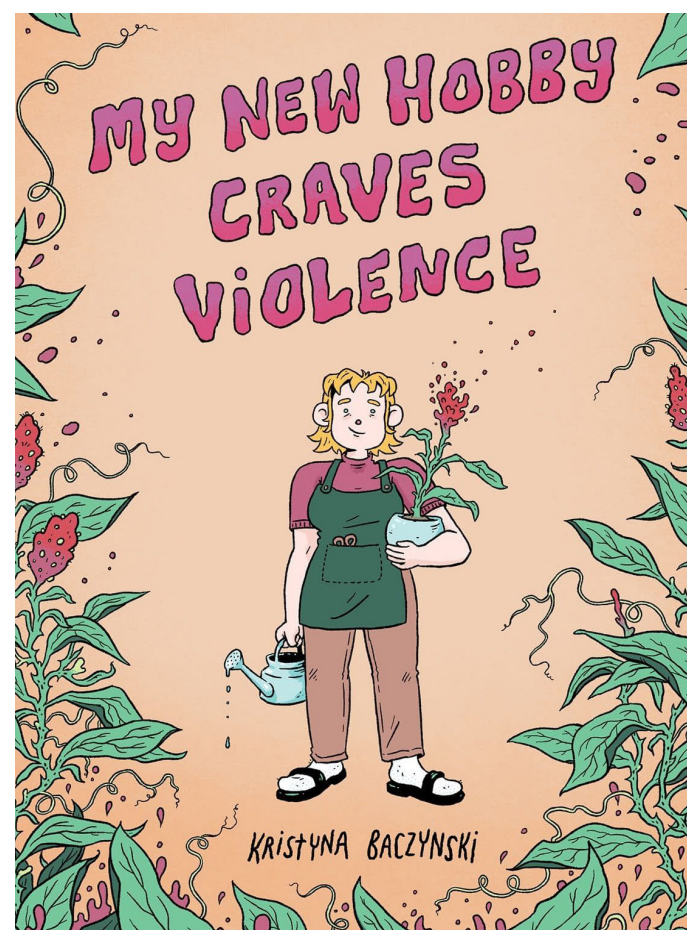
Pip can't identify the plant, so she turns to a Reddit-style forum for advice. The forum posters reply with messages of encouragement and support, inundating Pip's notifications with friendly positivity. As Pip continues to post, she gradually loses sight of her life outside the forum comments. Meanwhile, the mysterious plant continues to spread its roots and tendrils along the walls of her apartment. Before long, the grotesque green monstrosity breaks free of its containers, and Pip realizes that she might become its ultimate substrate.

Pip's situation is all too relatable as she ignores the warning signs of an unhealthy obsession while devoting her attention to the uncanny plant that serves as a consistent source of new content. After all, the mindset of "numbers must go up" is an easy trap to fall into. For many people, the addictive compulsion to achieve higher metrics contributes to a fixation with the approval of internet strangers. While gliding high on the heady currents of positive feedback online, the mundane groundedness of in-person relationships can feel like a chore. It's tempting to ignore what happened to the person you've replaced at the top of the algorithm while not thinking too hard about what strangers online might actually want.

Still, the analogy of "unhealthy growth" doesn't work if the botanical horror doesn't operate on a visceral level, and Baczynski's horrible little houseplant is amazingly creepy. Its thickly veined leaves twist and squirm across the pages as the comic panels become increasingly crowded and claustrophobic.

Text message bubbles pop up between scenes of Pip's collapsing life, competing for the reader's attention and engendering a palpable sense of urgency as Pip grabs a pair of pruning shears and struggles to disentangle herself from the clutching vines.

Despite its relatively short length, *My New Hobby Craves Violence* is filled with



fascinating details that invite multiple readings. Baczynski has self-published this minicomic as a handsome A5 size zine available on her store on Etsy. Perhaps you might consider the artist's other botanical zines as you browse. Not every plant bites, thankfully, but Baczynski isn't afraid to revel in the wild and untamed growth of those that do.

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MY NEW HOBBY CRAVES VIOLENCE IS SELF-PUBLISHED AND WRITTEN AND DRAWN BY
KRISTYNA BACZYNSKI

the comics courier

Fourth Issue

2026 Summer/Fall Edition

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