Written by Michael Koopmans Saturday, 03 April 2010 10:40



Greetings, boils and ghouls! Today's repulsive review is of the gruesome graphic novel MORBID MYTHS VOLUME 1: THE COLLECTION, which follows the EC Comics formula of such fright-filled classic titles as TALES FROM THE CRYPT, THE VAULT OF HORROR and THE HAUNT OF FEAR. I hope you like your meat a little rotten!

MORBID MYTHS is a four-issue anthology series originally published by Hard Way Studios back in 2006. However, it became more readily available in 2008 when Alterna Press collected the issues into one terrifying trade paperback. Although most of the stories do not live up to the stature of their predecessors, there are much worse things you could do to yourself than give this little monster a once-over.



There's only one, self-contained story in the first issue, and in my opinion, it's the best the series has to offer. It's called "Overdue Collections" and follows the daily grind of one Abigail Cummerbund, librarian. Now, this little granny doesn't work for just any ol' bookery; she's employed by the Miskatonic Municipal County Library. And when one of their books is overdue, a small fine won't cut it. It's up to Abigail and her two sidekicks to get the tomes back before someone spends a little too much time with the Necronomicon.

Not only does the second issue contain two putrid plots, we are also introduced to our host, our guide to the macabre, Job. Call me old-fashioned, but I prefer my horror hosts a little less handsome and a little more decayed and dripping. Is that too much to ask? Anyway, the first story is titled "The Box" and it's about...well, a box. The plot is very shallow, and the punch line is so anticlimactic that it will leave you wondering if your copy is missing a page or two. Next we have "Tourist Trap"—like the previous one, pretty self-explanatory. I wasn't as impressed with this issue as I was with the originality of the previous one, but it's still an entertaining read.

"MORBID MYTHS VOLUME 1: THE COLLECTION" (Graphic Novel Review)

Written by Michael Koopmans Saturday, 03 April 2010 10:40

The third ish contains three slimy segments. "Mirror Images!?" is a reworking of the Bloody Mary legend. "What's in a Name?" is a short and sweet tale that reassures us that the dead have feelings too. And finally, "The Real Me" tells of a man who hasn't been feeling himself as of late. The three-part format is a real handicap for this series; right when you start to get into one of these tales, it suddenly ends. If each had been given a few more pages, I probably wouldn't have been scratching my head after their conclusions, thinking, "Really? That's it?"

If, however, you expect the fourth issue to consist of four sludgy stories, you'd be dead wrong. "Real Monsters!" is an attempt to make the reader question his or her definition of just what makes a person a monster. Everyone wants their dreams to come true, except the main character in "What Dreams May Come." Another tale that will leave you scratching your dome is "Something In My Head is Screaming." It's roughly seven pages and 33 panels of a man trying to figure out why he is hearing screams coming from inside his brain. With such a buildup, you brace yourself for a mind-blowing conclusion—but saying the ending is anticlimactic is the understatement of the century.

I'm not sure why the format changed between issues; it seemed like they had a good thing going with the first. The pace of Dale Mettam's writing flows very naturally, and the humor is always spot-on. Dwayne Biddix's chunky pencil work adds frightfully fun character and creature designs that you can't peel your bloodshot eyes off. And since there's no color on these pages, you can really sit back and appreciate Gary Mitchell's dense, mood-setting inking. This trifecta is a force to be reckoned with, given an entire issue to stretch their talents. As for the rest of the series? Most of the stories come off as a little too shallow, clichéd and predictable.

MORBID MYTHS VOLUME 1: THE COLLECTION might not be as entertaining and timeless as some of the series EC spawned—but there are so many that it's nowhere near the worst. If you enjoy bite-size horror-comic tales, you'll want to give this collection a try. There is something about the formula that is so engaging to read, no matter how disposable. This book is currently available on-line and, if you're lucky, at your local comic chop, er, shop. Sorry, all these puns are really getting to me.

**1/2

{jcomments on}

"MORBID MYTHS VOLUME 1: THE COLLECTION" (Graphic Novel Review)

Written by Michael Koopmans Saturday, 03 April 2010 10:40