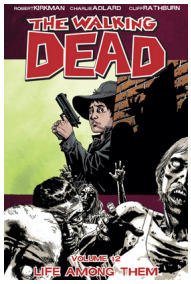
With most zombie films, the credits begin to roll after you get a slight taste of what it takes to survive an apocalypse—leaving you to wonder what the remaining character(s) will do next considering their situation. It’s difficult to have any sense of closure when the screen fades to black while our hero, recently triumphant, is still stranded in a lifeless world.

That said, the epic scale of Image’s THE WALKING DEAD comic series is alone worth its weight in mouthwatering brain matter. In the previous chapters, our survivors were introduced to a threat just as, if not more, deadly than the zombies themselves: The Hunters. When all was said and done, Rick and the gang were forced to sink to a new low to assure their own safety. The ramifications of those decisions still linger into the latest trade paperback collection, LIFE AMONG THEM (out July 21), which collects issues #67-72 and opens with the crew heading toward their promised sanctuary in Washington, D.C.



Just when you think things are finally looking up for our survivors, the sweet salvation anticipated at the nation’s capital quickly turns sour. Then, just when you think their luck has completely run out, a new group of humans makes their presence, and their secure community, known. Along with these saviors, the arc’s main theme—trust—comes to the forefront.

Trust has been an on-and-off notion in this series from the get-go, but never to the extent seen here. After making it through hell by depending on each other for so long, the protagonists are each offered their own personal heaven: a community to be apart of, a house to live in and, simply put, a normal life again. Considering everything they’ve been through, who wouldn’t be skeptical? Of course, Rick is the least trusting of the bunch, but then they didn’t last this long with a pushover leader. Will he ever learn to sleep without one eye open? And if the offer is genuine, how mundane can life get when all that separates you and thousands of miles of the

undead is a wall?

Despite what the title implies, this book showcases only a handful of zombies, and even fewer interactions between the living and the living dead. Even though those moldy flesh-munchers were the main reason I started reading this series, that’s more than OK. It’s kind of funny—the ghouls have slowly become the least interesting aspect of the story, popping up here and there with the sole purpose of progressing the plot by leading the humans to their next major conflict. The shining star has become the cast’s realistic interactions and natural decision-making. It may sound crazy—a zombie comic with little to no zombie action—but the current drought ought to make their next appearance as frighteningly fresh as in issue #1.

It’s thrilling to read a zombie-apocalypse account with such a grand scale. Quantity doesn’t always equate to quality, but in this case it does—in spades. The superb, spasmodic pacing of writer Robert Kirkman and the monochromatic, menacing artwork of Charlie Adlard continues to make this series a must-read for fright fans.

{jcomments on}