

“THE GREEN WOMAN” (Graphic Novel Review)

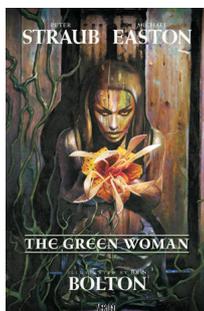
Written by Jorge Solis

Saturday, 23 October 2010 07:39



Vertigo Comics' THE GREEN WOMAN is the first graphic novel from best-selling author Peter Straub. With co-writer Michael Easton and artist John Bolton, the GHOST STORY author creates a mesmerizing tale of unrelenting suspense accompanied by eerie illustrations. Readers will discover two types of narratives combined here: a police procedural and a character study that delves into the mind of a serial killer.

Detective Bob Steele has grown up hating his father for naming him after a famous cowboy hero. Though he has his own badge and gun, Steele feels there's nothing about himself that resembles a hero. While in the midst of interrogating suspects, Steele loses control and beats them down with his fists. But the disillusioned detective discovers a chance at redemption as he searches for the identity of a murderer who has been nicknamed “The Virgin Killer” by the press.



Meanwhile, Straub resurrects one of his characters from his acclaimed “Blue Rose Trilogy”: serial killer Fielding “Fee” Bandolier, who was left for dead in the gripping pages of the author's THROAT. Now, at the abandoned Green Woman tavern, Fee sits at the bar, drinking heavily, tired of a life dedicated to death. His body has grown old and fat, and he's mentally preparing himself to retire. Suddenly, a mysterious stranger stumbles to the pub's front door, asking Fee to let him in. The mysterious drifter claims to be an eager admirer of Fee's past work, and even has even brought a decapitated head as a present for the man he worships. Upon seeing this sick and twisted act of devotion, Fee screams at his stalker to leave.

The title of THE GREEN WOMAN ties in to a sailing ship once known as the Black Galleon that shares a mysterious link to the tavern Fee is hiding in. Something in the ship ordered the crew

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to kill each other, and now the figurehead of the Black Galleon—a carved wooden decoration of a green woman—stands inside the bar, staring directly at Fee. The walls seductively whisper into Fee's ears, beckoning him to murder one more time. The haunted structure draws out the evil in others, gathering them at its feet—and the evil entity will ultimately steer the fallen detective into the path of the unstoppable serial killer.

Bolton creates haunting images in each of the fully painted panels, each page bearing a sense of impending doom and dread. His hyper-realistic artwork jumps right at your eyes, grabbing your full attention. You will no doubt check back at each page twice, to fully appreciate the artistic detail in the drawings. And for those who haven't read the “Blue Rose Trilogy,” you don't have to worry about catching up with the story. Though there are certain references that first-time readers will not understand, Fee's narrative is expanded as an origin tale. Newcomers and followers alike are rewarded with something new in these pages.

THE GREEN WOMAN is a genuinely disturbing thrill ride, a cop-and-killer standoff with a horror twist. Straub, Easton and Bolton have taken the graphic-novel form to a whole new level, and anyone interested in a good fright should definitely pick this one up.



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