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ABATTOIR #3 (Radical Publishing) carries a well-executed package of suspenseful storytelling and surrealistic artwork. When a real estate agent investigates into the dark history of a haunted house, his entire life is thrown into shambles. As he is thrown into complete madness, the agent struggles to keep his last ounce of sanity from drifting. Created by filmmaker Darren Lynn Bousman (pictured, of MOTHER’S DAY, REPO!, SAW II-IV), this is a must-read issue for horror fans.

Real estate agent Richard Ashwalt has to do the impossible and put on the market the infamous Mitchell household, which is rumored by gossipy neighbors to be cursed. Ashwalt wonders how he can sell a building notorious for its brutal violence and vicious murders. But when a fascinated client shows major interest in buying the property, the agent questions why the buyer is so obsessed with the Mitchell household. Richard’s life suddenly spirals out of control when he defies to sell the house to the client.

Richard finds himself running from the law, framed for a murder he didn’t commit. With Richard’s fingerprints on the murder weapon, Detective Sperry has no choice but to search his best friend’s house. After interrogating the wife and child, Sperry questions whether the two know more than what they are saying. Richard’s wife doesn’t believe he is a vicious killer; he’s

just a cheating husband.

To clear his name, Richard becomes consumed with the search for the mysterious Jebediah Crone. After going through records, it appears Crone doesn’t really exist on paper. After many deadends, Richard finally finds the necessary clues from another real estate agent. The more he learns about Crone’s devious past, the more Ashwalt realizes his life is in utter danger.

Writers Rob Levin and Troy Peteri keep building the marital difficulties between Richard and his wife, Vanessa. Who’s cheating on whom in this relationship? Or, have they just lost complete trust in each other, that no one has been unfaithful? The duo manages to skillfully transition from one genre to another. What starts out as a police procedural becomes a fugitive-on-the-run chapter and finally turns into a haunted house tale.

ABATTOIR’s cinematic panels by the gifted artists (Bing Cansino, Dennis Calero, and Rodell Noora) elevate the well-crafted script. The artists digitally paint realism with such detailed precision. The artwork takes a step further into surrealism as Richard begins having feverish nightmares. These hallucinatory sequences are the issue’s major highlights. The illustrations are just striking to look at and yet menacing at the same time.

Ready to be made into a movie, ABATTOIR #3, a miniseries of six issues, carries a foreboding sense of dread and suspense throughout. You shouldn’t miss out on this wickedly fresh take on the haunted house genre. Readers will be eagerly awaiting the fourth issue because of the eyebrow-raising cliffhanger. You definitely want to know where the story is going after this ending. The issue is out in stores now and you can also order ABBATOIR here .

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