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A solid combination of hard-boiled noir and horror, CRIMINAL MACABRE: THE CAL MCDONALD MYSTERIES OMNIBUS Vol. 1 (Dark Horse Comics) stars unconventional Cal McDonald, a pill-popping, alcoholic private eye who specializes in the paranormal. As the only line of defense between Los Angeles and the monsters that lurk in the shadows, McDonald has his hands full in this extensive collection that's not to be missed...

CRIMINAL MACABRE is a terrific introduction to the series. In this nonlinear narrative, Cal and his ghoulish associate Mo'Lock attempt to prevent a plague that threatens an endless horde of vampires, werewolves and zombies. In "Love Me Tenderloin," a missing-persons case develops into an all-out battle with a giant meat monster. "Last Train to Deadsville" starts off with a hilarious fight sequence with Cal and an Egyptian mummy, and ends on a bad note as Cal's investigation leads him to a demonic succubus.

For fans of Stephen King's CHRISTINE, Cal has to confront his own haunted car from Hell in "Supernatural Freak Machine." Elsewhere, Dr. Polynice, Cal's nemesis, has escaped from prison intent on taking revenge against Cal. After the shocking conclusion of this eerie tale, Cal will never be the same again.

Author Steve Niles has created an antihero full of charm and dark humor. Cal drowns himself in booze and pills, forever haunted by the image of a headless zombie chasing after him when he was eight years old. Suicidal and trigger-happy, hardened and violent, he takes his anger out on the supernatural.

The art transitions from the gritty illustrations of 30 DAYS OF NIGHT's Ben Templesmith to the expressionistic images of SANDMAN's Kelly Jones. Templesmith's style is experimental and, at times, often layered in shadows. Jones depicts Cal more as a fallible protagonist who ends up hurting himself during his epic battles, yet uninterested in being taken in for medical care.

CRIMINAL MACABRE is a fantastic read from start to finish. Horror comic fans will enjoy this extensive collection of four trade paperbacks, a sketchbook and one-shot story.

For more on CRIMINAL MACABRE: THE CAL MCDONALD MYSTERIES OMNIBUS Vol. 1, click here .