

## “RISERS: Volume 1” (Graphic Novel Review)

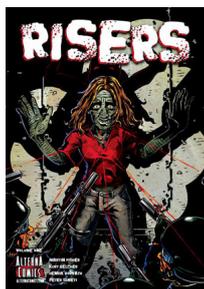
Written by Michael Koopmans  
Saturday, 17 April 2010 08:37

---



Zombies, zombies, zombies, zombies and more zombies. It seems like everyone and their mothers love the undead in this day and age. These days, anywhere you go, you can purchase something ghoulish-related, including comic shops.

So many zombie comics have flooded the shelves recently, many with little to no ambition. The pleasure I got out of reading the same old flesheating tales was very short-lived. As much as the walking dead seek human flesh, I crave a fresh take on the subgenre. And although it has its flaws, and is by no means groundbreaking, Alterna Comics' RISERS is a title I will stand behind solely for its refreshing originality.



“Riser” is the term used to describe someone who dies with some secret unfinished business, unwillingly gets a second chance at life as a zombie and must right the wrong from their previous life before they can finally rest in peace. The purpose of their resurrection could be anything from seeking forgiveness from a certain person to finally professing their love to an individual. A riser usually has an idea as to the purpose of their rebirth; however, our heroine Annette has no clue. Rejected by her family after she came back from the grave, she has nowhere to go, is starting to decay and is feeling a tad hungry.

That's where Ned Petersen comes into play. Ned and his small staff run a home for risers that both helps them come to terms with their secrets and keeps them off the streets (the living are not too fond of the walking dead). Along with Ned and a few risen friends, Annette must now find a purpose in her second chance, fend off some radical Christians and finally grab some grub. Don't worry: Although these aren't your typical cold-blooded zombies, they still enjoy their meat raw.

## “RISERS: Volume 1” (Graphic Novel Review)

Written by Michael Koopmans  
Saturday, 17 April 2010 08:37

---

It's very satisfying to read an undead tale with such emotional weight as this one. And it's told almost entirely from a zombie's perspective to boot! Writer Martin Fisher does a superb job of fleshing out each character, presenting you with reasons to actually give a damn what happens to every last one of them. Like the premise, Kurt Belcher's pencil work is quite original. You will be hard-pressed to find many curved lines in his thick, lightless and angular style. The duo create a world that, unlike most containing the undead, has substance and meaning.

One of my few complaints with this story is that it seems only a select few who die become risers. In other words, they are the only individuals seeking some form of closure. Now be honest: If you were to die today, would you have no regrets at all? Wouldn't there be something you wished you had or hadn't done? I'd assume pretty much everyone dies with at least a secret or two. I know this is just a plot device to introduce us to Annette, but nonetheless, it still slightly tainted my suspension of disbelief. In addition, the pacing kept me from really loving this book. It seems like it takes 10 pages just to get a point across that could have easily been explained in one or two. Having to trudge through the same material over and over again really takes the edge off the positive experience one gets out of reading this book.

Fisher also has the tendency to be a little too elaborate when it comes to writing out the characters' inner emotions. I found myself thinking that many of the plot's more powerful points could have had more impact without any text. I understood what Annette was going through, and I genuinely felt connected to her, but I wonder if the writer didn't have enough faith in his readers' ability to feel the impact at first glance.

However, in the grand scheme of things, these complaints are minor. RISERS Volume 1 still carries an impressive and fun concept, and gives a new level of significance to the increasingly trite zombie.

Published in 2008, RISERS Volume 1 collects the complete miniseries and is available for purchase through Alterna's [on-line store](#), among others. So if you love zombie comics but are getting tired of all the rehashed plots, do yourself a favor and check this graphic novel out. It's hard for a ghoulish lover to find an original take on the subgenre nowadays, but rest assured, this one's worth its weight in raw meat.



## “RISERS: Volume 1” (Graphic Novel Review)

Written by Michael Koopmans  
Saturday, 17 April 2010 08:37

---

{comments on}