

"THE MILKMAN MURDERS" (Comic Review)

Written by Svetlana Fedotov

Tuesday, 11 September 2012 08:37



The American dream is a dream like no other. Jobs line streets of gold, vacuum cleaners and TVs sit in every house, and families gathered each night to eat hot meals made lovingly by Mom. Everything seemed perfect; an idea of Middle America that has inspired generations. But underneath every love story sits a horror so dark and disturbing that Norman Rockwell himself would spin in his grave if he ever got wind of it—a horror of family secrets and broken dreams, where things beyond the human redemption can happen even in the quietest of suburbia. This is the premise for THE MILKMAN MURDERS, a comic so thoroughly fucked up and heart-wrenching, that if you finish reading it unscathed, you probably don't have a heart. In fact, feel free to feel bad about yourself right now.



In a “cookie-cutter,” suburban neighborhood, we find our heroine, Barbara Vale methodically preparing dinner for her loving family. As they enter the home, we are treated to a typical family scene of mother, father, and two beautiful children gathered around the dinner table. Except here, the father begins slapping mother around, and the children are loud-mouthed brats who couldn't give a shit about mom's dinner. This is where the story of our perfect family slowly begins to break down and a whole bag of insanity lets loose.

Barbara slowly begins to unveil the truth behind her family: her son is a psychopathic animal killer, her daughter is sleeping with half the staff at her school, and her husband is addicted to drugs and beats Barbara so badly that she frequently needs stitches. Despite all this, Barbara still holds out hope that her family can work it out, until one day a milkman breaks into her house and rapes her, finally pushing her over the edge. This is the turning point, a push to a

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no-man's land that Barbara never digs herself out of, and sets off a chain of events that changes her life forever.

THE MILKMAN MURDERS stays with you. So unbelievably brutal and unapologetic, the story makes you question the people and families around you and wonder what sort of demons they may be hiding. The author, Joe Casey, does a brilliant job with conveying that sense of disappointment and terror that Barbara feels with her brood, even almost making you feel sorry for them when she finally snaps. The art by Steve Parkhouse reflects the more innocent styling of the Sunday newspaper funnies, which really help add to the surreal sense of the entire work. Though THE MILKMAN MURDERS was originally published in 2004 by Dark Horse Comics, it is Image Comics that is finally releasing a hard-covered graphic novel that collects the four issue miniseries.

