



The Creep

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A young boy puts a gun in his mouth and pulls the trigger. The police don't care - not about his death or the death of his best friend two months earlier. The dead boy's mom seeks help from an old flame that's employed as a detective. What she doesn't know is that he suffers from a physical deformity that manifests at midlife. Will the detective's freakish appearance get in the way of uncovering the terrible secrets of these two teenagers? This collection features additional art by Frank Miller, Mike Mignola, Ryan Sook, and Tonci Zonjic.

Collects issues #0-#4.

The Creep Details

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From Reader Review The Creep for online ebook

Jan Philipzig says

A private detective of freakish appearance, his grieving old flame who has lost her son to suicide, the mysteriously related suicide of the son's best friend, an estranged car-dealing father, a mentally disturbed grandfather... Arcudi and Case deliver a character-driven, brooding, stylish noir that takes the genre's outsider theme to the extreme. Bottom line: not as splashy as something like Miller's *Sin City*, but with its own charm.

Dani Shuping says

"The Creep" on the cover appears to be a typical monster mystery. Someone...or something, has caused two boys, best friends, to kill themselves a month apart. The police...don't care or connect that the deaths might be related. Why would they when they have enough other things to worry about? But the mother of one of the boys wants answers. Why did he kill himself? She calls on an old flame that is now a private detective and he finds that the monster that he's looking for...might be the worst one of all.

Arcudi weaves a powerful story together one that will lead the reader to an unexpected ending. When I started the book I thought I was looking at a typical monster mystery, that something dark and gruesome demon would have caused the death, I mean Arcudi writes for Hellboy why wouldn't he continue it? But it's clear that he's learned lessons from Hellboy and instead of giving us a typical monster, introduces our worst fears and leaving us hanging on the edge of our seats. The artwork in these issues are fantastic, with just the great character designs, and even better color choices that let the reader feel the darkness creeping in.

If you like horror/mystery then you'll def. want to pick this book up. I give it 4 out of 5 stars.

ARC provided by NetGalley

Meri says

This aptly named book was very creepy. The hero is the best part: he has acromegaly, which complicates his life. He investigates the suicides of two boys, a fascinating tale that involves a crazy homeless grandfather, a smarmy used car salesman father, and two grieving mothers: one who wants to know the truth, and the other who wants nothing to do with it. It packs a lot into a short story. Well done.

Mark says

The first chapter of "The Creep" made its debut in the pages of "Dark Horse Presents," which is where I was stumbled across it. I read the first eight-page installment, and then stopped. Even at that early stage, I realized it was something I would enjoy so much more as complete book. So I set it aside and waited for the trade.

I'm glad that I did. The wait between installments, from the first in April 2012 to the last in December, probably would've killed me otherwise. This is a spectacular book, one of the finest I've had the pleasure to read.

The story follows Oxel Karnhus, a private detective. Oxel has a rare condition known as acromegaly, a disease that causes excess growth hormone, disfiguring the face and extremities. The most famous case of acromegaly was 1930s and 40s Hollywood monster man, Rondo Hatton, known for playing a character called the Creeper, which is where this book gets its title from. Acromegaly does not play a major role in the plot though. This isn't a story about acromegaly, but rather a story about a character that just happens to have acromegaly. That's not to say the disease could easily be stripped away from this book altogether either. It is in fact tied deeply to the core theme of perception versus reality in this book, a constant physical reminder that things are not always as they seem.

Most of the best comics find a way to tell the story that is unique to the medium. "The Creep" has artist Jonathan Case employ two distinct art styles, one for literal reality, the other for a constructed reality, whether it be a memory, a dream, the visions of the mentally ill, or an imagined reconstruction of past events. The mechanics of these dual styles are explained very early on when Oxel receives a letter from his high school sweetheart, Stephanie. He applies what he already knows about Stephanie, then adds and subtracts elements as he learns more from the letter, such as when he learns she's divorced, she takes her wedding ring off her finger. Right away the reader learns that this stuff is subjective, that it's about what the mind's eye sees.

I found this was a great way to visualize Oxel putting the puzzle together as he replays different versions of the same scenes. It really got me engaged in his process, but also showed him repeatedly hitting walls. There was a great moment when he was looking through the sketchbook of a dead boy, and Oxel is thinking, "What was he really thinking about? Is that here? Can I see that?" And of course he can't. This book is full of characters trying to put themselves in someone else's shoes, but for all their trying, they come up short. This disconnect is beautifully handled.

I should mention Jonathan Case. His work on this book is beautiful. He redesigned Oxel for this story, as the previous version from the early nineties was very much a caricature of Rondo Hatton. Oxel's design in Case's hands is appropriately monstrous without crossing the line and becoming a monster. Case has a sensitive approach to the character, with a focus on making him relatable, and great care has been taken with Oxel's eyes. I read this book much slower than I normally would. Something about the combination of Case's art with John Arcudi's script demanded that I linger a little on each page. I enjoy an artist that understands body language, and Case really gets this. The way a person stands says so much about the scene, or in the case of the constructed reality sequences, it says so much about the person who is doing the imagining.

John Arcudi blew me away with this book. He took on the difficult topic of suicide, and he handled it in such an honest way. He isn't interested in judgment, or solving the issue at all. This isn't an after school special. Each of the characters Oxel interviews in the course of his investigations has been touched by suicide and is coping (or not coping) in their own way. Each of the major characters in this book are all motivated by the same thing, a need for catharsis, especially Oxel. He resists it, but that need is what propels the book forward. It is a melancholy book, but I wouldn't call it bleak. I found the reading experience to be meditative and cathartic.

As for the trade itself, it's a digest-sized, hardcover. I hadn't noticed the smaller pages until after I finished it, and I don't think it in any way harms the presentation of the work. The volume features a nine-page

sketchbook in the back with notes by John Arcudi and Jonathan Case with a focus on the various covers for the single issues. The last two pages present various takes to a single chilling panel from the final chapter, which I found to be incredibly cool. I wish a few more pages had been spared for material like this, but that's a very minor quibble.

This book isn't going to be for everyone, I know that. It's moody and sombre, and firmly rooted in the real world. However, I absolutely loved it. I think this is one of the best things John Arcudi's ever written, and in Jonathan Case he found the perfect artist to compliment the story he wanted to tell. I cannot recommend this enough. "The Creep" is a beautiful book, one that has found a place of particular pride on my bookshelf.

karen says

i may have enjoyed this more if i hadn't read it on the computer screen. there is something about graphic novels that demands a tactile appreciation. a holding onto and turning of pages, a scrutiny of the art and the shading of a line, even to an art-moron like me, who doesn't know a chiaroscuro from an achromatic. (okay, i do, but is just example)

i have learned that reading it on a computer, squinting as the zoom-in feature causes the words to get a little blurred-together, is just not as immersive an experience as reading a book-in-hand.

and i didn't even realize that our detective-hero had acromegaly until so many characters were responding to his appearance. i thought he just had an exaggerated noir-head.

so that's my review of the experience of graphic-novel-on-ereader.

onto the book itself.

oxel karnhus is a sad and lonely private eye who left his job at aetna to strike out on his own once his disease began to seriously hit him, with its migraines and fatigue. he hunkers down to live the rest of his life with the small comforts of alcohol and prostitutes and braves the taunts of hooligans and the stares of children on a daily basis.

one day, he receives a letter from his old college flame telling him her teenage son has just killed himself, on the heels of his best friend doing the same. the local police do not see a mystery here, but a mother knows. and she wants oxel to figure out what really happened.

the answer is not one i saw coming, so it gets points for that. there are plenty of red herrings, and some pretty bleak commentaries on mental and physical disorders and the way we remember people in our minds vs. the reality and the ravages of time.

i loved the cover art - it has that haunting air that made me think this was going to be a supernatural tale in some way, plus arcudi's track record suggested this would be the case. but no. it is just a straight-up detective story with a starkly realistic and depressing tone throughout.

so for noir-fans who like their graphic novels on the dark side, i would just say, wait until it comes out as something you can hold and appreciate, because i think it will be better that way.

Majanka says

Book Review originally published here: <http://www.iheartreading.net/mini-rev...>

Two young boys kill themselves months apart. Nobody seems to care, so the boy's Mom calls in the help from a deformed detective. Atmospheric reading, a noir graphic novel where tragedy meets mystery and suspense, and one of the most intriguing casts of characters I've read about in a while. A definite recommendation for fans of horror / mystery.

Dianne Hamilton says

Really enjoyed this. I don't read a lot of graphic novels - very few in fact - but this was very well crafted. I wasn't expecting such a well rounded story from this medium and the climax is actually quite tragic. The characters are engaging and the artwork is beautiful. Highly recommended

Darren says

A private detective who suffers from an illness that causes physical deformity from mid-life sets out on a case to investigate the suicides of two friends, one of which is the son of his old flame.

The Creep is predominantly about appearances, and how appearances can deceive. It is a very human story, revealing aspects of its characters slowly, through the detail, rather than presenting a thundering, action packed narrative. It is, in short, evidence of what graphic novels do best: using art and narrative to reveal something of ourselves through the lives of others. It's a graphic novel for those who love good storytelling, managing a select small number of characters well, holding back and revealing key information with skill. Highly recommended.

Simon Sweetman says

It seemed a great idea, I loved the set-up and the artwork, but the story is a mess. Still, it wasn't hard work.

Jonathan Forisha says

Picked it up on a whim based on the cover art alone because I very much believe that you CAN judge a book by its cover.

This was a quick, and good, read! The art was straightforward and complemented the story well, and the story itself kept unfolding to spread new light on its small cast, which I appreciated. Arcudi did a good job injecting humanity into his characters.

It fell back on cliches of the Private Detective genre a bit for the setup, but I enjoyed our flawed protagonist's backstory so much that I was able to forgive it.

Lindsay says

Here I go again, reviewing yet another graphic novel. Yup. I'm a fan. And while I do like a lot of different comics, I am an especially huge Dark Horse fan! How can I not be?! The comics hold a certain dark mystery, and *The Creep* is no exception.

I have to start out with our protagonist, Oxel Karnh, as he is not your typical detective. (I apologize if I'm getting the last name wrong here. It isn't used often in the story, and I only had a digital copy. The quality degrades when I try to zoom in and read it) I object a little to the synopsis describing him as having a "freakish appearance". He suffers from acromegaly, which is an excess of growth hormone. There are many manifestations of the deformity, but in this case, Oxel is large, and his face and hands are a different proportion than most people would be used to. Hardly what I would call "freakish", though Oxel's self esteem has clearly been affected by the public's treatment of him. Despite all of this, or maybe because of it, he has become a great detective.

The plot is obviously dark, as Oxel investigates a suicide, with no apparent motive. Oxel gets a letter from an ex-girlfriend, beside herself with grief at the loss of her son. She has nowhere else to turn, since the police don't think it warrants investigation. Oxel, however, decides to help. While the dialogue, itself, is solid, the plot contains a few holes. On the plus side, I wasn't aware of them at all while reading. I was completely drawn into the story, and it wasn't until afterwards that I started to question how the story was built.

The artwork is where I truly felt pulled forward. Jonathan Case presents some fabulous work, but there are also the individual issue covers by guest artists. First off, Case's work is pretty standard on the most part. What got me were the past scenes, where the drawings felt more sketched. Here is where the true artistry was displayed. Although the lines were less defined, I felt like there was a clear emotion being conveyed.

For the graphic novel aficionado, this volume contains a series of artwork at the back. I only wish I had my hands on a hard copy, so that I could bask in their glory. As it was, I am thankful to Netgalley for providing me with the digital copy. Certainly better than having to wait until the release date in May!

John says

"*The Creep*" by John Arcudi manages to combine various elements that elevate what could be a typical story regularly churned out on television shows into something that is succinct and poetic: its noirish quality adds that dark menacing tone to a tragic story, which makes for a rather depressing tale, but whose sympathetic and quiet main character, who is suffering from a physical deformity, makes the experience of reading this surprisingly and thankfully not fully unpleasant, expected from its depressing sensibilities; instead, it is more of a painful melancholic unraveling. It is a short read, but its brevity makes it more haunting and sorrowful.

One of the best stand-alone graphic novels I have read. Highly recommended, specifically during fall, when the season's inexplicably bittersweet ruffles of the falling leaves correspond to the tale's pervading autumnal sadness.

Michael says

Solide gezeichnet und erzählt, musste ich THE CREEP in einem Rutsch durchlesen. Es ist die melancholische Story eines an Akromegalie erkrankten erfolglosen Privatdetektivs, der einen Auftrag annimmt, den er besser abgelehnt hätte:

Nach 20 Jahren schreibt ihm seine große Schulliebe, nicht weil sie nun geschieden ist, sondern weil sich ihr Sohn Curtis das Leben genommen hat. Unter Teenagern ist die Suizidrate skandalös hoch, doch in diesem Fall könnte es andere Ursachen für den Freitod geben, denn Curtis Freund hat sich zwei Monate zuvor das Leben genommen.

Was hinter den Suiziden steckt ist eine schreckliche Geschichte, die John Arcudi langsam und empathisch erzählt. Bis kurz vor Schluß habe ich mich gefragt, was geschehen sein könnte, und dass die Auflösung schließlich nicht an den Haaren hebegezogen ist, hat mir besonders gut gefallen.

Eine düstere, zuweilen vielleicht etwas pathetisch erzählte Geschichte, die mir gut gefallen hat und die darauf wartet, verfilmt zu werden.

Fabian says

Promising premise aside, the story is muddled and, frankly, not as interesting as first indicated. It's simply NOT one of the better graphic novels I have read of late. (Plus, what's the deal with the protagonist's disfigurement? It does NOTHING for the "eh" plot.)

Days later, forgot what all of this was about...

Mike says

I had higher hopes for this one. Maybe that was the problem? Aside from (to its credit) a fairly shocking ending, I wasn't getting a ton of "feels" out of this one. The main character is supposed to have a rare disease that bloats his features or thereabouts, but he just looks like Dick Tracy if he played linebacker. There's nothing particularly out of sorts with his physical appearance in this artwork. As a result there was a notable disconnect for me when other characters commented on how he looked. This is strange given that Arcudi claims the artist nailed it..

The story has some mystery to it, but was never gripping. I didn't get all the sweeping emotions that were quoted on the back cover. A pretty ho-hum private detective story with a bit of a surprise near the end and okay emotion on the part of the characters.
