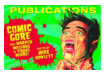

2010 was a great year for fright fans at the comic shop. Shocks and thrills didn't come in the form of new original series, however. No, much like the majority of my DVD purchases this year, the bulk of newly-acquired prized comic possessions are reissues of once hard to find, long out-of-print gems. **CREEPY/EERIE Archives** 2010 saw Dark Horse's continued release of a fright fan's wet dream- their stunningly crafted CREEPY and EERIE Archives. Seven hardcover volumes were released this year (four CREEPY and three EERIE), and although $49.95 a pop may seem steep, it's peanuts when considering the historical significance of these intelligently written and exceptionally illustrated tales that marked the first resurgence of horror comics. No comic (let alone horror comic) aficionado should be caught without these in their collection. (Available here) **DEADWORLD: Classic Vol. 1**

Tired of scouring eBay at all hours of the night for the past ten years, feverishly searching for those hard to find issues of DEADWORLD, only to pay an arm and a leg once you find one? No? Oh, well I have! IDW's first volume of THE ORIGINAL epic zombie comic was a must buy for me. In addition to the first seven gore-filled issues of the 1987 series, this book includes a collection of Vince Locke artwork including pinups and covers, as well as the original eight-page comic that started it all! It was "zombies" before "zombies" were cool! (Available here)

Dick Briefer's FRANKENSTEIN

The first volume in Yoe Book's "The Horror Comic Book Masters Library" series is a doozy! Compiled with love, you don't need to be a fan to appreciate the care given to this book. Sometimes kooky, sometimes creepy this interpretation of Mary Shelly's loved creature was originally published back in the 1940's and 50's. Accompanying the wonderfully wicked comics are rare photos of the artist, original art, letters, and drawings by Alex Toth inspired by Briefer. It will make an instant fan out of anyone! (Available here) **EEEK!** This four-issue anthology series may have slipped under your radar when it was originally published back in 2005 by Rat Race Comix. Thankfully, the kind folks over at Asylum Press have collected them into one trade paperback, released back in September. Author/illustrator Jason Paulos creates 15 tales of terror that are chock full of ghastly graphics, ironic comeuppance and that sick sense of humor reminiscent of horror comics' heyday. (Available here)

FOUR COLOR FEAR: FORGOTTEN HORROR COMICS OF THE 1950s

Fantagraphics Books knew exactly what I wanted for Halloween when they released this massive collection of never-before-reprinted, pre-Comics Code horror this past October. If you asked me to make a list of my all-time favorite comic artists, I'd just hand you this book, because all the greats are present in this terror tome; Jack Cole, Steve Ditko, Frank Frazetta, Alex Toth, Al Williamson, Basil Wolverton, Wally Wood, as well as many, many more! This is a truly amazing, thick collection of rare treats, as well as a nice reminder that EC wasn't the only ones churning out the goods back in the 1950's. (Available here)

FRANKENCASTLE (PUNISHER #11-16)

Earlier this year, Rick Remender wrote a one-shot title, DARK REIGN: THE LIST, in which the Punisher is dismembered and decapitated by Daken. Following this, the main PUNISHER series was renamed FRANKENCASTLE. For a handful of genuinely enjoyable issues, Frank Castle is resurrected by Morbius and the Legion of Monsters as a Frankenstein's-Monster-esque, err.. monster. It joins up with the Legion of Monsters to help protect the monsters of Monster Metropolis from the Hunter of Monster Special Forces! Doesn't that sound awesome?! (Available here)

THE HORROR! THE HORROR!: COMIC BOOKS THE GOVERNMENT DIDN'T WANT YOU TO READ!

THE HORROR! is similar to FOUR COLOR FEAR in that it beautifully reprints a plethora of non-EC pre-code horror, but additionally woven throughout are over 100 devilishly delightful cover scans and a highly informative commentary by the book's compiler, Jim Trombetta. A detailed history and context for these stories and their creators are offered, as well as a detailed account of the often told, always tragic tale of the government censorship that led to the swift death of the horror comic. A bonus DVD features a rare 25-minute TV special from 1955 about the evil effects of comics on juvenile delinquency. (Available here)

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