

"BEDLAM #1" (Comic Review)

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The name, Bedlam instantly calls images of a mentally disturbed individual shuffling around the antique halls of an outdated psychiatric institution, while rattling his chains around like a ghost. Though that particular Bedlam has been cast aside for a more updated hospital, the name still evokes chills down our spines. The comic BEDLAM (out now from Image) is no exception when it comes bringing the same amount of brutality as its namesake, virtually dripping the pages in violence and eye-popping surprises while evoking a long-forgotten fear of the demented. The story will follow you from page one, all the way to the next three books you read.

The story opens up with a birds-eye view of mass slaughter instigated by a masked madman known only as Madder Red. Unfortunately for him, his rampage is brought to a sudden and brutal stop, though not before taking the lives of hundreds of men, women, and children. He is promptly tossed into the city's Bedlam, home for the mentally ill (AKA Bedlam Hospital). It is here the story begins to twist and turn on itself, pacing back and forth from Madder Red and his final attempt at breaking out of the hospital and the man who Madder Red is under the mask, James Franklin Tyse. Bouncing from Madder Red moments after the breakout and James's life months after, BEDLAM shines a light straight into the brain of a mass murderer, often leaving behind more questions than answers.

BEDLAM boasts everything a horror fan could want: violence, gore, and pure insanity. Writer Nick Spencer does a great job of making Tyse/Madder Red the perfect margarita mix of genius and crazy, while art from Riley Rossmo is as equally deranged as it is beautiful. Heavy on the angular lines and strong colors, his work is a perfect complement to the story. Though it's only the first issue, BEDLAM has the potential to become extremely large and you're going to want to be on that train when it takes off. It pushes boundaries and all sense and sensibilities; it's seriously awesome.

