

“BUMP” (Book Review)

Written by Alondra Rogers
Saturday, 16 July 2011 09:02



A grotesque serial killer with a penchant for wood carving and a dark entity team up for eerie house haunting and rabid bloodletting while the local sheriff works to keep his town and his daughter safe and the whole story under wraps, in Mark Kidwell's debut novel, BUMP.

This book, now available at Amazon.com, is a novelization of Kidwell's limited series comic of the same title published in 2007 by FANGORIA Comics. Kidwell is also a writer and artist for the zombie war comic '68. The story is part haunted house, part supernatural horror and part serial killer thriller. Edgar Dill lives on the outskirts of town with his mother and his growing collection of disturbing, life-sized wooden mannequins with some very human features. After the sheriff's daughter goes missing, he pays a visit to the Dills where all hell breaks loose. The sheriff saves his daughter, preventing her from being the 11th victim of the discovered serial killer. Instead of handling the case as normal police business, the sheriff and deputies seal the house, conceal all the evidence and attempt to live out the rest of their lives pretending none of it ever happened. That plan fails when the darkness in the house gathers its strength for a comeback.

The action scenes in BUMP are fast and cinematic, in kind with Kidwell's previous work in a graphic format. Edgar Dill's wood carved creations are ingenious, scary and disgusting and by themselves make the book worthy of a read. The town setting, the characters, the woods and even the killer (inspired by real life Plainfield Ghoul, Ed Gein) are all classic horror standbys from the past 30 years and lend a wistfulness to the story any horror fan should enjoy. Without overdoing the analysis, BUMP also makes a statement about the "after" for female victims of violent crimes. Dill's mannequins remain his just as Bundy or Gacy's victims remain forever remain theirs: death serves as no relief.

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With lots of sex and violence, some creative monsters and downright good story, BUMP is sure to please, but literature it's not. The writing can be overly concerned with details that sometimes distract from the story; the female characters are often making silly porno puns at intimate moments—also distracting. The characters are all familiar clichés, yet this seems to work for the story giving it a comfortable nostalgic horror feel. The omniscient narration also includes the perspective of the unnamable evil that haunts the Dill Farm, which just doesn't work. There are still certain things that remain scary because they are unexplained: the feelings and motivation of a demonic force is one such thing. A professional edit would easily solve these issues for the self-published book.

BUMP is a sharp horror story that isn't afraid of its own gruesome content. It's appropriately brutal, familiar with some points of frightening creativity. Though the writing is sometimes unrefined it's not unskilled. It's a great story to fill your dark and stormy nights that will cause you to look askance at trembling branches and listen harder for the bump in the night.

