

“NIGHT & FOG” (Comic Review)

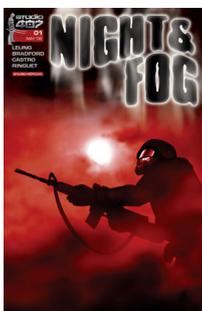
Written by Rich Mallery

Saturday, 09 October 2010 07:48



Using buried Nazi secrets, the government’s plans to create a race of supersoldiers backfires when the experiment unleashes hell on earth. In Studio 407’s new sci-fi/horror comic series NIGHT & FOG, author Alex Leung creates a nonstop, action-packed franchise that aims to appeal to a wide spectrum of genre fans—from those seeking old-school creature-invasion stories to gore enthusiasts craving pure adrenaline-soaked mayhem—but falls short on all counts.

At least this isn’t a slow read and gets right to the point fast, jerking the reader through rapid location shifts and light-speed character introductions. NIGHT & FOG doesn’t give the reader much time to take a breath, let alone grow accustomed to the surroundings. A metaphorical seatbelt is required here because once the ride starts, it doesn’t stop until the final page is turned.



Unfortunately, this is more of a minus than a plus. In any survival-horror story, character development is key in order to create attachment between the reader and the doomed victims. However, the people in NIGHT & FOG are as thin as the paper they are printed on. The tough-as-nails soldier; the sociopathic scientist; the valiant babysitter risking her life to protect her charges—the folks populating NIGHT & FOG are nothing more than clichés who do little but curse and give stage cues.

As simple as the dialogue is, the drawing is equally minimal. Other than a beard here and there, the characters are rarely given any distinguishing features, and are for the most part interchangeable. There are no heroes, no drop-dead gorgeous femme fatales here to root for, unless you’re the type who needs to see the good guys triumph regardless of who they are.

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Even the monsters—and there are many—are basically faceless and exist only for target practice.

The pages of NIGHT & FOG are dripping with unappealing shades of green and red. Most of the images resemble sketches, and this reviewer wouldn't be shocked to learn that the issues he saw were unfinished. It's possible the artists were going for a minimalist approach as in the 30 DAYS OF NIGHT series, but where those books are filled with creepy, unsettling artwork, NIGHT & FOG feels slightly amateur.

Luckily, events happen so fast in NIGHT & FOG that the reader won't spend much time examining the drawings...which is a shame, since half the joy of reading a comic or graphic novel is being enraptured by the collaboration of storyteller and artist. There isn't much to enrapture readers in NIGHT & FOG, and even those with a mosquito's attention span will be bored after the first chapter.

But perhaps there's something key that this writer missed. NIGHT & FOG is currently being developed into a feature film by SUPERMAN RETURNS producer Gil Adler and Shane McCarthy, so there must be something underlying, some saving grace that makes this work something other than more dead trees? Sorry to be a pessimist, but chances are the film will be another CGI-filled, uninspired mess that will pack the multiplexes for the opening weekend before being replaced by a Jennifer Aniston film. Perhaps it will even be in 3-D. (NIGHT & FOG, not the Jennifer Aniston film.)



{comments on}