Jam-packed with crime, sex, and horror, THE CHILL (Vertigo Crime; out now) is an exciting erotic thriller about a serial killer seducing and sacrificing young men in a sadistic manner. Detectives are having a difficult time tracking down a murderer who can change faces at ease. This fast-paced graphic novel consists of a gritty police procedural mixed with slasher elements.

At first, Mike Sheridan thought his trip to NYC with his two best buddies would be a blast. After having too much to drink, Mike suddenly sees an incredibly gorgeous vixen at the bar. During their flirtatious conservation, he never realized she was directly luring him to a trap. Mike never thought his head would be chopped off at the end of the night.

Mike’s decapitated head is left hanging from a tree for all to see. None of the concrete facts make sense to Detective Joseph Pavano. Witnesses claim they saw Sheridan, the victim, leaving the nightclub with an attractive woman. But none of them can describe what the person exactly looks like. The videotapes reveal Sheridan actually picking up an elderly woman, who may be about 80 years old.

Adding another piece to the puzzle is ex-Boston detective Martin Cleary, who claims to know the identity of the killer. Cleary, an angry drunk reeking of booze and cigarettes, believes a father and daughter committed the murders. The daughter morphs into any man’s desire, while the father butchers the victims in his lair. The brutal slayings are part of a ritual to achieve immortality.

Pavano suspects Cleary knows more than what he’s saying. Withholding a dark secret, Cleary

has an old score to settle with the two killers, which started a century ago. As the serial killers run loose in the streets of Manhattan, the two detectives constantly butt heads, while the FBI blocks their investigation at every turn. The hard-boiled lawmen form an uneasy alliance while the killers are stalking their next victim.

Bestselling author Jason Starr (PANIC ATTACK) has a fresh take on the snappy dialogue, letting characters breathe through their hard-edged accents, whether from Brooklyn or Boston. The fast-paced plot, however, unnecessarily slows down when the characters over-explain their reasoning. Refreshingly, Starr puts major effort in keeping the supernatural setting immersed in Druid mythology.

The black and white artwork by Mick Bertilorenzi saves the story from its sluggish momentum. The panels are layered with interesting camera angles and well-detailed facial expressions. In a single panel, the crime scenes are crammed with police officers, detectives and medical examiners, who are all doing something at the same time. Bertilorenzi splatters the page with gore, never shying away from decapitations and body dismemberment.

THE CHILL keeps readers well entertained with its solid plot. The dialogue is not afraid to be vulgar, nor does the artwork hold back on the violence either. Be sure not to miss out on the fun.

{jcomments on}