The introduction to Ape Entertainment’s three-part miniseries FREAKSHOW (debuting January 26) presents a violent and bleak future, where monsters become the last hope for humanity. When a mad scientist becomes hell-bent on world domination, a group of deformed mutants must band together to stop him. Noteworthy and original, this comic has a lot to offer readers.

Because of his charisma and bravado, the Superman-like Vanguard became the champion of a proud nation. With complete faith in him, the populace expected this superhero to stop the latest terrorist attack. Vanguard unexpectedly failed, allowing a toxic spill and massive explosion to occur, decimating cities and destroying the environment. In this apocalyptic future, no one can step outside without wearing a gas mask.

Inside the quarantined zone lurks a group of hideous monsters, unwanted survivors of the disaster. These freaks of nature used to be human, but are now hunted by the military. Rot is a walking, talking zombie; a single touch from him can spread a flesheating infection. Fog is a living mist, without a physical body to call his own. Psychosis is a telepath who aggressively invades your mind and twists your fears. Critter is a scorpionlike creature who has been trained to kill with his spear-tipped tail. Stronghold, the cold-hearted leader of the group, is an angry, hulking beast.

The uniformed world blames these creatures for the terrorist attack. Only maniacal scientist Dr. Gaghen knows the truth; the attack was just a taste of what he can cook up in his laboratory. If the monsters don’t stop him, Dr. Gaghen will unleash an even greater disaster upon the world.

Writers David Server and Jackson Lanzing have spent tremendous effort building the apocalyptic setting and characters. At a gradual pace, they reveal clues about their freakish characters, giving each member of the group a chance to breathe. Their outlook on society contains a profound message about how the media plays around with the term “terrorists.” In a different approach, its the monsters instead of superheroes risking their lives to save the world. Joe Suitor’s artwork is quite pulpy and effective, with each monster standing out on their own due to their specific designs. Thanks to its use of close-ups, the drawings provoke sympathy for these twisted characters that the writing might not present.

“FREAKSHOW” #1 closes on a shocking cliffhanger that will undoubtedly entice readers to come back for more. Comic book fans will have no difficulty rooting for these freaks, and this miniseries is highly recommended for its stylish artwork and attention-grabbing storytelling. To order, visit Ape Entertainment’s official website .

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