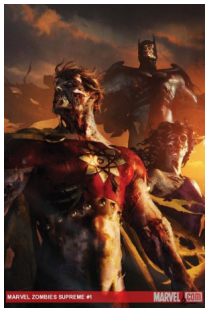
Five years ago this month, the folks over at Marvel Comics were in the midst of releasing a unique and innovative five-issue limited series titled MARVEL ZOMBIES. Due to the comic’s overwhelming success, the publisher, expectantly, developed dollar signs in its eyes and quickly chose quantity over quality, producing a slew of sequels and one-shots that have been flooding the comic racks ever since. The first few were entertaining and, at times, encapsulated the wit and ridiculous nature that worked so well in the original. But rehashed plots and lesser-known creative teams caused the series to become much like its titular creatures—it just wouldn’t die!



This month saw the release of MARVEL ZOMBIES: SUPREME #1, the first in a five-issue series. Unlike its predecessors, this 10th addition to the franchise has no relation to previous chapters and offers a cast of unknown humans against a group of barely cared for superheroes-as-zombies (my apologies to all three of you Squadron Supreme fans out there). Another change is that the spotlight no longer shines on the undead. This time around, a character named Jill Harper and her special-ops team are the focus of this first issue, mainly investigating strange events at the underground research facility, Project P.E.G.A.S.U.S. You see, the Squadron Supreme, once heroic defenders of justice, have become a motley crew of vicious cannibalistic supercreatures. Who did this to them? Can Harper’s team stop the disease from spreading outside the facility and devouring the world? A mad scientist was hinted at as a mastermind, but frankly, it’s all so familiar that I’m not really sure if I care or not.

My emotions were nowhere to be found while breezing through this issue. No real reasons to care for the special-ops unit’s well being or to be frightened by the threat of the B-list heroes were present. And where previous chapters always delivered in the humor department no mater how unoriginal in plot, this one falls flat on its face with a handful of cannibal jokes that come off as rewordings from older installments. Gore? Sure, it’s there, but artist Fernando Blanco’s style seems more at home representing superheroes that don’t rip off heads for a nosh. There is, visually, little mood or atmosphere to accompany the gruesome subject matter provided by

writer Frank Paraffin (Remember? That guy who butchered the HAUNTED TANK a few years back). The cover art is the only redeeming quality I found, which is pretty much just Michael Komark doing the best Arthur Sudyam impression I’ve ever seen.

With four issues remaining, here’s hoping the creators have something up their sleeves other than formulaic zombie fare. Let’s also pray Marvel gets the point and finally puts this slowly dying franchise out of its misery. Remember, aim for the head!

{jcomments on}