

Everybody seems interested in figuring out where the comic book industry is headed. For my part, I was certain they'd already begun streamlining the process; selling movie deals as soon as a superhero's spandex is designed. I haven't exactly changed my mind there, but recently something *funny* did come along—and I don't mean feel-good funny. I mean you should check your basement 'cause something smells...

That funny little item is ***Echoes***, by Josh Fialkov (*Tumor, Pilot Season: Alibi*) and Rahsan Ekedal (*Creepy*). Maybe you've heard of it but haven't had a chance to read it yet... that's because its first printing sold out in just one day! When something moves that quickly among comic fandom, you know it's worth the read, but man, I was unprepared.

This is not your usual comic.☐☐

Echoes is dark, it's noir, it's horror and suspense all in the classic American tradition and it's part of Top Cow's re-launched "Minotaur Press" imprint which promises to be a home for this kind of independently-styled comic. Currently there isn't much like *Echoes* on the market, and it's so well done that it really stands out as a fresh testament to what kind of stories comics can and should be telling.

Reading the first issue was like waking up in someone else's nightmare, with emotions made almost tangible in the grayscale. The protagonist suffers from schizophrenia, inherited from his dying father, and as events unfold that element of uncertainty really starts to characterize the writing and the art—from pathos seeping panel montages to the internal agony of the main character contrasted against Ekedal's black and white "real world." Without realizing it I connected with the hero; wanting him to wake up, wanting him to find redemption from the path he's apparently sliding down.

I don't usually do horror. Furthermore, I'm not used to reading books without color. At once, however, I felt absorbed into this book, into its superbly crafted atmosphere. By the end I was genuinely chilled, but also incredibly eager for more. I have to know what happens. That's another thing: horror today seems to be dominated by sadistic gore-fests. Meanwhile, this kind of comic comes along and succeeds in taking the reader to a very dark, very scary place, not with a bloody circus, but with merely suggestions of what *could* be lurking within the mind.

If you were one of the lucky ones able to pick up the first issue then I'm sure I don't have to tell you to pick up the second. If you weren't able to get the first issue, fear not. A second printing is on the way and due on shelves the same time as ***Echoes #2***. That way you won't have to miss out on what is quickly becoming a must read in the comic world and setting an impressive standard for the New Year. Make sure to tell your retailer to order extra copies of both—issue #1, NOV108255; and #2; NOV100511—as you'll definitely want to recommend this to friends.

Buy this book! Then congratulate the creators and Top Cow for preserving a little hope in a diverse future for comics.

-Jose Kessler, Top Cow Informant