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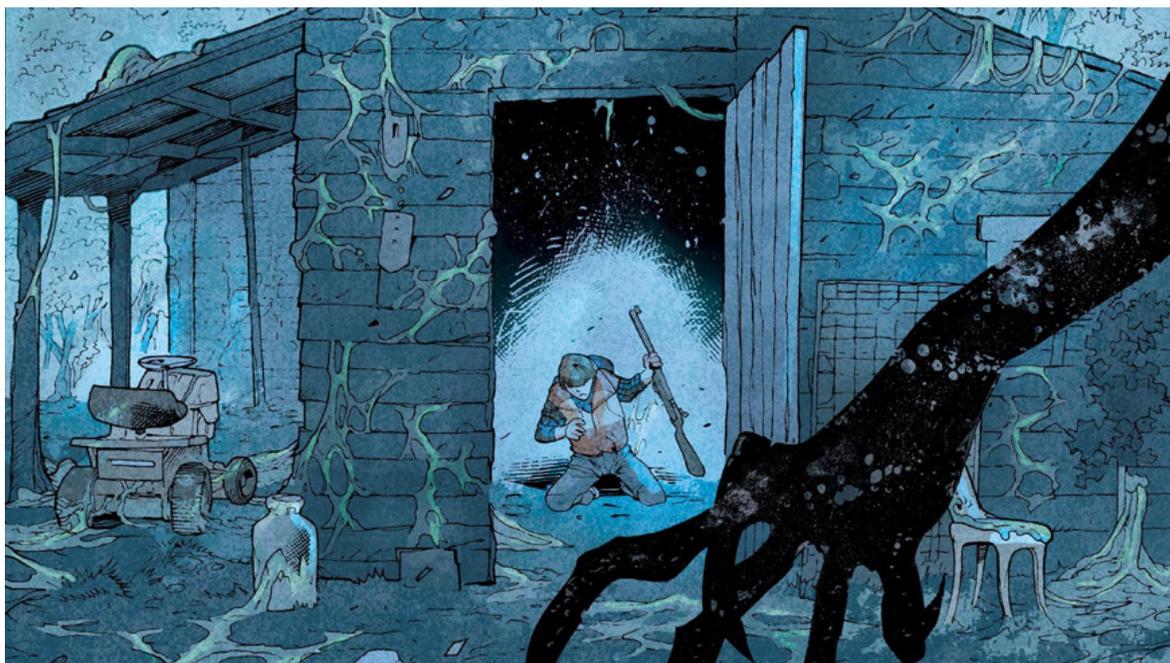
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Stranger Things #1 Review

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I may be dating myself a bit here, but when I was a kid comic book adaptations of feature films like *Star Wars*, *Indiana Jones* did really well simply because there were no streaming services and no VHS tapes or DVDs. Once a movie left theatres, you had to wait a year or even more before a television network aired it.

And when any network did so for the very first time, everyone and their distant cousins twice removed would watch as network television had the replay factor on lock. The only way you could re-watch your favourite movies was to catch them whenever they happened to air on television. Because of this, comic book adaptations were a great way for fans to relive their favourite films.

Nowadays, beyond the nostalgia factor, comic book film adaptations aren't nearly as popular as they once were. Knowing that, one has to wonder why Dark Horse Comics decided to adapt the first season of Netflix's *Stranger Things*. With the show already looking forward to its third season next summer, it would seem Dark Horse is a little late to the party with this comic, not striking while the iron was really hot during the first season.

The first issue in the four issue limited series is narrated by Will Byers, the character whom everyone was searching for after he was abducted by a monstrous Demogorgon and whisked away to the Upside Down, another dimension.

Will's journey into the Upside Down was never really detailed in the series because part of the show's mystique was slowly revealing what the Upside Down was and what other creatures, if any, lurked there.



Will, armed with a rifle, is chased by the Demogorgon while his pals play one of my favourite past-times: Dungeons & Dragons. On that front, writer Jody Houser fails her Writing Ability Check with a snake eyes dice roll. Lucas is irritated that the party's Magic User died so quickly and Dustin asks if there is any re-rolling when making characters. Mike says there are no re-rolls once a party has gathered.

Both declarations are utter nonsense as players. when creating a character, choose the class they desire then assign them ability scores determined via dice rolls. The dice rolls don't determine which character class you play. Also, no Dungeon Master would disallow a player from creating a new character if theirs met a tragic end when there is so much of an adventure left to play. What is that player supposed to do for the rest of the game? Sit there and read the Monster Manual for hours on end while everyone else has fun?

The moral of the story? Always do your research.



If one ignores her transparent surface level knowledge of Dungeons & Dragons, Houser does tell an admissible story although an unremarkable one, adding in not only some D&D references but one from the movie Poltergeist and Lord of the Rings mirroring how the Netflix series is a tribute to the eighties and sci-fi-horror icons like Stephen King.

While the story is passable the art work and the colouring are not. Unlike the work he has done on Star Wars, Catwoman and Doctor Who, Stefano Martino's pencils here look absolutely rushed. They have very little detail, shading to them and the backgrounds themselves aren't fully developed and neither are the characters' features. This level of art work is not worth the \$3.99 asking price.

The coloring by Lauren Affe makes the art work look even worse. The book is full of pukey pastel colours. It is as if the comic fell into a load of white laundry tinged with bleach before you read it. Everything looks washed out, muted and unappealing, the complete opposite of what a comic book should be.

Though it is kinda curious witnessing what happened to Will, the plot of the show has moved so far past that chapter that the entire comic is completely unnecessary and in this information overloaded, mass media climate, is really dated by now. This comic book adaption has the ear marks of Dark Horse just cashing in on the franchise and doesn't add anything important or engaging to Stranger Things in any way, shape or form. In the eighties, we would call Stranger Things #1 butt ugly, grody to the max and just not fresh. What a bummer, man.

THE GOOD

- ⊕ Average story.

THE BAD

- ⊖ Anemic art work.
- ⊖ Shabby, hideous coloring.
- ⊖ Moldy happenings.
- ⊖ Overpriced.

2
Terrible

Review Summary

Like the Upside Down, avoid this at all costs.

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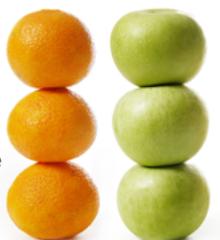


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