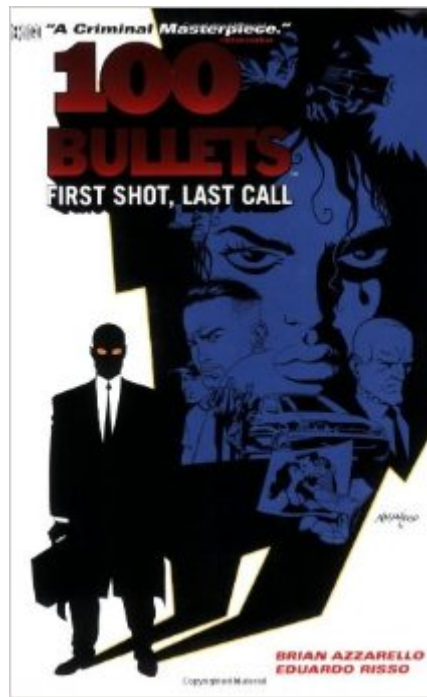


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100 Bullets Vol. 1: First Shot, Last Call



Synopsis

Written by Brian Azzarello; Art by Eduardo Risso, and Dave Johnson In this dark and intriguing trade paperback, the mysterious Agent Graves approaches ordinary citizens and gives them an opportunity to exact revenge on a person that has wronged them. Offering his clients an attache case containing proof of the deed and a gun, he guarantees his "clients" full immunity for all of their actions, including murder. In these opening chapters, Dizzy Cordova, a Latina gangbanger who has just finished a prison sentence, is given the chance to avenge her family's murders, and a downtrodden bartender receives the opportunity to exact revenge against the woman that ruined his life.

Book Information

Series: 100 Bullets (Book 1)

Paperback: 128 pages

Publisher: Vertigo; Gph edition (February 1, 2000)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1563896451

ISBN-13: 978-1563896453

Product Dimensions: 6.6 x 0.3 x 10.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 0.8 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (64 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #386,934 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #308 inÂ Books > Comics &

Graphic Novels > Comic Books #522 inÂ Books > Comics & Graphic Novels > Graphic Novels >

Mystery #1585 inÂ Books > Comics & Graphic Novels > Publishers > DC

Customer Reviews

Brian Azzarello's 100 BULLETS is the best, most intriguing and most well-thought-out comic book series currently in publication. It starts out seemingly as an episodic series of revenge stories but quickly becomes part espionage thriller and part conspiracy theory yarn. This TPB collects the first two story arcs, both of which are fairly well self-contained. I fully expect readers will find it enjoyable enough that many sequels will follow. The basic premise is that a mysterious man by the name of Mr. Graves arrives in your life and presents you with a briefcase. In the briefcase is a gun, 100 bullets of completely untraceable ammunition and loads of evidence about the person who screwed you over and why. You're given the choice: use the bullets or not. It's up to you what to do from there. You'd think the answer would be obvious and the series would degrade into a Charles

Bronsonesque revenge caper. Far from it. The decisions Azzarello's characters make and how they go about plotting their revenge never fails to surprise. The opening tale is about Dizzy Cordova, a Hispanic "girl from the hood," whose boyfriend and child were killed by crooked cops. She meets Mr. Graves and makes her decision about what she should do with this opportunity to "make things right." Eduardo Risso's art is perfect for this series. He uses darkness and light for maximum effect and is excellent at communicating the emotions of the characters through subtle depictions of body language and facial expressions. I don't know who the Vertigo people at DC Comics found him, but this Argentine (I think that's his nationality) is a serious talent. Having read 100 BULLETS for a year and a half now, I can say that I honestly have no idea where it's headed but that it's a non-stop thrill ride.

This what might be called a "high concept" series in Hollywood lingo. A mysterious man in black shows up and gives you proof that a particular person has wronged you badly in the past, an untraceable gun, 100 bullets, and license to kill that person. What do you do? The answer isn't as simple as one might suspect, as the first two stories demonstrate. In the first one, we meet Dizzy, a Latina gangster just released from jail and bitter from the death of her man and her son in a drive-by shooting. Back on the streets of Chicago after a few years served, she's sad and seeking to live a straight life. But of course, you can't leave the gangster world behind that easily, and her brother's rise to prominence as a local gang-banger sucks her back in. It also doesn't help that the two cops the man in black fingered as having done the drive-by are in her face, giving her a lot of static. The art is pretty nifty stuff, perfect for the genre, with a great muted wash to the colors. The only lame part is that the women are all comic-booky, with huge breasts and bared midriffs -- pretty cheesy. The dialogue never really rings true, as all the "we got bidness", "knowhumsayin'" and "I ain't playin'" sounds more like something lifted from some tired film than it does real life. The characters are the familiar gangster hoodlums types and none are given any interesting nuances, nor does the story get interesting until the last few panels, which leave the door open for Dizzy to reappear later on in the series. The second storyline is somewhat stronger, as we meet down and out Los Angeles bartender Lee Dolan. The man in black shows up and offers him the chance to get even with the woman who set him up on kiddie porn charges.

If you could get away with murder -- would you have the balls to do it? That's the question that the often brilliant 100 BULLETS asks -- and its answers may surprise you. The first collection of the DC Comics/Vertigo series 100 BULLETS, written by Brian Azzarello and drawn by Eduardo Risso, is a

truly stunning read. Azzarello and Risso, who first worked together on another DC/Vertigo comic, JOHNNY DOUBLE, have created an utterly original work in this ongoing series, and it's a work worth taking note of. Azzarello's talents are manifold, but perhaps his most remarkable skill is his flair for utterly realistic dialogue -- when you open 100 BULLETS, you'll swear that you'd been transported to wherever it is the action is set, be it a Hispanic barrio (as is the case in the first, three-issue story) or a ratty old bar (as is the case in the second, two-issue story). Every word spoken is absolutely perfect -- and, better yet, there's no unnecessary or overly expository dialogue -- every word on the page fits and if it doesn't always explain everything, well, that's part of the grand design. Of course, Azzarello's skills aren't limited merely to dialogue; he's able to create a handful of truly fascinating characters in just a few pages -- from the mysterious and sinister Mr. Graves to the downtrodden and betrayed Dizzy to the framed and broken bartender man in the second story to the cool and mesmerizingly evil manipulative woman in that story. And while both of the stories stand very well on their own, there are also hints of an overarching plot in the background, too. I mustn't forget to praise the astonishing work of Risso, though.

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