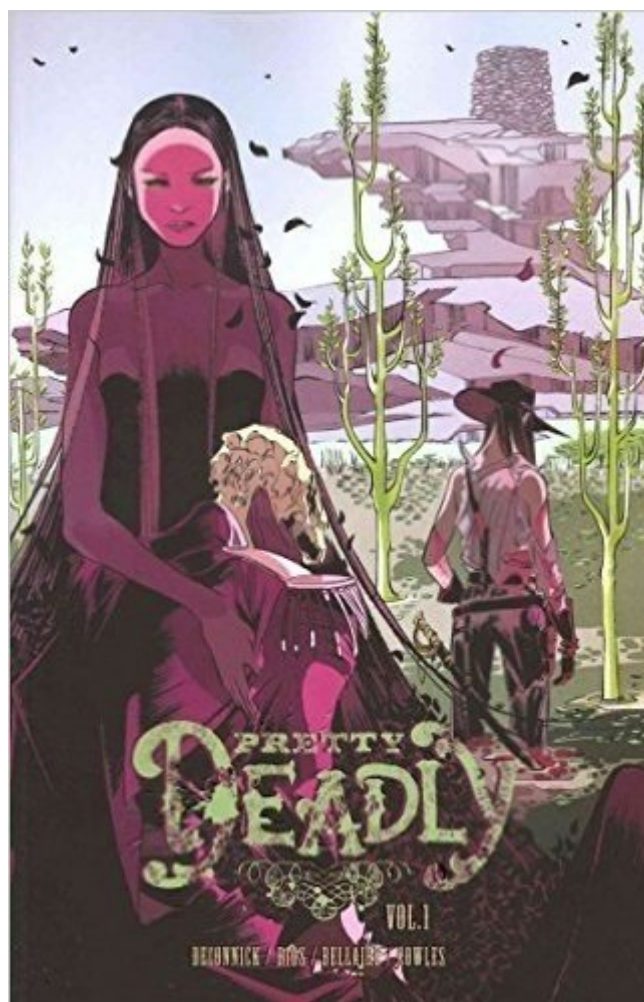


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Pretty Deadly Volume 1: The Shrike



Synopsis

Kelly Sue DeConnick (*Avengers Assemble*, *Captain Marvel*) and Emma Rios (*Dr. Strange*, *Osborn*) present the collected opening arc of their surprise-hit series that marries the magical realism of *Sandman* with the western brutality of *Preacher*. Death's daughter rides the wind on a horse made of smoke and her face bears the skull marks of her father. Her origin story is a tale of retribution as beautifully lush as it is unflinchingly savage. "It's a perfect match for the gorgeous, dizzying artwork in a sumptuous palette-overlaid panels add intricate choreography to fight scenes, and detailed, whirling splash pages beg for long-lingering looks. Couple that, along with a handful of Eisner nominations, with a multicultural cast of tough-as-nails women who all fight for their own honor, and this is a series to watch out for." - Booklist "It's ambitious and challenging (two qualities that are not often valued, but that probably should be), under a façade of violence and sacrifice. Rio's art is lush and detailed, and is more than capable of keeping up with the far-reaching story." - PW

Book Information

Series: *Pretty Deadly* (Book 1)

Paperback: 120 pages

Publisher: Image Comics; First Edition edition (May 13, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1607069628

ISBN-13: 978-1607069621

Product Dimensions: 6.5 x 0.6 x 10 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (94 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #18,023 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #46 in [Books > Comics & Graphic Novels > Publishers > Image Comics](#) #60 in [Books > Comics & Graphic Novels > Fantasy Graphic Novels](#) #381 in [Books > Comics & Graphic Novels > Graphic Novels](#)

Customer Reviews

Westerns are not a common element in the comic world. They just do not sell well for some reason or the next, which is why there is only a select few on the current market. Sure we have DC's own *All Star Western* starring Jonah Hex as a more traditional western and Image's other comic, *East of West*, a science fiction/Western about the coming of the apocalypse. But from the top of my head, I think that's about it. So it comes as a pleasant surprise another western joins the rank of modern day comics, now billed as a western/fantasy and written by Kelly Sue DeConnick who has become a

well known name doing Marvel's current Captain Marvel with an artist I am a fan of, Emma Rios. And though it does have some minor faults, this is very mystical and gritty series worth taking a look at. PRETTY DEADLY VOL.1 collects issues #1-5. The story is told past tense between a butterfly and a rabbit (I kid you not). The Rabbit tells the story of Sissy, a young girl with a crow head-dress and two separate eye colors traveling the old west with Fox, an old blind man and his crew of mutts on the run from Death and his minions. There is something about Sissy that Death wants badly and a letter called the Binder. And in the middle of all this is Ginny, a demigod as the daughter of Death and a human mother who has her own personal reasons for getting involved. Aside from the general overview of the story, it's difficult to describe anymore on the account it would give away any more information and for the nature that the book is hard to describe since it doesn't use the traditional story telling method like many other books. This makes PRETTY DEADLY a fairly unique book on the current comic stands.

Ah. I'm really not sure what to say about this one. I picked it up from the library on a whim after the sticker on its spine screaming that it was a recent acquisition caught my eye and further investigation of the cover quotes revealed endorsements by the likes of Brian Michael Bendis (Marvel's Civil War, Secret Invasion, and just about every other company-wide crossover from the last decade) and Warren Ellis (Planetary). Well, with recommendations like that, how can I refuse? Welcome to DeConnick and Rios's vision of the Old West. It's a tale narrated by a butterfly and a skeletal rabbit (Yes, you read that right). It's a tale where the line between people and animals is blurred, if it even exists at all. Sissy is a young girl with mismatched eyes who wears a vulture cloak. Together with Fox, an elderly blind man who can still kick your @\$@ if need be, she travels from town to town, telling stories for coins and picking the pockets of those who earn her ire. Johnny Coyote's pocket had something in it that she shouldn't have taken. Johnny stole some sort of file from Death, and Death sent his agent Big Alice to collect it. This quest sets her on the tail of Fox and Sissy, and she's not in a mood to talk. Now Fox and Sissy's only hope lies with Death's estranged daughter, Deathface Ginny. You don't want to mess with Deathface Ginny. Now don't get me wrong, Pretty Deadly shows an ambitious vision that is rarely seen these days. Comparisons to Gaiman's Sandman are frequent, even among the negative reviews. The book is also visually stunning, with a stark attention to detail that serves the tale's magical take on the Old West admirably. It's a gritty tale, with no shortage of violence, but it also has something to say. I'm just not quite sure what.

Pretty Deadly is a lyrical, fairytale type of story set in the Old West but firmly rooted in folklore and fables. Seemingly disparate threads slowly converge as the story unfolds, creating a mesmerizing story of love and loss. This is another great example of how graphic novels are a true artform - illustrations furthering story, with each working together to create a unique and distinct tale. Story: A butterfly and a bunny have a story to tell about several girls/women; of particular, a child in a vulture suit who follows a blind man, telling stories at small towns for money. Enter a ginger-haired gunslinger with a talking crow, the daughter of death himself, and the story of love gone wrong and you have a grand adventure in life and beyond. As for the bunny and butterfly? The bunny is shot through the head in the first panel and continues the tale in bone form thereafter. What we have is a solid story, very well thought out and then exquisitely executed in full color artwork. This isn't a spaghetti Western; rather, a fable that just happens to be set in the old West. What really surprised me were the successive layers with each chapter. What seemed inconsequential or trivial in the beginning soon begins to take on new dimension and definition. Odd nuances and mysterious characters slowly develop through words and images, each chapter pushing the reader to continue to solve the riddles of the beginning. This is definitely a book that rewards with each subsequent rereading - from a cat hiding under floorboards as a dog walks blithely by to the lyricism of the story within a story told by the old man Fox. For once, in a Western and a comic, we have very strong female characters, many flawed but all facing their fate head on and with determination.

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