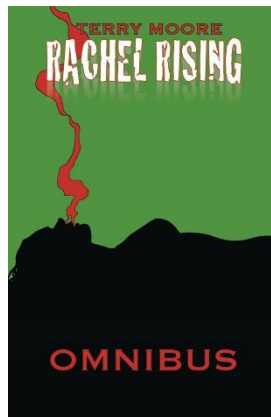




Rachel Rising by Terry Moore

[Horror]



"Did she tell you we're dead?"
"We all have our little quirks, dear."

One of the finest-ever opening sequences in comics, we begin in the early hours of the morning in a sequestered glade above a dried-up river bed. Birds take flight as a tall woman waits, silently and patiently... Until a leaf below her spontaneously combusts, then another woman claws herself slowly and painfully from her grave... and stumbles falteringly through the trees to make her way back home.

I promise you two things. Rachel's no zombie: she's very much aware of everything around her.

But she's definitely dead. She just doesn't know who killed her yet.

The resurrection, pushing through heavy, dried chunks of clay, is so evidently arduous, and you can feel the soil when it grits beneath finger nails. Then there are those stricken eyes – the irises bright, their whites blood-red from asphyxiation – as Rachel starts to grasp where she is, if not why.

The first woman soon reappears as a catalyst for death, shadowing Rachel while turning love into hatred. A young girl called Zoe, meanwhile, starts turning the town of Manson into a mass graveyard. Well, it already *is*: look to its past. Nothing good can ever come from a town called Manson.



From the creator of STRANGERS IN PARADISE this whodunnit is yet another epic *tour de force* splicing history, tragedy and religious mythology with merciful mischief and comedy. There's plenty of arched-eyebrow attitude, fury, and foibles. It's the humanity I love in a Terry Moore comic: the vulnerability and kindness with complicates friendships rather than two-dimensional bravado, and that's reflected in his art for he draws fulsome curves where they naturally occur, rather than where our plastic surgeons or prurient photo-shop dingbats dictate they should be. There are spectacular snow-swept landscapes with skeletal trees or dense summer woodland populated by deer and dogs and ever so many crows. Life and death are central to its premise, the natural cycle all too unnaturally broken by Lilith and Rachel and the man who's been slaughtering women then burying them, face down with a rope around their necks, in shallow graves. Sorry, did I abruptly introduce Lilith there?

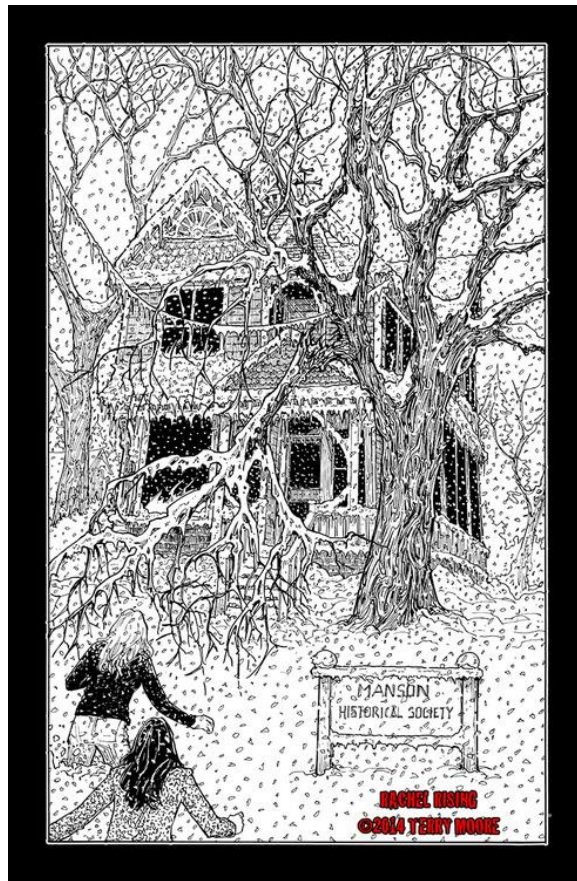


"I never pictured you as a gardener."
"Really? I was the first."





Rachel's best friend Jet is a goldmine of deadpan, pithy rejoinders. Tiny Zoe's no slouch on the comebacks, either, and this graphic novel is all about comebacks. Her tender years and off-hand delinquent behaviour belie her true age and enthusiasm for extreme, psychopathic violence. Giving her the sharpest knife in Christendom probably wasn't the wisest idea.



As throughout *STRANGERS IN PARADISE*, Terry Moore is all about LGBTQ inclusivity and you'll adore Manson's mortician Aunt Johnny who is resolute and unflustered even when out of her depth. That's when she'll start digging deeper. And if I cared for anyone above all others it was for her assistant Earl whose eyes, hidden behind such thick glasses, you never see but who nonetheless wears his great big heart on his equally gargantuan sleeve and doesn't have a duplicitous or disloyal bone in his body. Bulky and bald, he's not as simple as he seems for he knows right from wrong. He's just reticent and easily embarrassed, so suffers in silence because of it.

Before the end it's not impossible that you'll come to love Lilith too.

"You should have more respect for human life."

"I would if they would."