



Lady Killer, Volume 1

Joëlle Jones (Illustrations) , Jamie S. Rich (co-writer) , Chelsea Cain (Introduction)

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Betty Draper meets Hannibal!

Josie Schuller is a picture-perfect homemaker, wife, and mother—but she’s also a ruthless, efficient killer for hire! A brand-new original comedy series that combines the wholesome imagery of early 1960s domestic bliss with a tightening web of murder, paranoia, and cold-blooded survival.

* New original series by Joëlle Jones!

* Dark comedy, gritty action, and killer laughs!

Lady Killer, Volume 1 Details

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Author : Joëlle Jones (Illustrations) , Jamie S. Rich (co-writer) , Chelsea Cain (Introduction)

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From Reader Review Lady Killer, Volume 1 for online ebook

Gabrielle says

More like 4 and a half stars!

This was just what I needed (along with a big glass of pinot noir). Thank you Joe, for bringing it to my attention: I ran over to the comic book store at lunch to get it and just devoured it! I am just crazy for the vintage 50's look, but I also love a bit of murder-mayhem on the side, and "Lady Killer" gave me both at the same time! AND a heroine who looks just like my favorite Venture Bros. character, the amazing Dr. Girlfriend, to boot!

Josie is a housewife and mother who couldn't look more respectful. But she is also a skilled assassin who will fool any mark with her flawless charm. She is balancing her family and professional life perfectly until her boss decides to "retire" her a bit earlier than she'd planned - for rather misogynistic reasons, I might add. But Josie isn't one to go away quietly...

The artwork by Joelle Jones is simply stunning, and I loved every frame of this deliciously dark and fun graphic novel. The social commentary on the era's views is maybe a bit more subtle than I would have wanted, but it was the perfect amount of playfully gory for me.

Josie is a fantastic character and I found her story very original and fresh. There's something quite appealing (to me, at least) in an elegant lady who is in control of her own life and choices, and who will not let anyone make decisions for her.

For "Mad Men" fans who desperately wished Betty would have stabbed Francine in her silly face. Stylish, fun and bloody! More like this please!!

Joe Valdez says

I'm in love with *Lady Killer*.

The Dark Horse comic book with a story by Joëlle Jones & Jamie S. Rich, artwork by Joëlle Jones and colors by Laura Allred debuted in September 2015 and issues #1-5 are bound here, with a sketchbook of character designs and spoof ads. I'm not a comic book buyer because of my literary (and cheapskate) belief that one purchase should equal one story. I don't like getting into a narrative and being told to pop more quarters in the machine. To my pleasure and surprise, this female empowered, action-packed and cheeky volume does contain a beginning, middle and end, along with killer artwork that made me feel alive.

The story involves Mrs. Josie Schuller, a housewife and mom of two blonde girls who judging by her proximity to the Century 21 Exposition, lives in Seattle of 1962. As far as her amiable husband Gene and neighbors are concerned, Josie manages the household and volunteers at a hospice. This is a facade for Josie's secret fifteen years running as a contract killer. Demonstrating an aversion to firearms and none for getting bloody, she's fielded contracts and sometimes assisted by a playboy named Peck, who also works for her boss, Mr. Stenholm. When the big boss begins to doubt the little lady's commitment to her work, he decides to have Josie terminated. Bad idea.

Lady Killer #1 is small but perfect. While the concept of a female killer-for-hire in the suburbs wouldn't have had much agency in the present day, the contrast between the wholesome conformity of the Space Age and the splatter of blood (household stains being a cultural hanging offense in those times) is as playful as it is powerful. Light and darker elements are well-balanced, both in the story and the artwork, which are equally strong and produce an exciting narrative with plenty of forward momentum. The set pieces include a kitchen, a strip club and saving the best for last, the Seattle World's Fair, all unfolding thrillingly and illustrated gorgeously.

Rather than make Josie Schuller a sociopath, Joëlle Jones selects a favorite sub-genre of mine: the professional on the job. Nothing about Josie's past or her feelings are stated. Instead, we get to know her by watching her work: She likes using her hands, announcing herself before attack and keeping business separate from home. She dislikes firearms, party guests who can't handle their alcohol and peers with sloppy work ethic. Josie Schuller is a compelling character, using her brain as much as her body to work through problems, *work* being the key word, in an era where there were few opportunities for women to do so outside the hearth.

I'd like to see *Lady Killer #2* find Josie balancing the tedium of running a business with the challenges of keeping the spark in her marriage alive.

Magdalena aka A Bookaholic Swede says

Josie Schuller is not your ordinary housewife, she is also an efficient killer for hire! But it's not easy having to juggle family and work and having a distrustful mother-in-law. And, things gets even worse when Josie's boss decides that it's time for Josie to retire...for good!

This graphic novel combined humor and action and to top it all, really great art. I found myself quite engrossed in the story, this is like a 60s version of Mr. and Mrs. Smith, without the Mr.

Josie Schuller is a dedicated wife and mother and now and then she has some work to do that her family and neighbors have no idea about.

Then everything goes wrong, her boss just thinks that her time is up, she fails to carry out an assignment and now she has to fend for herself and not let her family know anything...

Josie and her loving family...

And, her mother-in-law...

Josie working

I received this copy from the publisher through Edelweiss in return for an honest review! Thank you!

Richard says

A stylish and hip little story about a 1960's Suzy-homemaker housewife who also works as a cutthroat assassin in her free time. The story isn't particularly memorable though. Beyond the initial cool concept it didn't seem to have the legs to keep me as engaged as I would hope, but Joëlle Jones is one of the best artists in the business and kills it here. Although everyone's blood is black for some reason...

Anywho, changing the subject, I just heard the news that Joëlle Jones is writing and illustrating the upcoming Catwoman series and she seems to be the perfect fit to put my comic book girlfriend, Selina Kyle, back in the spotlight! She's already been doing a great job drawing her on the recent Batman series.

Check out her teaser image here! Such a great fit:

Stacey says

My first graphic novel. Chelsea Cain wrote the introduction. Cain has crafted the best female serial killer that I have read. I knew this journey into Lady Killer was going to be good with an endorsement like that.

Josie is a doting wife and mother, but she harbors a sinister job on the side. She is an unsuspecting hitman. This is darkly funny and the graphics are well done.

Thank you Melissa Martin for challenging me to read outside of my comfort zone with your fantastic review!
x

Matthew says

Wow - very interesting! Action packed! No punches pulled!

Did you see that movie True Lies? Well what if it wasn't Arnold Schwarzenegger hiding his secret agent life from Jamie Lee Curtis? What if Jamie Lee was a 1950s/60s housewife hiding her secret agent life from Arnold?

Action packed and risqué at times. Not for the sensitive and feint of heart. But, if you are okay watching a mild-mannered housewife go from cooking a pot roast to stabbing some guy in the eye with a knife that would make Michael Meyers jealous, then this just might be the graphic novel for you! (Oh! Another Jamie Lee pop-culture reference - more points for me!)

And, as always, with graphic novels I have to comment on the art. I would say that the art is very good and is a cross between Archer and Aeon Flux. I thought it was perfect for the story!

If you like your secret agent stories shaken with a twist, I think you should give this one a go.

Andrew says

This is another example of how many good books you can find here, through friends. Then, thank you Lauren for your recommendation!

Josie is a housewife in the America of the '60, with a lovely husband and two beautiful children. A normal American family? Not exactly: Josie is a killer for an unidentified agency, with a supervisor, Peck and a boss, mister Stenholm. Her life is doubly complicated, so we have the efficient killer that lives with the lovely mother and wife.

Josie splits her time between murderer, betrayals, lies to friend and family and bringing the daughters to dance lessons.

The story is relative short, not so original, divided in five volumes, but is the artwork that it's great. Colors are vivid, with well-defined drawings and sharp strokes, made with modern technique, but representing environments of the past.

Furthermore, the author has used a different technique of drawing, according to characters. The family, husband and daughters, cheerful, lively and unaware of the truth about Josie, are outlined in the most comical and funny way. Josie and the Agency's men are sketched more angular, sharp, with hard eyes, like those of a predator.

A curiosity: (view spoiler).

There are some things at the end, that are not completely explained (view spoiler) (for this reason I didn't give 5 stars), but what is not from history, is widely balanced by artwork.

Sam Quixote says

Josie Schuller is the stereotypical 1960s housewife/mom - and a secret assassin! But when the organisation decides she's a liability to be disposed of, Josie must use all her skills to neutralise the threat and keep her family alive.

Lady Killer is a bloody brilliant comic! It's not the most original premise but Jamie S. Rich and Joelle Jones still pull off a very compelling action thriller period piece. The juxtaposition between domestic bliss and graphic violence works well without seeming jarring which says a lot about the writing. I also really liked Josie's complex character: she's a caring wife/mother/friend but also a stone cold killer - that she uses only knives on her hits (it's quieter, which symbolically fits in with keeping her double life quiet) was a nice and chilling touch.

Jones' artwork is beautiful as always with some very kinetic, big screen moments like an awesome car chase, a hit that threatens to go south, and the finale at the World's Fair. Laura Allred's colours add to the appealing visuals, bringing '60s Americana to vivid life.

The one critique I would give it is the about-turn in the middle of the story when Josie's employer decides to kill her off. The motivation behind that decision is so unconvincing: they think the double life will become too much for her and she'll snap even though there's no evidence indicating this - it's a classic case of being told rather than shown something, and it makes no sense. It's especially stupid as the next scene gives the employer a far better reason to off Josie.

So she's tasked with killing a kid who saw some things and she doesn't follow through with it out of compassion. Right then and there that shows that she can't follow orders anymore and that she's made the organisation vulnerable because she's gone soft. That's a way better motive than "Uh, she might lose it in the near future because she's got a family and, uh, the, uh..."

Anyway, it's a relatively minor point and didn't stop me from enjoying the book overall. Fans of Ed Brubaker/Steve Epting's Velvet will definitely get a kick out of this one as will anyone looking for an entertaining Mr and Mrs Smith-style caper - Lady Killer is wonderfully stylish violent fun.

Ahmed Ejaz says

It's a fine comic series having bloody murders. It's not for light heart readers though.

A house wife who is a contract killer. One day, she gets a task to kill an orphan kid. She tries it too but can't make herself to kill an orphan kid. Her boss is trying to kill her as she is becoming unworthy. So she, with other two rebels, plans to kill the boss.

I am not gonna read the second volume of this series. #Sorrynotsorry

11 February, 2018

David Schaafsma says

I really liked this a lot! Story by Joelle Jones and Jamie Rich, drawn by Jones. Sassy intro by Chelsea Cain. Colors by Laura Aldred.

Retro fifties noir style and story with a housewife hired assassin, Josie, in a pink taffeta dress. Her husband and kids and neighbors and mother in law don't know about her work, though the latter will be the first to know. . . One thread has Josie work in a pussycat lounge and dress in a bunny-like (only kitty!!) costume in order to kill some guy (and entertain us with her hotness, natch). I mean, why the Playboyish costume? Throwback to days of Hef in the fifties. . . and just for fun, I guess. It was fun, I thought.

The stories are not that elaborate, not very well explained, and thus not its strongest point. Style and blood and seem to be its strongest points. And killing jerks who deserve it. We have all these male murderers, and we have all these assumptions about women, and maybe especially fifties women housewives, and this has fun with that. She gets to dress in these fabulous feminine dresses AND be a badass. Really fun, though a tad bloody, as the cover reveals. But if you don't like assholes (men), and you have these little revenge fantasies about them, well, enjoy. I thought it was fun and funny. This is just volume 1 so I think with the events near the end it could shift into a new gear.

Someone said in a blurb on the back cover (Comic Book Resources) that it's like Don Draper meets Dexter,

and that seems right.

Lauren says

Re-read review:

I have forgotten how much I love this GN! I think my original review below captures the spunky essence of Lady Killer, and Josie is seriously STUNNING! I mean she's a beautiful lady and a don't f*ck with me assassin. And her EYES! I mean...wow! *swoons*

The artwork is incredible and richly detailed with some vibrant colours which really makes the story come to life. The whole atmosphere wonderfully juxtaposes Josie's normal home life with her husband and daughters with the sheer bloody violence of her work life. It's sheer genius!

This was a re-read as my pre-ordered edition of volume 2 has been despatched and I honestly cannot wait to see what other adventures await Josie.

A very easy 5 star read.

Original review:

I bloody loved this graphic novel!

Lady Killer follows the kick-ass antics of Josie Schuller, a seemingly average 1960s housewife who balances her momsy role with gory assassinations. I quickly came to love Josie - her heart is in the right place and she dotes on her family, plus she's one feisty lady who can quickly kick nasty guys into touch.

The story was brilliant, in each chapter we learn something new about Josie and the artwork was phenomenal. I also think it helps to have a smokin' hot protagonist which we definitely have with Josie. Her eyes are gorgeous! Anyway...

The dialogue was spot on and it had me laughing several times. Overall, a fantastic graphic novel which perfectly captures the 1960s vibe.

My only complaint is that there aren't any more issues...yet. I'm hoping that will change soon!

Liz Janet says

This is the story of Josie, in the 1960s. Wife, mother, assassin for hire. She likes to choke and stab people. Although it deals with the struggles women faced at the time when balancing work and family in an age that treated them the way it did, it still dealt very well, with what I assume, is the life of an assassin. However, I found little inclination of her love for her husband and children, and same vice-versa, I would have liked to have seen that. The strongest aspect was the beautiful and poignant art. I would recommend people to read this simply for the art.

Here are some examples:

I'm going to add more because I loved it:

Julie says

It's odd that I'm giving this adult graphic novel four stars instead of five. (Actually, what's really odd is that I read it in the first place).

It is far more artistic, clear to read, and cohesive in plot than just about any other in its genre, but, the interesting part is, it was so well-done, I came to have *actual expectations* for it, and when I encountered a couple of sloppy transitions at the end, I felt disappointed (thus the loss of one star).

This is a story centered around Josie Schuller, the hottest femme fatale to hit pen and ink since *Jessica Rabbit*.

Josie's everything a man ever wanted from a wife in the early 1950s. . . she's hot, she's quiet, and she knows how to throw together a jello mold for a last minute dinner.

She's a devoted wife and a mother of two. She volunteers at hospice and bake sales, too. And, oh yeah, she's a *lady killer*. Not a killer of *ladies* (well, she does kill a few), but a killer who's a *lady*.

A hot lady killer.

And, before you know it. . . you're like. . . but, *why* does she kill? Why has she killed for an agency for 15 years? Does she do it for pay, and, if so, where's the money? Why does she use a knife instead of a gun? And, how does her husband never notice that her arms are as brawny as a man's?

I'm trying to let you know that. . . yes, you become invested and you want to know more.

It's a violent graphic novel, incredibly violent at the end, but there's a brilliant tongue in cheek quality to it.

It's strangely empowering. . . not that Josie *kills*, but that she has such a subversive lifestyle that is so. . . *sticking it to the man*.

When her husband says to her at the end, "you know. . . earning money of your own might teach you a little something about business, and the pride of accomplishment," it made me want to throw up in my mouth a little, realizing how often men spoke to their wives back then like they were children instead of partners.

But, after reading Josie's response, I knew with confidence that there was a *Lady Killer #2* and that this was one housewife who was going to have the last, twisted laugh.

Melissa ♥ Dog/Wolf Lover ♥ Martin says

This book was super fun and a bit gory. Just a bit ?

Good graphics and I enjoyed the storyline!

Happy Reading!

Mel ♥?

MY BLOG: [Melissa Martin's Reading List](#)

AMAZON: [REVIEW](#)

Jeff says

This is a tongue-in-cheek collection about a 1950's housewife, who moonlights as an assassin. It could use a little more tongue and less cheek, but otherwise it's fairly entertaining.

The writing gets talky and bogged down midway when the killer agency overlord questions mom's continued usefulness as an agent of death.

The concept doesn't seem sustainable beyond this five issue collection and the satirical twist on the idyllic '50's seems on dangerously thin ice by the last issue. By volumes end, the plot line really goes south and Joelle Jones seems to be grasping at straws with a violent, bloody wrap-up.

Bottom line: Despite the drawbacks, this is fun in a dark, psychopathic nightmarish kind of way. It's as if Ed Brubaker wrote a twisted version of *Leave It to Beaver*, but used half his brain.
