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Collects: Hellboy 1954: The Mirror, Black Sun #1–2, The Unreasoning Beast, Ghost Moon #1–2

Hellboy and the B.P.R.D., Vol. 3: 1954 Details

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From Reader Review Hellboy and the B.P.R.D., Vol. 3: 1954 for online ebook

Tom Ewing says

In these difficult times it's heartening to know that at least one comics hero who got his start punching Nazis is still upholding that grand tradition. In most other respects, sadly, this is a lacklustre Hellboy collection. Three stories, the first of which starts promisingly but abandons its cast and setting halfway through for genetic Hellboy brawling. The second is a done-in-one ghost story, with decent visuals but a flat script. The third is sub-par, one issue of heavy exposition about 50s Hong Kong, one issue dealing with a moustache-twirling villain. When your baddie admits on the page he doesn't really have a motive or goal it's probably a sign things need a little work. After some promising early volumes this series is spinning its wheels and becoming less worthwhile by the issue.

Chad says

While I prefer the longer Hellboy stories, these are still fun. There just isn't a lot of depth. I do like the idea of the British version of B.P.R.D., S.I.M.

Received a review copy from Dark Horse and Edelweiss in exchange for an honest review.

Artemy says

Hellboy and the B.P.R.D. is a filler series pretty much by definition, but it's also a compelling filler since it lets us see more of Hellboy on the job, outside of the whole world-saving he did in his main book. So it's expected that these stories are going to be hit or miss. For me, the 1954 collection was mostly a miss, unfortunately — I wasn't really feeling most of the short stories collected here, they felt like some half-baked bland horror story ideas that were reworked into the Hellboy universe. The only really good story in this collection was the 7-page 'The Mirror' illustrated by Richard Corben. He had illustrated some of the most iconic Hellboy short stories during the original HB run, so I was happy to see him drawing a new one even if it was so short. And the story itself was really good, too — that creepy, fable-esque tale felt like classic Hellboy, and it almost made the entire collection worth getting through. Almost, but not quite, though — overall this was a really underwhelming collection that is entirely skippable.

Orrin Grey says

So far I've really been enjoying the Hellboy and the B.P.R.D. titles, and while I love the cover on this one, I didn't dig the stories quite as much as the two previous volumes. The opening story with its Nazi flying saucers and all is pretty great, and the last one has fun art and sets up a bunch of threads that will, presumably, be further explored in future installments, but the total package feels a bit less than the sum of its parts, when compared with the other Hellboy and the B.P.R.D. installments we've gotten to date.

Ill D says

Spoilers 'n' STuff

Thou has been warned

1954 boilers down to a lump a filler than left me salty more than anything.

Even though titled Hellboy and the B.P.R.D. the titular organization that, "bumps back," really only factors into these stories marginally at best. Nope, no Abe Sapien, nor Liz Sherman, just ancillaries of ancillaries; just Susan Xiang and some other tangentially tied characters that act more as plot devices than actually fleshed out characters appear here. As forgettable as the newly introduced heroes and villains are, so too are the stories themselves which adding nothing really to the Hellboy over-story which when boiled off reduce to a compendium of filler so than another comic book can be sold.

Story #1 starts off with some promise. Hellboy lands in the Arctic to follow-up a sighting of an illusory SuperBeast. Following a thin helping of suspense and the foreshadowing it entails, devolves into a breadth of predictability that is disappointingly expected. Nazis, plans for world-domination, and the all too hackneyed evil genius exposition of his analogously evil plan splash across the pages. In fact, the Gruppenführer spends far more time waxing eloquent than does it take Hellboy to undue his captivity and save the day. Good guys win, bad guys lose, and as always, the ending is wrapped with a pretty pink bow for all the (neophytes) to enjoy.

The next two stories follow a roughly similar (and dull) format. The call goes out, the B.P.R.D. (and more importantly) Hellboy show up and stuff happens. Whether its a demonic simian jacking people's bodies (story # 2) or larger scale spirit possession (Story #3) there is a curiously vast length of filler applied. Hellboy punches people, the supernatural fights back, and (well) Hellboy punches more until brawn triumphs of brains.

Story #4 irritated me the most though. Reducing to nothing less than a troll job (which includes for Hellboy too, not just us readers), of eight pages of vacuous dialogue, action, and more pointless dialogue (well) just 'cause. It has the veneer of horror but none of the substance that (would) make it (otherwise) matter. It doesn't make any sense to boot.

So what are we left with beyond a stale taste? The art, while enjoyable and well detailed, doesn't exactly reward further inspection. This low-level eye-candy is compounded by lame-O stories that flash before our eyes sans a scintilla of emotional resonance. With nothing to tie us into the story (beyond the shekels we might (hopefully not) have doled out) your eyes will rove across the narratives at the speed of light. However, instead of ending up in another galaxy at the end, you'll still be stuck in your seat (and probably out some shekels).

Sucker!

Two granite-encrusted thumbs down!

Andrew says

I've been enjoying these short stories of Hellboy's early days at BPRD. It's a smart way to keep capitalizing on Hellboy's popularity without forcing the story to continue past Hellboy in Hell. I wish they were of a higher quality though. As it is most of the stories are enjoyable but forgettable.

Richard Corben has a short story featured in this volume. It's nice - Corben is one of my favourite artists - but again, pretty forgettable. I feel like the story has already been told in other Hellboy books. All of these stories are feeling too familiar at this point. Hellboy goes to investigate a mystery, stumbles into some crazy ghost/nazi/demon and punches them a bunch.

Fans only, for sure. --Check out the original run of Hellboy instead if you're new to this and only read Hellboy and the B.P.R.D. if you're desperate for more Hellboy (like me I guess haha)

Cale says

They grow up so fast, don't they? Although only a few years in, Hellboy is already turning into the grizzled investigator we meet in the original series. This volume features alien spacecraft, a spirit monkey, and an Asian spirit stealer. In general, the stories are interesting, with the setup of "Black Sun" and the resolution of "Ghost Moon" being my favorite parts. The art style has gone far afield from Mignola's iconic look, but honestly that doesn't bother me - the characters are spot on in their characterizations, and I actually appreciate the more detailed art style we get here - it works to very good effect in Sue's visions especially. All the stories have some heft to them, matched with a lot of punching, and some better humor than the previous volumes have displayed. This series feels like it's coming into its own at about the same rate Hellboy is.

Adam Stone says

One of the frustrating things about reading Hellboy is that most of the main collections are not organized chronologically or thematically. It's just that the writers decided to tell a particular story or set of stories, and in order to release them to the trade paperback/hardcover market, they package them as the five or six issues that came out around the same time, whether or not they make sense as a single story.

With the Hellboy & The BPRD stuff, everything is arranged chronologically, even giving the year the stories took place on the cover, which is a nice change of pace.

Because I didn't invest myself in the Hellboy universe when it started, and I read more traditionally narrative comic series, I'm not used to the "Now we're over here! Now we're over here!" nature of some of these collections. I tend to find some of the short stories paced strangely. And that's very true for this volume. Until I got to the main story, I thought this was going to be a two star review. Ben Stenbeck, and Paolo Rivera's art is top of the line Hellboy, and Michael Walsh's art is less detailed than I enjoy but not distractingly so, but I just wasn't invested in any of the first five stories.

The sixth story, "Beyond The Fences" brings it up to three stars by having the story take a little more time to breathe, and tying it into BPRD 1948. It also has some fun misdirects.

I would recommend this to Hellboy enthusiasts, Mike Mignola fanboys, people who enjoy incredibly short stories about haunted dismembered limbs, people who never trusted Mr. Ed, people who think Bojack Horseman should commit more murder, and people who like snappy action movie patter to go with their demon hunting.

Paul E. Morph says

Another nice little collection of stories from Hellboy's past. Anthologies like this tend to be a bit patchy, so I'm happy to report this one's pretty solid throughout. There's nothing amazing in here but it was enjoyable and certainly scratched my Hellboy itch in the absence of anything new from Mike Mignola himself.

Rick says

Mike Mignola's Hellboy remains one of the most entertaining comics year after year and incarnation after incarnation. This latest series has been going back and revealing untold tales of the early days of the B.P.R.D. and Hellboy's youth. The stories are fun, light and reminiscent of Mignola's early work with the character. Good stuff!

Dakota Morgan says

Another terrific entry in the Hellboy series. *1954* consists of three short Hellboy adventures, each uniquely fascinating and fun. There's an Arctic monster, ghosts in the suburbs, and crazy Hong Kong demons. High adventure! In true Hellboy fashion, the main character is gruff and prone to punching while his BPRD sidekicks are happy to offer explanations for the various mysteries. None of it appears to tie into some larger storyline, but that's all fine. Hellboy is always a good time.

Pop Bop says

Mmmm, That's Some Good Hellboy

This is the third "Hellboy and the B.P.R.D." collection, following on the 1952 and 1953 editions. I favor the 1953 collection out of the three but this one is a close second.

We get three longer tales and one mini-tale. There is "Black Sun #1-2", "The Unreasoning Beast", "Ghost Moon #1-2", and a very short "Mirror". SOME MILD GENERAL PREMISE/PLOT SPOILERS follow.

"Black Sun" is a Nazi nutsy tale that consists mostly of Hellboy making wisecracks while the villain engages in the longest monologue I've read in a while. Since the monologue is interesting in a classic nutsy Nazi way and the wisecracks were amusing enough I was happy. The drawing had some nice "big" scenes loaded with detail and atmosphere, and that actually supported and backed up the villain speech quite well.

"The Unreasoning Beast" is a domestic haunting story that has Hellboy pretty much never leaving a suburban living room. It's character and dialogue driven and is one of the few Hellboys I've read in which the

drawing, which is restrained and realistic, actually sort of upstages Hellboy. (That said, the drawing is technically very accomplished but might strike some as too understated.)

My favorite tale was "Ghost Moon", which mixed in Chinese mythology, demons, a powerful artifact, shadowy operatives, and action, although Hellboy was almost on the sidelines for chunks of the story. This adventure had the best mix, I thought, of dialogue, plot, action, backstory, exotic setting, and demon creepiness and struck me as the most satisfying and complete of the tales.

The final story, which is only a few pages, is an atmospheric and suggestive mood piece, which I always like to find sprinkled into these collections.

This isn't Hellboy in Hell or Hellboy in Mexico but the 1950's throwback stories are fun and if you like early Hellboy and the B.P.R.D. team and are willing to just wander around with them punching stuff then I imagine this collection will go down just fine.

(Please note that I received a free advance will-self-destruct-in-x-days Adobe Digital copy of this book without a review requirement, or any influence regarding review content should I choose to post a review. Apart from that I have no connection at all to either the author or the publisher of this book.)

Sohan Surag says

It was fun reading Hellboy and the BPRD 1954 but I have to say it's the weakest among the four that released. I absolutely loved 1953, 1952 and although 1954 had some good stuff it never reached the heights set by its predecessors. Perhaps this is the only title I have rated 3 stars so far. I usually devour any Hellboy material, be it prose, comics, celluloid or videogame formats and I am always in search of newer Hellboy stuff so even if something turns out mediocre its still worth it.

Amverbo says

Siempre está bien echarle un ojo a Hellboy. Al ser cuatro historias cortas, la calidad es variable, pero tienen buen nivel. Por la parte del dibujo, se echa de menos a Mignola, pero el estilo más realista encaja muy bien con las historias, en este sentido me quedo con el Mes de los Muertos.

Wing Kee says

Wonderful collection of stories that builds HB's world and mythos.

World: The art is fantastic, it's moody, it's beautiful and the colors are just perfect. That being said, I was somewhat irked by the art of Churchill in the Hong Kong story. Being Chinese, I found the art done by someone who didn't really take the time to study Chinese culture and just mashed Asian cultures together (as is the norm in the West). Mignola and Roberson were wonderful and accurate in their detail, from the lore to the history of Hong Kong to the supernatural and religious beliefs of Southern China, that I commend them. However Churchill needs to do his homework (it's not that hard, it's 2017 you can google). The world building as I said is fantastic overall, it not only further builds HB and the BPRD's world. I like little pieces like the S.I.P. are interesting and thought weaving them into the Mignolaverse is a difficult and rewarding

endeavor. I love the mythos the lore that Mignola uses throughout the world, I just love the Mignolaverse.

Story: The four tales are all unique and fun and feel both familiar and also different from the many many stories that Mignola has written for the Mignolaverse throughout the years. The Black Sun story is pretty fantastic and calls back to the Vril but also with the UFOs it was awesome! The Ghost Moon story though the art is a bit off for Chinese culture (as is common in many Western artists who don't do enough research) is an interesting and fun story that dives deep into Chinese beliefs and myths, I mostly liked it. The other two were more wonderful little tales of building the world and little character moments.

Characters: HB is solid here and pretty much fully formed, he is still at this point in time suffering from the finding his identity and this of course will be his main drive for many years to come. The rest of the cast were solid little characters that as I said above make the world denser and the BPRD more than just a faceless group. The myths here are tied very much to world building but also characters and I love that, Horse Face and Ox Face have scared me since I was a child and having them here as characters made me smile.

I love this series and I love this soft stepping on point series since it was announced a couple of years back, it's good to see HB in the BPRD during his prime before all the Roger stuff happened.

Onwards to the next book!
