



B.P.R.D. Hell on Earth, Vol. 5: The Pickens County Horror and Others

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The B.P.R.D. crew investigates the site of a hundred-year-old magical ritual and Hellboy breaks into the secret library of a dead necromancer. Collects The Pickens County Horror #1-#2, The Transformation of J. H. O'Donnell, and The Abyss of Time Parts 1 and 2.

B.P.R.D. Hell on Earth, Vol. 5: The Pickens County Horror and Others Details

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Author : Mike Mignola (writer) , Scott Allie , Jason Latour (Illustrator) , Max Fiumara (Illustrator) , James Harren (Illustrator)

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From Reader Review B.P.R.D. Hell on Earth, Vol. 5: The Pickens County Horror and Others for online ebook

Jake says

These stand alone stories are always some of my favs.

Samhain Quixote says

BPRD is generally a great series and Hell On Earth, the current story arc, has been an interesting ride so far. Occasionally with these books (along with other books in the Hellboy universe) Mike Mignola and his team will put out a standalone book of short stories that can be really awesome to read like Hellboy: The Crooked Man which readers who haven't been following the main Hellboy story can just pick up and enjoy by itself. The Pickens County Horror and Others is just like that, where we get three standalone tales featuring vampires and Lovecraftian monsters except this one turns out to be one of the least interesting collections Mignola and co. have put out in a while.

The first story, The Pickens County Horror, is by far the best. Some nondescript BPRD agents - most of the famous ones like Johann, Liz and Abe have disappeared for various reasons, so we get what are essentially a series of Star Trek red shirts - investigate a vampire family living in rural South Carolina and the source of a mysterious green fog. It's not the most original of setups but Southern Gothic as a genre and that kind of horror imagery of the woods at night and lurking monsters with glowing eyes, or even just a hut in the middle of nowhere being attacked by nightmarish figures, is just catnip to me so even when it turned out to be not even an average vampire story, I didn't mind all that much.

The Transformation of JH O'Donnell goes back in time to when Hellboy was still around as he and the titular character investigate a haunted library containing old, rare forgotten volumes. Hellboy punches a monster, O'Donnell sees some scary spirits, that's about it. Very forgettable.

The Abyss of Time is by far the least involving story here. Some more nondescript BPRD agents investigate an underground vault and one of them goes into a trance - his body remains in the present while his mind/spirit/soul goes back in time where he (or his ancestor) was a barbarian prince. He leads his barbarian horde to fight some evil monsters, the end. It reminded me a lot of Pat Mills' *Slainé* books where we also had a time-travelling barbarian but this version was a lot less interesting mostly because it's exactly as I've described with nothing surprising thrown in - great art from James Harren as ever though.

BPRD is usually a great series but The Pickens County Horror is a blip in that it's not very good. Full of generic "horror" stories that are very forgettable and boring to read, don't judge the series on this uninteresting volume and pick up Volume 4: The Devil's Engine instead, skip this, and go straight on to Volume 6: The Return of the Master.

Brandon St Mark says

Actual rating: 4.5 stars.

The Abyss of Time was the best story in this volume.

Canavan says

★★½

Robert says

First half usual high quality stuff, second half not my cup of tea.

Paul E. Morph says

This BPRD collection lumps together a pair of two-part stories and a one-shot. For the most part, these tales don't feature any of the major players in the BPRD universe (apart from Hellboy himself in the one-shot). This resulted in me not really investing in the stories emotionally that much, unfortunately.

Are the stories creepy? Scary? Well-written? Yeah, reasonably so... I just couldn't care that much about what happened to the characters.

This volume is by no means actually BAD, it just feels a little non-essential. One for BPRD/Hellboy completists only, I would think.

III D says

Three stories here for the price of one!

#1. Already with much in common as continuing his legacy, it feels quite apropos for the first story to have a highly explicit George Romero feel to it. In particular, the setting of a boarded-up house surrounded by some undead figures is highly reminiscent of this director's magnum opus, *Night of the Living Dead*. However, while the aforementioned film thrills us with a continual series of jaw-dropping series of spine tingling sensations the suspense here is generated by an amorphous screen of fog. Yup, green-tinted low-lying clouds aren't exactly heart-pumping inducing. And neither is the flaccid action that occurs sequentially. Not to mention the horror animated by such ghastliness is evidently penetrable by bullets. You can shoot and kill ghosts??? Wait – what? Laaaaaaaaaame!

Anyways...

#2/3. BPRD does this whole subaltern take on the Hellboy world to meh effect. By sacrificing the otherwise main characters due to their afflictions or incapacities, the story thus focuses on the foot soldiers. While it's something of a novel idea, I'm not sure the implementation is effective (enough). None of the characters are particularly engaging and since they're just grunts, they're just as disposable as their job titles would suggest.

This vending machine of ancillaries dispense new ones as we need them – with the platonic dispensary restocking itself on an as needed basis. Going along with this metaphorical analogy, just another cosmetic wrapping is all we get on each individual - they're just the same platonic mass just formed differently in regards to gender and appearance. As Vonnegut said in *Slaughter House*, "So it goes."

All the more ineffective is the transference to a back story in this third tale. This could be implemented well but, a severe case of chronological vertigo is induced by the stream of time being jutted even further back before we return where whence it came.

In either case, the ending seems to end in another disposable manner for semi-heroes and the briefly introduced shadowy villain alike. Equally vague is the conclusion within regarding the reversely travelled stream of time. Yet, with implications for the future for the series, not all is lost and something is to be gained. Indeed, it's not all total mediocrity here.

Peter Derk says

Pickens County, which is real, seems to be a certain kind of county. I'll let you guess, reader:

- A) Urban
- B) Hillbilly

Just based on name alone. Take a stab. You'll nail it.

But then, get this! Neighboring county? Transylvania County! I can't be the only idiot who had no idea that there was a Transylvania County. Think about it. When you go get a library card, how awesome is that? "Which county do you live in sir?" Then you throw your cloak over the bottom half of your face. "Transylvania!" Then lightning crashes. Or "Lightning Crashes" by Live plays in your head, either way.

The school system in Pickens is rated an A-, which is a pretty big deal for the area. However, let's look at some of the school names:

Hagood Elementary: That sounds like a witch name.

Ambler Elementary: Watch out. For at midnight comes...The Ambler.

Six Mile Elementary: Eminem made a movie about this, I think.

And get this: Shoeless Joe Jackson? Ghost in Field of Dreams? From Pickens.

Overall, seems like BPRD picked a good, spooky county to investigate. Granted, seems like maybe the neighboring Transylvania county would be the best spot, but I guess it's a little on the nose for your average haunting.

Garrett says

Boring an unnecessary short stories that don't really add anything to the overall Hell on Earth Story. Skip

this one after reading vol 4 and go straight to vol 6

Orrin Grey says

More fungal terror from Mignola & co!

Actually, the title story was probably my least favorite of the three B.P.R.D. tales contained in this collection, in spite of the fungus and the vampires. I really enjoyed "The Transformation of J.H. O'Donnell" and "The Abyss of Time." The latter, notably, had some great art from James Harren, who has grown on me a lot since I was introduced to his work in the second Abe Sapien volume. He draws great googly crazy eyes, and there's lots of those here.

Koen Claeys says

3 great short stories accompanied by excellent artwork by James Harren, Max Fiumara and Jason Latour. I liked this very much.

Jeff Lanter says

Since this is another collection of shorter stories, here are my individual reviews of each one:

Pickens County Horror - I loved the unique style of art in this volume. I would definitely like to see this artist do more in BPRD. The story has some really nice tension and horror all the way up until the end which I did not understand. Maybe it ties into older volumes or I missed a subtle hint during these two issues but that was really the only thing lacking in this story.

The Exorcism - Nothing about this story was especially interesting other than the art. It was nice to see an old character come back but other than that, this felt a little too standard or predictable.

The Transformation of J.H. O' Donnell - While short, it definitely fills in the backstory of a crazy and entertaining character. I wasn't a big fan of the art in this issue however.

As a whole, this is not a strong B.P.R.D. volume. Every story had something that could have been a bit better and while any diehard fan B.P.R.D. fan will enjoy this, it is not a must read either. As I said in my previous review, I look forward to the main plot advancing and a longer form story in the next volume.

Otherwyrd says

Three short stories set amongst the backdrop of the continuing destruction of the world, mostly featuring B.P.R.D. agents we haven't met before, and probably won't again judging by what happens to them.

In the first story, a "moaning fog" in South Carolina turns out to conceal a family of vampires that can trace

their origin back to the Boston tea party. There is a reference to the vampire council and their long term plans for the conquest of the world, but the story goes nowhere and the artwork is confusing. 2 stars

The second tale is potentially the most interesting as it tells the story of Dr. O'Donnell, the mad old man who pops up every so often to spout weirdly prophetic nonsense. Here we get to find out exactly what happens to him, and as a bonus this is also a story with Hellboy in it. Needless to say, it is pretty nasty. 4 stars

In the final story, some agents find a secret temple in a basement under a building in Chicago. When one of the team touches a mysterious weapon (which has also popped up in a number of previous stories), he is drawn into a vision set in the ancient past. There he becomes the leader that stops the old gods from returning to our world. It's potentially interesting, but comes to an abrupt halt before there is a satisfactory end. 3 stars

This book can be read as a standalone with little knowledge of the wider story, but in the end it doesn't amount to much

Artemy says

Ouch. Lots of great artwork in this volume, but the three stories collected here had nothing to do with anything that was going on in the series for the past 16 books. Even worse, the stories really weren't even that good on their own. This volume felt like an entirely skippable filler, and that was a huge disappointment. I really hope this was just a one time thing, and that it'll get back on track in the next one.

K De says

Interesting background stories for the B.P.R.D. crew. Different artists give it a different feel to the reality of the characters.
