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In 525 B.C., the Persian king Cambyses sent fifty thousand soldiers across

the conquered Egyptian desert to take an oasis city not far from where the Libyan border stands today. According to Greek history, a hurricane-force sandstorm struck near the end of their six-hundred-mile trek. The army - all fifty thousand men - vanished without a single trace. Fast forward to 1986. A British archaeological team, sent to the edge of the Great Sand Sea to exhume evidence of the incident, has also gone missing. It's up to Hellboy to find the missing Brits and to discover what became of The Lost Army. This illustrated novel is written by Christopher Golden, best-selling author of the book *Of Saints and Shadows*. Hellboy creator Mike Mignola has done sixty-eight black-and-white illustrations for the story.

Hellboy: The Lost Army Details

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Author : Christopher Golden , Mike Mignola (Illustrator)

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BookMarc says

I used to enjoy Hellboy prose novels more when they were published by Pocket Star Books. I don't know how much say a publisher has in choosing who will author their novels but overall the quality was far better with PSB than when the franchise moved over to Dark Horse Books. A good example of the better quality can be found in 'Hellboy: The Lost Army'.

We start off the book with a foreword by Hellboy's creator Mike Mignola. Not being much of a fanboy when it comes to authors, artists, actors or anyone else for that matter I'm not beyond criticizing even the guy who created one of my favorite characters. The issue I have is in the drawing he does. Now this story is a prose novel but Mignola did contribute some drawings that appear throughout this mass market paperback. That's unusual in itself and, quite frankly, so is Mignola's style of drawing. I'm not quite sure how to describe his style but, to me at least, it seems amateur and yet professional all at the same time. Hellboy looks good on the cover, and I would expect no less from a drawing by his creator, but the skeletons appear too cartoonish in a way. Yeah, "cartoonish" isn't a word so my writing is amateur and nowhere near professional but this blog is for my opinions you know and if I wish to make up words like "cartoonish" then so be it. If it's quality you're after go read one of my followers blogs.

So the story begins with Hellboy having to beat the crap out of a "thing" with tentacles. He hates things with tentacles. So do most of my ex girlfriends but I swear I really do only have two hands...they just move around the female form like there's eight of them. Speaking of such things Hellboy has a love interest in this book. And she's a human female. Thankfully the author spares us any intimate details as even I had absolutely no desire to know how a cloven hoofed, red demon with a stone hand gets his freak on with a human English female. Having a love interest for Hellboy is certainly odd but it does allow for the storyline to play on the age old damsel in distress being saved by her hero subplot.

The main plot revolves around the disappearance of a group of British archeologists along the edge of the Great Sand Sea. It wouldn't be much of a job for Red if it was a straight forward disappearance and it isn't as back in 525BC a fifty-thousand strong Persian army vanished in the same place...hence 'The Lost Army'.

Golden is a huge fan of Hellboy and it certainly shows through in his writing. He knows Hellboy inside and out...actually I'm not sure if he really does know about Red's insides but it sounded like the correct thing to proclaim. What's for sure is that he knows the character well enough to bring him to life perfectly in the novel and add that to his as-per-usual excellent storytelling ability and what you have is an awesome Hellboy novel. The author even done a great job in making the love story between Hellboy and Anastasia believable and that took some doing as you just don't think about a red demon and sex in the same sentence. I don't anyway although it's obvious from looking at Hellboy's head that he's always horny.

With an immortal sorcerer and The Lost Army to contend with this novel is certainly action packed and exciting. Our hero is portrayed wonderfully, particularly his sense of humour, and I couldn't put this book down once I had picked it up. Really, that's the last time I use crazy glue before reading a novel. Even though the "romantic" element was done well I could have done without it but that's being picky on what is an overall excellent novel. Highly recommended.

Victor Espinosa says

Thumbs up for this book. Though it started off slow and choppy and it took me a while to like the characters, it really developed into a good story.

Pros: Great action. Chris Golden writes in short choppy sentences that don't work well with descriptive

scenes, but make action and combat scenes work perfectly. He has great vocabulary to describe things correctly the first time, and paces the novel well. There is hardly a moment in the story where it feels boring or lax. The action is awesome, the plot twists and conflict that the characters go through is seriously cool. The villain is your typical take over the world with evil magic type of bad guy, but he's evil enough that you don't question anything he does. The ending is satisfyingly badass. You've been warned. Also, there are some original illustrations by Mike Mignola in there that help make the story pop.

Cons: There are a few scenes that feel really forced. The conflict, the romance, the suspense, whatever. There are a handful of times that it just felt like the scene didn't need to happen, but was thrown in to make things edgier. The aforementioned choppy sentences were a real turn off for me. And by the end of the novel, Hellboy only speaks in bad puns. At that point it's like Chris Golden starts trying to get as many lame jokes in as possible. Could have done without that.

Bottom line? If you like action, adventure, humor, or anything that can remotely be called "Cool", check out this book.

John says

A friend of mine talked me into reading this, though I was highly dubious whether Hellboy could successfully make the jump to prose novels. Underscoring my doubt was the fact that Christopher Golden's name was on the cover, since I believe he really dropped the ball in adapting the ALIENS and BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER franchises. (His UNCHARTED tie-in was OK.)

That being said, HELLBOY: THE LOST ARMY quenched all doubts right from the get-go. Golden seems right at home in this storytelling environment, and Mike Mignola's occasional illustrations function like the juicy center inside a Black Forest Fruit Snack. For a long time, Golden manages to keep the story surprisingly grounded and believable (not to mention fun in an Indiana Jones sort of way) before eventually surrendering to total comic book silliness in the form of powerful wizards, gigantic spiders, underground cities, Persian zombie hordes, Lovecraftian Elder Gods, and other such nonsense.

It was a fun ride while it lasted, though.

Joe Lambert says

Fun, quick read with some genuinely creepy sequences. You can tell Golden really enjoys Hellboy as a character

DeCarabas says

El primer libro del año; una lectura divertida y ligera, con los tintes lovecraftianos siempre presentes en las aventuras de Hellboy que recuerdan las aventuras de templos perdidos, cultos malignos y ruinas también visitados por Conan el Barbaro, Elric de Melniboné o Indiana Jones.

Una historia sencilla y bien construida, que casi hace olvidar que el formato original de Hellboy es el cómic, contenida en una edición que aunque barata, no es por ello menos disfrutable.

Tengo una debilidad por las versiones novelizadas de cómics, y sé por tanto que no es esta una lectura a recomendar fácilmente; pero si usted amable lector disfruta de los héroes pulp, de los ignotos horrores

arqueológicos que estos enfrentan y de los protagonistas defectuosos y con mala actitud, pudiera esta lectura resultarle, como al que suscribe, un amable entretenimiento.

TK421 says

Let me say that I am big big big fan of Hellboy. I love the story, the concept, even the character in movie and book and comic format. But HELLBOY: THE LOST ARMY did nothing for me. I found it rambled in too many spots and the story was just a jumbled mess.

I understand where Golden was trying to take this, and I can appreciate that, but if he would have simplified the storyline and remained true to the character of Hellboy, then this would hav come out much better.

Perhaps this "novel" was merely an experimental project for a next Hellboy movie. I admit, I would watch that.

WASTE OF TIME

Avery Follett says

I loved this!! I am gripped by an intense urge to read every single Hellboy novel. This guy will always be my favourite character and, after having read all of the comics and graphic novels, I would love to read all the novels too in order to complete my psychological collection.

Wing Kee says

Hellboy and the Mignolaverse is just so dense and amazing that no matter the format the stories takes, if the writers understand it and respect it, you will have a wonderful story.

I've never read Christopher Golden's books, I've never even heard of him before this, but when Mignola announced that he would be writing HB's first novel format story I was very much intrigued. This is actually the third time I've read this book (so yes, expect me to say that it's pretty damn good) and every time I read it I am reminded of how much Golden understands what makes HB and his world a fun place to explore:

World: Golden right from the start understands what HB's world is about. It's about mythology, monsters, the occult and weird and unexplained stuff...and it's about how HB bashes all of them with his right hand. How does Mignola's world translate without his iconic art? Fear not, for throughout the book you will find Mignola art showing key moments, characters and settings, it's a good little added bonus that makes this novel awesome. That's not to say that Golden needs those picture to world build, cause he does not, he understands this world and his writing is descriptive enough but not to the point of being an info dump, it's well realized. One little thing that could have been better was the amount of mythology, if there was a smidgen more it would have been awesome.

Story: Straight forward and to the point, there is no subtlety here, there is not deeper meaning, this is simply
1) HB is called in to investigate supernatural phenomenon 2) supernatural phenomenon starts killing people

3) HB solves it by fighting said phenomenon by beating it into submission. This is a HB story to the core, it is a ride and that's what it is. I did however, find the action which Mignola is known for (the big spectacle fights) to be a bit bland, it's just the nature of the different format, but it's a little thing. I don't complain there is too much action in the comic book but the amount of action in the novel actually kinda made me bored. Oh well. I also would have liked a bit more mythology and more mustache twirling by the villain explaining his story but also oh well. It's solid and it's fun.

Characters: Wow, HB has a sex life, good for him! The characters are quirky, not really deep and it's fine, it's an action book, it's about HB bashing things and the people around him just need to be deep enough for you to care. Honestly, other than Anastasia all the other characters are paper thing and it's fine. I did like the added pages and words for HB's internal dialogue as it takes advantage of this format's strength.

It was a fun read, if you like the HB comic books you will like the novel, it has the same DNA but with a different face, it's just different enough to be fresh and just the same enough for people who like the comic books to also enjoy this. Good stuff!

Onward to the next book!

Cindy says

Set in Sahara. 50,000 Persian soldiers and an archaeological team (25) disappear. Queen's 2nd cousin Lady Catherine is among them. Anastasia, Hellboy's lover, sends for him Illustrated by Mignola.

Aranluc says

Compré en pack las dos novelas de Hellboy por Christopher Golden y los dos recopilatorios de historias cortas de Hellboy, todo publicado por Norma, en un arrebató porque estaban muy baratos y porque qué puñeta, es Hellboy.

No es nada especial, el Hellboy de esta novela recuerda más al de la película que al original de los cómics, es demasiado hablador y gruñón, el de los cómics es un tío muy callado que te deja hablar tranquilamente hasta que se cansa y procede a mandarte a la mierda, puños por delante. Porque los que sueltan parrafadas en el cómic son, en el 75% de los casos, los malos. Mignola dice que no sabe escribir, que lo suyo es la imagen, pero el caso es que el texto del cómic tiene un estilo, un tono muy particular que no está en esta novela, y no culpo a los traductores, aunque es verdad que parece que les faltó una revisión antes de entregar el texto y que usan unas expresiones que no me acaban de convencer, pero uno nunca sabe, sin tener el original en inglés, si la culpa la tienen ellos o el autor.

En definitiva, esto es como leer fanfiction aceptablemente bien escrito, y encima aprobado e ilustrado por el mismísimo Mignola. P'a qué queremos más. Intuyo que los recopilatorios de cuentos cortos me van a gustar más, pero eso era de esperar.

Leila Anani says

This ticks a lot of my boxes: Hellboy, Ancient History/Myth, Zombies, tentacle monster, metamorphosis... and it gives Hellboy a love interest, but somehow it wasn't nearly as good as it should have been.

I think part of the reason is that this takes Hellboy out of his element and puts him on a solo mission with completely new characters - So there's hardly any Abe, Liz, professor Bruttonholm and no Nazi or steampunk elements and I'm sorry but these trappings are as much as what makes Hellboy great as the HB himself.

So his archaeologist ex calls him out into the desert where a previous team is missing and indeed it seems there have been many more disappearances going right back to 525BC where Cambyses II managed to lose an entire Persian Army. The army of course make a sand zombie reappearance and HB and co have to work out what's reanimating them and stop it.

Other than the utterly brilliant premise - What happened to Cambyses' Lost Army? The story is rather uninteresting and unoriginal. The novel also spends much of its time harping back to Hellboy's previous relationship with Anastasia. This romance never gets rekindled and I was getting sick and tired of the novel reiterating all the time that they were now just friends but still cared deeply for each other - Now this came out well before the first movie so I think it was the first time HB was given any kind of love interest but since the films came out his relationship with Liz has become so part of the HB mythos that having him with someone else just feels wrong somehow. The personal elements also really mess with the pace of what would have otherwise been a fun pulp action story.

Far from my favourite foray into the Hellboy universe but still OK.

Willow Redd says

Here we have the first Hellboy novel, officially sanctioned by Mike Mignola (who also illustrates). It took me a while to get a hold of this, since I was silly enough to let it go out of print on me, but now I have it.

This was also, I believe, the first appearance of Anastasia Bransfield, Hellboy's former love interest who calls when needed. Golden explores their story more in some of the other novels and stories he's written.

The story has everything you'd expect from a Hellboy tale; a lost Persian army brought back from the dead, evil sorcerers, underground civilizations, ancient tentacled evil, human-to-monster transformations, dismemberment, ghosts, and a ritual to bring some form of "ultimate evil" back into this plane of existence. And, of course, Hellboy is right in the middle of it.

I really do enjoy the way Golden writes Hellboy. He really does seem to understand Mignola's world.

Martin Pinkerton says

The BLUFF: Fun enough, wouldn't read again but don't regret reading it, will likely read the sequel (since we already own it)

Equivalent of: reading an comic book with mature content

Ideal for: fans of the character and/or sci-fi occult stories, not young kids

This book was enjoyable enough. It's about a comic book character and read like a text version of a comic book. The original artist/creator drew the illustrations so that's a plus. I had bought it and its sequel for my oldest son years ago. I like occulty sci-fi and needed a book to read when Littleman was reading his Star Wars books so I figured why not. It was fun jaunt if not fairly predictable. It does have some mature concepts so i wouldn't recommend it for younger children.

Chad says

Christopher Golden's first collaboration with Mike Mignola. Golden really gets Hellboy. This thing reads exactly like a Hellboy comic. Plus, he gives Hellboy a sex life. You gotta love it.

Hellboy heads to Libya to help an old flame. A group of archaeologists have vanished in the desert while searching for a lost Persian army. Hellboy parachutes in to investigate. In his typical stone-fisted way, he uncovers an ancient sorcerer who's trying to bring a god to our reality. Along the way he fights zombies, giant spiders and krakens. Mignola provides 50 or so illustrations as well.

Kevin C Steele says

I've had this one on my shelf for a couple of years and finally decided to read it when I was fiending for some Hellboy fun. I thoroughly enjoy the movies, as well as the occasional graphic novel. I've also been a long-time fan of pulp characters such as "The Spider" and "Doc Savage", so I figured Hellboy would be perfect for the "illustrated novel" treatment. Admittedly, this was my second attempt at this book, as it didn't hook me the first time. But, this time it got me and it was just what I needed then, having recently journeyed through the "Song of Fire & Ice" novels. This book was light and fun, like Christopher Golden GM-ing me through a monster-of-the-week adventure in the Mignola-verse. Mike Mignola's art perfectly complimented the writing, adding the right dash of imagery to clearly envision what Golden was describing. Overall, it was entertaining and I will certainly read more of these novels.
