



Hellblazer: The Gift

Mike Carey , Leonardo Manco (Illustrator) , Frazer Irving (Illustrator)

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Hellblazer: The Gift Written by Mike Carey Art by Leonardo Manco & Frazer Irving Cover by Tim

Bradstreet Collecting HELLBLAZER #207-215! One of Constantine's blunders proves disastrous for a loved one, forcing him to ally himself with the last person he would choose. The path Constantine finds himself on leads directly to Hell, where he must confront the dread demon Nergal, Constantine's longtime adversary.

Full description

Hellblazer: The Gift Details

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Author : Mike Carey , Leonardo Manco (Illustrator) , Frazer Irving (Illustrator)

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From Reader Review Hellblazer: The Gift for online ebook

Drizztl says

6,5/10

Jaimie says

Like Constantine will actually stick to his new magic-less lot in life, even if he did set his past on fire... But I'm getting ahead of myself.

The conflict that Carey started chronicling a few books ago comes to a bloody conclusion, with Constantine voluntarily going to Hell in search of the soul of his sister in the company of Nergal. While the journey is definitely physical, it has many metaphysical and spiritual themes that link it clearly with a similar journey through Hell in Dante's Inferno. Thankfully, Constantine is more of a wheeler-dealer than a follower along for the ride, so we get to witness some of his most intense and dangerous bargaining attempts. But nothing goes quite as planned, since his sister chooses to stay in Hell to help her newly deceased husband, which leaves Constantine to pick up the messy pieces back in the real world with his niece Gemma.

Paul says

John Constantine, Hellblazer: Red Sepulchre by Mike Carey

John Constantine, Hellblazer: Black Flowers by Mike Carey

John Constantine, Hellblazer: Staring at the Wall by Mike Carey

John Constantine, Hellblazer: Stations of the Cross by Mike Carey

John Constantine, Hellblazer: Reasons to be Cheerful by Mike Carey

John Constantine, Hellblazer: The Gift by Mike Carey

Yeah, it would be just like me to start reading a writer's take on a character by reading the ending first.

Ah well, this was a good series and I'll be looking to get the rest of Carey's run as soon as possible (providing I can find it at an affordable price). Maybe I'll even be able to start from the beginning for once.

Quentin Wallace says

Mike Carey really ended his run with a bang. So Constantine journeys to Hell to bring back his sister's soul and confront his "children" along with the demon that seduced him. It's a great storyline but it doesn't end the way you'd expect. We also see that John's already dwindling circle of friends is still getting smaller. And then he decides to irritate every magician in London, leaving him with few allies as well.

Constantine is probably the most hard luck character in comics, but also one of the most entertaining. Art was above average as well. If you're a Hellblazer fan, you should enjoy this one.

Rena Sherwood says

Well, gee, do you think Mike Carey was a wee bit depressed when he wrote this one? Constantine does not seem to be entirely in character here. And the stories presented here rely on previous story arcs in the Hellblazer series, which I haven't been able to read and not sure I want to after reading this one. So this is more of a 2.55 stars than a three.

Also, do NOT read the blurb on the back. That gives out way too many spoilers for the stories presented here. If I ever get to rule the world, blurbs that give off too much information will become illegal.

And what IS the opposite of deus ex machina? Whatever it's called, you'll find out in this graphic novel.

Darrell says

"Someone you loved is dead, and it seems as if the world should end. But it doesn't end. It doesn't even change. That's what's unbearable."

After the death of his sister, John Constantine travels to Hell to get her soul back while Gemma and Angie guard her body. He's forced to team up with his oldest enemy, Nergal, who plays Virgil to his Dante on their voyage through Hell. Along the way, they cross a bridge of souls in purgatory, encounter Constantine's demonic doppelgänger, and face the devil himself. Constantine also learns more about Rosacarnis. The artwork portrays Hell as a dark and dank place, much more appropriate than the brightly colored Hell of related comics Sandman and Lucifer. This is definitely the best story of Mike Carey's run on the series, perhaps the best Hellblazer story period. It includes a flashback of John's childhood in Liverpool, which reminded me somewhat of the childhood flashback in Carey's novel Thicker Than Water. Highly recommended.

Shashank says

The graphic novel features typical Hellblazer series artwork.

Imagining the scene in reality is almost impossible due to the context being supernatural.

Additionally it brings together various dark myth characters and presents a face-off between Constantine and his most dangerous enemy (personally).

But it is in continuation from the one previous to it so please read that.

Luckily I happened to read both in series and can't wait to lay m hands on the next.

It also shows Constantine's human side as a demon's used him and he's been unaware.

All in all, it ties a lot of loose strings so please read this after its predecessors.

Justin says

Watch closely and it would appear that John Constantine isn't completely incapable of tears at the conclusion of "The Gift," and chances are, readers will also lament the exit of writer Mike Carey, whose run Vertigo's HELLBLAZER comes to its final and inevitable conclusion.

But what a gift it was.

To be quite clear, fans (and even detractors) of LUCIFER discovered that Mike Carey had very different designs when he signed on to write the adventures of the chain-smoking anti-hero. LUCIFER was a sprawling epic, along the lines of Neil Gaiman's SANDMAN, and Carey's latest title, UNWRITTEN, is picking up steam a lot sooner than any other work he's written to date.

Whatever trepidation or anticipation readers may have felt about Carey's initial first stories on HELLBLAZER...Carey's run will stand, as even the best critics write, as one of the best runs ever produced on this long-running title.

Aided as he is by the mainstay illustrators who have made the last 2+ years of HELLBLAZER such a treat, Carey, in true HELLBLAZER scribe fashion, does his best to leave the character and the title in relatively the same state in which he originally found it. This has always been a quality of writers who tackle Constantine: Whatever changes he endures over the course of the run, the singular writer's run...from start to finish...can serve as a mini-series in and of itself, mostly free from any continuity that will come after it, and certainly not a complete slave to the continuity that has come before it (though "The Gift" relies heavily on the readers' understanding of what Carey has done with the character up until now...having not read the previous volumes by Mike Carey, readers will not grasp "The Gift" easily).

(It should also be noted that only Azzarello generated a "series" of HELLBLAZER stories that somehow ignored the title's continuity without completely destroying what Constantine stood for, when Constantine left London for a bit to travel through America. At the time, Azzarello said that he was using that time to research the UK and determine what he could bring to the HELLBLAZER mythology, but by the time Constantine's first major "Yankee adventure" had concluded, either Azzarello had had enough, or Vertigo editors wanted John returned to the London fog.)

Over the course of Carey's run, then, Constantine has been wiped of his memory of the bad deeds that taint his past (a bit like Jenkins' allowance of Constantine to cast the worst "bits" of his personality into the body of Aleister Crowley and send the S.O.B. to Hell) and sired three of the worst progeny a parent could expect.

And, in most ways, Carey brings Constantine full circle, though the future of his three demon children remains a mystery for now. A brave writer might tackle the subject in a later storyline, but readers aren't meant to hold their breath. As with some of the dangling threads that Garth Ennis left behind, it could be another 100 issues before a writer makes use of Adam and the rest of them.

For this reason alone, "The Gift" fails to reach its goal of excellence, but Carey's final chapter of his run, which posits Constantine as the keynote speaker for a banquet of London's up-and-coming magicians, reads a bit more like a dissertation by Carey himself to his readers.

Any magician, like any reader, can simply do his best. The miracles that you glimpse along the way...well, those miracles are mostly your imagination, but hopefully that's what you enjoyed from it. The rest of it is

just smoke and mirrors. The conclusion itself holds as strongly as Ennis' or Jenkins' conclusion. Few readers will be able to argue that this wasn't a fine foray into the world of John Constantine, and as Andy Diggle prepares to take over the series with the next major story arc, fans can only speculate whether Constantine will have as much continued luck with his subsequent authors.

It'd be a gift that continues giving, if the greatness doesn't end here.

Joseph says

Borrowed from Karen.

John Constantine is a survivor with a death wish, piling debt upon debt, until when it finally comes time to pay the piper, he pulls out a brand new credit card, transfers the balance, and starts the whole vicious little cycle over again. *The Gift* catches him right at the moment when he's desperately looking through his wallet to see if he can pull the same trick all over again.

Tormented by his three demon children, and forced to work with the demon Nergal, one of his oldest opponents, the story merely reinforces the fact that John Constantine has only ever had one true antagonist: namely, himself. There's a lot of nice continuity here, pulling in old characters and old storylines, and rebuilding the Constantine story without substantially changing it.

What most struck me about this book, though, is that no matter how many times Constantine survives, he never actually wins. He's always hated himself just about as much as any of his many enemies, but that self-loathing, and the ways it makes him act out really shine.

David Agranoff says

Mike Carey writes the best Hellblazers! The young Constantine story is the best part

47Time says

I've been loving the cover art for a while now, but I just now thought to mention it. The interior art is more simplistic, but well matched to the dark tones of the story. The last major arc from Carey will take something away from John, showing us that he isn't without fail, even given his skill with magic.

John must follow her sister's soul to hell and there is a bunch of stuff to do to get there, even with Nergal's willing help, though the latter has a nasty surprise in store. It's a dangerous road that John has never used. One on which he will meet old enemies and be betrayed. In the end John is willing to sacrifice his own soul to save a loved one.

(view spoiler)

John's soul is returned to his body. He can't face Gemma out of shame and runs away to relive the first time he used magic. He was bullied by one of his neighbours into giving away his allowance, so he offered to do a seance that would allow the bully to speak to his dead mother.

(view spoiler)

John gets invited to the Tate Club for an evening organized by magicians that look up to John. His scathing speech is anything but motivating and will likely isolate him from the magicians in London. His energy is sapped as a result of the previous arc, so he doesn't mince words when he criticizes magicians and warns them none too pleasantly that true magic is not a game and will result in greater losses than gains.

Cameron H says

"I never mentioned magic. But that was the first time, yeah. That was when I knew. That was when I knew I had a gift. And exactly what it was."

Suitably dark, epic, and twisted. It's like LotR by way of Bosch.

Printable Tire says

Well, people are probably pretty sick of me writing reviews of Hellblazer books at this point. I don't really have anything to say about this one. It's pretty good, but then again I haven't read any other Hellblazer books from this timepoint so I had no idea what was really going on or who was who or what was what in the main story. The minor stories in the back were good, although their main fascination, mainly Constantine blaming himself for letting all his friends die, seems tired. It already seems overdone in the Hellblazer books I've read, and those were written mostly in the 90's. He's STILL bitching about shit that happened in the 80's in 2005? Get over it, buddy!

Like most of the Hellblazer books, there were a lot of good one-liners. I wish I kept a list of the ones from previous books, but one I particularly liked in this book was directed at his bastard evil son:

"Sonny, the best part of you ran down your mother's leg."

Makes you think, right? And the library puts these books in the YA section. Go figure.

Mel says

This was a great ending to Mike Carey's run in Hellblazer. Bringing it full circle to the council estates and bringing in the more human element was great. It was all about how messed up families are. How love tends to destroy everything and cause untold pain. How you can't save the ones you care about. Constantine going to hell to save his sister and then his treatment of his "children" could not be more different. For a comic that is mostly a trip through hell with hideous demons on every page for the first half, this is a very character driven book. I found it by far the most interesting of the run. Carey really made Constantine face the consequences of his actions. One of the most terrifying and real things was the young Constantine story,

when he used his "powers" to save himself from the local bully, hard to imagine a more messed up kids story. Mike Carey definitely remains one of my favourite authors.

Kyle Warner says

"Blood is thicker than water, after all... and has a richer flavor."

Hellblazer is a dark comic and The Gift stands as one of its darkest volumes. Unable or unwilling to strike at John Constantine directly, his foes tear apart John's family and friends instead. It's a tale that takes John down to Hell, where he must team up with a most unlikely ally.

This is, I believe, the last or at least one of the last volumes written by Mike Carey. And I will miss him. Carey's Constantine tales are pitch black, full of mythology, and unfold in an unlikely way with nice twists and unexpected bloodshed.

The Gift is not the place to start your Hellblazer journey, but damn if it isn't one of the best chapters along that road.
