



Conan, Vol. 6: The Hand of Nergal

Timothy Truman , Tomás Giorello (Illustrator)

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This latest collection in Dark Horse's smart, innovative Conan series finds the cunning Cimmerian chased by both unfinished business from his past and a strange novice magician who seeks to deliver a dire warning to the wandering barbarian. Fleshing out Robert E. Howard's unfinished "Hand of Nergal" tale, Timothy Truman weaves several plot threads together in an ambitious culmination of ideas, and his skill at characterization is apparent in both his handling of Howard's beloved, iconic hero and a colorful supporting cast of thieves, royalty, seasoned soldiers, and magicians both good and evil. A great evil from Conan's past moves ever closer while unfathomable terrors awaken and come into view. Conan is, of course, eager to meet both head on

Conan, Vol. 6: The Hand of Nergal Details

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Author : Timothy Truman , Tomás Giorello (Illustrator)

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From Reader Review Conan, Vol. 6: The Hand of Nergal for online ebook

Fahim Ahmed says

A fantastic ending to this epic! For now at least. Tim Truman brings his first Conan story an excellent conclusion. I initially had doubts on whether I'll enjoy Tomas Giorello's art style, but it turns I had nothing to worry. The new art direction seems to mesh perfectly with Truman's writing style. I can't tell if Truman changed up his writing style, because tbh I was so wrapped up in what was going on that I barely. It really was damn near perfect.

By then end it makes sense why Conan would decide to return, before ultimately returning. But for now, on to Cimmeria!

Scott Lee says

Read in one sitting last night, except for the appended essay at the end which I finished this morning. Another fantastic volume from Truman and Giorello. I thought that the last volume was fantastic and this one certainly is at least its equal. The art is stunning throughout, and Giorello plays exactly the right "ick" factor with the zombie army that plays a role in this story.

As I mentioned in the last review having Nestor hang around as long as he did I found a plus, as it gave us a continuing presence in the book besides Conan, and allowed us to see Conan develop the first real relationship he's had since the first volume when we saw him in Cimmeria as a youth before he first left. (view spoiler)

I thoroughly enjoyed what seemed to me an expanded narration that accompanied many of the panels in which the characters were silent. I am firmly of the opinion, that comic books, powerful visual medium that they are, are meant to be read, and sacrifice some of the unique ability to have it both ways when they lean too far toward either half (visual or linguistic) of the medium.

An excellent volume and I cannot wait to read the next.

Trevor says

Conan + zombies = fantastic! Remember Nestor? If you thought his story was over, well, it is not. I hope the Dark Horse Conan series never ends.

Dan Schul says

Darkhorse Comics adaptation of Conan the Barbarian.

Some of the stories are adaptation of some of Robert E. Howards best stories, others are original stories by the Darkhorse Writers. A very nice collection of stories if you like the sword and sorcery genre.

Jordi says

Para fans.

Robert says

This series continues to deliver in terms of lusty adventures and lurid artwork! The denouement of this one felt a little rushed, but I'm glad it ends with Conan heading homeward to find a change of scene.

Andrew says

They desperately need a reboot! I mean, c'mon, 'Big Trouble, Little China' but not Conan? Sheesh!

Oh yeah, review.

Seeing Kurt Busiek take a bow and transition over to Timothy Truman for writing duties made me a little apprehensive. And then Cary Nord wasn't to be found either. Oh, but who am I kidding, these guys know exactly what they're doing and they actually move the story and our hero forward in a meaningful way. And they did it by patching together mere fragments of REH's unfinished ideas (literally two pages). Here we have Conan as mercenary, moving beyond the alley ways and taverns of the 'Maul' as a thief and mere survivor to fighting an army of undead soldiers brought back to this realm by the evil Atalis (who uses a demonic go-between D'Snal via Nergal, an ancient God of the Dead. Love it) What really impressed me were two things: namely the added dimension of Conan's friendship and sadness regarding Nestor, the Gunderman; and secondly the story itself, which tied together about three volumes worth of material into a coherent and exciting plot. Not an easy feat. The Gunderman was probably the closest thing that Conan had to friend in many moons, and the fact that they had started out as enemies makes the emotional punctuation even stronger. Conan avenged the man's death for Crom's sake. That says a lot.

It seems from reading other harsh reviews of this volume, people were not happy with what Timothy Truman did, or the incredible artist Tomas Giorello and for the life of me I can't grasp that.

These guys have put together another great volume and I'm looking forward to the journey ahead!
Ho! Onward toward the Northron lands! To home!

Heath Lowrance says

"The Hand of Nergal" was a fragment that Robert E Howard never got around to fleshing out; if I remember correctly, it was little more than two pages. So what Tim Truman does here is pretty amazing-- he takes those two pages, draws on what he already knows about REH's approach to writing Conan, as well as what previous writer Kurt Busiek has established, and turns in a top notch tale. Truman's "The Hand of Nergal" very skillfully takes Conan to the next stage of his career.

Making his way back to Cimmeria after having had enough of civilization, Conan becomes a mercenary with the army of Yaralet sent to meet the escort of a Princess -- just in time to see his army slaughtered by demonic creatures. The demons mistake the "waif" Iniri for the Princess and steal her away. It's up to Conan, the Princess and a blind wizard to rescue her before she becomes a meal for the evil god Nergal.

There are a few bumps here, which I attribute to Truman getting his feet dug in, but over-all it's a well-done story. It's clear, at least, that Truman "gets" Conan just as much as Busiek did. The art, by Tomas Giorello, while not as painterly or stunning as Cary Nord's best work, is more consistent and he makes a fine Conan artist.

I'd call this a fine new beginning for Dark Horse's Conan.

Brandon says

This book ties in with the previous volumes of 'Halls of the Dead' and 'Roques in the House' both which were fine but I enjoyed this volume the most. The common thread between the three volumes is the ongoing story of Nestor the Gunderman and the waif/sorceress who appear in all the volumes. Their stories conclude in this book before Conan heads off the Cimmeria for further adventures. The book itself continues the familiar themes found in most Conan stories - Devious elites, corrupt and evil priests, men hunting him down and monsters - but this book doesn't dwell too much on any of that. Conan spends most of the book apart from the evil doers being pre-occupied by a zombie army and his new role of a mercenary. They all converge in the end and it doesn't end well for the bad guys as expected but getting there was a wonderful ride.

The artwork takes a drastic turn with this book and it may take me some time to get used to the change. It's busier than before and the colors more muted. This is obvious when reading the prologue involving the wondering prince who wants to hear the Conan story. The art is good and the battle scenes are epic and exciting and the characters are well drawn but it looked scratchy to me and gone are the shadows and backgrounds that I loved so much. Still, there is little to complain of and Dark Horse is still turning out a quality comic worthy of the character.

Timothy Boyd says

The new Conan comic series does good justice to the Robert E. Howard stories. While the art does come and go in quality at time, overall it is a good. The adaptations of the original stories is well done. The fill in stories are also well done and follow the flow of the Character's life as written by Howard. Recommended to

comic fans and Very recommended to Howard and Conan fans.

Brian says

Like Halls of the Dead, *The Hand of Nergal* is based on a Howard fragment that was never completed. It describes Conan on a battlefield, searching through the corpses and finding a woman who was still alive, and the city of Yaralet, where no one walks the streets at night because of hideous shapes that sometimes break down doors and take inhabitants away, and where Atalis the scholar with a strange, hidden deformity met with Prince Than. That's it. It's about a page and a half and it's not clear what it's even about. Lin Carter expanded it out into a full story, but *The Hand of Nergal* ignores that in favor of its own story.

Unlike some earlier Conan comic books, there's no other stories bracketing the title piece. After a complete retelling of the Aryan prince finding Conan's statue and asking his wazir to read him the story of Conan, it jumps right into terrible shapes stalking the streets of Yaralet and Conan stumbling on a soldiers' camp and joining up as a mercenary. The vizier is evil, the princess is beautiful, and there is dark sorcery afoot.

I guess that's why I only thought it was average. There's a tentacled monster, a servitor of Nergal, and the notes at the end suggest that the fragment might have been Howard's attempt to write a real horror story. *The Hand of Nergal* is not a horror story. It has some horror elements, certainly, like the child who sees the things in the streets and falls back frothing and screaming, or the heart-ripping ritual. But the mood isn't that of horror. Conan stories never have the mood of an H.P. Lovecraft story, with unknowable cosmic gulf and beings without description or name, and Conan can always bring his sword to bear against the threats he faces. But in something like The Tower of the Elephant, it's obvious that Conan is terrified to the point of immobility when confronted by Yag-Kosha. It is possible for him to be frightened.

There's no sense of terror in *The Hand of Nergal*. There are animated dead stalking the streets and an inhuman monster, but Conan just keeps fighting and never even expresses any dismay at being confronted by walking corpses or an otherworldly horror writhing in a pit of bones. Some of the secondary characters are scared, but that's expected. Conan is only frightened when subjected to the sorcerous gaze of an undead monster, and of course he breaks free of it because he's Conan. But that's not real fear. It doesn't count.

I was happy to see I was wrong and that Nestor did eventually come back, and I was unhappy that his story was resolved just as quickly. With all the build-up about the darkness, I was hoping for something a bit more consequential.

Hopefully this and the previous volume are just a short downturn and my interest picks up again.

Previous Review: Conan, Vol. 5: Rogues in the House and Other Stories.

Next Review: Conan, Vol 7: Cimmeria.

Chip Hunter says

While this volume isn't as awful as you might think from reading many of the Amazon reviews, it is a relative low-point in the series. Besides the rather bland primary story arc of a mad priest raising an army of dead and trying to gain immortality from the death-god Nergal (which sounds epic on paper, but doesn't

succeed well here), this book also fails in its handling of the Epic of Nestor and the feel of continuity with the rest of the series. Really none of the characters in this one are easy to sympathize with, and even Conan himself seems different and uninteresting here. Actually, a significant portion of this book seemed like useless filler, developing characters that aren't going anywhere, showing repetitive and obvious scenes, and concentrating mostly on Conan hacking apart the undead or showing the skimpy 'clothing' of the female characters come teasingly close to falling off completely. Sort of a teen-age translation of a Conan epic.

As for the art, I agree with the other reviewers. You really hope for more from this series, especially after the first four volumes, which were so vibrant and exciting as to make you want to actually spend a couple of minutes absorbing each frame and not just turn the pages to get through the story. Its not only the detail that is lacking here, but the muted tones and ugly characters that make it less attractive. After a battle and for the rest of the story (as the characters don't get to take a bath), Conan and friends are blood-splattered. This is fine, but the method of dabbing blotchy red speckles over all exposed skin results in ugly. Browns are the most-used colors here, and it just means this is a dreary and dark setting. While it may make sense for the story, it makes a less-enjoyable read. Hopefully things will improve in the next volumes.

All that being said, this one is still enjoyable at some level. And it does continue the epic story of Conan as told by Dark Horse. I'd still recommend it to fans of the series, just temper your expectations.

Octavi says

Correcto pero sin nada especial. Buen dibujo y color.

Chad says

Remember that old trope where Conan fights a priest who's killing people to gain power from an elder god? Well, it's back. Just go watch Conan the Barbarian. It's the same plot as this but with zealots instead of zombies

Clark Hallman says

Conan: The Hand of Nergal is volume 6 of Dark Horse Books' Conan graphic novel series. This terrific story was written by Timothy Truman and the fantastic art was created by Tomas Giorello. Many Conan stories, including this one, are pastiches based on the unpublished and often unfinished work of Robert E. Howard, the creator of Conan who died in 1936. I first read and enjoyed Howard's Conan tales long ago as a teenager. I also enjoyed other pastiches of his work done by L. Sprague de Camp and Lin Carter. The Conan graphic novels from Dark Horse Books are extremely well written and illustrated. The stories are enriched by brilliant art work to help the reader experience Conan's ruthless behavior in a savage and mystical world. These graphic novels also accurately convey Robert E. Howard's barbarian and the dangerous, but fascinating, world he inhabited. They are exciting, enchanting, mystical and just fun-to-read stories. In Conan: The Hand of Nergal, the barbarian/thief comes to the aid of a beautiful princess who is betrothed to a rich prince. The prince wants to live in his kingdom with his future bride forever. His servant has agreed to help the prince gain his eternal wish. However, the servant is also a servant of Nergal, the God of death and the damned, and he has his own plans for the virgin princess. To help the princess, Conan battles the children

of Nergal, who are warriors refashioned from demon flesh. In addition, Conan battles Nestor, a previous rival thief and sometimes ally, who had been hanged in Conan: Rogues in the House, volume 6 in the Dark Horse Book series. This book is full of vicious supernatural creatures and much violence. It's a Conan book! I liked it very much.
