



## Dark Entries

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HELLBLAZER's John Constantine must become part of HAUNTED PALACE -- a closed-set reality game-show (think BIG BROTHER or SCI-FI's new reality show, ESTATE OF PANIC) in order to deal with a supernatural murder of one of the contestants. He enters as a 'surprise' contestant and meets the other participants, learning that they all have secrets and that one of them must be 'channeling' poltergeists and/or be the murderer. But there are more surprises to come!

## Dark Entries Details

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Author : Ian Rankin , Werther Dell'Edera (Illustrator)

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## From Reader Review Dark Entries for online ebook

### **Matt says**

I picked up Christos Gage's graphic novel, *Area Ten*, on a whim, loved it, and grabbed more entries in the Vertigo Crime series. This one seemed charming: there are six contestants on a Big Brother knockoff set in a haunted house, but something creepy is going on, so the producers send John Constantine (star of comics I have never read and a movie I have never seen) in to investigate before they lose too many viewers. The supernatural twist was a little oversimplifying and took some engaging characters into a comparatively dull plot, but this was still a fun little stab at reality television.

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### **Quentin Wallace says**

Another great Hellblazer story starring John Constantine. What starts off as another reality TV show turns into something much different, and I can't say much more without adding spoilers. Let's just say Constantine once again finds himself in some trouble and he deals with the best way he knows, by the skin of his teeth! Some parts were a little silly but sometimes half the fun of the story is its absurdity. Great story for any Constantine fan or fan of Ian Rankin.

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### **Derek says**

This was interesting, putting Constantine as a game show contestant in hell. Very refreshing, considering how unpopular Constantine is, in hell. Story could have been better though, it kind of went downhill after Constantine revealed to Keene that all the other contestants were dead, that and Brian McArthur, and the room with a window into Limbo, and a lot of other stuff. They could've been handled better, pace wise. Either way, this was a good read, shouldn't have taken me all this long to read it.

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### **Sam Quixote says**

A Big Brother type house and it's contestants are being haunted by ghosts so the show's producer gets Constantine in to investigate. Things become stranger as none of the contestants can remember how they came on the show or much about their past. Then about the halfway point things get very Hellblazer and the story takes off.

I've never read Ian Rankin or a John Constantine: Hellblazer book so this was something of a gamble. Fortunately Rankin keeps the pace ticking over very nicely and the story shoots along with the tension expertly mounting up. The reality television spectacle is parodied well - it really is Hell - and the contestants become better characters with the reveals throughout the story.

The only weak point here is the artwork. Werther Dell'endera does scratchy black and white scrawls that reminded me a bit of Manga books but with sloppier drawing. If the publishers had hooked Rankin up with a decent artist I think this could be a 5 star book, as such the artist lets the book down with his sub-standard

work. Definitely going to check out more of Rankin's work though.

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### **Sud666 says**

Dark Entries tries to bill itself as an old school John Constantine story. It doesn't quite measure up. That is not to say it is not interesting and it does display a small shadow of the angst driven "real" JC stories (such as Hellblazer vol 1 and on).

JC is brought in by a tv company that is doing a reality show. 6 contestants are in a "haunted" house and will be recorded by camera. Except that the house may really be haunted. JC is brought in to be an "extra" on the show. It then devolves into what is going on in the house? Who is this tv company? It is part ghost story and part supernatural thriller. I enjoyed the ending and the "twist" was actually well done. The artwork is merely ok-it's black and white. Nothing special but not bad. Sadly the same can be said for the story-nothing special (and JC has some GREAT stories from better writers) just a good story trying to recapture the old style. It fails. But it IS a good story-better than many of the NEW 52 versions. Recommend for any JC fans.

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### **Scott says**

Crime writer Ian Rankin (the Inspector Rebus series) turns his talents to writing a John Constantine graphic novel. Constantine is pulled into investigating the odd occurrences happening on the set of a reality television show that are scaring the daylights out of the contestants. Of course, Constantine runs up against his own hellish personal demons. Edgily drawn in stark black and white by Werther Dell'edera, this collaboration works really well and I'd enjoy seeing Rankin do more of this kind of thing.

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### **Shawn says**

Well, this was okay. I'll try not to be spoilerish. I was reading Alan Moore's SWAMP THING off the spinner racks back when J.C. first showed up (I still remember when he was so mysterious that there were theories he was meant to be Jesus Christ!) and kept reading his book, HELLBLAZER, up until shortly after Garth Ennis left (I stuck around for Eddie Campbell's short run but was unimpressed by Ennis' return). It is the nature of monthly comics that at some point, no matter how flexible the character is, the reader reaches burnout from repetition. In superhero comics, that used to correspond to adolescence or the late teenage years, but with adult comics for adults, well, you just end up stepping away at some point.

Because, yeah, Constantine is a great character - a mid-80's reinvention of the occult detective as working class con-man sorceror and slick operator, grizzled and cynical, he's a misanthrope who's repeatedly forced to save a world he's not sure deserves saving. Also, he's not above sacrificing the occasional confederate in service of his larger plans, so to know Constantine is to usually end up dead (and occasionally damned). He's a bit of a tarnished knight noir character, good at what he does, who moves among all social classes, which means there's lots of directions stories can go - demonic plots, quiet ghost stories, political conspiracies, sordid crime tales.

A good friend bought me this and I buzzed through it in one evening. Ian Rankin seems to be a name writer or something, but hey, I can't read everything and I tend to lose track of current popular writers. He has a

solid take on Constantine's voice: wryly acerbic and always needling the powerful, yet compassionate (if blunt) with those in need, he doesn't suffer fools gladly. The rough, sketchy, black and white art by Werther Dell'Edera is effective - at times starkly atmospheric, occasionally too vague or lazy, generally serviceable (he reminds of a less shadowy, vaguely manga-inspired version of Keith Giffen's style when he was ripping off José Muñoz, crossed with Clive Barker's, uhhh, "sketchwork" - the visual conception of the Cannibal Killer in particular looked very "Barker-ish"). The basic idea is that Constantine is hired to be injected into a popular, horror-themed BIG BROTHER type show because the contestants are suffering horrifying visions unrelated to the actual contest. Constantine disdains television in general, and hates reality tv in particular (just like me), so things go as one might expect until...

To tell you the truth, I liked the set-up until the big plot twist at the halfway point (which is ruined by the GOODREADS synopsis - perhaps I'll talk to them about that). Even after the rather goofy and illogical (if not unprecedented - this story does resonate with the tone of some older, if less auspicious, HELLBLAZER scenarios) twist, I was willing to play along and the read is not unenjoyable, it just sacrifices the chance for real-world scares on the altar of tricky plots, modern pulpy dark fantasy concepts and an unfortunate character revelation rather late in the game that screams "comic booky" (HELLBLAZER and the related spin off are comic books - I'm not a big fan of the term graphic novel and like "comic book" because it keeps the form humble - but they are supposed to be written for adults, and yet the modern age seems to be willing to accept more and more adolescent conceptions in their adult genre fictions).

In the end, a quick read that, at least in the character moments, feels like a visit with an old friend who hasn't changed much - which is just fine, familiar and predictable being sides of the same coin. I'd be interested in knowing what someone felt for whom this is their first introduction to Constantine.

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### **Melissa says**

I picked up *Dark Entries* as an Ian Rankin fan, with no knowledge of the John Constantine character. I was unaware of his existence beyond this book, and so the discovery that the cover lies completely - that this is a fantasy, not a crime novel - annoyed me utterly.

The premise as described in the blurb is that of an "occult detective" investigating strange goings-on in a Big Brother-style reality TV house. I count Ben Elton's *Dead Famous* as one of my favourite novels, so I was expecting something vaguely similar. I was sorely disappointed. Basically, half way through it turns out that all of the contestants are actually dead and in Hell, changing the entire *genre* of the book. I felt completely cheated. Last month, I described *The Colorado Kid* by Stephen King as "a bait and switch of a book". It promises hard-boiled crime and resoundingly doesn't deliver, but when all's said and done, it's still a *crime* novel. *Dark Entries* doesn't even end up in the same ball park as advertised.

I've given it 3/10. Rankin does some good things with the characters' back-stories, and his "story within a story" on Constantine's history with the cannibal Brian McArthur was something I'd happily read as a standalone. The line art is serviceable, though the artist's obsession with the lewd elements of the female form was cringeworthy, the "Hell" characters were interchangeable, and the action scenes towards the end became steadily more difficult to follow.

All-in-all, a total disappointment, and not one I'd recommend to anyone.

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## Zachary Rawlins says

Wish I could give it a three and a half - it doesn't quite merit a four, but it was better than a three. This is the second of Vertigo's ambitious hardback illustrated crime novels that I have had a chance to read, and the first to concern an existing character, Hell's Rake himself, John Constantine. Ian Rankin is a more than passable modern crime writer, and I have enjoyed a few of his books in the past, though his reoccurring detective character is not my fav.

This was a double-treat - a Constantine book not burdened by his overcomplicated past or DC's editorial demands, and an Ian Rankin book that didn't have the Scottish detective he normal works with. The actual plot is combination of classic haunted house story mixed with reality TV, with a distinctly infernal bent. It moves fast, the art is appropriate and simple, and the characters are surprisingly well-developed in a short amount of time. I really enjoyed this, and hope that Vertigo continues to publish this line.

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## Robert Davis says

Perhaps I liked this a it more than I should have. I was not at all familiar with the paranormal detective John Constantine, so I was a bit taken aback with where this story led... namely a reality tv show in Hell. The artwork, one by Werther Dell'Edera, was basic pen & ink drawing, competent but unremarkable, it looked hurried. Had the art detail been fully realized, given real color, nuance and attention, it would have improved the product greatly. But, despite it's rushed look, the story was fun nonetheless. It doesn't appear as if a sequel is forthcoming, so this appears to be a one-off endeavor by Ian Rankin & Werther Dell'Edera.

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## Titas (I read in bed) says

Constantine's popularity is off the scale!

Dark Entries is a John Constantine story. Yes, *the one and only John Constantine*. But don't worry because it doesn't require any previous plots or base to read about him. Just to make sure you are on board, Constantine is a **British exorcist**. But in the most kick-ass way **without any faith or holiness**. Now that it is said, lets talk about the story.

John is called by a TV production house to check a reality TV show set on the basis of 'fear', in which willing contestants stay in a locked house and are watched 24 hours like Big Brother. But unlike that show, this one's publicity explores and showcases the horror among the participants *induced* by the show runners. But what if the house decides to have so fun on its own and tries to scare the people in ways which are beyond the production?

This is a classic example for novels of horror, ghost, exorcism, monster, spooky genre! Ian Rankin starts the story *as if the plot is small and easy and just another Haunted-house story*. But with one after another surprisingly enjoyable twists *it becomes so huge and so epic* (from Heaven to Hell all the way) that it is beyond explanation!

Somehow it simultaneously roams around the fields of murder mystery, thriller, suspense with excellent balance and grabs 200% attention of the reader's mind. The writing is so smooth as if we have already been reading about this long ago. The characters, the twists, action, the dialogues are top notch! No, seriously top notch! And Mr John F'ing Constantine is at his best in the book *luv!* (Satan can go n' eat his heart out. Wait,

does he have one?)

And what can I say about the art?! There are just clean black and white lines. That is all. not even any shades of them. Werther Dell'Edera's drawing is crisp, clean, cutting edge, sexy, smooth and immensely enjoyable! The monsters, the action sequences, the spookiness are on a whole a treat for the eyes. His art walks on the line between simple and complex art and still stands out from all of them!

A must read for any horror or suspense or graphic novel lovers! And unmissable for Constantine fans!

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### **III D says**

Surprisingly devoid of any crime, Ian Rankin's Dark Entries was strangely printed under the now defunct Vertigo Crime Imprint. Perhaps not crime-ridden in regards to the events that unfold, our beloved John Constantine is present with all his established charisms of rakism and unfiltered roguishness that could very well fit into a story of a more illegal nature. With our hero in the picture the only thing left to establish is the setting. And, weirdly enough, it's a demented take on The Truman Show that sets the stage for this contradictory story to take place.

Not at all too wildly different from the degeneracy of modern reality T.V. John Constantine accepts an offer to join a ribald programme for a hefty bribe. What initially seems quite un-Constantine in themes, finds itself meshed into a story that (with some alterations sure) could fit into any of the early works of his canon. A simplistic palette of white and black occasionally expands to a wider application of color and styles namely: bristling greys and mangled manga to enflesh this tale before our eyes.

Some 200 pages later, my eyes had run over a disappointingly convoluted and excessively long take. Weak characters that were as unmemorable as the plot quickly melted from my psyche before the next comic reached my aching fingers. It's not horrible just for the record. Nor is it particularly horrible.

After giving it a moment of reflection here's my final two cents: Dark Entries is a John Constantine story for fans of John Constantine. If you're in the fan club, I'm sure you'll dig it. If you're not in the club, you'll probably be bored just like I was.

No thumb rating here.

P.S. I think there's some subtle references to OutLaw Star and The Shining in here.

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### **Adrian says**

A lo mejor con unos dibujines más curraos...

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### **George K. says**

Τρ?το κ?μικ της σειρ?ς Vertigo Crime που διαβ?ζω, το οπο?ο ?μως ξεφε?γει απ? τα στεν? ?ρια του αστυνομικο?, μιας και πρωταγωνιστ?ς ε?ναι ο John Constantine, ? αλλι?ς Hellblazer, ?νας ντετ?κτιβ

παραφυσικ?ν φαινομ?νων με ξεχωριστ?ς δυνατ?τητες. Η αλ?θεια ε?ναι ?τι πα?ζει να ε?ναι η πρ?τη φορ? που ασχολο?μαι με τον συγκεκριμ?νο χαρακτ?ρα, μιας και στο παρελθ?ν δεν ?τυχε να διαβ?σω κ?ποιο κ?μικ με αυτ?ν πρωταγωνιστ? και δεν ?χω δει καν την ταιν?α με τον Keanu Reeves. Θα επανορθ?σω ?μως!

Δεν θα πω και πολλ? για την πλοκ?, για να μην χαλ?σω κ?ποιες ωρα?ες εκπληξ?λες, απλ?ς ?χουμε ?να διαφορετικ? τηλεπαιχν?δι, στο οπο?ο συμμετ?χουν κ?ποιοι ν?οι, που υποτ?θεται ?τι δεν γνωρ?ζονται μεταξ? τους και οι οπο?οι, ?ντας κλεισμ?νοι σε μια μεγ?λη ?παυλη, χωρ?ς επαφ? με το εξωτερικ? περιβ?λλον, καλο?νται να αντιμετωπ?σουν τα δι?φορα περ?εργα που συμβα?νουν στο σπ?τι. Ο καθ?νας απ? αυτο?ς ?χει απ? ?να τρομακτικ? μυστικ? και φα?νεται ?τι το σπ?τι το γνωρ?ζει. Οι υπε?θυνοι του παιχνιδιο? δεν ξ?ρουν ακριβ?ς τι συμβα?νει, γ?αντ? και καλο?ν ?ναντι αμοιβ?ς τον John Constantine, να συμμετ?σχει στο παιχν?δι και να ανακαλ?ψει τι γ?νεται. ?μως τα πρ?γματα δεν ε?ναι καθ?λου ?πως φα?νονται...

Ο?τε Ian Rankin ε?χα διαβ?σει μ?χρι τ?ρα (αν ε?ναι δυνατ?ν!), ο?τε κ?μικ με ?ρωα τον John Constantine, παρ?λα αυτ? το απ?λαυσα πραγματικ?. Η ιστορ?α μου κ?νησε το ενδιαφ?ρον απ? την αρχ? και το κρ?ησε μ?χρι το τ?λος, μιας και η πλοκ? ε?χε αρκετ? μυστ?ριο και ωρα?ες αποκαλ?ψεις, εν? και ο χαρακτ?ρας του Constantine ?ταν ιδια?τερα ενδιαφ?ρων, κυνικ?ς και σαρκαστικ?ς. Το σκ?τσο μου φ?νηκε αρκετ? καλ? και απ?λυτα ταιριαστ? με το ?φος της ιστορ?ας, με απλ? και καθαρ? ασπρ?μαυρα σχ?δια, δ?χως αχρε?αστες λεπτομ?ρειες και σκι?ς.

Συμπερασματικ?, πρ?κειται για ?να ωρα?ο, ευκολοδι?βαστο και χορταστικ? κ?μικ, που πιστε?ω ?τι θα ικανοποι?σει τ?σο τους φαν του συγκεκριμ?νου ?ρωα ?σο και αυτο?ς που θ?λουν να διαβ?σουν μια ιστορ?α μυστηρ?ου με μπ?λικα υπερφυσικ? στοιχε?α. Το μ?νο σ?γουρο ε?ναι ?τι στο ?μεσο μ?λλον θα πι?σω κ?ποια απ? τα πιο γνωστ? ?ργα με ?ρωα τον John Constantine (ακο?ω προτ?σεις!) και εννοε?ται ?τι θα διαβ?σω επιτ?λους και βιβλ?α του Ian Rankin.

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## Michael says

John Constantine, tempted by a fat wad of cash, agrees to troubleshoot the latest tv reality show, ratings phenomena 'Haunted Mansion'. Or so he's told. The contestants are isolated in a rambling mansion, filled with secret passages and tricked up fake paranormal effects. So far the show has wowed the viewers with a slew of strange happenings. The only problem is... none of the fake spooks and tricks have been triggered so far. So what are the contestants reacting too?

Lots of writers have written Constantine, some good, some pretty dire, but main stream crime writer Ian Rankin really does get the character pretty much pitch perfect. He turns in a good story too, well suited to the style of Constantine. Reality shows and a celebrity obsessed media are easy targets for satire and Rankin pulls no punches, some subtle but mostly ... not so much. Werther Dell'edera's art fits the bill nicely too. Its simplistic composition and spare lines are raw on the eye but bang on the money for projecting the emotional tone of the piece. This is a quick read, despite its 200 plus pages. It's one of those pocket sized graphic novels Vertigo likes putting out.

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