

Tapping the Vein: Book One

Clive Barker , P. Craig Russell , Chuck Wagner , Fred Burke , Scott Hampton (Illustrator)

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Clive Barker's nightmarish vision has changed the face of horror forever. Now barker does for comics what he's already done for film, stage, and fiction--stretching the very boundaries of the medium itself to bring forth the lyrical and the brutal.

Tapping the Vein: Book One Details


Date : Published 1989 by Eclipse Books

ISBN :

Author : Clive Barker , P. Craig Russell , Chuck Wagner , Fred Burke , Scott Hampton (Illustrator)

Format : Paperback 56 pages

Genre : Sequential Art, Graphic Novels, Comics, Horror, Fiction, Fantasy

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From Reader Review Tapping the Vein: Book One for online ebook

Helen says

While I enjoyed this graphic novel, and the art was stunning, it feel below my expectations for Clive Barker's writing. I have not read the original stories so this opinion could be down to the adaption, I am not sure

Querus Abuttu says

"I am a thing without a proper name," it pronounced...

"I am a wound in the flank of the world. "

("Human Remains," by Clive Barker)

Clive Barker is ten years older than me, and I've read so many of his stories and compared them against the work of other writers, that I've declared him to be my favorite writer. While I've never aspired to BE exactly like Barker, I do hope that one day I will produce a piece of work that reads with the fluidity and animalistic self assurance that he so flawlessly exudes.

I'd be interested to know when CB wrote this short story. It seems like a much later piece. (Shades of Imajica.) I've read Barker's ideological struggles on Twitter in the past, his musings over male on male relationships and so on and I noticed a couple of years ago his Twitter messages were much like what is in this short story.

I love that Barker created a new monster with this piece. Two new monsters really, and he does an excellent job of highlighting a few of the monsters we see every day. In some ways, the monster he creates is similar to the vampire and in other ways vastly different. I was immediately drawn into the beginning of the story of the young good-looking 'bumboy' and his material ambitions. Barker is a master craftsman of language. He teases the worst terrors imaginable from his brain and sets them down like a bear-trap on a waiting page, and then before you know it the steel jaws of his concocted nightmares spring up and grab you in a merciless death-shake. Amazing.

The main character, Gavin, is an odd protagonist. He is a nocturnal human making a living off of selling his body for other people's pleasure. I never really 'liked' him in the story, and I didn't ever feel sorry for him, even when he suffered at the goon hands of Preetorias (I'm guessing an adapted word-form of the Praetorian: a Roman bodyguard). It only took one slip-up of the night, one poor miscalculation of a pickup, and Gavin is led to the ending thread of his old life and ushered into a bizarre and twisted world of the new. The beautiful man who once used his looks to get what he needed/wanted out of life suddenly loses his physical perfection, his one claim to fame and perhaps he truly loses his soul. Perhaps he loses it to a spirit once encased (or created) inside an ancient artifact. Or maybe it's simply an exchange of the heart.

There's not a lot I can say that would do justice to this story. I loved the innuendos, and the subtle meanings woven throughout this piece. And the macabre play on words was priceless. Christian. Not Christian. Crime of Fashion. Barker's prose holds disturbingly endearing and dementedly engrossing passages woven into a

short story filled with prickly precision and an 'in your face' punch. All of it revealed under the flicker of a golden light jumping up from the flame of a well-timed match. Which reminds me to say that this story brought my thoughts back to the famous lines in Macbeth:

"Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more." (~Macbeth. Shakespeare)

And Barker's tale reaches out and brings death to our door, unveiling the Reaper who always wants more...

~Factum Est

<http://wieldingpenandsword.blogspot.c...>

D.M. says

I got into Clive Barker when he broke the American scene back in the 1980s, and was into comics not much later, so when these comic adaptations of Barker's Books of Blood short stories came out I was all over them. Not only do they do an admirable job of adapting Barker's prose, leaving very little of his rhythm and style out, but they got some of the top artists in the field at the time to illustrate them.

This first book chooses some lesser stories to begin: 'Human Remains,' about a curious sort of doppelganger meeting a rent boy, is adapted and illustrated perfectly by P. Craig Russell; 'Pig Blood Blues' is a ghost story the way only Barker's likely to craft, takes place at a boys' reform school that's just gotten a new worker, and it's smartly illustrated by Scott Hampton but adapted by project originator Chuck Wagner and editor Fred Burke. Not the stories I would have chosen to open the series, but very well handled.

Sadly, the silly and puzzling John Bolton cover as well as the strange neon splatter endpages sort of spoil what could have been a dignified collection.

Jamie O'Rourke says

The first volume of the illustrated editions of Clive Barker's stories is a very interesting one to talk about, as both of the stories do certain things well and other things not so.

HUMAN REMAINS 3* (Original 3*)

Human Remains was never one of my favorite stories from the BOB collection, but it does do certain things well and this rendition takes that and serves it right back out at you. While I'm not so keen on the artstyle of this one, I do think that the emotional moments hit harder here than they did in the book.

PIG BLOOD BLUES 3.5* (Original 4.5*)

Now this is an interesting one. The original story had some of the most intense engrossing imagery Barker has ever created, and this version is no where near as scary. It is possible that this scenario is just much scarier to read about than to see. The thing however that makes this worth reading and elevates the book from

3* to 4* is the very pretty artstyle that rivals the Eclipse graphic novels.

Leila Anani says

This first volume of Tapping the vein contains Human Remains and Pig Blood Blues from The Books of Blood.

Human Remains deals with a beautiful young hustler who encounters an evil doppelganger intent on taking over his life - Creepy for the most part but I found the ending just fizzled and Craig Russell's artwork didn't do much for me - although I have seen much worse.

Pig Blood Blues is for the most part supremely freaky - a new teacher at a reformatory 'prison' encounters a sow possessed by one of the former inmates - Scott Hampton's art nicely offsets this one as well.

Over all not a bad attempt at turning Barker's short stories into graphic form. Looking forward to subsequent volumes.

Derek says

The first story, HUMAN REMAINS, must be the scariest, creepiest story about Doppelgangers ever written. It's a total creepfest.

The second story, PIG BLOOD BLUES, is familiar to me, I've read it in the first volume of The Books of Blood. Still, that was a long time ago, it was nice to see that story of angsty rebellion rendered into Graphic Novel medium.

Both tales are disturbing in their eloquent imagination.

Nikita Katiyar says

I went to sleep after I was done reading it and woke up around 2 am feeling a bit queasy, normally once I sleep I don't wake up till the alarm goes off. Weird. The stories aren't all that eerie, but you will feel uneasy for a while. Gavin's doppelganger and the demonic sow are hard to forget, they are nowhere near as horrifying as some of the monsters Barker has created but like I said they will leave their imprint.

Tobin Elliott says

I originally bought this 26 years ago, back when it was first published, and never picked up the next four volumes. No idea why.

Great idea, taking two Barker stories from his **Books of Blood** series of short stories, getting some of the best artists in the field at the time to illustrate them, and call it *Tapping The Vein* (get it? Tapping the vein from the Books of Blood?).

In this one, the two stories weren't necessarily my favourites from the BoB, but both, in my opinion, were greatly enhanced by the two artists. The first, *Human Remains*...well, to be honest, anything illustrated by P. Craig Russell is going to look absolutely gorgeous. He's always been one of my favourite artists, and his work on Robert E. Howard and Michael Moorcock's adaptations have always been a standout. As is his work here.

The second, *Pig Blood Blues* was a story by Barker that I actually disliked when I first read it. But Scott Hampton--an artist I'm unfamiliar with--did a beautiful job illustrating it and, to my mind, breathed new life into it.

It'll be interesting to go through the next four volumes.
