



Punk Land

Carlton Mellick III

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Returning to his avant-punk style introduced in the international cult hit, SATAN BURGER, Carlton Mellick III takes us on a journey into an absurd afterlife called PUNK LAND: the punk version of Heaven. The story follows Goblin, a deformed young hermit who is perfectly happy haunting an abandoned gatehouse far outside of civilization with his pet dildo, Frog Strips, until two strangers named Nan and Mortician arrive at his doorstep with a crazy story that turns his quiet post-life existence upside-down. Goblin soon finds himself mixed up in a war between corporate punks and traditional punks that he really couldn't care less about. But without the help of Goblin, Mortician's sperm, and a blue-mohawked female assassin named Shark Girl, the utopian anarchy in Punk Land will surely be lost. Featuring cameos by famous punk icons and cartoonish illustrations in the tradition of Kurt Vonnegut's Breakfast of Champions. This Bizarro novel is Carlton Mellick III's most fun and hilarious book to date.

Punk Land Details

Date : Published September 1st 2005 by Eraserhead Press
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From Reader Review Punk Land for online ebook

M.P. Johnson says

Hanging With GG Allin In The Afterlife

Where do people like GG Allin go when they die? Punk Land, of course. It's like heaven, except for punks. And some of those punks may have talking dildo babies. And some of those punks may actually be human-shark hybrid assassins. Basically, this is a rad concept made better by goofing around with punk culture and punk lore, and by adding in a helping of cool characters and their weird pets/babies.

Dustin says

Sequel to Satan Burger... It was part of a four book series called Brave New World, which also featured Virtual Light by William Gibson, City Come A Walkin by John Shirley, and Tea from an Empty Cup by Pat Cadigan. [note]

David Barbee says

I don't really consider this to be a sequel to Satan Burger, even though that's technically what it is. It's more of a bizarro espionage story with loads of famous punks and punk culture thrown in for flavor. And what flavor is it? I think its raspberry mixed with sewage mud. Delicioso.

Jorge Palacios says

The sequel to Satan Burger is even funnier than it's predecessor. It's full of artwork, which makes the read even more surreal, and the humor and stakes rise and are off the chart in this one. One of my favorite books ever!

May says

This book was a pile of shit and I feel stupider for having read it. Ugh. Trying way too hard.

Speakwright says

Punk Land is really good at being what it is. When I found *Satan Burger* eight years ago in Texas, it was a battered and creased, being passed around a group of friends like some sort of drug, and that's kinda what Carlton Mellick III seems to be good at. I found *Punk Land* yesterday in a bookstore, the shock of recognition and the memory of that clandestine relationship was so great that I purchased it immediately and read it all that evening. (I will note that it feels a little unnatural to be reading a crisp glossy copy.)

The prose has shifted from the disjointed associative language of *Satan Burger* to a much more sentence oriented prose YA narrative feel. *Punk Land* and *Satan Burger* both feature good natured, or neutral child-like male narrators. They are naive, incapable of significant action and loveably twisted. They have a somewhat innocent sex drive and are deformed in some major way. Goblin, the narrator of *Punk Land*, is a shy recluse who in was in life a collector of dildos, and in punk heaven is physically deformed to the point that it is difficult for him to walk. Although Goblin is supposed to have graduated from college, his consciousness is more slacker adolescent. Actually, everything in these stories is deformed in some major way, and all the main characters have a strong sex-drive (except for secondary male characters perhaps?).

The neotenous male narrator is largely why the books work. They make the somewhat simplistic plot and limited explanations of absurd events, as well as the odd spelling error, believable and endearing. Both novels take place sort of tangentially in the same universe. The Walm, a soul-sucking portal between Earth and other dimensions, appears in *Punk Land* as a link between a now-dead earth and punk heaven. *Punk Land* has an unusual physical presentation in that the book design seems conspicuously inept and awkward without hindering consumption of the text. The illustrations are zine-ish and terrible. The effect pretty appealing, and eventually even has an in-text explanation. "Grammar is not punk," so book design probably isn't either.

The plot takes the shape of a traditional action/adventure Odyssey type quest, (to save the world, to restore anarchy to Punk Land) with the exception that things just sort of happen to the narrator as a result of the supporting characters, who drive the plot. Death, drug use, sex, physical deformity, and discussions of various factions of punk and skinhead culture feature heavily, but in sort of a neutral tone. The main character accepts the presence of environmental factors, but doesn't seek out sex violence or drugs or factional alliance. Hybrid female characters are the most interested in perpetrating violence and sexual molestation, male characters seem the most prone to drug abuse, potentially as a way to escape responsibility.

The physical details of Mellick's worlds are wierd, grotesque and often disgusting, which is set off against the characters' apathy towards most physical phenomena. *Punk Land*, which was created out of Sid Vicious' imagination when he was chosen to be the god of Punk Land, affords all kinds of opportunities for strangeness, like Pizza Cats. Other things are a result of inter-dimensional travel, or attempts to infiltrate heaven. In any case, in *Punk Land*, worlds are malleable and shift quickly. The proliferation of ideas reminds me of a punk version of Piers Anthony.

Some reviewers wonder if Mellick's writing is feminist. While women are the major movers and shakers, and the main male character is generally nearly powerless, the female characters are uniformly predominantly horror-core sexual and are often motivated by harming and sexually molesting males. This seems mostly like a more uncommon appeal to a certain kind of male sexuality (the kinda guy who likes torture porn and suicide girls) than feminist, but because this view is not exactly a large part of the dominant paradigm, from my perspective it's not exactly offensive, but more of an item of curiosity. Mileage will pretty certainly vary.

Mellick is one of the main participants of a genre he created which he calls Bizarro, claiming kinship to film makers like David Lynch and Jan Svankmajer, as well as a cadre (a gaggle, a mosh?) of less iconic writers and a few presses. Mellick is not widely published outside of his own Eraserhead Press, but has published nearly 50 of his own books as well as the work of a smallish group of likeminded writers. Mellick says Bizarro has been shunned by libraries and bookstores, part of that reason may be because the content isn't likely to appeal to librarians, and there is no bookstore discount. Volumes are print-on-demand and non-returnable. This makes a sighting of an Eraserhead Press book in an actual bookstore (Bindlestiff Books, Philadelphia) unlikely and delightful.

Having an inefficient business model = punk. (But seriously, there's at least an attempt at pretty interesting marketing strategies behind the books, Mellick has or had something called the Avant Punk Army in which

readers who want to promote the books gain points for actions. I tried half-heartedly to look into it, but it took me to Myspace, so I stopped.)

:)

Nathan says

After reading this, I feel like CM3 wanted to write a Dummy's Guide to Punk just for the ironic satisfaction that such an effort would give. This work is an allegory for the commercialisation of popular revolution and the corruption of order-seeking hierarchy. It is a reinterpretation of the classic Crass song "Punk Is Dead". And it has the protagonist throwing dildos at God and punk icons. This is fun all around.

Jonathan says

I adored "Satan Burger," "The Baby Jesus Butt Plug," "The Haunted Vagina," "Sausagey Santa," and "Ocean of Lard," but for some reason this one just didn't tickle my fancy quite the same way. Honestly, I was a bit disappointed. Great ideas and images, occasionally funny, but there wasn't much of a narrative thrust. I think the problem here was that the many ideas going into it didn't come together quite so well--it might have worked better had the ideas been distributed into several different books, each one with a tighter focus. Often it seems like it is trying to tie as many great ideas in as possible, but the result is that all of them mean less. Take the Pizza Cat. It's very funny. Unfortunately, it comes and goes and doesn't matter in the least. Or what of the Robot Stripper? One of the times I laughed hardest in the book was on the page regarding the "RULES OF THE ROBOT STRIPPER." But the Robot Stripper was there in the background for one chapter, then gone, with no real meaning. Essentially, by packing as many ideas as possible into Punk Land, few of them end up having any importance to the plot. They're just there as visual, conceptual, or comedic detours, rarely being particularly necessary. However, I wouldn't argue that they shouldn't have been cut, because the detours were some of my favorite parts in the book.

The main plotline, of course, deals with the disintegration of Punk Land as it becomes an increasingly fascist afterlife, and the ways in which it becomes fascist are ridiculous and fitting. It's a reasonable enough plot that takes a little while to get going--too much time is spent at the gates of Punk Land, with our "heroes" doing very little. Once we meet Six things speed up and go nuts and just get much better, but the slow beginning was hard to get through. The ending, too, left me with more questions than answers, and I didn't feel completely satisfied. I honestly found it all too easy to switch to reading other books, so it took me longer to finish this than it should have.

I think another problem I had was that I wasn't quite into any of the characters. Morte & Nan are of course funny quirky sorts, but practically nothing is done with them. Six is awesome and fun in that "violent fetishistic psychobitch" way that is common with Mellick's female characters, but doesn't really show up until well into the first half. I found Goblin to be a somewhat boring narrator, even though he had a cool look to him and had a funny dildo fetish. I don't know how to explain it--I just didn't like his personality, I guess. Kudos, though, for the first sentence of Scene 2, regarding why Goblin got kicked out of heaven. That alone made the book worth reading.

In the end, it's not one of Mellick's best, but I still recommend it to fans of him or Bizarro in general,

especially those who are interested in all things Punk. I'll definitely reread certain parts of it.

Zoe says

Imagine a place which exists somewhere between Heaven and hell, a land where punks have erected their own afterlife rather than try to get along in Heaven. Goblin is a guard who works at the main gate of Punk Land, and yet, no one has visited the security station or entered Punk Land in some time. So Goblin is surprised to find two people who arrive not through the gate, but from within Punk Land itself. And they have many more shocking revelations which Goblin decides must be put before the Punk Council.

During the trip through Punk Land, Goblin begins to understand that something has gone horribly wrong, and instead of anarchy, Punk Land is being ruled by corporate goons.

Then with the entry of Shark Girl into the story, the real horror show begins. Between Shark Girl and the actions of the Punk Council, this book makes the afterlife seem very unpleasant. Because once you accept that you can feel pain in the afterlife, the concept of being eternally shredded on a giant metal grater is pretty gruesome. And this is just one of the nasty surprises waiting for you in this book. If you're looking for a good Bizarro book with a lot of gore and laughs in equal portions, I'd recommend this book.

Donny says

This book was the first book I had read from Mellick. His style is like no other. I hate typing reviews so I'll keep it short. Punk Land was creepy, sickening, and oddly arousing with it's cannibal sex scenes. I recommend this to anyone who loves weird shit.

Zeo says

Upon entering Noid, the atmosphere goes from peaceful nature sounds to blisteringly loud Oi! music attacking from twenty different directions.

"Now this is Punk Land!" Nan says.

The city is much different than it was just a year ago. It has become a giant mosh pit. Skinheads and punks running through the streets punching and slamming each other. Oi! bands are playing everywhere and it's sometimes hard to distinguish between the band members and the audience. Perhaps half of the crowd are bands...And everyone is yelling, "Oi! Oi! Oi! Punk Rock and shit!" and shit.

If this sounds like a waste of time for you, it probably will be. If this sounds in any way appealing even if only on grounds of absurdity and fondness for bizarro shit, hey, maybe it'll appeal. It's like a better than average longform zine. I enjoyed it, I think. It was silly?

Galan says

Quite disappointing. The prose was weak; a forced sequel to the above average 'Satan's Burger'. Mostly, the type face made the novel feel even cheaper than it's cover promises.

Ekel Adolf says

People who follow my reviews might already know that I have quite a high opinion of Mr. Mellick's works. In other reviews I stated that his books can roughly be separated into two categories: Surreal, rather dark and nightmarish stuff on the one and fun, crazy and outright trashy novels and novellas on the other side. While *Punk Land* is clearly a fun read, it has an "all natural" flavour to it, which means that it feels and tastes like an organic composition and not like something created by mixing the most silly, extreme, offensive and or nonsensical components together. Don't get me wrong here, since it is one of CM3's most notable qualities as an author to create masterpieces from nutty exposés, but this novel definitely has a different feel to it. *Punk Land* is richly illustrated with crude drawings in the vein of Kurt Vonnegut's masterpiece *Breakfast of Champions*, which is another aspect in which it differs from CM3 other works. Regarding the story line and plot, *Punk Land* shows Mellick once again in top form. I won't try to give a summary here, but amongst the elements and details I liked the most are the protagonist's (Goblin) luciferian act of rebellion against God and authority itself by throwing his pet dildo Frog Strips at him and characters like GG Allin and Seth Putnam, which are based and modelled after the real-life equivalents from the history of punk & other underground music cultures. Mellick definitely is familiar with the stuff he is writing around, and rebels and legends like Allin or Putnam come back to life in this book.

Thomas Flynn says

The kind-of sort-of sequel to "Satan Burger," which I also loved. Much more of an engaging adventure. With shark girls.

Joseph says

If you like punk rock. You will like this book.
