

## “HELLRAISER” #1 (Comic Review)

Written by Jorge Solis

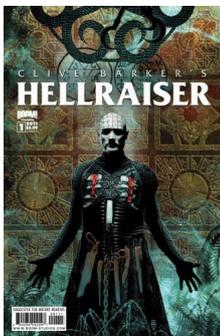
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The first issue of BOOM! Studios' new HELLRAISER comic series is definitely must-read horror. As your fingers flip through each page, “Pursuit of the Flesh” builds nothing but mounting dread. Back in the hands of its original creator, Clive Barker returns to tell a chilling new chapter in the franchise's mythology. The narrative and art will undoubtedly captivate its readers right from the first page. To mark this epic event, a list of talented artists—such as Tim Bradstreet (BLADE), Nick Percival (JUDGE DREDD) and Barker himself—have contributed various covers.

Sitting in complete darkness, a runaway teen finds herself trapped inside a white-padded cell. No matter how hard she cries and screams, no one is coming in to rescue her. When the lights suddenly turn on, she unexpectedly sees a small device lying on the floor. Though this teen can't explain why, she is utterly compelled to solve the puzzle box. Unfortunately, what this runaway doesn't realize is that she has just opened a gateway into hell.



When the puzzle box is solved, Pinhead and his demonic race of Cenobites appear on command. The hostage screams at the sight. As her torturer and executioner, Pinhead mocks the prisoner as she begs and whimpers for mercy. With the box in his hands, chains strike forth and lash out at the girl. Pinhead coldheartedly watches as the chains eviscerate the runaway, tearing her flesh apart and splattering the cell with her intestines.

A violent war is brewing in the outside world. The Meddler and her group have destroyed another music box. Two more Cenobites have been sent to the abyss. These so-called meddlers are heading closer toward Pinhead's box. Even though he doesn't care and isn't worried, Pinhead eagerly awaits this confrontation. Just who are these meddlers? Could it be Kirsty Cotton herself, the series' heroine? Or could it be Tiffany, who Kirsty met at the Channard

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Institute? Major players are being set up in this chess game, but who is orchestrating their moves? Readers will be anxiously anticipating the answers to these questions in the next issue.

Author Barker reteams with co-writer Christopher Monfette (SEDUTH 3D) to bring the franchise back to its roots. This is not the Pinhead you remember from the sequels. In just a few pages, the writers convey deep characterization toward the infamous horror icon. Pinhead has more personality and approaches his quest for a new experience with such unrelenting aggressiveness. The writing allows for a new generation of HELLRAISER fans to jump in, but doesn't swerve off to disappoint long-time followers.

The artwork by HELLBLAZER'S Leonardo Manco is definitely something to behold. The highlight of this issue is the church organ made of dead bodies. The art oozes with gore and yet is so stylishly artistic at the same time. This is something very difficult to pull off, but Manco exceeds at developing the disturbing terror. With the illustrations aided by the gritty colors of Charlie Kirchoff, you will cringe at some of the sights they have made.

Presented with such raw nerve and imagination, HELLRAISER #1 is full of nightmarish imagery that horror fans will instantly crave. New followers will be able to approach this issue with ease, while regulars will proudly remember what made the original such a modern classic. Once you start reading, there is no way you will be able to put this one down. For more info about the creation of the new HELLRAISER comics, pick up Fango #302 (on sale now).



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