



Preacher, Volume 4: Ancient History

Garth Ennis , Steve Dillon (Illustrator) , Steve Pugh (Illustrator) , Matt Hollingsworth (Colors) , Carlos Ezquerra (Illustrator) , Richard Case (Illustrator)

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Four distinctive characters whose lives were forever changed by encounters with Preacher's Jesse Custer take center stage in this volume. Included: The Saint of Killers, telling the origin of this troubled, violent figure from the Old West, and The Story of You-Know-Who, in which a disaffected loser tries to escape the influence of his abusive sheriff father with tragic, yet comical, results, and more.

Preacher, Volume 4: Ancient History Details

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From Reader Review Preacher, Volume 4: Ancient History for online ebook

Holly (The Grimdragon) says

There are three parts to this volume, featuring some of the main supporting characters.

It begins with the action-packed backstory of The Saint of Killers. He is so badass! This installment takes up a good portion of the book. I really enjoyed this!

The second story was about the much talked about Arseface. Wow. There was a deep, intense sadness throughout. Surprisingly heartbreaking. I was quite drawn to it.

The third was a satirical look at action hero movies, which focused on Jesse's uncles, Jody & TC. This was okay, but definitely my least favorite out of the three!

Even though this takes away from the main storyline with Jesse, Cassidy & Tulip, it was nice to have a more fleshed out view of some of the important supporting characters. I just requested volumes 5 & 6 from the library. Now that I am back into reading them, I really cannot wait to see where the story goes next!

Bradley says

Holy crap! The Saint's story was even better than I imagined!

I mean, we're getting into some great ghost story stuff, but add a mountain of steroids and a man that both the Angel of Death and Satan, himself, is scared shitless of, and we've got Keyser Söze, or um, I mean, the Saint of Slaughter. :) Hell of a good story.

Someone in Supernatural has been cribbing from this comic. :)

And now that I know so much more about this guy, I can't believe that everyone got off so light, before. :)

Sam Quixote says

"Ancient History" is sort of a sidenote to the main story of Custer and Co. as this book (the fourth in the series) contains back story for the Saint of Killers, Arseface, and Jody and T.C.

The best of the bunch is the Saint of Killers' story. From late 19th century wild west, cowboys and injuns, to the gates of Hell and beyond, we see how the Saint became the cold blooded killing machine he is in the main story. Carlos Eszquerria supplies some fantastic drawings for his part in the story, the Hell sequence. His Devil is brilliant and you find out his first name too. The story takes up a full half of the book and is perfect reading for upcoming Hallowe'en celebrations. That is, read it by candlelight with a drink and ignore the brats at the door.

Arseface's backstory isn't that great. If you've read the first book (and why haven't you?) you'll know he looks the way he does because of his own actions and some other details. It's elaborated on more here but doesn't really provide that compelling a story.

Jody and T.C.'s story is a satire on action films and has a fun story of the pair taking apart an international mobster's hitforce in the swamps of the South. Some really creative deaths in this part of the book.

It's a great addition to the brilliant story of "Preacher", fleshing out the supporting players for the reader and providing some excellent reading for a couple of hours.

Melki says

I was all prepared to hate this volume.

I mean...no Custer? No Tulip? N-n-n-n-o Cassidy, the world's coolest and most inebriated vampire?

No freakin' way!

But, geez, they got me. Right away I was slapped in the face with a glorious, bloody, Peckinpahish horse opera about how a loner seeking vengeance became the *Saint of Killers*. What's the devil to do when Hell literally freezes over?

Then we revisit the sad, sad story of Arseface, and see the birth of yet another loner out for blood.

And finally, there's a fun tale of mayhem and wild things gone wilder with Jody and T.C., *fore they was dead*. Watch as these good ole boys mix it up with *a cop on the edge* and *a supermodel-turned-lawyer-with-a-dangerous-secret* who just happen to find themselves marooned in the middle of a swamp.

Even without the three main characters, there are some rip-roarin' times to be had in this collection.

Jesse A says

Much better one off stories than the Cassidy origin. The saint of killers story was phenomenal. The Arseface and The Jodi, T.C. stories were ok.

? Sh3lly - Grumpy Name-Changing Wanderer ? says

I stayed up well past midnight and read this entire thing in one sitting. I knew going into it, that it was about a few of the side characters and tells their backstory. I'm not a huge western fan, and the first story called the "Saint of Killers" is one. I wasn't sure how I felt about that, but once I started reading, I loved it! You find out how he became what he is and why. Scary sumbitch. So scary, even the devil didn't want him!

As a little warning to those who might be new to the series, Preacher is a comic with tons of violence and cursing and all sorts of objectionable content. I love it, but it's definitely not for everyone. :)

The second story is "The Story of You-Know-Who," which tells how arseface became...well, arseface. This story was so sad.

His dad was a total POS, beat him, humiliated him. His mom just buried herself in pills and alcohol and allowed it. He was bullied, even his friend made fun of him. No wonder he tried to do what he did. **Tried** is the key word here. Because he lived and now looks like this:

But he has a new outlook on life, and even though no one can understand a word he says, he still talks a lot as though he was a motivational speaker. Maybe not quite that much.

The final story is about those two sick bastards, Jody and T.C. This is before they meet up with Preacher a final time. In this one, our hillbilly psychopaths inadvertently get caught up in a plot involving a cop and a lawyer who has some evidence a terrorist is looking for. It's kind of funny.

I wasn't sure if I was going to give this four or five stars, but the fact that I read it so quickly and stayed up late to finish it, put me from the 4-4.5 stars range to just giving it **all the stars**. My favorite yet, i think!

C says

This is a collection of three spin-off stories.

The first tells the much-needed backstory of The Saint of Killers. While part of this is actually one of the few areas where the TV series was true to the comics, some of it was new to me. It was well-done, creative, and interesting; it's also the reason that I didn't give this volume a more negative review.

The second tells the little-needed backstory of Arseface, who is... basically a useless character. We learn how he became deformed, in a very dated and cliched plotline that adds virtually nothing to the story except satisfy one's curiosity as to how someone can survive a self-inflicted shotgun wound to the head.

The third is an even less-needed story of two people (an intentionally cliché hero and his intentionally cliché naive female companion) who run into Jesse's family's enforcers, Jody and T.C. While the male "protagonist" is supposed to be foolish and annoying, I actually felt bad for him because of the cruelty of Jody and T.C.

Kemper says

Garth Ennis wrote an introduction to this volume of *Preacher* where he says that part of his inspiration for

the story came from his love of western movies. He doesn't explain why he included a kid disfigured after a botched suicide attempt who now goes by the name of Arseface. That's probably for the best. I don't think I want to know how Ennis came up with that character.

This collection breaks away from the main storyline of Jesse Custer's quest to find and punish God to give us some background of some of the supporting characters. We learn why Arseface decided to follow in Kurt Cobain's footsteps and try to stage a quick exit via shotgun. For a character that's been portrayed as disgusting comic relief to this point, it's a surprisingly moving story.

There's a hilarious satire of action hero movies starring a couple of old acquaintances of Jesse's. Watching Jody and TC's violent redneck antics as they deal with a handsome male cop and a beautiful female lawyer being pursued through a swamp by a deranged terrorist is disgusting, and completely hilarious.

But the pivotal story in this is the origin of the Saint of Killers. The Saint was once just a man with a talent for murder that he used during the Civil War as well as hunting Apaches afterwards. When he was robbed of the only happiness he'd known, his rage is so fierce that it scares both Satan and the Angel of Death, leading to him taking up the mantle as God's own killer. He carries out this duty as a kind of fucked up hybrid of a cowboy and the Grim Reaper. As Ennis puts it: *Back when he was just a man, before the world shook to the thunder of his guns, there was still some good in his heart. And that was the tragedy.*

While not strictly necessary to the overall *Preacher* story, this collection is still great reading for fans of the series. Where else are you going to see a guy fight a gorilla with a baseball bat?

Ashish Iyer says

Review in Volume 9.

Mike says

I enjoyed how over the top the Jody/T.C. story was with the typical over the top action star, and the female with the over-complicated backstory. I also enjoyed reading how the Saint of Killers took up his enchanted pistols and began his reign of terror. Saying that, though...i didn't like the artwork and I felt that even though the stories were good, most of the book was a waste of time. An unwelcome break to the normal Preacher story arc.

Devann says

this is just ...so incredibly boring and also unnecessary. i literally don't even think i read this 'volume' the first time i read through the series because NONE of this seems familiar in the slightest. anyway this is a volume comprised entirely of specials that have little to do with the main plot line. you can honestly skip it and not miss out on anything important.

the saint of killers stuff was probably the best out of the three but still leaves me rolling my eyes, mostly because i have literally zero patience for 'murdered wife and child' origin stories and also just because i don't

caaare. the arseface story was ...okay i guess but again never in my life have i ever thought 'boy i wish i knew more about him'. plus we pretty much knew all of his stuff already from the main series. and the one with jody and ...the other guy was just ...entirely awful. who in the world wants to read more about them. [loud groaning]

Garrison Kelly says

Three tales of bloodshed, three glimpses into the pasts of the famous Preacher characters we know today. The Saint of Killers started off as a wild west bounty hunter with a heart so cold he brought snowy weather to Texas (that's not a clever joke, that's a fact). Arse-Face's was a disenfranchised teenager constantly bullied at school and abused by his corrupt cop father. The Good Old Boys Jody and TC were swamp fighters who stumbled upon a gang of mercenaries trying to recover a blackmail tape from a cop and a smoking hot lawyer. Nobody is safe in these homicidal stories. What doesn't kill them will leave a scar.

The level of violence in these stories is maximum tier, maybe even beyond that if it's humanly possible. It's more than just splattering blood across the scenery. It's more than just broken bones and squishy organs. It's psychological torture. It's reliving those horrific scenes for the rest of your life (however long that may be). Maybe if you're lucky, your brain will explode in this hurricane of violence and you can be spared from this maddening torture. But then there's always the possibility of living with a sadistic devil or a corrupt god. In which case, the bloodshed and brutality will come full circle long before you're ready to be reincarnated and have it happen to you all over again.

Unfortunately, this kind of horrific display is also applicable to innocent animals that've done nothing wrong. The animal cruelty in this graphic novel is easily the hardest to stomach while the violence to humans is at least sick and twisted fun. Whether it's Gumbo McCready's gang shooting horses, Pube shooting a yappy dog, or Jody beating the hell out of a confused gorilla with a baseball bat, your heart will sink so far down it'll think it's in the ninth circle of hell. While the animal deaths are a true representation of how screwed up life can be, it doesn't make them easier to read about, much less physically see on the pages of a graphic novel. Thank goodness for the ASPCA, which I donate to every month.

Just as alarming is the way in which Arse-Face is treated throughout his story. He's constantly beaten by his father, beaten by the students at school, and rejected pretty much everywhere else he goes, and this is all before his face became permanently disfigured. His only escape in life is through his punk rocker best friend Pube, who happened to be the one to shoot the yappy dog with a shotgun. Not much of an escape, huh? If I had to live that screwed up of a life in Texas, I too would want to find solace in even the most horrible people while smoking marijuana until the end of time. Disturbing as hell, yet the most poignant of the three stories, especially considering how Kurt Cobain's suicide played a role in Pube and Arse-Face's decision-making.

Preacher, Vol. 4 is equal parts heartbreak and violent fun. The delightfully vulgar dialogue sets it all up with perfection and can be another entertaining part of the graphic novel, even with Saddam Hopper and his inability to swear properly. Garth Ennis knocks it out of the park yet again with these Preacher graphic novels. He probably needs many years of therapy, but it'll be worth it if he continues pumping out awesomely violent fiction like this. How does a passing grade sound to all of you?

The Flooze says

Ancient History covers the background of some of Jesse's adversaries: the Saint of Killers, Arseface, and Jody & T.C.

Saint of Killers struck me as the most interesting. It's got an haunting, mythic quality to it. I even found myself sympathizing with the man he was and the situation that brought him to what he is now.

Arseface is a story of a quiet teen from an abusive home. Though I don't care all that much for the character, it was sad to see Sheriff Root's treatment, the mother's depression, and the uncertainty that led "Arseface" to destruction. He inspires a lot of pity.

Jody & T.C. What to say about these two. The entire story ran as a farce of a blockbuster action-comedy: the gorgeous model-turned-lawyer, the ruggedly handsome cop trying to protect her from the Bad Guy foreigner...until the good ol' boys show up. The two are sadistic and reprehensible, but damn if they don't know how to kick ass. Other than highlighting Jody's warped sense of honor this didn't add much to the world, but was still mildly entertaining.

Because this is an add-on to the Preacher series, the artwork was handled by three different artists. Having grown used to the style of the previous books, I found some of these pages lacking by comparison. There was a realism missing from many of the fight scenes, and the work was somewhat inconsistent.

Overall, worth reading for the Saint of Killers' origins, but I'll be glad to get back to Jesse, Tulip and Cassidy!

Eric says

This should really be labeled Volume 3.5, as it does not follow the main cast of characters -- neither Jesse, Tulip nor Cassidy make an appearance in this volume -- nor does it push forward the main story line.

That being said, these three unrelated back stories are still engaging and do a good job of fleshing out the ensemble cast of the Preacher universe. The first, chronicling how the Saint of Killers became who he is, is the highlight of the three, but the Arseface story is also revealing and worth reading. The story of Jesse's redneck cousins was the only one that I really didn't love, as it was a little too farcical and over the top.

I also didn't like the fill-in artist, Carlos Ezquerra, as much as Steve Dillon, the regular artist for the series.

Mike says

Ah yes, what I've come to learn is a signature move on the part of Ennis (and others like Aaron in Scalped or Wood in DMZ): the volume of "side character stories".

Related tangent: I was obsessed with Preacher when I first read it, and tracked down everything in print. Including some obscure little one-off of story about the Saint of Killers. I awaited that eBay/Amazon

purchase like a rabid squirrel, and when it finally arrived I tore it open...only to discover it was the original printing of the very story collected in this volume. Bugger me - where's the extra-special secret stories I was seeking?

Re-reads like this are both hard and gratifying - hard to think I've forgotten so much of what I once knew, and gratifying to see these old, vaguely familiar characters in scenarios that are so new to me, even if I have a funny idea I know where they're headed.

Favourite character: well duh - the Saint Of Killers.

Favourite moment: "Go an' look."

Favourite surprise: the Devil playing cards, smoking a cigar and cursing.

Least exciting story: the lame parody of 20th-century action films, even if there were a few fun puerile moments.

Stephen says

A "**Most Interesting**" review:

He once read **Ulysses** by **James Joyce**...

He composed a **dirty limerick** in **Cuneiform**...

He once...

He is...

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.
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*"I don't always read graphic novels, but when I do, I prefer **Preacher** by **Garth Ennis**."*

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Nuff said...I mean when the coolest suds spokesman since Billy Dee was telling America that, "It works every time"

spills that he enjoys Garth Ennis's Preacher series, I'm not sure what more my rambling comments can add to the endorsement, so let me just give a brief rundown of the events transpiring in this fourth Volume.

PLOT SUMMARY:

Taking a break from the ongoing storyline, this installment provides some overdue back story on several important supporting characters, most notably and most awesomely, the immortal, badass extraordinaire, Saint of Killers.

Taking up two-thirds of the page count, this terrific origin story lays out the history of this unstoppable murder machine, who until now has been the most mysterious characters of the series. While main character Jesse Custer is clearly the voice of the series, Ennis has described the Saint of Killers as its "soul," making his story an essential aspect of the narrative. Ennis intended the SOK to be the personification of the violence and cruelty of the old west, making him reminiscent of "the Judge" from McCarthy's Blood Meridian.

Only Ennis, master of the medium that he is, could tell the story of this destructive, cold-hearted (literally) killing machine and make you empathize with him. His actions may prevent you from truly caring about him, but you will grow to understand him and how he came to hold the position of Heaven's chief assassin.

Great story, great art, and Ennis's usual superb writing. It is, put simply, EXCELLENT.

Next, Ennis takes us on the sad, childhood journey of the most unusual characters of the series...ARSEFACE. Told with surprising emotion, Garth shows us an unloved, abused child, who nonetheless loves his verbally and physically abusive father, and we see the progression of events that culminated in the botched suicide attempt that gave birth to Arseface. While I did not enjoy this quite as much as the Saint of Killers storyline, it was well done and Ennis does an excellent job evoking empathy for the child that became this monster of a man.

Finally, in what passes for a "lighter story" in this series, Ennis takes us on a violent, gore-strewn parody of action film clichés, when Preacher's uncles, Jody and TC, take on a whole gaggle of bumbling soldiers and inept terrorists. Disgusting, profane and extremely funny, this was a great way to end this volume on a upbeat note...so to speak.

4.0 to 4.5 stars. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!!!

Keith Moser says

Preacher Vol 4 Ancient History doesn't deal with Jesse's attempt to find God with Tulip & Cassidy at all, but is rather a collection of spin offs. Here, we have three Preacher Specials which expore the backstory of some other second tier characters.

The first special, Saint of Killers, gives us the story of...the Saint of Killers. The preface explains the different look to the comic due to new artists brought onboard while Preacher' still was being published. There are some bits that look better than usual, but it was odd seeing such a different Saint (at times). The story is 4* and could have been 5* had it gone back to the Civil War days for more than a splash page to explain a little more about this man before he became the Saint. His time in hell was beautifully drawn and written, and his revenge on earth as the newly ordained Saint was brutal and bloody.

The Story of You-Know-Who gives the back story of Arseface and is a solid 5* story. It's only half the length of SoK but still gives a damn fine arc. Set in the days of Nirvana, it introduces us to Root's teenage son before his botched suicide attempt. We meet his Cobain-loving friend; we see Root beat up his son; we see Mrs Root drink her way to oblivion; we see the struggles of being the son of a sheriff who makes the lives of every big jock miserable; we see the awkward attempts to talk to girls. It's all written so well with hints of the "future" (Columbine) and bombs from the "present" (Kurt's suicide). I'm anxious to see if Arseface will actually appear in future stories as he tried to take revenge on the man he feels is responsible for his father's death or if this is all we'll get.

The Good Old Boys takes us back before Jody & T.C. crossed paths with Jesse for their last time & gives us a little story about them. It seems like it might have been written in a day. Here's an example of how two new characters are introduced on page 4: "Hey, don't mess with me lady! I'm a cop on the edge!" / "You watch how you talk to me, then! Remember, I'm a supermodel-turned-lawyer with a dangerous secret!" Page 4 is filled with even more horribly-written exposition and these characters and their whole story just stunk. Jody's a pretty bad ass character, but he was the bad guy in previous issues so it feels weird to root for him as he kills dozens of terrorists (oh yeah, there are terrorists chasing after the cop and model-cum-lawyer). And the continuity is absolute shit. On one page, our macho cop gets covered in shit (don't ask), and on the facing page, with no break in the action, he's completely clean. If I could give this less than 1* I would. But I can't, so it, plus the other two average out to a 3* overall. Here's hoping I still remember the important story when I (hopefully) get back to it in Vol 5.

Jedi JC Daquis says

Ancient History features 3 spinoff stories about The Saint of Killers, Arseface, and the Jody and T.C. tandem. I believe that these standalone chapters are not vital to the whole Preacher story as a whole, though they offer a deeper character development that the main series didn't show.

All three stories are entertaining, though it's only with the origin of The Saint of Killers and Arseface I am invested in. The background story about Jody and T.C., with all the satires and violence and its inappropriateness, falls flat and hollow when compared with the other two.

Arseface's story before the ass face is a sweet, tragic comedy about a teenage kid who grew up everyday with everything going against him. I pity him and the sad state he is in now while laughing my arse off (pun intended) as I read his muffled dialogue shown in boxed translations. Whu wuhn hur whu huhmuh du wuh hu wuuh? (Who wouldn't try to imitate the way he speaks)?

The Saint of Killers origin story on the other hand might pass as a straightforward revenge-western story with a lot of glorious bloodbath from gun-slinging and sabre-cutting, if not because of his brief trip to hell and encounter with the devil himself. Damn, this saint is clearly NOT someone to piss-off!

Preacher volume 4 gives a quick detour from the main storyline. It may not be at par with the main comics, but these spinoff chapters are definitely must-reads for Preacher readers and fans.

Mohammed says

Im rating this 5 stars only for Preacher Special: Saint of Killers #1-4 and not the other two stories in this collection which isnt as powerful. The first 3 volumes of Preacher issues was good but not as great as the story of Saint of Killers and his old west days. Garth Ennis is a great comics writer and his writing of the Revisionist Western story is one of the best westerns i have read in comics form. Up there with the best Jonah Hex comics. A dark Western that deals frankly with the uglier aspects of violence and the myth of the Old West. A destruction of the myth and the same time a homage to the western movies of John Wayne, Clint Eastwood.

I knew Ennis hero was Clint Eastwood like he is my fav western actor and i always wished he wrote a hardcore western like that.

Steve Pugh and Carlos Ezquerro art fit the story better than Steve Dillon art would ever have.

Jim C says

This is a collection of three stories that provide background information for different characters. This collection does not move the story arc forward so one can read this collection at anytime. In this collection, we find out how the Saint of Killers comes to be, how the accident occurred to Arseface, and a side story to Jodi and T.C. who were characters in Jesse's teenage years.

I absolutely loved the stories about the Saint of Killers and Arseface. Even though I knew about these stories from the television series, these two stories were fantastic and emotional. One cannot help but feel empathy for the Saint of Killers and how he became so cold and ruthless. There are differences between the print and television story of Arseface and I prefer the comics story. It details how teenagers feel alone and how in some cases the parents are the problem and not the children. I was going to give this collection five stars based on these two stories and then I read the final story. Visually, there is nothing wrong with it. It was just a little too much on the nose for my liking as it was blatant what it was trying to spoof.

I enjoy the background information aspect of universes as we get to see the motivations of characters. I would have never guessed that I would have enjoyed this universe's background information so much. Two out of the three stories were fantastic and a pure pleasure to read. I wish I stopped after the second story and moved on to the next collection.
