

Allen, Son of Hellcock

Will Tracy

Gabe Koplowitz

Miguel Porto, Illustrator

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Allen, Son of Hellcock is an amusing and entertaining romp that satirizes Conan-type fantasy tales while also posing the question, how does a son live up to a father who's become a legend?

Tongue-in-cheek throughout, *Allen, Son of Hellcock* focuses on Allen, the meek and mild progeny of the fabled (and deceased) swordsman Hellcock. Hellcock is now a ghost, and in his absence, Allen is sucked into a battle with Kaarl, the son of Hellcock's former archenemy, Lord Krong. Enlisting the surviving members of Hellcock's band of heroes and aided by Madeline, an aggressive leader who also serves as Allen's romantic interest, the Son of Hellcock heads for a decisive encounter with Kaarl's forces.

Koplowitz and Tracy infuse the entire book with a sense of fun, and it's abundantly evident that they enjoyed the experience of writing it. They break the fourth wall at times and introduce numerous sight gags—delivered with style and aplomb by artists Porto and Wells—including recurring appearances of bizarrely intriguing horse-donkey hybrids.

The writers also have a knack for bestowing their characters with funny names—the supporting cast includes Grumbus, Skrell the Gloomorian, Prince Bolderon, and Xerxax of New Champia, just to name a few. These characters embody the most ridiculous aspects of fantasy heroes, and there's a steady stream of laughs as they accompany Allen on his quest to defeat Kaarl.

There's also plenty of humor to be had mining the nature of celebrity and fandom, as Allen witnesses the 25th annual Hellcockcon fan gathering, where dealers sell “Hellcock Grog Koozies” and “Hellcock Unlicensed Erotic Fan Fiction,” and in exploring the thorny relationships of Allen and Hellcock, and Kaarl and Lord Krong—sons who live in shadows of their famous fathers while attempting to forge their own paths.

Allen, Son of Hellcock will be of particular interest to fans of swords and sorcery who are looking for a lighthearted take on the subject, but the book is so well conceived and executed that even those unfamiliar with the trappings of the genre will find themselves chuckling aloud.

PETER DABBENE (June 28, 2017)

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