

Terrifyingly Gnarly: Six Flags, Abandon All Hope

Written by Samuel Zimmerman
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Recently, a friend of mine and I decided to start once again exploring the park I've essentially grown up right next door to. The biggest in New York City, Pelham Bay Park, despite being decidedly non-threatening (we've done a ton of looking into its past without much scary success), is still an absolutely terrifying place, much like the abandoned Six Flags you're about to meet below.

From its massive, deep and pitch-black sprawling forest to the small, decrepit beach across from a landfill that can be nothing other than toxic, Pelham Bay Park easily gets your imagination working when wandering nearby past nightfall. It's often these real-life locales, coupled with my own perception of whatever negative energy might reside there, that really get under my skin. So naturally, the video I came across this morning (which you can see just down a bit) of Teddy Smith documenting the state of New Orleans' Six Flags theme park that has been abandoned since Hurricane Katrina is nothing short of the creepiest thing I've seen in a good while.

Sure, the melancholy score (courtesy of Godspeed You Black Emperor, who helped make the 28 DAYS LATER soundtrack so memorable) helps the atmosphere, but it's not exactly what makes these images so harrowing. As the camera pans through the park, the New Orleans Six Flags is a microcosm of doomsday possibilities, its own mini-postapocalyptic universe. Like many other amusement parks, this Six Flags seems to have contained an array of sections built to look like small towns—and between the themed rides, shattered and deteriorated conditions and graffiti, it's not hard to conjure up a separate plague of horror wiping out each.

On a wooden clown standee, someone has spray-painted "Welcome 2 Zombie Land, Kids." Sure, it's an obvious joke, but try and observe the street lined with desolate faux taverns and houses without imagining it the result of an undead uprising. What about the space-age extraterrestrial rollercoaster, sporting a 1950s-esque art-deco robot aesthetic? Under "Earthlings Beware," another piece of vandalism reads, "We're coming, 2012." Once again, not the most clever of warnings (those who resort to writing phrases on walls rarely are the most clever), but still, is this what Earth could look like past the point of invasion? Plants grow on and around high-flying swings, an enormous battered clown head screams evildoing, shadows and an overcast sky leave the impression something's lurking behind each corner and a canoe,

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ripped in half, easily reminds you that this doesn't even have to be supernatural to create chills—a very real and horrible natural disaster did these things.

Here's the clip; it's a spooky and fascinating six minutes or so:

{youtube}Bcja8UBtXdk{/youtube}

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