

MERCURY  
COMICS

9

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# ATOMICA



GOD IS RED



# ATOMIKA GOD IS RED

ISSUE # 9

CREATED BY SAL ABBINANTI

WRITTEN BY ANDREW DABB

ART BY SAL ABBINANTI

COLORS BY SIMONE PERUZZI

LETTERING/PRODUCTION DAVE SHARPE

COVER BY SIMONE BIANCHI

INSIDE BACK COVER BY ERNIE CHAN

BACK COVER BY MARK TEXEIRA

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AND SIMONE PERUZZI FOR HIS MAGNIFICENT COLORS.

# TEST



HE IS MY SON, AND  
HE IS BEAUTIFUL.

CHERNOBYL'S POWER BURNED  
WITHIN HIS SHELL OF STEEL  
AND STONE, PULSING LIKE A  
GREAT STAR, NEWBORN AND  
WHITE WITH HEAT AND FURY.

I WAS MORE THAN A DOZEN  
LEAGUES AWAY WHEN I FIRST  
FELT THE ALBA OF HIS NIGHT  
WASHING OVER ME--A CLEAN,  
BOILING RAIN.

WHERE CHERNOBYL MOVED, THE  
EARTH BOWED AND BUCKLED,  
PAYING REVERENCE TO THE PART  
OF THE BOY THAT IS PURE, HIS  
MOTHER'S HALF...

AND FLEEING IN TERROR  
FROM THE TAIN OF HIS  
FATHER, MY OWN MARK  
OF CAIN.

HE IS MY SON, HE IS  
BEAUTIFUL, AND FOR  
THE FIRST TIME IN  
MORE THAN A DECADE,  
I WAS BEING ALLOWED  
TO SEE HIM.

I PRAYED TO THE GODS--  
WHATEVER PER SHALL DEITIES  
JEROME HAS BEEN HIT TO  
SPARE FROM MY WRATH--THAT  
HE HAD BECOME MORE THAN  
I EVERY WAS.

THAT HE HAD BECOME  
WHAT I ALWAYS DREAMED  
OF BEING, BUT WAS TOO  
WEAK TO ACHIEVE.

PERFECTION.

## MOON HARBORING, 2000.

IT HAD BEEN YEARS SINCE THE  
ALBUCHS. YEARS SINCE A WOMAN  
CRIED OUT TO ME FOR HELP, AND I  
REPAID HER WITH PAIN AND DEATH.

YEARS SINCE ABOCHIE CALLED  
UPON ME, AND WHY SHOULD HE?  
THERE WERE NO MORE ENEMIES  
TO FIGHT, NO MORE WARS TO  
BE WAGED.

THE RED EMPIRE THRIVED AND  
SPREAD AND BUNK ITS CRIMSON  
ROOTS DEEP INTO ALL CORNERS  
OF THE GLOBE....

...FROM MOSCOW, RE-BUILT  
THREE AS MAGNIFICENT AS  
BEFORE, TO NEW RUSS, RISEN  
UP FROM THE SKELETON OF  
LIBERTY.

THE WORLD I  
SHAPE, NEEDED  
ME NO MORE.

PERHAPS THE AGE OF ATOMIKA  
HAD PASSED. PERHAPS THE  
PLANET LONGS FOR A NEW GOD.

A NEW GOD, FOR  
A NEW CENTURY.

I LANDED BESIDE CHERNOBYL,  
AND GASPED IN PAIN, SIMPLY TO  
BE IN HIS PRESENCE WAS AGONY.

I HAVE FACED THE DIVINE BEFORE,  
TOO MANY TIMES TO COUNT, BUT  
THOSE WERE OLD GODS, THEIR  
POWER FADED AND PULLED BY TIME.

CHERNOBYL IS YOUTH--  
VITAL AND ALIVE WITH  
POSSIBILITY.

GREETINGS,  
CHERNOBYL.

ARCHER HAS  
ASKED ME TO BEAR  
WITNESS TO YOUR TO  
THE FINAL TEST OF  
YOUR WORTH.

I HOPE TO BE  
IMRESSED.

THE BOY REPLIED NOT  
WITH WORDS BUT WITH  
A HARD-EDGED RASP OF  
BREATH THAT I TOOK  
FOR LAUGHTER.

THEN...

THEN I SAW HIM...  
I SAW MYSELF MADE  
YOUNG AGAIN.

I WANTED TO WEEP AT  
THE SIGHT OF HIM...OF  
MY SON WHO IS ALL I  
DREAMED AND MORE.

I WANTED TO COMPOSE  
AN ODE TO HIS RASSETS,  
TO GIRD OF HIS SUBLIME  
TRANSCENDENCE, YET I  
COULD MUSTER BY THESE  
SIMPLE WORDS...

YOU'VE  
GROWN  
UP.

OVERHORN,  
LITTERED ANOTHER OF  
HIS RASPING LAUGHS,  
NOT QUITE MOCKING,  
BUT NEAR ENOUGH.

AND WHY NOT? WHAT  
WAS I TO HIM? NOT A  
FATHER, NOT ANYMORE.

BESIDES, THE BOY WASN'T  
INTERESTED IN ME. HE HAD EYES  
ONLY FOR THE MOUNTAIN...

...FOR ZEMLU, THE  
GATE TO MELL.

SEALED AWAYS AGO BY  
THE PRINCIPAL GODS, WHO  
BEAT BACK THE DAMNED  
HORDES AND CAST THEM DOWN  
INTO FIRE--ALL SAVE ONE.



THAT  
IS TO BE  
MY TEST.

ZEMLU WILL BE  
OPENED, AND I SHALL  
EXTINGUISH THE  
INFERNAL.

I SHALL  
CONQUER  
MELL.

NO! IF  
YOU SHOULD  
FAIL--



THMMMMM

BUT BEFORE THE BOY COULD REPLY,  
THE GROUND BEGINS TO SHAKE, AND I  
KNOW OUR MEETING IS NEAR ITS END...



...AROMVE  
HAD ARRIVED

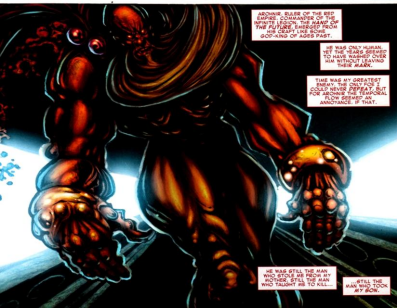


SENSORS INDICATE  
TWO SUPRA-HUMAN  
TARGETS BELOW.

ATOMIKA,  
POWER LEVEL  
0.95823.

AND  
CHERNOBYL,  
POWER LEVEL  
0.00000.

THREAT  
METERS READ  
ZERO. CRASHING  
PODS.



ARONIS, RULER OF THE RED  
EMPIRE, COMMANDER OF THE  
INFINITE LEGION, THE HAND OF  
THE FUTURE, EMBODIED FROM  
HIS CRAFT LIKE SOME  
GOD-KING OF AGES PAST.

HE WAS ONLY MURAN.  
YET THE YEARS SEEMED  
TO HAVE WASHED OVER  
HIM WITHOUT LEAVING  
THEIR MARK.

TIME WAS MY GREATEST  
ENEMY. THE ONLY FOX I  
COULD NEVER REPEAT, BUT  
FOR ARONIS THE TEMPORAL  
FLOW SEEMED AN  
ANNOUNCEMENT, IF THAT.

HE WAS STILL THE MAN  
WHO STOLE ME FROM MY  
MOTHER, STILL THE MAN  
WHO TAUGHT ME TO KILL...

...STILL THE  
MAN WHO TOOK  
MY SON.





MY  
CHILDREN, IT  
IS SO GOOD  
TO SEE YOU  
TOGETHER  
AT LAST.

AND  
ON SUCH AN  
AUSPICIOUS  
DAY.

YOU CANNOT  
ALLOW THIS TEST,  
ARCHIE!

IT TOOK ALL ~~THE~~  
OF THE OLD GODS TO  
REAL. STILL, CHERNOBYL  
IS STRONG, BUT HE IS  
NOT THEIR EQUAL.

IS THAT SO,  
YOUNG ONE? DOES  
YOUR FATHER SPEAK  
TRUTH?

HE SPEAKS  
WITH FEAR AND  
WEARINESS.

I AM CHERNOBYL,  
BORN OF ATOMIKA  
AND BABA YAGA.

I AM THE PERFECT  
MELDING OF OLD AND NEW,  
OF MAGIC AND SCIENCE.  
THERE HAVE BEEN SOME AS  
POWERFUL AS I IN THE  
HISTORY OF THIS WORLD,  
OR ANY OTHER.

HIS VOICE WAS STEEL, MY  
VOICE, WHEN I WAS YOUNG  
AND DRUNK WITH PRIDE.





THE CASKETS SUNK INTO  
THE MOUNTAIN LIKE A VOLLEY  
OF ARROWS, DRAWING OUT  
THE VITALITY THAT KEPT  
ZEMULU CLOSED.

A MILLION ROTTING  
ARMS, IN A LOCK AS  
OLD AS TIME ITSELF.

AND THEN THERE WAS  
SILENCE. THE SILENCE  
BEFORE A STORM.  
BEFORE A CHILD'S SCREAM.



I WILL FIGHT  
ALONGSIDE YOU,  
MY SON.

I DON'T  
NEED YOUR  
HELP.

I TAKE UP  
ARMS NOT FOR  
YOU, CHERNOBYL, BUT  
FOR THIS WORLD, WHICH  
WILL BE LITTLE MORE  
THAN A SHOLDING  
EMBER SHOULD  
WE FAIL.



HE LAUGHED AGAIN, BUT  
AT WHAT? MY IDEALISM?  
MY INSUFFICIENT WORDS?  
ARMAGEDDON?

THEN THE GROUND AROUND  
US SHATTERED, AND ALL  
QUESTIONS FLEW FROM  
MY MIND...



...REPLACED BY  
THE HIGH, SHRIEL  
SHRIELS OF  
DEMONS.



FROM MY CLOAK I DREW A  
HAMMER AND BUCKLE, ONCE  
SYMBOLS OF AN IDEOLOGY FOR  
WHICH I FOUGHT AND BLED.

NOW STEPPED OF WORDS  
AND BELIEF, THEY FELT HEAVY  
AND SOLID IN MY HANDS.

THEY WERE WHAT THEY  
HAD ALWAYS BEEN, BEFORE  
THE PHILOSOPHERS AND  
POLITICIANS, BEFORE ARCHIE:

TOOLS,  
WEAPONS.



THE HELLSPAWN SURGED IN,  
PROMISES OF AN ETERNITY OF  
SUFFERING SPIRING FROM THEIR  
CRACKED AND BROKEN LIPS.



I SAW CHERNOBYL'S EYES  
GO WIDE WITH SHOCK--AND  
PERHAPS A TOUCH OF FEAR.

ARCHIE HAD TRAINED  
HIM WELL, OF THAT I HAD  
NO DOUBT, BUT HE HAD  
NEVER FACED THIS.

HAD NEVER STARED INTO THE  
EYES OF THOSE WHO WISHED  
FOR NOTHING MORE THAN TO  
DEVOUR HIM FROM THE INSIDE  
OUT--BODY AND SOUL.

I HAD.

AND I SHOWED MY SON  
WHAT MUST BE DONE.



HE FOUGHT THEM BURN-UP-HEATS,  
AS I WAS PREPARED TO GO AND  
WAVE MY HAND IN A BATTLE, AND I WAS  
FOUNT SOME DARK CITY IN BATTLE.

BUT THIS WAS NO LUCKY  
NO FUTURE FUTURE. IT  
WAS REAL, AND FUTURE,  
AND BLOOD FUTURE.

CHARCOT, AUTOMATED  
BURN FOR BURN, AND THEN  
THE BURN WENT UP, BURNING  
HONORING THE JEWEL BY  
THE FUTURE.

BURN OF HIS FUTURE  
DEADLINE WITH FUTURE,  
AND THE FUTURE FUTURE  
HONORING THAT BURN  
THE BURN AND FUTURE.

THOSE FUTURE IN JEWEL  
AND BURNING FUTURE, BUT  
THEY CAN BE BURN, THEY  
CAN BE FUTURE BACK.

IN THE FUTURE BEFORE THIS  
IT WAS FUTURE AND BURN  
AND BURN FUTURE TO  
DEVELOP THE FUTURE.

CHARCOT—  
AT BURN  
AND BURN  
THE BURN FUTURE  
IS A FUTURE  
OF FUTURE.

AND FUTURE I BURN  
AT BURN AND BURN  
HONORING THAT BURN  
THE FUTURE BURN, IT  
WAS FUTURE FUTURE.

IN THE FUTURE, IT WAS FUTURE  
LITTLE MORE THAN FUTURE  
AND BURN FUTURE,  
AND BURN FUTURE.



AS ONE COFFIN  
ERUPTED, SHOWING  
FORTH THEIR LIFE-  
LESS OCCUPANTS.

THE FORCE  
OF CHENOCRYL'S  
ATTACK HAD BROKEN  
ARCHIE'S KEY.  
THE GATE SHOULD  
BEING SHUT.



MY HAMMER FELL BLACK  
IN MY HAND, THE HEAT AND FURY  
OF THE BATTLE MAKING THE AIR  
SWIRLER ALL AROUND ME.

AND THEN I  
GAZED UP,  
AND I SAW.



ZEMLU'S  
MAY STILL  
GAPED WIDE.



THE LORDS OF HELL CAME  
THIN, DARK HOUNDS OF THE  
GODS--LESHI, AND PROPET,  
AND BABA YABA, AND ALL  
THE REST.

AS POWERFUL  
IN DEATH AS THEY  
WERE IN LIFE, BUT  
EARNED PITY OR  
REMORSE.

THIS  
WORLD IS  
OURS?

CHERNOBYL HEARD THEM, AND  
BREATHED HIS RASPING LAUGH,  
AND SPOKE A WORD.

**NO!**

AND THEN, THERE  
WAS LIGHT.



I HAVE SEEN POWER--ONCE.  
I BELIEVED I WAS POWER--  
THIS WAS SOMETHING MORE.

WHEN MY SON  
BROUGHT HIS  
HANDS TOGETHER,  
AND RELEASED  
THE DIVINE WITHIN  
HIM, I SAW THE  
BEGINNING OF  
THINGS.

I SAW THE NAMELESS  
FIRST ONES BORN FROM  
YAWNING CELESTIAL  
VOIDS. I SAW STARS  
FLARE AND GO DIM...

...I SAW LIFE RISE,  
AND RUSTY, AND  
PIE, AS IT SHOULD.

AND I SAW THE END,  
BLACK AND COLD  
AND EMPTY.

SO THOROUGHLY DID THESE  
VISIONS INVADGE MY MIND, I  
BARELY NOTICED THE DEMONS  
BEING THRUST BACK  
THROUGH THE GATE...

OR THAT CHERNOBYL'S  
MIGHT HAD SCARRED THE  
EARTH, SPLITTING THE GAPING  
WOUND CALLED ZERUJ, CLOSED  
WITH THE THREAD OF HIS BEING.

IT WAS  
OVER.



YOU  
YOU DID  
WELL.

I TOLD  
YOU I DON'T  
NEED YOUR  
HELP.

YOU ARE  
STRONG MY  
SON, BUT YOU  
LACK SKILL.

I CAN TEACH  
YOU WHAT I KNOW.  
I'VE FOUGHT MANY  
BATTLES AND LEARNED  
MANY LESSONS.

HOW WOULD AN  
EAGLE TEACH WITH  
A SPARROW?

I AM  
ABOVE YOU  
FATHER. I NEED  
NOTHING FROM  
YOU.



HE WAS RIGHT, AND  
THEN HE WAS GONE.



AND SO  
WAS I.



I RETURNED TO MY ENDLESS  
PLIGHT, KEEPING WATCH OVER  
A PEOPLE WHO HAD ONCE  
SERVED ME...

...BUT NOW LOOKED  
UPON THEIR ONCE PRECIOUS  
GOD IN STARK TERROR.

ARONOV RETURNED TO MOSCOW,  
WHERE THE SIGHT OF HIS AIR-GUYS  
ATTRACTED CHEERING CROWDS--  
AS IT SHOULD BE.

HE FED THEM. HE CLOTHED  
THEM. HE BUILT THE CITY IN  
WHICH THEY LIVED. PERHAPS  
ARONOV WAS THE GOD, NOT I.





THE BOY IS  
BETTER THAN  
HIS FATHER!  
MUCH  
BETTER!

ATOMIKA IS  
NOTHING COMPARED  
TO CHERNOBYL. IT'S  
EXACTLY AS WE  
PLANNED!

AND HE HAS  
EARTHLY LUSTS  
ATOMIKA NEVER  
HAD FOR WAR  
AND WOMEN!

HE'LL BE  
EASIER TO  
CONTROL.

PROPHET  
SAID, SON EYES,  
FATHER FALLS.



LONG HAVE  
WAITED I WHO  
ESCAPED.

LONG  
HAVE HIDDEN  
IN SHADOWS,  
UNTIL YOU  
ARRIVE.

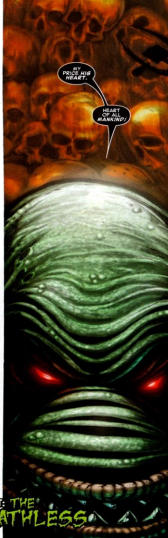
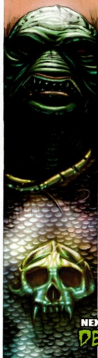
KOSCHEI SHOW  
YOU WAY, NOSCH  
GIVE YOU MEAT  
OF WORLD.

NOW YOU  
REPAY.

FEAST,  
DEVOUR,  
CONSUME.

ATORKA  
EYES BLIND,  
KOSCHEI  
STARVING.

HE  
WINE.



BY  
POSS HIS  
HEART.

HEART  
OF ALL  
MANKIND!

NEXT: THE  
DEATHLESS

COMING SOON

MERCURY  
COMICS

10

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# ATOMIKA



COVER BY  
**SIMON  
BISLEY**

Written by  
**Andrew Dabb**

Art by  
**Sal Abbinanti**

**ATOMIKA #10** GOD IS RED - PART 10 of 12

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