



A God Somewhere

John Arcudi , Peter Snebjerg (Illustrator)

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After a mysterious disaster, a young man named Eric finds that he has just as mysteriously developed extraordinary abilities. He starts out trying to help people, but his solitary position in the world isolates him in ways no average human could understand. This story charts the arc of the evolution of Eric from man to...well, who knows what, as seen through the eyes of his family and his best friend, Sam.

A God Somewhere Details

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Author : John Arcudi , Peter Snejbjerg (Illustrator)

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Christopher says

I honestly don't know what prompted me to read this graphic novel. One day last week, I got an email notification from my library telling me I had reserved it and it was waiting for me, so I figured I must know what I like to read, whether I remember reserving it or not...so I shrugged off my sign of early senility and cracked the spine on this one. It wasn't a bad read at all - it was engaging, with characters I came to care about, flawed as they were, both intentionally and unintentionally.

Without spoiling anything, this is essentially a story about a Superman gone terribly wrong, told with a very real-world sensibility. There's more - lots more - but that's the basic premise.

I think the creative team on this comic mini-series did a fantastic job of creating characters who were just plain joes, with histories and relationships and personalities that feel genuine and relatable. At times, I felt the scripting became all TOO relatable, to the point of becoming mundane and droney...but hey, how often does a comic book err on the side of realism? This one does. And it doesn't always work. But ya know what? The story commits to its town. And overall, the commitment to realistic characterization pays off.

This is a particularly gory morality tale based on the old "absolute power corrupts absolutely" maxim, and to its credit I think the gore, while extremely graphic, is more effective than it is gratuitous. The story gains a momentum of tragedy and gravity, and its horrors are displayed less for shock value, more for empathy. We feel the dark clouds settling over our heads as the story progresses, undeniably.

Does the story succeed in cautioning us? I have to say, I'm not sold on the moral of this story, although I suppose it raises a fair possibility in the timeworn Superman myth.

Overall, a good read and a fast read. See if your library has it.

Arminzerella says

My friend Dave keeps lending me things that feature superheroes or people with god-like powers that go BAD. Maybe he's trying to tell me something? I really liked how this started out - these two brothers (Eric and Hugh) save a new kid (Sam) in high school from being beaten within an inch of his life (he's still in a bad way, though) and they all become friends. Their triumvirate (of sorts) gets broken up when Hugh finds a special lady (Alma) and marries her (Eric and Sam are both into her, too). There's this interesting new tension in their relationship with her presence.

Then, one night after they hang out watching the game on Hugh's big screen TV, Eric's building is bombed. He's taken to the hospital, but there's not a scratch on him. That's when he realizes that he's been given some kind of gift, powers, which he believes come from God. He flies back to ground zero and helps the emergency responders rescue the other people trapped in the rubble. Everyone calls him a hero, and Eric sort of relishes the fame and the chance to make a difference.

Unfortunately, Hugh doesn't share his enthusiasm. He doesn't like being in the spot light. He also sees Eric's powers as yet another wedge dividing them and hurting their relationship. The breaking point comes when Eric tries to convince Hugh to move to a safer neighborhood and Hugh rebuffs him. Eric becomes enraged, suffers some kind of psychotic break, and uses his powers to attack everyone around him - breaks into Hugh's house, injures his brother, rapes Alma, then flees (wreaking havoc wherever he goes). And although he's nearly invincible, it's only a matter of time before the authorities find a way to bring him down.

The suddenness of Eric's transformation - from do-gooder to pox on the world was a bit jolting. And I didn't buy it. He just went crazy all of a sudden and I didn't see any foreshadowing. Everything that happens after that is rather accelerated and different from the slower pacing of the flashbacks as we get to know about Sam and his relationship with the brothers. Eric is supposedly lashing out against the world, but I can't see that the world has really done any more to him than it has to others, and it isn't an issue in his pre-superpowers life - he doesn't rail against injustice or fret over man's corruption. So, this seemed a little out of the blue, hard to buy into. I think this could have been reeled out a bit longer in places, and that might have improved the flow. Still, not bad. Getting to the point, though, where I'm ready for a different theme.

Zedsdead says

Wow. Dark. "A God Somewhere" is firmly in the 'real people can't handle this much power' camp.

The first half of the book is about a good man and his relationships with his best friend and his younger brother. Then it abruptly changes into a gory superman-run-amok story.

It's kind of a downer, and very unpredictable. Every time I thought I knew where it was heading, everything changed. I found the ending to be vaguely unsatisfying but overall it was very thought-provoking, very well-written.

Chad Bearden says

"A God Somewhere" is unquestionably a very accomplished work. John Arcudi's story about a man losing his humanity after receiving super powers is an interesting one. Shifting the point-of-view from super man, Eric, to friend, Sam, is a very humanizing one. The relationship between brothers Eric and Hugh is well fleshed out and the directions the story takes are genuinely surprising and satisfying. Artist Peter Snejbjerg also deserves some of the credit for some stark and haunting illustrations that bring a creepy vibrancy to the proceedings.

The thing that drags this from a 4-star to a 3-star review is the very thing that has plagued a lot of the better graphic novels to hit the shelves in recent years: Brevity. Another reviewer compared "A God Somewhere" with "Watchmen", which is utterly absurd. "Watchmen" is 400 densely packed pages that take a few days to get through. It gives itself time to establish a complex plot with complex characters and complex resolutions.

"A God Somewhere" can be read in one sitting, and basically feels like a extra-sized issue of a regular (albeit well-written) comic book. It's there, then it's done, and left me a little unsatisfied. It's very similar to how I felt after reading Alex Robinson's "Too Cool to Be Forgotten" and Brian K. Vaughan's critically-acclaimed "Pride of Baghdad". Like "A God Somewhere", both were accomplished work that showed off both interesting writing and attractive art, but both also were so brief they barely registered a few days after reading. I actually just noticed that I didn't even have "Pride of Baghdad" marked as 'read' here on

GoodReads. I recall now that, at the time, I didn't feel it was substantial enough to mark.

As a work of art, I absolutely appreciate everything about "A God Somewhere". But I think I'd have been more satisfied if I'd picked this up at the comic shop for \$7 or \$8 bucks instead of from Barnes & Noble for \$15.

If you want a graphic novel that has some more emotional weight (and literal heft), I'd recommend David Mazzuchelli's "Asteryios Polyp" or David Small's "Stitches", both recently released. Or the older "Blankets" or "Box Office Poison".

"A God Somewhere" is good, just too brief.

Sumit Singla says

The first thing that comes to mind on reading A God Somewhere is Mark Waid's Irredeemable.

The narrator of the story is a black guy called Sam, who is saved from school bullies by two brothers Eric and Hugh. OF course, they become the best of friends after that.

Some time later, there is an explosion in Eric's apartment building, and hundreds of people die. Eric doesn't. And that's what changes things. Forever.

Eric becomes a super-human of some sort. He develops incredible strength, speed, and the ability to not be harmed by almost any weapon known to mankind. He begins on a good note, saving people trapped under rubble, preventing bank robberies, and other stuff that typical vigilante heroes do.

However, some unknown reason causes him to become unhinged. He beats his own brother, and leaves him a quadriplegic. He brutally rapes his sister-in-law and goes completely berserk. He goes on a killing spree and kills hundreds of innocent people. The only person he leaves unharmed is Sam, and the two maintain some kind of uncertain 'friendship'.

Eric narrates to Sam that in a dream, he was 'a god somewhere' in some universe and people worshipped him.

Meanwhile, from a revered hero, Eric turns into public enemy number one and the military is practically at war against one man.

So, what happens next? Does Sam manage to 'reform' Eric? Or does Eric end up as a tyrannical ruler of the planet or even the universe?

I'm not giving away any spoilers on that front.

The artwork is fluid and gritty. The storyline begins as a bit of a cliché, but the rapid descent of Eric into sheer insanity is brilliantly depicted. The scenes depicting the horrific killings are very detailed and hard-hitting.

Overall, the book is a great read and I especially like the fact that Eric's motives are shrouded in mystery. It is left to the reader to figure out why Eric ended up the way he did. However, I took away two stars because the story does tend to sag a wee bit at times and slow down considerably in between.

Even if you've read Irredeemable, I suggest giving this a try.

Bogdan says

Take cover!

A "God" is on a rampage killing spree!

Interesting artwork.

Good story.

Not for the faint-hearted readers...

Maxoel Costa says

For a long time, i've heard of this graphic novel and I even get the scan copy, but I didn't get any interest in reading it. Recently,

I've bought a copy and started to read. I've read little about the comics, so every page, as well as the story development and end, was a completely surprise.

I really enjoyed the Sam character, the black guy friend of the blond Forsters Brothers, Eric and Hugh, and the chronicler of the fate of one of them, Eric, that after a misterious explosion develops superpowers, becoming, at firstly, a kind of superhero and after, as hinted in the title, a self declared god. Other important character is Alma, wife of Hugh and former romantic interest of Sam and Eric. The graphic Novel, just like Watchmen, The Authority and many others, tells the story in the hero-in-the-real-life perspective.

Someone said, critically, that the book doesn't explain how and why some things happened. In my opinion, they just happen like in the life. This is not a normal hero's comic book, where everything has to have an explanation. There's no thought ballons to know the intentions and secrets motivations of the main characters. The only form of narration of the events occurs in the form of the magazine article that Sam writes and we know the thoughts and feelings of anyone when its verbalized. So, it's normal that many questions remains unanswered. This is not a defect. In fact, empathizes the "real life" aspect of the book.

Christina says

There's no way to write about this book without using spoilers. So stop now if you don't want any.

I wanted to like this graphic novel. Really, I did. It's an interesting concept. And the art is fantastic.

But the characters are flat, so the story falls flat.

"A God Somewhere" is told mostly through the perspective of Sam, a black guy whose best friends are Eric and Hugh, two white guys who saved him from being beaten to death by bullies at his high school. One

night, Sam and Hugh see an explosion (which is never explained) at Eric's apartment building. Hundreds of people are killed. Eric is not. Eric is fine. Eric is better than fine.

Eric suddenly develops super-human powers (their origin is never explained) - he can run as fast as The Flash, he can break through walls, he can fly, he can lift heavy objects, he can be shot multiple times and not die. He's all your favorite superheroes rolled into one. And he uses his powers to save the lives of people buried under the rubble of his building, hostages in a bank robbery and many others.

And just as suddenly as Eric develops his super-human powers, he goes insane. He beats Hugh to within an inch of his life and rapes Hugh's wife. Then he starts killing people. He kills cops, soldiers, innocent little girls who give him their teddy bears, reporters - everyone but Sam.

Eric tells Sam he had a dream that he was "a god somewhere." And Eric uses his telekinesis to help Sam fly and Sam talks about feeling powerful and separate from the world. But none of those thoughts are developed enough to give any clear insight into Eric's state of mind. There's never any real explanation - nothing explored in Eric's history or present to explain how he gets his powers, why he decides to use them to hurt and kill people, or why he always spares Sam.

Eric is just good and kind and helpful on one page, and rude and murderous on the next.

Chris Kelly says

In the early 1980's British comic book writer Alan Moore began exploring the darkest possibilities of superhero fiction with his work on *Miracleman*, *Book One: A Dream of Flying*. In the series, he portrayed the inevitable dislocation from normal humankind that would likely occur should someone attain powers like that of say, Superman. In the mid-80s he brought the question to the forefront of mainstream American comics when he published the 12 part series *Watchmen*. For better or worse, superhero comics have existed under the umbrella of what Moore has done ever since. Many of the products of this legacy have been atrocious. But there have been gems too.

A God Somewhere by John Arcudi is one of the gems. The story is told through the eyes of Sam, whose best friend Eric receives incomparable powers after a strange explosion hits his apartment building. At first Eric does what any character in a superhero universe would do; he uses his newfound abilities to rescue people in danger and stop bad guys from doing bad things. But as the awesome weight of these changes sink in, Eric's humanity slips away and the narrative changes from that of a superhero origin story to one of a natural disaster. Eric abruptly becomes a monster who inflicts unparalleled levels of suffering upon mankind.

Many negative reviews I've read have focused on the unanswered questions and Eric's incomprehensible motivations. They have talked about his abrupt change from a normal southern California dude, to a budding superhero, to a force of nature completely divorced from his humanity. These reviews are correct: we don't get to view Eric's inner world and the process feels abrupt and inexplicable. But that is the point. As Eric tells Sam long after his transformation is complete, those questions can't be answered so it's not worth even trying. We do get a handful of cryptic statements from Eric to clue us in to the incomprehensibility of his motivations, and here Arcudi has the courage to trust his readers to fill in the details as they see fit. But for the most part, the reader is left to feel like an ant watching a toddler stomp his colony to oblivion for reasons that would surely make no sense to insect-kind.

Arcudi's use of Sam as his POV character is wise here as any attempts to tell the story from Eric's point of view would render the entire point of this story's purpose completely obsolete. We are not meant to

understand Eric's mind, because we are incapable of seeing through the eyes of the god/monster he has become.

A God Somewhere is unsettling and does leave the reader with more questions than answers. This has obviously turned off a lot of readers and if you are looking for a tidy story, you should look elsewhere. However, if you are interested in a tale that begins a conversation and leaves the rest up to you, then pick this book up.

Also, if you like the artwork common in the Mignolaverse (Arcudi did not illustrate this story, but has illustrated for Hellboy and B.P.R.D.) you will enjoy the dark tones and thick line drawings in this book.

Ester Dachs Escarra says

The art is pretty and the beginning is promising and suddenly the guy just flips out. There is no gradual change or explanation... There is nothing that makes him attack his family like he does. Yes, the idea is a valid one: somebody with god powers would feel superior and probably would lose compassion for humanity, but the change is too sudden and feels forced. It is like the writer had an idea he wanted to say and didn't care too much about the characters.

I think is a poor attempt to make a gritty dark comic book following Alan Moore and Frank Miller. But dark for dark doesn't make sense. The attack on his brother and wife is vicious but doesn't follow the pattern of later attacks where he seems just to think that humans are just like ants and kills them because they are annoying and unimportant. But the first attack is different his brother survives and he rapes the wife, that is not you are ants, that is cruelty more specific to a different type of criminal. It is a behavior that just is there for this action, after he becomes a Oh God I am who kills people but doesn't main them and doesn't rape. The first attack seems to be there just for being shocking and gritty. Look he has become crazy. Why? I don't know , but now he is crazy and attacks people, let the story continue. Now he kills everybody even if in the first attack he let his brother alive, and with his powers it had to be more difficult to let his brother alive than kill him, and he raped the wife. Why? because he is evil and this is a gritty comic book.

I don't mind a pessimist story but the characters have to feel real. Here the main character just becomes crazy overnight and attacks his family for some reason.

I like the best friend which is why I put two stars, he feel real.

In resume: Good idea , awful execution.

Shell Senseless says

A graphic novel which asks the question how does an ordinary man cope when he inadvertently ends up with superhero god-like powers, and what is it like for the people around him. Told from the perspective of his best friend this could have been a really thoughtful and interesting book, but it ended up being a gore fest that forgot to bother with character progression and just opted to change whole personalities in the space of a panel with no explanation.

Gilang Danu says

The theme of *average-joe-turned-god* is not a new theme in comic book medium, we're already familiar with

characters like Dr. Manhattan in *Watchmen* or The Sentry in Marvel universe (which were also a borrowed idea from Nietzsche concept of *ubermensch*).

One quotable line from the book, '*...you're just another character in somebody's else story.*' summed up *A God Somewhere* perfectly. No matter how powerful, influential and godlike you are, the world still not revolve around you. *A God Somewhere* reminded us again and again that life is bigger than the sum of every human life combined. You live around people, but people don't live around you. No one is on the main spotlight in life, but rather, everyone.

While the opening chapter promise us an awesome plot, the rest of the story makes *A God Somewhere* ambiguous: the premise of the story is that it'll be a philosophical and dramatic one, yet the final execution presents us a different output: the book indulge too long in depicting the brutality of Eric (the said *ubermensch*, one of the main character in the story), serving us pages and pages of gruesome art and violent images. In short, the early pages promise us something as big as *Watchmen*, but the following gave us *Kick-Ass* instead. Not a bad thing, indeed, but not that great either. The book could be one classic tale of tragedy, but choose instead to be one of '*rampaging superhero*' story a la World War Hulk.

Jamie says

John Arcudi wrote one of my favorite “forgotten” comics of the 1990s. *Major Bummer*, his series with Dough Mahnke, was a humorous take on the “average joe gets superpowers” concept; it was funny, action-packed, and at its core, like John’s best work, human. *A God Somewhere*, his creator-owned graphic novel with Peter Snejbjerg, takes that same basic concept and flips it around. This is the serious sibling to *Bummer*, a harsh examination of absolute power being visited on the common man and corrupting absolutely.

Smartly jettisoning any convoluted origin or explanation, *A God Somewhere* drops special abilities on Eric Forster by way of an explosion. Whether caused by an outside force or emanating straight from Eric, it’s a shared disaster that takes many lives while also changing his. A religious man, Eric thinks that he is somehow blessed and starts doing good with his new abilities. At first, everyone loves him, but soon he starts to sense the fear that some harbor. He begins to resent that fear, and so he starts to purposely live up to those dark expectations.

There have been plenty of other comics about superheroes turned bad, but Arcudi’s is unique for its subtle use of religion to question the vagaries of human nature. Eric is ultimately mercurial, selfish, and cruel--traits we all too often share with the supreme beings we invent to govern our moral lives. This is the central conundrum of *A God Somewhere*: is Eric the way he is because that’s the way he is, or is it the way other people view him that warps his mind? Arcudi uses flashbacks to give us insight into his character, and he also explores the core relationships in Eric’s life. It’s not so much a book about one man as it is about four friends: Eric’s smarter and more responsible younger brother Hugh; Hugh’s wife Alma; and their best friend Sam. Much of the narrative is through Sam’s eyes. He is the human assistant who at first takes advantage of his closeness to the muscle-bound cause célèbre, only to become the victim of his own hubris. He’s also the only compassionate pair of eyes left to forgive Eric’s decline.

The art for *A God Somewhere* is by the Danish team of Peter Snejbjerg and colorist Bjarne Hansen. Snejbjerg’s draftsmanship is impeccable. His grasp of anatomy and expressions gives true life to the characters, and his intuition about page layout and his impressionistic approach to violence and gore lend a flare to the narrative. Hansen uses color to effect mood, embracing monotone and shadow to amp up the more dangerous scenes in the book. The killing goes way over the top, but that’s as it should be if this concept is to be examined with true seriousness. It’s never sensationalistic, however; the carnage is meant to

make the reader queasy, and it works.

This done-in-one comic has a strong story arc, finishing in a sweet spot that sews up both the plot and thematic structure of the book in a way that doesn't leave the reader wanting. It's a book that tackles some tough subjects by a couple of guys tough enough to do so. Surprisingly, *A God Somewhere* was published under DC's recently shuttered Wildstorm imprint. It's often forgotten that Wildstorm was a place where creators were occasionally afforded the chance to go out on a limb of their own making. *A God Somewhere* got little fanfare on its release last summer, despite Arcudi's popular ongoing work on Mike Mignola's *B.P.R.D.* series. It's too bad, this is one that deserves to be unearthed and reappraised.

EisNinE says

Peter Snejbjerg has long been a member of the elite team of artists assembled by Mike Mignola to illustrate the various titles that make up the Hellboy-BPRD universe, pound-for-pound the most talented group of pencil-wielding warriors in mainstream comics. John Arcudi has been the mind behind most of the excellent scripts and storylines, working with the skeletal narrative architecture bolted together by Mignola. He has proven himself to be one of the best and most under-rated writers in comics, crafting unpredictable and shocking supernatural horror that displays a remarkable comfort with slow-burning, character-driven suspense and world-encompassing, plot-heavy epics involving huge casts. His collaboration with artist Guy Davis on 'BPRD: Plague of Frogs' (which includes the last three of the four volume omnibus series collecting the entire storyline) was one of those comic partnerships that transcended the artistic compromises of the assembly-line method, a true synthesis of ideas from two masters of the form.

Arcudi and Snejbjerg accomplish the same feat here, re-imagining the Marvel Universe's version of the Norse god Thor in a realistic world in which superheroes are just a fantasy, and gods are a relic of our pagan origins. A good-natured, morally grounded young man is inexplicably given superhuman abilities in a violent eruption of energy that destroys his apartment building. As he struggles to save those hurt in the blast, his exponentially increased strength, invulnerability, and power of flight are revealed to the world by the reporters and cameras on the scene. As his best friend, his brother, and his brother's wife watch helplessly, the protagonist gradually loses touch with his own humanity, his deeply felt Christian faith twisting into a conviction of his own divinity. In what is one of the most violent, shocking, and horrific takes on the reality of power, Arcudi and Snejbjerg refuse to let the reader look away as the tiny fears and jealousies that afflict the best of us consume an otherwise 'good man'. He no longer has an incentive to keep himself in check, and the onetime hero and celebrity becomes a monster, declaring war on the human race.

The parallel to Thor is obvious, and this story may have began as an idea for a non-continuity Marvel mini-series. It works far better as the 'R-rated' graphic novel it ended up as, given the grim realism that is so necessary to its emotional impact. Arcudi's pessimistic view of human nature is reminiscent of the themes explored in Katsuhiro Otomo's manga masterpiece 'Akira', particularly the madness that mirrors Tetsuo's increasingly god-like powers. The brutality of the story is perfectly rendered in Snejbjerg's crisp, clean lines, and the horrific violence cannot be overstated; combined with the raw emotions of the story, the gore is incredibly disturbing. Arcudi and Snejbjerg are determined to make the reader feel the consequences of power and battle, instead of glossing over it like so many other titles. It's not as unsettling as 'Crossed', but I found it to be a heavier read than 'The Walking Dead', so this is not for people with weak stomachs.
