



Aphrodite IX: Rebirth, Vol. 1

Matt Hawkins , Stjepan Šejić (illustrator)

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Hundreds of years after a cataclysmic event scorched the surface, Earth and its inhabitants have been forever altered and a new landscape and political struggle has taken hold between two distinct factions fighting for control. Aphrodite IX is both anachronism and advanced technology in a world that she no longer recognizes. To survive in this future, she must choose sides in a war that she wants no part in.

Aphrodite IX: Rebirth, Vol. 1 Details

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From Reader Review Aphrodite IX: Rebirth, Vol. 1 for online ebook

Johan says

Well, the rebirth is better than the original, Aphrodite IX - Time Out of Mind; better and more coherent story, more coherent artwork, ... It is definitely better, but I am not a fan.

47Time says

I love the complexity this volume brings with it. It's pure sci-fi of a very respectable caliber that is enhanced further by the gorgeous artwork. This future brings wars and intrigue between two factions that I, for one, refuse to classify as good or evil as they both fight for survival. The titular character will undo the balance between these forces.

The universe is far more complex this time around. After a planet-wide cataclysmic event, the Earth has very little living space left that can support a limited population around the Equator. There's a war going on between two factions, one religion-oriented favoring genetic modifications and riding huge dragon-like fliers called drakes, the other, cybernetic enhancements which prolong their lives indefinitely at the cost of their humanity.

Aphrodite has been in stasis for a long while and is awoken by Marcus, a warrior from the genetic modification faction. It's fun to see how she perceives the world, analyzing threats and adapting to the circumstances. She is equally adept at learning a new language in minutes, as she is at understanding enemies' threat level and finding their weaknesses. It's all done in a Terminator-like interface.

(view spoiler)

Mike says

This trade collects Aphrodite IX (vol. 2) issues 1-5.

The original Aphrodite IX comic was a decent little adventure despite its flaws. Unfortunately the flaws were numerous: the plot was run-of-the-mill and rather shallow, very little of the world was explained, and only four issues were ever produced that contain what seemed to be an introductory arc. It also was incredibly over the top in its pandering, containing page after page of Aphrodite posing or twisting to give a clear view of her thong or torn tank top.

Fast forward about ten years and Aphrodite IX is back in a new series that has significant buzz about it. Hawkins and Sejic's re-imagining takes a few core ideas from the original and fleshes them out in new ways to end up with a really well-built, gripping read. This is a complete restart - no familiarity with the original series is needed at all and outside of the core ideas I mentioned and Aphrodite herself there's little similarity.

It's hundreds of years since an undisclosed event left most of the Earth uninhabitable. Two major factions formed among the survivors, one favoring cybernetics and one genetic manipulation, and are in a constant state of war. One of their leaders is about to uncover a powerful artifact from before the cataclysm, a lethal artifact with green hair...

The trade's opening short prose introduction provides more information about the history of Aphrodite's world than was given in the entire original series. Hawkins' tale is dense, conveying large amounts of information while moving the narrative along at a nice clip. The atmosphere is excellent and has nicely used post-apocalyptic and cyberpunk elements.

Both factions' philosophies and characteristics are interesting and well integrated into the story. While it seems like Hawkins was trying to keep the factions roughly equal in morality (or lack of it) one ends up decidedly more sinister than the other overall. Slight tweaking of a couple major characters would have kept the feel of good and bad elements to both societies more prevalent. It's a minor complaint though. The supporting characters and their actions serve the plot, themes, and Aphrodite's personal journey well, which is the important thing.

The art is phenomenal. The painted style is gorgeous. Both character and background designs are striking, distinct, and highly detailed. There are occasional moments of fanservice and some sexuality here, but it suits the story and the pin-up poses exist solely on the covers now.

Credit for Hawkins to adding depth and gravitas to a character and world that was originally mostly pin-up action fluff. This is a fantastic opening volume that contains a solid, complete arc while laying in several threads for the future, including a wonderful final page tease that has me dying to get my hands on the next volume.

Highly recommended.

3/14

Tara Calaby says

This caught my eye in the library because it had an attractive cover. Reading on the back that it was about a female cyborg assassin, it seemed imperative that I read it. Unfortunately, the writing in this is really not good. There's an enormous amount of awkwardly composed exposition, to the point that I felt like Stan Lee's 1960s narrative boxes were more natural. There's also nothing remotely original about the main character and her circumstances.

The art was decent, though, which is why I read through to the end.

Nicholas Driscoll says

Really gorgeous art, composed of incredibly detailed digital paintings. Totally overpowered and ridiculous main character who can do anything and defeat anyone. Some interesting ideas of technology. Plus dragons.

But, spoiler, how the heck did Aphrodite take out an entire Air Force of drones by crashing one drone into... something? Was there just one big ship that mattered that much that she could take out that easily? And why don't the technology guys just BOMB the genetically enhanced dudes?

Elliot Huxtable says

Interesting yet flawed take on the Manchurian Candidate type assassin. Interesting in its setting, this post-apocalyptic waste is fascinating. However the characterisation seems to be mostly absent.

Rye Bread says

Amazing art. Interesting story although it takes a bit to understand what's going on.

Personally I really enjoyed this despite having low expectations going in. I don't suggest it if you're expecting a super hero story. This is much more in the speculative sci fi realm, including social commentary thru analogy. If that's your thing, you'll enjoy this.

Also worth noting, there isn't much fanservice like the older Top Cow works tended to have. That might mean something to someone

Logan says

#11 of The 2015 Reading Challenge. Also reviewed on YouTube:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_cma...

Pretty good! So this is a reboot of the original run, I have not read the original run but this was awesome! Matt Hawkins is the reason I got this, his detail he puts into the world of any sci-fi story he does is so good! You feel so engaged and involved in the world you're reading. So this is set in a world where earth has been divided into 2 factions: Genetics and Cybernetics. The Main character is awesome, she's a bit of serious and a bit of comic relief. The Art is beautiful! Overall a great story!

Perry Gough says

But of a mess storyline wise about humans and dragons and cyborgs and a weird assassin thing with an inconsistent plot.

Matthew Cox says

In all honesty, I picked this up almost entirely because it was illustrated by Stepjan Sejic - of whom I am a huge fan. Sure, the central conflict between the two factions (one that favours genetics, and one that favours

cybernetics) was also intriguing - but mostly it was the artist.

So what did I think? Overall I liked it, though the story wasn't anything amazing. I liked many of the ideas more than the actual execution. The characters also weren't anything special, and this unfortunately applies to the titular Aphrodite herself. I found that it was actually some of the more background things that appealed to me more - anything to do with the history of the setting, and the ideology of the two factions and their conflict. Sadly this was a bit thin on the ground. I would also have been interested to get a bit more on the background between Aphrodite and her handler - but maybe that is explored more in the next volume.

Probably my biggest disappointment is that I actually wasn't in love with the art - despite it being my initial draw factor. I actually prefer the more sketchy style Sejic uses in his other works, such as in Death Vigil and his short stint on Rat Queens. Don't get me wrong, much of the art was very lavish, but somehow it just didn't feel right.

All-in-all, it was an enjoyable enough read - and might satisfy someone looking for a sci-fi fix. The story doesn't really go anywhere special, and the characters are not wildly memorable, but it has some pretty art and some world-building potential. That said, I haven't been gripped by a burning desire to grab the next volume (unless the art is more in the style of Sejic's other work).

Tidbits: Stupid green face dot, and Riding awesome dragons.

Abhinav says

I've reviewed each of the issues separately (#2 and #3 were review together). You can read them all in full here:

#1 -- [http://thefoundingfields.com/2013/06/...](http://thefoundingfields.com/2013/06/)

#2-3 -- [http://thefoundingfields.com/2013/08/...](http://thefoundingfields.com/2013/08/)

#4 -- <http://sonsofcorax.wordpress.com/2013...>

#5 -- <http://sonsofcorax.wordpress.com/2013...>

Issue #1:

“Defined by Sejic’s amazing art, this is a great first issue, and if things continue, then Matt Hawkins himself is set to become one of my favourite writers.” ~Shadowhawk, The Founding Fields

In contrast to what Bane says as below, I've read a few Top Cow titles prior to this book. David Hine's The Darkness: Rebirth Volume 1 and Ron Marz's first four volumes of Artifacts have been some of the top-level comics (or graphic novels rather, I should say), I've read since getting back into comics last year. Aside from the writing, which I've found to be quite excellent, easily comparable to what the top talents at DC and Marvel are writing (such as Gail Simone, Jason Aaron, Brian Wood, Geoff Johns and Scott Snyder), the art has been highly impressive as well. Based on my experience with The Darkness and Artifacts, I recently bought several more Top Cow/Image graphic novels and I'm looking forward to reading all of them. Fun times.

Last month, as part of their New Comic Book Day offering, Top Cow offered the first issue of their newly relaunched Aphrodite IX series as their one freebie and I picked up the digital copy as soon as I could, the physical copy having run out by the time I got to my store. Getting single issues in general is quite problematic for me since the store stocks only a handful, and they are all primarily DC and Marvel titles, highly selective ones at that. I actually wasn't able to read Aphrodite IX #1 until just a few minutes prior, since even though I've been wanting to read it since I picked it up, it kept slipping my mind. Hence why I picked it as my review title for today.

I haven't read anything that Matt Hawkins has written prior to this book. He is currently also writing Top Cow's Think Tank series, which has been getting a lot of fan acclaim of late, and it's certainly gone on my reading list, so that's another book I'm looking forward to. What attracted me to the book was the titular character, who plays a major role in Marz's Artifacts and was one of my favourite characters in the series as well. Another was the fact that Stejpan Sejic was doing the art on the book. He is one of Top Cow/Image's premier artists and everything I've seen of his work, whether on Artifacts or on his creator-owned project Ravine with Ron Marz, has been impressive (although, as I mentioned in my review of the first volume, there were some negatives on Sejic's art for Ravine).

So that's two points already in favour of the book, and nothing against it. And when I read the book, I came away with the positive experience that I wanted out of it.

I'm not conversant with much of Aphrodite IX's previous comics history, outside of what I've read in Artifacts, so this issue is a great starting point. Instead of a more contemporary setting, like what we've seen before, Hawkins takes the character into the future, to a post-apocalyptic Earth where the Human race is now divided into two factions constantly engaged in a war of attrition on each other. We are introduced to two new characters, Marcus and Lina, right off the bat as they lead a raiding party of drake-riders towards a stronghold of their enemies, with the intention of destroying an enemy transport ship. Returning from the raid, which sees his mount take a fatal wound, Marcus crash lands and accidentally discovers the vault where Aphrodite IX is kept in stasis. What follows is typical Aphrodite IX kick-ass action, with a cliffhanger ending that makes me want to read #2 immediately.

Hawkins' writing is, for the most part, quite good. Aphrodite IX's commentary gives us a quick overview of the setting, and here Hawkins shows his skill with balancing brevity and providing enough detail without it coming across as an info-dump, while his dialogue is both casual and fitting for the characters speaking it. The overall effect is one that eases the reader into the characters and the setting without an overload. I can see Marcus and Lina both becoming important supporting characters to Aphrodite IX in future issues, and I look forward to their development as characters, particularly Lina since she got the least screen-time here, compared to Marcus.

Aphrodite IX also gets a fairly good outing, and the simple easy way in which Hawkins conveys her disorientation with the "new" world and her adjustment to it, was another point in his favour. Aphrodite IX is pretty much a walking talking super-computer/cyborg, to put it simply, and the issue plays to her strengths. And her weaknesses, as the cliffhanger ending points out.

The only negative for Hawkins' writing is the way that he writes the antagonist here, someone who has had a long relationship with Aphrodite IX apparently. Whereas Aphrodite IX's reaction to the "new" world is shown, and commented on, the same is not true with him, and it made me raise my eye. There's a way in the script that his adjustment can be inferred as being similar to hers, but it is never acknowledged, only vaguely hinted at. That's really it.

On the art side, I really don't know what to say, other than that I loved the art, whether its the amazing cover, or the interior pencilling with all its inks and colours. Sejic is definitely a top-notch artist. This issue is a huge step up from his work on the Ravine TPB and none of the complaints that I had on that book are existent here. For me, not as well-read in Top Cow comics as I would like to be, Sejic's art is the defining visual tone of the Top Cow universe and he justifies that kind of respect and status with this issue. Definitely one of his finest work I have to say. If there's any one niggle in it, it is a certain panel that shows Aphrodite IX out of her stasis pod. The specific panel has a very seductive vibe to it, and it certainly jarred for me. Hardly a damning point though, since aside from that one minor moment, the rest of the art is all top-notch.

In short, Aphrodite IX #1 is a great first issue and now I'm off to get #2 now, and read through it soon as I can.

Rating: 9/10

Issue #2-3:

Matt's first issue for this rebooted series was quite a spectacular issue. It introduced the protagonist, Aphrodite IX, in a post-apocalyptic setting where Humanity has consolidated into two technologically-opposed groups, one favouring genetic engineering and the other cybernetics, and it delivered some kick-ass action so very typical of the character from what I remember of Ron Marz's Artifacts maxi-series. It was a very, very promising start to one of Top Cow's signature heroes, so very different from what the Big 2 offer, and I was really looking forward to the next few issues, hoping for more of the same. And Matt does deliver.

Issues 2 and 3 continue the theme of Aphrodite gaining acceptance with the geneticists of the city of Genesis, but being manipulated in secret by a man named Burch who used to be her handler in the old days. On behalf of Burch, Aphrodite continues to wreak havoc in Genesis, but when she is in control of her faculties, she manages to cause enough trouble for the people of Speros, Burch's allies and the enemies of the people of Genesis.

Where these two issue absolutely succeed is in showing off the scary levels of pure skill and badassery of Aphrodite. Conceived as an infiltrator, spy and assassin, Matt plays up to every single one of her abilities, giving her ample space to show off just who and what she is. It is quite refreshing to see a no-holds barred approach to a character like this and I'm certainly enjoying the series.

The development of other characters like Marcus and Lina (the upcoming generation of Genesis' leaders), and Chronos and Helen (the military leaders of Speros) is also quite good. Through Burch and Aphrodite, we get to see a great deal of what makes these characters and how deep the ideological divide between the people of Genesis and Speros is. Burch himself is quite an reprehensible character, but his calm self-confidence is just so interesting. I'm certainly rooting for Marcus and Lina to win at the moment, and I hope it doesn't change, especially in the wake of the cliffhanger ending of the third issue.

Stjepan Sejic is once again the artist on both issues and he has done a great job once again. I don't know how he does it, but Stjepan delivers some of the most amazing artwork I've ever seen. So many complimentary colour-palettes, incredible details, genuine variety of expressions on all the characters, and so on. Above everything, I love how realistic his artwork looks. Sometimes its as if I'm watching a high-budget action film, and other times its as if I'm watching a top-quality animated film instead of reading a comic. He is an artist in a class of his own.

This is not really a criticism of the issues as such, but I think I'm ready for Marcus and his people to be cut a

break now. Issue 3 has a really bleak ending, preceded by some of the best action choreography in the series so far, but it's all still going downhill for the Gens. Time for some good things to happen to them and I'm hoping that issue 4 this month can do that.

Rating: 9.5/10

Issue #4:

My reading of more of what Top Cow publishes continued last night with the latest issue of Matt Hawkins' *Aphrodite IX*, a series that was rebooted under his direction and features art by Stjepan Sejic, Top Cow's premier artist. In the three issues that I've read so far, Matt has created a really interesting post-apocalyptic world and has populated it with equally interesting characters, whether they be the geneticists of Genesis City or the cyborgs of Speros, or the protagonist herself, Aphrodite IX.

The tale so far has been one of deceit, betrayal, assassination and a race of control, which are always great concepts to base a story around. And that is exactly what Matt has been doing so far.

Aphrodite IX 04 B

This is a variant cover.

There is absolutely nothing in this issue that Matt Hawkins does that he already hasn't done before. Except making the story and the characters more awesome. When last we saw *Aphrodite IX*, she had once again been mind-controlled by her handler Burch into killing another character, someone close to the new ruler of Genesis City, Marcus. This issue deals with the fallout of that death and we finally begin to really explore how Aphrodite feels about all that is happening with her and around her. She questions what is happening to her and she struggles to come to terms with what she has done and what she might be forced to do.

The previous issues were full of a lot of political intrigue, particularly in Speros since its senior military leader, Chronos, wants a full-scale war with Genesis and he will do whatever it takes to make that happen. Conversely, this issue is light on political intrigue, but is heavier on the typical Aphrodite action. And I love to see that kind of a panel, so I enjoyed all those scenes. More so since Matt mixes things quite well and he keeps the narrative flow going without any drop in the pacing to the point that things are boring or just... slow.

One of the things that make this issue standout is that Matt doesn't go the typical comics route of Aphrodite's stealth capabilities being too tough for anyone to counter. This is something that happens to a lot of such characters and it is all a bit silly and unrealistic. It also makes the characters come across as stupid. Here, Marcus immediately brings back a tracker, an old friend, who sets about to discover just who has been killing people in Genesis. As expected, for someone like him, the conclusions are obvious, and there are also snippets of this character's thoroughness and determination, which made for a nice change of pace from Marcus' indecisiveness in the previous issues.

Not to say that Marcus hasn't improved significantly in this issue, but the addition of a new character was justified ably by the narrative and it also helped to move things along without getting bogged down in an unnecessary and superfluous extended search of Aphrodite throughout Genesis.

Of course, the real kicker comes towards the end, when both Marcus and Aphrodite have to make an important decision, and that's where the biggest twist in the series, so far, comes into play. Matt Hawkins has

had a knack of such endings for each of the previous issues, and this one is no different, except to say that he dials up everything and fully hooks the reader to stay around for the next issue in a month's time.

As always, the art in the series is brilliant. By now, I'm quite comfortable and even familiar with Sejic's pencils and his colours in this series, so I was able to enjoy the art that much more. At the risk of repeating myself from previous reviews of this title, I'll say that Sejic is an artist who is in a completely different class of his own. He does things very differently and the biggest charm of his work is that his characters are always so expressive. You can always see a riot of emotions on their faces throughout an issue, something that very few artists are able to pull off. And then there's the realism of his art style which, at the least, is like watching a high-budget animated feature. Totally out of this world.

The only "negative" I have for this issue is that I didn't like the cover at all. The previous covers have all had Aphrodite IX, but this one doesn't appear to be doing the same thing. It's a very dolled up version of the character and I just couldn't go along with it. Which is why I used one of the variants since, even though it doesn't have Aphrodite IX, it doesn't present a dolled up version.

All I'll say in the end is that I'm really enjoying this series and that this book is one of my favourites. With The Darkness and Aphrodite IX, Top Cow has some great titles out every month and that I can't wait to get to the next issues.

Rating: 9.5/10

And Issue #5:

Reading Top Cow comics always gives me a thrill. Whether its the characters or the story or the art, everything is always spot on and entertaining. Having read a wide variety of their books in the last year or so, I've enjoyed almost all of them, whether monthlies or trades, and the experience has been very positive for me. Reading Matt Hawkins' futuristic reboot of the Aphrodite property has been one of the highlights of that experience, and for good reasons too.

Characters like Aphrodite, in all her different incarnations, are very few and far in between in comics. In the Top Cow Universe, she occupies a very specific and niche place, built up on the concept of Artifacts that a few select individuals are heirs to. Ever since I started reading Ron Marz's Artifacts maxi-series last year, Aphrodite has been one of my favourite characters, and Matt Hawkins' recent work with her has only solidified that, and given me even more reasons to like her.

Aphrodite IX 05

This issue picks up only a few moments after the ending of the previous one, in which we saw that the military might of Speros had finally initiated its attack on Genesis City and that the cybernetically-enhanced people of Speros had used an unwilling Aphrodite in assassination attempts to sweep away the political structures of the people of Genesis City. There were some interesting revelations in that issue, and what Matt does here is that he continues to build on all of that, presenting his vision of a city at war, a city under siege, and a people displaced from their home.

Undeniably, this is the conclusion of the first arc on this series. Matt Hawkins has built up a really interesting and involved futuristic setting here, and has populated it with some really interesting characters to match. With the way that this issue reads, its as if we are coming to the end of a long epic with lots of reversals and misfortunes and fortunes and some pretty damn big twists. Sure, the primary characters aren't exactly going

anywhere, but Matt Hawkins has most definitely changed the entire playing field here, rebalanced the status quo to fit all the new events that have happened. And that's what I loved about it.

There's no holding back in this issue, and one thing that struck me while reading it was that I could very well be watching a mega-blockbuster movie at work here. Matt deals with the emotional troubles between Aphrodite and Marcus, he deals with the scope of two cities in the far future at war with each other, he deals with revenge and betrayal, with political intrigues and subterfuges. There is, quite frankly, a lot going on in this issue and Matt keeps everything together to the very end. His plotting is focused on the larger story and he never loses sight of what's to come next.

Really fantastic stuff. With the way that everything has changed here, I expect next month's issue to begin on an even better level. There's no way to go but up, because there's no looking back here. Neither the characters nor the story have that kind of freedom. Everything is always progressing and always moving forward. Most of all, Matt gives his characters freedom to choose their own paths, going forward. They make their own choices, unburdened by any kind of pressure. Most assuredly, it's quite clear that Matt loves these characters and that he enjoys writing about them. That vibe leaps right off the book.

The action scenes feel like, as I've already said, something straight out of an action movie. They are big, they are loud, and they are entertaining. It does help that the man giving visual life to Matt's script is Stjepan Sejic, one of the best artists in the industry right now, with his signature style that is unique and invigorating for all the right reasons. One of the things that struck a chord with me here was the sheer variety of colours that Stjepan uses, page to page. We have pages of soft oranges and browns mixed in with lightning-highlighted blues, followed by pages with warm yellows and bright reds, followed by pages that evoke icy vistas and are full of soft blues and purples. It's all really incredible.

Of course, as always, his character-work is always spot on as always, because his characters are always so expressive, so full of life. There are lots of things that can be said for Stjepan's artwork, but one thing that must be said, is that his art is beautiful, it's expansive, and it's definitely eye-catching. He is the perfect fit for this title.

Bring on October and issue #6! The final panel/page for this issue is an absolute rocker and I really can't wait to see what exactly Matt and Stjepan have in store next. It was a really exciting ending and also completely unexpected, so bonus points there!

Rating: 9.5/10

Matthew J. says

The art is interesting, but the character design on the titular character seems weirdly cheesecake. The story is OK. The dialog is too wordy. It definitely seems like a cool story could come out of this, but it also feels like it could turn into every anime TV series ever (read: interesting concepts that never come to anything).

Lady Entropy says

A decent read, with amazing art. I still think *Aphrodite IX* is a poor attempt at exploitation (if this is an

infiltration agent, why does she have a giant green dot on her face that she can't remove or disguise without a mask).

However, I kinda did like her and her plight, and the world they offered was an interesting take on cyberpunkish themes: tech vs. biomanipulation, even if the story didn't particularly entice me (Aphrodite is unstoppable, and the most beautiful woman ever, of course, because seduction is more important than not being noticed)

Unfortunately, there is a book that did it better, first, and with equally good art. *Romeo and Juliet: The War*.

By all means, read this book, but if you need to choose one, go with *Romeo and Juliet*.

Jon says

Eurgh.

In a post-apocalyptic far-future, a totalitarian society of technologically advanced cyborgs are engaged in a constant battle for the Earth's scant remaining resources with a tribe of spiritual, dinosaur-riding animal/human hybrid people, the Gen. (What do you mean, "this sounds kind of like that *Avatar* movie"?) That was *totally* different! Those spiritualistic, dinosaur-riding tribes-people were **blue** - and these are all, like, **not blue**. And stuff.)

Aphrodite IX - a cybernetically enhanced assassin from Earth's past, placed in stasis for reasons initially unknown - is accidentally discovered and released by Marcus, the heir to the Gen throne. Marcus takes her back to the Gen capital, where an insta-love triangle ensues. Hooray.

Fortunately, the cyborgs learn of a way to take control of Aphrodite's mind for exactly 20 minutes every 24 hours and begin using her to kill all of the Gen leadership. *cue dramatic music*

Good grief.

Derivative, cliché and utterly juvenile, *Aphrodite IX* is a painful reminder that comics still have a long way to go to be taken seriously. The characters are paper thin, with almost zero believable development or reasons for the reader to actually care. The whole book just feels like a vessel to objectify the female protagonist as often as possible. Which it does. A lot.

Aphrodite even has a 'pheromone mode' which she engages to distract victims with her allure before going in for the kill. This is the most unintentionally hilarious thing I've read in quite some time.

Sigh.

On the plus side, the art is some of the best I've ever seen in a graphic novel (and was the main reason I was drawn to picking this up at the library) - which makes it even more of a shame that everything else is just so mind-numbingly bad.

Phil Zimmerman says

Way better than the first book. This is the story of two rival factions, one who relied on genetics and the other that relied on technology to advance humankind. In the midst of their fighting, they uncover aphrodite. She becomes a player in their war.
