



## Orchid, Volume 1

*Tom Morello , Dan Jackson (Illustrator) , Scott Hepburn (Illustrator)*

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When the seas rose, genetic codes were smashed. Human settlements are ringed by a dense wilderness from which ferocious new animal species prey on the helpless. The high ground belongs to the rich and powerful that overlook swampland shantytowns from their fortress-like cities. Iron-fisted rule ensures order and allows the wealthy to harvest the poor as slaves. Delve into the first chapter of Orchid, the tale of a teenage prostitute who learns that she is more than the role society has imposed upon her, from the mind of musician Tom Morello (Rage Against the Machine, Audioslave, The Nightwatchman).

## Orchid, Volume 1 Details

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Author : Tom Morello , Dan Jackson (Illustrator) , Scott Hepburn (Illustrator)

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## **From Reader Review Orchid, Volume 1 for online ebook**

**osoi says**

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lukk.svbtle

Ana says

Stick to music, Tom.

**Trekscribbler says**

ORCHID: An Epic Look At The Ultimate Dystopian Future

Books and films about the fall of society have always held a particular fascination for most folks. We never much care for what causes the fall – be it Biblical prophecy, nuclear annihilation, plagues, the rise of Teletubbies, etc. – because, in the end, it's really all about just that: the end. The ultimate end. I've often likened it to that curious fascination we seem to have with automobile accidents. Given the chance, sure, we'll all slow down, crane our necks, and sneak a glance through the passenger window back in the direction of the possibly tragedy. I've stopped asking 'why' and just accepted that we have this collective morbid fascination with not so much death but what death looks like, be it a mangled auto, a bloodied body, or bruised and battered limbs. And broken glass. I can't tell you what the Apocalypse will look like, but I know there's going to be miles and miles of broken glass.

It's an interest that's fueled disaster pictures since film was possible. It's certainly given scribes like Stephen King something to look forward to, both creatively and financially. From the bleak desert landscape of *THE ROAD WARRIOR* to the lecherously evil thoughts of Trashcan Man in *THE STAND*, the end of life as we once knew it, continues to poke through the curtain ... and now, compliments of writer Tom Morello and others, it's arrived in graphic novel format.

(WARNING: The following review will contain minor spoilers for the purpose of discussing plot and characters only. If you're looking only for an endorsement, you can save yourself a lot of heartache by jumping to the last two paragraphs. Otherwise, read on, if you must.)

Life as we knew it ended long ago, but Morello never hammers out specifically what happened to mankind. There are hints that point toward Global Warming and warring nations. How it all fell isn't so much important here as how the world of tomorrow appears, and that's particularly frightening. Suffice it to say, the beast called man is no longer at the top of the food chain; in fact, he might just be hanging on near the bottom! Once commonplace animals have mutated into horrific beasties that go bump in the night, all with the same purpose of feeding on the human survivors. What remains of civilization has splintered into several groups that basically boil down to two types: rulers and servants.

Still – as is often the case in fantasies of this order – hope is out there. As fate would have it, a man who answered to the name of "General China" rose up to become an avenger of the people – an End-of-Days 'Zorro,' for lack of a better comparison. His secret was a powerful rag-tag mask that, when worn, gave only a 'sainted soul' power to destroy any opponent. His rebellion failed, and he suffered a fate similar to others, but the mask survived. As our story begins, rebels have taken the mask, and they're seeking out a new savior. The only problem is that putting it on comes at great risk: if you're not a saint, then mask instantly destroys you. Simon believes he can find someone to wear the mask; yet before he's able to test his theory, he's separated from the other rebels, and now he needs to find his way back. Joining him on his quest – whether they like it or not – are Orchid, a fallen teenage prostitute, and her younger brother, Yehzu.

While it may not sound like it to the untrained eye, *ORCHID* is pure fantasy. It shares, literally, dozens of similarities with such tales as *THE LORD OF THE RINGS* or *THE WHEEL OF TIME* or *A GAME OF THRONES*. For instance, there's the reluctant hero. There's the magic prize. There's the mythic quest. There's the fallen princess. There's the cruel leader. There are warriors and monsters aplenty, and it's all told with a sense of awe and wonder but backed with the incredible power of global tragedy. There are no sunny skies in this world – not at present, anyway – and whether or not there will be a tomorrow is always in doubt as our heroes face danger after danger. It's a dark and wonderful tale – this first volume contains an awful lot of set-up as Morello goes to great pains to spell out some significant background in flashback – and I've no doubt it'll only get more dark and wonderful with the next installments.

Certainly, *ORCHID* may not be for everyone, but I've no doubt it's a delight for those of us who slow down

to glance at automobile accidents and still hope for happy endings.

**HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.** It's the ultimate urban fantasy. Humanity has collapsed. Societies are in ruin. The unfortunate souls left alive have been broken into two castes – one that rules, one that's enslaved. Into this chaos is thrust a young rebel with a mask as magical as it is historic, a disguise when worn by a saint presents the anointed one with immeasurable powers. Along with his fellow travelers – a despondent prostitute and her impressionable younger brother; and one aging adventuress who talks to her horse – he approaches the ultimate stronghold remaining in the wild. His mission is to rescue the fellow rebels and to quite possibly wage a war for the future of humanity. Indeed, Mr. Morello dreams nightmares of a grand scale, and his tale *ORCHID* only seeks to deliver the same.

In the interests of fairness, I'm pleased to disclose that the good people at Dark Horse Comics provided me with a digital copy of *ORCHID, VOLUME 01* by request for the expressed purposes of completing this review.

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### **Bry says**

*Orchid* is the story of a girl, who is a whore, and is trying to care for her family at a time when the world has been flooded, evolution has created terrible monsters, and humanity is no longer the top of the food chain. *Orchid* is fine with her place in the world, she accepts it, and she knows her role, but she wants more from life for her younger brother.

All of that goes to hell in a handbasket though the second Simon, a revolutionary fighting against a man who enslave other humans and is truly evil. His entering her life ends in death, destruction, slavery, and grief. And now she has to take all of that emotion and turn it into a reason to survive, to fight, and to avenge.

The story is definitely epic fantasy, the characters complex, and the plot full of political and human intrigue. The art was super detailed, didn't skimp on the blood and gore, and had great colors. The main characters though just didn't really appeal to me but that's not all that important. All in all, I think I will read volume 2 when its released.

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### **usagi ?? says**

I've always been a fan of Rage Against the Machine. So when I heard their guitarist, Tom Morello, was putting out a comic, I was intrigued. The art on the cover looked gorgeous (I'm a sucker for pretty covers. There, I said it.), so I decided to dive in. And I'm glad I did. Even though there's a bit of a slow start to it, "*Orchid*" is a great dystopian story of the human race being forced back to its beginnings after a major global warming event nearly wipes it out. Warning: this one is DEFINITELY not for kids, so I'd advise older YA and above for an audience. All the same, it's dark and gritty and unflinching, warning us about a future that may be in our reach if we don't shape up our act now.

What I love most about "*Orchid*" is Morello's absolute staunchness in telling us how bad things get. Well, not exactly that - just when you think things are bad (the seas are rising, people are becoming displaced on boats to survive the flooding), he makes them worse (guess what? the boats are full of crazy cannibals!).

People are divided into two classes: the ruling class, and slaves. He also emphasizes that it's probably best to trust no one in either class - because everyone's just doing what they can to survive, which includes killing, maiming, betraying, and the like.

This is not a happy story. I'll say that flat out. But it is one that will make you want to cheer for our heroine. Pretty much everything that can go wrong does for her, yet she still stands up and wants to fight for her right to simply exist. She kicks ass and takes names even after all of the horrible things that happen to her - she refuses to lie down and take it (as so many women in her part of the slave/sex trade do). It's nice to see a heroine so feisty in such a terrible world, so I really, really enjoyed watching how she evolved in the few short issues that are included in this volume.

However - since this is the introductory volume, the character building in the larger sense isn't quite where I would have liked it to be. Anyone who wasn't David or Orchid (or later, Barabas) wasn't really filled out too well, except for the occasional villain of the week. But the worldbuilding knocked my socks off in how detailed it was in the story of how things came to be, and how things are now. The art really puts a gorgeous touch on the worldbuilding, too. Since the worldbuilding really makes up for the wobbly character structure and mostly backstory chapters outside of the main cast and story, I'll give Morello a pass on this one.

So if you're not sick of dystopian stories yet, I'd definitely give this one a read. "Orchid: Volume 1" will be out in North America through Dark Horse Comics July 10, 2012. Definitely check this one out when you get the time, guys - I think Morello is going to prove to be a fantastic comic writer if we just give him the chance.

(posted to goodreads, shelfari, and birthofanewwitch.wordpress.com)

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### **Online Eccentric Librarian says**

*More reviews (and no fluff) on the blog <http://surrealtalvi.wordpress.com/>*

I don't give very many one star ratings - maybe 2 a year. And unfortunately, this graphic novel solidly hit 1 star for me. Poor worldbuilding, far too much nonsense to suspend disbelief, unlikeable 2-dimensional characters, and juvenile artwork added up to a hot mess of a comic.

The story is all over the place - near as I can tell having got half way through the book, it involves a young prostitute, her brother, and a non-violent rebel trying to resurrect a violent fallen rebellion leader. Apparently a great flood drowned most of the world, warlords took over, they were sponsored by corporations, and that water somehow managed to mutate all life, making most land too wild and dangerous to survive. The bad guys are Evil, with a capital E, and our poor put upon low life main characters must survive the world as slaves.

If you can get past a flood mutating genetics, corporations surviving when 90% of humanity is wiped out, warlords finding and using industrial fabrication machines despite the obvious lack of electricity, a young teen prostitute hitting her pimp for an insult despite having a desperate family to watch over, and a guy who is supposedly non violent but desperately trying to revive a bloody rebellion leader....and let's not even get

into the rebels all having clean hair with modern haircuts (guess the hair salons didn't flood)..... then you have more patience than I do.

I can suspend my dystopian disbelief as much as the next girl. But it's really hard to respect the kind of laziness that comes from making such an incredibly weak story, characters, and world. As well, the storytelling itself is very muddled, jumping from info dump to action to info dump, treating the apocalypse like an bad epic poem.

Finally, the illustrations were very comic-book (better for an Alex Ryder novel adaptation than a supposedly gritty dystopian). The cover being egregiously misrepresentative of the artwork inside, which treats characters very superficially and overreacting to everything.

I could not take this seriously and just kept rolling my eyes with every page or info dump. Absolutely nothing worked for me with this first in a series.

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### **Angela says**

I thoroughly enjoyed reading this and got through it relatively quickly considering I had to read it on a computer screen.

I am a massive fan of dystopian literature and post-apocalyptic scenarios and this one did not fail to deliver in the slightest. I enjoyed Morello's vision and the artwork was beautifully done.

You do need a certain suspension of disbelief whilst reading this; the mutated animals are not completely explained but they were incredibly fun to read about, nor is it fully explained how the vast majority of mechanical devices have been destroyed but solar panels have been salvaged to help grow crops. Yes, some of this graphic novel is slightly absurd but I didn't care as it was so much fun to read.

I loved the storyline, the characters and the artwork and I eagerly await the next instalment.

*An advance reader copy was kindly supplied by the publisher through Netgalley.*

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### **Diayll says**

**Originally Reviewed At:** Mother/Gamer/Writer

**Rating:** 4 out of 5 Controllers

**Review Source:** NetGalley

**Reviewer:** Me

Celebrated musician Tom Morello (Rage Against The Machine) has created a larger-than-life post-apocalyptic graphic novel about disaster, revolution, and hair-raising monsters. *Orchid, Vol. 1* is a grandiose adventure of disturbingly epic proportions. It's not for the faint of heart, nor is it for those of you who don't

want to be sucker punched by a reluctant hero, a feisty (prostitute) female lead, war torn nations, and creatures who'd love to have you as a snack. This is a dark and dreadful, weary place. And I invite Dystopian fans to step into the pages and submerge themselves in Orchid's frightening world.

Meet Simon, a book smart rebel who has come into possession of an artifact used by the infamous General China. He eludes capture, only to stumble upon a boy who he just barely rescues from certain death. The young boy takes Simon to his home where we meet his mother and eventually a prostitute with the word "property" tattooed across her chest, Orchid. Because of a certain "thing" Orchid has done, trouble follows her home and she, Simon and her brother are captured. And consequently, their mother is killed. Thus begins their hair-raising adventure of survival, loss, and retribution.

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Overall, Orchid Volume 1 is great for anyone looking for over-the-top fantasy adventures with not-so-happy beginnings, a lot of death, and creatures that might make you think twice about entering dark forests. The artwork, ominous tone, and worldbuilding will capture your attention from page one and take you on an emotional journey that won't let up until the ride is over. Yeah folks...it's good!

### **Gina says**

Re-reading the series.

Last time around I read it for the environmental issues as part of a class. I was irritated by the lack of adherence to natural laws and logic (oceans rising caused the smashing of the genetic code, so giant scorpion bears and trilobite cats and whatever are completely legitimate) but also did not love the grotesquerie in those images, which is of course why you would have the genetic code smashed so you can create giant scorpion bears. After Earth - which apparently just turned all the herbivores super carnivorous and aggressive - would be less of a stretch.

Putting some time in between it, I see a lot of reality in the social issues, and am picking up better on the humor with Simon, who is otherwise rather annoying. The bird he administers while falling backwards, and the smile on his face as he does it, is a good moment.

Having finished re-reading the series now, the old things that bothered me still do. One is that the relationships are not organic. It is plot-driven instead of character-driven, with all of the usual problems that entails.

The bigger problem may be a lack of belief in a better world. Even though at the end that's what the survivors are working on, and they seem to be getting there, there is so much ugly violence and revenge that it feels like the creators would end up making a similar world to their dystopia without meaning to.

Spoilers below:

That Orchid can find her brother again and then not be able to be with him, that feels like a lack of belief that

things can turn out well. Hope is an important part of the final battle, but not as much as anger and revenge.

There is a lot of ugliness in humanity, and if you want to deal with that you will have to reference that, but that doesn't mean wallowing in it. It felt like the gore was reveled in here, and for all of the empowering of the prostitutes at the end, they treated Laika's breasts much like a lot of other sexist artists in other comics. All in all, it feels like this fell short of what it wanted to be.

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### **Mandy says**

Y'know when you go into something having no idea what to expect and being pleasantly surprised? I think that's why I'm giving this a 4 star review... But I do want to continue reading this.

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### **Kristin says**

How could I not like this? Female lead, check. A non-hero hero, check. Future setting of a post apocalyptic dystopia, check. Falls short of 5 stars because although good, it is not perfect. I need to know more about Orchid's past. Barrabas is my favorite character so far but maybe only because he has the best back story so far. I am excited for future volumes when Orchid hopefully takes center stage and breathes new life into the rebellion.

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### **Lauren (Northern Plunder) says**

#### **Review was originally posted at Northern Plunder.**

**Review:** I was left a little speechless. This book really made an impression on me, I think it really helps that the back story to every character and to the world is given completely which meant you felt connected and worried for those fighting for their survival, worried for those living on the edge of civilisation praying that the very wild beast stay right away and despising those in power for doing nothing but being in power for all the wrong reasons and even though the world is dangerous and terrifying, it still has this strange and beautiful appearance to it, I wish I could just show you some of the work (well, I have included an image below but there is so much more beauty to the work)! The story follows Simon a freedom fighter who has stolen back the previous leaders mask that is believed to have special powers, he stumbles into the home of Orchid, a teenage prostitute doing what she can to provide for her mother and brother whilst wanting a better life for them too. From the moment Simon enters her life, he turns it upside down, they capture by slave traders and the story follows them on their journey throughout this new and wild Earth. We also get to meet a crazy old lady who lives in the deep wild and a strange, mute "demon" man, it's definitely not your average tale on Earth. I've held back a star even though I really enjoyed reading it simply because considering the book is titled after Orchid, she doesn't really do that much, so I have a feeling that in the next volume we'll definitely get to see her kick some butt and be more of a bad ass, yes? Hopefully. I see it heading in that direction at least because what would be the point in naming the graphic novel after her if she does nothing and because it ends on a cliff hanger! In other words I am completely dying to know what happens next and hope it continues to live up to my expectations.

**Recommend?** I see no reason why not! Hopefully my local library will get it in stock too cause I think I'd like to reread it.

\*\*\*Initial thoughts sprawled out\*\*\*

Have you ever read something that just seemed so perfect and left you wanting more? I have, right now. It provided the right amount of background to the world and every character whilst also having a gripping and beautiful (and dangerous) story and setting. Orchid is just becoming what I imagine to be her full-fledged BA so I've held back a star because I want to see her kick ass. Can December get here sooner?

Full review to come but seriously I think what I just wrote on spur of the moment does it justice.

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### **Nicola Mansfield says**

Reason for Reading: On impulse actually. I've just re-read the publisher's summary and I think that last paragraph was missing from what I first read as "teenage" prostitute does not appeal to me at all. However, for some reason, this called to me.

I am so glad I read this, rather unusual for me, graphic novel. Very violent, quite graphic in s\*xuality, language and plain brutal images. The publisher recommends age 14+. I'm age 40+ and was disturbed by some images; my recommended age is 18+. So I start with these caveats but let me tell you this was a fantastic story!

It did start off a bit shaky. The premise is somewhat unbelievable as to how this post-apocalyptic world came to be along with the mutant DNA animals. Also I'm a bit tired of assuming that future worlds will be medieval-like and women will revert back to being used, abused "property" of men. But. Suspending belief to a degree and getting comfortable within this world with the first couple of issues, by the third issue the story has picked up and proves to be an extremely detailed, intriguing, highly developed plot. There are many side stories along with the major plot taking shape within this first volume and I was completely hooked by the end and am anxious to read volume 2 which has been added to my pre-order titles.

The characters are fantastic especially Orchid and the main male character, Simon. Orchid (who I never thought of as "teenage" but had rather set her as 20-21 in my mind) starts off weak, and a bit whiny, but her character grows throughout this volume to become the hero she is going to be for the future of the series. Simon really shined for me. A slave who learned to read, he speaks rather "bookish" and pompously compared to the general population; he is an idealist who thinks the world is the way he wants it to be. He is a hero but also adds a much needed comic relief to the otherwise dark, brutish nature of the rest of the story.

I really can't say how much I enjoyed this story. I'd even be tempted to buy the comics and I don't "do" individual comics! Highly entertaining and promises to be an above average epic.

PS - My actual rating is a 4.5 for the points I mention in the review.

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### **Ginny Lurcock says**

So it???s probably not a big secret that post-apocalyptic stories flip my switch. Same with comics. So you???re probably wondering how I made it this long without knowing about ???Orchid???. And really, I wish I had some kind of an answer for you??? since now I???m going to have to scurry about tracking down all single issues. Which is just a hassle.

???Orchid,??? written by Tom Morello (yes that Tom Morello) and brought to life on the page by Dan Jackson and Scott Hepburn is the story of a future gone tragically wrong. The world flooded, DNA went wonky creating terrible monsters, and humans are fighting to survive. As always in a setting such as this, the strong and the rich prey upon the weak and the poor.

Enter Simon (yes, I know you were expecting ???Enter Orchid,??? but we???re not there yet.)

Simon is a former slave who is one of the rare few who has fancy book learning. The story starts with him being part of a merry band of rebels who has stolen a rare artifact used by the cultural icon General China during his failed rebellion. He???s the only one who makes it out. On an attempt to flee the city, he saves a little boy from becoming monster chow. This little boy happens to have a big sister.

Enter Orchid. (see, I told you it was coming) Hooker with a heart of??? well I???m pretty sure she has a heart anyways. With the word ???property??? tattooed on her chest and ???know your role??? branded into her arm, you can tell the life of a prostitute (or ???Walk???) is even less glamorous in this unappealing future than it is today.

Together, the three embark on what is a ???great for us, shitty for them??? adventure.

In addition to the character introductions and the beginning of their epic journey, there???s a lot of background contained in this first volume. Introduced in snippets throughout the story, it gives you a look at how the world got into this mess, and what this mess really is, without detracting from the flow of the story. Normally I???m not a fan of these kinds of interruptions, but ???Orchid??? does it so well, I find it to be a positive instead of a negative.

Simply put, Orchid was stunning. I can???t wait for more.

5 stars.

Also posted on Pure Textuality

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### Crystal says

Visually beautiful, daringly violent, and ridiculously fast paced. The writing is alright, so far. I think I'll have to judge the writing better after issue #2 (definitely buying it), when the author might seem less eager to set up the story and win an audience as a brand spanking new comics writer. It's in the postapocalypse genre with hints of Margaret Atwood and Octavia Butler, and, I'd say, some hints that it might also take a bit of influence from steam punk. We shall see. For a first issue it was a bit hurried and full, but this eagerness is fairly endearing, sort of like a talented young man interviewing for his first entry level job who shows up wearing cuff links and carrying a briefcase.

Merged review:

It's getting good!

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