

Outer space gods wooing a girl from the Garden State? That's more Jersey than Bon Jovi, the Boss and Jimmy Hoffa combined!



JERSEY GODS

Image's latest smash earns props from comics' biggest names thanks to its mix of cosmic gods and romantic comedy

Love does funny things to people. It drives men to devious ways, women to illicit lifestyles and—in the case of Glen Brunswick and Dan McDaid's latest Image monthly—makes a cosmic war god leave his home among the stars for a decidedly less-epic home base: New Jersey.

"*Jersey Gods* is a love-at-first-sight adventure story that begins when Barock, a god of war, is forced into a life and death struggle with his evil counterpart at the Cherry Hill Mall," explains Brunswick. "During the battle, he saves the life of Zoe, a beautiful yet high-maintenance girl from New

Jersey. The first arc takes readers on a journey through the futuristic god cities of Neboron and the back alleys of Cherry Hill, as we come to understand why these two vastly different people are, in fact, perfect for each other."

But perfect relationships aren't always a guarantee when it comes to the gods of Barock's home planet Neboron, and after the opening five-issue arc, Brunswick and McDaid stand poised to throw as many complications at their young couple as possible, from Jack Kirby-inspired slugfests to the sassy, trash-talking mavens

of Zoe's career as a fashion reporter. And while *Jersey Gods* certainly pays homage to series like *The New Gods* with McDaid's expressive and aggressive cartooning, the young personalities of the gods and the tongue-in-cheek trials of Zoe's work life imbue the series with a unique flavor that's equal parts multiplex date night and Wednesday afternoon nerd binge.

"Even if you tread on some familiar territory, you do it in a unique way that's true to your own characters," says Brunswick of his methodology. "Zoe is very driven. And since Barock is moving into her world, she plans on calling the shots. But Barock was a prince and a leader during a bloody civil war. He expects to be in charge as well."

The clash of cosmic odyssey and Jersey drama finds two major outlets in August's *Jersey Gods* #6, which begins the new "The Abandoned" arc and continues back-ups detailing the history of the Neboron gods by Mark Waid (*Amazing Spider-Man*). "The gods have visited the earth many times

before—some thousands of years ago," says Brunswick of the lead story. "There are a few people living on Earth that are hundreds of years old or more but they don't look a day over 30. [New villain] Hecticus is one of 'The Abandoned.' He was born during the American Civil War but still looks like a young man. He's made himself into a multimedia player like Rupert Murdoch, but he's also got a major fury inside him for being left behind."

Meanwhile, the involvement of Waid and cover artist Mike Allred (*Madman*) just goes to show how the creative community has gotten behind *Jersey Gods*.

"I've been a fan of [Waid's] for so long. I don't think I can put in to words what it's like to work with one of your personal heroes. I've never won the lottery, but I think it must feel like that," Brunswick says. "And Mike is one of the greatest artists working in comics today. It's like winning the lottery and getting the girl. I hope Mike doesn't think I'm comparing him to a girl. He's not going to see this article, right?" • **KP**