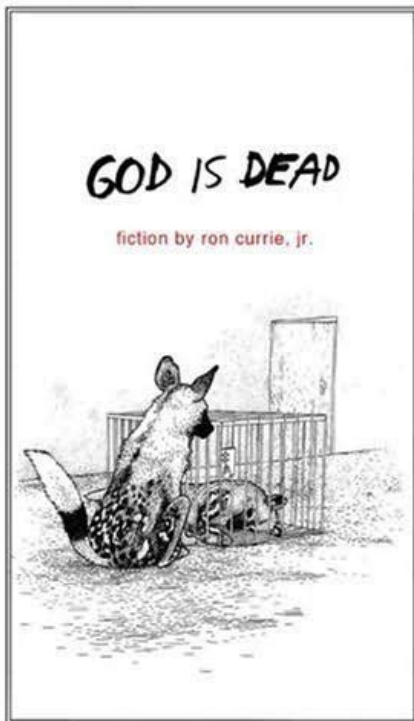




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BARBARIAN'S BOOK OF THE MONTH



God is Dead by Ron Currie Jr.

A bleak dystopian future is tempered with moments of possibility in story writer Currie's debut novel, in which a sick and wounded Dinka woman arrives at a refugee camp in Darfur, searching for her lost brother. The woman is God, come to Earth in human form to make apologies to the Sudanese, over whose fate He is, "due to an implacable polytheistic bureaucracy, completely powerless." When God is gunned down, news of His death spreads quickly around the globe and provides the jumping-off point for the subsequent short story-like chapters that reveal what happens in a post-God world: suicide rates skyrocket (especially among clergy members), riots and mass looting erupt and the pack of feral dogs that feasted on God's corpse begin "speaking a mishmash of Greek and Hebrew" and inspiring worship among Africans. (Meanwhile, in America, the masses, seeking a deity to fill the void, begin worshipping children.) Looking at humanity through a warped lens allows the various narrators unusual insight; while sometimes overwrought, these observations are often striking, as when an enlightened dog describes the strange new experience of emotion. This novel-in-stories is unsettling and strange, but still easily accessible; despite the ways in which his world has changed, Currie's altered humanity has one foot in ours.