

Monstress Volume 1

By Author, Marjorie Liu

Reviewed by: Jake 16

Star Teen Book Reviewer of Be the Star You Are! Charity

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Maika Halfwolf, a seventeen-year-old girl, is a mysterious key player in an ongoing war. The war is between Arcanics, a race of magical creatures and the Cumea, an order of witches who consume Arcanics for power. Maika is a human-passing Arcanic, who is missing an arm and branded with a strange sideways eye symbol on her chest. Captured by slavers, she is sold to a witch called Sophie and brought to one of the witches' compounds. Unlike other Arcanics, Maika possesses a strange and unreliable power that seems to unlock locks. Maika manages to escape her chains thanks to her powers, and by travelling through the witches' compound, information is revealed about her past and powers. Maika's story is a great look at the quest for power and the struggle to survive.

The first installment of Marjorie Liu's graphic novel series wonderfully blends her dark fantasy story with Sana Takeda's beautiful art. The series has also won numerous awards, including the British Fantasy Awards, the Eisner Awards, the Harvey Awards, and the Hugo Awards. This series is geared towards a mature audience, as it incorporates themes of war, slavery, dehumanization, and survival to create a gripping tale. Further depictions of death, rape, partial nudity, and child slavery are also triggering content. Maika's bravery, and tale of survival is simultaneously bleak and inspiring. Her journey humanizes those who have survived a war, while also commenting on the trauma that results from such an experience. This book would be a great gift for someone sixteen or older interested in dark fantasy and the effects of war.

Recommended Titles:

Sandman series by Neil Gaiman

Death Note series by Tsugumi Ohba

Saga series by Brian K. Vaughan

Paper Girls series by Brian K. Vaughan

Locke & Key series by Joe Hill