



Monstress, Vol. 2: The Blood

Marjorie M. Liu , Sana Takeda (Illustrator)

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The Eisner-nominated MONSTRESS is back! Maika, Kippa, and Ren journey to Thyria in search of answers to her past...and discover a terrible new threat. Collects MONSTRESS #7-12.

Monstress, Vol. 2: The Blood Details

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Author : Marjorie M. Liu , Sana Takeda (Illustrator)

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From Reader Review Monstress, Vol. 2: The Blood for online ebook

Caro M. says

Sana Takeda, you're a GOD. The graphic part of this series is so absolutely gorgeous that it works like a portal to another world. At some point while reading you feel like you're immersed into Maika's world, which is beautiful, wild, unpredictable and cruel. One feels like participating in this wicked fairy tale. So fantastic and so real at the same time.

That's why phrases like "*are you fucking insane?*" or many other f-bombs author likes to insert here and there feel so unnatural and out of place and they violently drag me back to my everyday city street or "Sopranos". Not like I'm some bigot who never drops those bombs, I do a lot, actually, but couldn't the author try to be at least creative with it? Because this is just too primitive. For my tastes at least. Hence one star off.

Melissa ♥ Dog/Wolf Lover ♥ Martin says

I freaking loved it! This one is even better than the first one. Maika Halfwolf, Kippa, and Captain Ren are all together again in this one. Maika is on a journey to find something and get rid of something. There are a ton of wonderful characters in the book! I took some pictures from my book. They aren't that great but you will get an idea of some of the awesome graphics and creatures => And they are not in order, just like my life!

ENJOY!

Mel ♥

Hannah says

This is, simply put, absolutely stunning story-telling, on all possible levels. There is a reason why Marjorie Liu won the Eisner Award this year (as the first woman, I might add incredulously in the year 2018).

Picking up after the events of the last volume and not losing even the slightest bit of steam, Marjorie Liu and Sana Takeda build on their already impressive worldbuilding, adding new cultures and more depth to this world that already feels much bigger than what we have seen so far. And also kickass female pirates.

The storytelling is layered and complicated – the world here is ravaged by ages of war and prejudice and hate against each other, with no race being wholly innocent in the matter. The authors do not shy away from gruesome pictures and elements of war in a way that never feels gratuitous. This complicated tapestry of people is exemplified in our main characters, Maika is difficult to like but easy to root for, her companions equally complicated with motivations that not always point in the same direction.

But nothing of the above points would work as well as it does without Sana Takeda's absolutely brilliant art. It is intricate and sweeping and oh so very beautiful. I don't know if I have ever read a graphic novel that was quite as visually stunning (maybe Sandman, maybe not even that). If you have any interest in feminist, complicated, dark, beautiful comics – you really should be picking this one up. I will be reading this until the very end.

This review and other thoughts on books can be found on my blog.

Michael Finocchiaro says

Excellent continuation from the previous volume from the brilliant Marjorie Liu and Sana Takeda. The menagerie of cats, lions, foxes and shark humanoids reminded me of the art in Blacksad. The story is still a little convoluted but nonetheless fascinating and engaging. Will Maika come to terms with her dual nature? The Isle of Bones was gorgeously illustrated and I loved the storyline. Only downside is that we have to wait a few more months for Vol 3...

Melanie says

Vol. 1: Awakening ★★★★★

“Halfwolf’s daughter has returned.”

In *Volume Two: The Blood*, We are thrown back into this amazing world that I love so much. We are reintroduced to a girl that is living with a monster inside of her. She is being hunted, but trying to piece together all the parts that make up her past, including what happened to her mother, who taught her at a young age to be strong in a world that will refuse to ever accept you.

Moriko and her sidekicks that she doesn't want to love, Kippa and Ren, are on a completely new adventure, which involves a ship, a pirate crew, a mysterious island, and maybe some ghosts. The banter is perfection, the art is quite literally a gift to the world, and the story is a masterpiece. This is my favorite graphic novel series of all time.

And the message about never letting anyone control you, about rising to the top of a world that wants

nothing more than to drag you down, is so powerful. This graphic novel is a fantasy inspired world that is ownvoices, and this graphic novel is filled with PoC characters. Also, Moriko only has one arm, but shows the world constantly how she should never be underestimated because of her disability. This is a super diverse series, and this story is filled with discussions about fear tactics and hate speech, and shows how easily hate speech can turn into hate actions.

Trigger and content warnings for a lot of blood, a lot of gore, and a whole lot of violence. Slavery, war themes, child abuse, animal cruelty, experimentations on unwilling living creatures, and one pretty dark birthing scene. This is a very dark graphic novel, please use caution.

But this series is so perfect, and I truly believe it is a tier above anything else out there right now. If you feel like you are in the right mindset, I can't implore you enough to pick Awakening up and give it a try.

I'm now going to just break down each single issue super quickly! Minor spoilers ahead!

► **CHAPTER SEVEN** -

We are reintroduced to Moriko, and we get to revisit the monster that is trying to very hard to escape her. Kippa is the best character in all existence. Ren is second best. And I love all the cat people, so much, even when they are bad sometimes. Moriko finds a bone key and procures a ship and a crew to take her to an island that might have the answers about her mother.

► **CHAPTER EIGHT** -

Moriko talks about how it has always hurt her that she never received any Goddess-marks to easily show that she is like the other Arcanic children, even though she carries so much power within herself. And then we see a new monster that lurks in the sea below, right before the ship is attacked.

► **CHAPTER NINE** -

We get to see some flashbacks of Moriko's mother teaching her, but we see how hard her mother was on her. Honestly? It just made me want to protect her even more. Also, Kippa is smart, perfect, and oh so loyal. I love her more than words.

► **CHAPTER TEN** -

This issue had some of the most beautiful art I've ever seen in my entire life. I could frame something on every single page. Perfection. But Moriko, Kippa, and Ren are on a smaller boat, heading to the island together. And the bone key comes into play, in a pretty amazing way. But once they get to the island, they quickly realize they are not alone.

► **CHAPTER ELEVEN** -

I loved this issue, because we get to know Moriko's monster a little bit better through more flashbacks. And I'm loving all these breadcrumbs so much. And Moriko also gets more knowledge about her mother, but for a price.

► **CHAPTER TWELVE** -

Oh boy, this concluding issue left me needing the next volume this very instant! Also, I know I shouldn't, but I love the ferryman. Moriko is able to put on the part of the mask she has in her possession, but someone else senses it immediately; her father.

Again, this graphic novel is everything to me. Marjorie M. Liu & Sana Takeda are a gift to the world, and I will read this series for as long as they create it. If you're looking for an adult, high fantasy, dark, ownvoices, Asian inspired graphic novel series, please pick this up. From the art, to the characters, to the mysteries, to the messages, this is a masterpiece in every single way.

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Readalong for the BooktubeSFF Awards which is being hosted by:

? Samantha from Sam's Nonsense
? Frankie from Frankie Reads
? Kaitlin from Kitty G
? Rachel from Kalanadi
? Thomas from SFF180
? Connor from Connor O'Brien
? Sam from Thoughts on Tomes
? Chelsea from TheReadingOutlaw
? Elena from Elena Reads Books

Fables&Wren says

WrensReads Review:

I guess this is just way over my head. The art is phenomenal and the world seems legitimately awesome; but I just don't know what the heck is going on the majority of the time and I am just looking at all the pretty pictures.

Oh well, to each their own. I'm just going to go read things that make me smile and cry all at once and not make me feel like an idiot.

[WrensReads](#) | [Goodreads](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#)

Anne says

Arrgh, me matey!

Volume 2 probably would have been cool even if Liu hadn't decided to make it pirate-themed, but with the addition of the high seas adventure she *really* kicked that shit up a notch.

Or is that just me?

You know, sailors just don't get enough credit for being badass in my opinion. Think about it! Mother Nature is a vicious bitch and she's at her most terrifying in the ocean. I mean, who knows what the fuck is lurking down at the bottom of that sucker?!

And all that horrific aquatic shit works well with the rest of this fantasy story about gods and monsters.

Truth time?

I'm not really sure how to even review **The Blood**. It's gorgeous and gross. It's crazy and confusing.

But. It *does* manage to give you a few answers!

Ish.

Hell, I don't know. I got nothing!

It's really weird but super cool, so check it out if you're looking for something outside the normal capes and tights comic.

Bentley ★ Bookbastion.net says

If I was rating this on artistic style alone, this would get all the stars.

Seriously, the illustrations in this are jaw-dropping and gorgeous, and should be enough for anyone to give this series a chance. The story elements are only slightly less impressive when placed in comparison.

Clearly, the world-building and history of the land/lore is on point in this series, but I think the one thing that's weighing it down is the tendency to try and accomplish too much too quickly. The story often flits from set piece to set piece, in an attempt to fill the reader in on *this* complex historical event, and then *that one*, before flitting back to a flashback of certain character's childhoods or important conversations we weren't privy to, before jumping ahead and introducing a character we've never seen before.

You almost need to read this with a Wiki open to fully appreciate all of the elements that have been crafted and laid within the story movement. It's not necessarily a bad thing - and I certainly think that future re-reads would allow readers to glean even more from the story. But for someone like me who picked this up on a whim, I'd like the story to feel a bit more tightly defined.

I'm invested now though, and I'll definitely be picking up the next edition when it's available!

4/5 stars

David Schaafsma says

Update 7/22/18: Eisner Awards 2018, just announced: Monstress took best continuing series, best publication for teens, best painter/multimedia artist (for Takeda), best cover artist (again, for Takeda) and

best writer (for Liu). Reread for summer 2018 summer comics class and enjoying it more this time.

8/5/17: "Cats are the great mystery, born in that space where shadow meets light. . . that borderland of dreams and death, and death and life. No door is closed against us. No secret can defy us. We exist in every world, every universe, every possibility. We cannot be denied, not even by the dead. We are magnificent, Ren Mormorian. We are fucking glorious."—Marjorie Liu

Liu, obviously a cat lover. This book may in part have been written for cat lovers; i.e., me, but in the way of novels, and knowing cats, not all the cats in this story are admirable. This work depicts in fact many animals—cats, foxes, tigers, humans, half humans. There's so great a range of creatures and factions and ideas that I am not completely sure, two volumes in, what is going on, but the art from Sana Takeda is amazing and the central characters and the central quest are interesting.

The main story is, as I just said, a quest: Maika Halfwolf, is in search of her mother; traveling with Kippa, a little girl with a fox tail, and Captain Ren, a necromancer cat. Maika's seeking her mother in order to expunge the monster inside her (Maika) that is literally eating her alive (or tearing her limb by limb). As I said, with a subtitle like "The Blood" and having read the bloody first volume, I was steeling myself for more blood, but this one actually focuses on blood connections, Maika and her mother, and also (maybe, maybe not) her father, a tiger pirate she meets at sea. Or is it her godfather?

One of the attractions here is that there are almost all women characters, and all conceived by women creators, I might add, which is one of the glories of comics these days. This second volume, in the way of second volumes, gives us a lot of backstory on the Monstrum and their relationship with the Empress and Maika's family.

The vibe of this work at a glance is dark and mysterious, intricate and lovely with some little manga-esque cute characters like Kippa and lovely Maika with her flowing perfect hair. Then, at a closer glance, it is all these things, yes, but also violent, even gory. The story and art are a unique blend of gorgeous beauty and violence. There's also a sort of surprising (because it is such pretty fantasy, on the surface?) amount of profanity, but this is part of the uniqueness and edginess of the series (and I've also been reading Bukowski's fiction, so I am not offended, just noting). It's this unexpected blend of pretty and violent, profane and sweet, that is the unique attraction of this series.

The best thing about this series is Sana Takeda's gorgeous design work. Look closely at the backgrounds and they often feature interesting details. The demons of *The Isle of Bones* feels just as realistically scary as Maika looks gorgeous and Kippa seems adorable.

If you enjoy magic, fantasy, half-humans, anthropomorphic animals, war, and a little horror, check out this particularly strong series.

Samantha says

4.5 stars! I didn't love this volume quite as much as volume 1, but still adored it and this story.

Jessica ✿ ⇨ Silverbow ⇨ ✿ Rabid Reads-no-more says

Updated review:

First of all, I have no idea what previously led me to give this 3.0 stars. Obviously, part of it was not rereading vol. 1 beforehand, so a lot of the details flew over my head (b/c crappy memory), but it was more than that, b/c I had tangible feelings of resentment over the "lesser quality" of this second volume.

rolls eyes at self

I still think vol. 1 was slightly better. The ending socked me in the FEELS in a way this one didn't, and (despite vol. 2's content) I connected more to the previous leg of Maika's journey, but overall . . . Definitely not a 3.0 star read.

SO.

Things that that happened that are concerning:

(view spoiler)

Questions:

(view spoiler)

Reviewed by: Rabid Reads

The second collection of MONSTRESS is centered around Maika Halfwolf retracing her mother's steps in an attempt to discover how to rid herself of the monster that lives inside of her.

Like that's going to be possible. *rolls eyes*

The journey is interesting despite its pointlessness. We learn much about Maika's family and meet her goddessfather, who is both a giant tiger and a pirate), and we see more of her glorious violence as third parties try to keep her from her goal.

BUT.

There was something missing from this volume . . . Maybe several somethings. The art, while still beautiful at times, was somehow *less* overall. The story, while informative, lacked the heart that had previously punched me in the feels.

Then there was the was the vulgarity for the sake of . . . I don't know . . . a splash of color? I'm not a prude, and I can even appreciate the creative use of four-letter words if it serves a purpose. But it didn't. And that's so boring.

I'm not ready to give up on MONSTRESS just yet though. We've already seen the greatness this team of author and artist are capable of, and the seeds planted for the future installments are promising--who is Maika's father, and how did I never think the ask about him before? Why is that adorable fox child compelled to follow after a girl who might devour her one day? And those cats . . . What is their endgame?

Questions, I have them, so eagerly await vol. 3, I will. Recommended. Ish.

Trish says

I think I'm repeating myself when saying that I'm completely stunned, both by this graphic novel's story and the artwork. But it's true. The second volume is no different from the first - impeccable.

The young Halfwolf travels further to find out what all her mother's actions MEAN, what is living inside of her and why. She is, once again, accompanied by the little fox girl and Ren (the necromancer cat). But we are introduced to new players as well, some of which are characters from Maika's past and actually mean well.

I like how the author plays on the misconceptions of good and evil simply by showcasing characters and their actions - a very powerful way of showing, rather than just telling.

The star, however, is the art. Seriously, it's like nothing I've ever seen. Usually, black and dark brown tones interspersed with brilliant colours like turquoise, red or lilac; but sometimes also brighter scenes with pastel pinks and light blues or greens; or just light greys to showcase bleakness - all used in fantastically simple or crazy detailed images (it's a shame that my pictures aren't of better quality, especially of that red, sorry).

The covers to the respective issues are gorgeous as well:

And many of the topics addressed in this volume should strike a chord with many people because there are definite parallels to our history.

In general, one can say that the art is very Asian, with nods to Japanese Kaiju even. However, we even get a European classic element, the Ferryman:

Though, admittedly, he is a bit different in this story.

This showcases that both Marjorie Liu (the author) and Sana Takeda (the artist) have taken the best of all cultures and blended all the elements together perfectly. Seriously, though the story is fantastic, I will shamelessly admit that it's the art I'm most in love with. Nevertheless, my curiosity has spiked even more than after the first volume due to some developments here and I can't wait to know how the story will progress.

Bradley says

A lot of people have raved about Monstress and I am no exception. From the brilliantly detailed and gorgeous artwork to the dark tale of a demon finding its way out of a girl who was born to carry it and destroy the world, I'm lost in my absolute-favorite iteration of dark fantasy.

My only complaint is that I can't keep reading this forever. I want to jump ahead in the future and have in my hands 10 or 20 full volumes and not just two. I want to savor them and gush over them.

You know, gush like I do about Naruto, which has a very similar epic story, or the rich external worldbuilding and lush detail of Berserk. Or the jaw-dropping monstrous quality of Hellsing. I want to place this comic up there with all the greats, to have it sit on a throne as their equals. :)

That being said, Halfwolf is freaking awesome. The demon within her is shaping up in a really fantastic rounded fashion, too. And we have pirates! Haunted islands! Corrupting magics! And enough imagination on every single page to choke an ox. The density and the smooth inclusion of it all is enough to make me cry.

So again, I want a ton of volumes! This is like reading only book one of the Wheel of Time and knowing you might have 14 enormous tomes to look forward to but you're going to have to wait a decade or two to read

them.

cry Not again.

:) But I can and will love what I have now! Vol 2 is up for '18 Hugo nom.

On the strength of the artwork alone, I would name it the winner. But we're also concerned with emotional impact, great story, and all the other things that we would call "brilliant". It's very close for me. I'd place it a close second below Saga. :)

Petrik says

Monstress returns with another great installment.

“Just because you are afraid you won't have anything tomorrow doesn't mean you shouldn't help people today.”

Monstress is the only one out of two graphic novels—the other is Elric adaptation by Julien Blondel—that I'm willing to continue until the end. I know it will still be a while until its completion but to me, the two volume in Monstress is already better than my entire experience with the six-volume I've read of Saga by Brian K. Vaughn. Not only I'm definitely rooting for this to win Goodreads Awards 2017, Monstress Volume 1 also just won the Hugo Award 2017 in the 'Best graphic novel' category, beating Saga and it's definitely for a great reason.

I've stated this in my previous review, but Marjorie Liu and Sana Takeda is truly one heck of a duo. The storyline is great, this time with more actions, character developments for Maika, and revelations for the Monstrum and the Old Gods. As usual, the artworks never failed to impress me. Without the artwork done by Sana Takeda, Monstress would be an 'okay' graphic novel at best. Here's an example of the gorgeous artwork

Once again, I highly recommend Monstress to every graphic novels reader, in my opinion, it's one of the greatest out there in the market right now.

Catriona (LittleBookOwl) says

Rating: 4.5 stars!

Really enjoying this series so far, and the illustrations are absolutely superb!
