



Monstrous

By MarcyKate Connolly

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Reminiscent of *Frankenstein* and tales by the Brothers Grimm, this debut novel stands out as a compelling, original story that has the feel of a classic.

The city of Bryre suffers under the magic of an evil wizard. Because of his curse, girls sicken and disappear without a trace, and all live in fear. No one is allowed outside after dark. Night is when Kymera comes to the city, with a cloak disguising her wings, the bolts in her neck, and her spiky tail. Her mission is to rescue the girls of Bryre. Despite Kym's caution in going secretly, a boy named Ren sees and befriends her . . . but what he knows will change her world forever.

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Monstrous By MarcyKate Connolly Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #265722 in Books
- Published on: 2015-02-10
- Released on: 2015-02-10
- Format: Deckle Edge
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.25" h x 1.33" w x 5.50" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 432 pages

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 4–7—Kymera lives with a man she calls "Father" in a hidden compound outside of Bryre, a city threatened by the dark magic of a murderous, jealous wizard. When she first awakens, Kymera slowly begins to recognize that she is different than her so-called father, Barnabas; he has no tail or wings, his skin isn't mottled, and there are no bolts on his neck. He explains that Kymera is special, one of a kind. Barnabas tells his creation that he saved her from the wizard to help the people of Bryre and liberate the girls who fall ill from the wizard's evil curse. Soon Barnabas feels that Kymera's education is complete—she knows how, where, and when to fly; how to use her stinging tail; and more—and she is sent to the city to free sickened girls. Barnabas contends that they will be found in a beautiful place called Belladona. Kymera begins to satisfy her curiosity about the people of Bryre and fragments of memory emerge. As she gradually befriends a boy named Ren and connects with Batu, a rock dragon, the truth about Barnabas, Bryre, and all those around Kymera begins to become clear. Tension builds as Kymera's innocence fades, gradually revealed through her first-person narration. Though slow to start, the action picks up and hurtles along at a breathtaking pace. Loose ends are tied up in the main, although the final battle and Kymera's fate are revealed a bit too quickly. Magic, fantastic creatures, mythology, and a bit of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* combine here for an exciting, if sometimes overlong, tale.—Maria B. Salvadore, formerly at District of Columbia Public Library

Review

“Like a literary mad scientist, MarcyKate Connolly takes bits from classic fairy tales and legends and uses them to assemble a creation that is wholly original and wonderfully strange. Subversive, bewitching, and whip-smart, *Monstrous* is a marvel of storytelling alchemy. --Anne Ursu, author of *Breadcrumbs* (.)

“Kym’s bravery shines, as she fights against the menacing forces in Bryre and also struggles to figure out where she, a self-described monster of a girl, belongs. This remarkable, absorbing debut will enchant readers. --Rebecca Behrens, author of *When Audrey Met Alice* (.)

“Pays tribute to classic fairy tales while turning the tradition on its head. A smart, ambitious adventure, led by a heroine whose differences only enhance her humanity.” --Emma Trevayne, author of *Flights and Chimes and Mysterious Times* (.)

Readers seeking a lengthy, thoughtful novel, particularly those who appreciate careful world-building, will find this worth their time. (Bulletin of the Center for Children’s Books)

A likely read-aloud that has its share of guts, blood, and grim reality within this fantasy land, *Monstrous* will keep young readers thinking about trust, good and evil, friendship and loyalty, and devotion to community. (Booklist)

Magic, fantastic creatures, mythology, and a bit of Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* combine here for an exciting...tale. (School Library Journal)

Connolly invokes fairy-tale elements with ease, and... the formidable theme of sacrifice resonates far beyond the final page. (Publishers Weekly)

“This is a dazzling and unique once-upon-a-time about a girl who is part dragon, part bird, part cat, all hero.”

--Natalie Lloyd, author of *A Snicker of Magic* (.)

From the Back Cover

The city of Bryre suffers under the magic of an evil wizard. Because of his curse, girls sicken and disappear without a trace, and Bryre's inhabitants live in fear. No one is allowed outside after dark.

Yet night is the only time that Kymera can enter this dangerous city, for she must not be seen by humans. Her father says they would not understand her wings, the bolts in her neck, or her spiky tail—they would kill her. They would not understand that she was created for a purpose: to rescue the girls of Bryre.

Despite her caution, a boy named Ren sees Kym and begins to leave a perfect red rose for her every evening. As they become friends, Kym learns that Ren knows about the missing girls, the wizard, and the evil magic that haunts Bryre.

And what he knows will change Kym's life.

Reminiscent of *Frankenstein* and the tales of the Brothers Grimm, this debut novel by MarcyKate Connolly stands out as a compelling, original story that has the feel of a classic.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Katie Phillips:

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Ann Fortune:

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