



## Baba Yaga's Assistant

*Marika McCoola , Emily Carroll (Illustrations)*

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**Baba Yaga's Assistant** Marika McCoola , Emily Carroll (Illustrations)

**ASSISTANT WANTED ASAP**

*Must have skills in hauling, obeying orders, cooking, and cleaning. Magical talent a bonus. Must be good with heights. Enter Baba Yaga's house to apply.*

Most children think twice before braving a haunted wood filled with terrifying beasties to match wits with a witch, but not Masha. Her beloved grandma taught her many things: that stories are useful, that magic is fickle, and that nothing is too difficult or too dirty to clean. The fearsome witch of folklore needs an assistant, and Masha needs an adventure. She may be clever enough to enter Baba Yaga's house on chicken legs, but within its walls, deceit is the rule. To earn her place, Masha must pass a series of tests, outfox a territorial bear, and make dinner for her host. No easy task, with children on the menu!

Wry, spooky and poignant, Marika McCoola's debut--with richly layered art by acclaimed graphic artist Emily Carroll--is a storytelling feat and a visual fest.

## Baba Yaga's Assistant Details

Date : Published August 4th 2015 by Candlewick Press

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Author : Marika McCoola , Emily Carroll (Illustrations)

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## From Reader Review Baba Yaga's Assistant for online ebook

### Jackie "the Librarian" says

A fun modern retelling of Baba Yaga stories, with just a little bit of Cinderella thrown in as the framing story. Ever since Masha's mother died, her father has been distant. Masha longs for attention, and is hurt to find out he's been spending time with others.

Seeing an ad for an assistant for the legendary witch, Baba Yaga, who Masha knows from her grandmother's stories, she decides to go where she may actually be wanted. taking with her her grandmother's matryoshka dolls and her ingenuity.

I liked the humor, I liked the multi-generational story, and I loved the pictures of Baba Yaga, her house with the chicken legs, and a cookie in the shape of a bear. A little bit scary, but not too much, this is a great way to introduce Baba Yaga to kids.

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### Lola says

Another enjoyable graphic novel aimed at a young audience. I liked how magic was used in the story and the little tricks Masha thought of to get out of trouble or complete the challenges she was given. Astute girl.

I wasn't impressed by the graphics though... which is unfortunate because I know the artist, Emily Carroll, having read Through the Woods by her, so I'm certain that she could have done a better job. Some pages looked so sketchy.

Also, It would have been a valuable element to the story if we knew more about Baba Yaga, meaning her past and the reason to why she did everything she did. But that's because I don't know this character much and wanted to be enlightened during my reading.

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### Katiria says

\*\*\* Review Baba Yaga's Assistant on Kati's Bookaholic Rambling Reviews \*\*\*

<http://katisbookaholicramblingreviews...>

I have always wanted to read book by Baba Yaga after I read the book Uprooted there are some reference about her in Uprooted, which by the way I just love Uprooted as well. So when I saw this graphic novel that has Baba Yaga in it I wanted to give it a go and read it since I am really into graphic novels lately. So I check it out from the library this book is a 3.5 star for me I didn't love it but I absolutely and thoroughly enjoyed it. My favorite part was how Baba Yaga was acting towards her would to be assistant Masha and giving her test to do and prove if she was a worthy assistant or not. And I really liked the silly and crazy test she gave and thoroughly enjoy how Masha acted on those silly and crazy test. Masa is a very clever girl which her grandmother told her plenty of Baba Yaga Stories so she is so ready for her own adventure with Baba Yaga as her future assistant if she past the test though. I absolutely love the artwork in this graphic novel it was very beautiful and creepy at the same time which is the way I like creepy novels to be like. The plotline was

very unique and new for me, which this is the only graphic novel I have read with Baba Yaga in it so it was a refreshing book for me to read. The characters I thought were well rounded and well developed but I didn't feel any connection to any of them. But the writing style was beautiful and flawless that I just love reading every word in this graphic novel. All and all while I didn't love this graphic novel I absolutely and thoroughly enjoy it more than I thought I would. I would really like to read more books by Marika McCoola and Emily Carroll in the near future.

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### **Melanie (TBR and Beyond) says**

Nice, quick read. I love stories having to do with Baba Yaga. It was def worth the read. I'm giving it 3.5 stars.

Full review to come.

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### **Bam says**

#2015-Reading-Challenge-Group--week 42: a graphic novel. A new reading experience for me...and fitting for the Halloween season! I quite enjoyed this ya tale, which brings the Baba Yaga story into the modern era. The witch advertises for an assistant and Masha, a young teenager whose home life is in upheaval, decides to apply. Masha must pass several tests to get the job and shows lots of ingenuity while learning a few of life's lessons along the way. Lovely graphics.

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### **Melissa Chung says**

I thought this was a cute story. I loved the illustrations. 4 stars!

This story is about Masha a girl who had lost her mother at an early age. She was raised by her grandmother. Her grandmother told her lots of stories of Baba Yaga and other fairy tales. In the Baba Yaga stories Masha's grandmother told her all about her adventures while she stuck with the witch.

When Masha is a (teen?) her father decides to remarry. Although the new woman seems nice, her soon to be sister is a monster. Masha decides she is going to leave and become Baba Yaga's assistant. The witch makes her pass a bunch of tests.

Don't want to give away the ending...all in all a very cute story!

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### **Miranda says**

The story fell a little flat, but I did like Baba Yaga's portrayal. Scary but not entirely unreasonable.

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## **Dov Zeller says**

This book is fairly clunky and puppy-ish (awkward? almost feels like an early draft of something) and for at least the first half, doesn't quite come together. I love, though, that it is trying to bring folklore into the present moment. And that it values the resourcefulness of the protagonist and presents Baba Yaga as a delightfully complex character.

The reason I am giving it four stars (oh rating systems, how ambivalent I feel when you are near) is because it does something that I rarely find other books doing. I am talking about the ending, which I won't go into here, but I will say, I really appreciated.

The art is fine. Not brilliant, but okay. Somehow the registers seem a bit mixed and not fully formed, but that's okay, too. It's a book in which a heroine is struggling at home, for good reason, and goes off on a sort of epic quest. It's nice to be reminded that a novel doesn't have to be perfect in any way in order to offer a very worthwhile experience. I can see a sequel to this book being quite good.

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## **Brittany says**

This book was SO WONDERFUL. I was a little skeptical, because I'm used to seeing Emily Carroll (who I LOVE) doing super creepy, usually not suitable for children, illustrations and comics. However, she does such an awesome job in this really sweet story. Her artwork is soooo beautiful, the writing is awesome. Baba Yaga is terrifying, but in an endearing kinda way. Loved seeing old folklore told in new ways.

Ps. my fav character is the house <3

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## **Vitor Martins says**

Que quadrinho lindo! Uma história com muita magia e um jeitão de fábula, contada através das ilustrações MARAVILHOSAS da Emily Carroll.

Sério. Essa ilustradora é tudo que eu queria ser um dia na minha vida haha. Muito ansioso pra ler mais coisas dela!

O roteiro da Marika McCoola também é muito bem feito, cheio de viagens entre passado, fantasia e realidade. Gostei bastante :D

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## **Cameron Chaney says**

This was pretty good. As a big fan of Emily Carroll's work on *Through the Woods*, I had high hopes for this one. And I wasn't let down by her artwork here. It is simply beautiful to look at, not to mention creepy. I give a big 5 stars to the art!

In terms of the story... well, it isn't quite on par with Emily Carroll's storytelling in *Through the Woods*,

probably because Emily didn't write this story. She just illustrated it. It just felt too short to me, and the solutions the main character came up with were way too easy and simple. There was no challenge to overcome.

Overall, I just didn't feel attached to the story, but I would still recommend this based off the stunning artwork alone.

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### **Chris says**

Disclaimer: ARC via Netgalley.

Baba Yaga is perhaps the most famous witch outside of Oz. If it, then she is tied with the White Queen from Narnia. She is old, ugly, tough as nails in boots, and doesn't take crap from anyone. All that said, to call her evil isn't quite right. She is, to a degree; I mean she has a taste for young flesh, but there is something about her that defies easy classification. Even when comparing her cannibalistic urges to the witch from "Hansel and Gretel", Baba Yaga seems less bloodthirsty, and more testing. She is a test.

This Baba Yaga tale focuses mostly on that aspect of the witch, though to call her warm and fuzzy would be incorrect. The protagonist is Masha, a young woman whose widowed father is remarrying and who seems to be more warm and fuzzy towards his new family in the offering than his own daughter. This aspect of the story will no doubt anger some parents, but while a more concrete view of her father's feelings one way or another would have been nice, it also sounds somewhat false to the story itself. Sometimes, we just don't know.

It is because the story does not follow the standard trope and plot of meddling two families that it stands out. Masha's encounters with Baba Yaga are drawn from Russian folklore and there are brief retellings of a few traditional Baba Yaga tales, but the emphasis is on a modern girl trying to, not so much find her place, but as trying to discover who she is, or to get back to who is. It is more about the connection between mothers and daughters than anything else. This is made clear with Masha's memories of her grandmother, a more prominent figure than her mother, a character who makes her presence felt though her absence.

The illustrations to this graphic novel seemed to be designed to appear to children. There is abundant use of bright colors, and during the retellings of the Russian folklore, there is almost a cartoonish feel. This is not intended to be negative criticism. The feeling is one of Disney has a love child with Anime. There are some humorous touches, in particular when Masha encounters both Baba Yaga's house and bear. These small points make good use of modern teen's reaction to some fairy tales.

Perhaps the best part of the novel is Masha herself, a young woman who is not condemned by anyone for being bad nor good. She is refreshing normal and every day.

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### **Book Riot Community says**

This wonderful graphic novel is about a young girl named Masha whose father has become very distant since her mother died. When the father announces he has a new girlfriend, who has children of her own, Masha

takes off into the woods. There she meets Baba Yaga, the Russian witch, and attempts to meet each of her challenges in order to become her assistant.

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<http://bookriot.com/category/all-the-...>

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### **Miriam says**

All this time Masha thought her father was burying his grief for his dead wife in work, so she forgave him for never spending any time at home. But when she finds out that he has actually been romancing a new woman and that she's getting not only a step-mother but a brat of a stepsister -- well, suddenly that want-ad for living in the forest with an evil witch sounds rather appealing.

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### **Raeleen Lemay says**

I really enjoyed the art and how each page had its own unique color scheme, but the story itself fell flat.

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