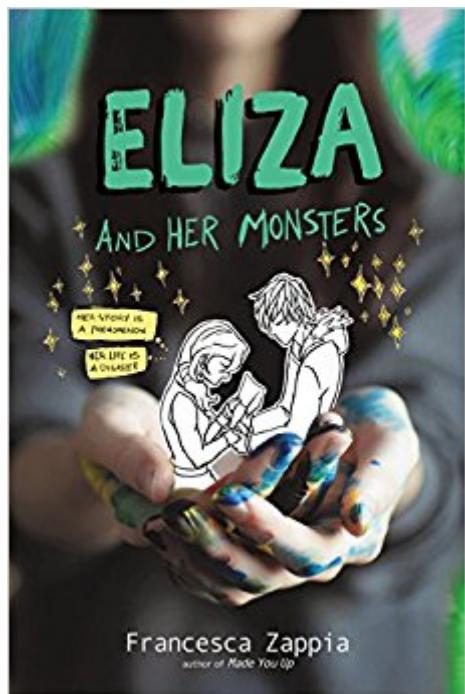


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Eliza And Her Monsters



Synopsis

Eighteen-year-old Eliza Mirk is the anonymous creator of *Monstrous Sea*, a wildly popular webcomic, but when a new boy at school tempts her to live a life offline, everything she's worked for begins to crumble. Scott Westerfeld's *Afterworlds* meets *Nimona* in this novel about art, fandom, and finding the courage to be yourself. Features illustrations by the author throughout. Perfect for readers of Rainbow Rowell's *Fangirl*, this is the second novel by the acclaimed author of *Made You Up*. In the real world, Eliza Mirk is shy, weird, smart, and friendless. Online, Eliza is LadyConstellation, the anonymous creator of a popular webcomic called *Monstrous Sea*. With millions of followers and fans throughout the world, Eliza's persona is popular. Eliza can't imagine enjoying the real world as much as she loves her digital community. Then Wallace Warland transfers to her school, and Eliza begins to wonder if a life offline might be worthwhile. But when Eliza's secret is accidentally shared with the world, everything she's built—her story, her relationship with Wallace, and even her sanity—begins to fall apart. With pages from Eliza's webcomic, as well as screenshots from Eliza's online forums, this uniquely formatted book will appeal to fans of Noelle Stevenson's *Nimona* and Rainbow Rowell's *Fangirl*.

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Customer Reviews

"A love letter to fandom, friendship, and the stories that shape us, *Eliza and her Monsters* is absolutely magical." (Marieke Nijkamp, New York Times bestselling author of *This Is Where*

It Ends) | “Creator of an astonishingly successful webcomic...Eliza finds her voice. A wrenching depiction of depression and anxiety, respectful to fandom, online-only friendship, and the benefits and dangers of internet fame.” (Kirkus Reviews (starred review)) | “In her sophomore novel, Zappia gracefully examines Eliza’s complicated struggle with anxiety, depression...peppered with detailed illustrations from Eliza’s webcomic, drawn by Zappia herself. A fervent celebration of online fandom.” (Booklist (starred review)) | “Told in a series of letters, instant messages, comics, and prose, this book focuses on relationships and identity. ...will resonate with teens who write, create art, and love fandom. ...A must-have for all YA collections, especially where geek culture is celebrated.” (School Library Journal (starred review)) | “We’ve seen variants on this premise before, but Zappia uses it to focus on introversion and isolations, panic disorders, suicidal ideation, and a preferable online existence that offers more control...Readers involved in fandoms and those who wish to understand and think about their reach are the audience for this.” (Bulletin of the Center for Children’s Books)

Francesca Zappia lives in central Indiana. When she is not writing, she’s drawing her characters, reading, or playing video games. She is also the author of *Made You Up* and *Eliza Mirk*’s favorite, *The Children of Hypnos*, a biweekly serial novel posted on Tumblr and Wattpad. www.francescazappia.com

Eliza and Her Monsters is part geeky, part adorable and one hundred percent addictive. In the vein of Rainbow Rowell’s *Fangirl*, Eliza Mirk has an online alter ego where she is known as LadyConstellation, the creator of one of the most popular webcomics called *Monstrous Sea*. Just like Cath, Eliza pours her heart into what she is passionate about. Eliza feels more comfortable talking to her online friends since in real life people think she is weird. A new guy named Wallace moves to town during senior year and it’s fate that he is also a huge *Monstrous Sea* fan. Eliza debates whether to let him know that she is the creator of the webcomic but decides to ride it out that she is just a huge fan of the series and likes to create fan art. One day Eliza’s world starts crashing down when her identity of the creator of *Monstrous Sea* gets revealed. Eliza starts to have panic attacks and her anxiety increases. She even starts seeing a therapist. Francesca Zappia even touches upon grief through Wallace and what happened to his biological father. Warning, there are slight mentions of suicide and possible depression for those who are sensitive to those topics. Francesca Zappia delves into two different types of families. The structure of each family

shapes Eliza and Wallace differently. We have Eliza's family with a mom, dad, two brothers and her dog. On the other hand, we have Wallace's family where he lives with two step parents, a half sister and a step sister. It's good for readers to know that there are different varieties of families out there and there is no such thing as the perfect family. Everyone has their share of joy and distress. Throughout the novel, Zappia includes illustrations from Eliza's webcomics which acts as a visual aid to show readers what Eliza is currently working on. Zappia also includes some of the conversation she has through an online forum. They add a more personal touch to the novel. The interaction between Eliza and Wallace is perfect. There is no instalove and their friendship grows before their love blooms. Zappia breaks down stereotypes. Wallace who enjoys football can also love writing and reading webcomics. Even one of Eliza's brothers likes theatre and choir despite the love for sports and video games. Zappia reminds readers that we cannot judge people by their looks. There is more than meets the eye. We just need to scratch under the surface a bit to see it. Readers who love fan fiction and fan art alike will devour this book! This book is made for people who like to geek out at home on forums and find themselves chatting with people online. There is no question that *Eliza and Her Monsters* is another favorite novel of mine. With its quirkiness, honesty and sense of nostalgia, I can relate to Eliza and all the people who live on that Monstrous Sea forum. *Eliza and Her Monsters* is a novel to celebrate fandom. No matter what fandom you belong to, go out there and create something meaningful. I am sure someone will find your creation to be extraordinary and you will make at least one new friend. Fandom brings people together no matter what kind of lives they are living. Fandom is where people feel like themselves despite the tough things they have to accept in their lives.

This past Tuesday, *Eliza and Her Monsters* by Francesca Zappia was released into the world, and you all need to get a copy. Now. I was an Eliza beta reader about a year and a half ago, and I finished reading my hardback yesterday. All the praise that I had already given the beta version? Oh, wow. Magnify that by a hundred. This book is fantastic. Here are my 5 reasons for why you need NEED to read it.

- 1) **Fantastic Characters**--It's a well known fact that Chessie makes amazing, multi-layered characters, the type to delight fans of all ages (cc: *Made You Up*). Her characters feel flesh and blood. They make you want to cry and scream, and you get frustrated on their behalf. Chessie's attention to detail makes her characters come alive, with their own little habits and phrases. And with such fantastic characters, you're guaranteed to be engaged in the story, even if you don't always agree with what the characters do.
- 2) **Breaking Gender Norms**--The romantic interest in this book is a hulk, former football player and now fanfiction writer and a selective mute,

with a soft voice. The main character is a girl with greasy hair and social anxiety, and she's this super popular creator of a webcomic. Society tends to portray female creators as being Nice, Polite Women - women need to comprise, to smile more often, etc. Here, we have another story to rival that. And many of the side characters also break gender norms. I don't know about you, but I'm very pleased to have a story where the characters aren't in these flat cardboard boxes of what we expect (e.g., alpha male). This also makes the characters feel more real to me.3) The Unique Formatting--You can look at several of the Goodreads reviews that mention the photos - here, for instance. Or just at look at the EpicReads post of the first two chapters. You can see the inclusion of the Monstrous Sea webcomic pages, and the prose transcription beneath. You can see private messages between the characters - the moderators of the webcomic and Eliza, the romantic interest and Eliza. You can see forum interactions and forum profiles. Most of the YA books out right now don't have this amount of layering within their stories. Horror YA sometimes includes pictures, and other fandom related books might have some stories, some fanfiction--not to this extent, not to this level of metaness. See point below.4) Unlike Anything Else You've Read--This book has been compared to Fangirl and Afterworlds and Nimona, because every book needs to be compared to something, so you have an idea of its marketing. It's a fact of life that you build on schemas that people already have of the world. But this book is unlike anything else that you've read. You only get Cath's fanfiction in Fangirl, some of the story from the main character in Afterworlds. Nimona started off as a comic. None of these is quite the same as Eliza and Her Monsters. Here, you get the main character's creation and see how she interacts with her fans, and you see how fanfic writers interact with the creator and the fandom. You also get to hear about a series of books that she loves, too. Chessie has posted this online - the Children of Hypnos story. The main character has a drive to create after the fandom that she loves no longer exists. You have access to that story too. There's this amazing level of metaness in this story that ties so well into the themes of creation, fandoms, etc. I repeat: unlike anything else you've read.5) So Easy to Relate to--If you're reading this book, there is a good likelihood that you will relate to SOMETHING in this book. Whether it's the main character's social anxiety, the need to create, the desire to interact with the fandom, or just loving how the fandom interacts-- there is something for everyone. And you know that Chessie has interacted with or been a part of fandoms, because it shows in her writing. It shows in how fandoms a portrayed. Marieke Nijkamp wrote the blurb, "A love letter to fandom, friendship, and the stories that shape us, Eliza and Her Monsters is absolutely magical." Yes, yes, yes. A love letter to fandom and friendship and stories. Yes. 100% true. READ THIS BOOK!PS - This wonderful novel got a starred review from Kirkus, Publisher's Weekly, Booklist, and School Library Journal.PPS - Here is

my original pre-review: I read a manuscript of this book about one year ago to date. If you like Made You Up, you will most certainly love Eliza! Chessie brings back her trademark endearing humor in another wonderful mix of adorable romance, quirky characters, and multilayered plotting (plus the cool formatting here, which is typically reserved for YA horror, but hey, Eliza is just that awesome). I would also recommend this book to fans of Fangirl and Afterworlds.

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