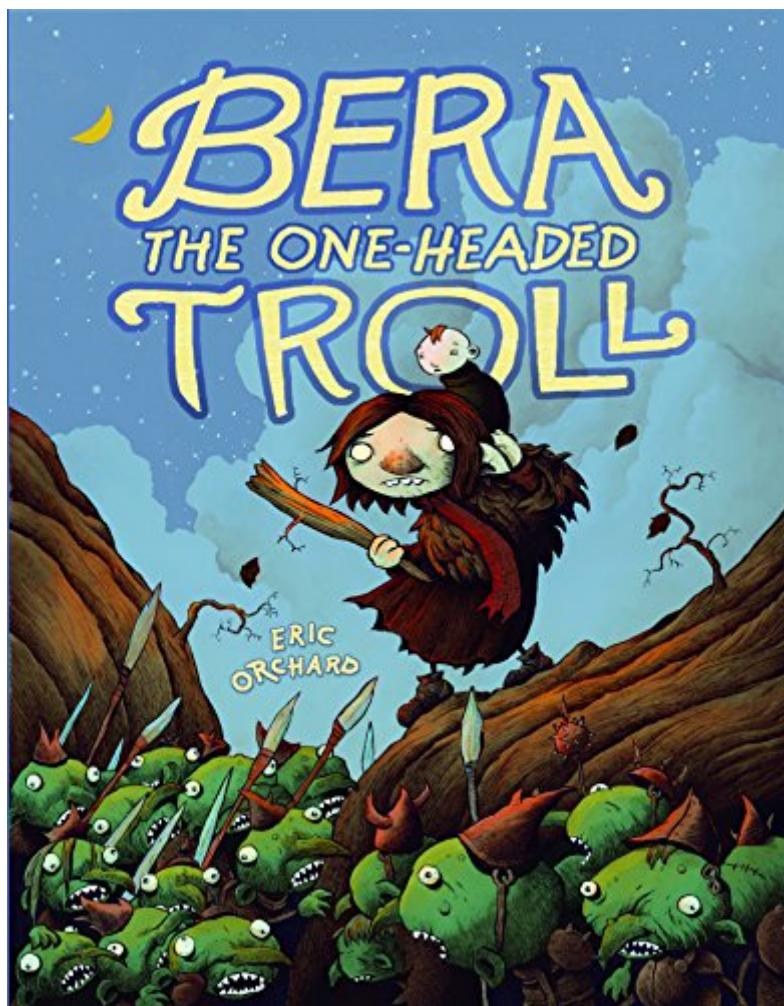


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# Bera The One-Headed Troll



## **Synopsis**

Bera doesn't ask for much in life. She's a solitary, humble troll, tending her island pumpkin patch in cheerful isolation. She isn't looking for any trouble. But when trouble comes to find her, it comes in spades. A human baby has arrived in the realm of the trolls, and nobody knows where it came from, but Bera seems to be the only person who doesn't want it dead. There's nothing to it but to return the adorable little thing to its parents. Like it or not, Bera's gone and found herself a quest. From noted picture book illustrator and graphic novelist (Maddy Kettle) Eric Orchard comes *Bera the One-Headed Troll*, a delightful new fantasy adventure with all the sweetness, spookiness, and satisfaction of your favorite childhood bedtime story.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

A beautiful and heartwarming story, the artwork perfectly fitting the tone. Eric Orchard manages to capture the mythological trolls in a way I have never seen before, adhering to the most important ideas of the fantasy race without being a slave to the unimportant ideas. I bought this book because it was about Trolls, and I got far more out of the book than I had anticipated. The book has themes of loneliness, family, and raises a question of what it means to be a hero and who can be a

hero. And it was thoroughly beautiful, from front to back.

This is a wonderful book! I purchased it as a gift, and it has quickly become a favorite. I highly recommend, the artwork is amazing and the story will touch your heart.

Loved this book. It's full of magic and trolls, darkness and hope. I've already lent it to two other people. My nephew read it in one sitting. Would definitely recommend to anyone who likes fables.

The story was too "baby-ish" for my 9-year old daughter and she says the artwork was rather dark, menacing, depressing.

We did not really enjoy this book as much as I hoped. I read it with my first grader, maybe she was too young and I was too old. Not sure. Let me start with what I did like. I liked that it was a bit of an epic adventure although as it turns out, a futile one. Perhaps what is important is having the adventure itself so I am ok with that really. One the way Berra looks for 3 famous troll heros to help her try to find the parents of the human baby she found. The first one is old and forgetful now. The second turned out to never have been a hero at all. Duke Otig is actually my favorite aspect of the book. He is a two-headed troll who is now working for the evil witch Cloote. We find out that he had a ghost writer writing about his brave, heroic, albeit untrue, exploits and turning him into a renowned hero. I think this is a good reminder to be careful whom we idolize and to be careful not to believe everything the media may feed us. Like I said, that lesson was the most powerful aspect of the story. Berra ends up getting away from a Duke Otig and finds one last, but also quite aged, hero. Berra ends up triumphing over the witch with the help of her friends when she realizes that the witch herself is not powerful but rather it's the tools the witch has stolen from others that gives her power. Berra and her friends strip Cloote of those tools and hence strip Cloote of her power. Another good lesson there. Hmmm, maybe I liked this book more than I realized at first! In the end Berra realizes the human village is not a safe place for the baby so Berra takes her home to her tiny island. The end. Yea, the end did not work for me. If ever a children's book needed an epilogue this is it. One of the major sticking points keeping me from enjoying the book is the lack of world building. I did not understand all the characters or how they inter-related. I had other nagging questions. Why did the king of the trolls value pumpkins so much? Why was the human baby there without her parents in the first place? What happened to her parents? Why did Cloote get kicked out of the troll king's court? Questions, questions... The illustrations were fairly monochromatic and slightly gruesome

looking. It was extremely hard for me to tell the trolls from the goblins from the witch from the shadow wolves, etc. The good guys and bad guys looked alike although perhaps that was the point. Another hmm, I did not get while reading the book. Well, I think if you enjoy graphic novels and trolls and such you might like this book. Despite everything we would probably have liked it much better if it just had more closure at the end.

Very cute! I really enjoyed this children's fantasy. A pumpkin gardening troll leaves her tiny island home to save a human baby from a witch who wants to put it in a recipe. Along the way, Bera, the troll, meets all kinds of creatures, good and bad, as she explores the big wide world. However, she learns there's no place like home and that one doesn't need a hero to save the day but one can do it themselves with just some effort. I loved the artwork. Cute, creepy creatures and wonderful shades of brown keep it atmospheric.

Brought to you by OBS Reviewer ScottBera The One Headed Troll is my fan pick of the year in graphic novels so far. When the evil wizard Cloote loses a baby she has stolen, and wants back badly, it's up to a humble pumpkin grower Bera, a one headed troll (they can have up to three I gather), to begin an epic journey away from her remote island to bring it back to its family. An epic adventure is in the works, takes Bera to meet heroes of ancient times, in her pursuit to outwit Cloote. A charming tale, that was good until the end, Bera The One Headed Troll belies Eric Orchard's somber writing, and skillful European styled art. The writing was astounding for a work of 128 pages. The pacing was spot on and very little of the words were wasted. Told through expository text with dialogue at key points, Orchard weaves the Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey into the text with spectacular results. Monsters, talking rats, hedgehog wizards and, of course, trolls swirl together into a melting pot of speculative fiction. Each encounter serves an overall purpose, and those are the key points touched upon. A Tolkienesque take on trolls (such as turning to stone in the sunlight) and an almost Lord of the Rings like adventure, Bera's quest draws the reader into its web, and captivates one with its magic. Dialogue is handled well, with the unworldly Bera finding elderly heroes who are hundreds of years old. Even her pet owl has a voice that is as distinctive as any of the others. It truly synthesizes dialogue and exposition into an almost short work of fiction, let alone a graphic novel. The art is stylized and mesmerizing, never missing a beat of the overall story. Dark and foreboding, forests loom, swamps take on a frightening new meaning, and towers have never looked so ominous. The sweeping vistas and the manner in which Orchard draws the characters

and their environs is truly grandiose. The fine line work and attention to the bizarre creations and creatures that inhabit Bera's world are given character and life. Muted coloring makes the fantastic eerie, and the overall effect reflects the perilous journey of the protagonists. Panels are cleanly laid out, word balloons guide, and thus gives the art that much more of a presence. It's the art and story combined that give Bera The One Headed Troll its allure, and captivation of its audience. Either holds its own but together is what makes this graphic novel magical. The plot is a weaving maze of uncertainty, as we are pulled with Bera from her Pumpkin patch into the areas she only knows about from maps hundreds of years old. Like Frodo stepping out of the Shire, the reader is compelled to follow these adventurers on their noble quest. Through the well placed hooks and baits, one becomes a part of the tale, as most of the poignant dialogue is taken up by other characters in the true epic format. For such a short work, Bera The One Headed Troll, packs a lot into it and deserves a good second reading to catch the subtle nuances of the story. For fans of Tolkien, heroic adventure and European artwork to a well told story, Bera The One Headed Troll is sure to delight. Playing on the hero's journey, there is something for anyone from tweenies to adults to enjoy. It's a remarkable work that you'll read over and deserves a place on your shelf.\*OBS would like to thank the publisher for supplying a free copy of this title in exchange for an honest review\*

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