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Lazarus Volume 5



Synopsis

The fifth collection of the critically-acclaimed New York Times bestselling series by Eisner winners Michael Lark and Greg Rucka plunges the Sixteen Families into chaos as the world goes to war. But Forever Carlyle, the Lazarus of the Carlyle Family, has been sidelined, and her loyalties are now in question as she struggles to come to terms with who and what she is. To win her trust, her sister Johanna must reveal the Family's most closely-guarded secret – the truth of Forever Carlyle. Collects issues 22 through 26.

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Customer Reviews

A gripping continuance of this epic dystopian story. These are some of Rucka's best characters since 'Queen & Country'. This is bound to be made into a series someday.

I am hooked on this series,keep them coming Mr Rucka et al.Arrived safely Thank you

Follow story line religiously

I got hooked on Lazarus some time ago and have always looked forward to each new volume, and this fifth one - written by Greg Rucka with pencils and inks by Michael Lark and colors by Santi Arcas - just keeps raising the already considerable levels of intensity and intrigue. What I really like about Rucka and Lark's work is that they keep adding layers of details to give depth and complexity

to the world they've created and to the characters who inhabit it, making Lazarus truly one of the best dystopic graphic novel series being written today. Note: for those unfamiliar with the series and who have not read the previous volumes, I have added a section below on the background of the world of Lazarus. If you're new to the world of Lazarus, I would suggest reading that before reading the rest of my review of this, the fifth and newest volume in the series. This volume - Cull - picks up what feels like right after the previous volume, Poison, which ended with Michael Barrett having found a cure for Malcolm Carlyle, the head of Family Carlyle who had been treacherously poisoned by Jakob Hock, the head of Family Hock; with Johanna Carlyle now acting-head-of-family while Malcolm recovers after her brother Stephen proved to be not up to the task; with Forever Carlyle, the Lazarus of Family Carlyle, having been recovered - barely alive and severely damaged - after the costly but ultimately successful Battle of Duluth; and with the surprise revelation that there is a second Forever Carlyle, this one eleven years old, who knows nothing of the first's existence. Cull continues the plotlines on a number of fronts, the principal two being the war between the Carlyle Alliance and the Hock Coalition, and the intrigues going on behind the scenes within the Carlyle Family. Most, though not all (Family heads Jakob Hock and Edgar Morray are off-stage this time around) of the characters from the previous volumes are present. And at least one new character has been added - Sere Cooper, the most popular anchor of Carlyle's entertainment/news-programming network, who'll do anything to get a hot story that might lead to further recognition and advancement. But the focus is really on the Lazari in this volume. On the domestic front where Forever is learning for the first time the truth about her origins. And on the war front where a number of Lazari are committed to the fight. A fight that takes some very grim turns for all involved.

Some background on the world of Lazarus: For anyone unfamiliar with this series, there are a lot of dystopias these days, both in literature and in the comics, but the Lazarus series in my opinion has put forward one of the most interesting and well thought out, taking some current trends and extrapolating them into the future and then creating a social order based on the logical outcome. Set in a future that feels like it might be sixty to seventy years or so from now, the dystopia of Rucka and Lark's creation is the apparent result of some global economic and governmental collapse, complicated by an agriculturally-challenged environment where control of genetically-modified seed strains (think Monsanto) is one of the highest mechanisms of power. Society (in what feels like a substantially reduced population) consists of three classes: Family, Serfs and Waste. Family is restricted to a tiny elite - the top 1% of 1% of 1% - a handful of individuals who wield absolute power over a domain, with different Families controlling different domains. Family Carlyle, the central one in the story line, has a domain that apparently extends

from the West Coast to the Mississippi River. Family Morray's domain lies to the south, making up what used to be Mexico and Central America. Families Bittner and Hock's domains lie to the north and to the east. Besides wielding total control, Family also have the very best of everything, including access to advanced medical technology. In the particular case of Family Carlyle, their technology allows them greatly increased life-spans, such that Family members who look to be in their 20's may actually be in their 60's, those in their 30's may be in their 90's and so on. Under Family you have Serfs - the maybe 1 in 10 (or more often, 1 in 100) individuals who have some skill or talent or potential that the Family finds useful or necessary. Unlike their medieval namesakes, Serfs in this dystopia are not just agricultural workers but pretty much everyone who serves Family, from domestic servants and soldiers all the way up to medical professionals and scientists. The higher up the service ladder you are, the better life you and your family have. For as long as Family deems you useful and loyal anyway. Everyone else in society - the remaining 95 to 98% of the people in a domain - are considered Waste. Waste - if they're properly registered as legal residents of the domain - are provided a minimum level of subsistence and little else. The most Waste can aspire to - beyond not dying of starvation, disease, natural disaster or just outright being killed - is to be found useful enough at some point to be 'lifted' to Serf. The most Serf can aspire to, beyond moving up the Family service ladder, is not reverting back to Waste. And not being killed if they inadvertently cross some Family line. Nobody moves up to becoming Family. Family are born, not made. Or so it would seem. To maintain their control over their territory, both internally and against external threats, every family has its own private armed force. At the pinnacle of that armed force, every Family has a Lazarus, a member of the Family with special highly advanced bio-tech enhancements and rigorous training that make them not only extremely deadly but also virtually impossible to kill. The chief functions of a Lazarus are to protect the Family against any and all threats, and to enforce the Family's rule. To this end, they are conditioned from early childhood both psychologically and biologically to exhibit unquestioning loyalty to Family. Enter Forever Carlyle. Forever Carlyle is the Lazarus of Family Carlyle. She is the youngest of the five Carlyle siblings, and she is very, very good at her job. She is also increasingly conflicted about some of the things she is called on to do, which we see in the opening scene of the first volume where she must investigate an attack by another Family on one of the Carlyle's precious seed storage facilities. Adding to her problems is the fact that Family Carlyle is riven internally by factions and plots among the siblings, all of whom seem to be aware of something that Forever has been kept ignorant of, a secret kept so intensely that her continued existence appears to depend on her never learning of it. Some reviewers have commented about the slow pace, but Rucka and Lark know what they're doing here.

The reason things are proceeding somewhat slowly is because they're engaged in some first-class world-building here, i.e. showing us in intimate episodic detail how things are in this near-future world, building up the reality that the story takes place in. This is important because the characters are very much a part of this world, and their natures are very much determined by who they are in this world, be they Family, Serf or Waste. Or a Lazarus, as Forever happens to be. The result is that you get a disturbing but highly believable world with characters that you can believe inhabit this world. Highly, highly recommended.

It's a post-apocalyptic setting, sometime in the late 21st or early 22nd century. The world is divided up among families (not nations, nor corporations). Forever is the Carlyle Lazarus. The Carlyles rule the Western half of the US. They are one of the principal families, and they and their allies are fighting a collection of other families. Each family has a Lazarus, which is a super-powered agent that serves them (why not more than one...that is a question that hasn't been answered). We are five volumes in, and still don't know what caused the world to spin out like this, how the families gained power, or why they are fighting (though really, the reason countries fight is usually over money/trade and/or resources). We are just following Forever around as she figures out her own origins (we still don't know) and question her own family (really starting this volume). She's a great female lead. Solid series. I'll keep reading.

This volume deals with Forever Carlyle and her role in the family's attempt to resurrect their position. She finds out about her origin and begins to plot. There's a lot of bloody action as well in the European zone as the Lazari clash. Well-written and illustrated, it is a treat and I'd recommend it any comic book lover. Highly enjoyable and I look forward to the next instalment.

The French version of this book is available and sold since April 29. I wonder why the US book is published after. Someone knows?

Can I pre-order every volume ever until I'm in the cold cold ground? Because that's what I want to do. Where's the "buy it until death" button? Everything about this series is brilliant; the writing, the art, the lettering, the colors. I'm not saying it's my favorite graphic novel of all time oh wait that's exactly what I'm saying. Here's hoping this gets the HBO treatment.

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