

Science Fiction -- Sidekicks

Akiko

Vol. 1: ISBN: 1579890423

by Mark Crilley

2002

Age Level: 7 and up

From the outside, Akiko is certainly a normal 4th grader. She goes to school, plays with her friends, and helps out when she can. Of course, her friends happen to be aliens from the planet Smoo, and by helping out, she is put in charge of a rescue mission to save the kidnapped Crown Prince from the clutches of the evil Alia Rellapor. Along for the ride are her frequent companions, the fastidious Beeba, and the reckless but brave Spuckler. From the moment she takes off from her home (a robot replica takes her place), Akiko and her friends careen from clue to clue and uncharted territory on the trail of the Prince. Well, they meant to be on the trail of the Prince, but are waylaid but problems with their ship, then a gigantic sea creature, and then little tiny people. You'll see. This is the first in 4 volumes of graphic novels following Akiko's adventures, but there were also 4 books (yes, actual books!) before this series. I recommend you read them all!

review by [Robin](#)

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Sigil: Mark of Power

ISBN: 1931484015

by Barbara Kesel

Art by Scott Eaton, Andrew Hennessy, and Wil Quitana

CrossGen 2002

Age Level: 9 and up

Samandahl Rey doesn't ask much of life. All he wants is to enjoy a night out of gaming, the companionship of his best friend and partner, the sassy Roiya Sintor, and the command of his own ship in the intergalactic star field he calls home. What he gets, however, is a strange and powerful mark, his best friend killed in an ambush, and the power to detonate a mysterious large-scale weapon in an outpouring of grief. Due to his hasty retreat from the scene of the crime, strangers are forced to flee into his crew, his beloved ship is left hanging on by a thread, and he's retreating from every friend and foe in the galaxy, all of whom want to know what that weapon was. Sam is an ex-military, no-nonsense sort of guy. Enemies, comrades, battle, strategy, loyalty – all these things he understands. Magical powers, the mysterious reappearance of Roiya, and blinking into other worlds, he's not so comfortable with. An excellent straight sci-fi title from the consistently polished CrossGen universe, **Sigil** contains all the humor and action of classics of the genre, and the artwork lives up to CrossGen's high standards.

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Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind

box set, 4 volumes: ISBN: 1569313482
by Hayao Miyazaki
Viz Communications 1995
Age Level: 9 and up

Often mentioned in favorable comparison to the anime film **Princess Mononoke** and authored by one of the most loved manga authors in Japan, **Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind** combines heart-thumping battle action with struggling for honor and a b ecological message. Nausicaa is a passionate defender of the natural world on a ravaged Earth where plant spores and massive insects roam wild and few humans survive in pockets of safety. Intrigue between the ruling family's brother and sister drag Nausicaa into the politics which may mean the end of humanity unless she can find a way to take control.

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