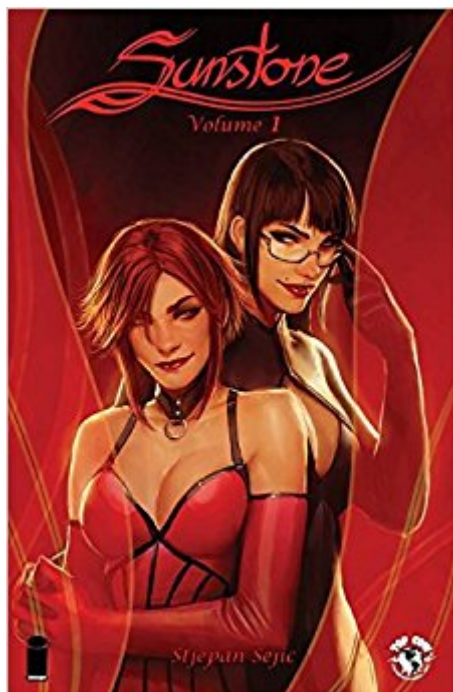


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Sunstone Volume 1



Synopsis

Two women deal with modern themes of sex, relationships, and fetishism in this erotic romantic comedy. So beware all who enter, because, to quote a few hundred thousand readers on DeviantArt: "I'm not into BDSM...but this story...I get it."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a sexual BDSM comic about a pair of lesbian lovers. Now that we've gotten that out of the way, let's move on to the REAL value of this comic: it is possibly one of the best pieces of romantic fiction ever to be published, comic or not. What *Fifty Shades of Gray* poorly and sloppily tries to convey in staggering, misinterpreted gestures, this comic parades in a brilliant, almost harmonic display of art, story, and genuinely relatable and realistic characters. The narration is personal and engaging, the flow of the plot and the various focus on every character that makes EVERY ONE OF THEM feel like genuine, full on protagonists in their own rights, and the actual, FACTUAL descriptions and depictions of BDSM in the bedroom, the community, and inter-personal relationships overrides the smear of misleading, garbled smut of *Fifty Shades of Gray* at LEAST a hundred times over. Stjepan Sejic is one of the most exceptional artists in the comic industry today, and his talent as an artist is only matched by his talent as a storyteller. Despite coming from material created as little more than drawing exercises and costume designs, the characters, story and world all came together in a rush of imagination that he couldn't hold back, and that numerous fans including myself clamored at him to push further into a fully realized story. And he does not

disappoint. If you read *Fifty Shades of Gray*, or saw the movie, or even just have been immersed in the pop culture aftershocks of it, READ THIS COMIC. It will not only clear up every single misconception and mistake made by it in terms of the reality of BDSM, but it will make it look like a child's rushed English assignment compared to Tolkien or JK Rowling. The art alone is enough to make it exceptional, but the story and characters are some of the best in any form of modern fiction today. READ THIS COMIC. YOU WILL NOT REGRET IT.

It's hard to recommend something that could be described as pornographic in nature (although this is more focused on story and characters with eroticism being an element of that, rather than it being what you should be reading the story for). *Sunstone* is, so far, very much a good enough read that I feel compelled to give some incentive for people to pick this up. Before I say anything else, though, I need to clarify one thing about the nature of this comic: there is sex in it, explicit sex, but the pacing and writing is always focused on the characters themselves. The sex scenes only last long enough to get the writer's point across about what's happened; it's neither rushed to a conclusion nor drawn out for the duration of the act as it would be in an actual porn comic. There are two explicit scenes in the book, toward the middle, and quite a lot of suggestive stuff sprinkled through the rest of the book, but one of the "scenes" lasts about three pages, and the first, while longer, "fades to black" after it's done doing what it needs to do for the story. The story itself, which is focused on two women--Lisa and Ally--who have secret BDSM preferences and find each other online, is primarily about the human element. This isn't a story that glorifies actual domination (like *Fifty Shades of Gray* does), this is a story about what the narrator herself calls "sexual nerds," and about the personal trust and growing connection between these two women. BDSM, usually only portrayed in terms of pure pornographic fetish elsewhere, is shown in a very accurate light here. The awkward nerves of two partners taking the leap together for the first time, the worry that one might go too far, and yes, even the sheer ridiculous kink of it, is all touched on in this story. What makes it really go is that the characters are just written so well. You don't actually need to buy the comic to sample this story. Large chunks of it are available for free reading on DeviantArt--posted by the author himself under the screen name Shiniez, so it's easy to sample the story and artwork before throwing any money at all at it. It should be noted that the author lives in another country (the exact one escapes me at the moment), so English is not their first language and the dialogue is thus rather clumsy grammatically in these free pages. This is not the case in the published graphic novel; editing has greatly corrected and smoothed out the grammar issues, with only very rare lines still sounding slightly awkward in their wording. One last thing I should mention is that the graphic novel itself is

rather thin and a little less than a third of its page count is dedicated to extra stuff--some additional artwork, and a three-or-four-page comic short about the author's own creative blundering into writing this story at the end of a long creative burnout. Charming stuff, but do not expect Sunstone volumes to be omnibus-length. It was long enough to feel worth the ten bucks I payed, but at a guess I'd put it at the length of five or six monthly comic-book issues. There are no page numbers, so I can't give an exact page-count. That said, definitely worth it. I believe so, anyway.

A lot of great reviews have already been written on this work so I'll keep this short and point out my impressions as a non-BDSM lesbian who has triggers around exploitive porn. First off, is it exploitive? No. Does a male author/illustrator somehow adversely impact the depiction of a f/f relationship? No. Is this in the fantasy genre (i.e. vampires, demons, unicorns, dragons)? No. The cover looks like it may be but this is a contemporary romance in our everyday world. Is BDSM well represented? I think so... At least I thought it did a good job of normalizing the desires from both the domme and sub perspectives, where the kink aspect of their sexuality was innate in both characters from early on in their lives. It didn't seem fetishized or anything. Are the characters lesbian? No. It seems both characters are heterosexual and this is their first time with another woman... so, I guess, ultimately bisexual. If you've read 'Owning Regina' by Lorelei Elstrom it has a similar take where the kink (and good partner match) takes precedence as a sexual orientation in itself over the actual gender/sex of the partner. Does the lack of woman on woman experience or bisexuality make the f/f aspect any less sincere? No. Is there nudity? Yes. Is it erotic? For some maybe. Is this a romance? Yes. It actually ends up being a fluffy and sweet romance between Ally and Lisa. Are the characters good? Yep. Despite this seeming to be only about BDSM, the author spent time showing these characters in their friendship (the non-BDSM aspect) vs them in their BDSM play and also independent of each other in their own lives. Ally, though the domme, is a rather geeky gamer type person while Lisa, the sub, actually shows some dominance outside of the BDSM. Overall, with this read, we get gorgeous artwork and a sweet romance with a nice dose of humor that also happens to have graphic depictions of Lisa and Ally's sexual relationship. Recommend? Yes.

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