



Laddertop, Volume 1

Orson Scott Card , Emily Janice Card , Honoel A. Ibardolaza

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An original science fiction manga by the bestselling author of *Ender's Game* and his daughter

Twenty-five years ago, the alien Givers came to Earth. They gave the human race the greatest technology ever seen— four giant towers known as Ladders that rise 36,000 miles into space and culminate in space stations that power the entire planet. Then, for reasons unknown, the Givers disappeared. Due to the unique alien construction of the Laddertop space stations, only a skilled crew of children can perform the maintenance necessary to keep the stations up and running.

Back on Earth, competition is fierce to enter Laddertop Academy. It is an honor few students will achieve. Robbi and Azure, two eleven-year-old girls who are the best of friends, are candidates for the Academy. They will become entangled in a dangerous mystery that may help them solve the riddle of the Givers...if it doesn't destroy the Earth first!

Laddertop, Volume 1 Details

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From Reader Review Laddertop, Volume 1 for online ebook

Wandering Librarians says

When the Givers came to Earth, they made a gift of four towers that stretch from Earth to space stations. These space stations provide power for the whole world. Then the Givers disappeared. The towers were built in such a way that the only people who can fit to maintain them are children. Competition to get into Laddertop Academy is intense, and of the few who are invited, even fewer will make it to space. Robbie and her friend Azure have both been accepted to the Academy, but only one of them will make it in to space.

Here's the thing, at this point, when I have heard Orson Scott Card speak at a number of events and on panels, I have such a strong aversion to him as a person that when I read something by him that I quite like I think, "That was good. Stupid Orson Scott Card." I wish he would never talk again and just write us books that we will surely enjoy. Is that too much to ask?

So the graphic novel: I quite enjoyed it (stupid Orson Scott Card). A whole bunch of awesome girl characters that are all different from each other. Azure has a short temper and a strong drive to succeed. She will do whatever she has to to achieve her dreams of going in to space and she's a natural leader. Robbie is much quieter and calmer. There are hints of an unstable home life. She is the hero of the story, and seems to have been chosen by the Givers for some purpose. There's also Nine, who's super smart but not the best at making friends. It's not totally clear what's going on with her, but she definitely knows something that she isn't telling.

This is only the first volume, so there have been many characters introduced and many things hinted at that haven't been fully explained or explored yet. For instance, being chosen for Laddertop was looked on as such an important honor, but it seems that once the kids actually get there they're looked down on as menial workers. There's a lot of mystery surrounding the selection process, and why the Givers didn't explain how anything worked. It seems people have just been blindly following what the Givers told them to do for the past 25 years, and no one has ever questioned why it has to be done that way.

The art is black and white with clear manga influences. It's all very cute, all big eyes and long eyelashes. It's quite clear the characters we don't like, because they are lacking the wide open eyes.

I will look for the next volume. I'd like to see where this series goes

Darcy Roar says

This just did not hit it for me. The relatively similar plot makes it difficult to stop comparisons between this and the Ender series (and Laddertop does not appear favorably in those comparisons). It just does not have much going on in this volume, but to be fair, space weirdness does need a fair bit of set-up. The characters bounce all over too in a way that just does not read well. Characters with complex emotions seem flighty when all we see is them shifting from furiously upset to bouncy happy in a single page. It has good ideas, but it seems to be fighting the format with every panel. I will keep watching this one to see if it fills out, but I can't shake the feeling this story would be better served in traditional novel format.

Dan says

I listened to the audiobook version of this a year ago without realizing the book version was a comic. I think I liked the audiobook better, and I think parts of it made more sense with the extra narrative explanation in that version. As lots of reviews note, this has a lot of material that's similar to Ender's Game and just generally stupider here. It's obviously targeted to younger readers, which is fine, but I'd generally recommend almost every other Orson Scott Card book over this one.

Kandice says

I'm not sure if this deserves a great rating for Card's depiction of kick ass girls, or a low rating for the predictability.

Nothing original.

Jim says

I expected more from Card. Sure, this is for kids, but they'd have to be fairly dumb ones not to see all the holes. It was an interesting premise that was poorly executed. Well read, though. I won't bother with part 2.

Kailey (BooksforMKs) says

Robbi and Azure are chosen from among their classmates to train for Laddertop Academy, a space station that hires gifted children to do maintenance work in the miles of tiny service tunnels. Laddertop space station was a gift from an alien race, but the aliens disappeared soon after. When Robbi begins her training, she finds out that Laddertop holds mysteries and enigmas that could destroy Earth or save it.

Robbi and Azure are excellent characters, with Azure providing some humor and Robbi being the serious-minded protagonist.

I really liked the interaction between all the children in training. They poke fun at each other, make friends and sometimes enemies, but it's never boring!

The world building is very intriguing! The Laddertop space station is set up in such a unique way, and the humans who run it don't really understand what it is capable of. I'm dying to know what those aliens are up to, and what role Robbi will play in their plans!

I really need to get my hands on the 2nd volume!

Lisa says

(originally reviewed on starmetal oak book blog)

I feel like it will be hard to review this book because it's just the beginning of a larger story. For a first volume, though, I enjoyed it and found it to be interesting enough to pursue.

The story, at least from what I hear (I never read *Ender's Game*), is similar to that book in that it has a young protagonist that goes into training in space. In this case it's a girl named Roberta ("Robbi") and the story follows how she is accepted to a school called Laddertop Academy. There's a large cast of characters most of which are classmates of Robbi.

What I enjoyed most about Laddertop is the world building. There's a healthy plot of mystery and science fiction surrounding the The Givers, aliens who gave humans technology to go into space and progress in many things. Robbi seems to be at the heart of this when she passes a scan that all students must do (this was installed by The Givers and no one really knows what it's scanning) in order to go up to Laddertop. Robbi's scan results are unusual and this furthers the idea that something else is going on.

I would recommend this if you're interested in a new manga centered around science fiction school life. I feel like I should hold off a little until the next volumes to make a firm decision on this story, since volume one is just the beginning. It didn't start off with a bang, but there is a lot of potential here for a good series. As for the art, I thought it was great and held a lot of detail.

Review copy of this book was provided by the publisher.

John says

For 30 min. I perused
A half hour later I was amused

seak says

Laddertop, Volume 1 by Orson Scott Card and Emily Janice Card

3.0 to 3.5 stars

(A night at the Card's)

(Emily walks in to talk to her Uncle Orson, she's got big plans)

OSC: (startled) Oh, hi Emily. What are you doing here so early?

EJC: (black sheep of the family doesn't begin to explain her) Hi Unkie Orson, I had this great idea for a new book I want to write, but I think I need your help and your connections of course.

OSC: You know I'd do anything for family, what's the pitch?

EJC: So, I was thinking of having this school, and, well, it's only for kids...oh and it's in space...

OSC: Umm...I don't know if you've ever read my most fam-

EJC: ...and the kids in this school are really smart and they're a select group...

OSC: I really think you should look at the things I've already pub-

EJC: ...and we would definitely have to have an antigravity training scene or two and awesome space suits, oh, and aliens...

OSC: Have you even been paying attention to my career-

EJC: ...and the lead characters will be two girls and it will all be done as a manga.

OSC: Oh, I've never done anything like this before. Let's go with it, I'll call Tor.

Mathew Carruthers says

Interesting story with similarities to the Ender saga. Lighter in tone, perhaps, but still a kids in space story. These kids in space are not being trained as a combat force, but rather to maintain a power grid - I have the sneaking suspicion, though, that there is much more to the story than what I can glean from volume 1. I look forward to reading the next installment.

Hamster says

Don't usually read manga, but I made an exception for Card.

I enjoyed the story but was bugged that it didn't have anything resembling an ending. Is that how all mangas are? Art was good but would've preferred color. In b&w all the characters start to look that same after a while.

The ending felt a little rushed and disjointed. Still nothing resembling a plot.

It worries me slightly that there is only 1? more book published in the series. Was it a total flop? I find myself in the "meh" category.

Kevin Xu says

This book is exactly the reason why I hate all of his works after Shadow of the Giant. Why would he be involved in a project like this, even if it is to help of a family memeber. Does he not know it is ripping the exact premise from his masterpiece, Ender's Game. If someone came to me with a idea similar to one of my works, I would throw the person out the door, and never speak or see him or her ever again. I just think is willing to publishing anything to appeal to the masses in order to make money anyway possible. I will never spent any money on any of his new books at all anymore. He has really disappointed me. Shame on you Orson Scott Card. Shame on you.

Stephanie Griffin says

LADDERTOP starts off on Earth with an application competition to an elite academy which trains children for working 36,000 miles up at the top of a tower. This first volume goes through the competition, election, training, and transportation through the tower of the chosen children. The Earth scenes look modern day but the story takes place 25 years after aliens visited Earth, built the towers, and then disappeared.

Robbi and Azure are best friends who are both in the competition. Robbi is the quieter one who has problems at home but feels she is the only one who can solve them, while Azure is a little spitfire who will take on any challenges but often gets in a jam because of it.

The plot answers some questions 11-yr-olds might ask when reading this (like how do you go to the bathroom when you're strapped in a chair on an 18 hour journey?) but also leaves several unanswered, building the complexity for later volumes.

I was surprised at how much the book held my interest. The drawings conveying emotions are spot-on and there is continuing action throughout the book. I liked how so many intriguing things were going on. What does the scanner really scan the children for? What are the drawings on Robbi's arm? What is the real work being done at the top of Laddertop? I would have to recommend LADDERTOP to middle readers because I for one really want to find out what happens in the next volume!

I received this through goodreads' First Reads giveaways.

Cathy Keaton says

Robbi is a young girl (in Middle School, I think) who ends up getting into Laddertop Academy because her mother secretly sent in her application. Her best friend Azure wants to go so badly, and they both get accepted to the academy for training. While there, Robbi has a string of strange experiences connected with to the mystery surrounding the aliens that gave Earth the Laddertop towers. No one really knows anything about the advanced technology, how to change it, how to fix it, and definitely not how to replicate it. It seems the reason only young children are capable of fitting into the small tubes for maintenance is very much intentional on the part of the mysterious alien givers.

Robbi is the main character and she's just an average girl her age, although perhaps a little short in stature. That's a good thing for kids in this world because the smaller and smarter you are, the more likely you are to get selected to attend Laddertop Academy. Azure is a spunky tomboy who's been dreaming of attending the Academy her whole life, although Robbi never wanted to leave home because her mother's husband is physically violent and she's afraid he'll start abusing her little sisters and mother while she's away. I like Robbi, but with so little of the story contained in this volume, it's hard to get a clear idea of her personality.

The concept of this story is really great—something very much up my alley. It reminds me of my favorite science fiction anime, which I believe is an influence. The mystery surrounding the aliens is very intriguing because they seem a little too sneaky. What are they up to? All the adults running the Laddertop towers try to uncover the towers' secrets only to be constantly stumped. While I really like the premise and the world building, both are well done, I'm not usually into stories meant for younger children, so this one seemed a bit lackluster to me.

Because it is a manga-style comic book, the writing is done through talk bubbles and captions, and it's done well. The artwork, which has to be mentioned, on the other hand, is not my favorite. I just didn't feel like the

quality was good enough and the style wasn't very appealing to me, either.

Favorite Scene/Moment: I liked the scene where Robbi picked up a metallic bug-looking object and it suddenly started carving out some alien symbols into her arm. That was unexpected and very cool! Never found out what any of it meant in this volume, unfortunately.

Andrea says

I am no comic book/manga/gamer/sci-fi expert. At all. My comic book experience only goes back to the Archie comics and Garfield comic books. So I don't know if I am especially qualified to review this book on a technical level. I don't know the lingo or definitions of what makes a book a comic or a graphic novel, or a manga. But I do know what I like and I'll base this mini-review on that.

When I started reading, I thought I would be lost. I felt the synopsis gave me enough of a base to go on and it did. I was able to immediately jump into the story. The illustrations were beautiful and did a fabulous job of telling the story, the characters were fun, and the story was interesting.

The actual reading time spent on Laddertop was one to two hours, tops. That speedy reading time made it a nice little palate cleanser, which isn't to say there was anything wrong with the book, only that it served as a change of pace for me.

Like I said, I'm not an expert on this genre, but if you enjoy a lively fast-paced story, Laddertop would surely fit that bill.

I received a copy of Laddertop from Tor Publishing, in exchange for an honest review.
