FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

FOREWORD REVIEW ♥♥♥♥♥ COMICS & GRAPHIC NOVELS

Age of Bronze: Sacrifice - The Story of the Trojan War, Volume Two

Eric Shanower
Hungry Tiger Press (Jul 14, 2004)
Unknown $0.00 (224pp)
978-1-58240-360-1

Mention the Trojan War and the image that comes to most minds is the Trojan Horse. The author-illustrator has taken a lesser-known tale about that war and turned it into a very human adventure, with all the human failings and trivialities that come with it. Under Shanower's hand, the characters have come to life, with expressive faces, body language, and a level of detail that move the story as effectively as the words.

This book is the second volume of a projected series of seven, which has twice earned Shanower the Eisner Award for Best Writer/Artist. It tells the story of Iphigenia's self-sacrifice, that her father, Agamemnon. may conquer Troy. Readers will recognize names and legends as they read of Paris's charge to recover his father Priam's sister Hesione from Achaea, where she has been a prisoner for years. Paris, however, self-centered and superficial, instead has seduced Helen, the wife of Spartan ruler Menelaus, and carried her away with him to Troy.

When Paris and his men return with ships full of plunder and Helen, instead of Hesione, Priam at first refuses to allow her to enter Troy. The seer Kassandra has predicted that Troy will be cursed if Helen enters. However, no one believes Kassandra, and Helen and Paris change Priam's mind with the news that Helen is pregnant by Paris and thus carrying the ruling bloodline of Troy.

Agamemnon, brother of Menelaus and high king of the Achaeans, has gathered other kings to his side, to sack Troy and recover Helen. All his efforts come to nothing, until it is revealed that he must honor a vow he made to the goddess Artemis fourteen years before—to give her his daughter, "the most beautiful thing that Mycenae produced" that year. Disaster follows disaster as Agamemnon's men wait, frustrated at not being able to honor their own vows, recover Helen, and return to their families. At last Iphigenia herself must make the decision that will determine Troy's fate.

Shanower's illustrations are wonderful, bold and clean, with strong lines and fine detail. Laden with historical images, the artwork brings to life everything from the madness of Kassandra, to the love affair of Achilles and Patroclus, to the agony and despair of Agamemnon and Klytemnestra at the fate ordained for their daughter.

Definitely not a work for children, *Sacrifice* deals with such themes as adultery, homosexuality, and betrayal; drawings depict occasional nudity, but as part of the story rather than gratuitously. It is an extraordinary project, and readers will be well pleased with its complexity and artistry.

MARLENE SATTER (August 18, 2009)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The author provided free copies of his/her book to have his/her book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the author for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love and make no guarantee that the author will receive a positive review. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.