Clarion Review

General

Full Contact Warfare: Evolution's Burden

978-1-4389-2478-6

One Star (out of Five)

In *Evolution's Burden* Timjin and his wife Moknola climb the "harsh and treacherous" Forbidden Mountains to find a mythical medallion which gives great spiritual knowledge to the wearer. After finding it Timjin hides it away in his room. When they return to the mountains Timjin and Moknola find a primitive cave people and bring a few back to town. Artimus an outcast in their egalitarian community is an ambitious man who desires a war with their aggressive neighbors to the south. He enslaves many of the cave people and puts them to forced labor to build his armaments. Battle comes—but not with their enemies; it is between Artimus and the rest of the townspeople who oppose the enslavement of the cave dwellers. The medallion is neglected until the very end of the story; a victory in battle is miraculously pulled from defeat and it is never evident how the medallion's "spiritual knowledge" is at work.

Evolution's Burden is the second book in Barry Lumsden's Full Contact Warfare series. Like its predecessor *Evolution's Burden* is not publishable quality. Young talent should be encouraged but entering the professional marketplace before one's work reaches an adequate level of skill and maturity is na&239;ve. The book contains numerous flaws: clichés abound the plot is transparent dialogue is stilted and although it's a graphic novel the graphics are primitive.

Yet one can see a seed of imaginative talent in *Evolution's Burden*. The plot works and the author is not bound by convention. The juxtaposition of low-level medieval technology and an advanced musical instrument such as the saxophone could be developed into a camp style that would work well with the archers who ride on giant tortoises and the rhinoceroses that are used for transportation. The author's interest in medieval warfare and knowledge of martial arts is evident.

The elements for a quality story are here but they are underdeveloped and poorly presented. There is no title page and no credit is given for the illustration. Readers are left to assume the graphics are the work of the author. The narrative is presented in the present tense which is extremely difficult to do well and dialogue is introduced with the character's name as

in a screenplay but the book simply is not worth the price of admission.