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FOREWORD REVIEW ♥♥♥♥♥ COMICS & GRAPHIC NOVELS

## Kidnapped

**Robert Louis Stevenson**
**Cam Kennedy, illustrator**
**Alan Grant, contributor**
Tundra Books (Oct 9, 2007)
Unknown $11.95 (64pp)
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Translating classic literature into sequential art can be a difficult process. Regardless of the merit of graphic novels, some may still argue that the final product destroys imagination, dumbs down literature, or ruins the author's intent. This doesn't happen with Grant and Kennedy's rendition of author Robert Louis Stevenson' *Kidnapped*.

The original story was high adventure colorfully recounted by a seventeen-year-old Scottish lad, David Balfour. Upon his father's death, Davie is given an unopened letter to carry to his uncle Ebenezer, a "mean, stooping, narrow-shouldered, clay-faced creature." The letter involves an inheritance, which hinged on a love affair—both Davie's father and uncle loved the same woman. Ebenezer, worried that his nephew might insist on his legacy, has Davie kidnapped by the corrupt captain of the *Covenant*, eventually to be sold as a slave in the Colonies. Along the way, however, the *Covenant* is wrecked in a storm, and young Davie finds himself alone on an island.

Alan Grant is best known for creating the comic strips *Judge Dredd* and *Starlord;* he also wrote for DC Comics*.* Kennedy has illustrated for Marvel and Dark Horse, and his watercolors are represented in the original *Star Wars*. Both men are Scots, like the original author of the book, and this work was commissioned as part of the celebration of Edinburgh being named the first UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) City of Literature.

Grant's sensitive selection of prose and Kennedy's colorful art applications result in a vibrant, unified effect on the page, even with panels that cross borders and range in shape and size. The speaking bubbles include type style variations, while the exposition boxes are patterned and colored in such a way as to resemble the frayed yellow paper of Davie's personal journal. The realistic utilization of natural lighting allows Kennedy to cast eerie glows and foreboding shadows upon the characters.

Much of the art for this adaptation has been purchased for the collections of the National Library of Scotland, and 7,500 free copies of the Edinburgh Evening News were distributed to promote the project, the international honor, and one of the most famous adventure stories of all time.

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