Metaphrog's Bluebeard: A Feminist Fairy Tale

Metaphrog
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The graphic novel team known as Metaphrog presents a stunning adaptation of a famous French folk tale in *Metaphrog's Bluebeard*.

A poor village girl, Eve, has a happy life with her family and best friend Tom, but atop a mountain in the distance, Bluebeard's castle looms. Stories have circulated, but no one has ever seen the man.

The year of Eve's eighteenth birthday, famine strikes the town. Bluebeard invites the village to come and enjoy his hospitality, but once there, the villagers discover the cost: Bluebeard wants to marry either Eve or her sister, Anne. Their options limited, the girls' parents decide Eve will marry Bluebeard.

In the castle, Eve is given a set of keys with a prohibition against using one in particular. Trapped in the house that's increasingly foreboding, Eve uses the key and discovers a grim secret: the fate of Bluebeard's many former wives. But within this feminist retelling, Eve rescues herself, rather than being saved by her brothers, and Eve and Anne's sisterhood proves stronger than Bluebeard's entrancing spell.

Every page of the work is beautiful and dreamlike, rich in atmosphere for what is tantamount to a horror story. The artists make expert use of color: red and orange hues indicate happiness and good times, while blue is used to illustrate frightened animals and the ominous corners of Bluebeard's mansion. Shifts from red to purple foreshadow events to come, as does Eve's narration: "some insects spend their whole lives not realizing they have wings. Not realizing they can fly." Eve learns to take hold of her fate and soar in this gorgeous adaptation.

PETER DABBENE (May / June 2020)

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