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Zanjan



Synopsis

A visually stunning graphic novel that is based on actual events from one of the many dramatic episodes surrounding the emergence of the Bahai Faith in mid-nineteenth century Persia. Zanzan places fictional characters amid the real events that took place on the streets of cities and towns all over Persia where the imperial army literally waged war on the peaceful followers of the new religion.

Book Information

Paperback: 104 pages

Publisher: Bahai Publishing (October 1, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1931847886

ISBN-13: 978-1931847889

Product Dimensions: 6.1 x 0.4 x 8.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 6.4 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (2 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

Zanzan is graphic historical fiction, with the the social conditions and the characters that drive the action being historical, and the characters through which the reader experiences the events being fictional, although historically consistent and realistic. A lot of people, Christian or Muslim, tend to think of the Day of Judgment as being relatively uncomplicated for someone who is a true believer. Some even believe that the true believers worthy of salvation will be somehow rescued or taken away from the catastrophic events of that time, leaving the Earth temporarily populated by those people deserving of punishment. In Zanzan, the true believer on the Day of Judgment is tested, demonstrating the quality of her or his belief. The reward is not avoiding death and destruction, or loss and suffering, but in knowing that one has been through the fire and demonstrated one's commitment to God. The reward is certitude, an awareness of one's own truth. So there is not much celebration or joy in Zanzan. It is grim as the protagonists are up against the corruption of a society that values conformity and resistance to change above truth. The two sides have very different

standards about constitutes victory or defeat. Zanzan is about the beginning of the Day of Judgment, the beginning of a war between those who hold to truth and the value of the choices one freely makes, and those who hold to an unchanging but imaginary vision of a static society where a few people rule over the rest, and who have made an idol of that image. The war is still going on. For historical accounts of the real events:

I will be the first to tell you that I am a nerd. I love my comics and I love being a grown up fanboy. When I heard about Zanzan, the graphic novel from Aaron Emmel and Aaron Kreader I knew I had to read it asap. I was not disappointed! First off, I will say that this was a quick read. That is not a disparaging remark, as I've read it at least three times! I think that's the benefit of its brevity, its re-readability! I finished my first read in one sitting. I was not familiar with the history of Zanzan. Being a relatively new Baha'i I'm not super familiar with the history of the Bā'is, either, so this was a great way to start my understanding. The main character is a young man named Navid training to be an Islamic scholar who, upon witnessing the unearned scorn and torture heaped upon three Bā'is, defends them and eventually becomes a Bā' himself. The story unravels around the city of Zanzan and the persecutions the Bā'is experience. I've got to say that I expected the Bā' or Baha'u'llah to show up. I'm glad they didn't. Let me explain! Seeing the story through the eyes of Navid and the other early believers allows us to really put ourselves there, to witness these happenings with them. It is a violent, hard, sad, yet hopeful and redeeming story. Not only that, but I sympathized with Navid, as a believer who doesn't have the opportunity to physically lay eyes on Bā', Navid is won over, he believes. There is something in the revelation that calls to him, and he follows. I am the same. We are the same. Not only is the story really touching and very interesting, the artwork is phenomenal. Aaron Kreader's line work is very solid.

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