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Notes For A War Story



Synopsis

"The war arrived in our village on the 18th of January. Obviously there were other wars going on, but they didn't have anything to do with us. There were wars for blacks. Wars for Arabs. Wars for Slavs. Our war started on the 18th of January, and in a few days, everything had changed." So recounts Giuliano, a loner among outsiders, one of three young drifters caught up in the whirlwind of a war in the Balkans. The three boys are like passing shadows; they live in abandoned houses, dodge the occasional bomb, and steal car parts for money. Meeting Felix—a powerful, fast-talking mercenary—changes everything for them. Felix is an expert manipulator; he speaks to their ambition and to their desires for power, wealth, and purpose. They're instantly hooked, especially the trio's unofficial leader, Stefano, and they soon escalate from petty crime to working on behalf of a mafia-style militia, bullying and extorting money in Felix's name. But as Giuliano comes to realize, they don't know what they're fighting for—if they're even fighting for anything. *Notes for a War Story* is an astonishing look at life in a lawless, war-torn nation, heightened by the harsh, moving, pencil and watercolor artwork of Italy's best graphic novel author.

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Customer Reviews

Its really hard to find a comic artist in the magnitude of the old masters in this pile of superhero and manga garbage of today but Gipi really gets close to the likes of Hugo Pratt, Moebius and the other gods imo. Not only he is as good but he lacks the superficialims and narcissism that some of these great artists had (Manara comes to mind). He doesnt draw just to make beautiful pictures but to

make his characters and stories jump off the page. His lines are simple and flow incredibly with the motion, feelings and mood of his characters. His watercolors blend magically and add depth and atmosphere in a natural way. Storytelling and pace is excellent and I do love his complex characters and imaginative and lively dialogue. A true genius.

I read this on the heels of watching "Children of God." In some ways there were similar themes of children turned to a life of guns, crime...war. This novel also brought to mind tales of my friends who experienced the war first hand in Bosnia and Croatia. And even of those who now have had to live with the war in Iraq on their turf. Gipi never stipulates place...because this could be anywhere. The style is unique. The story is gripping. A graphic novel which certainly stays with you long after you've set it down.

...disturbing, brackish, and entirely convincing story of three teens trying to survive in a war zone without 'losing points' in each other's eyes. The translation is entirely convincing as idiomatic English. A note (not by the author) at the end of the story says that Gipi rendered the story in oils, but I don't believe it, it looks like pen and monochromatic watercolour (or just possibly ink) wash...as one of the previous reviewers has also noted. In any case, a perfect melding of form, style and content...one of the few graphic novels we can be confident will still be read a century from now.

This is the story of 3 young men in an unnamed war-torn country trying to survive the conflict. They meet a local gangster and begin working for him. The narrator is a middle class boy who's left his family to be with his friends, both of whom are orphans. One of the orphans called Little Killer becomes leader of their small group as they become gangsters themselves. Eventually they become involved as freedom fighters in the conflict but the narrator is separated from his two friends. He returns home to his family rather than fight. He never sees his two friends again. The story is well told and the blasted, barren landscapes of endless country with a tunnel of smoke coming from it and the empty, damaged cities add a sense of doomed apocalypse to the story. The landscapes reminded me of "Waltz with Bashir" and Joe Sacco's work, but it tells a different story of survival away from the armed conflicts. It's a story of lost youth and misplaced optimism as the narrator realises there's no escaping the war. The images of headless men first in a dream then glimpsed in the returning prisoners who pull their coats up over their heads to avoid the international press, is a haunting one and very powerful. Gipi tells a tragic but gripping tale that's a fantastic graphic novel.

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