

attitude to her and her frustration over her lack of educational opportunities are all happily solved.

There are, however, a number of problems with this book. An English graduate (and from my own university) really should not write sentences such as "'I'm sorry', her grandmother paused." (13). A carriage does not wait patiently (182). There are also some implausibilities and inconsistencies. How can Maud believe that removing the inn sign from her front lawn will make the inn look "just like any other farmhouse" (80) when the place is sufficiently spacious (116) to boast a ballroom large enough to be used for "the occasional village meeting or dance"?

Susan Merritt is already experienced in the writing of history for young people, having published *Her Story: Women from Canada's Past* (1993) and *Her Story II* (1995). She herself lives in Ridgeway and has consulted local as well as more general sources for the background to the novel. However, she has not looked at either of Hereward Senior's two books on the Fenians (1978 and 1991). Moreover, the use of the letters IRA on a Fenian flag in 1866 is perhaps doubtful (see G.A. Hayes-McCoy, *A History of Irish Flags* (1979), 152), and certainly the term was not common currency at that time. A good map would also have been a help. In sum, the story is engaging but the historical atmosphere is somewhat unconvincing.

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No Wondrous Thing

Shadows on a Sword: The Second Book of the Crusades. Karleen Bradford. HarperCollins, 1996. 195 pp. \$14.00 paper. ISBN 0-00-648108-6.

As the First Crusade followed in the wake of the People's Crusade in 1096, so *Shadows on a Sword* follows upon the acclaimed *There Will Be Wolves* (1992), but with a different set of young people traversing the crusaders' path and bloody proving-grounds. The earlier book's cross-grained Ursula and sensitive Bruno, unwilling participants in the disastrous People's Crusade, give way to more traditional adventurers indebted to the Crusades of romance. Theobald, knighted at seventeen, enlists under the banner of Godfrey of Bouillon to take part in the First Crusade's three-year trek to Jerusalem, fitfully succumbs to the battle-joy for which he and his friend Amalric have been trained up, and eventually finds peace in the holy city when he marries Emma, a maidservant who, in boy's disguise, has attached herself to Theo as groom. In this low-keyed narrative of violent pilgrimage, however, romance is engaged only to be stripped of glamour. Godfrey of Bouillon's sword conjures up for Mark Twain in *The Innocents Abroad* stirring visions of the holy wars, but Karleen Bradford makes sure her innocents lose sight of that visionary gleam. Theo's relinquished sword, "propped

in the shadows” of the room he shares with Emma, emblemizes his — and the novel’s — dim view of war undertaken in the belief that God wills it.

Mass slaughter in the name of Christ resists imaginative glorification nowadays, though the Crusades continue to fascinate. Violence sanctioned on holy or at least ideologically hallowed grounds has a contemporary resonance, to which the remarkable profusion of Crusades studies in recent years may attest. While the BBC *Crusades* series assembled by Terry Jones presents with Pythonesque glee the monstrous reach of armed piety, some historians have assayed more searchingly the phenomenon of crusading fervour, as reluctant to debunk its compulsions as to yield to its spell. That attempt to grasp what is both irretrievably strange and pressingly familiar is missing from *Shadows on a Sword*, which, in scanting the provocative otherness of the past, discovers no impetus for realizing the timely story it summons history to tell.

Evidently, the journey to Jerusalem forces Theo and his companions to work out their own truths when grim reality shatters the ideals their culture proclaims, but this narrative of maturation in time of crisis lacks the captivating urgency its predecessor drew from the same historical materials. Temperate Theo, depressed after every clash along the way, seems a confirmed pacifist long before the massacre at Jerusalem; his relationship with Amalric is so lightly sketched that his brother-in-arms’ choosing war over peace has little impact; Emma-as-groom takes up archery to fight at Antioch, but soon reverts to her role as sceptical observer of the whole crusading scene. Because shadows fall on the crusader’s sword from the beginning of the story to its foregone conclusion, the novel’s imaginative use of history is somewhat dulled, however faithfully it traces, chapter by chapter with accompanying maps, the excruciating trajectory of the First Crusade. Early in his journey, Theo encounters *en tableau* exhausted survivors of the People’s Crusade — none other than those whose story is told in *There Will Be Wolves* — and sees then that the crusade is no “wondrous thing.” *There Will Be Wolves* poignantly enacts the lesson its sequel only repeats.

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Tom Austen: Canada’s Youth-Sleuth

The Inuk Mountie Adventure. Eric Wilson. HarperCollins, 1995. 137 pp. \$14.95. ISBN 0-00-224394-6.

Eric Wilson has another hit. *The Inuk Mountie Adventure* sends Tom Austen, Canadian youth-sleuth, to Gjoa Haven on King William Island to solve an intriguing mystery. This book covers topics ranging from Canadian politics, to the history and culture of the Inuit to racism. Like a Canadian Hardy boy, Tom and his comrades uncover corruption in our world and make Canada safe for today’s young people.