

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.

Wilson's trademark is his use of authentic Canadian settings for his fiction. He thoroughly researches an environment and then bases his work in that locale. A student exchange program takes the book's characters from Winnipeg to the Arctic village of Gjoa Haven on King William Island. This venue allows Wilson to introduce his reader to everyday Inuit culture, language and traditions. Cultural differences between the Inuit and "kabloonas" (whites) are clearly illustrated and explained to the reader. The ignorant behaviour of an overtly racist reporter is challenged by the students. His violent temper contrasts the peaceful manner of the Inuk Mountie and his family. The Inuit belief in peaceful coexistence is the rationale explained to the Manitoba youth who question the Inuit's passive reaction to this vile character. Wilson's characters refuse to accept racism as they embrace and celebrate Inuit culture. Their occasional hesitance to experience new things, like eating Ptarmigan heart, is credible, as is their enthusiasm to overnight in igloos on the outskirts of town. Wilson's hero, Tom, and his friends are entirely believable teens.

Intertwined throughout *The Inuk Mountie Adventure* are history lessons about the Franklin expedition and early arctic exploration. Throughout the book, Wilson stresses the need for inter-cultural co-operation; he explains the demise of many early explorers, including Sir James Franklin, who refused to take advice from the Inuit. Canadian politics also feature prominently; Wilson's hero foils a corrupt Prime Minister and prevents his attempts to merge Canada with USA. The book's characters also stop this political egomaniac from stripping Canada of its natural resources. Canadian institutions such as the RCMP and CSIS are also introduced to the reader, increasing young people's knowledge of Canadian governmental institutions.

Wilson crafts his fiction with suspense and intrigue and his works engage readers and listeners of all ages. His efforts to educate readers about Canada — our history, geography, politics, our many cultures and traditions — must be commended. *The Inuk Mountie Adventure* is a highly entertaining and most informative read for people of all ages.

Bruno and Boots meet "The Phantom"

Something Fishy at Macdonald Hall. Gordon Korman. Scholastic, 1995. 198 pp. \$17.99 cloth. ISBN 0-590-25521-5.

Gordon Korman's latest book involving characters Bruno Walton and Boots O'Neal is an uproariously funny tale which finds the mischievous youths being blamed for a series of practical jokes for which they, for once, are not responsible. The seventh book in the Macdonald Hall series, *Something Fishy at Macdonald Hall* reveals Korman's impressive talent for characterization. He creates a cast of characters and continues to develop each individual throughout the novel. While his adolescents are mischievous, they are not delinquents. They engage in innocent antics; for instance, the girls from Miss Scrimmage's sneak out at night as regularly as the boys and thus become suspects in the search to identify "The Phantom." New to Macdonald Hall this time is Edward O'Neal, Boots'