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Orpheus in the Underworld

Ariel Woodbury

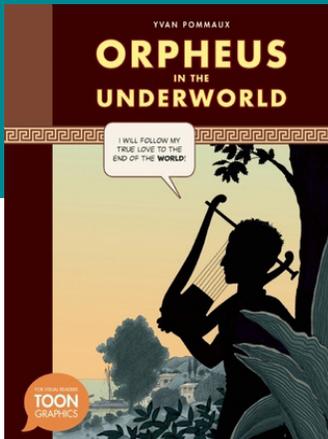
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Book Review

Orpheus in the Underworld

Author

Yvan Pommaux

Illustrator

Yvan Pommaux

Reviewer

Ariel Woodbury

Rating

Dependable

Level

Intermediate

Pages

46

Year

2015

Publisher

TOON Graphics

ISBN

9781935179849

Orpheus, a great musician, falls in love with Eurydice, but shortly after they marry, she dies. Orpheus decides to journey to the Underworld and use his music to convince Hades to release Eurydice. His beautiful playing helps him to get across the river Styx and past Cerberus, the three-headed dog. When he arrives, Hades and Persephone listen to his melancholy ballad. Hades tells Orpheus that he will allow Eurydice's soul to follow him back to the land of the living so long as Orpheus never looks behind him. The journey back to the land of the living is more difficult than his journey in, but when Orpheus is almost done he can't bear it any longer and looks over his shoulder, causing Eurydice's spirit to decent back to the Underworld. The people are so disgusted with how depressing Orpheus's songs are now that they kill him, allowing him to finally be reunited with his love.

Orpheus in the Underworld does a great job at setting up the world of Greek mythology. The relationship between gods, demigods, and humans is integrated smoothly into the telling of the story. Other myths are mentioned, perhaps encouraging readers to explore more mythology on their own. This does not make the story confusing by adding additional unknown characters. The illustrations for this graphic novel aren't confined to the typical small boxes and are all full color and usually full spread. The artwork is somewhat inconsistent within a single image, but not throughout the text. The majority of the surroundings and landscape exhibit shading, adding a three-dimensional effect, but characters' skin and face have none and look exceptionally flat. This is a great book to learn the story of Orpheus and will likely be remembered, but it isn't exceptional at much else. If you want an immersive, artful, or in depth look at Greek mythology, you should probably find a different book.

*Contains mild violence.