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Wanted!

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~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

3

Quality writing of historical fiction for younger readers is not easy to find so it was heartening to read this story of ancient Rome, set in the time of the Emperor Caligula.

With clear print and plenty of illustrations, this short novel is the story of Marcus, the baker's son who is on his way home when he is catapulted into an adventure. He is asked to hold the bridle of the consul Incitatus, a horse that has been made a consul by the mad Emperor, here called Littleboots. Rumour rushes round Rome that Littleboots is dead and, fearing the worst, Marcus rides the horse home through an unsettled city. His grandmother recognising that the horse is Incitatus puts him in the best bedroom. Eventually, in front of the new Emperor, Claudius, Marcus makes Incitatus bow to give his consent to the accession. The horse is then stripped of his purple consul blanket and Marcus may take him home to pull the baker's cart.

Told in beautiful clear prose, this short novel does not try to emulate the historical fiction published in the Antelope and Gazelle series of the 1960s-1980s by such authors as Rosemary Sutcliff, but gives the reader a glimpse of a past era in a different, humorous way. The illustrations of people are disappointingly flat and cartoony while the horses are drawn really well.

Running Order:

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