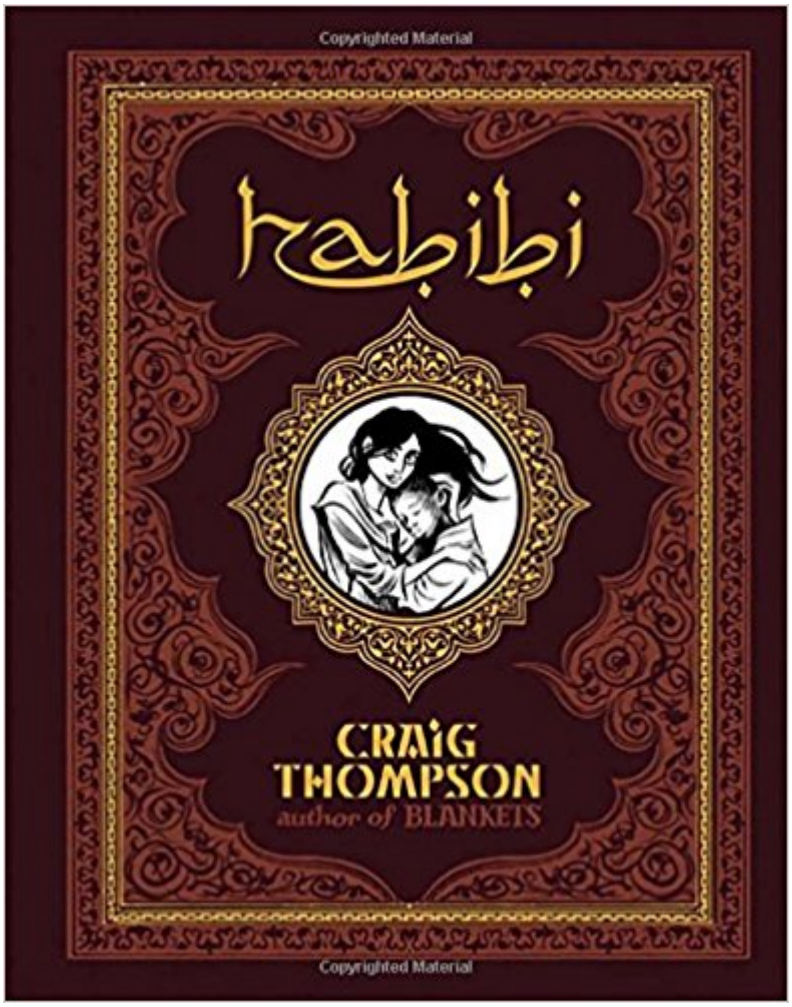
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Habibi (Pantheon Graphic Novels)



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Synopsis

From the internationally acclaimed author of Blankets (Ã¢â ¬Å“A triumph for the genre.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Library Journal), a highly anticipated new graphic novel.Ã Â Sprawling across an epic landscape of deserts,Ã Â harems, and modern industrial clutter, Habibi tells the tale of Dodola and Zam, refugee child slaves bound to each other by chance, by circumstance, and by the love that grows between them. We follow them as their lives unfold together and apart; as they struggle to make a place for themselves in a world (not unlike our own) fueled by fear, lust, and greed; and as they discover the extraordinary depthÃ¢â ¬â •and frailtyÃ¢â ¬â •of their connection.Ã Â At once contemporary and timeless, Habibi gives us a love story of astounding resonance: a parable about our relationship to the natural world, the cultural divide between the first and third worlds, the common heritage of Christianity and Islam, and, most potently, the magic of storytelling.

Book Information

Series: Pantheon Graphic Novels

Hardcover: 672 pages

Publisher: Pantheon; First Edition edition (September 20, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0375424148

ISBN-13: 978-0375424144

Product Dimensions: 7.3 x 2 x 9.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.5 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 236 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #73,346 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #53 inÃ Â Books > Comics & Graphic Novels > Graphic Novels > Historical & Biographical Fiction #141 inÃ Â Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Religious & Inspirational > Historical #755 inÃ Â Books > Literature & Fiction > Mythology & Folk Tales

Customer Reviews

Best Books of the Month, September 2011: Habibi is impressive to hold. It looks like a lost tome, recovered from a different time and place--a fitting package for a comic book that feels like an exotic, bizarre fairy tale. Craig Thompson’s inkwork is bold yet intricate. Each page reveals a meticulous symmetry, both in art and narrative, that unravels a sweeping tale that takes readers from the dessert to an industrial wasteland to the inner walls of a harem. Thematically, there’s no

shortage of ambition here, as Thompson tackles familial and romantic love, one’s relationship to their environment, the shared roots of Christianity and Islam, and the effects of industrial modernization. Not all of these conflicts are resolved--in fact, there’s more ambiguity than there is clarity--but it’s Dodola and Zam, the book’s two orphaned lovers, that imbue Habibi with empathy and humanity. Thompson, who is best known for Blankets, one of the most critically lauded comics of the past decade, has crafted another affecting story of passion, humor, and imagination. --Kevin Nguyen

Ã¢â ¬Å“The character depth, plot complexity, and storytelling in this lyrical, sexual, and scholarly epic would make any novelist proudÃ¢â ¬Â¦Thompson strings compositions that are often more tapestry than comics and that balance graphic design, illumination, calligraphy, and cartooning in steady alignment. It is unfair to expect two masterpieces in a row from anyone, but here Thompson sits securely in that rarefied air.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œBooklist, starred reviewÃ¢â ¬Å“A lushly epic love story that’s both inspiring and heartbreakingÃ¢â ¬Â¦In addition to richly detailed story panels, the gorgeous Arabic ornamental calligraphy makes each page an individual work of art. A dense, swirling dervish of a taleÃ¢â ¬Â¦this will be the most talked about graphic novel of the fall.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œPublishers Weekly, starred reviewÃ Â Ã Â Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å“The exquisite beauty and deep magic of this Arabian Nights-style love story cannot be overstated...Habibi is certain to join the ranks of graphic novels that expand our understanding of not only the genre but also the world it describes.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œLibrary Journal, starred reviewÃ Â Ã¢â ¬Å“Habibi lifts the bar of graphic storytelling to new heights, both by the intricate, dramatic density and breathtaking scholarÃ Â- ship of ThompsonÃ¢â ¬â„¢s panels and by the sheer scale and decorative beauty of his flowing, roiling, protean style. Thompson is the Charles Dickens of the genre, able to capture all the scary, heartbreaking, brave, uplifting details of his charactersÃ¢â ¬â„¢ fates while orchestrating the big-picture machinations that connect them to the lives and times of his readersÃ¢â ¬Â¦Habibi is a masterpiece that surely is one of a kind.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œElle MagazineÃ Â Ã Â Ã Â Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å“A graphic novel that is sure to attract attentionÃ¢â ¬Â¦A matureÃ¢â ¬â •in all its meaningsÃ¢â ¬â •glimpse into a world few Westerners are at home with, and Thompson is respectful throughout.Ã¢â ¬Â• -Kirkus Ã¢â ¬Å“ExquisiteÃ¢â ¬Â¦HABIBI is a remarkable feat of research, care, and black ink, and a reminder that all "People of the book," despite the division of their individual traditions, share a mosaic of stories.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œZadie Smith, HarperÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Magazine Ã¢â ¬Å“Habibi has classic written all over it. ItÃ¢â ¬â„¢s a modern literary triumph, a book so broad and magical in its scope, only a master could pull it off.

This is no ordinary comic, it is a complete work of art. Beautiful, thought provoking, both timeless and of its timeÃ¢â ¬Â|An awe-inspiring read you canÃ¢â ¬â„¢t afford to missÃ¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œGrovel, graphic novel reviews Ã Â Ã Â Ã Â Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å“Easily the best graphic novel of the year, and probably the decadeÃ¢â ¬Â|ThompsonÃ¢â ¬â„¢s line work here is beyond brilliant, combining myriad styles and capturing the rich historical legacy of the cultural and religious volumes that inspired it. This is a work that truly changes the game and sets a new standard for all the graphic novels that follow it.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œGraphicNovelReporter.com "Craig Thompson's new graphic novel, Habibi, is a masterpiece. This isn't an opinion. This book is a gorgeous object; to make it, Thompson apparently covered himself in honey and rolled around in a thousand years of Arabic calligraphy and Islamic art, and the result is breathtaking.Ã¢â ¬Â• -The Boston PhoenixÃ¢â ¬Å“Erotic, grotesque, and profoundly movingÃ¢â ¬Â|I donÃ¢â ¬â„¢t think IÃ¢â ¬â„¢ve ever read a book quite like this, and I expect IÃ¢â ¬â„¢ll be thinking about it for a long, long time.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œBoing BoingÃ¢â ¬Å“Layered, daring, and brilliantly toldÃ¢â ¬â •an intricate story of love, religion, desire, survival, poverty, hope. ItÃ¢â ¬â„¢s drenched in metaphor and rich with double meanings. Yet for all it takes on, Habibi feels light on its feet; throughout, we feel Thompson reveling in his skills as a writer and artist. Its exuberance, even in its darkest moments, feels somehow celebratory. IÃ¢â ¬â„¢m not sure that IÃ¢â ¬â„¢ve read a better graphic novelÃ¢â ¬Â|ThompsonÃ¢â ¬â„¢s own work is manically elaborate and ingeniously laid out; heÃ¢â ¬â„¢s become expert at moving the eye through exploding, dexterous panels.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œThe MillionsÃ Â Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å“Mere wordsÃ¢â ¬â •or at least my mere wordsÃ¢â ¬â •seemed not enough to even try to convey just how intricate and ornate, lush and seductive, arabesque and sometimes knowingly grotesque this artistic epic isÃ¢â ¬Â|a visual masterpiece.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œComic Riffs, Washington Post blogÃ¢â ¬Å“Like the elegantly dense mosaic patterns that Thompson fills the background of his pages with, Habibi is a book that weaves isolated shapes into an overpowering tableaux, its pieces carefully fit together and subtly repeated until a gorgeous unity emerges.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œNational PostÃ¢â ¬Å“Relentlessly virtuosic... It is a tribute to Thompson's skill as a cartoonist that the transition from an old fashioned Orient to modern Babylon leaves few visual seams." Ã¢â ¬â œNew York Times Book Review Ã¢â ¬Å“While the storytelling is gripping, surprising, and emotionally and intellectually hard-hitting, it almost takes a back seat to the artwork that is alternately robust and fragile. Thompson's deft, assured lines have never been more delicately and profoundly inked than hereÃ¢â ¬Â|This book is a monument of intelligent, vibrant design, all in service to the story.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œBarnes and Noble reviewÃ¢â ¬Å“Brilliantly imaginedÃ¢â ¬Â|celebrates the power of the artist to tell a story with

ink teased into magisterial letters and visual images.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œNewsweek Ã Â Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å“Thompson makes a good third of the other illustrators out there look like total chumps. Each page is carefully designed with recurring motifsÃ¢â ¬â œthat draw from sources like the QurÃ¢â ¬â„¢an and other storytelling traditionsÃ¢â ¬â œto add multiple layers of meaning to every moment. Scenes of city life and vast endless oceans of sand are drawn with such attention to detail that youÃ¢â ¬â„¢ll be staggered imagining a human being crafting the images with human hands and commonly available toolsÃ¢â ¬Â¦Ã¢â ¬â„¢s a story told with technical precision and real, honest-to-gosh passion, and if you cry at the end it wonÃ¢â ¬â„¢t be because youÃ¢â ¬â„¢ve been successfully manipulatedÃ¢â ¬â œitÃ¢â ¬â„¢ll be because this world and these characters have come to mean something to you, and youÃ¢â ¬â„¢ll miss them once you reach the final page.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œRichmond NewsÃ Â Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å“If you havenÃ¢â ¬â„¢t been exposed to the work of Craig Thompson yet, you have been deprived of a true aesthetic experienceÃ¢â ¬Â¦To say the work is visually stunning is an understatement. ThompsonÃ¢â ¬â„¢s art is simple black and white inking, yet his ink strokes convey a sense of live movement as if youÃ¢â ¬â„¢re watching the characters move across the pageÃ¢â ¬Â¦donÃ¢â ¬â„¢t dismiss Habibi as a book of pretty pictures. While the artwork is incredible, Craig ThompsonÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Habibi is a book that will affect your heart.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œWit and Fancy blog site Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å“Artistically, it’s the most gorgeous book I read this year, with compositions and layouts weaving together effortlessly and with endless depth and detailÃ¢â ¬Â¦an outrageous success, and worth every bit of time Thompson spent on it. As great as this year was in comics, Habibi might have been the best thing I read in all of comics all year, and it makes me all the more excited to see what Thompson will be up to next.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œMultiversityComics.com, Ã¢â ¬Å“Best Graphic Novel of the 2011Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬Å“The intricacy of patterns and motifs (both visible and metaphorical) hold the text together and astound in their complexity. In the world of Habibi, art is never divorced from meaning; drawings are symbolic verse, words twisted into new shapesÃ¢â ¬Â¦Habibi is about the power of words to carry and envelop us, and in ThompsonÃ¢â ¬â„¢s beautifully written novel, the reader experiences a similar magic.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œALARM PressÃ¢â ¬Å“Habibi is a confident, powerfully drawn graphic novel, telling its tale with passion, humor and an endless understanding of the human conditionÃ¢â ¬Â¦A graphic novel masterpiece that explores what it means to be human through religious story, slavery, prostitution and personal and societal struggles within the industrial and third worlds.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œShelf Awareness, starred review Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å“A lush commentary on love and lust, wealth and want, religion and storytellingÃ¢â ¬Â¦the power in this tale lies in human passion,

sometimes cruel and sometimes sweet, combined with its geometric precision and deep sense of the sacred.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œHarvard CrimsonÃ Â Ã¢â ¬Å“Lushly illustrated, at times unbearably sad and unexpectedly erotic.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œPaste MagazineÃ¢â ¬Å“To read Habibi is to sink into the sensuous arabesque patterns that decorate its pages. Steeped in the imagery and storytelling traditions of the Muslim world, this densely layered love story is as grand and sustained a performance as any cartoonist has publishedÃ¢â ¬Â¦ThompsonÃ¢â ¬â„¢s fluid, evocative artwork is pretty miraculous too.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œTime MagazineÃ Â Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å“Habibi is like a big, rousing, unabashedly tear-jerking Dumas novel, with fascinatingly intricate designs and fabulous tales on almost every page.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œSalon Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å“ItÃ¢â ¬â„¢s impossible to read this book and not walk away with a deeper, more profound understanding or appreciation for not both Arab culture and for the subtle and varied ways in which populations portrayed as enemies are in fact alike. Thanks to ThompsonÃ¢â ¬â„¢s deft storytelling, Ã¢â ¬ËœHabibiÃ¢â ¬â„¢sÃ¢â ¬â„¢ seemingly daunting 700-plus pages can go by in a breeze; you wonÃ¢â ¬â„¢t want them to, though, because his delicate, yet ornate art make this a story you wonÃ¢â ¬â„¢t want to finish.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œDeathandtaxesmag.com Ã¢â ¬Å“Audaciously ambitious.Ã Â Just the decorative and calligraphic elements of its design alone are enough to recommend this volume.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œIcv2 reviewÃ¢â ¬Å“Executed with enormous empathy and something that in earlier times would have been called divine inspiration, Habibi is an extraordinary milestone in the world of drawn stories. Who would have thought that black ink could make such complex, soul-filling music?Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œFT.com Ã¢â ¬Å“Habibi is a triumph of creativity. Thompson dazzles us with his pen strokes, with his mastery of storytelling, his research, plotting and characterisation. The book is destined to become an instant classic, confirming the author’s position among not only the most masterful of graphic novelists but our finest contemporary writers, regardless of medium.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œThe Independent Ã¢â ¬Å“A fascinating exploration of a foreign cultural tradition by an American cartooning auteur at the height of his powersÃ¢â ¬Â¦never anything less than a breathtaking visual and intellectual experience.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œPittsburgh Post-Gazette Ã¢â ¬Å“Brilliantly imaginedÃ¢â ¬Â¦it celebrates the power of the artist to tell a story with ink teased into magisterial letters and visual images.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œDaily BeastÃ Â Ã¢â ¬Å“The art and lettering are both stunning and Thompson has rendered a complicated, dense story that truly elevates the medium.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œForces of Geek Holiday Gift GuideÃ Â Ã¢â ¬Å“A subtle and engrossing tale that encompasses everything from Islam to climate changeÃ¢â ¬Â¦Thompson is a consummate storyteller, and his talent shines through in every line, every frame, and every speech bubbleÃ¢â ¬Â¦In a medium thatÃ¢â ¬â„¢s still

dominated by masked crusaders, Habibi stands testament to the ongoing versatility of old-fashioned pen and paper.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œCulture Mob reviewÃ Â Ã¢â ¬Å“Craig Thompson doesn't fail to impress with yet another beautifully crafted graphic novelÃ¢â ¬Â¦The art is breathtaking, and the imagery that pulls the whole thing together help the reader step out of the everyday and enjoy this rich mythology illuminating universal human truths about loveÃ¢â ¬Â¦It is a beautiful book.Ã Â The illustrations are exquisite.Ã Â Holding it in one's hands, and reading it for the first time, is quite the experience.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œLari is Writing blog reviewÃ¢â ¬Å“Thompson is a superb artistÃ¢â ¬Â¦Habibi is a success.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œWashington TimesÃ Â Ã Â Ã Â Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å“The work of an artist creating at the height of his powers with a confidence and an artistry that reveals grace in every pen stroke, in every panel, and it deftly makes greatness look easyÃ¢â ¬Â¦ The scope of this book is simply massive and what it achieves is not only unique for a comic book or graphic novel, but also important and so relevant to the times in which we all liveÃ¢â ¬Â¦This is an important book that, hopefully, will be read by as wide an audience as possible. It completely deserves all the attention and all the praise thatÃ¢â ¬â„¢s sure to come its way. Craig Thompson has created something truly special here that will surely be read and reflected upon for generations to come.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œTheShortBox.com Ã¢â ¬Å“Habibi isn't just Thompson's greatest work yet; it's one of the most beautiful novels I've read this yearÃ¢â ¬Â¦The artwork is elegant, striking, reverent.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œThe Portland Mercury Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å“This is almost without question one of the most important graphic novel releases of the year. It overflows with elegant, elaborate and brilliantly composed hybrid imagery.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œwarmoth.orgÃ¢â ¬Å“Habibi reminds one of nothing so much as the work of novelist John Barth, with its clear love of patterns, narrative, and beautyÃ¢â ¬Â¦incredibly compelling and readable on many levels.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œPaste MagazineÃ Â Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å“Utterly engrossingÃ¢â ¬Â¦DodolaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s and ZamÃ¢â ¬â„¢s stories are interwoven with the stories they learned as children, the underpinnings of Islam. This lends not only beauty and texture but also meaning and redemption to their suffering, and ThompsonÃ¢â ¬â„¢s handling of the religious elementsÃ¢â ¬â •something that might have been awkward or controversialÃ¢â ¬â •is restrained and graceful. His black-and-white drawings, often incorporating Arabic script, are at times floaty and feverish but always perfectly clear. He breaks up dreamy exposition with tightly structured action sequences, and the pages couldnÃ¢â ¬â„¢t be prettier. As always, his economical writing is deeply moving. Habibi is a book not to be missed.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œBookpage Ã¢â ¬Å“A fairy tale that's by turns tender and bawdy and brutally darkÃ¢â ¬Â¦Habibi is a stunningly beautiful art object: 672 painstakingly intricate pages that astonish with their sheer level of detail, the way a ship made out of

toothpicks, or the Eiffel Tower up close, astonishes.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œEast Bay ExpressÃ¢â ¬Å“Well-researched (Thompson reportedly worked on this project for more than a decade), this dark and mature adventure tale melds the modern Middle Eastern world with its rich mythology from the Quran, and is detailed with its mix of the areaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s landscape, people, symbology and particularly the Arabic calligraphy in all its ornamentationÃ¢â ¬Â¦a page-turner that might be best consumed in smaller bits to better appreciate the depth and breadth of the story.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œHonolulu Star-AdvertiserÃ¢â ¬Å“These are real people living on the page in ink, and Thompson has sculpted characters that are perfectly imperfectÃ¢â ¬Â¦ Habibi stands as a new masterwork in American comics, and a graphic novel seriously worthy of sharing shelf space with Salman Rushdie and Umberto Eco.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œBleeding Cool Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å“With Habibi, Craig Thompson elevates the graphic novel form to even higher levels.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œGraphicNovelReporter.comÃ¢â ¬Å“Part adventure epic, part exploration of Middle Eastern folklore, Habibi is a work of tremendous scope and jaw-dropping ambitionÃ¢â ¬Â¦ Habibi looks to be Thompson's next great book.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œCritical Mob Ã¢â ¬Å“A massive masterpieceÃ¢â ¬Â¦HabibiÃ¢â ¬â„¢s pages are rich with ornamentation.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œWillamette WeeklyÃ Â Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å“Habibi is a visual banquet, a veritable feast of brushstrokes and intricate detail. Thompson uses eastern design and the beautiful Arabic script to weave the story together in a soft, organic flow that floats along from panel to panel, page to page in rich, breathtaking beautyÃ¢â ¬Â¦a truly magnificent book, one that is compelling, thoughtful, emotional and visually Beautiful.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œComic Book MovieÃ Â Ã¢â ¬Å“A fascinating look at the thinking, tinkering, and creative process behind the making of the iconic comicÃ¢â ¬Â¦MetaMaus offers a rare glimpse inside the mind of a genius storyteller, using Spiegelman's celebrated visual eloquence to illuminate the deeper psychological and sociocultural elements that underpin his thoughtful, provocative, masterful classic.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œThe AtlanticÃ¢â ¬Å“In addition to fine storytelling, Thompson's artwork rose to higher level with Habibi.Ã Â Still operating in black and white, every panel aches with the amount of detail present.Ã Â Sprawling two-page layouts throughout the book just bleed style and substanceÃ¢â ¬Â¦the story is expertly told and drawn.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œTennessee Tech OracleÃ¢â ¬Å“Richly detailedÃ¢â ¬Â¦ Habibi fits in the grand literary tradition of stories about stories and the effect they have on us.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œNational PostÃ Â Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å“The yearÃ¢â ¬â„¢s most critically acclaimed graphic novel.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œWausau Daily HeraldÃ Â Ã¢â ¬Å“Part fable and part history, Habibi is all novel: In the end, you care profoundly for ThompsonÃ¢â ¬â„¢s protagonists.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œTime Out New YorkÃ¢â ¬Å“The magic

here is twofold: Dodola’s love for Zam, which transcends all other loves, and the wise storiesÃ¢â ¬Â¦And what images! Thompson’s brushstrokes give us villains with weight, smoke that wriggles, architecture that positively grows from the page.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œSan Francisco ChronicleÃ Â Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å“Impeccably researched and beautifulÃ¢â ¬Â¦a fount of delight for the attentive reader; a work of staggering ambitionÃ¢â ¬Â¦Habibi was not just written or drawn; it reads like it was practically birthed in a tremendous effort of will.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œWSJ Ã¢â ¬Å“Live MintÃ¢â ¬Â• blog Ã¢â ¬Å“Thompson is a masterful comic book artist with the ability to fill pages with life: the amount of detail he includes in some of his drawings is incredible and astounding, as is the sheer scope of the workÃ¢â ¬Â¦thereÃ¢â ¬â„¢s no denying that Habibi is a work of art.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œWired Magazine, Geek Dad blog Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å“Thompson took the literary establishment by its starched lapels and made the case for graphic novels as capital "A" Art.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œFlavorpill.com Ã¢â ¬Å“A highly anticipated heavy hitter who did deliver was Craig Thompson with Habibi, one of Phil Guie’s choices for best of the year. Massive in scale and ambition, Habibi is essentially a love story of two slaves told through a brilliant integration of classic storytelling and religious iconography.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œCritical Mob, Critical Books of 2011 Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å“Set in a never-named country of the Middle East (or North Africa), Craig ThompsonÃ¢â ¬â„¢s dystopian Habibi is an epic love story, a primer on the Koran, and a cautionary tale about human greed and squandered natural resources, all in one exquisitely rendered volume.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œStraight.comÃ¢â ¬â„¢s best graphic novels of 2011 Ã¢â ¬Å“A gorgeously drawn fairy taleÃ¢â ¬Â¦That it’s a book that supports debate marks it as the most interesting comic of the year. That every one of its 655 pages is tremendously engaging and astonishingly beautiful marks it as the best comic of the year.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œNPR best graphic novels of 2011 Ã¢â ¬Å“Incredibly gorgeous. Expect Habibi to join Maus on college syllabuses soon.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œComic Book Day: Top 5 Comics of 2011Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å“Exotic and lush, yet heartbreaking at times, ThompsonÃ¢â ¬â„¢s book is an exploration of the Islamic culture by one of comicsÃ¢â ¬â„¢ most deft craftsmen.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œNewsOK blog Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å“Staggering in scope and ambition, this massive book (700 pages) delivers page after page of art that your eyes can get lost inÃ¢â ¬Â¦Thompson carries you to someplace new and different, asking for your trust in his pen and ink, and if you give it to him, the rewards are grand.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œComics Waiting Room.comÃ Â Ã¢â ¬Å“A beautifully told and drawn story, as complex in its narrative as in its drawings.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â œOnMilwaukee.com

If you don’t bother to do anything else this year, be sure you get ahold of a copy of this book and

read it! Or should I more appropriately specify: Enjoy it. Relish it. Savor the experience.Mr Thompson has pulled out all the stops here: it is a gorgeous package: huge, well-made and wonderfully designed. The story follows two characters and traverses decades of their lives. It is graphically inventive, well-researched and heartfelt. The art is stunning in every way. Communicates well, lovely to look at.My highest compliment? Craig feels like the grandson of the late, great Will Eisner, both in his deft handling of the story and art. A very rich experience. And it is just a joy to hold. I love tech but digital will NEVER be able to replace the wonderful sensation of holding a big, beautiful book like this, or the tactile experience of touching the covers and the interior paper. It is a book to lose yourself in.It’s even a great value, with almost 700 pages for around $20 (on , at least). Oh, and don’t forget: be sure to buy at least one copy to give away to a good friend! They’ll love you for it.

Honestly, my new favorite book. BEAUTIFUL art. BEAUTIFUL story. There’s a lot of weight, and for those who say its "too graphic", it’s dealing with really serious issues- sexism, racism, slavery, poverty and other very serious subjects that can’t be portrayed nicely. I can’t speak for its accuracy in it’s portrayal of Islam or the area of the world it is set in but- after all, this is a work of FICTION, and is also subject to the interpretations of the author’s unique perspective and the folks who helped him write it. In general- worth your tine; definitely the best graphic novel I’ve ever read.

The book is simply amazing as art -- the creation of so many expertly drawn scenes. Not only does Craig Thompson have the skill to render any scene at all that is real or that he could have imagined, but his lines are more and more masterful with each book. I hardly see how his art can improve, unless he were to change his style entirely.As a story, it is both simple and complex -- simple in lining out the lives of the two characters Dodola and Zam from childhood, through their separation and meeting again, and complex because of the backdrop of culture and even religion that he draws into the story, which may not interest everyone, naturally. The juxtaposing of modern times with what seems to be an ancient world comes slowly until we realize the story setting is quite current. The overbearing nature of both old and new worlds on a poverty stricken individual is striking -- that these two did not fall victim is perhaps the story’s triumph. Sex affects both victims by its inherent practice within the culture; I did not find it gratuitous but rather what I would have expected a young helpless bride or an enslaved girl to go through, the practices of arrogant, dominant males toward women, and how a young man’s might have become a eunuch.I will say that the ending entirely satisfied me. Without spoiling it, the final action of good taken by Dodola and Zam toward another

helpless person is another triumph. How should one’s philosophy and view of life ultimately manifest itself, if not in the choice to do good for someone in need? So despite the almost overwhelming size of the tome, I am solidly happy with the conclusion which Thompson obviously means us to take away with us.

Let me start by saying that I am not much of a big reader and while people can say that this is a graphic novel that doesn’t always require much reading, I still finished this book 2 days after I bought it. I couldn’t put it down. I first found out about it when I went to a comic book store in LA and thought it looked visually great but didn’t pick it up at the time.The art in this book is amazing; it really is a feast for the eyes. The drawings are sublime and the calligraphy is beautiful. A simple yet engaging story will keep you going as you whisk through the pages of this well told story and it’s take on modern issues, tying those very same issues to how the world was years ago.I definitely recommend this book for anyone who wants to read something different for a change. Bear in mind though that it is quite graphic and explicit in most parts of the book but that is how it is impactful and makes its point on issues.

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