

Why Are You Calling Me Barbarian?

By Birgitta Petren, Elisabetta Putini

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It is the 3rd century BC, and as the Roman imperial army travels north followed by a caravan of families, slaves, and livestock, two kids meet at an encampment near Cologne, in today's Germany. Martilla, a young Roman slave girl, and Marbord, the son of a merchant from Scandia, strike an unlikely friendship. As they learn about each other's customs, lifestyles, and lands they discover that calling someone a "barbarian" is strictly a matter of ignorance.
This timely lesson in tolerance--set centuries ago in Europe--shows children how people of different cultures can overcome stereotypes to become friends. The book's quaint illustrations show children the daily life of early Europeans, and a section on the history of Roman and Scandian slavery offers age-appropriate insights on the subject. Also included is a glossary of Germanic and Roman terms and proper names.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly
Originally published in Italy, this pricey volume sets up a stilted dialogue between two children living in the third century A.D.: Martilla, a nine-year-old Roman slave girl, and Marbord, the 11-year-old son of an arms merchant from Scandia. In alternating spreads, the two take turns describing life in their homelands. The book's title refers to the Romans' name for Marbord's tribe; making a feeble stab at humor, the authors have the boy challenge Martilla, "Come on, last one in is a barbarian!" as he suggests a swim in the river. The youngsters uncover differences and similarities in their respective lifestyles (housing, food, clothing, gods, burial rituals, etc.). Though the narrators reveal some lively particulars, an excess of extraneous reactions ("Do you really wash your feet before eating? Why on earth would you do that?") and vague, lackluster passages ("In our village, we do everything by ourselves. Everyone has to pitch in so that we'll have everything we need by the time winter comes") slow the pacing. The cartoonish artwork fills in period details but doesn't do much to help characterize Martilla or Marbord. Ages 10-up. (Dec.)
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From School Library Journal
Grade 2-5-When 9-year-old Martilla, a slave girl who is traveling north with the Roman army, meets Marbord, the 11-year-old son of a Scandinavian merchant, they compare their lives and become friends. The alternating narratives are rather breathless, with many exclamation points, but present the information in a lively manner. The cartoonlike illustrations are helpful in showing unfamiliar customs, clothing, and architecture. Small pictures of the children identify who is speaking on each page. Marbord says that his "family are descendants of a Germanic tribe. The Romans call us 'barbarians' because they think that we're stupid. Maybe they don't know that the word 'barbarian' means 'traveler' or 'foreigner.'" As the youngsters discuss their houses, food, work, and entertainment, readers learn about daily life in ancient times. Some of the more difficult aspects of society are introduced but not explained in detail. "[S]ome slaves in Rome are much worse off than I am," says Martilla, and "Some slaves are gladiators, fighting for their lives against beasts and men in the amphitheater." Although the words are serious, the illustration depicts a nervous-looking man trying to appease a lion with a box of popcorn. Many terms are explained in the context of the story but a detailed glossary is also included. A serviceable discussion starter for students studying ancient civilizations or examining issues of prejudice.
Lucinda Snyder Whitehurst, St. Christopher's School, Richmond, VA
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Language Notes
Text: English (translation)
Original Language: Italian

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jennifer McNab:

The ability that you get from Why Are You Calling Me Barbarian? could be the more deep you rooting the information that hide within the words the more you get thinking about reading it. It does not mean that this

book is hard to know but Why Are You Calling Me Barbarian? giving you thrill feeling of reading. The article author conveys their point in selected way that can be understood simply by anyone who read it because the author of this reserve is well-known enough. This particular book also makes your vocabulary increase well. So it is easy to understand then can go along, both in printed or e-book style are available. We highly recommend you for having this Why Are You Calling Me Barbarian? instantly.

Tara Huber:

Playing with family in a park, coming to see the ocean world or hanging out with good friends is thing that usually you have done when you have spare time, then why you don't try point that really opposite from that. Just one activity that make you not experience tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you are ride on and with addition of knowledge. Even you love Why Are You Calling Me Barbarian?, you are able to enjoy both. It is good combination right, you still would like to miss it? What kind of hang type is it? Oh seriously its mind hangout men. What? Still don't understand it, oh come on its known as reading friends.

Kerstin Torres:

This Why Are You Calling Me Barbarian? is great reserve for you because the content that is full of information for you who all always deal with world and also have to make decision every minute. That book reveal it info accurately using great organize word or we can say no rambling sentences inside. So if you are read that hurriedly you can have whole information in it. Doesn't mean it only provides you with straight forward sentences but tough core information with splendid delivering sentences. Having Why Are You Calling Me Barbarian? in your hand like keeping the world in your arm, data in it is not ridiculous one particular. We can say that no publication that offer you world throughout ten or fifteen tiny right but this e-book already do that. So , this really is good reading book. Hey Mr. and Mrs. busy do you still doubt in which?

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