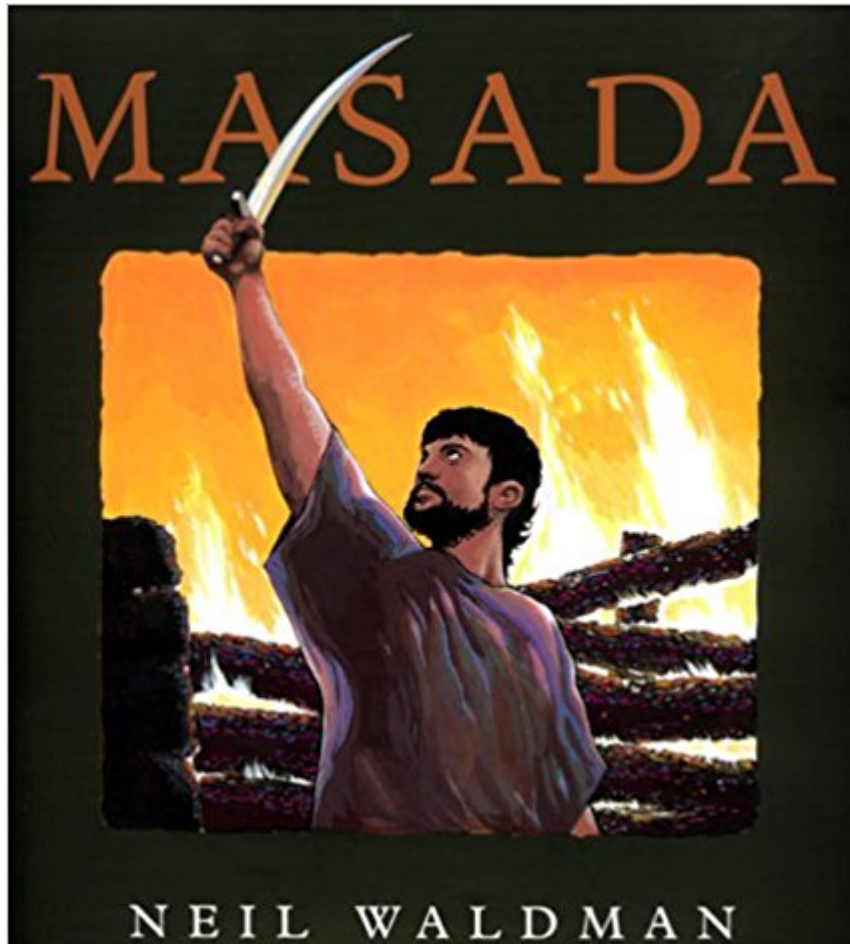




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Masada



Synopsis

Masada shall not fall again! Both a rallying cry for modern-day Israel and an inspiration to the world, the siege of Masada took place in the first century C.E., when a small group of Jewish rebels defended their lives and their freedom against the overwhelming might of Rome. With his meticulously researched, event-filled text and illustrations that capture the great desert fortress then and now. Neil Waldman dramatizes the ancient story behind the ruins of Masada and the contemporary efforts by archaeologists to uncover its secrets.

Book Information

Age Range: 9 and up

Hardcover: 64 pages

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Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 1 customer review

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Customer Reviews

Waldman (The Golden City) returns to Israel for this tribute to the legendary citadel, encompassing over 2000 years of history. A towering fortress built on a rock plateau in what is now the Negev desert, Masada was the last remaining Jewish stronghold in the Holy Land until it fell to the Romans in 73 C.E. In a frankly partisan approach, the author traces the history of Masada, built by Herod in the first century B.C.E., to the Masada Archaeological Expedition of 1963. Waldman is most compelling when he recreates pivotal scenes in detail, such as the last stand of the Zealots as they attempt to ward off the Romans from Masada. Unfortunately, readers may find much of the history confusing, as important figures are mentioned offhandedly (for example, six brief paragraphs cover Josephus Flavius; yet Flavius, a Jewish leader who joined the Romans, is later cited as the author of the pivotal account that led to the rediscovery of Masada in the 19th century), and obvious

omissions may prove troubling to readers (e.g., in the opening chapter, set in Jerusalem in 66 C.E., hundreds of persecuted Jews hang from wooden crosses, yet there is not even a passing reference to Christ and his followers). The most vexing gap occurs when the text mentions "Israel's greatest archaeologist, Yigael Yadin," in a chapter set in 1838, then leaps ahead to Yadin's expedition in 1963. More successful is Waldman's use of halftone paintings, which effectively convey a feeling of antiquity as well as the austerity and drama of the desert landscape. While this history may pique readers' interest in the controversial fortress, they may well walk away from this book with more questions than answers. Ages 10-up. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Grade 4-6-Built by King Herod during the first century B.C.E. as a stronghold to protect himself and his followers from the Romans, the fortress of Masada still stands on top of a steep plateau in the Judean wilderness. Waldman has written a concise account of the escape to Masada of a group of Jewish Zealots and of their valiant stand against the massive, well-equipped Roman legions of the emperor Vespasian. The standoff ended in 71 C.E. when the Roman army forced slaves to build a huge ramp of earth and rocks, pulled an enormous assault tower into position, and overpowered the last remnant of Jewish civilization in the Middle East. The narrative is based on the detailed firsthand account recorded by Josephus Flavius, a young Jewish leader who swore allegiance to the Romans in order to stay alive. Waldman dramatizes the story by adding dialogue-a tactic that gives a fictional quality to the otherwise carefully researched text. Descriptions of the rediscovery and excavation of the site are also included. Dramatic illustrations and two large maps, all in charcoal shades of acrylic and india ink, show realistic scenes, many of them painted from photos, relief sculptures, and artifacts found during the excavation of Masada. This is the only available account for young people of the Roman wars against the Jews of Jerusalem and Masada. Susan Scheps, Shaker Heights Public Library, OH Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

A history of the conquering of Israel, and especically Masada, by the Roman Empire. A brief discussion of the Archaeological site as it exists today. Interesting and accurate portrayal. Contains very good black and white illustrations and will be of interest to those of the Jewish faith, those who are interested in Israel, the Jewish history, or those with Jewish friends. I recommend this book to students from the 4th grade up. Teachers and parents will also find this interesting.

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