

Book Review/Report

Black Ships Before Troy



Level 8

Most people have heard of Homer's Iliad in history books, but the story was always summarized in a few succinct paragraphs. I will tell about a book that truthfully narrates the story and is also beautifully portrayed in pictures. Black Ships Before Troy by Rosemary Sutcliff is a tale of blood and gore. Today I will judge if it was worth reading or not by analyzing the plot of the book.

In the beginning, the beautiful queen Helen is carried away by Paris of Troy. Soon after, Menelaus, Helen's rightful husband, sets off after her along with the rest of the Achean warriors, some to reclaim Helen and some for an excuse to fight. They arrive at Troy and immediately a huge battle ensues, lasting for ten long years.

At the end of ten years, Achilles, the invulnerable fighter of the Achean army, leaves the fight because of a quarrel with Agamemnon, Menelaus' brother. Because of his folly, Achilles' sword brother, Patroclus, soon falls by the hand of Hector, the leader of the Trojan army. Mad with grief and sorrow, Achilles makes a vow to live only to kill Hector. Achilles accomplishes this, but he in turn is slain by Paris, Hector's brother. The Greeks lose heart, but a soothsayer tells them they need a legendary archer, Philoctetes by name, to defeat the Trojans. They fetch Philoctetes, and he kills Paris, destroying the Trojans' last reason for keeping Helen. Odysseus then steals the Luck of Troy, a stone in the middle of Troy that the Trojan people thought would protect them from harm. They were now in great despair, but they would not give up Helen. Ultimately, the Achaeans build a wooden horse and use it to storm Troy, thus reclaiming Helen. The Achaeans sail away from the ruins of Troy and live happily ever after.

This writer has used the correct format for a Book review, using the three body paragraphs for summarizing the content and the conclusion for his/her criticisms.

While the three body paragraphs are meant for summary, it would be a good idea to discuss writing style and characterization as well.



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As appropriate, the book report ends by telling whether the writer thinks the book is worthwhile. It is flawed, though, by not explaining how an implausible way to take Troy produces a satisfying conclusion.

Black Ships Before Troy does not have a climactic ending because of the implausible way in which the Achaeans take Troy (by hiding in a wooden horse and then taking the city during the night), but it is well written with beautiful illustrations. It has suspense that keeps you reading, and it also has a satisfying conclusion. All in all, Black Ships Before Troy is a very good book and everyone should enjoy reading it because of its suspense and beautiful illustrations.