

Booklist

Advance Review - Uncorrected Proof

Macedonia. [Pekar, Harvey - Author; Roberson, Heather - Author; Piskor, Ed - Illustrator]. Price: 17.95; Publisher: Villard; ISBN: 0345498992 (paperback). Dewey: 949.7603. Issue: MY2, 2007;

REVIEW

Challenged by a good argument with a political-science professor, peace-studies undergrad Roberson went to Macedonia, the small Balkan country that has avoided war despite suffering stresses very similar to those of tumultuous Kosovo. She met and talked with academics, government and NGO officials, and ordinary citizens, trying to find out how Macedonia remained at peace. She came back with no firm answers, though she had discovered several earnest efforts devoted to resolving conflict and promoting national solidarity. She also heard disparagement of those attempts on all sides and plenty of prejudice against one another among ethnic Macedonians, Albanians, and Turks. She hung out with Western-educated natives and other young foreigners as intrigued by the country as she, and came back loving Macedonian hospitality and good-fellowship. Fortunately, she told her story to nonfiction comics author Pekar, who skillfully prepared the book's text and basic layout. Unfortunately, artist Piskor isn't as skillful. The figuration is stiff, perspective is often uncertain, and Piskor seems never to have been inside an airliner or a taxi. Intrinsically interesting content and excellent panel-by-panel planning are the book's saving strengths.

- Ray Olson