

By Water: The Felix Manz Story

Jason Landsel

Richard Mommsen, Illustrator

Sankha Banerjee, Illustrator

Plough Publishing (Mar 21, 2023)

Softcover \$19.95 (144pp)

978-1-63608-053-6

Drawing on historical records and imaginative recreations, *By Water* is the graphic biography of a leading figure of the Radical Reformation.

In the early sixteenth century, Felix Manz, a Swiss Anabaptist, protested against the baptism of infants, believing that one needed to make a conscious choice to become a Christian. The view was not popular among the establishment, though. After a betrayal by a former ally, Manz and his fellow Anabaptists were threatened with imprisonment and death by drowning—seen as an ironic punishment for those who refused to have their children baptized or who conducted adult baptisms.

Here, Manz is developed as a fearless crusader for his convictions—the ultimate heroic figure. This dramatization of his story is tense, compelling, and informative, with thorough explorations of the differences between one religious group and another told in an exciting narrative style that delivers information as a seamless part of the action.

The artwork's detailed lines and soft pastel colors make for a sublime combination, and the unique single- and double-page spreads rival the beauty of the centuries-old historical artwork sprinkled among their pages. The appendix includes text from several documents of the era as well as an illustrated guide to the people covered, a timeline, and a bibliography.

By Water is a remarkable graphic novel about the life and death of a notable Christian reformer.

PETER DABBENE (March / April 2023)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the publisher for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.