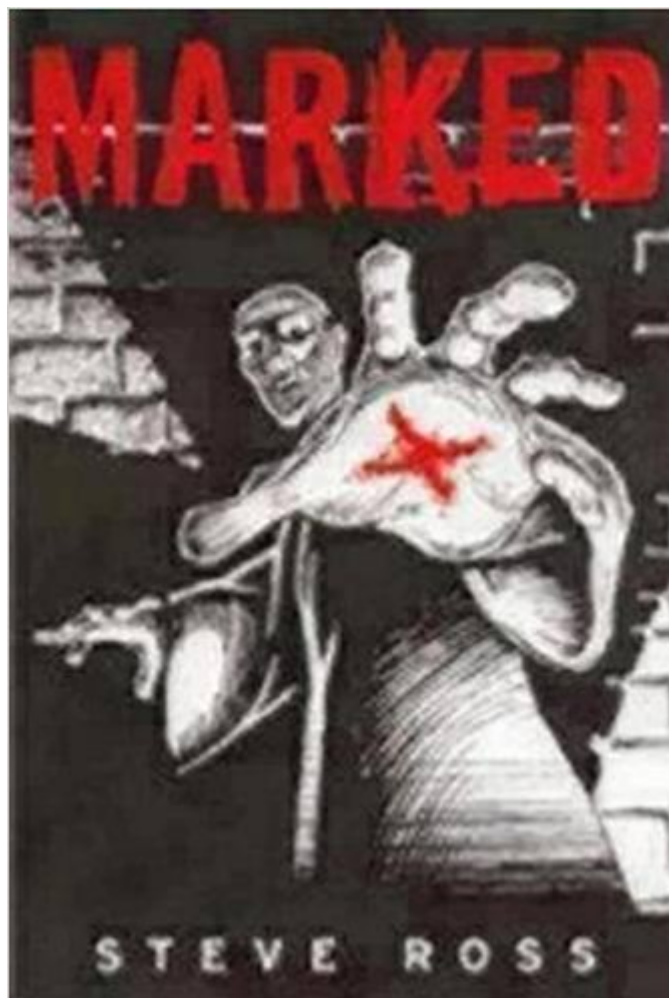


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Marked



Synopsis

An occupied country. A people infested with demons. a time of revolution. a liberator rises. One of the oldest and most powerful stories in human history comes uniquely alive in this telling of the Gospel of Mark. Join a carpenter as he changes the world. And join Steve Ross as he re-imagines the ancient story, with all of its power and mystery intact. Told with unexpected and startling imagery, *Marked* will forever change the way you think about this both familiar and strange tale. This is a human story of passion and murder. Of a compassionate man brutally killed and yet compellingly alive.

Book Information

Paperback: 180 pages

Publisher: SEABURY BOOKS (September 1, 2005)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1596270020

ISBN-13: 978-1596270022

Product Dimensions: 7 x 0.4 x 10.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.8 out of 5 stars 21 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #337,049 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #13 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Children's & Teens > Teens > Bible Stories](#) #73 in [Books > Comics & Graphic Novels > Graphic Novels > Religion & Spirituality](#) #328 in [Books > Teens > Religion & Spirituality](#)

Customer Reviews

Steve Ross An occupied country. A people infested with demons. a time of revolution. a liberator rises. One of the oldest and most powerful stories in human history comes uniquely alive in this telling of the Gospel of Mark. Join a carpenter as he changes the world. And join Steve Ross as he re-imagines the ancient story, with all of its power and mystery intact. Told with unexpected and startling imagery, *Marked* will forever change the way you think about this both familiar and strange tale. This is a human story of passion and murder. Of a compassionate man brutally killed and yet compellingly alive.

Steve Ross began his professional career as a teenager in San Antonio, Texas, selling pictures of angst-ridden, dark and disturbing surrealist art to his friends and teachers. After high school he soon

landed a job drawing pictures of dining room tables for a local furniture company, and was surprised when the owner became upset that he was drawing dark and disturbing surrealist furniture for the company's newspaper ads. They parted company. Steve works as a professional illustrator and resides in New York City.

I picked up a copy of Steve Ross's *Marked* a couple of years ago, flipped through it, and for some reason was unimpressed and put it aside. I read it more thoroughly recently, and it knocked my socks off. Ross has succeeded in re-telling Mark's gospel in a way that avoids sickly piety or slick preachiness. His rejuvenation of biblical scenes that have become too familiar or too institutionalized is incredible. Through his imaginative reconstruction, Ross actually succeeds in making Mark's gospel interesting, relevant, and--*mirabilis dictu!*--plausible. Ross's *Marked* is as much an indictment of contemporary American Christianity as it is a re-telling of Mark. The true believers--the Pharisees of Jesus' day--are drawn as properly attired respectable church-goers. But each of them--clergy included--wears a blindfold. They have eyes, but don't wish to see, and when the Jesus figure of the book, an androgynous figure who looks anything but the typically bearded guy we associate with Jesus, rips off the blindfolds, the sudden light is painful. And speaking of atypical representations: the twelve apostles are wonderfully drawn as genuine social outcasts. They include a spike-haired punkster, a couple of dimwits, John Deere-capped yahoos, a glamorous hooker, a blind, near-autistic kid, and so on. Losers and misfits, everyone--yet absolutely, unconditionally embraced by this strange man called Jesus. But the Jesus of *Marked* shouldn't be mistaken for the Jesus meek-and-mild creampuff of Sunday School fame. That's the kind of Jesus that the respectable blindfolded worshippers want. Ross's Jesus is a man who loathes injustice, cruelty, and stupidity, and isn't afraid to attack it. As he shouts while disrupting the Temple moneychangers, "For the last time, I'm Not NICE!" Ross's visual imagining of Mark's gospel is astoundingly creative, but stubbornly loyal to the spirit and message of the gospel. The Pharisees who try to fast-talk Jesus into a corner are depicted as manic-eyed and creepy game show hosts; the rich young man who asks what he must do to be saved carries a mountain of (oppressive) luxuries on his back; Roman soldiers are depicted as helmeted, sunglassed state troopers; the death and resurrection of Jairus' daughter becomes an exploitable media-moment; and the angel in the empty tomb (which has a street address of 1546, corresponding to Mark 15:46) is the sad clown Canio from the opera "Pagliacci." What creativity! Read Ross's *Marked*, then re-read Mark's Mark. Things will be different--but also the same.

With my newly revived interest in old and new, well-done comic books-slash-graphic novels (think ASTONISHING X-MEN, think SANDMAN, think WATCHMEN, think SUPREME POWERS), I had to rush here to .com for a copy of MARKED. I first saw it featured at novelist Chris Well's nifty blog. This re-imagination of the gospel of Mark sounded like something I should "taste and see." It arrived on a Friday. I read it the next Saturday, in one sitting. Loved it. Why? MARKED is clever. It's got attitude. It's got gentle moments of compassion. It's got strong visuals that mix a bag of emotions together and toss them at you. It's got humor. It captures the essence of what the evangelist wrote: a very active Son of God, a very troubled world, imperfect followers, even more imperfect antagonists, wisdom, courage, mercy, grace, death, and victory over death. I recommend it. I dare you not to laugh at mad-eyed John the Baptizer and the running headlines that cover the main events of that prophet's activities--even as you'll be horrified (rightly so) by the front page spread of his demise and its timeliness given some of our recent front page news. I dare you not to be thrilled at some really fine creative moments, such as the Gadarene's encounter with the Christ or the incident of transfiguration on the mount. I dare you not to feel ferklempt over the incident of Christ's meeting with the leper. I dare you not to holler, "Cool!" every few pages. And do tell me if you've seen the resurrection handled anywhere quite like this, ever. I haven't. I had to actually stop and ...STOP. No, really, I had one of those blank moments of, "What?" And I had to think. I like when creative folk make me stop and think. I like when creative folk stir things up. Steve Ross achieves this with MARKED. The Mir's thumb is way up. Side Note: You can also play, "Find the famous person" with this. Can you find a great black leader? Can you find the is-he-dead-or-isn't-he rocker? Anyone else? Shameless Gift Suggestion: Christmas is upon us. If you have a comic book lover in your family, or if you know a reader who needs to be slapped with a zingy graphical gospel that will whet their appetite for a visit to the original, or if you just love someone and want to thrill them, get this as a gift for that person. A slightly different version of this review with helpful links to an article with Steve Ross and to Chris Well's Nifty Blog may be found at: [...]

Sub-par retelling

Readers familiar and unfamiliar with the Gospel according to Mark will both find much to appreciate in Steve Ross's retelling. He really internalized the story and then retold it from his perspective. This version will surprise many readers who have no interest in the Gospel, or who think they understand it and have dismissed it. It will also be of great use to people who love the Gospel, but need to re-learn some parts of it. Either way, I suggest reading Marked on its own, and then read through it

again alongside a more widely used translation (like the New International Version of the Gospel of Mark, to see the parallels. This is a remarkable work. I hope to see more retellings of Scripture in the future.

VERY though provoking and a good companion piece to the study of the book of Mark. May use this idea for church high school youth study project.

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