



Loyal Creatures

Books Reviewed:

[Loyal Creatures](#) [1]

Issue:

[209](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[Anne Faundez](#) [3]

[New to the Choice](#):

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

This compelling story brings an Australian perspective to the First World War. It's 1914 and sixteen-year-old Frank is desperate to enlist. He's far too young to fight, besides which Dad promised his dying mother to keep him safe until he's at least eighteen. But soon he and Dad become too impatient to wait, especially now that Frank is all fired up and Dad has received an anonymous white feather for cowardice. They chuck in their jobs as water borers and join the Australian Light Horse, taking their beloved horses Daisy and Jimmy with them. Their destination is Egypt, where after many grim weeks at sea, they begin their training. Shortly after, Dad sets off for the Dardanelles, leaving Frank to face the future alone. As Frank engages in war, so the nightmare begins, his days engulfed in horror and grief, his love for Daisy his only comfort.

It's hard not to get caught up in this gripping story, based on real events, whose fictional characters echo the experiences of the Australian volunteers in the First World War. It is, in addition, a tender account of the bond between a young boy and his horse, and of the historic role played by the hardy but inelegant breed of horse - the Waler - and their fate at war's end. Narrated from Frank's point of view, the story races along in an intimate, almost breathless staccato-like manner. The broken sentences and phrases, slang and colloquial dialogue allow the reader to enter Frank's space - his feelings, thoughts and actions - and add a sense of urgency to the unfolding story. This is a compelling read, unflinching in its portrayal of war and moving in its depiction of courage.

Source URL (retrieved on Aug '20): <http://w.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/209/childrens-books/reviews/loyal-creatures>

Links:

[1] <http://w.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/loyal-creatures>

[2] <http://w.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/209>

[3] <http://w.booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/anne-faundez>