

The Masada Stones: A Novel

E. W. Bonadio

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Reviewed by Richard R. Blake for Reader Views (6/08)

E. W. Bonadio brilliantly combines ancient history, fast-paced adventure, mythology, and deception in his novel "The Masada Stones." Aaron Skorsky, an American professor and archeologist, has spent his entire career intrigued by the story of the Masada stones and the legend purporting that Josephus, the Jewish first-century historian had written a retraction of his account regarding a Roman plan for the annihilation of Hebrew zealots and the alchemy of the Masada stones.

Tension, excitement, academic rivalry, terrorism, and romance move the plot forward as Aaron seeks to find and proclaim the truth behind the myth of the power of the stones.

Bonadio weaves his plot around a politically-charged environment of the Middle East and a specific period of Israeli and Roman history. He intricately and realistically brings to life the possible explanations for the effort to change the veracity of the reporting of an historical event.

The great non-stop action and strong character development take the reader on an archeological student dig at Masada. A bright, young, American coed uncovers scrolls that lead to the discovery of a box containing the mysterious Masada Stones. The Israeli Army, the government secret service, a Palestinian spy, and a terrorist cell group in Jerusalem compete to retrieve the stones to use in surreptitious operations as weapons against their enemy.

A rich widow, and benefactor of the Masada dig, mother of the coed that made the discovery of the scrolls, is kidnapped by the Palestinians. Skorsky saves her life and becomes emotionally and romantically involved. He discovers that he has missed an important purpose in life in his pursuit to resolve the myth of the Masada stones.

Bonadio's writing is creative and ingenious. He takes the reader on a wonderful, imaginative, and vicarious journey. His dialog is strong and intelligent. The descriptive settings are vivid and realistic. The quest for the academic truth is convincing and challenging. The dramatic climax is thought provoking haunting, and memorable. The message behind the "Masada Stones" will linger, long, in the subconscious mind of the reader.

"The Masada Stones," by E. W. Bonadio, is a truly great read.