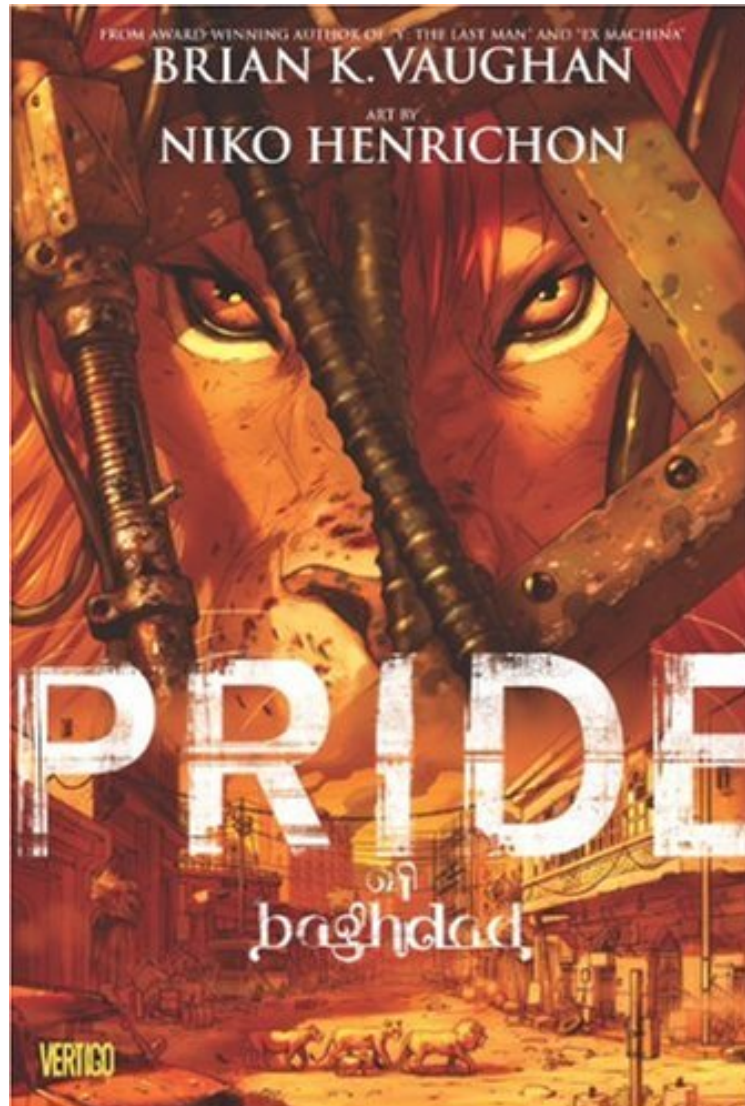


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## Pride of Baghdad

*Brian K. Vaughan, Niko Henrichon*  
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#161282 in Books DC Vertigo 2008-01-02 2008-01-02Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 10.10 x .30 x 6.80l, .51 #File Name: 1401203159136 pagesPride of Baghdad | File size: 41.Mb

**Brian K. Vaughan, Niko Henrichon : Pride of Baghdad** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Pride of Baghdad:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A little let down by this one.By Alex TateI went into this book with HIGH expectations. Sadly, it was nowhere near as amazing as the blurbs on the cover led me to expect.The dialogue feels awkward and contrived at times. I know this sounds weird, but the lions just don't speak the way I would expect lions to speak. It's hard to explain, but something just feels off.There is not much complexity to the characters and their interactions. There is really no character progression. It feels like there should be more there.However, the art is

absolutely STUNNING. I almost wish that this story would've been told with no dialogue. Just the beautiful artwork. It was by far the best part. Still, for all of its problems, I did enjoy the book and Vaughn's exploration of power, freedom, and captivity. 3 stars  
3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Never meets its potential  
By Brian Scoggins  
I think the mark of a mediocre work is that criticism attacks not what it does, but what it does not. *Pride of Baghdad* is, to be blunt, 136 pages that should've been 3 times that. For such a compelling premise, the authors seem rushed. The historical basis plainly states that after several days without eating, the starving lions break free (well, dig free, according to the BBC) and die at the hands of American troops, but the entirety of the story covers a single afternoon, from unexpected threatened starvation to unexpected freedom to unexpected death. This appears nitpicky, I admit, but it seems like the narrative set up requires a sequence of events that could occur over 4 hours or less. As the more negative reviews said, the allegory seems shoehorned in and ham-fisted, the authors always ready to slap you across the face with their meta-story. More frustratingly, the finale follows no build-up, and (since I had not familiarized myself with the backstory ahead of time) incredibly arbitrary, as if the writer had just run out of ideas. Are the lives of anthropomorphized lions so boring that it takes only a few hours to illustrate the entirety of the interesting things they might do in a war zone? Why did they limit the things lions do to just hunting and bickering? Lions are, for instance, legendary sleepers, but the interesting question of "where and how would a lion sleep during a war?" remains frustratingly unraised, let alone answered. The lions themselves are caricatures, one-dimensional cardboard cutouts of characters that neither progress nor show any real depth. There is a clear attempt early in the book to provide some via a flashback, but as the only one, it seems odd that the one they keep depicts lion-rape, and apparently serves as the case-in-point justification for that character's gruff exterior (but not at all her stock-character-required gooey center). In one instance, a lion sees a painting of a lion with wings, and clearly wants to discuss it, but in literally the next panel, that conversation is cut off by her compatriot's (and presumably the author's, since the book ends 12 pages later) need to advance the narrative. The authors present an interesting, if Disney-esque idea about the nature of animals in the zoo, some being religious, some acting as petty gangsters, but then completely fail to examine the consequences of those natures. If the turtle has interesting things to say about people and their wars, why not other animals, the birds for instance? The bear in the story explicitly tells us that it knows a lot more about the world than our protagonist lions. Rather than even providing the clichéd monologue of your standard comic book super-villain, the authors cut to elsewhere, where yet another opportunity to fill us in on how the lions are actually responding to the world around them is wasted. As I said, this book is mediocre. I liked it on a panel-by-panel basis, but there is a good idea on virtually every single page that goes unexplored. I don't want to suggest motivations for the authors, but given their track record, I can only assume *Pride of Baghdad*'s brevity resulted from Vertigo, the DC imprint dedicated to publishing experimental and long-form books, not wanting to risk publishing an experimental, long-form book.  
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Abruptly ended...  
By Ethan  
The story was pretty good, characters were interesting, art was good. However it was printed on just regular paper instead of the nice high gloss thick pages so that's why I gave it 4 stars. Also it just kind of ends. There is a decent beginning and middle part but in my personal opinion, I think the ending was kind of crammed into the last few pages.

"Deeply moving." *LOS ANGELES TIMES BOOK REVIEW* "Lavishly drawn, and devastating. Vaughan has his marvelously imagined characters debate the concept of freedom versus desire for safety the total effect is memorable." *PUBLISHERS WEEKLY*, starred "This is an important work, strongly recommended for all adult collections." *LIBRARY JOURNAL*, starred "Seems destined to cement the reputation of Brian K. Vaughan as one of the best writers to grace the medium in many years." *VARIETY* "The startlingly original look at life on the streets of Baghdad during the Iraq War inspired by true events arrives in a stunning new softcover edition. In his award-winning work on *Y: THE LAST MAN* and *EX MACHINA* (one of Entertainment Weekly's 2005 Ten Best Fiction titles), writer Brian K. Vaughan has displayed an understanding of both the cost of survival and the political nuances of the modern world. Now, in this provocative graphic novel, Vaughan examines life on the streets of war-torn Iraq. The experience is made all the more evocative by the lush, spectacular artwork of Niko Henrichon. In the spring of 2003, a pride of lions escaped from the Baghdad Zoo during an American bombing raid. Lost and confused, hungry but finally free, the four lions roamed the decimated streets of Baghdad in a desperate struggle for their lives. In documenting the plight of the lions, *PRIDE OF BAGHDAD* raises questions about the true meaning of liberation - can it be given, or is it earned only through self-determination and sacrifice? And in the end, is it truly better to die free than to live life in captivity?"

From School Library Journal  
Grade 9 Up  
A heartbreaking look at what it's like to live in a war zone. Inspired by true events, this story tells of four lions that escape from the Baghdad Zoo during a bombing raid in 2003 and encounter other animals that offer unique perspectives, such as a tortoise that survived World War I. They begin to question the nature of freedom. Can it be achieved without being earned? What is its price? What do the lions owe the zookeepers who took care of them at the cost of keeping them in captivity? Where should they go? What should they eat? The four lions soon realize that a desert city is nothing like the grassy savannas of their memories. Their experiences mirror

those of the Iraqi citizens displaced by the conflict. The book succeeds as a graphic novel and as an account of the current crisis. Henrichon's full palette emphasizes browns and grays that evoke the sands of the country, while his long brushstrokes and careful attention to detail reflect the precise and minimalist dialogue that Vaughan uses. An allegorical tale with compelling and believable characters, *Baghdad* makes it clear that without self-determination, there can be no freedom.

Erin Dennington, Chantilly Regional Library, Fairfax, VA  
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About the Author  
Brian K. Vaughan is the Eisner and Harvey Award-winning co-creator of many critically acclaimed comic books, including *Saga*, *Y: The Last Man*, *Ex Machina*, *Runaways*, and *Pride of Baghdad*. A professional comics writer since his days as an undergraduate film student at New York University, Brian has written every major DC and Marvel character from Batman to the X-Men. He's also written several screenplays, stage plays and short stories, but mostly, he likes to work on the funnybooks. He also served as writer and story editor on the hit TV series *Lost*.

Niko Henrichon is a Canadian comic book artist best known as the artist of the critically acclaimed graphic novel *Pride of Baghdad* written by Brian K. Vaughan. His first major work was the Vertigo original graphic novel titled *Barnum!* written by Howard Chaykin and David Tischman. Henrichon's pencils have also been seen in the pages of *Superman* from DC Comics, *Star Wars Tales* from Dark Horse Comics, and *Micronauts* from Marvel Comics.