

SPOTLIGHT



21 October 2016

One of the more quirky mysteries in the north is how and why a suit of Samurai armour wound up in a Fort Smith museum. Richard Van Camp, who also hails from Fort Smith, has fun with this fact while composing a quick action story with a few loftier themes.

The Eisner Award nominated graphic novel *A Blanket of Butterflies* tells the story of Shinobu who has traveled to Fort Smith to return the ancestral suit along with a family sword. The sword, unfortunately, is not being held at the museum but a notorious local group led by "Benny the Bank." They are not as willing to hand it over.

After some intense fight scenes, it is an elder woman who saves the day through her powerful storytelling. She is able to get to the root of and deflate the anger. Soon the sword, too, is back in its rightful hands.

Clearly the healing power of stories is a theme, but I also enjoyed the parallels between Shinobu's struggles to reclaim familial artifacts and the struggles that many First Nations have had in reclaiming their ancestral artifacts from museums.

I appreciated Henderson's art, especially the montage of fight scenes. He uses a lot of hatching and cross-hatching to achieve shadow and enhance expression that could have gotten lost had they chosen to go with colour, but fortunately it's done in black and white. Also, of course, black and white lends a historical vibe which is perfect for a story such as this, one entrenched in history.

Richard Van Camp will be visiting Yellowknife in early November to celebrate his remarkable 20 books in 20 years achievement. There are many events scheduled across the city and it all kicks off with a screening of *The Lesser Blessed* at Yellowknife Public Library on November 1st starting at 6:30 p.m. (in partnership with Western Arctic Moving Pictures).

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