

Wonder Woman: Tempest Tossed by Laurie Halse Anderson

In this new graphic novel, readers are treated to a completely fresh take on Wonder Woman's origin story. Laurie Halse Anderson and Leila del Duca start out by showing what life is like for Princess Diana of Themyscira leading up to her 16th birthday. She comes across as a pretty normal teenager, dealing with things like acne and mood swings. Because she's the only one of the Amazons to go through puberty, they don't really know what she's going through, so the island's healers study her growth and have taken to calling her "the Changeling."

On Diana's 16th birthday, the barrier that keeps the island from view of mortals is damaged and some refugees wash up on the beach of Themyscira. Diana jumps in to save those that are still in the water, and ends up on the other side of the barrier after it is repaired. This makes her a refugee in the mortal world. She ends up in a refugee camp in Greece, and quickly finds the attention of members of the United Nations who take her to New York City since she can speak so many languages. She is placed with a woman named Henke and her teenaged granddaughter Raissa. Raissa introduced Diana to local activism, by making lunches for the neighborhood children who are food insecure while on summer vacation from school. In the process she learns of the other problems facing those in Henke and Raissa's borough, which are numerous.

The plot is very timely, looking at real issues the world is currently facing, such as immigration, child trafficking, homelessness, and gentrification, among many others. Diana quite literally jumps in to help immediately, because she wants to do everything she can in order to help everyone she comes across. I really appreciated the fact that any time Diana or other characters are speaking in another language, there is a note recognizing which language it is. It might seem like a small thing, but it helps illustrate the fact that it is difficult for refugees when there is a language barrier.

The art is beautiful, with an interestingly subdued color palette. The blues and oranges give this such a different vibe than most superhero graphic novels. It was so interesting to read about Diana before she becomes Wonder Woman, where she is more vulnerable and more human, while still exuding that strength and determination that she's known for. This is a fascinating take on the character, and one that I would happily read a continuation of.

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