

Adventure for middle grade readers

O'Neill delivers heroism with a lesson in decision making

It is only coincidence that “Ghosts of the Hindu Kush,” the latest installment in Joe O’Neill’s “Red Hand Adventures,” a series for middle grade readers, begins in the very part of the world that many are now focused on.

The series follows three young adventurers, Tariq, Fez and Aseem. Since meeting in Tangier, Morocco, in 1912, the three have dealt with pirates, rogues and despots over the course of four books. “Rebels of the Kasbah” was the first volume, followed by “Wrath of the Caid,” “Legends of the Rif,” and “Thieves of the Black Sea.”

Now “Ghosts of the Hindu Kush” picks up the tale, as the three friends arrive from sailing the Black Sea to the port of Rostov-on-Don, a Russian trading post, where the three are met by a dangerous group of characters. Previous adventures have given these friends plenty of practice in handling these sorts of threats,

This week’s book

‘Ghosts of the Hindu Kush’ by Joe O’Neill
Black Ship Publishing — 276 pp — \$24.95

but still more peril lies ahead. According to the prophecy of the Red Hand, the trio is entrusted with delivering an ancient diary to India, and the changing markings of a mysterious map point them on a route through the Hindu Kush region, notorious for both challenging terrain and treacherous inhabitants.

And the three friends’ journey is not the only adventure in this tale. Other story strands involve additional characters introduced in the previous books. Margaret, a British girl once held captive in Morocco with the three friends, has since been liberated and now flies undercover missions in World War I with her British officer dad.

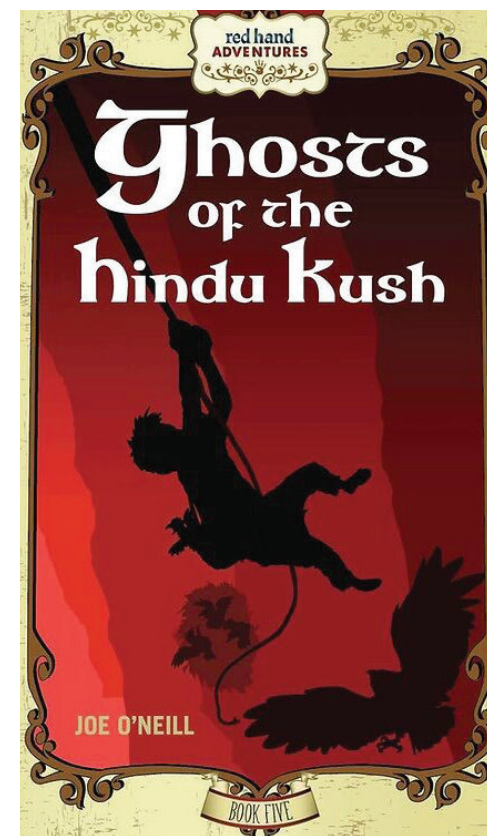
Inez, a French girl, now serves as a nurse on the front lines. To her shock, she finds that one of the prisoners of war she attends to is

Reinhold, a German boy who once provided her with shelter years earlier. Also, masterminding many of the difficulties these young people confront, antagonist Razikov yearns for global anarchy, and will stop at little to achieve his goal.

O’Neill, the book’s author and a Hood River businessman, goes beyond heroic adventure to deliver readers lessons in cross-cultural history, literature and ethics.

Ensuring that his idealistic young characters confront moral dilemmas as well as physical danger, the author conveys to his readers the complicated motivations of decision making, as well as the potential long-term consequences of actions taken. The optimum way to dive into O’Neill’s terrific series is to start with the first book and read through each sequentially, ending with this most recent addition.

The Bookmonger is Barbara Lloyd McMichael, who writes this weekly column focusing on books, authors and publishers of the Pacific Northwest. Contact her at barbaralmcm@gmail.com.



‘Ghosts of the Hindu Kush’ is by Joe O’Neill.

Coastal Living



LOWER COLUMBIA BOWL

NOW OPEN

826 Marine Dr. Astoria
503-325-3321

Discover More!



DiscoverOurCoast.com



LOWER COLUMBIA BOWL

SAFE, SANITIZED, READY TO ROLL

Bowling is Back!

\$1 OFF WEDNESDAYS

Take \$1 off:

- Shoe rental
- Every Game
- Fountain Sodas
- Adult Beverages

ADVERTISE YOUR BUSINESS HERE!

Call us at
503-325-3211
to learn more