

Dippy

and the Dinosaurs

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Concept by Ben Smith Whatley

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The Invisible War: a Tale on Two Scales (2017)

*Aisla Wild & Ben Hutchings, Scale Free Network, 88pp.
978 0 9925872 5 3 Pb*

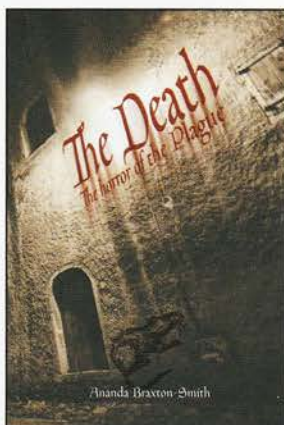
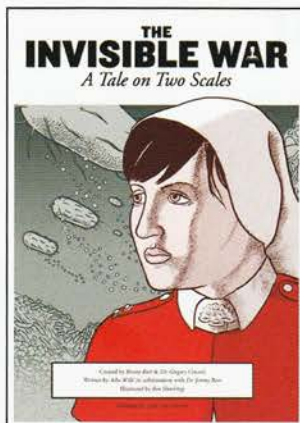
This is a unique and interesting graphic novel, the result of a collaboration between a number of people. It tells two stories of two wars happening side by side. One war is the First World War, raging in France along the Western Front. It is 1916 and Sister Annie Barnaby is nursing at a Casualty Clearing Station near the Somme. The other war is raging inside Annie's lower intestine — the bacteria which causes dysentery against Annie's immune system, the microbes and bacteriophages which live inside her digestive system.

There has been a recent resurgence of interest in the human microbiome — the vast number of bacteria which live on and inside us, and how they have a huge impact on our health and wellbeing. This book provides a fascinating and accessible insight into how the human body repels invaders. The text is succinct but meaningful, in true comic book style. The illustrations are simple, black and white line drawings which convey the bleakness and horror of the Western Front. While the illustrations aren't very graphic they don't shy away from showing the human misery caused by war and disease.

There is an appendix at the end of the book that provides notes on the history of WWI and more information about the science of microbiology as well as a website where people can download a digital version of the book and access teaching resources.

Recommended for Upper Secondary libraries and for those interested in microbiology, science and history.

Rebecca Kemble



The Death: The Horror of the Plague (2009)

*Black Dog Books, Ananda Braxton-Smith, Walker Books Australia, 256pp.
978 1 74203 073 9 Pb*

Beginning with an account of an outbreak of plague in the Hubei province of China in which around five million people have thought to have died, the story continues to track its spread, via trading routes to India, Asia, the Middle East and Europe resulting in the plague becoming endemic throughout vast areas of the world for the next 500 years with no known effective treatment—although there were plenty of ideas, some bizarre. Braxton-Smith first sets out the mediaeval way of life and of understanding of the world around them. Religious thought played a central role in understanding what might have been made of such a catastrophic disease. Backed by extracts from contemporary sources and longer fictionalised accounts of what people may have experienced, Braxton-Smith develops, for readers, an understanding of the period.

From Chapter Seven onwards the focus of the narrative is on the progress of the plague in the 1700s in England leading to an understanding of the disease in the late twentieth century and today.

Includes reproductions, an extensive bibliography, a glossary and index.