

The Brotherhood of Man *by Marilyn Reeves*

My name is Gogar. Today was a good hunt. With our spears and clubs we brought down a large food animal. With our knives of obsidian we have torn open the flesh and hold it over the fire that keeps us warm during the snow time. My son asks, "Father, why am I here? Who created us? Why must I die?"

And I answer, "You are here to grow into a fine hunter. You must kill to eat. And when you die, you in turn, will be eaten. The sun created us. We are children of the sun. Your grandfather's grandfather has said it is so, and so it must be true. Tomorrow you will come with us to hunt the other tribe that lives on the far side of the mountain. We will take their women and children, but the men must die."

My name is Ishto. Today we harvested grain from our fields for the women to make into bread. My son asks, "Father, why am I here? Who created us? Why must I die?"

And I tell him, "You are here to plant the fields. We are children of the earth. When you die you will return to the earth. Your grandfather's grandfather has said it is so, and so it must be true. You must learn to use weapons to fight the others who will come to take what we have. They will take our women and children. Those men must die."

My name is Marcus. My son asks, "Father, why am I here? Who created us? Why must I die?"

I tell him, "You are here to become a great warrior, to fight for the glory of Rome. There are many gods, but the one whom we follow is Mars, the God of War. If you fight with honor, you shall die a hero, and spend eternity reflecting upon your achievements. Your grandfather's grandfather has said it is so, and so it must be true. You will invade other lands and take their women and children, but the men must die."

My name is Hon Cho, Ivan Ravinovitch, Ishmael Hunan, John Jones. My son asks, "Father, why am I here? Who created us? Why must I die?"

And I tell him, "You were created by Jehovah, Allah, Vishnu, Amon-Ra. You are here to convert others to your way of thinking. When you die, you will go to Valhalla, the Happy Hunting Grounds, Paradise, Nirvana. Your grandfather's grandfather has said it is so, and so it must be true. You must learn to become a brave soldier to protect your philosophy, your sky scrapers, your bills of sale. There are those who do not believe as we do. We must kill them first, or they will kill us.

"Save the women and children, but the men must die."