



Ithaka

Adèle Geras

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Many years have passed since the end of the Trojan War, and Penelope is still waiting for her husband, Odysseus, to return home. The city of Ithaka is overrun with uncouth suitors from the surrounding islands who are vying to win Penelope's hand in marriage, thereby gaining control of the land. When a naked, half-drowned man washes up on the beach, everything changes. . . .

Told through the eyes of Klymene, a young girl who is like a daughter to Penelope--and who longs for more than friendship from the young prince Telemachus--*Ithaka* captures the quiet strength and patience of a woman's enduring love for her husband and the ensuing chaos that threatens all as Penelope is pressured to remarry.

Ithaka Details

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From Reader Review Ithaka for online ebook

Horatia Ma says

A gripping tale of love, betrayal and death. Yes, people, we're journeying to Ancient Greece as the battle of Troy rages on. But we're not going to that particular battlefield. No, we're staying back home, where it's safe. But is it really? Different people have different problems, and that's certainly true for Penelope and Telemachus. While Odysseus fights another kingdom, Penelope fights her own battle - against her own kingdom.

Emily Mcelveen says

This is now one of my favorite books. It has a large focus on what happens in Ithaka while Odysseus is traveling back home. You get to know what all of the suitors are like much more than in anything I have read before. It also focuses on the relationship between Klymene and Ikarios, who are twins that have lived with their grandmother, Nana, who was also Odysseus' nurse. The biggest part of the plot is when Melanthe comes into play in the beginning of the story. Telemachus ends up falling in love with her, which breaks Klymene's heart. Melanthe also starts to like one of the suitors. This ends up causing everything like Penelope's loom being destroyed because of the shroud. My favorite part is when Klymene meets Mydon in the very beginning because he is apologizing for the rest of Antinous' men. They end up falling in love at the end of the story, and also, Telemachus is free from Melanthe by this time. I loved this book and i hope to pick up a copy sometime soon.

Feathzzz says

Bit of a disappointment..... 3

Anne Osterlund says

The women of the Ithaka are waiting.

The goddess, Athene, waiting in the form of an owl, outside the queen's window.

The queen, Penelope, waiting, weaving, and unweaving the shroud she has pledged to complete before choosing a new suitor to replace her husband.

And Klymene, the servant girl who has grown up in a palace overrun with the queen's would-be suitors--all lurking like vultures seeking a kingdom they cannot claim.

Because these women stand in their way.

Adele Geras's *Ithaka* is the tale of *The Odyssey* told from the women's point of view. A study of love and loss, constancy and betrayal, and true heartbreak versus false.

Lisa Schensted says

in a sentence or two: faithful Penelope is waiting for Odysseus to come home after the trojan war (still waiting 16 years after...yeesh) and in the meantime, the palace is overrun by dirty, nasty, stinky, mean men who are determined to marry Penelope and become ruler of Ithaka.

i was really excited to see this title, especially after having read Troy and really liking it. i am personally intrigued by greek mythology and the stories about the trojan war, and having the ability to read them in young adult form is just perfect for me.

Ithaka focuses mainly on Klymene and her interactions with the other characters - the main of whom are Penelope (Queen of Ithaka, Klymene is her personal handmaid / honorary daughter), Ikarios (Klymene's twin brother), Telemachus (Son of Penelope and Odysseus and first love of Klymene), Melantho (the newest handmaid to Penelope, and rather conniving and slutty actually), and then the suitors (the dozens of men living at the palace for like 6 months waiting for Penelope to choose one of them).

as with Troy, there is a casual incorporation of the gods from Olympus and they are only seen by some characters. this element helps keep the story flow to the nature of a greek myth nicely. the god's don't consistently intervene, which is nice, but when they do you get a glimpse of them and their intentions before they vanish.

the best way that i can think to describe Ithaka is that it's a multi-layer love story complete with betrayal, murder, sadness, and hope. i did feel like it got a little long, however, that may have been the attempt by the author to help portray the extreme waiting that Penelope did so faithfully (well, most of the time) for Odysseus and to help the reader realize just how long and unpleasant the icky suitors made time at the palace for everyone in the meantime.

i couldn't help feeling like some of the characters were more shallow than i'd hoped for. while i really dug Klymene as a caring, devoted, and genuine person, i was let down by Telemachus, completely forgot about Ikarios at times, and felt that while Melantho provided a solid element of bitchiness that was necessary for the twists in the story, that she was a pretty underdeveloped character herself. i felt like they had to be deeper than they were portrayed, and that really bugged me.

overall, i appreciated the take on the flip side of the Odyssey from the palace point of view, and particularly from Klymene's perspective. similar to Troy in that the main characters are part of the palace life, Geras paints a vivid picture of that life and the surrounding landscape of the island of Ithaka and at times i really did see what she was describing. the story doesn't end perfectly, which is refreshing, and there are some serious heartaches along the way. Geras deals with first loves, doubt, and hope in an interesting and serious way.

fave quotes: "'Sorrow', said Odysseus, 'has to be borne, or we might as well die on our way out of our mothers' wombs. Life is threaded through with it, but you must face it and grieve and carry on if you're to be a real man. It's easier to do that when you've got your family around you. When you're in your own house. Home...that's the best that we can hope for this side of Hades, and it's worth fighting and even dying for. Ithaka is worth every bit of agony I've gone through to get here.'" (299)

"The only answer was a shrug, and Klymene sighed. She was used to the way men sometimes behaved, but it was exhausting. She wouldn't ever admit, straight out, what was wrong, but waited for the thing - whatever it was that was bothering them - to be drawn out slowly like a thorn from an animal's paw. You had to ask questions. They had to be the right questions. You had to guess and cajole and tease the pain out of them,

and it could be a tedious business." (319) - a good example of Klymene's character also.

fix er up: i really wanted deeper character development from others besides Klymene!

Emily says

I always wondered why Odysseus got to cheat on Penelope, while she had to put up with all the suitors, remaining faithful, even though Odysseus wasn't to her. Narrated by Klymene, a girl who is almost like a daughter to Penelope. Very nicely told.

Claudia says

The Iliad and the Odyssey are two of my all time favourite tales, so I am particularly drawn to any "spin offs" of the Homer epics. It helps to keep the stories alive, and I really am no ready to let go, just yet.

This story is set in Ithaca and centres around Klymene and Ikarios, twins that have a close bond with Telemachus and Penelope (Odysseus' son and wife). It gives Klymene's perspective on the period that Penelope waits for her husband to return from war, as she holds contemptuous suitors at bay, and tries to keep her fracturing family together.

I enjoyed this a great deal, and look forward to more Homeric side stories to help me keep the fantasy alive.

Allyson says

The second book I've read by Geras and my impression of her style remains the same - her style of writing is good but her lines?! Horrifying! It's like picking up Romeo and Juliet, expecting those beautifully posed words, and Juliet says "Oh my God! Can you, like, believe what she's, like, wearing? It's so, like, not hot!" The colloquialisms make me cringe. Her plot points are beautiful, her characters are usually well drawn (with the exception of the femme fatales, who are fairly one-dimensional and exactly the same in both books), but when an author writes the same thing over and over, it makes for boring reading.

Katy says

A wonderful take on "The Odyssey."

Amanda Macias says

Very interesting stories. It follows the different characters perspectives in a way that makes since and goes in-depth into them all. I got attached to the characters and enjoyed the Greek mythology in it and the way how it showed how they interacted with the humans. Sheds light on a truth that was hidden. Very goo book.

Emily says

After reading The Odyssey and another book similar to this one, this book added to everything. It was amazing! I love Adele Geras' format of the book. It was cool how it changed perspectives and included parts of the Odyssey. It also included Argos' dreams. I wish there was more!

Ellen says

this was good!!!!!!

i loved seeing what the odyssey wouldve looked like for penelope waiting for odysseus and the whole situation with the suitors.

good

Hedwig says

I cherished this book. Everything you could possibly want in one book; adventure, drama, chaos, war, bloodshed, sex, passion gods, goddesses and love. It has the classic spin of an ancient greek myth with gods and goddesses, written in a story format that made it much easier and enjoyable to read.

Cameran says

To be honest this book was a disappointment. I had read her previous book Troy (which I loved!) many years ago, and had been expecting Ithaka to create that same sort of magic. Instead I received dull characters who I did not care about; the portrayal of Penelope was horrendous -- she is known/famed for remaining faithful to her husband over 20 years, so why change it??

Krista Stevens says

Loved this (until I hated it) perspective of Homer's "The Odyssey" one of my all time favorite books. This book tells the story of what happened at Odysseus' home for the twenty years he was away, first fighting in the Trojan War and then his ten-year long odyssey home. We see Telemachus growing up with two servants who are close to the family and many of the events in The Odyssey are woven into this story to great affect. We see Argos dream doggy dreams, Penelope struggle to cope with the increasing frustration of the suitors while she weaves (which somehow ties into what Odysseus is currently dealing with - that was a little odd), and the rest of the minor characters. This was all quite lovely and wonderful until *****SPOILER ALERT***** Penelope has a long-term affair with one of the suitors and falls in love with him. NO. NO. NO. NO. NO. NO. I get it that it's a double standard that O can have sexual encounters with goddessess and somehow that's okay but it's not okay for Penelope, but that flies in the face of their first encounter when he returns still disguised as a beggar, which this book completely fails at capturing both of their cunning, cleverness, and delight in seeing each other. Some sexually explicit scenes. I thought this might be a nice

companion to our Greek mythology unit. It's not.
