



# The Girl from Ithaca

*Cherry Gregory*

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## **The Girl from Ithaca** Cherry Gregory

A Spartan war ship sails into Ithaca and two men arrive to demand the fulfillment of an oath. When Odysseus joins the Greek alliance against Troy, his little sister, fourteen-year-old Neomene, is thrust into a world she knows little about.

Amid the secrecy and plots, Neomene befriends the women who are forced to survive alongside warriors such as Achilles, Ajax and Agamemnon. As the war drags on and heroes die, she finds romance and faces dangers vastly different from the battles on the Trojan Plain.

Readers not familiar with the tales of Troy will find *The Girl from Ithaca* a story in its own right and an exciting introduction to Mycenaean culture, the Greek myths and the Trojan War. For those already acquainted with Homer's version, read on to discover the heroes as you've never seen them before.

It all starts on the island of Ithaca...

This is the first book in the series, which concludes with *The Walls of Troy*.

A Gold-medal winner from Authonomy (Harper Collins).

## **The Girl from Ithaca Details**

Date : Published August 2013 by Imprintli Publishing

ISBN : 9780989741866

Author : Cherry Gregory

Format : Paperback 345 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Fiction, Fantasy, Mythology

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# **From Reader Review The Girl from Ithaca for online ebook**

## **Jay Douglass says**

Let me preface this review by saying I love historical fiction. That said, I can objectively say, that in spite of this being one my favorite genres, the author nails it.

Cherry Gregory captures the Greek Mythology period accurately with her intricate attention to detail. Yet still managing to create a new storyline with the backdrop of the Mycenaean culture.

Even if you're not that familiar with this time period, you'll still enjoy this novel. My wife for example loved it, even though she knew little about Greek mythology, yet she turned me on to this book.

Getting reacquainted with this period was a lot more fun the second time around than in 10th grade English class.

I look forward to reading the next book(s) in the series.

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## **Frank Kusy says**

I have nothing but praise for this vast, sweeping, yet enjoyably accessible interpretation of the Trojan legend. Ms Gregory has done her Homer-work well, and the result is a fascinating and finely-woven tapestry worthy of Penelope herself!

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## **Jake Fowler says**

I have always been a Greek Mythology geek.

So I was pleased with Cherry Gregory's moderately successful attempt to tackle this difficult genre.

The story takes awhile to take shape but then is fairly interesting.

Because the author is such a good writer using prose seamlessly, she makes it work.

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## **Linda Kovic-Skow says**

The Girl From Ithaca, told from the perspective of a young fourteen-year-old girl, is a compelling story based on Greek mythology. Filled with suspense, humor, and romance, the book will keep you riveted to your seat racing to get to the end. I'm so glad to hear that there's going to be a sequel. Well done Cherry!

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## LunaBel says

**Rating: 2.5**

**---Spoilers---**

### Synopsis

*After Paris charmed Helen and took her home, the Greek army did not tarry to follow. Princes and kings sailed to Troy either for glory, wealth, fame, or love. This novel relates the events as they unfold from Odysseus' jolt until the first death of a prince.*

### Thoughts

I really do not know what this novel was about exactly. Was it about the Trojan War, or was it about the girl from Ithaca? One may argue that they belong to one another as Neomene found herself in the Ithacan camp with her brother Odysseus fighting a war which is not hers.

The story is at times a boring retelling, and other times it is clumsily renewed. It felt as if the author could not decide which comes first: relating how and why the Trojan war was provoked (sometimes authentically sometimes with little twists), or following the personal struggles of Lady Neomene. I assume that the author was inspired by the only sister of Odysseus whom I know as Ctimene (and if I am mistaken please correct me) to build her main character. Neomene. Neomene was a problem for me because she was an attempt at being both original and faithful to the real events. She was at the same time like a broken string and a daring step. She fills wrong because she does not feel real to me, and she is a good attempt at originality because we get to have a woman's voice in a men's world.

Neo's character is a very unstable one. She is a historical puppet in the sense that she relates to me historical events that I already know (though some are fabricated). There is no life in her, no freshness, no deep study of her as an individual, and as a woman. Neo changes from a frail naïve girl to a protector, a friend, a healer, and a lover. Her love affair shadows everything else at some point; even when receiving news about the war, she concentrates on Antiochus and forgets all about her brother. The author attempts to bring something out of her but it is trapped between a submissive sister and a devoted lover and friend. Sometimes too devoted. She is Lady Neomene yet she only fulfills the role of a servant. Sometimes even servants order her around. She was given a central role only when she was  
(spoiler show)

But oh not everything was bad in this novel. It shows how it is possible to have fun in the middle of the war. In fact most of the novel concentrates on anything but the war. Death has no grip in the events. Soldiers go and don't come back but that's the last of Neo's worries. I don't understand why the author has made her take medical lesson if we only get to know about her skills as a nurse when she rarely needs to know how the war is going (and btw she was instructed during one day and was splendid in her work!). I guess Agamemnon was taunting her by ordering her to help the wounded, still she could have become a devoted nurse, and do something better with her life and just wash clothes and wait for her brother while gossiping with wounded soldiers and servants.

I give *The Girl from Ithaca* 2.5 stars. It is meant for readers who like YA, and who would like to be introduced to the Trojan War, but the fact that it could be introductory does not mean that it was accurate, (sometimes not even closely so). It is very short and only describes the minimum of the first years of the war. Still one can at least pick some names and go from there.

Will I read the sequel? Hmmm Maybe, maybe...

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### **Seayla says**

I won a copy from Goodreads *Giveaways*. I can't wait to start reading it.

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I thought I was familiar with mythology but I had to make index cards with all the characters that are mentioned. I was having a hard time remembering who they are, how they are related, where they are from or what their job is without a cheat sheet. I ended up with 85 characters, 17 "countries", 14 gods/immortals mentioned in the book.

Mythology is character rich and I guess I didn't know as much as I thought. I was stopping constantly to write down a new name and a memory trigger on my cards or forever going back to them to figure out who a character was. The names on my cards weren't in alpha order, more in order of appearance so I was forever searching. In the end it took my work with the cards and some internet research about the characters (even a search for a map) to feel comfortable with my knowledge of the people and places. I know it would of been more enjoyable for me to have a *cast of characters* and a *map* right in the book to refer to. It makes me question my intelligence level because I had to do so much work to understand a young adult book. I know I could of just read through and not worry about it so much but its Greek mythology, it's good stuff. I wanted to know it thoroughly.

I enjoyed the book and reading about the Trojan War from Neomene's viewpoint.

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### **Rosalind Minett says**

THE GIRL FROM ITHACA

Here is an historical novel to captivate and enthrall. Taking a Greek myth and placing the reader in the shoes of a young girl, the author adds her own development to Odysseus's story.

This girl from Ithaca is Neomene, sister of Odysseus. She did well to contemplate the eagle circling as she rushed to warn her brother of the Spartan ships approaching. Much drama lies ahead.

She is only fourteen when she is torn from her roots to escort a bride-to-be to Sparta, only to find there is deadly intrigue involved and is then caught up in the Trojan War.

This story is told in two parts, the exciting sequel, Walls of Troy, taking us on to the point where, years later, she sees her homeland again. In the meantime, Neomene has experienced trauma and hardships of every kind. They test her, but she overcomes immense dangers. It was no easy life for even a high-born woman in those times. Neomene is never just an onlooker while the battles rage on.

The novel gives a very different slant from the conventional re-telling of the myths. The action moves constantly forward while Neomene matures from innocent girl to companion and staunch supporter of her menfolk, never a victim, much as Odysseus' enemies would wish.

Readers will identify with Neomene's adventures to the point where they forget that these were Greek myths and this story is fiction.

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### **Sue Moorhouse says**

The story of Odysseus written from the viewpoint of his young sister. The author brings the ancient world vividly to life and establishes believable and sympathetic characters. Very readable without losing an authentic feel for the period.

I hate Agamemnon. Can't wait for book two when I hope Achilles will give him a really bad time!

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### **Bonnie says**

Loved this book!!!!

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### **Dana says**

Really good book , mythology that kept me entertained. Neomene is a character you can get to know, in a personal way. I thought she was very real.

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### **Susan Rits says**

This is a wonderful, exciting, and historically accurate tale of Odysseus's little sister, Neomene.

Neomene falls in love, witnesses the sacrifice of Iphigenia by her father, witnesses Achilles's change from a love-struck youth to a brutal warrior, and meets a demi-goddess or two along the way.

Cherry Gregory writes with clear language an entirely accessible story about a very famous, ancient war—all from the point of view of the women. This is a fun read for the YA crowd, but even older adults like me will find it entirely enthralling.

This is Imprintli's first of our YA imprint. Book Two, *The Walls of Troy*, will be out in September.

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### **Susan Joyce says**

Somewhat familiar with Greek mythology, I found this novel fascinating, with a cast of colorful characters, and filled with historical accuracies.

The Girl from Ithaca is the story of Neomene, little sister of Odysseus. When Spartan war ships sail into Ithaca, Odysseus joins the Greek alliance against Troy to fulfill an oath. Fourteen-year-old Neomene is asked to escort a bride-to-be to Sparta and finds herself thrown into a world of war—a world she knows little about.

The war drags on for years. Many die. A weary Neomene faces extreme hardships, but is determined to survive and return to her homeland. As she matures into a beautiful and confident woman, she befriends and supports other women and men mired in the raging battle, and finds love amidst the chaos of war.

I highly recommended this beautifully written historical novel.

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### **Beth Haslam says**

As a lover of the Greek myths I was immediately attracted to this book and then absolutely delighted by the unique way in which this well-known legend was related.

The adventure is recounted through Princess Neomene, the fourteen-year-old sister of King Odysseus. She's a feisty tomboy who loves her country, and is fiercely loyal to her family.

The plot begins to unfold as Neomene is playing on the headland. She sees Spartan ships approaching the Ithaca shores and rushes to warn her brother. They know why the Spartans are coming, and have a plan, but it's to no avail. Despite their best efforts, the support of Odysseus and his army is demanded by Agamemnon in his campaign to wage war against Troy and Paris. The goal is to win back the beautiful Helen, who is wife to his own son Meneleus.

With battle preparations underway, Neomene is appointed as special envoy to one of Agamemnon's daughters. Neomene travels to Sparta and is horrified as she witnesses the death of her charge and the wickedness displayed by the king in honour of the Gods. Odysseus quickly removes Neomene from the potential dangers, and they sail with his troops to Troy to set up camp on the hostile territory. From here the adventures involving intrigue, passion and courage unfold. This is the story of Troy.

Cherry Gregory has a terrific writing style. Her ability to describe places, people and emotions are captivating, and immediately draw the reader into the story. In this book she excels in this as she brings several well-known mythical characters to life, and gives them a new dimension and personality. I especially liked her treatment of Neomene (whose name is changed in this book). She is portrayed as a practical, gutsy young girl, unaffected by her royal heritage, who is intent on supporting her brother and help the troops. The book contains humour and pathos, and ends in great drama. I was engrossed throughout, and am already looking forward to reading the sequel.

I highly recommend this book to anyone who enjoys Greek myths and adventures.

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### **Farnoosh Brock says**

After reading *I Am Livia* (by Phyllis Smith) and while in the midst of *Memoirs of Cleopatra* by Margaret George, I was hungry for historical fiction with a strong female character as narrator, and *The Girl from Ithaca* fit the bill. I read the sample and I was in love. The story telling style of Cherry Gregory is simple, captivating, powerful without the big words and fancy jargon of your usual novelist, and truly compelling. I just finished reading pages in Wikipedia about the Trojan War, thanks to the author inspiring me to learn more about that particular part of history - or Greek Mythology, apparently, there is a debate as to whether this war actually happened. This is my very first introduction into Greek Mythology and I am fascinated!!

I have to admit to my temporary disappointment: When the story didn't finish in this book, about which I started having a suspicion when 85% into the book, there had been no talk of the Trojan horse and any of those plans, I was just a bit miffed. What? There is another book?? I did not realize there was a sequel, which I've downloaded and will read today, so both a disappointment and a good surprise in that there is more to read by the author.

This is the first novel by this author and just like Smith's "*I Am Livia*", her story telling and writing voice and knowledge of the Greek mythology are remarkable. I love discovering new authors who are venturing into historical fiction and the novel writing scene, and using the voice of a powerful female to depict ancient tales of war, romance, and mystique!

The narrator is Neomene, the sister of Odysseus who finds herself on the way to Troy to keep her brother company during the decade long Trojan-Greek war. My favorite scenes are between the female character: Neomene, Helen of Troy (although very brief), Elissa, Lo, and Goddess in Mountain of Ida. I love learning about Greek Mythology through the story telling and the author does this so well. I can't think of anything I didn't like in this book and I must wrap this review so I can get to reading *The Walls of Troy - Part II* of the series.

What's your favorite historical fiction book? I hope this review helps you pick up this book and delve into the story head on!

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### **Kevin Bergeron says**

Prior to reading this book my knowledge of Greek mythology was pretty much limited to having supposedly



read “The Odyssey” in high school Latin class forty-five years ago. I’d forgotten a lot of Homer’s tale, and had only half read it anyway, but a lot of the characters and events came back to me as I read this, and I learned a lot of new things as well.

I believe Homer did not make up his stories from whole cloth, but developed characters and stories that were being told at the time, some of which were probably based upon historical fact. Similarly, author Cherry Gregory takes Homer’s tales and develops them further, giving them an added dimension through the creation of a new character named Neomene, who is Odysseus’s little sister, and also the narrator, so the story is told through the eyes of a fourteen year old girl.

This narrative device makes the story come alive. Neomene is a likable character with an engaging voice, and also a keen observer. How she ever talks her brother into letting her tag along with the Greek army trying to rescue Helen is a story in itself, and though it sounds improbable, it’s actually fully believable as told.

I might have liked a bit more of Neomene’s personal story (perhaps relating to her coming of age), even at the cost of losing some of the peripheral characters and events of the larger historical and mythological story. Still, a fun and interesting novel, and I thoroughly enjoyed this book cover to cover. I think Homer would approve.

The book ends during the siege of Troy, before the Trojan Horse, and I was hoping that would be in the book. A sequel is in the works, so most likely it will be in there.

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