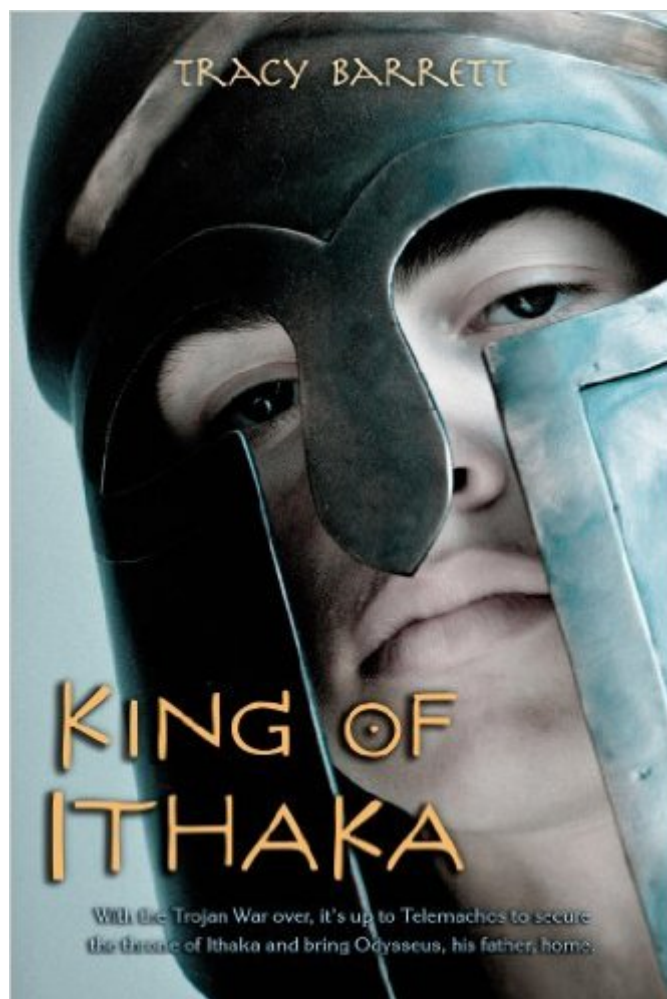


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King Of Ithaka



Synopsis

Telemachos has a comfortable life on his small island of Ithaka, where his mother, Penelopeia, keeps the peace even though the land has been without its king, his father Odysseus, since the Trojan War began many years ago. But now the people are demanding a new king, unless Telemachos can find Odysseus and bring him home. With only a mysterious prophecy to guide him, Telemachos sets off over sea and desert in search of the father he has never known. Tracy Barrett brings Greek mythology to life in King of Ithaka.

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 - 18 years

Grade Level: 7 - 12

Customer Reviews

Tracy Barrett's KING OF ITHAKA rules! (Sorry, I couldn't resist.) KING is a smart, funny, thought-provoking retelling of the famous tales from Homer, but from Odysseus's son's point-of-view. Sixteen-year-old Telemachos must find his sea-faring, war-mongering father before the kingdom of Ithaka collapses and his mother remarries. Telemachos is a character that teens today will easily relate to, and readers need not be familiar with the classics to understand this tale, though I imagine many a teacher pairing this with the Iliad and Odyssey. Storytelling at its best.

I have always loved Greek mythology and the Odyssey in particular. The strange lands and stranger

people have a way of sparking the imagination and creating new dreams and worlds in your mind. Telemachus and Penelope, or, in this instance, Telemachos and Penelopeia, have always interested me more than Odysseus. He was off having adventures for years, while his son grew up without a father and his wife kept the kingdom together as best she could without a husband. It was interesting to read about what life might have been like for them. This book is written in a modern style, with Telemachos and his friends speaking and behaving like modern teenagers. He spies on girls and steals alcohol, goofing off like any other 16-year-old boy might, but he isn't what I would call wild. He is very much a boy at the beginning, but hardships and experience set him on the road to being a man. There is just a little bit of romance in this novel, but that is not what the story is about. It is about learning what is more important than strength, courage, and generosity. It is about learning to see reality instead of building too much on wishes and beliefs. It is about learning to stand on your own two feet, but still understanding the value of friends.

Complete with mystery and mythical creatures, KING OF ITHAKA tells the story of Telemachos and his adventurous search for his father (the missing king, Odysseus). Braving fears, danger, and temptations, Telemachos travels with his centaur friend, Brax, and a stowaway passenger, Polydora, who may become a romantic interest (you have to read it to find out). Barrett has crafted a compelling and unique retelling from Greek mythology. Newcomers to the story of Telemachos will delight in his escapades as well as Barrett's rich descriptions of ancient life.

The King of Ithaka holds the reader's attention while immersing him or her in the world of Ancient Greece. Telemachos, son of Odysseus, decides it is time to find his father. As he begins his search he meets with numerous difficulties. During his search things are not as they appear and Telemachos must solve his problems with the help of his friends. He returns to Ithaka to find that his adventure is not over. The story does not end as one would expect, helping the reader to learn that acting with integrity always wins. This well-written book uses ideas and language that are appropriate for the early teen. Boys, especially, will be drawn to the hero, Telemachos, whose experiences include adventurous situations where he does not always have the solution.

At sixteen, Telemachos sets off on his own Odyssey in search of his father who has not yet returned to Ithaka from the Trojan War. As in Homer's Odyssey, Telemachos sails to Pylos to consult King Nestor, and Nestor's son Pisistratos agrees to take Telemachos to Sparta in his chariot to ask King Menelaos what has become of Odysseus. Mythological creatures and deities live anew in this

coming-of-age adventure where a young prince discovers the meaning of friendship and the true qualities of a king. Telemachos must find within himself the strength, bravery and generosity of a king along with another essential quality that Nestor, Menelaos, and even Odysseus seem to be lacking. Barrett weaves many delightful twists into an old tale by assuring us that great poets such as Homer were beloved for their ability to create a beautiful story, not their historical accuracy.

This is Barrett's imaginative exploration of the personality of Telemachos, son of Odysseus. Accompanied by his friends Brax and Polydora, Telemachos must go in search of his father and then "return to the place that is not, on the day that is not, bearing the thing that is not." The struggles ensuing from this strange quest help Telemachos grow in the knowledge of what it takes to be a king. Barrett creates an unexpected Telemachos - he's afraid of the sea, and he can't do a lot for himself. I interviewed her for my column/blog and she had this to say: "I think that both Telemachos and Penelopeia have a lot of fears that govern large parts of their lives. Telemachos knows that his father sailed away and never returned; therefore, the sea naturally holds a lot of terror for him. He also doesn't have any kind of role model; his grandfather is old and befuddled, and most of his neighbors are greedy and lazy. Somewhere inside of him he knows that he really needs to man up, but he's so afraid of growing up (and also, he has a pretty cushy life) that he closes his eyes to the abuses going on in his home. Penelopeia also doesn't want him to grow up. It's easier to spoil him, not make him work, and indulge him, than to allow him to face the suitors and perhaps lose his life by challenging them." Neat story. I enjoyed it.

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