



Homer's Daughter and the Anger of Achilles (The Millennium Graves)

Robert Graves

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We don't know who, or even if, Homer was. Given threads of internal evidence in the "Odyssey", Robert Graves invents, or discovers, that the author of the poem was a woman, herself part of the epic action. He chooses the beguiling, clear-headed Nausicaa and re-vision the post-Trojan world through her eyes. This is the theme of "Homer's Daughter", one of Graves's most daring fictional acts. The "Odyssey" has been described as a "woman's epic", full of female characters and different in kind and colour from the "Illiad" with its tight focus, its largely male world, Graves's Nausicaa is brilliant at telling dramatic aplomb. The confrontations in the Council and between Aethon and the suitors are memorably evoked. Nausicaa is a princess of mixed Greek and other ancestry, combining in herself the various cultures that inform the language and folklore of the epic. Graves makes it possible for us to believe that the author told her own story, a true one, buried within the Homeric epic. There is adventure and intrigue; the book stands near the beginning of a tradition that includes Leonardo Sciascia's "The Council of Eqypt" and Umberto Eco's "The Name of the Rose". "Homer's Daughter" is reprinted here with Graves's ambitious Trojan novel "The Anger of Achilles", which culminates in the death of Hector, emblem of the doom of Troy itself.

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