



# Homer's Daughter

*Robert Graves*

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## **Homer's Daughter** Robert Graves

Graves has recreated another strong and convincing historical setting; this time the scene of the Odyssey, which he believes occurred in Western Sicily. Graves believes also that the author of the Odyssey was not the blind and bearded Homer of legend, but the young woman who calls herself Nausica in the story.

## **Homer's Daughter Details**

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## Tomas says

"Only let Eurymachus ask for another bath!" she cried. "I'll take net and axe and butcher him, as Clytaemnestra butchered Agamemnon. My heart growls in my breast like a bitch with puppies when a stranger approaches."

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## Marquise says

This is an excellent novel that elaborates on the hypothesis that the reason *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* diverge in style and present inconsistencies is due to the latter not being the work of Homer but of a Sicilian princess, Nausicaa, who is the true author of the tale by virtue of composing it and sending her father's court bard to popularise it all throughout the Hellenic world.

The premise of the two major works of Western epic poetry having two different authors, one of them an anonymous woman, is intriguing, and Graves has made it into a very plausible story that's also a pleasure to read, if you like quiet-paced and full-of-intrigue storytelling. Those who've read *The Odyssey* will recognise Nausicaa in some of its plotlines, not least because she not only appears in it with her own name as one of Odysseus' seductresses but is also the source of the most famous scenes: that of Penelope's odious suitors, whom she stays away from by weaving and unweaving endlessly. The joke here is that the "real" Nausicaa is the opposite of the über-beautiful siren in the epic, as she's a plain girl. But a very clever one, very clever indeed. When her brother gets lost in a silly adventure abroad and her father absents himself from the kingdom, she's besieged by unwanted and boorish suitors, whom she must outsmart to keep her kingdom and her head, and whom eventually she gets killed at a banquet. Obsessed as she is with leaving a legacy and not let her life's story be lost to time, she's inspired to create an epic with her resident Son of Homer, as bards called themselves back then, and *The Odyssey* comes into life over several discussions and disputes with her home poet, which provide hilarious "explanations" for the inconsistencies and contradictions within the epic.

The novel is slow until the last part, and starts with lengthy descriptions of places, tribes, and peoples. Whilst it doesn't require any deep knowledge of history to be appreciated, I'm not sure it will be an easy read for those who don't know their Homer a bit. The plotline is more interesting if you know what Graves is aiming at with this novel and get the references, for the author assumes his audience does.

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## Esteban Candia says

Excelente. lo leí inmediatamente después de leer La Odisea, y lo disfruté mucho

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## Carla Rodrigues says

Ainda que não seja fã de Graves, este livro transportou-me ao "Olimpo"; às odisseias de Homero, à terminologia (apaixonante) dos deuses Gregos e da sua ligação tão próxima ao humano.

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### **Alake88 says**

Es una historia interesante y muy bien narrada.

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### **Diego Gomez says**

Para quienes disfrutamos la mitología griega este libro 'La hija de Homero' del inglés y experto en mitos Robert Graves es más que recomendado.

En esta belleza de libro, Graves pone en boca de la princesa siciliana Nausícaa la narración de las aventuras de su reino, en las que sucede de todo, a la manera de los mitos griegos. Un príncipe extraviado, un rey que sale en su búsqueda, un conato de rebelión, la deshonra de la familia real, la aparición de un héroe inesperado y un final maravilloso, lleno de portentos y ayuda de los dioses, son algunos de los giros que maquina Graves para una novela llena de acción e intriga. Incluso se da el lujo de incluir acontecimientos inverosímiles, justificados en el acompañamiento de los dioses, que favorecen a uno u otro personaje a medida que avanza el relato.

Graves narra con su habitual erudición y así enriquece cada suceso, con detalles de las costumbres sicilianas, de los protocolos reales y religiosos y de toda clase de anécdotas que intercala con maestría.

Y para terminar, en la narración justifica la hipótesis según la cual una princesa siciliana es coautora de La odisea, en un capítulo de cierre perfecto.

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### **Debi says**

I had a hard time getting into this book. The first half is tiresome and I almost gave up on it but then in the second half the plot picks up and the writing improves. In the end I would say that I do recommend this book, though with a warning about its slow start.

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### **Xole says**

Robert Graves excels at historical fiction, and this book does not disappoint. I was put off at first by the introduction, in which the author explains his reasons for writing this by saying that "The Iliad is a poem about and for men, the Odyssey (despite its male hero) is a poem about and for women." I don't at all share that view, but thankfully the story that follows is a very good one, especially because I've recently read an Odyssey and it was fresh in my mind. Reader, I loved this.

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### **Mika says**

Epic.

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### **Sarah (Presto agitato) says**

Robert Graves, best known for *I, Claudius*, uses Samuel Butler's theory that *The Odyssey* was actually written by a Sicilian woman as the inspiration for the novel *Homer's Daughter*. Nausicaa, daughter of an Elyman king, faces a host of unwelcome suitors while the king is away and has to devise a means of getting rid of them. Luckily, she is quick-witted and resourceful in facing her conundrum. She also has a knack for poetry and has a bard in her debt who happens to be a Son of Homer. With these advantages, she is able to ensure that her words, if not her name (at least not as authoress), live on for eternity.

After a rocky start explaining the origins of all the regional tribes and Nausicaa's ancestry in excessive detail, Graves finds his rhythm in this clever and witty story. It's fun seeing what he comes up with to explain various elements of the *Odyssey* as envisioned by Nausicaa. The writing captures the style of the original *Iliad* and *Odyssey* perfectly, complete with over-the-top declamations, implausible feats, and gross-out violence. This is fan fiction, but it's the fan fiction of a classical scholar who knows his stuff, even if he is a touch irreverent and unorthodox.

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### **Sara Jesus says**

Um livro muito original. Mistura as histórias metodológicas com uma história ficcional. Centra-se sobretudo nas personagens de "Odisseia". A obra de Homero tem uma importância fundamental na vida da protagonista. Pois a sua família é descendente de Egeste.

Achei o romance entre a princesa e o Éton um pouco forçado. Não é que não acredite em amor a primeira vista. Mas acho que o casamento deles foi muito apressado. Considero que só aconteceu para ela escapar-se dos seus muitos pretendentes. Agrada-me a figura de Éton, apenas não fiquei encantado com a sua adoração pela princesa grega.

A mãe e o pai da princesa foram duas das personagens que mais me agradaram devido a sua sabedoria, e por apoiar-la a casar-se por amor. Também adorei o irmão dela, que a ajudou a vingar-se dos que assassinaram os seus familiares e sempre esteve do seu lado.

Em linhas gerais, "A filha de Homero" celebra as culturas clássicas e é um bom livro para quem quer entender melhor a "Odisseia" e a "Ilíada" por falar também na Guerra de Tróia.

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### **Louisa says**

In *Homer's Daughter*, Robert Graves takes up Samuel Butler's argument that it wasn't blind old Homer who wrote *The Odyssey*, but a young woman from Sicily. Her name was Nausicaa, says Graves, and she wrote the epic poem in the tradition of the singing poets called Homer's Sons, based on her own life experiences. Nausicaa, the princess who does the washing in *The Odyssey*, who saves Odysseus when he is shipwrecked

on the island where she lives, who gives him some of the laundry to wear and helps him on his way back to Ithaca. In Graves's version, Penelope's lovers are in fact Nausicaa's suitors, and the scene of the archery contest is the palace of Nausicaa's father, the King of the Elymans in Drepanum, Sicily. In return for saving the life of Phemius the singer during the final battle, Nausicaa makes him promise to sing and circulate her epic poem.

*The Iliad, which I admire, is devised by a man for men; this epic, the Odyssey, will be devised by a woman for women. Understand that I am Homer's latest-born child, a daughter; and listen attentively. When I have finished the poem, and written it out in cuttlefish ink on sheepskin, you must memorize it, and, if necessary, improve the language where it halts or flags.*

Well, and even if it's not true, then it is at least a very, very good story. I loved it!

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### **Paul Downs says**

Unsettling.

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### **Esther González says**

La leí hace mucho, antes de conocer y leer "La diosa blanca".  
Me pareció una gran novela, a esa gran altura que la prosa de Robert Graves acostumbra.

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### **Fernando Gonzalo Pellico says**

Muy buena recreación histórica de la Odisea. Una historia alternativa a la canónica que transmite Homero, dando una explicación distinta, que justificaría las discrepancias de estilo entre la Ilíada y la Odisea.

Lectura obligada para los interesados en los mitos homéricos.

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