

## “The Song of Achilles” - Madeline Miller

If you were to retell the story of the great lovers of ancient Greek mythology, perhaps you'd choose Paris, whose lust for Helen led to a glorious battle overlooking the city of Troy, lasting 10 years. Or Apollo and Hyacinthus, whose story began over an athletic game of discus. Or even Ceyx and Alcyone, whose love was fated to be the greatest and strongest of all of Greek Mythology that one could quite literally not live without the other.

The last mythical figure you might try to portray as a romantic hero would be Achilles, a one-man genocide whose defining characteristic was his unquenchable anger and pride acting as his ultimate fatal flaw.

The song of Achilles is a coming of age, melodious retelling of the renowned 'Iliad' by ancient Greek poet Homer- an account of significant events occurring towards the end of the remarkable Trojan War. This novel takes place from the perspective of Patroclus- Achilles' companion, most-beloved, childhood friend, kindred spirit, Therapon(brother in arms) and eventual lover. The reader truly gets to embark on a raw, effectively lyrical journey as we see the growth of the two from young boys, to men, to warriors, to death...

The famous Achilles - ARISTOS ACHAION (best of the Greeks)- is fated to be the greatest warrior ever to live. Regardless of the plans of his sea nymph mother, Thetis, who intends for her mortal son to undertake the transformation into immortal God, Achilles continues to radiate poise, beauty, light, and courage as a young child. Eventually, his inundating desire for fame and legacy translates into ego, which eventually brings about his tragic demise. Such a theme is so skillfully embedded on Miller's part. We grow to admire and root for the character of Achilles', which makes the heart-aching lesson shown through the consequences of his pride and ego all the more triggering.

Patroclus, the narrative voice, is quite the contrary. As a young child he is shown to display nothing extraordinary- except from the kindness in his heart. Despite his lack of fame, physical strength, and masculinity, Patroclus is inevitably 'The best of the Myrmidons' as fated in the novel. His hospitality and loyal nature is often demonstrated in the book and he is ultimately the only one who could influence Achilles' to make the right decision.

Miller does such an extraordinary job of perfectly articulating this story in such a beautifully descriptive and intuitive way that the audience truly feels a deep sense of connection towards these characters. From start to end, such enticing imagery is created. This book is a piece of art that truly brings ancient history to life.

Review by Amani