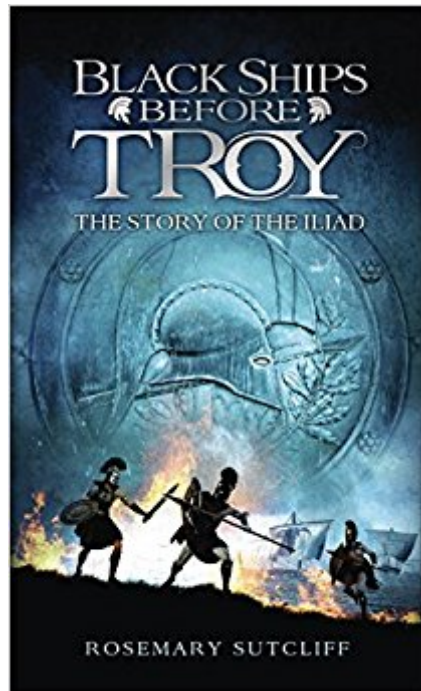




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Black Ships Before Troy: The Story Of 'The Iliad'



Synopsis

For Greek myth fans, those who can't get enough of the D'Aulaires' Book of Greek Myths, and readers who have aged out of Rick Riordan, this classroom staple and mythology classic is perfect for learning about the ancient myths! As the gods and goddesses of Olympus scheme, the ancient world is thrown into turmoil when Helen, the most beautiful woman in all of Greece, is stolen away by her Trojan love. Inflamed by jealousy, the Greek king seeks lethal vengeance and sends his black war ships to descend on the city of Troy. In the siege that follows, history's greatest heroes, from Ajax to Achilles to Odysseus, are forged in combat, and the brutal costs of passion, pride, and revenge must be paid. In the end, the whims of the gods, the cunning of the warriors, and a great wooden horse will decide who emerges victorious. Homer's epic poem, The Iliad, is one of the greatest adventure stories of all time and Rosemary Sutcliff's retelling of the classic saga embodies all of the astonishing drama, romance, and intrigue of ancient Greece. Don't miss The Wanderings of Odysseus, the companion to Black Ships Before Troy, and follow Odysseus on his adventure home. This book has been selected as a Common Core State Standards Text Exemplar (Grades 6-8, Stories) in Appendix B.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 1300L (What's this?)

Mass Market Paperback: 151 pages

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Sutcliff, who died last year, authored numerous retellings of canonical texts for younger readers. Here she brings into vivid focus the mythic story of the Trojan War, with all of its visually dramatic elements. While carefully tempering the bias towards the Greeks that exists in the original poem, Sutcliff's text leaves many of the epic's powerful metaphors intact: "The dark tide of warriors poured through and became a river of flame." Also preserved are a good many disturbing images ("Hector's body was dragged behind them, twisting and lurching over the rough ground, his dark hair flying and fouled with dust and all the filth of the battlefield"); and while there is no doubt that this authenticity maintains the saga's integrity and enhances its impact, younger or particularly sensitive readers may be disturbed by the violence. Accompanying the dense, earnestly told tale are Lee's cool-toned watercolors, which frequently take up the greater portion of the large format double-page spreads. Dreamy, yet highly detailed and filled with representational images, these illustrations are in keeping with the story's mythic grandeur. All ages. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Gr. 5 and up. "Achilles sat among his ships, nursing his anger as though it were a red rose in his breast." The late Rosemary Sutcliff always knew how to humanize the epic heroes without diminishing their power. Now, with the same kind of lyrical prose that distinguished her Arthurian trilogy, she takes on Homer's Iliad. People whose names we all know--Helen, Hector, Achilles, Odysseus, etc.--are all woven into one great story, with the jealous gods taking sides in the Greeks' 10-year siege of the city of Troy. Sutcliff's strong rhythms and Lee's misty watercolors in shades of brown, blue, and silvergray make this large-size volume great for reading aloud. There are dull patches about desultory battles, funeral games, and the weary machinations of gods and people, but you can skip those and get to the dramatic confrontations. Achilles sulks in his tent, then driven mad with grief and rage at the death of his friend Patroclus, he not only kills Hector, but also drags the body through the dust and filth of the battlefield. For all the rules of honor, this is a filthy battlefield, "clotted with blood," the soldiers drunk with fire and killing. Lee's illustrations show gateways choked with soldiers and chariots, men and women bent with sorrow. The climax, the story of the Wooden Horse, is amazingly told, taut with cunning and terror. Hazel Rochman --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Black Ships Before Troy is a children's retelling of the story of the Iliad. Nearly everything from Homer's original is included. It uses language that children can

understand. My 8 year old sometimes found it a bit boring, but my 10 year old thought it was quite a fascinating story. I highly recommend this version of the Iliad to anyone wanting to introduce it to their children.

Black Ships Before Troy is one of many retellings of The Iliad. This one rises to the status of special keepsake. The text is wonderful, suitable for a read aloud or for an older elementary student to read alone. But the pictures are just stunning, and they really make the book what it is. These are the type of storybooks you want to keep for your grandchildren one day. We recently read through this, and my child said, they should do one of these for The Odyssey. I was able to pull out The Wanderings of Odysseus by the same author and illustrator, and he happily ran off with it! Seal of approval from him as well. :)

As far as I'm concerned, this rendition of the Iliad for children/younger readers deserves 5 stars. The cover and paper quality of this book is disappointing, though. The cover artwork is attractive, but it is small (4.5" x 6"), and the thickness of paper is so thin that the binding for the 156-page text is wavy and flimsy. (Akin to pulp fictions at the grocery or dollar stores back in the '80s). I was disillusioned to expect that this book was of the same quality as Greek Myths by Olivia Coolidge that we ordered at the same time—Greek Myths. Just know what the paperback is like. No illustrations, either. I recommend a hardback or another edition if you are a bibliophile.

Skip this edition (with the red cover showing ships below a woman's face) and buy the one that is designed like a picture book. Missing the illustrations that are supposed to accompany this book is missing half the experience. The story itself is superb.

I teach this book. The boys love it and the girls do, too. There's literally something for everyone. The hardback has the most beautiful pictures which is suitable for 6-9th grades. The language is upper level and a thorough knowledge of Greek mythology is necessary. This book should never go out of print. A parent bought me about 25 copies so I could continue teaching it. The kids take one look at the pictures and are hooked. Such a delight! Thank you Rosemary Sutcliffe.

nice book and good price

Update: I noticed today that states my "verified review" was based on the paperback, however I

purchased the Hardcover, "Library Binding" Edition at three times the expense, thinking that was the book people were speaking of with the illustrations. I don't know where the illustrations the other reviewers are speaking of, which really upsets me. I got this for my elementary grade son in primarily due to the reviews about "amazing illustrations", which I thought would be helpful for him as we read it together. I received a small, 252 page book with-- ZERO -- ILLUSTRATIONS!!!! I am not pleased at all.

The story is told so that even those of us who suffered through the original text in the government schools can now enjoy reading the story with our children and understand it as well! My children enjoyed the story and the illustrations. Mrs. Sutcliffe does an excellent job with the story in the same way that Alan Lee brings the story to life and adds a huge dimension with his artistic talent. This was recommended by Carole Joy Seid. We will also be purchasing the Odyssey also illustrated by Alan Lee. (Check out the Lord of the Rings he illustrated - WOW).

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