



We Goddesses: Athena, Aphrodite, Hera

Doris Orgel

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In "life" they hardly got along, but their book is a triumph of witty, robust, spell-casting collaboration. The Greek myths have never before been told by their leading ladies. Nor ever before in such a charming, conversational yet dramatic and modern way. The tellings of Athena, Aphrodite, and Hera intertwine (though none repeats a myth), enabling us to hear more than one perspective on events and motives -- say, for instance, their wrangle over the golden apple and the outbreak of the Trojan War. And the cast of Olympian, mortal, and animal characters is unforgettable, as it has been since the times of Homer, Hesiod, Virgil, and Ovid, whose originals are the author's first sources here. Miraculous births, triumphs and sorrows in love, spats and adventures are all given a personal vividness, the voice of each goddess being distinctly her own. An introduction in the author's voice casts light on the Greeks' sense of right and wrong, and on their attitudes toward the social/political position of women (debased on earth, exalted on high), as well as explaining how children helped in the shaping of this book. In an Epilogue/Afterword, the goddesses personally invite readers to Olympus to choose among them as the young shepherd Paris had to. But now, their rivalries stilled, a sense of sisterhood prevails. Opulent original paintings adorn their tellings; back-matter pages of sculptures, vases, and friezes show how Classical artists imagined the goddesses, whose selves have proved to be deservedly immortal.

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