Ayelet Peer, "Entry on: Achilles' Rage (Warriors, 1) by Lee Smyth", peer-reviewed by Lisa Maurice and Susan Deacy. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/680. Entry version as of November 15, 2026.

Lee Smyth

Achilles' Rage (Warriors, 1)

United States of America (2017)

TAGS: Achilles Agamemnon Andromache Hector Helen Odysseus / Ulysses Paris (Trojan Prince) Patroclus





We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	Achilles' Rage (Warriors, 1)
Country of the First Edition	United States of America
Country/countries of popularity	United States of America
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2017
First Edition Details	Lee Smyth, *Achilles' Rage: Warriors*, Vol. 1. Tiger Road Publishing CO., 2017, 254 pp.
ISBN	9781539352204
Genre	Mythological fiction, Novels
Target Audience	Young adults (Older teens)
Author of the Entry	Ayelet Peer, Bar-Ilan University, ayelet.peer@gmail.com
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Creators



Lee Smyth (Author)

Smyth is a writer who lives in the Rocky Mountains. He has written many books on various themes, many of them reimagining of other works, such as Frankenstein and Dracula.

Source:

Profile at amazon.com (accessed: February 26, 2019)

Bio prepared by Ayelet Peer, Bar-Ilan University, ayelet.peer@gmail.com

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Additional information

Summary

This novel is set during the Trojan War, when two fictional characters, the twins Jem and Wren get involved with the rivalry between Achilles, Odysseus, Agamemnon and Hector. They witness the ending of the war and the seizure of Troy. Jem and Wren are orphans from Lemnos. Their parents were killed and the twins were takes as slaves by the horrible Greek mercenaries Scarp and Claw. They were brought to work with horses and are assigned to Achilles' camp where they witness his harsh feud with Agamemnon. Later they are being approached by Odysseus who helps them adapt to the military camp. The story alternates between Jem and Warren's viewpoints. At some point they get separated and Wren is taken to Troy. She accompanies Hector and learns of his wife, Andra and that Hector is gentle and responsible, in contrast to his cowardly brother Paris and Paris' treacherous wife, Helen. Wren and Jem know that both their benefactors, Achilles and Hector, must face each other in battle and they fear for their safety. They accompany them to the battle field as chariot drivers and try to help them, but with no avail. After Achilles and Hector are killed, Jem and Wren save Hector's wife, Andra, and, together with Odysseus, they flee the burning city of Troy.

Analysis

In the forward of the book, the author notes regarding Homer, "the old blind poet wasn't always faithful to the myths; sometimes he just winged it and changed details. The author admits that he has occasionally done the same thing." It is hard for us to know exactly how Homer "winged" the Trojan cycle, but he did not change details fundamentally. Many modern stories, on the other hand, do adapt the ancient myths to fit their own needs or literary aspirations (for example, Bernard Evslin's retelling of Greek mythology, or Joan Holub's retelling of myths for younger readers). However, while the author has complete control over his creation, questions should asked as to possible authorial intent concerning specific details that have consciously been altered, and historical periods and events mixed up. Especially puzzling in this case is the alteration of Achilles to make him a Spartan. Furthermore, Achilles in this novel is described as never knowing his mother, who is a significant character in the Iliad. At times the more knowledgeable reader is left wondering whether the author changed details in order to make it distinct from the original, or whether the changes stem from authorial ignorance.

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While the insertion of outside characters to the mythological scene is an interesting way to tell a story from a fresh viewpoint, there is no fundamental need to alter the story as such. There are also unnecessary anachronisms. One notable example, is when the fictional character girl Wren reflects on "the forced labor camps" (p. 22), which are apparently set up by evil Greeks. While the Greeks certainly used slaves and slave-power, the WWII connotation (or any modern connotation involving slavery) of this remark could be regarded as offensive and insensitive. This reference is used again, in regards to an evil Greek named Scarp: "Scarp sends the small and the weak to the forced labor camp. Then he starves them and works them to death." (p. 23). The author emphasizes the cruelty of these mercenaries.

The book also reveals a confusion of ancient time periods; for example, despite the Trojan War setting, the author refers to phalanxes and even to legionaries, while there is also a character named Remus. The author has a tendency to shorten the Greek names, probably in order to create a personal and somewhat humorous feel, with Odysseus being referred to as Ody, and Andromache as Andra. One last example is the naming of the wooden horse, Pegasus. The book therefore draws on multiple traditions and receptions of the ancient world as a whole, rather than the Trojan War specifically.

The author here aims at showing that heroism can be found within many people, both slaves and soldiers. The twins fight for their liberty, and do not give up or get consumed by hate and revenge. They learn from the people around them and try their best to help their new friends. Achilles, Odysseus and Hector are the true heroes who help those in need. Jem and Wren get caught up in a mythological war, yet they manage to show their merit and help their saviors and, in the end reunite, and go home. This shows that even torture cannot break one's spirit. This could suggest that sometimes ordinary people can become heroes when they are facing dire situations.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts

Achilles Agamemnon Andromache Hector Helen Odysseus / Ulysses Paris (Trojan Prince) Patroclus

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Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Adventure Death Family Freedom Heroism Journeys Oppression Revenge Siblings War

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