

Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher:	Gannon/DeGiorgio	School:	Hyatts Middle School
Book Title:	Inside the Walls of Troy	Genre:	historical fiction
Author:	Clemence McLaren	Pages:	208
Publisher:	Simon Pulse	Copyright:	2004

In a brief rationale, please provide the following information relative to the book you would like added to the school's book collection for classroom use. You may attach additional pages as needed.

Book Summary and summary citation: (suggested resources include book flap summaries, review summaries from publisher, book vendors, etc.)

Two women, one war.

Helen, at age twelve, is not prepared to deal with her famous beauty: to have the face that will launch a thousand ships, kill fifty thousand men, and cause the fall of the world's greatest city. But when she is kidnapped by Theseus of Athens, she begins her journey into womanhood and finds passion strong enough to start the Trojan War.

Cassandra has the gift, or curse, to predict the future. When she foresees the ruin of her family and city that Helen's arrival in Troy will cause, she is outraged. Yet she cannot help being drawn to Helen.

As the war rages around them, Helen, the woman who started the conflict, and Cassandra, the one who foresaw it, develop a deep friendship. And through their eyes we see the Trojan War in a fascinating new way.

Provide an instructional rationale for the use of this title, including specific reference to the OLSD curriculum map(s): (Curriculum maps may be referenced by grade/course and indicator number or curriculum maps with indicators highlighted may be attached to this form)

CCS #1-10

Include two professional reviews of this title: (a suggested list of resources for identifying professional reviews is shown below. Reviews may be "cut and pasted" (with citation) into the form or printed reviews may be attached to the form)

Review #1

From School Library Journal

Grade 8-10?What was it like to be the beautiful Helen of Troy, or to be Cassandra, the unappreciated visionary? This novel tries to offer some answers. It begins in the mind of 12-year-old Helen, abducted (but chastely treated) by Theseus, sought after by a dozen contentious suitors, married lovelessly to Menelaus, and finally?the only act in which she has not been completely passive?enthralled by passion in the form of Paris. If Helen, the victim of her own beauty and rank, is not exactly a heroine, Paris is far from a hero. He, too, is passive, blaming his actions on the will of the gods (particularly, Aphrodite), and is fonder of love and his own looks than he is of battle. Fortunately, almost two thirds of the novel is given to Cassandra. Her description of Helen as "bone

sweet" does not, however, conform to the Helen we have met in Part I. Of course many readers will know the outcome of the story, but the accounts of battles, negotiations and stratagems, seen from within Troy, still manage to be suspenseful, and the ending is particularly deft. The writing is competent but not especially vivid and too often predictable; there is some clumsy exposition. Little differentiates the voice of Cassandra from the voice of Helen: both are misfits in their world, but their speech and thoughts lack individual identity. Nevertheless, the novel is carefully structured, there are some interesting historical details, and the idea of a woman's-eye view of The Iliad would seem timely. If this novel manages to introduce even a few more readers to the world of the ancient Greeks, it will be worth its shelf space. ?Patricia (Dooley) Lothrop Green, St. George's School, Newport, RI

Review #2

From Booklist

Gr. 7[^]-10. Promising first-time author McLaren gives us the story of the Trojan War from two points of view. She begins with the divinely beautiful Helen, who recounts her own history--from her kidnapping at age 12 by Theseus to her marriage to Menelaus to her head-over-heels encounter with handsome, arrogant Paris. The remainder of the book is narrated by Paris' sister Cassandra, who experiences painful visions of the future (precipitated by Helen's arrival) but can get no one to believe her. These ancient stories are made as fresh and vivid as any modern tale by the electrifying characters and sensual details. By the time the tragedy has unfolded, readers will no longer think of Helen, Penelope, Achilles, and Odysseus as dull entries in a history text but will recognize them as gripping, fascinating personalities. Susan Dove Lempke --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

What alternate text(s) could also fulfill the instructional requirements?

Title: **Waiting for Odysseus**

Author: **Clemence McLaren**

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Document any potentially controversial content:

Keeping in mind the age, academic level, and maturity of the intended reader, what is the suggested classroom use: (check all that apply)

Gifted/Accelerated Regular At Risk

GRADE LEVEL(S): 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Reading level of this title (if applicable):

Date Submitted to Department Chair:

Suggested Professional Literary Review Sources:

School Library Journal

Horn Book

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)

Library Journal

Book Links

Publisher's Weekly

Booklist

Kirkus Review

Wilson Library Catalog

English Journal (and other resources of the National Council of Teachers of English)

The Reading Teacher (International Reading Association)

Literature for Today's Young Adults