

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## **Circe unsnarls an obsessive and vengeful romance in new Greek myth retelling**

**Seattle, WA** – Return to Circe’s mythical story in this fast-paced, adventurous, and tragically romantic reimagining of Glaucus and Skylla in **“An Unexpected Ally”** (She Writes Press, October 3, 2023); a Silver Finalist for the American Writing Awards! Sophia Kouidou-Giles’s debut fiction sheds new light on the classic story revealing the terrible origins of one of the most legendary Greek monsters against a background of romance, revenge, and unlikely sisterhood. *With the sequel to release in March 2025!*

The Greek born Sophia Kouidou-Giles, who has won the American Writer Award, has a background in Greek translation, poetry, and memoir-writing. She brings her own interpretation to the famous story of Circe, Glaucus, and Skylla creating a lush depiction of ancient Greek life amidst a scandalous relationship that ends in tragedy.



Following Odysseus’s departure, Circe journeys to Delos to meet an amphibian god, Glaucus. Intrigued by his abilities with herbs, she finds Glaucus to be a suitable match only to realize he’s in love with the local beauty, Skylla. However, the same couldn’t be said about Skylla and when Glaucus’s jealousy turns into revenge, it’s up to Circe to help the two undo the damage they’ve caused.

*“With luminescent prose, she weaves a psychologically astute study of Circe—each chapter compels the reader on to the next.”*

*- Kathryn Crawley, author of Walking on Fire: A Novel*

With another thrilling adventure in Circe’s world, readers will be enthralled by the compelling and whimsical interpretation.



## **An Unexpected Ally: A Greek Tale of Love, Revenge, and Redemption**

Sophia Kouidou-Giles | October 3, 2023

She Writes Press | Historical Fiction + Greek/Roman Mythology

Paperback | 978-1647425555 | \$17.95

Ebook | B0BQBQYMDX | \$8.99

**Sophia Kouidou-Giles** was born in Thessaloniki, Greece, and university educated in the USA. She holds a bachelor's degree in psychology and masters in social work. In her over-30-year child welfare career, she served as a practitioner, educator, researcher, and administrator and published articles in Greek and English professional journals. In recent years, her focus has shifted to writing nonfiction, fiction, poetry, and translation. She has published in *Voices*, *Persimmon Tree*, *Assay*, *The Raven's Perch*, *The Time Collection*, and *The Blue Nib*. Her poetry chapbook is *Transitions and Passages*. Her work has appeared in anthologies, including *The Time Collection*, *Visual Verse*, and *Art in the Time of Unbearable Crisis*.



Her memoir, *Επιστροφή Στη Θεσσαλονίκη/Return to Thessaloniki*, was published in Greek by Tyfri Press. The book in English: *Sophia's Return: Uncovering My Mother's Past*, was published by She Writes Press. Sophia lives in Seattle, Washington, near her son, her daughter-in-law, and two grandsons. Find out more about her at her [website](#). ***Perse* is a sequel to *An Unexpected Ally*. Look for it in November 2025.**

### **Follow Sophia Kouidou-Giles on social media:**

Facebook: [@Kouidou](#) | Twitter: [@Kouidou](#) | Instagram: [@sophiakg1](#)



## **Advanced praise for *An Unexpected Ally***

“Sophia Kouidou-Giles’ novella deftly eschews such bland storytelling, providing us instead with characters who, despite their superhuman powers, are nonetheless flawed, which adds extra spice to the narrative mix. Furthermore, we also have the opportunity to explore the experiences of women endowed with power, ingenuity and, importantly, a convincing voice.”

**— Clare Morris, Poetess and Editor of *The Blue Nib***

“Lovers of Greek myths and myth retellings should not miss this soaring tale. With *An Unexpected Ally*, Sophia Kouidou-Giles takes the oft-maligned goddess of sorcery to new heights and dimensions. In this fresh take, love, hate, and jealousy are channeled into a compelling story of sisterhood.”

**— Maria A. Karamitsos, Journalist & Author**

“Both young and old know the suffering of love’s end... and the disaster of wrong attraction. But if you happen to be the sorceress Circe—a shape-shifter and spell-caster—the outcomes are unrestrained by human proportion. An unforgettable story of infatuation, tragic error, and redemption for readers of all ages.”

**— Jean Gilbertson, author of *Dancing on the Whisper of God: A Novel***

“Kouidou-Giles’ book captivates the reader from the first paragraph. The story traveled me to vibrant worlds with rich descriptions of an ancient, mythical world. Through the fascinating adventures of Circe, the author extols the talents, emotions and skills of the feminine nature, revealing the primary virtues of female solidarity. A page turner!”

**— Nora Kazazi, Author of *Colours of My Soul/Στα Χρώματα της Ψυχής Μου*.**

“Circe by Sophia Kouidou-Giles is an enchanted reimagining of an ancient Greek myth, and has all the hallmarks of human drama with a powerful woman, Circe, at the center of the story. Circe includes timeless themes of family conflict, use and misuse of power,



desire, prophecy, dreams, sacrifices to the Gods, and love gone awry. Curl up in front of the fire, or enjoy this book sitting in the sun on vacation. A fun and educational read, Circe is highly recommended.”

— **Diana English, PhD**

“What a wonderful mix of adventure, mythology, age-old relationship issues; the reader encounters engaging, unusual characters and visual images that take them out of the daily grind and into another realm, including under the sea, into the sky. A true adventure tale with just enough history and psychology to elevate it above mere escapist pleasure.”

— **Mary Weikert, Journalist**

“What an unexpected retelling, filled with characters from Greek mythology! I couldn't quite remember my Greek myths from high school but it hardly mattered... all that's needed for the story is here. It centers on Circe, enchantress, mini-goddess & daughter of the sun god, as she learns how to use her magic in healing ways, and the story has a whole new take on Skylla, the monster with 6 dog-heads who figures in the adventures of Odysseus. It's an enjoyable read, with twists and turns!”

— **Meg Mahoney, Educator**

“Kouidou-Giles creates an unexpectedly vivid, moving story of clashes between titans and the disparate forces around them. This lends a flavor of epic fantasy adventure to the read that will draw audiences from mythology, fantasy, and fiction genres alike. Libraries and readers seeking evocative, compelling stories about new alliances and power plays will find *An Unexpected Ally* builds on Greek myth and psychological insights to create a story that is thought-provoking and thoroughly engrossing on many different levels.”

— **Midwest Book Review**



## **In an interview, Sophia Kouidou-Giles can discuss:**

- Creating a fantasy world based on Greek myth and the challenges faced when re-interpreting an already well-known story
- Her unique reasons for choosing the story of Circe in her retelling
- The importance of sharing Greek myth with readers and bringing more people to love the classics
- Her love for Greek culture and mythology and how it has played a role in her career and life
- Her love for Circe's story and how it fueled her inspiration for this book after years of translation work and memoir-writing
- Her experiences as an author and her approach when creating fiction
- Which character in *An Unexpected Ally* she most enjoyed writing about and why
- Why did she decide to become an author in retirement, and what sparked her novel
- How has her bilingual background been beneficial to her writing



## An Interview with Sophia Kouidou-Giles

### 1. Which Greek mythological elements heavily influence this novel?

*An Unexpected Ally* focuses on Circe's story, in particular the months after Odysseus left her to return home. The novel draws from Homer's epic, the *Odyssey*, where he briefly mentions Circe's story. The myth of Skylla and Charybdis and the myth of Glaucus, an amphibian god are woven into this novel revealing a complex character's adventures and alliances.

### 2. Why did you decide to pick Circe? What about that particular story inspired you to re-interpret it?

Homer dedicated a few lines to Circe's character, mainly portraying her as a two-dimensional witch, who converted people to beasts. In my book she is a complex character, who displays relatable, admirable and flawed characteristics in her relationships, while being at the same time a powerful enchantress with extensive knowledge about potions and other elements of magic.

### 3. What inspired you to fabricate this fantastical world and characters?

My Greek origins and familiarity with myths were two important factors.

My grandmother's facility to create original stories on the spot gave me the model and motivation to mirror her. I have always been a reader of literature and enjoyed mythology and fairy tales. All these influences conspired to help me craft the wonderful ancient world of Circe and to reconstruct her mythical character. Immortality means she has a vast amount of experience; her associations with Odysseus and Glaucus allow for



exploration of relationships with men; her interactions with Skylla, a younger woman, demonstrate the depth of her loyalty. As a powerful witch, she can harm *and* help others. The question remains, who is her ally?

**4. How would you describe your writing style? What was your process like to create this book?**

My friends and other writers tell me my writing is descriptive, immersive and evocative. I developed a fast-paced plot, using vivid language and imagery to describe settings and characters.

I started “An Unexpected Ally” without an outline, and continued without one through the project. Never knowing what comes next makes for an exciting process of discovery and means that several drafts and redrafts were required.

**5. What is the main takeaway you want readers to have after reading your novel?**

I hope readers already familiar with Circe will discover and appreciate new depths of her character and that all readers of the book will feel empowered to emulate the problem solving attributes displayed in the story.

**6. Do you plan to write another book either set in similar settings or based on Greek mythology?**

I have already written a sequel about Perse, Circe’s mother, forthcoming in November 2025. The story investigates three new myths, Phaethon, and Daedalus and refers to Homer’s Odyssey; it explores new themes in this ancient Greek world.

**7. Tell me about the research that is required to develop a story such as you have created about Circe.**



Growing up in Greece, I lived in a land dotted with museums and archaeological sites. That was an education in itself that helped me to get a sense of place and objects as well as to visualize everyday living.

Original sources used would include Homer's *Odyssey*, Books 10 and 12; in Hesiod's *Theogony*, he mentions who Circe's parents are; in Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, both Skylla and Glaucus are mentioned.

Other sources include Google searches, Wikipedia and the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. It also was interesting to read authors who interpreted Circe's character differently, such as Madeline Miller and Margaret Atwood.

**8. Why was it important to you to take the witch Homer presented negatively and create instead a positive persona?**

In Homer, the warriors and kings are the leaders and heroes of his epics; Circe is a two-dimensional secondary character that is given brief space in his *Odyssey*. My goal was to empower and detail her personality and make her the protagonist of a story that builds out her character more fully, showing strengths and flaws.