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Wildalone

by Krassi Zourkova



About the Book

In this darkly imaginative debut novel full of myth, magic, romance and mystery, a Princeton freshman is drawn into a love triangle with two brothers, and discovers terrifying secrets about her family and herself --- a bewitching blend of TWILIGHT, THE SECRET HISTORY, JANE EYRE and A DISCOVERY OF WITCHES.

Arriving at Princeton for her freshman year, Thea Slavin finds herself alone, a stranger in a strange land. Away from her family and her Eastern European homeland for the first time, she struggles to adapt to unfamiliar American ways and the challenges of college life --- including an enigmatic young man whose brooding good looks and murky past intrigue her. Drawn to the elusive Rhys and his equally handsome and mysterious brother, Jake, she ventures into a sensual mythic underworld as irresistible as it is dangerous.

In this shadow world that seems to mimic Greek mythology and the Bulgarian legends of the *samodivi* or "wildalones" --- forest witches who beguile and entrap men --- she will discover a family secret bound to transform her forever...if she can accept that *dead* doesn't always mean *gone*, and love doesn't always distinguish between the two.

Mesmerizing and addictive, WILDALONE is a thrilling blend of the modern and the fantastic. Krassi Zourkova creates an atmospheric world filled with rich characters as compelling as those of Diana Gabaldon, Deborah Harkness and Stephenie Meyer.

Discussion Guide

1. WILDALONE is steeped in mythology, from the Balkan Samodivi to the Greek Orpheus and Dionysus. How did these myths and mythic characters underpin Krassi Zourkova?s novel?

2. What are the similarities and differences between the two sets of siblings: sisters Elza and Thea, and brothers Rhys

and Jake?

3. What are some of the challenges Thea faces when she comes to Princeton from Bulgaria? How did those challenges and cultural differences enrich the novel?

4. What is the connection between the myths and folklore, and the poetry and music in WILDALONE? How do music and poetry help create a particular mood and express some feelings for the characters?

5. How would you characterize or describe Thea? Is she naïve? Strong? Is she innocent in the complicated relationships of the novel or complicit?

6. Did you prefer Rhys or Jake as the better love interest for Thea? Why?

7. The book moves from the psychological to the supernatural. What did you enjoy about either or both aspects of the story?

8. Thea is at the center of a number of complex relationships, though her feelings for Rhys and Jake are at the heart of the story. Why did her love for the brothers outweigh her love of her sister? In what ways was her connection to the Estlins stronger than her connection to Elza?

9. What were your impressions of the character Silen? Did you find him to be benevolent? Did your ideas about him change as the novel went on and his role in Elza and Rhys' life was clarified?

10. WILDALONE has been compared to supernatural romances by authors like Stephenie Meyer and Deborah Harkness. What do you think of these comparisons? What elements of the novel, the romantic or the supernatural, did you enjoy most and why? Why do you think romance and supernatural themes can work successfully together in a novel?

Author Bio

Krassi Zourkova grew up in Bulgaria and came to the United States to study art history at Princeton. After college, she graduated from Harvard Law School, and she has practiced finance law in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles, where she currently lives. Her poems have appeared in various literary journals. WILDALONE is her first novel.

Critical Praise

?Like Bulgarian-born Princeton grad Zourkova, Bulgarian-born Princeton student Theodora Slavin gets caught up in tales of the samodivi, or wildalones-forest witches of her country?s folklore who ensnare men. Think TWILIGHT and A DISCOVERY OF WITCHES; the fluid, pulsing, gothic narrative seems right for the screen.?

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