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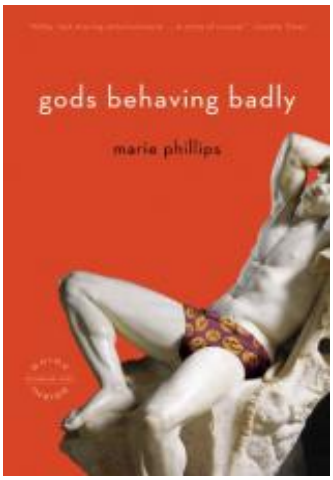
Gods Behaving Badly

by Marie Phillips



About the Book

Being a Greek god is not all it once was. Yes, the twelve gods of Olympus are alive and well in the twenty-first century, but they are crammed together in a London townhouse-and none too happy about it. And they've had to get day jobs: Artemis as a dog-walker, Apollo as a TV psychic, Aphrodite as a phone sex operator, Dionysus as a DJ.

Even more disturbingly, their powers are waning, and even turning mortals into trees --- a favorite pastime of Apollo's --- is sapping their vital reserves of strength.

Soon, what begins as a minor squabble between Aphrodite and Apollo escalates into an epic battle of wills. Two perplexed humans, Alice and Neil, who are caught in the crossfire, must fear not only for their own lives, but for the survival of humankind. Nothing less than a true act of heroism is needed --- but can these two decidedly ordinary people replicate the feats of the mythical heroes and save the world?

Discussion Guide

1. One of the recurring themes in the book is how bored the gods sometimes get with their centuries upon centuries of existence. Do you think immortality is a blessing or a curse? What would you do if you were given the option to live forever? If you had to be immortal, what would you do with your time on Earth?

2. Gods Behaving Badly presents the Greek gods in a very different light from the way they are depicted in most mythology books. How did you feel about the novel?s irreverent take on the Olympians?

3. Despite the waning of their powers, each of the gods has superhuman abilities. But they also have specific responsibilities and spheres of influence. Which of the gods would you most prefer being? Which of them would you least like to be?

4. Apollo says, ?Harming mortals is fun. We?ve all done it? (page 19). How does the role of the deities in Greek mythology differ from the role of the deity in many of the monotheistic religions? Which do you prefer?

5. Apollo claims to love Alice, yet he arranges for her to come to harm. He also seems genuinely surprised by the idea that forcing himself on her is wrong. How do our modern ideas of love and morality differ from those of the ancient world, if the gods? attitudes in the novel are any indication?

6. Alice?s experience of the underworld offers a somewhat chilling view of the eternity that awaits us after death. If you could design your own fictional afterlife, what would it be like?

7. Artemis?s discussion of some of the champions of the ancient world (pages 226?229) underlines how different Neil and Alice are from our ideas of legendary heroes. How does each of them display extraordinary bravery or strength? Do you think either of them earns the designation of ?hero? by the end of the book?

8. The solution to the dilemma of the gods? waning strength turns out to be deceptively simple. Do you feel this is an apt metaphor for the power of belief in our world? On a more personal level, have you ever been in a situation where someone?s faith in you helped you accomplish something?

Author Bio

Marie Phillips is a 30-year-old Cambridge Anthropology graduate who left her job at the BBC to write and currently works in a bookshop in Central London. She also writes the blog StrugglingAuthor.blogspot.com.

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