

Dreams of Marble

Short stories
about the
Parthenon
Marbles

Effrosyni Moschoudi



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Rising to the Occasion

Stella got in the back of the taxi in a hurry. Still drowsy from lack of sleep, she mumbled a good morning to the driver and issued a half-yawn as soon as she closed the door.

The driver, a bald-headed man in his forties, met her eyes in the rear-view mirror as soon as he drove away. "Where to, miss?" he asked pleasantly as he set off down Messogeion Avenue.

"Syntagma," replied Stella in a whisper that was barely audible over the traffic.

"Not possible today," said the man, "Athens centre is closed off for the procession. Haven't you heard?"

"Yes, sorry, I know. Force of habit," mumbled Stella shaking her head. She went to Syntagma by Metro daily for her classes at a private drama school. No school today, though. Of course she knew why it was closed, why the whole city centre was! It had been all over the news for days. The Parthenon Marbles were back!

She'd have to have just landed from a different planet not to know today was the day when they'd get paraded in the city streets. It was the only way everyone could get close enough to see and welcome them as they longed to.

The Marbles were the reason she was going to Syntagma herself. But today, being as tired as she was, she couldn't risk a ride to Athens in a chockful Metro train, standing all the way. Finding this taxi so painlessly had felt like a godsend.

The driver turned his head to throw her a puzzled look before saying, "Shall I leave you near Evangelismos then? The road up to there will be open, and you could walk the rest of the way. It's close enough."

"Yes, that'll be great." Stella yawned, then looked out the window. The taxi was cruising fast down the avenue, turning the world into a blur, but its speed wasn't the only reason for that. Stella brought the heels of both hands onto her eyes and rubbed hard. *I'd give anything for another hour of sleep!*

Stella had spent the previous evening at the school rehearsing for the play they were going to perform at the end of term. The play was based on the movie *Never on Sunday*. When she was given the reading role of Ilya that was played by Greek legendary actress Melina Merkouri in the movie, Stella had felt both honoured and overwhelmed. Not only would she have to fill a pair of awe-inspiring shoes, but she'd also have to sing and dance on top of acting. Stella had been losing sleep over that before the rehearsals had even started. The idea of singing and dancing in public simply terrified her.

These days, other than getting increasingly anxious, she was also exhausted seeing that the play would soon open to the public and they had to rehearse daily at this point. Last night she'd returned home at one a.m. She'd had a quick shower and a cup of chamomile tea, then got to bed, but somehow it was hard to surrender to sleep. She had about four hours of sleeping time in the end but felt like she'd been up all night.

Stella was contemplating all that with eyes closed as the taxi ride lulled her deliciously. Her head had found a comfortable cushioned spot by the window to rest upon, and she was aware she'd been drifting on and off to sleep. The curves of her lips turned up into a smile of gratitude for this wonderful reprieve when her whole body was propelled forward, her eyes snapping open, the sound of screeching tyres in her ears.

"Sorry for startling you," said the driver with a shrug. "The lady put up her hand in the last minute. I had no choice but to brake hard. Are you okay if I let her in? If she's going our way, that is?"

Stella was amazed. *That's a first. Taxi drivers don't ask these things, let alone apologize for erratic driving!*

"Sure," she mumbled as she heard the back door open on the other side. She darted her eyes there.

A middle-aged woman came in without much of a hurry. She was quite presentable and had an authoritative air about

her. She wore an exquisite leather coat that was buttoned all the way up, a dark long skirt, and high-heeled leather shoes. A stylish, classic-looking bag hung from her shoulder. Her long blond hair was adorned with old-fashioned hair clips that were reminiscent of the ones Stella's mother used to wear once. But that wasn't the most noteworthy thing about her.

The bit that puzzled Stella the most was that the lady's hands were laden with a pile of newspapers. And now, it was obvious why she had put up her hand to hail the taxi in the last minute. Her load looked heavy, and she clearly had trouble carrying it. *Just how many papers did she buy?*

As soon as the lady sat she uttered a polite greeting, then placed the pile of papers on her lap and immediately buried her nose in it without giving Stella or the driver as much as one look. She didn't even bother to take off her massive bone-rimmed sunglasses first; instead, she flicked them lower on her face, her eyes peering over them as she read the news thirstily.

Stella was stunned to silence for a few moments, and even exchanged a glance of confusion with the driver through his mirror.

"Where to, madam?" said the driver.

The lady didn't look up from her reading. She only lifted a manicured hand that glinted with gold – her beautiful bracelet and thick rings jingled when she moved her hand and waved it dismissively. "The parade... the parade... where else, my dear fellow?" it sufficed her to say as she continued reading.

Stella put a hand over her mouth to stifle a snigger. This woman was something else. As the taxi sped forward, Stella soon forgot her sleepiness. Her eyes were trained on the woman now, who kept reading, turning the pages busily. Every now and then, she'd utter an exclamation of surprise, or bang her open palm against her chest, her expression alight with indignation.

Finally, she shook her head and turned to Stella, her eyes huge over her big glasses. "Can you believe this? Those incompetent fools! How could they bring the country to this state? And they say it's the crisis! As if! It's their own corruption and stupidity that have brought the people to this!"

Both Stella and the driver nodded to agree. But before either could utter a single word, the woman continued, shaking her head profusely and appearing to be talking to herself, "And the refugees! Oh! How can they avert their eyes and abandon them like this? Those poor mothers, those tragic, tragic children! What's become of Europe? Where's their ethics? Their humanity? Gone, gone! My God! I almost wish I'd never come all the way here only for my heart to break like this! But of course I had to be here to welcome the Marbles... I promised, after all..." she lamented.

"You came just for the Marbles? That's wonderful! Sounds like you made a long journey to see them," said Stella, imagining the lady had taken a long-haul flight from the States, Australia or some other distant land. The lady's accent and command of the language was like her own though, so she imagined she was Greek and passionate about the devastating state the country was in.

For the first time, the lady fixed her eyes on Stella, and her facial muscles relaxed somewhat. The corners of her lips twitched into a tense little smile. "Oh yes, a very long one..." The look in her eyes was playful then, a wicked gleam causing them to sparkle as the morning sunshine crept through the window.

Stella was intrigued by her and was about to ask her where she'd come from, just to make conversation, when she realized the lady's face was very familiar. It took her a few moments as she gazed into her eyes, and then she finally realized who she reminded her of. The thought entertained her. It was a sign. This had to be good.

Stella chuckled. "You know, Madam, you are the spitting image of Melina Merkouri! Has anyone ever told you that?"

The lady gave a loud guffaw, then reached out with one hand and caressed Stella's cheek. Her touch caused Stella to shiver. *How can her hand be so freezing cold on a day as warm as this?*

The lady ignored the puzzled look on Stella's face and gave a titter. "What's really going to astound you is the fact my name is Melina!" she answered, causing Stella to gawp.

"Oh that's wonderful!" said Stella after she recovered somewhat, "You know, I am very superstitious. I guess it's the actress in me—"

"An actress! Don't tell me! Like... Melina Merkouri?" interrupted the woman with a wink.

"Yes! But I'm only a student of drama, not a professional actress as yet. But anyway, as I said, I am very superstitious. I'm rehearsing for a play, you see... It's *Never on Sunday* and I play Ilya—"

"Ilya!" said Mrs Melina, "Oh how I loved Ilya! She was the joy of live itself!"

"Yes, exactly! That's how I see her too," said Stella, "And I think it's wonderful I should meet you today. I am very nervous about playing the role, you see. To see you has to be a sign that I'm going to be fine!"

The lady let out a howl of laughter. "A sign! Oh that's funny!" She put a hand on Stella's shoulder and squeezed it gently to the sound of that pleasant jingle from her hand jewellery again. "Young lady, in my life I never believed in signs. I *made* the signs, and I would advise you to do the same. Especially since you're going to play Ilya. Don't taint her with that kind of thinking. Ilya made her own signs too... you know?"

Intrigued, and drawn by the intensity in Mrs Melina's eyes, Stella leaned closer to her. She felt magnetic, and warm like a beacon of light, her very own sun, the power and energy she radiated irresistible. "Yes, yes, I think I understand," she

mumbled. And then, she realized that her sleepiness had vanished into thin air. She felt her blood pumping through her veins with vigour now, every muscle and bone in her body rested.

The taxi driver's voice snapped her out of her reverie. "Sorry, lady, you can't smoke in here."

Mrs Melina huffed. "What? This is getting worse and worse!" She flicked her wrist and puffed up her lips, then said: "Oh well. I think I can do without cigarettes for just one day. But only one!" She put her unlit cigarette away, then winked at Stella, a cunning smile on her lips.

She opened her bag and got out a perfect red carnation. "Here!" she told Stella. "I have a few in my bag to throw over the Caryatid and welcome her properly at the parade. She's just been reunited with her long-lost five sisters, you know! I bet she's smiling today, our beautiful maiden! Under all that marble, her ancient soul must be flying! Take one of the flowers. For you. To remind you to make your own signs. A present from Melina."

Stella took it, a little mystified, but quite delighted by the woman's little speech. She loved the way she'd referred to the Caryatid that had just returned from London like she were a living and breathing thing. And why not?

With a dreamy smile, Stella gazed at the carnation in her hand for a few moments, then smelled it. Its perfume was so sweet it made her dizzy for a second or two. She imagined it was because she'd left the house in a rush. She hadn't yet had any breakfast.

"Thank you," she said at last, then opened her eyes wide and brought a hand over her mouth. "Oh! How rude of me! My name is Stella. Pleased to meet you, Mrs Melina."

Mrs Melina smirked. "Stella? Now that's another name that elicits beautiful memories for me."

"Yes, I know..." Stella smiled knowingly. She could read between the lady's lines perfectly by now. She was clearly

referring to Melina Merkouri again. One of her greatest roles ever was the one of Stella in the movie of the same name.

Mrs Melina leaned closer to Stella then, then brought her voice down a notch before saying, "I'll tell you a secret. Both Stella and Ilya had the same strength and confidence inside them. The same that I've always had. That's why they are my favourites. And you have the same strength and confidence too. Never forget that. You just have to look inside and find them, that's all. And don't be so worried about singing and dancing. Let Ilya guide you. Let Melina guide you. Let your *Greek heart* guide you. You're a Greek, for God's sake! Singing and dancing is in your blood! Remember Zorba? My close friend, Mikis Theodorakis, didn't write him for nothing. Understood?" She gave a wink, gazing into Stella's eyes intently.

By now, Stella was stunned to silence. Mrs Melina had just referred to the legendary composer Mikis Theodorakis as being a close friend... And she didn't just look and sound like the late Melina Merkouri. She seemed to have her very essence too. That made Stella feel like she was facing the late actress herself. The notion brought a shiver down her spine.

Yet, above all else, the most intriguing thing to Stella was there was no way Mrs Melina could have guessed Stella's apprehension about the singing and dancing parts of her role. *How did she know? Can she read my mind? Is she psychic?*

Confused, Stella turned away for a moment to gather her thoughts. She looked out the window absentmindedly as she twirled the fragrant carnation between two fingers. Stunned, she realized the time had passed really quickly. They had long left Messogeion Avenue behind and had just passed Megaro Mousikis. Soon, they'd be at the Evangelismos Metro station where she could get off.

Stella smiled, eager to get to Syntagma and to join the crowds. She'd been looking forward to this. Many of her friends had arranged to meet with her there to watch the parade together and to welcome the Marbles properly back to

Athens. She was already imagining the bewildered looks they'd give her as they heard about her encounter with this mystifying woman. But despite the mystery, she still felt that irresistible pull towards Mrs Melina. Part of her was sad to know they'd both soon leave the taxi, and she'd never see her again.

A terrible screech from the tyres brought Stella back to reality. Somehow, she had managed to doze again. Now, the look in her eyes was frantic as she looked out of the window up ahead to see what's happened. But it was nothing grave, just heavy traffic. From what the taxi driver said, a car up ahead had hit the brakes hard to avoid a pedestrian, causing everyone behind, including the taxi, to do the same.

Stella shook her head, then turned towards Mrs Melina to comment on that, when her lips froze in place by a terrible shock. Mrs Melina had simply vanished!

"Where is the lady?"

The driver turned his head, his brows knitted together. "What lady?"

"Um... the lady passenger you took on the way? She was just here. When did she leave?" Whispering to herself, she added, "I must have fallen asleep at some point..."

The driver chuckled. "You did fall asleep. And you probably dreamt about her too."

"What?"

"I never took another passenger, young lady!" He issued a roaring laugh. "Oh, to be young and carefree again! I wish I could stay up all night and party, then sleep all day."

"I didn't party..." Stella's lips froze again midsentence. Beside her, on the empty seat, lay a perfect red carnation.

"What the—?"

"What's the matter now?" said the driver, a little agitated. The closer they got to Megaro Mousikis the heavier the traffic seemed to get.

"Wait a minute! Didn't we just pass Megaro Mousikis?"

This time the driver didn't answer – he just shook his head again.

"Did you take a lady passenger before me? Did she leave this flower here?" asked Stella in a feeble voice.

"I didn't take any passengers before you," said the driver with a soft sigh without even looking back this time. "I'll have you know I picked up the car from the garage where it had a service yesterday. You're my first passenger this morning. What's this about a flower?"

"A carnation... Can't you smell it? Its fragrance is so intense..." she said as she held its delicate stalk between two gentle fingers. Once again, she smelled it and it soothed her soul this time.

The driver, annoyed to be stuck in traffic just before his pre-determined route was destined to end, flicked the switch of the radio to distract himself. He also hoped some music would stop that delusional youngster from uttering any more silliness. He could do strange on an easy day at work. Today wasn't one of them, with seemingly everyone on the streets.

The song that came on was a folk song. The radio stations seemed to play them non-stop these days. But this wasn't just any folk song. This was Zorba the Greek by Mikis Theodorakis.

Stella's eyes turned huge. *Another coincidence! For God's sake! Was it really Melina Merkouri sitting next to me, talking to me just now, or did I dream of it? And if it was a dream, then how did this flower get here?* Stella gazed at the carnation mutely, as if it held all the answers.

At the end of the song, the DJ gave some instructions to motorists on their way to Syntagma for the parade. From what he said, no cars were allowed further than Evagelismos on the way there. At least she'd be out of the taxi soon. The DJ's words brought back a sense of normality, easing her frustration, but then, he commented:

“Enjoy the parade folks! But keep a keen eye about you in case you spot someone really special today! Remember the words of the late Melina Merkouri: ‘I hope to see the Marbles back in Athens before I die; but should they come later, then I shall be reborn’.”

A moment of stunned realization passed, and then Stella asked the driver to stop. She paid the fare and got out into the golden Attica sunshine, a huge smile on her face as she began to walk. In her hand, she held Melina’s precious gift to her. Humming one of Ilya’s songs from *Never on Sunday*, she cut the carnation off its stem and tucked it behind her ear.

She quickened her pace, looking forward to welcoming the Marbles home. Maybe she’d spot Melina throwing carnations in the Caryatid’s path like she said she would, or maybe not. But either way, she knew Melina would be there too. Now she knew she’d kept her promise. And it was almost like she’d never really left. How could she have had the heart to leave, with the Marbles still away?

But now she could rest. Finally.

As she sped on towards Syntagma, Stella now was deep in thought. And as she recounted the moments she’d just shared with Melina, she knew she’d never be the same again.

A Day of Celebration

The sun was still low in the sky that blissful Sunday morning. Wild pigeons huddled together on the rooftops, ruffling their feathers and cooing busily, as crowds gathered on both sides of the highway below as far as the eye could see. A host of traffic policemen patrolled on foot, up and down the traffic-free highway, making sure everything was in order for the expected procession. Whenever they sounded their whistles, the wild pigeons fluttered their wings in protest and others flew away, estranged by the many novelties of the morning.

Eleni came to stand at the roadside, bringing her little daughter, Athena, to stand in front of her. They had walked from their nearby home in a hurry, hoping to get a good spot. Although they found a lot of people waiting, the elderly people in front of them parted at once to let them through, patting little Athena on the head as they did so. They were all going out of their way to allow the little girl to watch the procession comfortably. After all, what was happening today was an historic event, and the young needed to witness it more than anyone else.

Since the Parthenon Marbles had returned to Athens the previous Sunday, the whole country had been in a whirl of excitement, celebrations being organized in the spur of the moment everywhere, in Athens especially. A few days before the Marbles' scheduled return, the Prime Minister had announced there would be a celebratory Panathinaia Festival, the first in modern history, for the Athenians to come together *en masse* and to rejoice.

Also, as everyone wanted to see the Marbles up close, this was the only way to do it, as it would be impossible for The Acropolis Museum to meet such a huge public demand. On the other hand, the archaeological site of Elefsis was deemed perfect for this purpose. The announcement of a Panathinaia procession via the same, ancient itinerary had created tremendous excitement within the country, as well as a

record increase in travel bookings among philhellenes around the world, who had been arriving at the capital in droves as not to miss it.

The Panathinaia procession was to take place from The Acropolis Museum to the town of Elefsis via the Sacred Way—Iera Odos—the same road that the Athenians used in antiquity. Nowadays, it was a modest highway that ran past industrial areas and western suburbs, some more pleasing to the eye than others. Today, it was void of traffic, a miracle to watch in itself. Even though the crowds around Eleni and little Athena chattered excitedly while waiting, their eager anticipation was palpable.

An elderly lady in huge spectacles and a sunhat caressed Athena's hair. The little girl looked up, her eyes twinkling in the sunlight.

"What's your name, my darling?"

"Athena."

"Oh my goodness! You must be very proud today, having a procession named after you!"

The little girl gave a huge smile and turned around to hug her mother's legs.

"I'm sorry," said Eleni. "She's very shy."

"Oh, she's a darling. And I love her dress! Did you make it?"

Eleni threw a loving glance at her child, who was chewing her lower lip as she looked up at the old lady. Yet, the corners of her mouth were curled up in a mischievous smile. "Yes, I'm a seamstress," Eleni said finally, "Athena wanted to wear an ancient Greek dress to celebrate the day. I had a spare sheet, I added some tassel, a fancy ribbon..."

"Well done!" said the old woman, then turning to Athena, "You look like a goddess, indeed!"

"Not just any goddess!" piped up an old man in a trilby hat that, oddly enough, was adorned with speckled brown feathers. He was smartly dressed, in a suit and tie. With his huge smile and curly hair that was dancing in the light breeze, he was an endearing sight. Even little Athena warmed up to

him at once. Unlike her timid response to the old lady, she took a step to stand before him. When he gave her his hand, she placed hers in his, allowing him to raise and kiss it gently.

"I feel so blessed today! I've just kissed the hand of a goddess – Goddess Athena, no less!" said the man, and the women gave an easy laugh.

"Where are you from?" asked Eleni with an amicable grin. It was obvious from his accent he was a foreigner.

"I am English." He put up his hands and gave a cunning smirk. "But please! Don't hold it against me!"

The old lady knitted her brows. "Why would we?"

"You know, what with the trouble we've been giving you all these years with the Marbles."

Eleni gave a dismissive wave. "It wasn't the people's fault. Besides, they're here now, aren't they?"

"Indeed," said the old man, his face bright. "It's never too late to right the wrong. You know, I've been fighting the cause for years. I'm a writer, you see, and I've been publishing articles about it to raise awareness internationally, but mainly in Britain."

"Bravo!" said the women in unison, impressed.

The man shrugged. "Well, I thought, every little helps, you know? I knew the Marbles would return to their home sooner or later; I just thought I'd give things a little push."

"I'm amazed," said Eleni, "Of course, we Greeks have always had the faith this would happen sooner or later, but I never thought a Brit would be fighting the cause with such fervour!"

"You must be joking," said the man. "There was a big movement back home for that. Many British celebrities and politicians have been fighting on our side. Of course, our Prime Ministers have been anything but supportive for a long time but I never worried. I thought, it's only a matter of time till a true philhellene occupies 10 Downing Street!"

"Huh!" said Eleni with a titter. "It seems you were right. Your Prime Minister is a true philhellene! His speech in the

Acropolis Museum about the Greek culture and our people moved us all to tears the day of the Marbles' return."

The Englishman gave a wink. "As I said, it was only a matter of time..."

"So, you came to Greece for the Panathinaia procession?"

"Of course! I've been in Athens since last weekend, as a matter of fact, to be here when the Marbles returned. Oh, I cried like a baby..."

"We all did..." said Eleni shaking her head.

"And there's no shame in that. It's been a long-awaited joy for your people."

"For the whole world," said the old lady. "The Parthenon belongs to everyone."

"And finally, it can be a little more complete now. Thanks to your Prime Minister. May God bless him!" said Eleni, raising her eyes to the sky.

"Ah!" said the old man, putting up a finger. "A little correction there, if you don't mind: may the *Greek Gods* bless him! *Athena*, most of all!" he bellowed, then bent over as if about to pick up the child. He threw Eleni a glance, his expression benevolent. "May I?"

Eleni nodded her agreement, seeing that the child seemed to like him. The man raised little Athena over his head, placing her on his shoulders. "Nothing but the best seat for our Athena today!" he said, his face ablaze with elation.

As if on cue, drums and trumpets sounded in the distance and the policemen hurried to inspect the crowd one last time, making sure to clear the street completely, before taking their places by the pavement.

Eleni was astounded. Her shy little girl didn't seem to mind sitting on the shoulders of the adorable Englishman. If anything, she seemed to enjoy it, twirling his salt-and-pepper curls in her tiny fingers and, every now and then, caressing gently the delicate feathers on his hat, too.

Excited cries rose into the air when the first philharmonic orchestra emerged from the distance. Within a few minutes,

another orchestra sounded from further away. People cheered, many bouncing with anticipation. Soon, familiar notes from popular Greek songs by Theodorakis, Xarhakos, Spanos and others filled the warm morning air, causing the Greeks to sing along. Beloved folk songs about patience, a lemon tree, a sun of justice, and boats with white sails came to swell people's hearts, causing tears to stream down happy faces.

When a big chariot began to approach, unable to contain himself any longer, the Englishman came forth carrying the girl on his shoulders. "Make way! Make way for Athena!" he began to shout as he strode to the middle of the street, causing everyone to stare, puzzled, yet amused. Even the policemen didn't have the heart to stop him. Athena was giggling on his shoulders, and when the people began to wave she waved back.

"Athena will now inspect the troops on her chariot!" the man said, causing Eleni to panic for a moment, wondering what he had in mind to do but, thoughtfully, he turned to her and put out a hand, palm facing her, to assure her. Then, he winked and gestured to her to stay put.

When the big, shiny chariot came, the man held Athena up. One of its male passengers took her from his hands, then called out a request for the chariot to stop, and it did, in a heartbeat. The whole procession halted as a result, and the bands that were coming from behind got confused and stopped playing. An eerie silence ensued as the crowds and the people in the procession held their breaths.

Little Athena was in the man's arms on the chariot still, surrounded by a host of men and women dressed in costumes as ancient Greeks, just like she was. It brought a smile to her face. It felt like coming to a strange home she didn't know she had. Then, she saw her... standing in the very centre of the chariot.

It was the sixth Caryatid. She was leading the procession – the pride and joy of the Greeks these days, having been

recently reunited with her five, long-lost sisters in The Acropolis Museum. To honour her, a flimsy white veil of pure silk had been draped over her shoulders. It was adorned with fresh flowers and colourful ribbons stitched in with golden thread. A crown of red roses was on her head and on her feet sat a ring of children, crowned with white flower wreaths.

Little Athena walked up to the Caryatid and placed her palm flat on the statue's dress. A solemn look on her face, the little girl marvelled at the ancient girl's worn out dress, her sombre expression, the intricate plaits that adorned her shoulders and back. Then, she turned around and faced the crowd. She spotted her mother and cried out:

Mummy! It's really her! She's back! She's back! She's finally come home!"

What followed was indescribable. A huge sigh came out of people's hearts, all at the same time, and that collective sigh was released in perfect unison. Then, a thunderous applause erupted, rising into the air, causing every single wild pigeon on the rooftops to take to the sky. Like a grey, fleeting cloud, they flew away, the spectacle mesmerizing to all, until every single bird had disappeared to the back of the nearby park, out of sight.

By the time everyone had turned their attention back to the chariot, little Athena was in the Englishman's arms once more, and the procession had once again begun to move. The music resumed, and it was a happy song about life being nothing but love...

Eleni took her child in her arms when the man handed her over. She kissed her cheeks and fragrant hair and wiped tears from her own eyes. She was so proud of her little Athena, for the way she'd just moved all these people. She put the child down and was about to tell the man how thankful she was he could do this for her daughter but, to her surprise, he wasn't there anymore.

Taken aback, she turned to the old lady. "Where did the English gentleman go? He was here just now."

The old woman shook her head. "No idea. I cried so much, I can hardly see *you* as it is. This is too much excitement for someone as old as me!" She howled, elated, turning her attention back to the celebrations.

Little Athena tugged her mother's skirt, causing Eleni to look down.

"Mummy, don't worry about him. I can always see him again in the book."

Eleni gave a frown and knelt down to match her daughter's eye level. "What book, my darling?"

"The one of the Gods you read to me at night. He's the one wearing wings on his hat and feet."

"Hermes?"

"Yes, Mummy. I recognised him immediately. He has the same hair and the same smile. But he wore his wings only on his hat today. Didn't you see?"

Eleni gave a chuckle, then stood and joined her daughter in admiring the big chariots that hosted the rest of the returned Marbles. To the sound of folk songs, cheers and uproarious applause the Parthenon relics continued to parade down the street, allowing everyone who yearned to welcome them, each in their own way, to do so. Some did it with an applause and a cheer, and others, who were awestruck to the point of silence, with a prayer of thanks and a tear of gratitude.

Eleni patted her daughter's head and said a silent prayer, the exhilarating feeling of reinstated justice fluttering inside her bosom like a bird aching to fly for the first time.

She knew, like everyone else around her, that as long as the Greeks kept their vast legacy alive in their hearts, this great nation would never have to worry about the future.

Away from the crowd, the old man stood watching the parade from the rooftop where the wild pigeons were gathered earlier. With a wicked smile, he patted his hat and disappeared in a white velvety cloud of mist and feathers.

THE END



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A note from the author

Thank you for downloading Dreams of Marble. In its first edition (the one you're reading) it only contains two short stories but I hope to enrich the collection with more in future.

The stories were inspired by my firm belief that, one day, the Parthenon Marbles will return to Greece. When this happens, the whole of Greece will celebrate and the city of Athens will become the venue of a huge party. So, in these short tales, I tried to relay the vibes of absolute elation I felt as I imagined how it all would be... I hope you'll enjoy the fantastical elements. I couldn't help myself, as I tend to sprinkle a little magic on everything I write 😊

Both stories are included in my short story collection, Facets of Love. The eBook is available exclusively on my website as a gift to my new email subscribers.

[Go here](#) to join my newsletter and get a copy! I email people sparsely, only when I have fun news or special offers to share.

The repatriation of the Parthenon Marbles is a matter very important to Greece, and a chance for Britain to end a huge injustice that's been going on for centuries.

For more information on this noble cause, you're welcome to read my blog posts:

[What are the Parthenon Marbles to the Greeks?](#)

[Why is Lord Elgin an abomination to the Greeks?](#)

Thank you for reading Dreams of Marble!

Effrosyni

About the Author



Effrosyni Moschoudi was born and raised in Athens, Greece. As a child, she loved to sit alone in her garden scribbling rhymes about flowers, butterflies and ants. Today, she writes books for the romantic at heart. She lives in a quaint seaside town near Athens with her husband Andy and a ridiculous amount of books and DVDs.

Her debut novel, *The Necklace of Goddess Athena*, has won a silver medal in the 2017 book awards of Readers' Favorite. *The Ebb*, her romance set in Corfu that's inspired from her summers there in the 1980s, is an ABNA Q-Finalist.

Go here to grab FREE PDF books from this author:
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Visit Effrosyni's website for free excerpts, book trailers, her travel guide to Corfu, and a plethora of blog posts about her life in Greece. Make sure to join her newsletter to receive her news and special offers: <http://www.effrosyniwrites.com>

In this blog, she shares her favorite Greek meals with the world. Visit at your own peril - it will make you feel ravenous!
<https://effrosinimoss.wordpress.com/category/greek-recipes-2/>

Effrosyni is always delighted to hear from readers and highly values any comments!

**Email her at contact@effrosyniwrites.com or ladyofthepier@gmail.com

**Friend her on Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/efrosini.moschoudi>

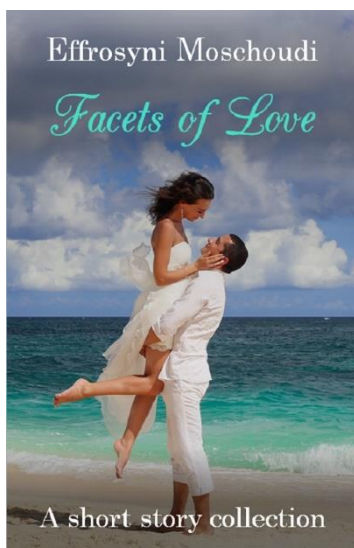
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Books by this author



FREE eBook! Treat yourself today to this wonderful collection of short stories that highlight various kinds of love. Not just the romantic kind, but also love for family, pets, and country. Facets of Love will introduce you to stunning locations around Greece. The fantasy elements contained in some of the stories are bound to enchant you!

"I loved the variety of voices, characters and motifs I encountered. From blooming love, second chance love, to the innocence of children, grandma's wise words, to Greek pride."~Alina's Bookish Hideout Blog

"Facets of love is a book of beautiful, intriguing short stories. They had me hooked and feeling like I was in the book myself. I didn't want to put my kindle down. Awesome."~Cheryl Worrall

Get your FREE copy here: <http://effrosyniwrites.com/yours-for-free/>



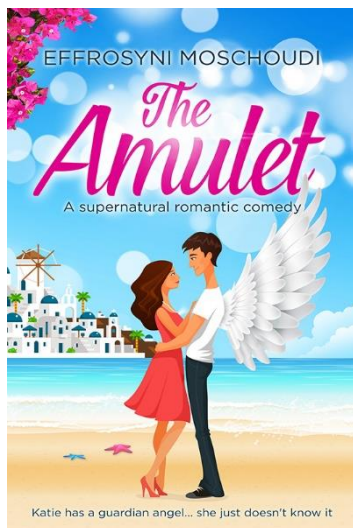
A terrible evil lurks in the mountain...

Lizzie arrives on the idyllic Greek island of Corfu but far from feeling excited, her heart is heavy. She is here to claim her brother back from an evil witch who had snatched him before her very eyes during her last holiday on the island. When she sees her brother again, Lizzie is shocked. The witch has tricked her... Falling in love with a handsome local complicates her life even further...

"A delightful read and the perfect treat for those who love sweet romances set in stunning locations."~Readers' Favorite

"It's a step up from Mills and Boon - much more Mary Stewart than Barbara Cartland, with a bit of Gothic horror and Harry Potter-esque magic in the mix. And it's certainly a page-turner." ~Hilary Whitton Paipeti, author of In the Footsteps of Lawrence Durrell and Gerald Durrell in Corfu

More info: <http://effrosyniwrites.com/books/the-raven-witch-of-corfu/>



Katie doesn't know she's fallen for her guardian angel...

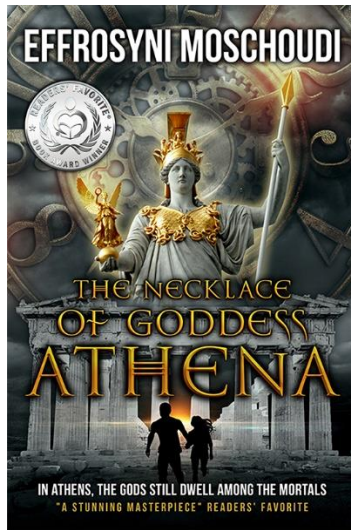
When Katie loses her office job, a gypsy woman hands her an amulet for good luck. Next, she gets hired as hotel receptionist on a Greek island where gorgeous Aggelos, one of the guests, keeps saving the day whenever she needs help. Katie is intrigued by him and the mysteries surrounding him, and falls in love, unaware that he is a guardian angel that came with the amulet...

"One of the things I love about Moschoudi's works is her endings; full of hope and salvation even in the direst of circumstances."

~Nicholas C. Rossis, author of the Pearseus scifi series

"Soul-soothing... a book that will warm your hearts and tantalize your senses." ~MM Jaye, romance author of *Fate Captured*

Visit: <http://effrosyniwrites.com/books/the-amulet/>



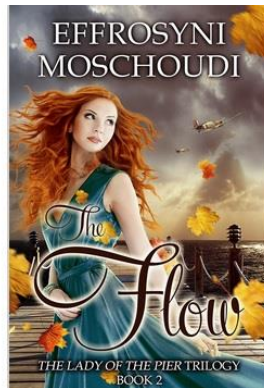
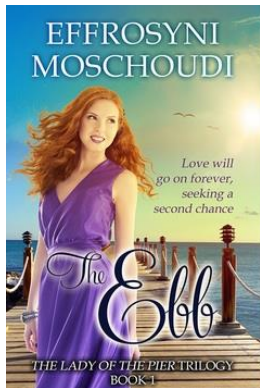
In Athens, the Gods still dwell among the mortals

Phevos, an ancient Greek, remembers very little from his childhood. When his mysterious father sends him to modern-day Athens on a time-traveling mission, he feels completely lost. Little does he know that dark family secrets, Greek Gods and romantic love await him here to fulfill his destiny...

"A stunning masterpiece . . . so well-written that I couldn't put it down."~Readers' Favorite

*"Effrosyni layers her words on the page like music."
~Jackie Weger, author of The House on Persimmon Road*

Visit: <http://effrosyniwrites.com/books/the-necklace-of-goddess-athena/>



When Sofia falls in love, a mourning spirit begins to haunt her...

Enjoy this riveting paranormal trilogy starting from The Ebb for only 99c!

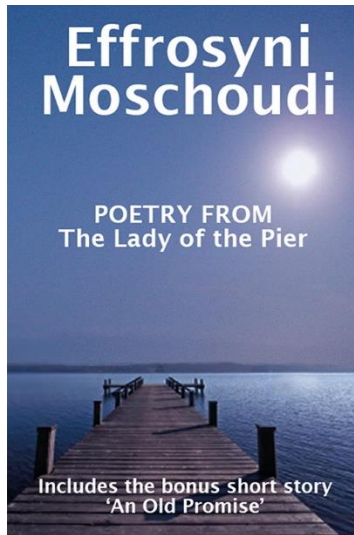
Sofia Aspioti, a young student who yearns to break free from the supervision of her loving yet over-protective family, falls in love with Danny, a larger-than-life British tourist, during her summer holiday on the Greek island of Corfu. Then, strange dreams about a woman dressed in black lamenting a love lost begin to haunt her...

"Very few writers have such a gift for realism."~Kelly Smith Reviews

"Reading Ms Moschoudi's work is like visiting a friend. You are so wrapped up in the story that you don't want it to end!"

~Julie Blaskie, Amazon reviewer

Visit: <http://effrosyniwrites.com/books/the-lady-of-the-pier-the-ebb/>



FREE short story!

Joanna boards a flight to visit the Greek island of Sifnos again after twenty years. All this time, despite the distance and her life's circumstances, she's been holding on to precious memories from an old summer love. Now, she's determined to meet again the man she once left behind, hoping for a chance to prove she never forgot their old promise...

"The author writes from her heart and endears the reader to the story quickly. Her writing flows in a comfortable and easy manner making the reader feel right at home." ~Janice Spina, author of An Angel Among Us

The book contains a Greek short story of second chance romance and ten love poems from the Lady of the Pier trilogy. Readers who are not familiar with the series may equally enjoy them. Available in kindle and PDF format.

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