



Argos

Phillip W. Simpson

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Loyalty has no limits

Raised from a pup by Greek hero, Odysseus, Argos has come to learn the true meaning of love and loyalty. But when Odysseus leaves for the Trojan War, little does Argos know it will be 20 years before he sees his master again. With Odysseus gone his wife, Penelope, and son, Telemachus, are easy prey for neighboring kings and the Gods themselves.

But Argos was tasked to keep them safe until Odysseus returns and that is a promise he is determined to keep – whatever the cost. Told through his eyes, Argos recounts the story of his life – his pain, his joy, his triumphs and failures; his endurance in the face of hardships almost too great to believe.

Above all else, Argos strives to do what is right – and to remain loyal to his King when all others have given up hope. To live long enough to see his beloved master one more time.

This epic myth of love and loyalty proves that a dog really is man's best friend.

Argos Details

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Author : Phillip W. Simpson

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As a huge lover of mythology in general, especially Greek mythology having studied it at university, I was extremely excited about reading Argos by Phillip W Simpson. It definitely did not disappoint! It was so refreshing to read a book that actually seems to care about keeping mythology "right," especially when it comes to Hades.

Simpson manages to take a well known myth and enhance it by giving us a different side of what we all know. Using the loyal dog, the only one to recognize his master, Argos, to tell the story of those left behind. Through Argos, we also get a better glimpse into Odysseus, the man, instead of just Odysseus, the rogue. The loyalty of a dog is such an admirable, universal truth, that it allows Argos to connect with Cerberus in a way that no other character has been able to do. Once Argos reaches his inevitable end, you can't help but tear up.

It's such a lovely little companion piece and so incredibly easy to understand, a fantastic introduction. I would definitely recommend Argos by Phillip W Simpson to middle-graders and young adults who are just starting to get into mythology in general, or the Odyssey or the Iliad at school.

// I received this title for free in exchange for an honest review //

Michelle (Scarborg) says

Read this review and more at Classy Cat Books!

It's been a long time since I last read a book from the perspective of an animal, and I honestly wasn't sure how I would react. But when I read that this was the story of what happened in Ithica while Odysseus was off doing his thing during the time of the Iliad and the Odyssey, I just had to give it a go!

I remember I had to read varying versions of The Odyssey in school at least three times, and one question on just about every test was about Argos, Odysseus' dog, usually something about the fact that he demonstrated his loyalty, and the fact that it was so telling how much he cared for Odysseus that he finally passed away right after his master got home. I only remember because I recall wondering what was so significant about that that it was worth being a test question. Anyway, when I read the blurb of this book, I was reminded of that, and thus intrigued. I'm a bit of a mythology fanatic, and the idea of filling in the story for the pieces we don't have any record of is awesome!

Overall I really enjoyed this book. I'd say in general it's written for a bit of a lower age group than I normally read from, but I felt that to be an appropriate decision. I did, however, have to remind myself of that a few times.

I was impressed by Simpson's ability to craft a creative story that was still exciting around the little tidbits of information provided by Homer. And I felt that he really captured the role that a dog would play in certain

scenarios, and the pride that might come with such a responsibility. I really did feel like I was the dog throughout most of Argos' journey. It helps that it's written in first person, which was an excellent choice. The story is structured such that Argos is recounting his tale to Cerberus, which at times I really enjoyed and at others I could have done without — there were a few interruptions of development in order to throw in a conversation with Cerberus that didn't feel like much of a value-add to me.

In general, I'd highly recommend this book to anyone interested in the mythology side of things! I would say, for younger readers, that some baseline familiarity with the Iliad and The Odyssey is recommended, though not 100% necessary.

Also, on a side note, I LOVE the cover!

Read this review and more at Classy Cat Books!

Penelope Haines says

This is a delightful book. A retelling of Homer's Odyssey from the point of view of the faithful hound, Argos.

One of the loveliest and most poignant stories in the Odyssey concerns the reuniting of Argos and Odysseus when the latter returns home from a 20-year absence at the siege of Troy. The old dog's joy at being able to see his master one last time before he dies has always been a tear-jerker moment, and a story I loved to hear when I was a child.

Phillip Simpson builds his novel around Argos's life story and the course of events that lead to his death on a rubbish heap. The characters and situations in the tale are familiar to any lover of Greek mythology, and it was a pleasure to find them fleshed out in the dog's story. His canine vision of events, and the people he serves, brings a vitality to the ancient tale. I thoroughly enjoyed the book.

Ashley Ferguson says

This review and more can be found at The A P Book Club!

I received an advanced copy of this book as a part of the blog tour in exchange for an honest review

Phillip Simpson's *Minotaur* was such a fun, exciting, interesting take on the myth of the Labyrinth and the Minotaur that I knew I needed to get my hands on *Argos* as soon as I possibly could. I love retellings of classic stories and I love dogs, so this book had the makings of something excellent. Add in Simpson's engaging writing style, and *Argos* was everything I hoped it would be.

Almost everyone that has graduated high school has been exposed to Odysseus and his incredible feats of heroism at some point in their lives. His victory at Troy using the Trojan Horse is referenced in so many different books, movies, and other media - even Monty Python included their own version of it in *The Holy Grail* - and even Penelope's struggles have been written about (Margaret Atwood's *The Penelopiad* comes to mind). But nobody ever tells Argos' story. Until now.

I didn't know how much I needed this story until I started reading it. Argos is loyal to a fault, and he's telling the story of his life to Cerberus, who has never met another dog as loyal to his master as himself. I loved the interactions between Argos and Cerberus, and I would love to have seen more about their relationship. I know it's outside of the scope of this story, but their friendship is one of the best relationships I've seen in a book. Argos was just a puppy when Odysseus left him to go fight in Troy, and I just really enjoyed listening to the joys and trials of his life. Even though he's a dog, things are not always easy for him, especially since he's blessed with the ability to understand humans. He has his fair share of enemies, and I was worried for him every time one of decided to show up.

Although there are a few parts that were a little slow, most of the story keeps up a nice pace. Argos has lived for 20 years, and somehow manages to tell his story in a reasonable amount of time. His friendships with Telemachus and Eumaeus, his unwavering love for his master, and all of the things he's willing to endure to protect his family are just a few of the things that made me love Argos even more. And then, of course, had me crying like a little baby. It takes a lot to make me cry in normal books, but somehow this book, told from the perspective of a dog, nearly gutted me. There were happy tears too!

If you, like me, enjoy a great retelling of classic stories, and are looking for something totally unique and different, you'll want to read *Argos*. It may be a story told by a dog, but it is also so much more than that. I hope Phillip Simpson continues to write books like *Argos* and *Minotaur*, because I will be waiting impatiently for another story that changes the way I think about these stories. 4/5!

Recipe Fairy says

What a thrilling, epic adventure! Immediately, I was drawn into this mythical tale of love, loyalty and endurance of a dog faithfully awaiting his master to return. Masterfully written, the emotions are strong and palpable, leaving me thinking about this book for days after I've finished it. The trials and pain that this poor dog has had to go through have left me having feelings for him that I've never quite felt for an animal in a book. With plenty of adventure and twists, some light-hearted parts and parts that made me almost cry, this book was wonderfully emotional- but in a good way! This was a stunning, epic adventure that I'd recommend to anybody and everybody!

Emmyjo says

This book has been fantastic. It is told through the life of a dog names Argos. From pup to old age. Argos goes through hard times and such. He is fiercely loyal to his master and his family. Trials are set by the Gods to destroy Odysseus by any means. So when Odysseus is sent on a battle of Troy, he tells Argos that he must stay back to watch over his wife and son. Through different trials for Argos some good some bad he stays loyal no matter what happens to him or how badly he is mistreated by others. This book is about love and loyalty to the very end and beyond. I would pick this book up for anyone who loves adventure and dogs.

CJ says

Argos, Odysseus ever-faithful dog, tells the story of his life with Odysseus and his family. Significant events from the lives of Odysseus, Penelope, and Telemachus are readily identifiable as Argos describes his

experience. The story is warm and engaging from the start. Just has his human, Odysseus, Argos leads an heroic life full of challenges. Dog-lovers will especially enjoy the tale and I expect will be petting their puppies throughout.

Rohan says

I absolutely loved this book, because I love dogs and Greek myths. Phillip W. Simpson does a good job of retelling the classic story of "The Odyssey" from Odysseus's dog's point of view back on Ithaca. The dog, whose name is Argos, is stuck on Ithaca waiting for his master to return from the Trojan war, asking the seagulls for news about his master, and eventually learning about all of Odysseus's exploits. While watching Telemachus, Odysseus's son, grow up, Argos helps him be strong while the suitors court Telemachus's mother Penelope, and hunts with Telemachus in the forest. Overall I really liked this book. I think that if you love Greek myths as much as I do, then you should read Argos.

Samuel says

Disclaimer: I received this book for free in exchange for an honest review as part of LibraryThing's Early Reviewers program.

Argos tells the story of Odysseus' extremely loyal dog. Starting from his very earliest days, we are given an emotional, easy-to-read tale about one dog's love for his family.

While I did truly enjoy the story, I found that Argos's perspective felt a little too much like he was a person who happened to be in the body of a dog. Argos views the world in human terms, placing too much value on logic and analysis instead of relying on the instincts that a dog would have. On top of this, Argos seems to have a near-encyclopedic knowledge of Greek mythology, even going so far as to know about Aeneas, a Trojan figure that, while known by Homer, I do not think would have been known in Ithaca prior to the Trojan war.

That aside, I think that Argos is a great read if you enjoy stories about dogs, loyalty, and action, and adventure. It expands on an interesting character who is met all too briefly in the Odyssey in an interesting way.

Heposton says

I received a copy of this book through the Library Thing Early Reviewers program. The book is the life story of a dog named Argos who is raised by Odysseus (of Greek mythology). Argos is tasked by Athena with the protection of Odysseus and his family and is granted magical powers throughout the book to help him with this task. The book is well-written and has a good story. I was a little disappointed by the limited amount of Greek mythology that appeared in the book. Based on the title, I expected it to be heavy on Odysseus' life and the gods, but the story was focused on Argos' life and mythology only entered the story occasionally. The book could easily have had a near identical plot without any mention of Greek mythology, gods, and goddesses. Also, it seemed like every time Argos faced a challenge, he was given a new magical power to help him defeat it. A lot of the story could be summed up as "Argos faced a challenge, he discovered a new special ability that he has, and he determinedly used it to save himself and others from certain death". All in

all, it was a good book, but now what I was expecting from the title and description.

Zachary Flye (Zach's YA Reviews) says

Review:

Protagonist: So this is a new one for me. I've never before read a book where the protagonist isn't human, or well isn't humanoid. This book holds the story of Argos, the beloved dog of Odysseus. Argos is unlike other dogs, he has a special awareness that other dogs don't. This awareness makes him feel very much like a typical human/humanoid narrator. He has complex thoughts and emotions, and is nearly loyal to a fault. I really loved the character of Argos, he has such a love for his family, a deep protectiveness over them, and it drives nearly every choice he makes.

World-Building: So confession time, I may have said it in another review already but if not here it goes, I haven't read The Odyssey yet. However that doesn't really matter here. I mean it does a little bit, but from what I do know about Odysseus and the little I researched before writing this review, there is very little of The Odyssey in these pages, instead it tells the life of a minor character, Argos, and by extant some of the key players in The Odyssey. Fear not though, this book is still steeped in Greek Mythology, there are plenty appearances by both Greek gods and Greek monsters.

Predictability: So, there's a lot to this book that's predictable. It's sort of obvious where it's going and how the end comes into play. However, I guess that's not where the twists and unpredictable moments would be. That being said though, I honestly can't think of any unpredictable moments. I mean things happened that I wasn't completely expecting, but they weren't really shocking or surprising. That being said though, this story never quite got boring. Even though I was neither shocked nor surprised, this book still managed to keep a nice steady, for not a bit swift, pace, which I actually enjoyed quite a bit.

Ending: So like I said the ending's, kind of, incredibly predictable, or at least it is for a 22 year old. That being said though the final climax was awesome. For those who have read The Odyssey, you can no doubt guess what the final climax of this tale is. As this book comes to a close, there aren't any loose ends. I mean sure there are things I'm curious about, but they're small. Then comes the epilogue. It's short, sweet, and maybe made me tear up a little bit.

Rating:

Even though this is a Middle Grade story it's extremely compelling and very fun to read. It's a fairly short read and it's just one of those books that warms your heart. If Middle Grade isn't your thing I'd still recommend it for those in your life that would like it.

Stefanie says

This book was provided by the publisher as an Early Review on Library Thing.

I finished this book some days ago, but was so filled up with emotions, that it didn't feel right to write the review right away. But even now, the emotions bubble up, when thinking about the book. Always a good sign.

"Argos" by Phillip W. Simpson, is a book about a loyal dog. Probably the most loyal dog ever, since he waited 20 years for his master, Odysseus, to return.

The book is written from Argos' point of view, which gives it a special quality. I've read many animal fantasy, so I think I have the right to say, that this book belongs to the best that is written in this genre. Simpson has a wonderful way of describing the world from Argos point, he seems to know exactly, what the dog sees and feels.

Although Argos knows, that he is special (he can see the gods and understands human language), he also is a normal dog, who can't resist a good treat, although he might have guessed it a trap, when it comes from his greatest enemy. But that only makes Argos more real, because it shows him as a living animal, even when he can reflect on himself and his situations.

Everyone knows about the Odyssey, but here you get a view of what happened at home, while Odysseus was gone.

Argos protected his son and wife from the gods who wanted to harm them. He was kidnapped, poisoned and nearly dies. But his strong will and determination always let him survive. His wish is to see his master one more time before he dies.

I really liked the story within a story style of the book. It starts with dying Argos on the dung heap, but takes a great twist then (I'm not telling more to avoid spoilers), and in the end comes back to the beginning. The epilogue had me crying, since it is the very thing every dog lover on this earth hopes for.

I can only highly recommend this wonderful book about Argos, the faithful one. It is wonderfully amusing, but also full of action and heartbreak. I will definately get myself a printed version.

Leo says

Good, but didn't hook me into the book.

Rachael says

Argos, faithful hound of the great hero Odysseus, is given center-stage in this unique retelling of mythological events. I have always been quite keen on Odysseus, and it was a lot of fun to have a completely different POV from which to view him BUT Argos is the star. I so appreciate the carefully crafted approach, with Argos looking back on his life telling the tale of his adventures to Cerberus. This traditional narrative technique echoes the style of Simpson's 'Minotaur' harkening back to the 'oral-tradition' of story telling, the formal tone creates a sense of time/place/history/weight/voice.

Argos's adventures are many and varied and wild fun. I love how Simpson introduces the villain of the piece and keeps bringing him across Argos's path, weaving their fates to a wonderfully dramatic end. I love seeing the gods appear on the page and the way Argos faces each challenge. However, Argos's intelligence, faithfulness and courage only serve to confirm to me that my dog is a useless sack of bones. Miss Jingles - for shame. (I still love her). My favourite scenes (without too many spoilers) are when Argos thwarts a King's son, meets a goddess, forms an alliance with a fellow-fanged-friend and faces a most unexpected-horned beast. I love the extra abilities/senses Argos learns to wield.

I am not ashamed to admit I cried at a certain point. I won't say when. What can I say, I'm a soft touch.

Also: a hoot and a holler for Simpson's crisp clean writing, tight pacing and structure. The reader is in safe hands.
