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George Katselis

The thirteenth goddess and the stolen marbles of Acropolis



FICTION FOR CHILDREN

**THE THIRTEENTH GODDESS AND THE STOLEN
MARBLES OF ACROPOLIS**

Translated from Greek
by Vasilis Pouloupoulos

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Illustrations:
Natalia Kapatsoulia



GEORGE KATSELIS was born in Asopia near Thebes in 1974. He studied at the Faculty of Primary Education from which he was also awarded a Master's Degree in Literature (2007), at the Faculty of Philosophy and at the Department of Communication and Media Studies of the University of Athens. He took a Postgraduate course at the Marasleion College of Education in Athens. He has worked with Nestor Matsas on the production of educational films and cultural events. He has also edited several books. His articles have been published in newspapers and magazines and on internet websites. He has published the children's literature books *Toumba Koumba Loumbamba*, (Modern Times Publications, 2009), *O vasilias Chartouros ke i ippotes tis chamenis anakyklosis* [King Chartouros and the Knights of the Lost Recycle] (Modern Times Publications, 2010), *O tri to trigonaki* [Tri the Tiny Triangle] (Tetragono Publications, 2010), *I dekati triti thea kai ta klemmena glypta*, [The Thirteenth Goddess and the Stolen Marbles of Acropolis] (Psichogios Publications, 2010), and *Ston planiti tis fantasias* [On the Planet of Fantasy] (Psichogios Publications, 2012).

*To two little goddesses...
My daughters Konstantina and Stamatina*

A SHORT INTRODUCTION

There is a place where myth and history give birth to heroes and gods, where heroes and gods become statues under the sculptor's chisel and statues become a fairy tale. In that place, the statues meet little Melina and tell her their story. This story is not just a fairy tale. It is also the belief and the hope that, at some time soon, the Parthenon sculptures which are now displayed in the British Museum in London will come back to their proper home in Athens.

Today, a unique museum, the New Acropolis Museum in Athens houses their other halves. The sculptures in this museum are awaiting the return of their siblings to become one, as they were long ago.

*The famous Greek poet Odysseas Elytis
has said meaningfully:*

*“There is only one swallow
and so precious is the spring
to bring back the sun
it takes a lot of work”*

*It takes hard work and resolve to achieve
an objective.*

*Let this story become the little swallow
that will carry the message to all the hearts
that can still be thrilled by the beauty of out-
standing works of art, by the beauty of these
unique statues.*



Once upon a time, many years ago, at the edge of the world, there was a city different from all others. Its name was Acropolis.

Acropolis was the most beautiful, the strangest, the most wonderful city on earth. No ordinary people lived there, only gods and goddesses, demi-gods and brave heroes together with mythical creatures like Giants and Titans, brave warrior women –the Ama-

zons– and creatures which were half men and half horses – the Centaurs.

And with them, there lived a little girl who represented mankind. Her name was Melina. Her hair was blonder than the rays of the sun and her eyes were blue like the clear sky.

Since her parents died, little Melina lived in Acropolis with her beloved grandfather, old Pheidias.

Pheidias had achieved fame as a sculptor from a young age, and he was the creator of all the statues that adorned the main temple of Acropolis, the most revered Parthenon. These statues gave the Parthenon its splendour and supremacy that made it the most famous temple in the world.

From the moment the two famous architects Iktinos and Kallikratis designed the Parthenon and had surrounded it with the towering and imposing marble columns, Pheidias' put all his skill and genius into decorating the city and its temple with the

most splendid statues and sought to find a way to make these statues immortal, to be admired by future generations in the centuries to come.

When he finished his task, he saw that his sculptures were perfect from every aspect



and his statues, that depicted scenes from the lives of the gods and heroes, were lifelike. Before he closed his eyes forever, he called his little granddaughter, twelve year old Melina, to his side and he revealed his great secret to her.

“My dear child, now that the time has come for me to leave this world, I’m handing over to you the most beautiful things ever made by the hand of man on this earth. You are the only heir and resident of this city and its temple. You must love it and look after it. And if you know how to give love and kindness to these sculptures, you will only have to touch them to bring them to life and they’ll be with you forever. In this way, not only will you never feel lonely, but you’ll remain young forever and will live for centuries like a goddess among goddesses.”

“Learn from the sculptures and you’ll become the richest person on earth. Along with the Gods, I have also created a procession

of men and animals. They will keep you company when the very dark times come. You'll discover them when I close my eyes forever. In the meantime, keep this secret well-guarded in your mind:

The statues fall into a deep sleep
when the golden embroidered sunrise breaks
But every evening when you touch them
you'll give them the breath of life."





George Katselis

*The thirteenth
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Young Melina lives in Acropolis, a city different from all others, on the edge of the world. She lives among a series of sculptures of great art and craftsmanship created by her grandfather, the great sculptor Pheidias.

Ancient gods and goddesses, Giants, Centaurs, Titans and Amazons are her inseparable friends. She is the only one who can make the statues come alive to tell her their unique story. Young Melina's purpose in life is to always protect the sculptures from the wicked. But evil lurking nearby will soon involve her in a great adventure.

Will she be able to save the sculptures and become "the thirteenth goddess"?

Includes
fun-filled
activities!



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