



Persephone's Orchard

The Chrysomelia Stories - Book One

Molly Ringle

The Greek gods never actually existed. Did they? Sophie Darrow finds she was wrong about that assumption when she's pulled into the spirit realm, complete with an Underworld, on her very first day at college. Adrian, the mysterious young man who brought her there, simply wants her to taste a pomegranate.

Soon, though she returns to her regular life, her mind begins exploding with dreams and memories of ancient times--of a love between two Greeks named Persephone and Hades. But lethal danger has always surrounded the immortals, and now that she's tainted with the Underworld's magic, that danger is drawing closer to Sophie.

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"I felt a deep connection with this beautiful retelling of this Greek Myth, (which is my favorite) and how she has wound it all together into this delectable story. I believe Ms. Ringle's readers will be enthralled by this journey too!" ~ A Bookish Escape

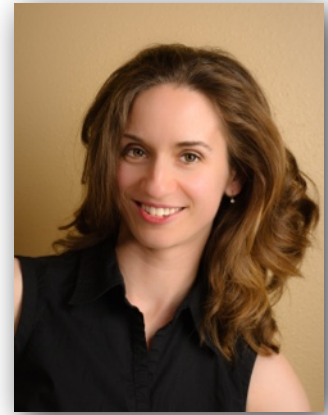
"This reinvention of Hades, Persephone, and the rest of the Greek gods is fascinating, creative, and breath-taking. A perfect blend of the old myth and the present day. And the love between the two main characters is aww-worthy. You will laugh, cry, and wish for more." ~ Such a Novel Idea

Discussion Questions

1. Were you familiar with Greek mythology before reading this story? If so, what differences did you notice between this novel and the popular versions of the myths? How would those changes affect people's interpretation of the stories?
2. In the original Greek myths, the gods' actions often harmed mortals. Did the "gods" in this story strike you as mostly benevolent toward mortals, or mostly self-indulgent? Which of them was your favorite, and which was your least favorite?
3. Would you eat the pomegranate? Do you think knowing your past lives would enrich or hinder your current life?
4. What do you think is in store for Sophie's family relationships in the future? What about Persephone's relationship with Demeter? How much would you be willing to disrupt your family life for a romantic relationship?
5. Adrian estimates that if you surveyed the world about immortality, half would like to be immortal themselves, forty percent wouldn't want to be immortal but wouldn't mind a few immortals for variety, and ten percent would be against immortality for anyone. Do you agree with his estimates? What would be your answer in such a survey? How many immortals in the world would be too many?

Molly Ringle has been writing fiction for over 20 years, and her stories always include love and humor, as well as the occasional touch of tragedy and/or the paranormal. Her book *THE GHOST DOWNSTAIRS*, was a 2010 EPIC Award finalist for paranormal romance.

Molly lives in Seattle with her husband and kids and worships fragrances and chocolate.



Interview with Molly Ringle

Q: This novel seems like a detour from your contemporary fiction. Why did you choose to switch genres?

A: True, I've written YA (or NA, more specifically), and I've written paranormal, but I hadn't written a book that was both yet. Even in *The Ghost Downstairs*, the ghosts are real but are still part of an otherwise ordinary world. So certainly *Persephone's Orchard* is much farther into the fantasy realm than my usual. Basically I wrote it because I've loved Greek mythology since I was a kid, and the myth of Persephone and Hades in particular seemed tailor-made for a paranormal romance.

Q: How did you get the idea for the story?

This story has been in my head a long, long time. I wrote my first draft of it about 17 years ago. That version was called *Letters From Hades*, and it's the one that really captivated my family and friends. They still asked me about it even as I wrote other books and got them published. So when I saw the popularity of paranormal romance emerge in the publishing world, including several *Persephone/Hades* and other Greek-myth stories, I thought I might as well fix up my version and add it to the heap. I gave the novel a complete rewrite, and ended up loving the whole exercise far more than I expected to.

Q: How do you think your background in anthropology and linguistics helped shaped this and other works you've done?

A: I'm that annoying person who points out, "They wouldn't even be able to understand each other!" in movies involving time travel. So I do make myself consider issues like dialect or language differences. For *Persephone's Orchard*, that included quandaries like: what do the souls speak in the Underworld? How can they all understand each other? I also tried to find out more about Kiwi dialect and slang, since Adrian is from New Zealand. But I bet I still got some of his usage wrong, and I feel bad about that. For my UK-related novels, I had British friends read through them and fix things, but I don't actually know any Kiwis to run my manuscripts by. As for anthropology, I did look up information about the Mediterranean in Minoan days so I could sprinkle in some details that might feel realistic. Whether they really are realistic, I cannot be sure--classical archaeology is not my specialty, but it is really cool stuff.

Q: Are you a planner or do you just like to let the story come to you as you write?

A: Usually I try to plan where the plot is going, in a broad sense. But there's always wiggle room for new ideas, and with every book I've ended up introducing some major new twist or revision before all the rewrites are done. Even if I plan carefully, it never goes exactly according to plan.

Q: What are your top five favorite books and why?

A: There are countless books I've loved, but I'll list these five because I've re-read them several times and love what they do for me:

- Jane Eyre, Charlotte Brontë. I know, everyone lists Jane Eyre, but with good reason! It's one of the world's earliest, best, and most enduring examples of a heartfelt, charming first-person narrator. Plus it's a dramatic and satisfying love story. I daresay Jane Eyre set the standard for modern romance.
- Les Misérables, Victor Hugo. I re-read it last summer and it overtook my life once again, just as it did the first time or two I read it. I was completely submerged in France in the early 1800s for a while there. But I'll be nice and tell you that you don't have to read the unabridged. Start with an abridged version; then, if you love it, go back in for the unabridged.
- A Room with a View, E.M. Forster. Light and lovely and romantic and witty, it's an antidepressant in book form. I wish I could always feel the way I feel when I'm reading A Room with a View.
- The Harry Potter series, J.K. Rowling. Hope that's not cheating, listing a whole series. Sure, it's got plot holes, but I still find the books totally addictive and fun and moving. Great example of literature that can appeal to both kids and adults.
- The Lord of the Rings, J.R.R. Tolkien. Again, actually a series, or one really big book. But I had such a major fandom phase for this one a few years ago that I would be remiss in not listing it.

Q: And finally: If you could eat the pomegranate, would you?

A: Hah! I would pretend to say that's a difficult question too, but who am I kidding? I don't even avoid spoilers for TV shows and books. In fact, I kind of seek them out. So, yeah, I'd eat it. It'd be cool and instructive to learn about past lives. Now, if the pomegranate showed us our future, then no, I wouldn't eat it. I think people are better off not knowing the future. But knowing the past? That's probably a worthwhile experience on the whole.