



## The Bull of Mithros

*Anne Zouroudi*

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## **The Bull of Mithros** Anne Zouroudi

It is summer, and as tourists, drawn by the legend of a priceless missing artifact, disembark on the sun-drenched quay of Mithros, the languid calm of the island is broken by the unorthodox arrival of a stranger who has been thrown overboard in the bay. Lacking money or identification, he is forced for a while to remain on Mithros. But is he truly a stranger? To some, his face seems familiar. The arrival of the investigator Hermes Diaktoros, intrigued himself by the island's fabled bull, coincides with a violent and mysterious death. This violence has an echo in Mithros's recent past: in a brutal unsolved crime committed several years before, which, although apparently forgotten may not yet have been forgiven. As Hermes sets about solving the complex puzzle of who is guilty and who is innocent, he discovers a web of secrets and unspoken loyalties, and it soon becomes clear that the bull of Mithros may only be the least of the island's shadowy mysteries.

## **The Bull of Mithros Details**

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Author : Anne Zouroudi

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# From Reader Review The Bull of Mithros for online ebook

## Marina Sofia says

Quintessential summer reading for me - captures so well the smell, taste, customs, colours of Greece...

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## Shari says

My fourth Zouroudi and I found this one a bit heavy-handed. Of course, this 'Seven Deadly Sins Mystery' was about sloth, and there is something not quite exciting about that. Laziness, lack of ambition, getting by the easiest way possible -- these are nothing to find much interest in. This is not erotic, exotic, or even clever. It's hard to make it intriguing.

Hermes Diaktoros-- in other words, Hermes Hermes; Diaktoros Diaktoros; Messenger Messenger (he smiles and says his Father had a sense of humor when he explains his name) -- he's a great character, coming from 'somewhere' (namely a 'higher Authority') not quite explainable, showing up when needed, when things are going wrong for good people, a man who merely makes sure that justice gets done, the record is straightened up, that good people get set back onto the right course. And, incidentally, anyone whom he happens to run across during his work who needs help, who needs a friend, they get taken care of too.

Allusions to 'I once knew a person who ... ...' are plentiful and one must scramble to figure out to which Greek gods or demi-gods Hermes is referring. This makes the reading fun and tests our own understanding of Greek myth. It also enriches Zouroudi's stories.

Not to be daunted by finding this one lacking in what I feel to be the usual Zouroudi/Hermes Diaktoros elan, I am pushing on to the next without any misgivings and with much anticipation. Gluttony, I believe, is the next deadly sin to be considered.

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## Julie says

I have loved all of Anne Zouroudi's books so far and this one is no exception. Having lived in Greece I can appreciate the way in which she gets to the heart of the Greek character. Hermes is a wonderful creation, sent by some higher power although we are left to our own devices to work out which higher power, he always manages to bring a mystery to a satisfying conclusion. In this case it is the missing effigy of a bull that has disappeared along with its replica from the museum. With a stranger suddenly landing on the shores and a benefactor about whom little is known, Hermes manages to bring order amidst the chaos.

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## Sophia says

The small island of Mithros is usually a quiet and peaceful place, but there have been a couple of events over the years that the islanders will never forget. The first was the theft of a priceless artifact, an ancient and

exquisite golden bull figurine. The second was a violent robbery from one of the island's premier citizens and the death of a man while pursuing those robbers, who themselves escaped. Now, over twenty years later, the arrival of a stranger starts the locals thinking about those past crimes. Are the two events related somehow? Might the famous Bull of Mithros still be hidden somewhere on the island?

Into the mystery steps Hermes Diaktoros, or "the fat man", as he is constantly (and slightly irritatingly) referred to. He's a genial gentleman who has a knack for persuading people to reveal their secrets, and he claims he has been sent there by The Authorities to solve a certain crime. Quite who these Authorities are we never discover.

Let's get the bad stuff out of the way first. My usual gripes against mysteries apply here; there's a lack of character development which is common to most mystery novels, and I felt my credibility was sometimes stretched a little too far in order to service the plot. For instance, we are expected to believe that a dead body had to be stored in the butcher's fridge as there was nowhere else for it to go. I was also slightly puzzled over the time the book was supposed to be set in. The existence of Mythos beer would indicate the late 90s, but the references to money are all wrong - 10,000 drachmas is referred to as a huge sum, when in actual fact it was roughly a normal day's wages in a fairly lowly job.

Fortunately, it was very easy to put these niggles aside, because the one thing I was hoping to get out of this novel is present in great abundance. For the first time since I was a teenager it looks like I'm not going to be able to go to Greece this year, and what I really wanted from *The Bull of Mithros* was for it to take me on a little armchair holiday. It succeeded completely! Zouroudi has taken the essence of Greece and put it straight into her novel, and I could almost smell the tang of the sea carried on the warm Greek air. It's not just her descriptions of place, but of the people, food and culture too, that feel authentic. Those little Greek mannerisms and peculiarities are all there and I instantly felt right at home.

The mystery itself was fairly gentle and not too taxing on the brain. Even I, who am notoriously bad at solving mysteries, had a pretty good idea of who had done what to whom by the time all was revealed. Personally, I only get confused by complicated trails of clues and end up feeling stupid, so this simpler tale suited me fine.

I did find the character of Hermes Diaktoros intriguing. We learn so little about him, why he is there or who he is working for that I found myself completely fascinated. He has a kind of otherworldly air and I wonder if any of the previous books in the series might reveal more about him. Whether they do or not, I am resolved to read them all, simply for the fact that they are sure to be able to effortlessly whisk me off to Greece whenever I'm feeling homesick.

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### **Lorna says**

A much more satisfying story than the last one I read in this series, but as always it's the vivid description of the people, places, and way of life in the Greek islands that keeps me coming back for more.

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### **Amit says**

A lovely, languidly written mystery (not quite, I mean if you're looking only for mystery you will be

disappointed) set in a small (mythical) greek coastal town. Beautifully written -- very vivid and tries to catch the slow pulse of the region with its own leisurely pace. The detective hero Hermes Diaktoros is a fascinating character. It's not so much of a whodunnit but a whydunnit mystery, and so a lot is in the way characters and the story is developed, and one is not bored for a moment (at least I wasn't).

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### **Kathleen Jones says**

I didn't like this as much as the previous books in the series, though it's just as beautifully written and carefully plotted. For some reason it felt a little 'tired', as if the author were flagging in her enthusiasm for the wonderful Hermes Diaktoros.

But she conveys the beauty and cruelty of Greece as well as ever - people living their lives on the edge of sustainability, retaining pagan sentiments beneath a Christian veneer.

I think Anne Zouroudi is a fantastic writer and I'm looking forward to the next in the series.

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### **Jane says**

Another delightful mystery in the author's Seven Deadly Sins series. This one involves sloth, which you see almost from the beginning of the novel; the whole population of Mithros is apathetic. An ancient archaeological artifact, the beautifully-decorated figurine of a bull, has been found on the island, then stolen. Even a replica from the little museum is stolen. Later, a stranger who has come to the village is murdered and his body found in a well. Hermes Diaktoros arrives on his yacht and sets out to solve the mysteries, revealing secrets from years before. Upon the solution, he dispenses his justice, as always, morality. The author constructed a fast-reading, interesting novel from the idea of sloth; I would imagine it was a hard novel to write--to make the story believable.

Highly recommended.

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### **Dorothy says**

What a strange story. As one of the jacket reviews says, this book is redolent of Greek honey and the hot languid days of island life - but for me it was too much so, as I kept waiting for something exciting to happen. It didn't help that the author doesn't tell us who the "detective" is - I kept waiting for someone official to arrive and start a proper investigation.

Instead, it eventually dawned on me that "the fat man" WAS the person doing the investigation. I never quite worked it out but it appears he is doing it on behalf of the Greek gods?

Many beautiful and telling passages, but too laid back and dreamy for me.

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## **Jennifer says**

Sloth is perhaps the hardest work for Anne Zouroudi to incorporate into her unusual series of crime novels focusing on each of the seven deadly sins... but my goodness, she pulls it off with *The Bull of Mithros*.

The fat man, Hermes, has never seemed less *deus ex machina* or yet more authoritative as he unpicks the ways we are bound to one another and to situations. Her depiction of the island setting is as vivid as ever, the food mouthwatering and her chief corpse distressing. She is always good at human frailty but she gives us some good people this time, amongst the weak and the foolish.

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## **Gregoire says**

3.5 étoiles pour cette enquête toute en finesse sous fond de vie quotidienne sur Mithros, île grecque, et d'amitiés/jalousies anciennes

A lire plus pour le décor et les portraits des différents protagonistes que pour l'enquête elle-même qui, pour les amoureux de polars, paraîtra un peu trop cousue de fils blancs

L'écriture rend parfaitement l'atmosphère sur l'île Ces personnages sont réels et très humains  
quant à l'inspecteur lui-même, il reste un mystère (en tout cas, pour moi)

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## **P.D.R. Lindsay says**

Interesting! I'm not quite sure about this book. Is the Greek M.C. really a detective or is he meant to be working for the Greek gods?

It's a well written novel, quirky plot and an enjoyable read. I would certainly seek out the earlier books in the series as I enjoyed all the Greek back story and Greece as a setting.

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## **Teresa says**

"The language brings everything to vividness and situations like with the army conscripts seem very, very real."

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## **Johanne says**

Hermes is on the case again this time arriving on his fabulous yacht at the small island of Mithros where as ever there have been dubious goings on. Slower paced than others in the series - the plot doesn't really get going till about half way in but it's a good escapist read.

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## **Igna says**

A "who done it" set about in a different manner. Who is the inspector and who does he work for? How does he know beforehand where to be?

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