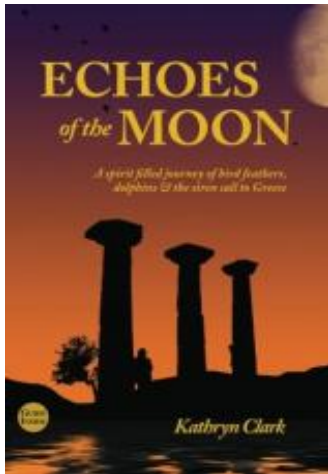


Echoes of the Moon

by Kathryn Clark



About the Book

Life deals Kathryn Clark some difficult challenges as she finds herself on a quest for healing and wholeness. The journey takes her on a detour through the Mediterranean to Greece and Rome in her search for meaning and hope for herself and her family.

This nine-year chronicle brings rich moments of self-awareness, and reflects the power of love experienced through the lenses of history and timeless spirituality.

Readers will make their own discoveries as they witness Clark's transformation as she welcomes the connections to her love of Greek history and finds comfort in the old ways of Apollo, the god of healing and prophecy.

The author confronts the challenges of serious illness and end-of-life issues, first with her beloved father who is suffering from a brain tumor, and soon after with her life-partner husband whose life is cut short by malignant melanoma. She records the physical and emotional changes as her family members deal with impending death. Her inner dialog reveals how she continues to cope, to hope, and to overcome obstacles with persistence.

Several threads weave their way through the book. She finds herself back in the work force after ten years as a stay-at-home mom. She deals with the demands of her boss, the coming of age of her three teens and the loss of her life partner all at the same time. We experience her bewilderment as she tells us what she is thinking.

Along the way, she connects with two women who share the same difficult path when their husbands die, and together they navigate the uncertain waters of young widowhood, forging a deep, unspoken bond. These friendships add a further dimension to the narrator's epiphany about the universality of life and death.

Echoes of the Moon is a story of becoming. It speaks to the symbols that permeate our lives. The moon, the dolphins, the birds, the sailboats, the Greek stories all resonate with the author as she travels her spirit-filled journey of discovery. We grow along with her as she returns again and again to her touchstone of Ancient Greece and reexamines herself and her beliefs.

Discussion Guide

Illness and Healing

1. How does the narrator handle the illnesses of her father and husband? What would you do / what have you done in similar circumstances?
2. Have you ever been seriously ill? What was most important to you at that time? Did your illness change the way you felt about people close to you?
3. Can you imagine what it might be like to be so ill as to be fully dependent on others? Was there anything in this book that made you think about terminal illness in a different way?
4. Some doctors seem more compassionate than others in this book. Discuss what kind of doctor you want when you are in need of a physician's care.

Death and Dying

1. People have different reactions to a loved one who is dying. What did you discover about your own reactions when reading this book?
2. There are several descriptions of the moment of death. Compare and contrast them. How does the narrator's experience differ each time, or does it?
3. Is there any way to be prepared for death, either your own or the death of a loved one? Did you learn anything in this book that affected the way you think about death?

Religious Ceremonies

1. Religious ceremonies use symbolism to reflect a belief. For example, in the traditional Jewish wedding ceremony the bride and groom drink wine from a single glass. Then the glass is intentionally broken. No one else will ever drink from that glass ? a symbol that only these two people can fully experience their own marriage ? it is not for anyone else to partake of it. How do the religious ceremonies in this book use symbolism? What truth or belief do the symbols reflect?
2. The narrator reacts to different religious ceremonies in different ways. How does her personal history affect the way she sees these ceremonies?
3. Have you ever chosen to leave a religious tradition?
4. Have you ever been curious about religious ceremonies different from your own? What did you learn?
5. What did you learn about ancient Greek rituals in this book? How do the old ways persist in modern religious practices? What connects the people of the ancient world with us today?

Rites of Passage

1. The narrator uses her husband's life experience to develop a rite of passage for their children. Have you ever done the same? If not, is there something of your past that you would pass on to your children or friends to remind them of you?
2. A rite of passage indicates that a person is growing from one way of being into a new way of being. When have you experienced a rite of passage ? and how did it make you feel?

Relationships

1. Describe the women in this book. How are they similar? How are they different? How do they change?
2. Discuss the roles of Grandmother, Mother, Daughter, Sister as you see them here. How are they the same? How are they different? How do they overlap?
3. Discuss how the narrator's personal experience informs her when dealing with her friend's loss of her husband. What has changed for the narrator? How is this helpful to her friend?

Connecting with Animals

1. Have you ever confided in your dog, cat, bird, fish? How do animals comfort us?
2. Are you a dog person, a cat person, or perhaps a person who does not connect with pets? Discuss how you feel about having or not having a pet in your life.

Gifts and Burdens

1. How do inheritances figure in this book? Discuss the idea of fairness as it applies to the people who receive inheritances and others who do not receive the same treatment.
2. Sometimes a gift is a burden. For example, when someone gives you a treasured vase but it is not to your own taste, you are torn between displaying it and hiding it in the closet. Describe a time when you received a gift that required something of you. How did that work out?

Incredible Experiences

1. Have you ever had an experience that you couldn't explain to anyone because it was too impossible to believe? What did you do about it?
2. Are there times when you later realized you had missed out on something because you weren't ready to accept or understand a deep experience? What happened?

Author Bio

Kathryn Clark grew up near Cape Cod, Massachusetts and attended the Dana Hall School in Wellesley, Massachusetts for her high school education. It was here that she developed her love for the power of the written word, mentored by creative writers and teachers. She pursued her college education first at Johnston College, University of Redlands, where she began to question the origins of the subject matter she was learning. The answers led her back to Herodotus, Aeschylus, Plato, Aristotle and Euclid, to mention just a few. She transferred to the University of California at Berkeley to pursue her Greek studies in earnest. Here, ancient Greece became modern for her and shaped her new understanding of the world. Here, she met her husband and followed him to New York City where he attended graduate school.

Having three children took precedence in her life, and she never lost her love of returning to Greece with her family, imparting her love and knowledge to her children during their formative years. Her children now young adults, she has found the time to return to Greece to write with her chocolate lab.

She loves to sail, hike and be close to her many varied friends, which of course includes all animals.

Critical Praise

"Kathryn Clark tells a tale of tragedy and transformation. Readers connect with her quickly, easily, feeling what she feels. The story is that of an everyday person struggling to make sense of life and ultimately to open to a new destiny. As most of us know, walking through the doorway is much easier said than done. First we have to understand that change is even possible, then we must listen, and act, sit, cry, dance, love, and ultimately embrace the unknown. Clark invites you on this journey, told from the first person perspective with both spoken and inner narrative. A quick page-turner, I felt her suffering and more importantly felt the growing glimmer of hope, birthing within her a new person. Her story is a universal one. She loses her husband; she struggles to be all that she can for her 3 children, filling both parental roles, nurturing her soul, and not losing herself completely amidst. We will all walk in her shoes (and/or already have), but what she offers is a choice to change our perspective, to find a peace that eludes even those with the purest hearts."

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