

Synopsis of *Sleep Under Stones*

Set against the backdrop of the most famous war in literature, *Sleep Under Stones* is a provocative reinvention of Homer's traditional tale as it unfolds through the lives of Troy's powerful women.

There is **Aclypsia**, priestess from the island of Delos, schooled in serpent handling and the old mysteries of the earth goddess. She is a wise teacher; Troy's most powerful oracle, and confidante of **Queen Hecuba**. When Hecuba's infant son, Alexandros, is taken from her to prevent Troy's predicted doom, and when later her daughter Cassandra is claimed by Apollo, Hecuba secretly turns to the ancient goddess of her Thracian home, and asks her to protect her children. There is **Oenone**, priestess and Lady of Mount Ida, who raises the infant Alexandros to be her lover/priest. And there is **Helen**, queen of Sparta and vessel of Aphrodite. When she meets the cast-off prince Alexandros, he recognizes her divinity, and when she returns with him to Troy, the war ensues. Not the fickle and faithless seductress of legend, Helen is a complex woman who, like Cassandra, struggles to maintain her autonomy and her sanity against conflicting divine powers within.

The novel's heroine, whose story weaves together all the others, is **Cassandra**. From the time she is a child, she is blessed (or cursed) with Apollo's raptures and enigmatic visions predicting Troy's future. But as she enters her womanhood, she discovers the goddess's gift: the erotic magic once a part of Troy's forgotten past. As the war between Trojans and Achaians rages outside the walls, Cassandra's desire for her "Beloved Enemy," the Achaian chieftain Aias of Lokris, both blesses and torments her, sealing Troy's doom.

Sleep Under Stones is a story of the end of the world, the end of a time when gods and goddesses walked upon the earth. Within a generation of the fall of Troy, all the demigods and heroes will be gone as well. As the novel concludes, the captive Cassandra stands on the deck of the Greek king Agamemnon's galley, looking back at the ruins of her city. What kind of world, she wonders, will those who come after make in its place—a world of war or a world of peace? Three thousand years later, we, too, struggle with this question. Perhaps the stories hidden beneath the stones of Troy will help us rediscover the answer.