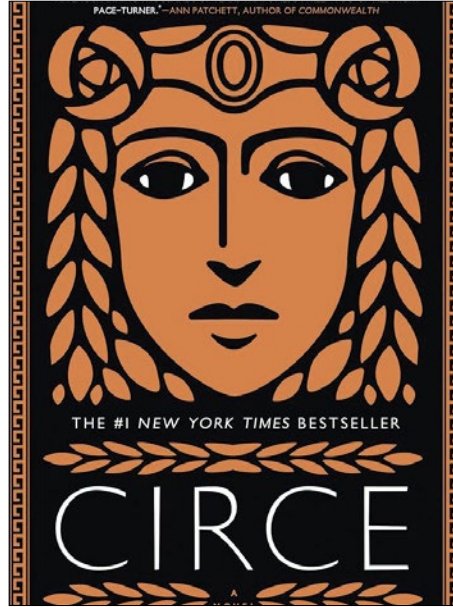


Circe (Mythologie - Ancient World)

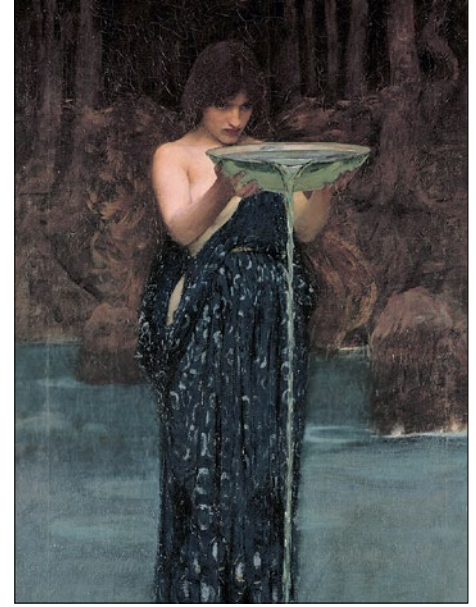
Circe is a famous figure in Greek mythology and appears, among other places, in the Odyssey. She is a powerful sorceress who lives on the island of Aea. When Odysseus and his companions arrive there, Circe transforms the men into pigs. With the help of the god Hermes, Odysseus is able to break her spell. Eventually, Circe even helps him on his journey.



John William Waterhouse:
Circe offering the cup to Odysseus
Oil painting, 1892, 149,0 cm × 92,0 cm, Oldham Gallery in Greater Manchester



Bookcover: Circe by Madeline Miller
(US Version)
illustrated by artist TBA, 2018,
Little, Brown Paperbacks



John William Waterhouse:
Circe Indiviosa
Oil painting, 1892, 180,7 cm × 87,4 cm,
Gallery of South Australia

In Madeline Miller's modern interpretation („Circe“), she is no longer portrayed as a dangerous seductress, but as an independent, intelligent, and self-determined woman who consciously uses her power. On her island, she encounters numerous well-known figures from Greek mythology, including Odysseus, Hermes, Daedalus, and Medea. The novel combines classical myths with a modern narrative style that focuses on themes such as identity, power, loneliness, love, and self-determination. Madeline Miller portrays Circe as a complex and empathetic character whose development forms the core of the story. The novel demonstrates how ancient legends can be retold from a fresh, female perspective, giving a voice to a rather negatively portrayed, marginal figure in mythology. Her literary transformation from Homer to Miller is remarkable; for example, Miller explains Circe's transformation into a pig, which Homer presents as an act of malice, as self-defense against the backdrop of past rapes by sailors. In Miller's version, Circe acquires her magic through hard work and study, enabling her to defend herself. The book is deeply impressive, not least because of its poetic language and empathetic portrayal of the sorceress's development—a self-determined woman who must learn to survive in a hostile environment. Depicting her transformation, her strength, and her vulnerability in a single image was a particular challenge for me.

Sources:

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