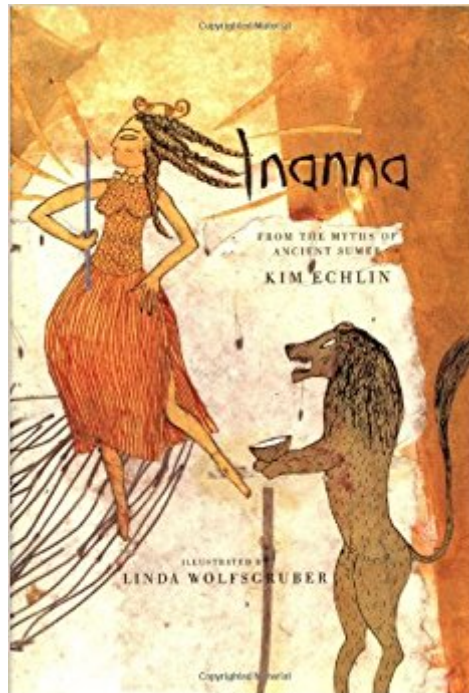


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Inanna: From The Myths Of Ancient Sumer



Synopsis

Long before the Bible and the Koran, before the myths of the Greeks and Romans were set down, the people of Sumer recorded the stories of their gods and kings on cuneiform tablets. The world's oldest epic poem is the Epic of Gilgamesh, the tale of a hero who was part god, part man. But just in the past century a thrilling discovery was made – the 4,000-year-old stories of his powerful sister, the goddess Inanna. Inanna is a goddess who embodies the quest for growth. Her stories tell how she develops from childish inexperience and youthful exuberance into maturity and gains the powers to create, to destroy and to name. She is a goddess of spunk and wisdom who outwits and defies the powerful, falls in love with the shepherd Dumuzi and, like Gilgamesh, dares to seek immortality. The people of Sumer associated Inanna with the planet Venus. With the guidance of Sumerian scholars, Kim Echlin has provided a moving, sensitive and knowledgeable translation of the Inanna myths. They describe a goddess who was a warrior, lover, nurturer, seeker of knowledge and giver of power – a figure worthy of admiration by people of any age.

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

This is absolutely gorgeous: well written (lively language, lyrical and intense) with illustrations that are lovely and clearly a nod to the art of the period. I bought this as a way to introduce my 5- and

7-year-old boys to Sumerian mythology (they had developed an interest in Ishtar/Inanna courtesy of Zeman's excellent Gilgamesh for kids), and I think this will work well, but will require photocopying the pages I want them to see, as some parts of the story are just not child-friendly at all, and my boys are independent enough readers that they'll pick it up and read everything. Thankfully, the parts that are too much for younger readers are mostly all on the same set of pages and the story will not suffer for leaving out those parts. (FWIW, I think the non-child-friendly stuff would be fine for older children, say 12 or older, depending on the kid. The sexual content is tasteful, joyous, positive (mostly ... the bulk of the sexual content is between husband and wife, but there is a rape in the story); it's just too much for younger readers. For parents who believe in frank sex. ed., there's a lot here that is eminently discussable. This would NOT be appropriate for parents who believe in not teaching their children about sex.) I also enjoyed the historical notes provided. If this is being read in the context of a study of ancient culture, there are notes about how the stories were found in bits and parts during excavations, and how some of the details are not necessarily clear because of how clay tablets were found in pieces rather than a whole story in a book.

This book, geared towards young adults and children, is a great introduction to the compelling figure of Inanna. I would recommend reading this and then picking up Diane Wolkstein and Samuel Noah Kramer's "Inanna: Queen of Heaven and Earth."

I bought every book I could find on Inanna and this was one of the better ones. Well written and well researched

Echlin's translation, *Inanna: From the Myths of Ancient Sumer*, is a gorgeous little book. I bought it because I was looking for a rendition of the Inanna myth suitable for middle-school-aged girls. Despite what other reviewers' wrote, I thought Echlin's translation would embrace healthy female sexuality and serve as an unusually positive influence for girls coming of age. Though I now believe most parents will find Echlin's account too sexually explicit for a pre-teen audience, older girls and women will likely appreciate the accessible language and lovely illustrations, which present a fierce female character who enjoys the pleasures of sex within the context of marriage. For those unaware, according to most accounts in Greek mythology, a parallel heroine, Persephone, an innocent girl, was sucked into the underground by being raped. While down below, Persephone grew and matured by enduring hardships and trials, and returned to be in the world for half the year as a more enlightened person. More recently, some storytellers say that Persephone stumbled into hell while

picking flowers, which serves as a "cleaned up" version suitable for children. In contrast, the Sumerian Goddess Inanna chose to explore the darkness below in order to expand her consciousness. Inanna was a young married deity who discovered guidance and uncovered wisdom during and after her intentional descent to the underworld. As an ancient goddess, Inanna embodied traits we admire today. She was emboldened to make choices about her destiny, explored and appreciated her sexuality, wisely used her intelligence for good, and willingly undertook adventures and self-discovery. She suffered, as all do, but was not a victim (in Persephone's case, a victim of an uncaring, or some would say cruel, father). Therefore, most contemporary women in the West can more readily identify with Inanna and/or see her as a symbol of positive female strength and empowerment. I highly recommend Echlin's and Wolfsgruber's work for readers familiar with Sumer's Inanna, and for those who enjoy myths but don't yet know of Inanna's grace. Echlin effectively streamlines language from another time for today's reader without losing the myth's integrity. Wolfsgruber's illustrations corroborate Inanna's journey in fresh, vibrant picture-form, which gives us a glimpse of Ancient Sumer. Really splendid!

Great book on describing the myth of Inanna in a symbolic and well researched way. Great for younger readers as well and empowering for young girl readers.

I come from the land where these stories originated! but I have mixed feelings about the book. The illustrations are great! really took me back to the time when I wandered among old ruins with ancient walls and drawings similar to these illustrations, though the coloring is different. The story is about a goddess in old Sumer. Though I believe in one true God that made life and everything seen and unseen and don't believe in these ancient gods, I enjoyed the drawings. I found the story not very different from other love stories in ancient myths. My reason to give it 4 stars is: In some passages the book is written in an explicit language on the subject of sexuality, according to the ancient style of writing on this subject in Sumer and other old civilizations in Mesopotamia. So not suited for children to read from in my opinion! most of Mesopotamia ancient stories like Gilgamesh, have sexually explicit language.

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