

ELLI PEONIDOU

**THE TRIPLETS AND THEIR FAIRY GODMOTHER
(I TRIDYMES KAI I MAGISSA NONA TOUS)**

Review by Andreas Kounios
'Alithia' newspaper, Cyprus 05-01-2009

The best thing about Elli Peonidou's books is this: They never disappoint. On the contrary, they invariably fulfil our expectations, which shows not only her literary ability but her playful imagination.

For me, "*The Triplets and their Fairy Godmother*" proved to be a charming read, first and foremost for its subject, secondly for its messages and thirdly for the moment in time when they took me to the borders of realism and surrealism. That is to say, the day before Christmas when almost all of us, forgetting any concerns about cholesterol and the price of sugar, become children again, happy to devour sweets and fairytales in the same greedy fashion.

The book charmingly narrates the adventures of three girls who lose their mother at an early age and are forced to walk among the nettles of danger alone and unprotected. Well, not entirely unprotected since they are loyally followed everywhere they go by the wondrous Spirit given to them by their Fairy Godmother Good Fortune. All this, naturally, requires skill and, above all, strong discipline and work. Fengareni, Meleni and Xefteri may be blessed with rare beauty, the voice of a nightingale and a sharp mind respectively but these qualities are not enough. All three girls have to work hard.

The most exciting aspects of Elli Peonidou's story are the attractive presentation of everyday behaviour – our own and that of those around us – and the way she transmits principles and values, away from tiring melodrama and didacticism. Indeed, until the three sisters find vindication, they have to weather the storm of their passions, often brought upon themselves. There is, of course, a miserly old man, an evil queen and all the bad elements of a real fairytale but the three girls also have their own weaknesses to deal with.

Elli Peonidou unravels a tale that is as real as life itself with clever analogies, balanced plot twists, a quickness of wit and rhythm. Do we come across angels? And if so, how do we make the most of their presence? Do we use the smallest pretext to call on them or do we wait until they are our last resort?

I enjoyed Elli Peonidou's book right up to the very last line. It is like the ecological symbols she uses. Like a juicy orange, a tasty apple and a cool pomegranate. Well-written and concise, with superb aesthetics and illustrations, Peonidou's book truly shines. And don't always believe the proverbs which she sprinkles liberally throughout the text. Often all that glitters actually is gold. In fact I am holding it in my hands right now and I am ready to read it again.