

## Kat's Greek Summer

**Mima Tipper**

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*A determined teenager comes of age in her ancestral environment in the relatable novel Kat's Greek Summer.*

In Mima Tipper's sympathetic novel *Kat's Greek Summer*, a teenage girl reconciles herself to her complex identity.

At the start of the summer, Kat is determined to train for her high school's cross-country team. Her mother has other plans. On a surprise trip to Greece to spend time with her extended family, Kat, who is only half Greek, struggles to fit in. She wants to run, but it's too hot during the day, and she's told that she can't run at night—it's not what good Greek girls do, and it could be dangerous. Whether she's sitting on the beach or floating on the sea, Kat has to figure out how to train and to become a young woman all at once.

While she sometimes overreacts, Kat is a relatable teenager at her best and worst moments. Her emotions are heightened, and her thought processes and internal pep talks are engaging. She can't understand why her parents make the decisions they do, and she becomes irrational over a crush on a boy, Theofilus, who distracts her from her running goals, leading to some lulls in the text's momentum. But she's also innocent: When two older boys approach her on the beach, she can't quite figure out why they're staring at her or what suggestions they are making about American girls they've seen on television.

Running has both a literal and a metaphorical presence in the story. Kat thinks that going to Greece will take away from training with the team, but she learns that there's a literal mountain for her to conquer and that she will be able to train on her own. Her alone time leads to other challenges, though: She learns to love running, worries about her safety, and becomes aware of how those around her react to her in running shorts. She develops keen thoughts on bodily autonomy, begins to reconcile others' perceptions with reality, and hones her skills at rebellion.

The prose is detailed and descriptive, fleshing out Kat's environment well even through her reserved eyes. Further, there are plenty of challenges in this unfamiliar place to test her abilities; she is forced to respond to problems in real time and to admit to her shortcomings. As she begins to understand her Greek relatives' world better, her respect for them and for their decisions grows, helping her to mature.

In the coming-of-age novel *Kat's Greek Summer*, a girl embraces her Greek identity and begins to understand who she wants to be.

ADDISSYN HOUSE (January 21, 2025)

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