

**A very special Book Report by Jessica @ 15 (complete with spelling error  
[Psappa=Psappha])**

Today some people look down on gays and lesbians. But it wasn't always that way. What about the time before Christ; before Adam and Eve? When nature, and Greek gods like Zeus were worshiped. What was thought of lesbians then? The ancient poetry of Psappa of Lesbos gives us an idea.

Psappa was banned from her home in Mytilene when she insulted the Tyrant. Her and her lover were put on separate ships, and sent away from Mytilene. But during a storm Psappa was thrown overboard. A man named Kerkolos, a trader spotted her and plucked her out of the water. When she woke up she met an African named Lycos, who dressed her, did her hair and makeup, decorated her room, and befriended her. On the boat was an African queen, Gongyla. Both women were to be taken to Kerkolos' home, and live with the many other women who were prisoners to his home.

Yet this was a beautiful prison, if any at all. Psappa was given her own room and servant. Though locked in the house, she was treated like a queen. But the queen was separated from all the other women. The only person she conversated with was her servant girl Lyneachia. Psappa longed for her home, and the company of the girls. But Kerkolos made it clear that Psappa was different from the other girls, she was special.

How special, Psappa did not know until Kerkolos returned from sea. Psappa was to be his wife. When she found out she was furious, and denied

his offer. Kerkolos got angry and went away. But Psappa soon realized she didn't have a choice and married him. After their marriage Psappa got pregnant. During delivery she was having trouble, if it wasn't for Gongyla cutting open her stomach, Psappa and her newborn daughter would have died.

Though when they first married Psappa didn't truly love Kerkolos. But now that she has had his child, she has grown to love her husband. Yet she was also falling in love with Gongyla. While Kerkolos spent months away at sea, Psappa and Gongyla became intimate lovers, emotionally and physically. It was a feeling Psappa never had experienced. She thought her husband would be mad, but he wasn't. He expected it.

While away at sea, Psappa got a message that Kerkolos had died. She was devastated. She had grown to love him, and now he has left her to raise their daughter alone. Kerkolos' mother Adriana took away many of the girls, and would sell them as slaves, or wives. Psappa made a deal to keep the elder ones, and the house. So much was going on at the same time, the only thing Psappa was sure of was her love for Gongyla. Even though Adriana had taken Gongyla and Lycos away, they escaped and came back to Psappa. Adriana never returned for them.

Psappa was a poet, and when she died she wanted her poems to live on. Lycos gave the suggestion of starting a women's school. It took some convincing, but eventually Psappa agreed. Psappa sang song for her student, and Gongyla taught them how to use a bow. Soon the school became crowded, and more scripts from eager fathers came daily, wanted their daughters to attend Psappa's school.

One day Alkaios, Psappa's old lover came to her school. He informed her that the tyrant had heard of her success and wanted her to return to Mytilene. Psappa was extremely happy when the boat reached Mytilene's harbor. She knew she was home, and was glad to have Gongyla and her daughter with her. Here Gongyla and her could be together with all the other Lesbos. They could manage their school, and live happy.

Gyla (Gongyla) had drugged Psappa's wine so she could have the intimate time she knew Psappa wanted with Atthis; the girl she has had her eye on before she was kick out of her home. But when Psappa found out what she had done, she became furious. Psappa yelled and cursed at Gyla, and without knowing until she was gone, drove Gyla away. Psappa became very depressed. She neglected her students and her school. Psappa left for many days and had an intimate affair with a fisherman, Phaeon. Her

daughter looked down on her for what she had done. She didn't understand how she could stoop to such a low level.

One day Gyla returned. Psappa and her both knew they were meant for each other. They were so happy to be together again. They went on living their lives together. They were sailing to Egypt and stopped at many harbors because of the weather. While stopped Psappa went to worship and give thanks to Apollo on a high cliff. She was watching Gyla climb the mast of the boat to dive off. The sea became a storm, and Psappa screamed at the ocean, and ran into it dieing with her lover Gongyla.

Being a bisexual, I know how hard it is to "come out". It's nice to be able to know that there were lesbians, long before Christ. Because it shows that it doesn't need to be between a man and women for it to be love. Love is how you feel about a certain person; it's not about how to reproduce children. Psappa and Gongyla's love was so true and pure. This book truly touched me on a personal level. And I am greatly appreciative that my grandmother and author Peggy Ullman Bell didn't care about the negative sayings and feelings of other people, and wrote this book about the truth of love.