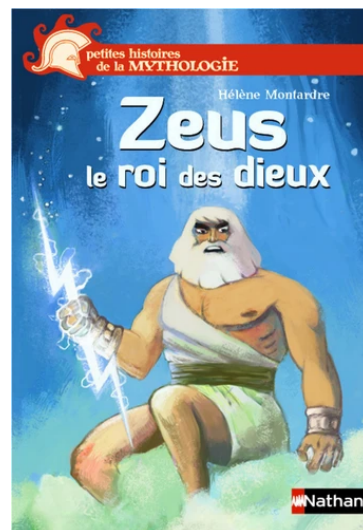


Zeus, King of the Gods [Zeus le roi des dieux]

TAGS: [Amalthea](#) [Aphrodite](#) [Apollo](#) [Briareus / Briareos](#) [Cottus](#) [Cronus / Kronos](#) [Cyclops / Cyclopes](#) [Demeter](#) [Gaia / Gaea](#) [Gyges](#) [Hades](#) [Hecate](#) [Hecatoncheires / Hundred-Handed](#) [Hera](#) [Hestia](#) [Olympus](#) [Orpheus](#) [Poseidon](#) [Rhea](#) [Titans](#) [Typhon / Typhoeus / Typhaon](#) [Zeus](#)



General information	
<i>Title of the work</i>	Zeus, King of the Gods [Zeus le roi des dieux]
<i>Country of the First Edition</i>	France
<i>Country/countries of popularity</i>	France and French-speaking countries
<i>Original Language</i>	French
<i>First Edition Date</i>	2013
<i>First Edition Details</i>	Hélène Montardre, ill. Nicolas Duffaut, <i>Zeus le roi des dieux</i> [Zeus, King of the Gods]. Little Stories from Mythology [Petites histoires de la mythologie] 12. Paris: Nathan, 2013, 61 pp.
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<i>Genre</i>	Retelling of myths*
<i>Target Audience</i>	Children (9 years+)
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Courtesy of Univers
Jeunesse – Nathan –
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Nicolas Duffaut , b. 1977 (Illustrator)

Born in 1977 in Aubenas, in the Ard  che region, he studied illustration at the   mile Cohl School in Lyons where he received his diploma in 2002. Since, he has been working as illustrator for a number of publishers, namely Bayard, Magnard, Flammarion, Milan jeunesse, Nathan, Sarbacane et Tourbillon. He also works for YA press. Among his illustrations connected to Antiquity are Homer's *Illiad and Odyssey*:

L'Odyss  e d'Homer, illustr   par Nicolas Duffaut. Paris: Nathan, 2009

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Additional information

Summary

In the mountains on the island of Crete, in a secret clearing, nymphs live, sing, dance, and play undisturbed. A young boy called Zeus plays and runs in the hills trying to catch Amalthea, a goat with horns full of ambrosia. Zeus grows up and asks nymphs about his parents. At first, they speak only about his mother Rhea, but later they tell him about his father, Kronos, who, trying to prevent a prophecy, devours his children. Zeus was saved by Rhea, who gave birth to him on Crete and, to save his life, left him to Amalthea and the nymphs' care. Instead of her baby, she gave Kronos a stone wrapped in swaddling clothes and Kronos, convinced that it was his son, swallowed the stone. The boy realizes that once he reaches adulthood, he would have to rejoin his strange family. When the time comes, he goes to find his father, the gigantic Titan Kronos. While scared of his father, he stays his ground and tells him who he is. Kronos is so astounded that he begins to cough; first, he coughs out the diapered stone, then, one after another, all the babies he devoured. Once they touch the ground, they instantly begin to grow: Poseidon, Hades, Hera, Hestia, and Demeter. After his bout of coughing and regurgitating devoured children, Kronos lies on the ground, unconscious. His three sons and three daughters plan their strategy against their father and the rest of the Titans.

Zeus' siblings are afraid of the Titans and think they have little chance of winning a war against them. Still, Zeus, brought up on stories told to him by the nymphs, knows all their potential allies: first, the Cyclopes, locked by Titans inside Gaia, then all the other deities that could be convinced to join. The best place from which the war could be conducted is Mount Olympus. Zeus goes to talk to the Cyclopes while his siblings try to coopt other gods. The Cyclopes make lightning bolts for Zeus and give him the ability to control the thunder. Finally, Zeus also releases three Hekatoncheires, hundred-handed giants: Briareus, Kottos, and Gyges. They have no problem standing on Olympus and showering the Titans with huge rocks. Zeus strikes the Titans with lightning after lightning. They are overwhelmed. Zeus asks the Hekatoncheires to chain the Titans, keeping them deep underground, imprisoning them in Tartarus, and standing guard there. After a time of peace, Gaia, to whose suffering nobody paid attention to, brings another plague against Olympus: Typhon, the strongest monster in the world. Zeus believes that if the Olympian gods work together, they can vanquish even Typhon. The battle evolves into a duel between Typhon and Zeus, from which, after a hard fight, Zeus emerges victorious.

Typhon falls, and the earth opens and swallows him. Zeus' hair and beard turned white during the duel, he also became taller, and his authority shines through. A new order of thing is being introduced: Zeus distributes power between the gods; Poseidon gets the seas, Hades the Underworld and the shades of the dead, Hera becomes the goddess of marriage, Hestia of the hearth, family, and home, Demeter of the harvest, Hecate takes the role of divine advisor, Aphrodite brings love, and so on, resulting in every goddess and god getting a special area of responsibility.

In the end, like in all books of the series, a *Pour en savoir plus* [To know more about it] section provides basic information about characters and sources.

Analysis

The myth of Zeus is retold from an unusual perspective, that of a child. During his idyllic childhood among nymphs on the Island of Crete, fed with ambrosia by his loving nurse, the goat Amalthea, Zeus is unaware of his parentage. As he grows up, he starts seeking answers to the eternal questions that all children who were not brought up in their family have: who am I? Who and where are my parents? Why did they abandon me? When he learns the fantastic truth from his companions, the Nymphs, he decides to face his father. The story tells us how difficult it was for the young Zeus to stand up to the terrifying Kronos. There is a scene full of dramatic tension when Zeus explains to his disbelieving father that he is his son. Kronos laughs so much that he vomits, first the stone, and then coughs up all the children he swallowed. Montardre continues the story providing a summary overview of what happened until Zeus' victory over the Titans and the division of power between the gods under his royal authority.

The young hero achieved his dream and recovered his rightful place in the world. This part of the myth is the most exciting and relevant for children. As in her other volumes in the series *Les petites histoires de la mythologie*, the author does not sanitize the myth for the young readers but highlights what can make the story relevant and presents it accordingly. She does not go into the gory details but does not distort the myth. Her modern language usage and style make the story accessible and the plot absorbing for children. The target age, as specified by the publisher, nine years and up, seems just right. The volume is an excellent introduction to Greek mythology and its perception by children.

