Ayelet Peer, "Entry on: Gods, Goddesses and Monsters: An Encyclopaedia of World Mythology by Sheila Keenan ", peer-reviewed by Lisa Maurice and Elizabeth Hale. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2020). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1093. Entry version as of October 30, 2026.

Sheila Keenan

Gods, Goddesses and Monsters: An Encyclopaedia of World Mythology

United States of America (2000)

TAGS: Argonauts Medusa Oedipus Olympians Remus Romulus Titans Trojan War





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General information	
Title of the work	Gods, Goddesses and Monsters: An Encyclopaedia of World Mythology
Country of the First Edition	United States of America
Country/countries of popularity	United States of America, Worldwide
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2000
First Edition Details	Sheila Keenan, *Gods, Goddesses and Monsters: An Encyclopaedia of World Mythology*. New York, Scholastic Reference, 2000, 128 pp.
ISBN	9781841480756
Genre	Myths
Target Audience	Young adults (adolescents)
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Creators



Sheila Keenan , b. 1953
(Author)

Sheila Keenan is an American author for fiction and non-fiction books for young readers. She is also a former editor for several New York City major publishers. Among her books: *O, Say Can You See*, *How It Works* books, *Dogs of War*, *Animals in the House*, Picture books *(Lizzy's Dizzy Day, Good Morning Monday, More or less a Mess and more)* and more. Her nonfiction books include reference works and books on how things function, such as *The Scholastic Encyclopedia of Women in the United States*, *The Scholastic Book of Outstanding Americans: Profiles of More than 450 Famous and Infamous Figures in U.S. History*, *Jet Plane: How It Works* and more.

Source:

Official website (accessed: July 26, 2020).

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Additional information

Summary

As its title suggests, this book is an abbreviated encyclopaedia of world mythology, from India, China, Japan, Southeast Asia, Africa, Egypt, The Near East, Greece, Rome, Celtic Lands, Norse Lands, North America, Central America, South America, Oceania and Australia. The book contains a bibliography and an index as well. The information is accompanied by stock photos or replicas of famous paintings with explanation for each picture.

The Greek section includes brief explanations of the origin of the gods and Titanomachy, and various mythological characters, gods, goddesses, heroes and figures of tragedy and monsters, organized in alphabetical order. In the section on Rome, there is a brief explanation of the Roman worship (lararium) and their myths which were also meant to glorify the Roman Republic. A short list of entries follows: Aeneas, Cybele, Dido, Janus, Romulus and Remus, Sibyl of Cumae and Vesta.

While some entries provide summaries of facts, most of them are written as brief mini-narratives. For example: “Orpheus: No one could play music more sweetly” [p. 70]. Some of the entries also provide abbreviated myths (for example, the myth of Icarus’ flight is abbreviated to one paragraph).

Analysis

In the introduction, the author discusses the importance and power of myth, “myths are the stories people tell about what it’s like to be human in a world of unseen or unknown forces.” [p.4]. She adds that “myths are powerful because the people who share them believe in their significance. And mythology reveals a great deal about a people’s religion, history, culture, social and moral codes, and their ties to nature.” [p. 5]. In compendia such as this book, myths reveal how various people from around the world, who never heard of each other, still believed in very similar things.

The author does not only include gods, goddesses titans and more familiar heroes such as Heracles or Perseus, but also figures from Greek tragedy, such as Oedipus, Clytemnestra, Medea and others. As a result, readers receive a brief yet wide-ranging information on the various kinds of mythological characters, not just the divinities. The

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	author wishes to emphasize the variety of mythological characters and mystical creatures in each culture she examines
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Argonauts Medusa Oedipus Olympians Remus Romulus Titans Trojan War
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Adventure Death Emotions Family Learning Magic

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