Ayelet Peer, "Entry on: Young Zeus by G. Brian Karas", peer-reviewed by Lisa Maurice and Susan Deacy. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2021). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1195. Entry version as of October 30, 2026.

G. Brian Karas

Young Zeus

United States of America (2010)

TAGS: Amalthea Chronos Cyclops / Cyclopes Demeter Gaia / Gaea Hades Hera Hestia Ouranos / Uranus Poseidon Rhea Zeus





We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	Young Zeus
Country of the First Edition	United States of America
Country/countries of popularity	worldwide
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2010
First Edition Details	G. Brian Karas, *Young Zeus*. New York: Scholastic Press, 2010, 48 pp.
ISBN	9780439728065
Genre	Fiction, Myths
Target Audience	Children (3 years)
Author of the Entry	Ayelet Peer, Bar-Ilan University, ayelet.peer@biu.ac.il
Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Lisa Maurice, Bar-Ilan University, lisa.maurice@biu.ac.il Susan Deacy, University of Roehampton, s.deacy@roehampton.ac.uk

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Creators



G. Brian Karas , b. 1957
(Author)

G. Brian Karas is an award-winning American author and artist. He graduated from Paier School of Art in Hamden CT in 1979. Right after his graduation, he was hired by the Hallmark Humorous Cards department. His first illustrated book, *The Holiday Handwriting School* by Robin Pulver was published in 1991. Since then he has illustrated many books, among them *The Village Blacksmith* (2020), *The Dinosaur Expert* (2018), *Anywhere Farm* (2017), and many more.

Source:

gbriankaras.com (accessed: January 10, 2021).

Bio prepared by Ayelet Peer, Bar-Ilan University,
ayelet.peer@gmail.com

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Additional information

Summary

This book follows the life of young Zeus, from his birth to his triumph over the Titans. During these events, Zeus remains a young boy (hence, the title) although we do not know his exact age. He grows up on Crete and then his enchanted she-goat nurse, Amaltheia, shares with him the fate of his brothers and sisters whom Cronus swallowed. Zeus decides to rescue them and he consults with his mother Rhea who comes to visit him. Zeus succeeds in making Cronus throw up and saving his siblings and then frees the Cyclops with the help of his grandmother Gaia. The young Olympians then fight the titans with the help of Zeus' thunderbolts. In the end, the happy Olympian family argue about everyday chores and laugh together among the clouds.

Analysis

On the cover, the author notes that his visit to Greece made him connect more personally with the ancient myths and that he also recognized his relatives in the human-like behaviour of the ancient gods and goddesses. He notes that he had consulted the *Theogony* and Apollodorus' *Library* yet while he could not find sufficient material on Zeus' youth he "imagined the rest." However, most of the details found in this book are taken from the classical myths on Zeus. The more imaginary parts are Zeus's childish bickering with his siblings or his heartfelt conversation with his mother, whom Zeus thinks abandoned him.

The story refers to the king of the gods as an infant and then as a toddler, approximately the same age as the readers. Hence, the young readers can more easily identify with our titular character.

Zeus experiences feelings of sadness and loneliness on Crete, since he has no one to play with. He also believes his mother has abandoned him. However, she gave him away in order to save him and frequently checks on him in secret. The two meet and reconcile with a loving embrace.

Brave little Zeus is not deterred by the dangers ahead of his cruel father and bravely proceeds to rescue his siblings. In a powerful image, we understand his fears. We see in the illustration a little Zeus sitting with his hands around his head and a menacing figure with an open mouth looms in the sky above. Zeus appears tiny in comparison

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

with his mammoth father and probably feels helpless, but he is not and he is surrounded by his animal friends. The young readers may feel empathy for young Zeus, since they perhaps have experienced menacing thoughts or hardships in their lives as well, and they can identify with this image and see themselves in the little boy who hides his face in his hands.

Yet Zeus' determination is strong. After reconciling with his mother, he sets off at once. Comically, the author makes the siblings bicker with each other immediately upon their release, especially regarding the identity of their leader. Yet Zeus' strong will convinces them of his abilities. In the end, when they all yell at him "who made you boss" he replies "I did" and Gaia eventually affirms his statement. Then after restoring peace and order among his siblings, Zeus continues to rule the world, bringing the story to a blissful end.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Amalthea Chronos Cyclops / Cyclopes Demeter Gaia / Gaea Hades Hera Hestia Ouranos / Uranus Poseidon Rhea Zeus
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Adventure Animals Childhood Conflict Family Heroism

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.