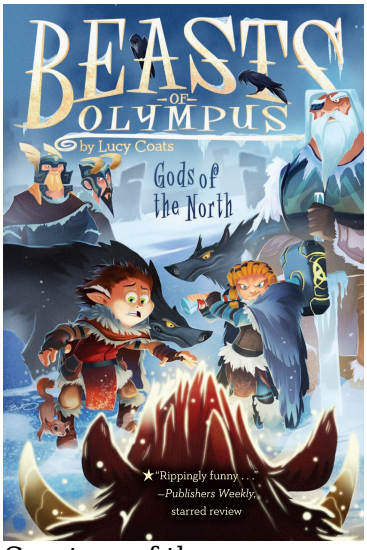
Ayelet Peer, "Entry on: Gods of the North (Beasts of Olympus, 7) by Brett Bean , Lucy Coats", peer-reviewed by Lisa Maurice and Susan Deacy. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2021). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1371. Entry version as of July 12, 2026.

Brett Bean , Lucy Coats

Gods of the North (Beasts of Olympus, 7)

United States (2017)

TAGS: Demeter Norse Mythology Pegasus Zeus



Courtesy of the publisher, Penguin Random House.

General information	
Title of the work	Gods of the North (Beasts of Olympus, 7)
Country of the First Edition	United States of America
Country/countries of popularity	USA, UK and worldwide
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2017
First Edition Details	Lucy Coats, *Beasts of Olympus: Gods of the North*. Penguin Workshop USA, 2017, 144 pp.
ISBN	9780451534330
Genre	Fiction
Target Audience	Children (7–9 years old)
Author of the Entry	Ayelet Peer, Bar Ilan University, ayelet.peer@biu.ac.il
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Creators

Brett Bean (Illustrator)

Brett Bean is an American cartoonist and illustrator originally from Seattle who currently resides in California. His work has been featured in TV, films, comics, games (digital and analog) manuals and more. Brett Bean is also the creator of the *Zoo Patrol Squad* and the illustrator of *Battle Bugs*.

Sources:

Official website (accessed: April 1, 2021).

Author's profile of CGMA (accessed: April 1, 2021).

Bio prepared by Ayelet Peer, Bar-Ilan University, ayelet.peer@biu.ac.il

Lucy Coats , b. 1961
(Author)

Lucy Coats is an British writer for children. She holds an MA in English Literature and Ancient History from the University of Edinburgh. She is also a member of the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids. In her books we can mostly find motifs from various legends and myths that she adapts for young readers. She published several picture books (including *King Ocean's Flute*, *The Animals Bedtime Storybook*), as well as novels for teenagers and young adults (including *Chosen*, *Hootcat Hill*). Among those inspired by Greek and Roman Mythology, besides the *Beasts of Olympus* series, Coats also wrote *Atticus the Storyteller's 100 Greek Myths* and *Great Beasts and Heroes – a 12 Book Series*. She also runs a blog and goes to school for

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reading sessions.

Sources:

Official website (accessed: July 4, 2018).

Twitter profile (accessed: July 4, 2018).

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Additional information

Summary

This is the seventh book in the *Beasts of Olympus* series. Pandemonius (or Demon as he is most commonly referred to in the series) is the 11-year-old son of the god Pan and the mortal Carys. Demon is the official beast keeper of the Olympic gods and it is his responsibility to take care of the various beasts.

In this story, the Northern gods under the main god Odin, the ruler of Asgard, have come to Olympus in search for Demon. They are warmly welcomed, and Demon even performs a special show for them with his flying horses. Then Odin asks Zeus' permission to take Demon with them, since apparently their immortal boar, Goldbristle, is losing his light and is seriously ill. Furthermore, Freya, a Norse goddess who also travelled to Olympus, explains that "Everything's all dark and horrid now in Asgard. And that means the plants are dying. None of the new crops I've planted have grown at all…" (p. 23). It turns out that Pegasus was talking with Odin's horse, Sleipnir, and recommended that Demon come to Asgard, evaluate the situation and perhaps be able to help. Hence Demon leaves his assistant, the faun Bion, to guard the stables and travels to Asgard with the gods. He is accompanied by Demeter, whom Zeus thinks might also be able to help. Yet she does not participate in the events very much.

In freezing Asgard, Demon befriends Thrud, Thor's daughter, and Ratatosk, a big talking red squirrel. He then examines the suffering boar, discovering that the beast was poisoned by a Piggy Darkness Poison. Demon thinks hard about how he can help the suffering beast and collects ingredients for a cure. Then suddenly a fox named Trixietoes approaches him and tells him that the great dragon Fafnir can help him. Demon follows the fox but suddenly he is seized and loses consciousness. When he wakes up, Demon discovers that he was captured by the god Loki, who had disguised himself as a fox to lure Demon. Loki was the one who poisoned Goldbristle as a result of his anger with Odin and the other gods, and therefore he does not want Demon to cure the beast, but Demon succeeds in making Loki tell him the cure for the poison: "Once a creature of light has eaten that, nothing will cure it but a drop of old Fafnir's blood, dripped onto an ice diamond, then ground up and mixed with some Fenrir wolf spit" (p. 41). Loki then locks Demon in a dungeon and makes the dark elves come and hurt him.

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Demon calls the gods, Odin, Thor, Thrud, yet none hears him. Then he remembers that he has the Phoenix feather in his pouch; but he needs fire to summon the phoenix. Suddenly the squirrel Ratatosk appears and frees Demon, explaining to him that he followed him and the fox. Demon then manages to light a fire and summon the phoenix.

Together they fly to the dragon Fafnir, who agrees to help Demon and gives him his blood. Now Demon must travel to the wolf, Fenrir. Thrud explains to him that Fenrir has gone mad and tried to kill Odin, but takes Demon to him. Upon their arrival, Demon plays his father's flute and the great wolf collapses enabling Demon to collect his drool. He senses, however, that the wolf has completely succumbed to madness and is greatly saddened that he cannot help him. Later Thrud and Demon steal Thor's hammer to break the ice diamond and prepare the cure for Goldbristle. The boar drinks the potion and is miraculously cured. Light begins to shine anew upon Asgard.

Odin thanks Demon who in return praises his new friends, Thrud and Ratatosk, and asks for Thrud to be a shield-maiden, a wish that she had confided to him. Demon is awarded the Order of Yggdrasil and the freedom of Asgard and he receives a special horn, Far Caller. If he ever finds himself in danger, the warriors of Asgard shall come to his rescue.

Analysis

In this story, the author connects the two great European mythologies, Greek and Norse with a reference to Egyptian mythology as well. Mixing the two cultures is quite common in juvenile literature, for example, Freya participates in the 'Girls Games' in the *Goddess Girls* series and she is also the mother of Oddonis and Zeus in *Odd Gods*.

In this story, although the Norse gods are magnificent, the Greek gods seem to be superior, with the former coming and asking for help from the latter. It is Demon, the half-Greek god who helps them save Asgard from Loki's curse. The Norse gods do not help Demon when he is caught, but an animal does. The one who helps Demon achieve his mission is the phoenix. The phoenix comes to Demon's rescue even in the far north. In the end, when he is truly in danger, Demon can only rely on his animal friends and not on the gods. Furthermore, it is an animal, Pegasus, which advises the north horse to ask Demon for advice. It appears that in this series, the animals are more trustworthy

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and wise than their divine or human companions. Hence the message seems to be that animals should be treated with respect and care, as they can truly be our best friends and even saviors.

The saddest part of the story is when Demon realizes that he cannot save Fenrir; even he cannot save them all. Demon can treat various physical illnesses, yet he cannot overcome madness. “For the first time in his life, he knew there was nothing he could do to cure this creature. Fenrir was truly, completely lost to madness.” (p. 57). A message here is that mental illness can be as serious as a physical illness, even worse, and should not be looked down upon. People or animals who suffer from mental illness are seriously ill and also worthy of treatment and sympathy. The young audience of the series can thus learn a bit about mental illness and be more familiar with its consequences (in reference to the story but also in general).

He decides to let the great wolf sleep without waking him. Thrud wishes for the wolf to dream of Ragnarök, which alludes to the Norse myth of the end of the world and Fenrir’s killing of Odin. In our story, Odin is afraid that in his madness Fenrir might try to kill him and so the wolf is locked away, perhaps in an attempt to delay the end of the world. Yet for Thrud, dreaming of Ragnarök is equal to wishing Fenrir sweet dreams. This shows the difference between the two cultures. Demon wishes him sweet and calm dreams while Thrud is part of a warrior society.

While in this series, the Greek gods appear malicious at times, none is trying to destroy Olympus, not even Ares or Eris. Even though they can be frightening, in this series each of the Greek gods has a soft spot for a beast. In the North, however, Loki is presented as the ultimate evil. He does not care for the beasts and only poison the boar as a revenge against Odin. Since the series’ main focal point is the welfare of animals, anyone who maltreats them is automatically cast as the villain (for example Heracles, Bellerophon or Eris). Furthermore, he transforms himself into an animal, the fox, in order to receive Demon’s trust, hence he abuses animals in this way as well. Loki is reminiscent of the mortal hero Heracles, who is responsible for the constant harm done to the immortal beasts.

Because this story focuses on the adventures in the north, there are few Greek mythological references in this installment of the series, although similarity can be seen between this tale and Demon’s new fried Thrud, to the *Steeds of the Gods*, the third book in the series,

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	where Demon befriended the Nereid Eunice who receives her coveted position from Poseidon thanks to helping Demon. These stories focus on young and strong heroines, yet in the end, they rely on Demon (and the leading male gods) in order to be rewarded according to their true worth.
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Demeter Norse Mythology Pegasus Zeus
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Adventure Animals Conflict Emotions Friendship Heroism Humour Integrity Journeys Love Parents (and children)
Addenda	The review refers to the Ebook edition (9780515159516)

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