Ayelet Peer, "Entry on: Zeus and the Dreadful Dragon (Heroes in Training, 15) by Craig Phillips, Tracey West", 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/1374. Entry version as of July 12, 2026.

Craig Phillips , Tracey West

Zeus and the Dreadful Dragon (Heroes in Training, 15)

United States (2018)

TAGS: Apollo Athena Atlas Bellerophon Briareus / Briareos Chronos Cottus Demeter Dionysus / Dionysos Eris Gaia / Gaea Gyges Hades Hera Hermes Hestia Hyperion Mnemosyne Oracles Pegasus Poseidon Rhea Typhon / Typhoeus / Typhaon Zeus

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

General information	
Title of the work	Zeus and the Dreadful Dragon (Heroes in Training, 15)
Country of the First Edition	United States of America
Country/countries of popularity	USA and worldwide
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2018
First Edition Details	Tracey West, *Heroes in training: Zeus and the Dreadful Dragon*. New York: Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing Division Aladdin Press, 2018, 128 pp.
ISBN	9781481488372
Genre	Action and adventure comics, Illustrated works, Mythological fiction
Target Audience	Children (6–10 years old)
Author of the Entry	Ayelet Peer, Bar-Ilan University, ayelet.peer@gmail.com
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

Craig Phillips (Illustrator)

Phillips is an Australian award winning illustrator who works with various publishers, including Random House, Simon & Schuster, Penguin, Scholastic, Bloomsbury, Egmont, Hardie Grant, and many more. As a child he was inspired by mythology and cartoons, and fantasy novels such as the *Hobbit* and *Conan the Barbarian*. He is still fascinated by the cartoons, comics, novels and stories that he enjoyed as a child and tries to capture that feeling in his work. His comics have been serialised in children's literary magazines and were collected and published as *Giants, Trolls, Witches, Beasts: Ten Tales from the Deep, Dark Woods* in 2017 by Allen and Unwin. He lives in New Zealand.

Source:

Official website (accessed: October 12, 2018).

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

Tracey West , b. 1965
(Author)

West is an American children's author. She has written about 200 books for children. She studied English and Journalism at Rutgers University, and now writes fiction and non-fiction books. Among her publications are *Dragon Masters*, *Cupcake Diaries*, *Pokémon* and more. West continues the *Heroes in Training* series which was created

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by Joan Holub and Suzanne Williams. (see under *Zeus and the Thunderbolt of Doom*)

Source:

Official website (accessed: August 16, 2019).

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

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Additional information

Summary

This is the fifteenth book in the *Heroes in Training* series (see Zeus and the thunderbolt of doom). In this installment, we finally arrive at the great battle between the 10 year olds Olympians and king Cronus and his army of Cronies.

At the beginning of the story, the Olympians are on their way to mount Olympus, fearing the coming battle. Ron, the mortal hero, and Pegasus help them scan the land and locate the enemy's army. Zeus, the leader of the group, does not have any tangible plan yet and Hera keeps taunting him with this. The group tries to get closer to Olympus by boat but are apprehended by the Titan, Oceanus, who wishes to capture them and deliver them to Cronus. However, his attempt is foiled by an unexpected helper - Gaia, the Olympians' grandmother. Gaia does not allow Oceanus to harm the Olympians. She explains to the children that she is angry with Cronus due to his bad behaviour. She tells them that he also imprisoned his three brothers, Briar, Kottos, and Gyes in Tartarus since he is afraid of them. Hades promises to rescue them and Gaia promises that they will help the Olympians defeat Cronus, but when Hades frees the multiple-armed Titans, they escape. Hera believes it was all a trick to set them free and the brothers will not help them against Cronus.

Later, two old ladies board the boat and give the Olympians figs. Upon eating them, some of the Olympians forget who they are. The ladies are revealed to be Eris and Mnemosyne and tell Zeus that there is no cure for this lack of memory, but Demeter and Zeus find a solution. Apollo's magical object is his lyre and anything he sings of can come true. Hence Demeter asks him to sing about their memory loss and how they regained their memory. This works and the forgetful Olympians regain their memories of themselves and their mission.

Then the Olympians finally stand against Cronus' armies. They manage to defeat his troops and even the Titans he sends against them (Atlas, Hyperion and Typhon). Meanwhile, Zeus orders Hades to take the fallen Titans to Tartarus and lock them there. With the other Olympians momentarily swept away after fighting the Titans, Zeus, Hera and Athena then proceed, intending to face Cronus, but they must first overcome a fearsome dragon; yet luckily their friends arrive in time to help them defeat it. Hermes then turns the body of the dragon into an outline of stars. Now, however, they are facing a hoard

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of soldiers and think of retreating, when suddenly Gaia arrives with Briar, Kottos and Gyes who join forces with the Olympians. The group then hurries to Olympus and enter the palace.

Inside the palace they find Cronus and Rhea. Cronus makes the all Olympians except Zeus float in the air and lands them on a cloud. He then tries to convince Zeus to rule together with him but Zeus refuses. Cronus points his finger at the cloud on which the other Olympians were standing and it plummets. Rhea then jumps after them and they all disappear.

Angry and stunned, Zeus captures Cronus using his bolt and sends him to Tartarus as well. Zeus then is reunited with Rhea and his siblings who manage to return to the palace (who were all saved) and they celebrate their triumph.

Analysis

In this story, the search for new Olympians is over. Now they must all join forces and cooperate in order to finally defeat Cronus and his armies in this story's version of the Titanomachy.

As has been seen in the previous books, Zeus can be insecure and he does not always come up with a plan, yet he always manages to find a solution just in time. Furthermore, he is the glue which connects all the other Olympians together. It is he who unites them, allocates missions and encourages them along the way, thereby exhibiting the qualities of a true leader. This is the main message of the book: the leader should be the one who supports all the other members and acknowledges their unique abilities. He knows how to harness everyone's talents for a united goal. The main theme in the series has always been teamwork and such cooperation is fully manifested in this final confrontation against Cronus. Hence the young readers of the stories might be inspired by Zeus' behaviour and conduct and discover their inner strength to lead others by being positive and encouraging.

Hera continues to taunt Zeus for his indecisiveness and lack of plans, yet Zeus does not let her bother him or distract him. This shows the stark contrast between them. Hera cannot stop bothering him or try to prove her superiority to others, while Zeus understands that you can also make mistakes and it is ok to do so. When Ron, who is not an Olympian, meets the group with Pegasus at the beginning, he asks Zeus why Hera calls him by nicknames, such as "Boltbrain". Zeus

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explains to him that bolt is his special magical item and that he believes that Hera is also jealous of him since he has two magical objects, Bolt and Chip (the special stone which helps to guide the Olympians in the right direction). Hence we can see here how Zeus acts more maturely than Hera. He relates to her feelings, understands them and does not fight her. He lets her insult him without being too bothered by her words. While Hera acts more like a little spoiled child, Zeus shows character and maturity, even though they are the same age.

Zeus is constantly thinking about the welfare of everyone. In fact, he uses his full powers against Cronus only when he believes that Rhea and his siblings are lost: “a fury and strength that Zeus had never felt before rose inside him…Zeus cried, I must put a stop to YOU! Once and for all!”” (p. 58).

While the Olympians are on their way to face their father, it is Gaia who comes to their rescue. She is a formidable woman. Gaia claims that Cronus does not care for the earth, plants, air or water and she believes Zeus would be a better leader. In the name of this ecological message she helps the children against Cronus, using her giant sons. Rhea also jumps from the palace to save her children. Hence these two female characters show care and empathy for the children. Yet while Rhea helps her children, Gaia is fighting against her son, reflecting the complexity of the Olympian family. It also shows that Gaia’s maternally feelings are not directed to all of her sons and are contingent on their behaviour.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Apollo Athena Atlas Bellerophon Briareus / Briareos Chronos Cottus Demeter Dionysus / Dionysos Eris Gaia / Gaea Gyges Hades Hera Hermes Hestia Hyperion Mnemosyne Oracles Pegasus Poseidon Rhea Typhon / Typhoeus / Typhaon Zeus
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Adolescence Adventure Adversity Appearances Authority Character traits Conflict Emotions Family Friendship Gaining understanding Good vs evil Heroism Identity Individuality Journeys Judgement Learning Magic Maturity War

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Addenda	The review refers to the ebook edition. (9781481488396)

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