Ayelet Peer, "Entry on: Artemis the Loyal (Goddess Girls, 7) by Joan Holub, Suzanne Williams ", peer-reviewed by Lisa Maurice and Susan Deacy. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/389. Entry version as of November 07, 2026.

Joan Holub , Suzanne Williams

Artemis the Loyal (Goddess Girls, 7)

United States (2011)

TAGS: Actaeon Aphrodite Apollo Ares Artemis Athena Atlas Ephialtes Hades Hera Heracles Hercules Medusa Otus (Giant) Pandora Persephone Pheme Poseidon Zeus





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

General information	
Title of the work	Artemis the Loyal (Goddess Girls, 7)
Country of the First Edition	United States of America
Country/countries of popularity	Worldwide
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2011
First Edition Details	Joan Holub and Suzanne Williams, *Artemis the Loyal* (Goddess Girls, 7). New York: Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing Division, Aladdin Press, 2011, 288 pp.
ISBN	9781442433779 (paperback) / 9781442433786
Genre	Alternative histories (Fiction), Bildungsromans (Coming-of-age fiction), Fiction, Humor, Mythological fiction, Novels, School story*
Target Audience	Children (Older children, 8–12 yrs)
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



Photo courtesy of Joan Holub.

Joan Holub , b. 1956
(Author)

Joan Holub is a prolific children's author from the USA. Graduated from college in Texas with a fine arts degree. Worked as an art director at Scholastic trade books in New York. She has written and/or illustrated over 150 children's books. She has developed a range of series for teenagers on mythological themes: *Goddess Girls*, set in Mount Olympus Academy, *Grimmtastic Tales* series, set in Grimm Academy, *Thunder Girls*, about Norse gods set in Asgard Academy, and *Heroes in Training*, in which the male Greek gods, as very young men, set out on a range of adventures. For pre-school children, Jan Holub has written on a range of topics including several works with religious and historical themes. These include: *This Little President*; *This Little Trailblazer*, *Hooray for St. Patrick's Day!*, and *Light the Candles: A Hanukkah Lift-the-Flap Book*. Joan Holub trained in fine art and worked as an art director at a graphic design company before becoming a children's illustrator and then author.

Sources:

Official website (accessed: July 2, 2018).

Profile at the penguinrandomhouse.com (accessed: July 2, 2018).

Profile at the simonandschuster.com (accessed: July 2, 2018).

Bio prepared by Sonya Nevin, University of Roehampton, sonya.nevin@roehampton.ac.uk and Allison Rosenblum, Bar-Ilan University, allie.rose89@gmail.com and Ayelet Peer, Bar-Ilan University, ayelet.peer@gmail.com

Questionnaire

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1. What drew you to writing / working with Classical Antiquity and what challenges did you face in selecting, representing, or adapting particular myths or stories?

I learned to love Greek and Norse mythology in elementary school. I'm very comfortable adapting the framework of an existing myth or fairy tale by pushing it into a different setting, adding humor, and/or building in a nonfiction component. Staying true to the essential core of each myth along the way is important to me. A young *Goddess Girls* reader once told me she enjoyed the series because she "learned something". In other words, while she liked being entertained, she appreciated that her familiarity and factual understanding of the original myths was broadened at the same time.

2. Why do you think classical / ancient myths, history, and literature continue to resonate with young audiences?

Kids have questions about their world. So it's interesting to them to learn how ancient Greeks and other cultures answered questions about how their world worked in exciting tales of heroes and beasts. How did the sun cross the sky? In a chariot drawn by the god Helios. What caused night? The goddess Nyx's starry cape covered the sky. Thrilling stories of courage and danger, such as Heracles' twelve labors, the Trojan Horse, and the Argonauts never go out of style.

3. Do you have a background in classical education (Latin or Greek at school or classes at the University?) What sources are you using? Scholarly work? Wikipedia? Are there any books that made an impact on you in this respect?

I have an entire shelf of mythology resource books. Some of my favorite go-to sources are the *Scholastic Mythlopedia* series, Edith Hamilton's *Mythology, Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes*, and www.theoi.com (accessed: May 28, 2018).

4. How concerned were you with "accuracy" or "fidelity" to the original? (another way of saying that might be – that I think writers are often more "faithful" to originals in adapting its

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spirit rather than being tied down at the level of detail – is this something you thought about?)

Each book in the *Goddess Girls* series (ages 8–12, Simon and Schuster) and *Heroes in Training* series (ages 7–10, Simon and Schuster) is a retelling of one or two Greek myths, with a twist. We stay as true as possible to the core bones of an original myth in order to give young readers a good understanding, but we include kid situations and humor to entertain. As an example, in *Goddess Girls #1: Athena the Brain*, Athena is summoned to attend Mount Olympus Academy, where Zeus is the principal. MOA teachers include Mr. Cyclops, who teaches Hero-ology, a class where students are graded on their abilities to maneuver small hero figures such as Odysseus, around a gameboard to enact the Trojan War, etc. Meanwhile, Athena, who is the goddess of invention among other things, inadvertently turns mean-girl Medusa's hair to snakes and gives her the power to turn mortals to stone by means of a shampoo-like invention called Snakeypoo at the MOA invention fair.

5. Are you planning any further forays into classical material?

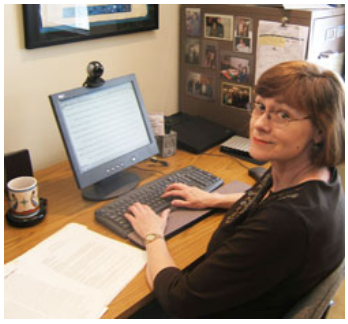
Suzanne Williams and I have written a new middle grade series called *Thunder Girls* (accessed: May 28, 2018), which is a twist on Norse mythology featuring strong girl characters. The first book Freya and the Magic Jewel releases May 2018 for ages 8–12, published by Simon and Schuster.

Prepared by Allison Rosenblum, Bar-Ilan University, allie.rose89@gmail.com and Ayelet Peer, Bar-Ilan University, ayelet.peer@gmail.com

Suzanne Williams , b. 1953
(Author)

Suzanne Williams is an American prolific children's author and former

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Courtesy of the Author from her personal website.

elementary school librarian. She has written over 60 books for children.

She grew up in Oregon and graduated with a bachelor's degree in sociology and a master's in library science from the University of Oregon. She currently lives in Reno, Washington.

Source:

Official website (accessed: May 29, 2018).

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

Questionnaire

1. What drew you to writing / working with Classical Antiquity and what challenges did you face in selecting, representing, or adapting particular myths or stories?

Writing about Greek mythology was my co-author, Joan Holub's idea. She's loved mythology since childhood. Her enthusiasm for the subject got me excited about it too. *Goddess Girls* (ages 8–12) was our very first collaboration. Soon there will be 26 books in that series. One of the challenges we've faced in writing our (soon to be four) myth-based series for young readers is how to handle the sexual and violent content of many of the myths.

To downplay the violence, we often make it cartoonish and lighten it with humor. Since most of our gods and goddesses are pre-teens (as are our readers!), we deal with inappropriate sexual content by making changes that still allow us to keep to the spirit of the myth. For example: in introducing the Adonis myth, in which Aphrodite and Persephone fight over a beautiful youth they both desire, we decided to make Adonis a kitten, rather than a young man.

Another challenge has involved familial relationships among the

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various gods and goddesses. In *Goddess Girls*, Zeus is an adult, the principal of Mount Olympus Academy, the school attended by our "goddessgirls" and "godboys". In mythology he would likely have fathered a good portion of the student body! So we made a decision that only Athena would call him "Dad". (Until Hebe popped forth from a lettuce in Book 21, that is.) We do acknowledge many other family relationships. For example: Apollo and Artemis as brother and sister. Medusa and her sisters Euryale and Stheno. Persephone and her mother, Demeter.

2. Why do you think classical / ancient myths, history, and literature continue to resonate with young audiences?

Myths have got all the elements that draw us to stories: action, conflict, drama, humor, etc. What's not to like?

3. Do you have a background in classical education (Latin or Greek at school or classes at the University?) What sources are you using? Scholarly work? Wikipedia? Are there any books that made an impact on you in this respect?

Neither Joan nor I have a classical education. I did take an online Greek and Roman mythology class a few years ago, however. (Taught by Peter Struck, University of Pennsylvania.) Terrific class!

For our Greek mythology-based series, Edith Hamilton's *Mythology* is the reference we rely on the most. My co-author and I do consult Wikipedia and other online resources, especially for lists of monsters and maps and general information about ancient Greece. References for *Thunder Girls*, our soon-to-be-published Norse mythology-based series include: *The Norse Myths* by Kevin Crossley-Holland, D'Aulaires' *Book of Norse Myths*, *Norse Mythology: A Guide to the Gods, Heroes, Rituals, and Beliefs* by John Lindow, *The Poetic Edda* (translated and edited by Jackson Crawford), and *The Prose Edda* by Snorri Sturluson (Penguin Classics).

4. Are you planning any further forays into classical material?

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In addition to *Goddess Girls*, my co-author and I have also collaborated on a second Greek mythology-based series called *Heroes in Training* (ages 6–9). It's a humorous quest/adventure series with Zeus, Poseidon, Hades and other Olympians as ten-year-olds on the run from King Cronus and the Titans. *Freya and the Magic Jewel*, the first book in *Thunder Girls*, our Norse mythology-based series, publishes May 1, 2018. I travel to Norway frequently to visit my daughter, granddaughter, and Norwegian son-in-law, so I am very excited to be doing a Norse-myth series. Aladdin (Simon & Schuster) publishes all three of Joan's and my mythology-based series. We will be doing a fourth myth-based series with them soon – for ages 5–8. Tentative title is *Little Goddess Girls*, and it will be another Greek myth-based series.

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

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Additional information

Summary

General summary for the series see under Athena the Brain.

In this installment, fairness and accepting others are the main themes. Artemis is angered that she cannot participate in the Olympics, since girls are not allowed. She needs to overcome the prejudice against the participation of girls in sport, decided long ago by Zeus and thus break a very long tradition. She even needs to face her own brother who does not encourage her, as well as the rest of the godboys.

We also get a different version of the encounter between Artemis and Actaeon. When two giants with the mythological names Otus and Ephialtes appear in the sports field, things get heated and Artemis ends up defending her brother Apollo against the giants. As a result, Apollo and Artemis are ridiculed and the mortal Actaeon pushes Artemis into a fountain. Artemis also faces a dangerous Python, who is part of the games. The target is to answer his questions without being swallowed by it. In the end, Apollo helps his sister and defeats the python and the girls get their own games, after everyone learns a valuable lesson in fairness.

Analysis

This series aims at empowering young girls; and what could be more empowering than beating the boys in their own territory? Artemis proves that being a girl does not mean you cannot beat the boys at sports. When Artemis and Apollo practice and race each other, Ares shouts to Apollo: “Go! You can beat her. She’s a girl!” (p. 4). Artemis immediately speeds to beat her twin and prove she is better than him. Yet this is not the only obstacle she is facing; “Artemis had noticed that whenever a girl was good at sports, boys seemed to lose interest.” (p. 4). She needs to overcome prejudice as well as her rivals. Furthermore, her brother feels humiliated by the situation, losing to his sister – another hurdle Artemis needs to tackle: “‘What?’ she thought. ‘I’m supposed to lose, just so he can save face? No way!’” (p. 5).

Another theme that appears early in the book, is that there are various types of girls; some are more sportive and some are more girly, like Aphrodite, who catches the godboys’ attention; “Those boys probably thought all girls should be girly-girls like Aphrodite and leave athletics

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to the guys." (p. 7).

Yet not all the girls share her feelings; Aphrodite does not wish to compete while Athena thinks that girls should be given a fair chance. Artemis needs to persuade them of her argument first. She also has to grow and develop herself, a process that happens during her encounter with the python, who can hypnotize his audience (like Ka in the Jungle Book), his questions forcing Artemis to be honest with herself.

In the original myth of Actaeon and Artemis, Actaeon saw the naked Artemis taking a bath; here he was just making fun of her. Yet his punishment is the same: "Turn that boy into a stag." (p. 32). Actaeon's punishment comes not because he made fun of her, but because Artemis became angrier and angrier at all the boys for belittling her and in the end could not control her temper. In this version, however, she soon changes him back, avoiding the horrible fate he suffered in the original myth.

While Artemis fights to get recognition, Apollo is doing the same thing. Artemis thinks that since he is a boy he gets more privileges, but apparently Apollo is struggling, like his sister, to work out who he is: "I want to prove myself at something that doesn't involve you. I want to see what I can do on my own!" (pp. 76–77). Sibling rivalry, especially between twins, is another motif, when Artemis is discussing her difficulties with her brother with Otus the giant, showing that family feuds can unite gods and giants, bridging the difference between the enemies (traditionally the giants sided with the Titans in the war against the gods).

The girls versus boys theme is referred to in many different ways; the girls devise their own Olympics, yet they want stuffed animals and pink sand, while Artemis wishes to be like the boys and earn their respect. It is interesting that Artemis seems to be the exception. It seems that all the other girls are only interested in hearts and flowers and the colour pink, all of which, Artemis, a tomboy, dislikes. This element rather undercuts the empowerment message of the book.

Fighting prejudge and accepting others, whether they are girls or giants, are other recurring motifs. Fairness is even brought up as the topic for Hera's Revenge-ology lesson at school. And again the girls and the giants are connected in their bid for a fair treatment? Interestingly it is Hera who is trying to direct the discussion about the

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	girls being forbidden from participating in the Olympics; Hera is here the defender of women, a strong-willed woman (and not the nagging, jealous and revengeful wife of the myth). The class discusses the term fairness, identifying it as the avoidance of favoritism. Hera tries to teach them about different cultures through marriage customs. Artemis suggests that a marriage and victory at games are similar since they both involve singers and happy crowds. As in other volumes, the subject of marriage is stressed, despite the young age of the students (and readers).
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Actaeon Aphrodite Apollo Ares Artemis Athena Atlas Ephialtes Hades Hera Heracles Hercules Medusa Otus (Giant) Pandora Persephone Pheme Poseidon Zeus
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Friendship Intellect Respect School Values Violence
Addenda	The review refers to the Kindle edition.

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