Ayelet Peer, "Entry on: Pegasus by Kinuko Y. Craft, Marianna Mayer", peer-reviewed by Lisa Maurice and Susan Deacy. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/667. Entry version as of October 31, 2026.

Kinuko Y. Craft , Marianna Mayer

Pegasus

United States of America (1998)

TAGS: Bellerophon Chimera / Chimaera Pegasus





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

General information	
Title of the work	Pegasus
Country of the First Edition	United States of America
Country/countries of popularity	United States of America
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	1998
First Edition Details	Marianna Mayer, *Pegasus*. New York: Morrow Junior Books, 1998, 40 pp.
ISBN	0688133827
Genre	Adaptations, Didactic fiction, Myths
Target Audience	Children (4–8 years)
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

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Creators



Kinuko Y. Craft (Illustrator)

Kinuko Y. Craft is a highly-respected fantasy illustrator in the USA. She considers herself a story teller. Born in Japan, she graduated in 1962 from The Kanazawa Bidai, the Kanazawa Municipal College of Fine and Industrial Art. She studied design and illustration at the Art Institute of Chicago. Her work has gained appraisal from professional art and design publications, and has won many awards.

Source:

Profile at borsini-burr.com (accessed: February 20, 2019)

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



Marianna Mayer , b. 1945
(Author)

Marianna Mayer is an American children's author from Connecticut. Her education is in the field of visual arts. She is quoted as saying: "I see folktales and myths as humankind's first stories…They are a kind of collective dreaming, filled with timeless symbols and images we can all relate to, regardless of age or culture." Quote taken from here (acessed: April 27, 2022).

Other books by Marianna include: *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Twelve Dancing Princesses*, *The Unicorn and the Lake* and more.

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Additional information

Summary

The story of the friendship between Bellerophon and Pegasus is narrated in this beautifully illustrated book. The story narrates how the innocent Bellerophon was betrayed by King Proetus out of jealousy. Bellerophon is sent with a sealed letter from Proetus to the king of Lycia, who develops a liking for the boy, as does his daughter, who falls in love with him. On discovering the letter ordering him to kill Bellerophon, the king decides to send him on a dangerous mission, to kill the menacing monster, the Chimera. Bellerophon is helped by the gods, especially Athena, who gives him a special girdle to harness the elusive Pegasus. Bellerophon and Pegasus develop a close friendship and trust. They succeed in defeating the Chimera and Bellerophon triumphantly returns to Lycia, where he marries and lives happily ever after with the king's daughter.

Analysis

In illustrated books, the illustrations form an integral and crucial part of the narrative. This book uses a rich and lavish style of artwork that is almost renaissance or baroque-like in feature, and is rarely found in children's books. The illustrations and the special font used for the narrative greatly contribute to the ethereal feeling of the mythological story, transferring the reader to a fairy-tale world of flying horses, valiant heroes, and fierce monsters. The plot itself has been adapted to suit children, avoiding any mention of the rape allegations made by Proetus' wife or Bellerophon's attempt to fly to heaven. The book keeps the fairy-tale atmosphere through its happy ending and a blessed reunion.

The story has clear pedagogical inclinations, as the author herself explains. In the short acknowledgement with which the book opens, the author writes regarding the connection between Bellerophon and Pegasus: "beyond the example of the bond that is possible between individual and animal, the myth suggests that if humankind is to live in harmony with nature, we must use love and respect, not force, to seek a better relationship with one another." This is the message the book tries to emphasise, stressing respect, both in the case of the king of Lycia who respects his guest Bellerophon, and Bellerophon himself showing respect for the gods and Pegasus. As Athena tells Bellerophon, the gift she gives Bellerophon that will enable him to harness Pegasus is "trust". She advises him: "you must be as equals if

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you are to succeed." The book thus also carries a strong humanitarian message regarding the treatment of animals as equals, and respect for nature. Bellerophon and Pegasus are described as equals and friends, not an animal and its human owner. It is Pegasus who gives Bellerophon the permission to ride him, by gently touching him. There is no force involved, no taming of Pegasus. Even later, after Bellerophon is happily married, they still meet each other and their friendship continues.

This could also explain why the author decided not to end the story with Bellerophon's end, where he wandered the earth, despised by men and gods. His death was a result of his disrespect for the gods. She wishes to show how trust and good behavior are rewarded. The author did not wish to blemish the reputation of the titular hero and therefore chose to end the tale in a fairy-tale happily ever after way. Bellerophon is one of the greatest heroes of myth. In this story he is a hero not only for killing the Chimera, but because of the strong bond he formed with Pegasus.

Thus the myth is used to convey the modern ideas of ecology and coexistence with the environment. This shows the versatility and universal nature of myths and how they can transfer various ideas.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Bellerophon Chimera / Chimaera Pegasus
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Adventure Animals Environment Friendship Good deeds Heroism Values

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