Ayelet Peer, "Entry on: Nice Shot, Cupid! (Myth-O-Mania, 4) by Kate McMullan , Denis Zilber", peer-reviewed by Lisa Maurice and Elizabeth Hale. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/692. Entry version as of November 02, 2026.

Kate McMullan , Denis Zilber

Nice Shot, Cupid! (Myth-O-Mania, 4)

United States (2012)

TAGS: Aphrodite Cupid Furies Hades Persephone Psyche Zephyrus Zeus





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

General information	
Title of the work	Nice Shot, Cupid! (Myth-O-Mania, 4)
Country of the First Edition	United Kingdom, United States of America
Country/countries of popularity	United States of America
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2012
First Edition Details	Kate McMullan, *Myth-O-Mania: Nice Shot, Cupid*. Mankato: Stone Arch Books, 2012, 208 pp.
ISBN	9781434234353 (pb)
Genre	Humor, Mythological fiction, Novels, Teen fiction*
Target Audience	Children (8–13)
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 Elizabeth Hale, University of New England, ehale@une.edu.au

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 Kate McMullan.

Kate McMullan , b. 1947
(Author)

Grew up in St. Louis, Missouri, but now lives in Sag Harbor, New York. McMullan began her career as a teacher after which she studied Early Childhood Education. She worked as a teacher in Los Angeles and an American Air Force base in Germany. She is married to and works with the illustrator Jim McMullan.

She has commented: "As soon as I could, I began reading my way through the Children's Room shelves at our local public library in St. Louis, Missouri. I carried my books home, settled in with a cat or dog or my guinea pigs on my lap, and read for hours. My favorites were Greek myths, Nancy Drew mysteries, Pippi Longstocking, and animal stories, but only if the animals didn't die. I also read *Little Women* (it was sad but acceptable if people died) and *The Borrowers*, about tiny people who lived behind the walls of houses. I loved comic books, too, and *Mad Magazine*. When asked what I wanted to be when I grew up, I answered, "A reader."

"After college, I taught fourth grade in an inner-city Los Angeles school and on an American Air Force base in Germany. Every day after lunch I read to my students, and in time I started to wonder if I could write books like the ones I read to my class. I tried, but after a day of teaching, I had little energy left for writing, so I moved to New York City, where I'd heard writers lived, and took a job in publishing, which was less tiring than teaching."

"And I kept writing – stories about Fluffy, the Classroom Guinea Pig (who will never die), a Greek Mythology series, books set in a medieval school for dragon-slaying, and picture books with art by my favorite illustrator, Jim McMullan." (source, see here, accessed: February 21, 2019).

Since she started writing, McMulland has published over 100 children's books. Her book *Pearl and Wagner: One Funny Day* was a Geisel Honor Book, and her book *I Stink!* was a Boston Globe-Horn Book Award Honor Book.

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Sources:

Official website (accessed: June 26, 2018).

Profile at penguinrandomhouse.com (accessed: June 26, 2018).

Profile at harpercollins.com (accessed: June 26, 2018).

Profile at amazon.com (accessed: February 21, 2019).

Bio prepared by Allison Rosenblum, Bar-Ilan University, allie.rose89@gmail.com and Tikva Schein, Bar-Ilan University, tikva.blaukopf@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?
I have always loved the ancient Greek myths, even as a child. I write books for kids, and thought it would be fun to retell some of the myths with a bit of twist, and what I came up with was using Hades as my narrator. In some versions of the myths, Hades is Zeus's older brother, and I thought having his little brother be the ruler of the Universe would annoy Hades quite a bit, so I figured that would make his retelling funny and engaging for kids.

2. Why do you think classical / ancient myths, history, and literature continue to resonate with young audiences?
I believe it's because the dieties are, for the most part, depicted as very human, with great character flaws as well as the capacity to do great good. I think humans connect with these gods and goddesses because of they show different aspects of the human heart.

3. Do you have a background in classical education (Latin or Greek at school or classes at the University?)
NO.

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4. What sources are you using? Scholarly work? Wikipedia? Are there any books that made an impact on you in this respect?
I used the *D'Aulaires' Book of Greek Myths* and *Theoi.com* as well as various other sources. Although I wasn't telling the myths in the traditional way, I did try to stay faithful to the way each myth is usually presented.

Prepared by Allison Rosenblum, Bar-Ilan University, allie.rose89@gmail.com



Photo courtesy of Denis Zilber.

Denis Zilber , b. 1962
(Illustrator)

Denis has a diploma in Advanced Character Animation Studies and has won the following awards for his freelance work as illustrator and character designer: “CG Choice” award of CGSociety.org (3 times), Animation Mentor Showcase 2009, *Frontpage Exellence* award of 3DTotal.com (twice). He has publications in *Expose 4 – Finest digital art in the known universe* by Ballistic Publishing, Australia, as well as in *2D Artist magazine* and *CGWorld magazine*.

Source:

Official website (accessed: May 29, 2018).

Bio prepared by Allison Rosenblum, Bar-Ilan University, allie.rose89@gmail.com

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Additional information

Summary

This is the fourth book in the Myth-O-Mania series, which offer alternative versions of the Greek myths, narrated by Hades. Hades, who is a self-professed shy and serious god, promises to tell the whole truth about the Greek myth; he claims that his brother Zeus, is a myth-o-maniac (that is, a liar) and that he fabricated the myths and wrote his version so that he and his children will appear noble and praiseworthy. Hades' versions offer the "true" story of the myths.

In this book, Hades promises to write the truth about Cupid and Psyche. Hades claims that Cupid was not handsome as the myth relates, that he was actually an "awkward, pimple-faced, greasy-haired teen-god with braces on his teeth." (p. 9). Cupid thought Psyche was beautiful but did not dare to approach her. Cupid also resents his mother who is obsessed with appearances: "She just wants me to look good so I won't embarrass her." (pp. 15–16). Psyche is also facing family problems. Her twin older sisters (called here Muffy and Buffy) make fun of her and trick her and she is also forced to marry.

When Hades hears the rumor that the mortals are worshipping Psyche and neglecting Aphrodite, he hurries to Thebes to warn King Otis, Psyche's father, to beware of Aphrodite's wrath. On his way, he encounters Cupid who confides in him his mother's plan, to make Psyche fall in love with a hideous mortal. Cupid accompanies Hades to Psyche's house, and while he hides in order to shoot Psyche with his love arrow, Hades interferes and knocks Cupid down. Cupid then sees Psyche for the first time and falls in love with her. Psyche is then ordered by the sibyl at Delphi to marry a serpent.

Hades suspects the oracle was false and decides to check the matter. He finds out that kidnapping Psyche was a plan by Cupid and Zeus. (Zeus helps Cupid in his mischievous plan because he is his father yet he is not a dominant figure in the story). Cupid wishes to keep her locked in Zeus' palace until his appearance improves. Psyche, meanwhile, is talking to Cupid every night without him allowing her to see him, and asks him for the company of her sisters. When Psyche accidently spills hot oil on Cupid while trying to see him, he gets hurt and cries to his mother. Psyche tries to reassures him that she loves him regardless of his look but he does not trust her. Hades suggests that Psyche wins over Aphrodite, and therefore Psyche performs the tasks she is given by Aphrodite (with the help of Hades) and in the end

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she and Cupid are reunited

Analysis

The myth of Cupid and Psych is a well-known romantic tale of love that conquers all odds. One of the great premises of the story is that the horrible monster Psyche thought she wed is actually a beautiful god. By making Cupid a pimpled teenager and not a divine heartthrob, the author turns the story on its head and makes the story relevant to other awkward teens who might be in love with the class' most beautiful girl. Thus the story she tells becomes less mythical and more in line with typical teen romantic comedies, in which the Geek boy gets the class queen. This seems to follow the series returning motif of helping the weaker or the underdog (for example, in the books about Medusa or Helen).

Furthermore, the fact that Cupid is ugly is a rarity in the world of gods (with the exception of the limping Hephaestus) and thus the author makes his story easy for teenagers to relate to. Not only does Cupid feel awkward, he also feels that his mother resents his appearance and is ashamed of him. All of these emotions are connected with growing up and puberty, which teenagers experience. Aphrodite is portrayed as an overbearing Italian mother. Hades tells Psyche that Aphrodite is sensitive because of the way she was born (from the foam of the sea) and that she claims that she has the soul of an Italian since she lived in Italy for a while. He tells her that this is why she gave her son a Roman name. While the entire story is fiction, this is a rather unusual explanation in a story that mixes together Greece and Rome, since Cupid had a Greek name, Eros.

Even though Cupid tricked Psyche, the readers can relate to his anxiety. He wishes Psyche to love him for who he is, yet is greatly concerned with his appearance. He is heavily influenced by his mother: "Mom's always told me that love and beauty go together." (p. 89). This story is a didactic tale about external and internal beauty. If the readers are familiar with the original myth, they have a prior knowledge that Psyche loved Cupid for his character and not just his appearance or divinity. If they are new to the myth than the author explains this aspect of the love story to them. Cupid becomes the real focus of the story, the one who is pitied by others because of his mother and his low self-esteem. The story as it is told by the author, seem to appeal to both genders. Girls can relate with Psyche, yet they can also fully relate to Cupid's insecurities, especially about his looks

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	at the beginning. Boy readers could also relate to Cupid who is the main protagonist of the story this time, and not Psyche. Thus the story seems to be directing both gender and giving each a relatable hero.
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Aphrodite Cupid Furies Hades Persephone Psyche Zephyrus Zeus
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Adventure Family Humour Love Romance

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