Ayelet Peer, "Entry on: Perseus and Medusa (Mini Myth, 1) by Russ Daff", 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/805. Entry version as of September 14, 2026.

Russ Daff

Perseus and Medusa (Mini Myth, 1)

United Kingdom (2016)

TAGS: Athena Danae Medusa Pegasus Perseus Zeus

Cover courtesy of the Author.

General information	
Title of the work	Perseus and Medusa (Mini Myth, 1)
Country of the First Edition	United Kingdom
Country/countries of popularity	United Kingdom
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2016
First Edition Details	Russ Daff, *Mini Myth Book One: Perseus and Medusa*. RD Books, 2016, 40 pp.
ISBN	9780957291416
Genre	Adaptations, Comics (Graphic works), Myths
Target Audience	Children
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Creators

Russ Daff (Author, Illustrator)

Russ is a British author and illustrator from Cambridge, UK. He graduated from Falmouth School of Art in 1993 and he works for the computer games industry as well as creating illustrations and cartoons.

Source:

Profile at cambridge-illustrators.co.uk (accessed: July 19, 2019).

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Additional information

Summary

The story begins with King Acrisius locking his daughter Danae in a tower to prevent the fulfillment of a prophecy that she will conceive a child who will kill him. Meanwhile Zeus decides to teach him a lesson. He sends her energy (which appears like bright light) and she conceives a baby. As a result, she is cast away on the sea by her father, but Poseidon helps them arrive safely at the shore of Seriphos. When Perseus grows up, the King of Seriphos grows jealous of the brave Perseus and becomes tyrannical. He then sends Perseus to fetch the head of Medusa. With the help of Athena, Perseus sets off on his journey and encounters three witches (the grey sisters) and then Medusa. Perseus then kills Medusa and Zeus sends him the Pegasus so he can fly back to Seriphos. On the last page the Sphinx answers the riddle.

Analysis

This book offers the story as a comic book for young readers. The main gods are shown in pictures at the beginning, each with their specific attribute (Zeus with lightning, Poseidon with his trident etc.). We then meet the Sphinx who introduces the riddle from the Oedipus legend, and on the next page the story begins. The story is narrated in the style of a comic book, with word balloons, however, instead of multiple panels, there is one main picture which covers the entire page; there are shorter panels later on but the illustrations are kept large and clear.

The drawings in this comic are kept light and humorous. We begin the story with Acrisius and the prophecy about Danae. The illustrations are an essential element of the plot and create particular moods, as, for example, when Danae is brought to the tower, where the colors are grey and dark.

The writer provides an interesting perspective on the gods. Zeus claims in response to Acrisius' cruelty that he never permitted the curse, and he claims he is tired of mortals' mistrust and greed, and announces that they need a hero. This is reflective of the author's general portrayal of Zeus and Athena as helpful and kind. Rather than leaving the curse out entirely, however, he specifically chooses to refute it and change the original myth in order to maintain his narrative of the benevolent gods. While it is not uncommon for

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authors to alter the ancient myths in order to adapt them for young readership (and even in this version, Zeus sends Danae a shower of pure energy, rather than impregnating her himself), it seems that there might be another reason for this change, relating to the portrayal of the gods. Nevertheless, the deities are not treated over reverently, with the narrator referring to Zeus as a "show off", an ironical note that keeps the story lighthearted.

The emphasis on the benevolence of the gods is also reflected in the portrayal of the Gorgons, who are depicted as maidens who were punished because they did not respect the gods (they drank wine and danced in a sacred temple, and sang songs that mocked the gods). This is also perhaps intended to be a warning for the young readers against rude behaviour. Yet there is no doubt that the author maintains a clear narrative of helpful and benevolent gods and a perfect and pious hero in Perseus, whose mother tells him that he is blessed by the gods. Further evidence of this approach is that Perseus asks for the gods' protection before entering Medusa's cave, and that, when Perseus kills Medusa, he dedicates it to the gods: "Gods of Olympus I honour You!". This of course pleases Zeus who judges Perseus to be a worthy hero, and rewards Perseus by creating Pegasus. Since in the original myth Perseus never flew on Pegasus, this is a clear influence from the Disney Hercules. This Pegasus also resembles that of Disney. Perhaps also an influence from Disney is the somewhat mixed message in the book as to what constitutes a real hero: is it knowledge and purpose? Or devotion to the gods?

On his way to find Medusa, Perseus encounters mysterious creatures such as a cyclops, a centaur and a winged monster, encounters that, the narrator assures the readers, he found great fun. Thus Perseus' adventures appear exciting rather than intimidating, with no terrifying monsters that he needs to face. Countering this attitude is that of Zeus and Athena, who are displeased with Perseus' treating his quest as a game, since he does not possess enough knowledge and tools to do so safely. In this way, the author explains to the readers that just randomly slaying monsters is not considered heroic. A hero needs knowledge, as well as muscles; he needs to know what he is seeking and how to achieve his purpose and most importantly, he needs proper (divine) guidance. Athena explains to him that he must possess intelligence not just passion.

In the end, Perseus flies home but the reader can only guess what he intends to do when he arrives. There is no complete ending to his tale,

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	as opposed to that of the original myth, in which he kills the king, although the author perhaps wants to make the readers wait more adventures of Perseus and Pegasus.
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Athena Danae Medusa Pegasus Perseus Zeus
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Adventure Conflict Heroism Knowledge
Addenda	The review refers to the Kindle edition.

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