Elizabeth Hale, "Entry on: Olympia. Jump for Glory (Olympia, 3) by Shoo Rayner ", peer-reviewed by Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/895. Entry version as of November 01, 2026.

Shoo Rayner

Olympia. Jump for Glory (Olympia, 3)

United Kingdom (2011)

TAGS: Olympia Sinis Theseus





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

General information	
Title of the work	Olympia. Jump for Glory (Olympia, 3)
Country of the First Edition	United Kingdom
Country/countries of popularity	Worldwide
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2011
First Edition Details	Shoo Rayner, *Olympia: Jump for Glory.* London: Orchard Books, 2011, 64 pp.
ISBN	9781408311899
Genre	Illustrated works
Target Audience	Children (aged 8–10)
Author of the Entry	Elizabeth Hale, University of New England, ehale@une.edu.au
Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Elżbieta Olechowska, University of Warsaw, elzbieta.olechowska@gmail.com

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Creators



Shoo Rayner , b. 1956
(Author, Illustrator)

Shoo (Hugh) Rayner is an author, illustrator, and teacher of drawing. He was born in Kingston-upon-Thames, the child of a member of the British Army who moved around the world. He spent his childhood in Germany, Pakistan, Yemen, and the United Kingdom. He is a graduate of Anglia Ruskin University (formerly Cambridge College of Art and Technology). He lives in Gloucestershire, near the Forest of Dean.He has illustrated over 250 books, and has two successful Youtube sites teaching drawing (Shoo Rayner Drawing, and Draw Stuff Real Easy).

Rayner creates picture books and middle-grade fiction for children. He admits that after failing his English O level he developed a visual approach to writing and telling stories. He refers to himself as a "storyteller illustrator" (see here, accessed: December 4, 2019). His published output is prolific: he has published a large number of series of Early Readers for children, including the *Lydia* series, the *Victor* series, the *Little Horror*s series, the *Ginger Ninja* series, the *Monster Boy* series, and the *Olympia* series.

Rayner's work in these series involves simple, easy-to-read stories, aimed at readers "at the most important stage of reading development where they can be put off, or enthused for life." (*Something about the Author*, 169)

Sources:

Official website (accessed: December 4, 2019)

Official channel on You Tube (accessed: December 4, 2019)

DrawStuffRealEasy, channel on You Tube (accessed: December 4, 2019)

Profile at en.wikipedia.org (accessed: April 6, 2019)

'Hugh (Shoo) Rayner,' *Something About the Author,* Ed. Lisa Kumar.

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Vol. 151. Detroit, MI: Gale, 2004, p. 168-171.

Bio prepared by Elizabeth Hale, University of New England, ehale@une.edu.au and Ayelet Peer, Bar-Ilan University, ayelet.peer@gmail.com

Questionnaire

Response to author's questionnaire on Author's Vimeo channel (accessed: April 4, 2019).

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Additional information

Summary

Jump for Glory is the third in author-illustrator Shoo Rayner's *Olympia* series of chapter books, which show what life was like for ordinary children in Ancient Greece. It features a boy named Olly, whose father runs the gymnasium where the great athletes train, and who dreams of being an Olympic champion. In *Jump for Glory*, Olly and Spiro (his 'arch-enemy') watch the athlete Makedon practising the long-jump: he runs, holding a large stone in each hand, then as he leaps, tosses the stones behind him to help propel him further. Ariston, Olly's father, reminds the boys that it is the Boys' Jumping Competition next week, and urges them to practice. It is a hot day, and Olly has trouble lifting the jumping-stones, unlike Spiro who uses them easily. His father allows him to jump without them, and indicates that the rules do not require them. The boys lay the tables for the athletes' lunch, and listen to the history teacher Simonedes tell stories. This time the story is about Theseus, and his encounter with Sinis the Pine Bender, explaining how the fierce giant would tie his enemies to the tips of bent pines and release them, hurling them into the sky, until one day Theseus turned the tables on him. He tied Sinis to the tops of two trees, causing him to be split in half.

On their way out of the dining hall, Spiro pushes Olly and sneers at him when he falls, but Olly vows he will beat him.He finds his sister, Chloe, outside, who suggests they go to the lake and swim. While Olly complains about Spiro's bullying, Chloe reminds him that at least he is allowed to compete, whereas she, a girl, cannot participate in the sports at all. At the lake, they encounter a large man, chopping trees. His name is Leon. Chloe and Olly encourage him to bend the pines, like Sinis. Chloe has an idea, and sits on the top of a small pine tree that Leon has bent to the ground. When he releases it, she flies into the lake. Olly follows suit, and they spend the afternoon playing at pine-tree diving.Later, Olly asks Leon for a long thin branch, which he has stripped off a fallen tree. He practices pole-vaulting with the branch.

A week later, Olly uses his pole to jump twice as far as the other boys, but Spiro accuses him of cheating. Spiro tries using the pole, but it snaps under his weight. The judges "applaud Olly's new style of jumping," but say that it "does not suit the Boys' Jumping Competition" (p. 57). The competition resumes, with no jumping aids. Olly touches his jumping pole, receiving the spirit of the pine tree, and

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jumps—and wins the competition."Well done, Olly!" says Leon, "you are the Pine Bender. And may the spirit of the pine tree stay with you forever!" (p. 63).

The book closes with a page of Olympic Facts, this time focusing on the long jump, as a training for warriors, who needed to "leap over streams and ravines when they were on the attack" (p. 64), and explaining that long jump athletes "used carved stones called *halteres* to help them create momentum to fly through the air" (p. 64).

Analysis

Race for the Stars is an educational reader for primary-school aged children, which uses large text and simple language to help new readers (see here).

In *Jump for Glory,* Rayner joins the story of Theseus and Sinis to Olly's desire to be a good long-jumper, and to win glory. The children's inventiveness with the pine-trees reinforces Chloe's cleverness and athleticism, suggests a humorous origin to the sport of pole vaulting (a sport practiced in ancient Greece, though not in the Olympic Games), and reminds young readers that girls were unable to join in sports in the period.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts

Olympia Sinis Theseus

Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture

Boys Child, children Child's view Girls History Masculinity Sport

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