



READER'S THEATER



Perseus and Medusa retold by Blake A. Hoena

Characters:

- Narrator
- Dictys
- Danae
- Perseus
- Athena
- King Polydectes

Genre: Mythology

Ages: 10-15

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Narrator: A prophet once told King Acrisius, ruler of Argos, that his daughter, Danae, would one day give birth to a son. That son would cause the King's death.

So, Acrisius locked Danae in a tall bronze tower.

Danae: Please, Father, don't do this!

Narrator: But King Acrisius could not prevent fate. Zeus, king of the gods, fell in love with Danae.

He visited her by pouring through the tower's windows as a shower of gold. Not long after, Danae gave birth to Zeus' son. She named the child Perseus.

Upon hearing that Danae had given birth, King Acrisius sealed them both inside a large wooden chest and heaved the chest into the churning sea, hoping to never see them again.

But Zeus would not allow his own son to be lost. He sent powerful winds to guide the chest toward the island of Seriphus. A fisherman found the chest floating by the shore.

Dictys: What an odd catch! What a beautiful chest! Something valuable must lie within!

Danae: Wh-who are you?

Dictys: My name is Dictys. This is the island of Seriphus. It's ruled by my brother, King Polydectes. You are safe here.

Narrator: Dictys took Danae and Perseus into his home and cared for them.

Dictys: Please come with me.

Narrator: Years later . . .

Dictys: Perseus, bring those buckets over here.

Perseus: My chores are finished, Dictys! Now will you tell me the story of Medusa?

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Dictys: Again?

Perseus: Please!

Dictys: A long time ago, there was a beautiful woman named Medusa. . .

Narrator: Poseidon, god of the sea, had fallen in love with Medusa. They met secretly in the temple of Athena, goddess of wisdom. But Medusa was boastful, claiming she was more beautiful than any of the goddesses — even Athena!

So Athena decided to punish Medusa.

Athena: For her vanity I will turn Medusa's silky hair into slithering serpents. Her soft hands will turn into crooked claws. Finally, her perfect white teeth will become sharp, jagged fangs!

Narrator: Now, Medusa is so hideous that any man who looks upon her is instantly turned into stone.

Perseus: Do you think anyone will ever slay Medusa?

Dictys: Only if they had help from Athena herself.

Narrator: Danae and Perseus lived peacefully until they met King Polydectes. The king wished to marry Danae, but she did not love him. King Polydectes did not force Danae to marry him because he feared Perseus, who had grown into a strong, young man. Instead, Polydectes searched for a way to get rid of Danae's son.

King Polydectes: Perseus! I see you've come empty handed to my banquet! Guests were expected to bring gifts. Do you not respect your king?

Narrator: . . . but Perseus was just a poor fisherman and could not afford a gift.

King Polydectes: It is I who allowed you to make Seriphus your home! What do you offer me in return?!

Perseus: I have no items of value to offer, my king. But if there is something else that you desire, name it — and I will get it for you.

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Narrator: The king suddenly had a great idea. He would send Perseus on an impossible mission where he would surely perish. Then the king would be free to marry Danae!

King Polydectes: Then bring me — the head of Medusa!

Danae: (Gasping) Oh, please no!

Perseus: As you wish, my king.

Danae: Perseus, you can't do this! Those who enter Medusa's lair never return! Please, I'm begging you!

Perseus: I must, or King Polydectes will never leave us alone.

Danae: No! Don't go, my son!

Athena: Fear not, Danae, your son is very brave. The gods will watch over him.

Will Perseus complete his challenge and succeed in bringing back the head of Medusa? Or will Medusa turn him into stone first? To find out, read *Perseus and Medusa*, a graphic mythology tale from Stone Arch Books.

THE END