

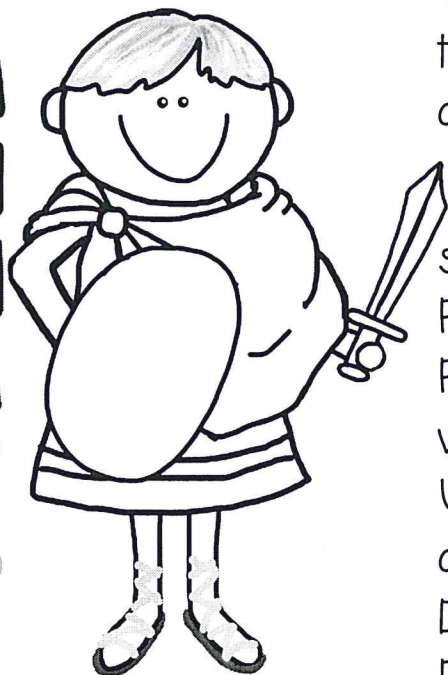
Perseus and Medusa

King Acrisius was worried about his future. Worrying about the future was a typical problem for many kings. He had paid a visit to the oracle of Delphi and she had given him some disturbing news. The oracle told the king that his grandson, Perseus, would be responsible for his death. So after his daughter, Danae, gave birth to a son named Perseus, everyone in the kingdom celebrated. Everyone that is, except the king, himself.

King Acrisius had a decision to make, so he did the only thing he knew to do. He had to get rid of his daughter and her son. He ordered his servants to build a wooden chest. He locked Danae and her newborn in the chest and threw it into the ocean. He was sure that Poseidon, the god of the sea, would cause rough waters and they would not survive.

Unfortunately, the plan did not work out quite as King Acrisius had hoped. Zeus, the god of the sky, intervened and ensured that the chest made it safely to the island.

The king of the island, Polydectes, was drawn to Danae's beauty. He decided to care for her and her son.



Years went by and Perseus grew up to be a strong and courageous young man. While Perseus was an honorable man, King Polydectes was not. He found Danae to be very beautiful and wanted to marry her. Unfortunately, she did not feel the same way about the king. The king was going to force Danae to take his hand in marriage, but Perseus quickly defended his mother.

Perseus and Medusa

The king knew that if he stood any chance of marrying Danae, he would have to get rid of her overprotective son. King Polydectes knew that Perseus had a sense of bravery and adventure, so he decided to use that to work against Perseus. He challenged Perseus to obtain the head of Medusa. He said that if Perseus brought the head of Medusa to him, he would no longer pursue Danae. Perseus agreed.

Perseus had no idea who or what Medusa was, but he knew that, with the help of the gods, he could prevail. The gods equipped him well for the quest. Hermes, the messenger god, gave Perseus winged sandals, a helmet to make him invisible, and a sharp sword that would cut through Medusa's thick skin. The goddess, Athena, offered Perseus some wise advice, a shiny shield, and a silver bag that would hold Medusa's head. Athena warned Perseus not to look directly at Medusa for one glance would turn him to stone. She advised him to use the shield as a mirror and to kill Medusa using her reflection.

Perseus flew for days until he found a tiny island. He noticed the island was covered with unusual looking rocks. He soon realized that these odd rocks were once people that had looked at Medusa. They had become stone figures.

Perseus moved swiftly and used the shield to locate Medusa. He found her resting on a bed of stones. He carefully crept behind Medusa. Medusa's snake-infested hair began to hiss; however, Medusa never woke. With one swoop of the sword, Perseus obtained Medusa's head and placed it in his silver bag.

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Perseus swiftly flew back home. He stormed into the castle where King Polydectes sat on his throne. The king gasped when he saw Perseus standing in front of him. He never dreamed Perseus would survive the quest.

Just as King Polydectes was about to speak, Perseus pulled Medusa's head from the silver bag and held it up for the king to see. Instantly, the king and his men were turned to stone. Danae was so proud of her courageous son. She was thankful she had been saved from having to marry the dreadful king.

Perseus returned all of the weapons to Hermes and Athena. As a thank you for the assistance, Perseus gave Medusa's head to Athena. Athena placed the head in the center of her shield to scare away enemies.

As for King Acrisius, the oracle had been correct. Many years later, Perseus competed in a sporting event. Perseus accidentally threw a discus into the crowd of spectators. It hit one of the men in the head and killed him. The man was King Acrisius, Perseus's grandfather. No matter how hard he tried, Acrisius could not change his fate.

What is the theme of the story?



Perseus

What character traits would you use to describe Perseus? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Character Trait

Evidence from the text

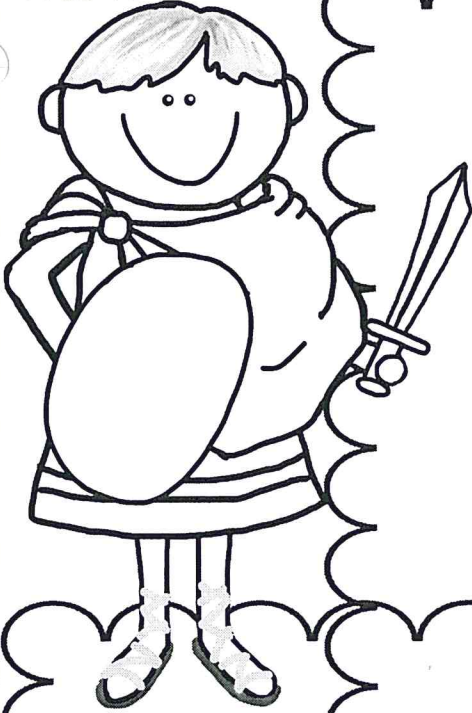


Character Trait

Evidence from the text

name:

Perseus and Medusa



The Hunt for Medusa's Head