

The Story of Medusa and Athena



There once was a beautiful young lady named Medusa. There were many beautiful women that lived in Athens, Greece, but Medusa was, without a doubt, the most striking of them all. The problem with Medusa was that she was very vain. She often bragged of her beauty and spoke of nothing else.

Medusa would boast to everyone that her skin was as fair and white as snow. She thought her lovely golden locks accented her eyes that were as emerald green as the Aegean Sea. She admired her ruby red lips that were softer and redder than the loveliest rose. Listening to Medusa going on and on about herself was exhausting.

When Medusa was not busy sharing her thoughts concerning her beauty, she would gaze for hours at her reflection in the mirror. Before bed each evening, she would brush her long blonde hair and admire her beauty in front of the pitch-black window that casted her reflection. Also, when she was sent to fetch water from the well for her father's horses, she would become so distracted by the beauty of her reflection casted in the water, she would forget about watering the horses.

One day, Medusa visited the Parthenon, Athena's temple. It was decorated with beautiful sculptures and paintings dedicated to the goddess of wisdom. Everyone that visited the temple was grateful for Athena for keeping a watchful eye over the city. Everyone was grateful, except Medusa.

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When Medusa saw the sculptures, she commented that she was far more beautiful than Athena. She thought she would have made a much better subject for the sculptor than Athena. She mentioned that the goddess's eyes were too beady and that it was a shame that the temple was wasted on Athena.

Medusa was so busy admiring her own reflection in a bronze door that she did not realize everyone had left the temple after her unfavorable remarks about Athena. It wasn't long before Medusa saw Athena's reflection next to hers in the bronze pillar. The goddess was angry.

"You are a vain and foolish girl, Medusa." Athena said angrily, "I find it amusing that you think you are more beautiful than me. Even if this was the truth, there is more to life than beauty. While others are out working, playing, or learning, you are busy boasting and admiring yourself." Medusa argued that she served as an inspiration to others and it was her sheer beauty that made their lives better. Athena was beyond angry.

"You speak utter rubbish!" Athena shouted. "Don't you know that beauty fades in all mortals? And by my powers, your beauty will be taken away forever. Your doom will serve as a reminder for all not to be boastful."

Then, Medusa was transformed into a repulsive monster. Her hair became a thickened



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heap of snakes writhing on her head.

“Medusa, this is the result of your pride. Your face is now so grotesque that the mere sight of you will turn a man to stone,” sneered Athena, “And Medusa, if you should seek out your own reflection, you shall turn to stone the moment you see your face.”

Medusa was sent to the ends of the earth to live with the Gorgon sisters, so that no innocent people would be turned to stone at the sight of her.

What is the theme of the story?



Athena

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

Character Trait

Evidence from the text



Character Trait

Evidence from the text

Medusa

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

Character Trait

Evidence from the text

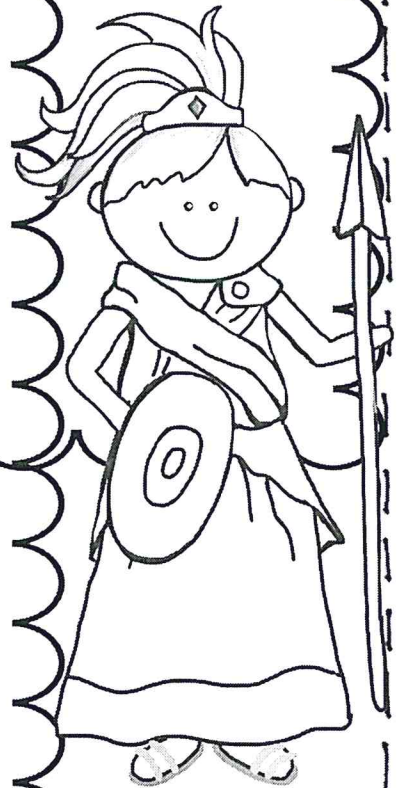


Character Trait

Evidence from the text

name: _____

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The Tangled Web

The Story of Arachne and Athena