

PERSEUS

Perseus and his mother, Danae, landed on the island of Seriphos and were looked after by King Polydectes.

Polydectes's challenge

Later, Polydectes tried to persuade Danae to marry him. She refused. He felt she might change her mind if her son went away, so he teased Perseus for preferring his mother's company to doing brave deeds like other young men. He said Perseus should prove his courage, by killing Medusa the Gorgon.

Perseus hunts Medusa

Medusa had been turned into a hideous monster by Athene (see page 15). She had snakes instead of hair and anyone who looked at her was turned to stone. She and her two sisters, also monsters, were called Gorgons.

As Athene had created Medusa, she decided to help Perseus kill her. She gave him a shining shield and told him to look only at Medusa's reflection, never directly at her.

Hermes gave him a sickle and sent him to the nymphs in the Underworld to borrow Pluto's helmet of invisibility (see page 9). They also gave him a magic wallet and winged sandals.

Perseus sought Medusa out and attacked her with his magic weapons. He watched her in the polished shield, and managed to cut off her head, which he put in the magic wallet. He escaped on his winged sandals.

The freeing of Andromeda

Flying home, Perseus saw a beautiful princess chained to a rock and fell in love. This was Andromeda. Her parents had boasted she was lovelier than the nereids so Poseidon had

flooded their land. To appease him, Andromeda was to be sacrificed to a sea-monster.

Perseus waited for the monster and killed it. He then freed Andromeda and married her.

When they returned to Seriphos, Polydectes was about to force Danae into marriage. Outraged, Perseus held up Medusa's head, the king looked at it and was turned to stone.

The Oracle is right again

One day, Perseus took part in some important Games. As he threw a discus it was caught by the wind and accidentally killed an old man. This proved to be Acrisius, his own grandfather, whom he had not seen since birth. The tragedy had been foretold by an Oracle (see page 5) and was unavoidable.

