

# Greek and Roman Mythology

Ch8

## The Great Heroes before the Trojan War (Perseus /Theseus)



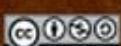
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Medusa's killer

# PERSEUS



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# Perseus

According to Apollo's oracle, King Acrisius of Argos's would be killed by the son of his only daughter.

To escape this fate, King Acrisius imprisoned his daughter, Danaë, underground with part of the roof open to the sky so that light and air could go through.



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Danaë was so beautiful that Zeus fell in love with her, becoming a shower of gold upon the room she dwelled. They mated this way.

Danaë, thereby, bore a son for Zeus, Perseus.



Danaë and the shower of gold



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Learning Danaë bore a child, King Acrisius deported Danaë and his grandson, Perseus in a box.

They were saved by a fisherman named Dictys. Having no offspring, Dictys and his wife took and treated Danaë and Perseus as their own children.





However, Polydectes, the ruler of the little island and also the brother of Dictys, found Danaë beautiful and would like to marry her.

Wanting no son to bother his romance with Danaë, Polydectes planned to humiliate Perseus and led him to dangerous adventures.

Polydectes asked for the head of **Medusa**, one of the three Gorgons. Perseus agreed.

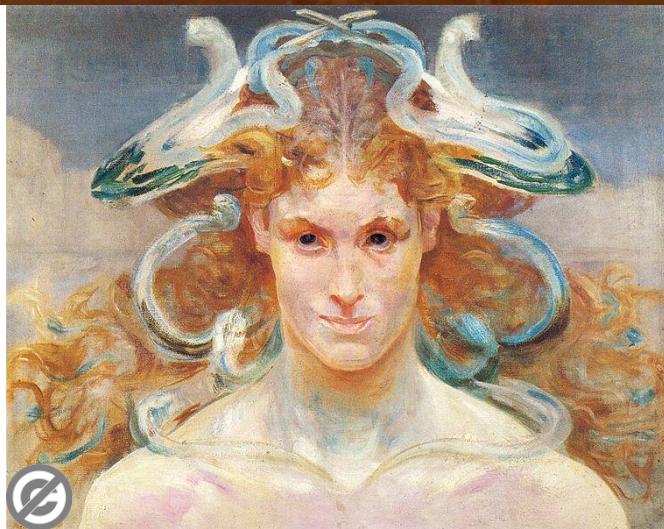


# Images of Medusa

Medusa's image appeared in the popular game, Tower of Saviors



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Hermes came to Perseus' help the first, giving him a sword that would never be bent or broken. Athena, too, gave him her shield.

With Hermes' help, Perseus found the **Gray Women**, forcing them to tell where could they find the nymphs of the North.



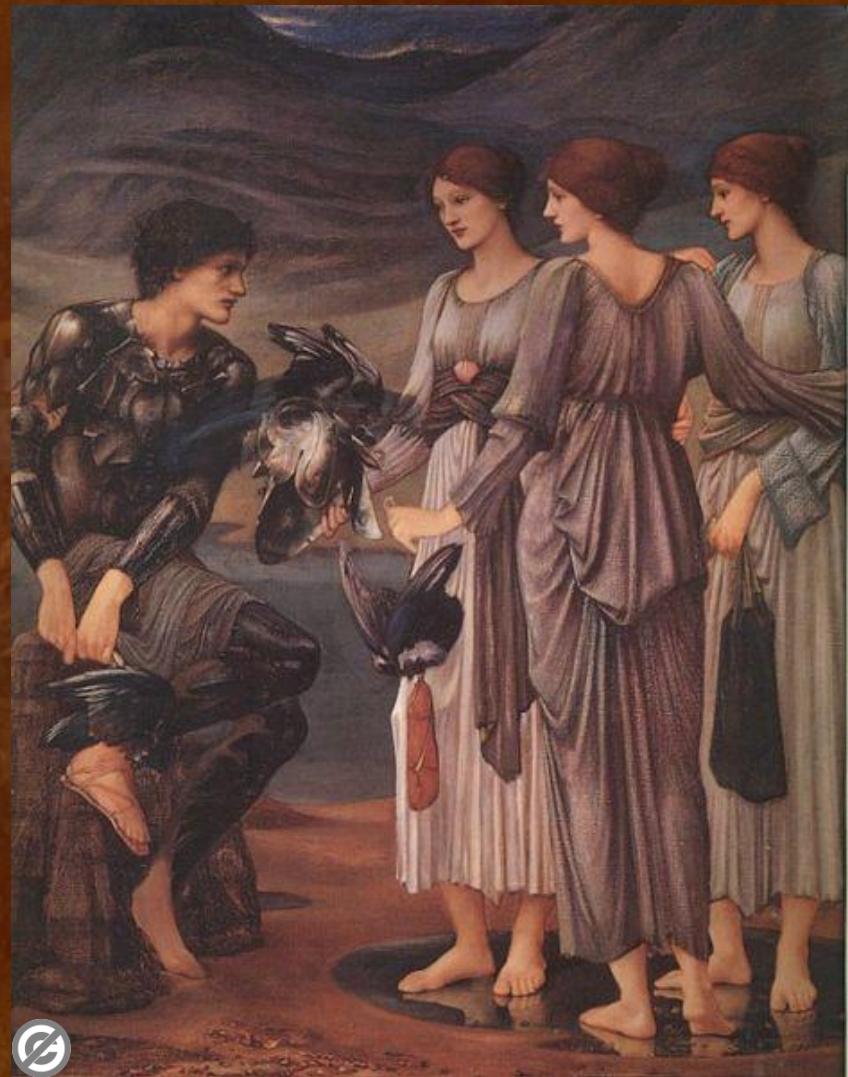
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Athena gave Perseus a shield to avoid Medusa's petrifying eyes

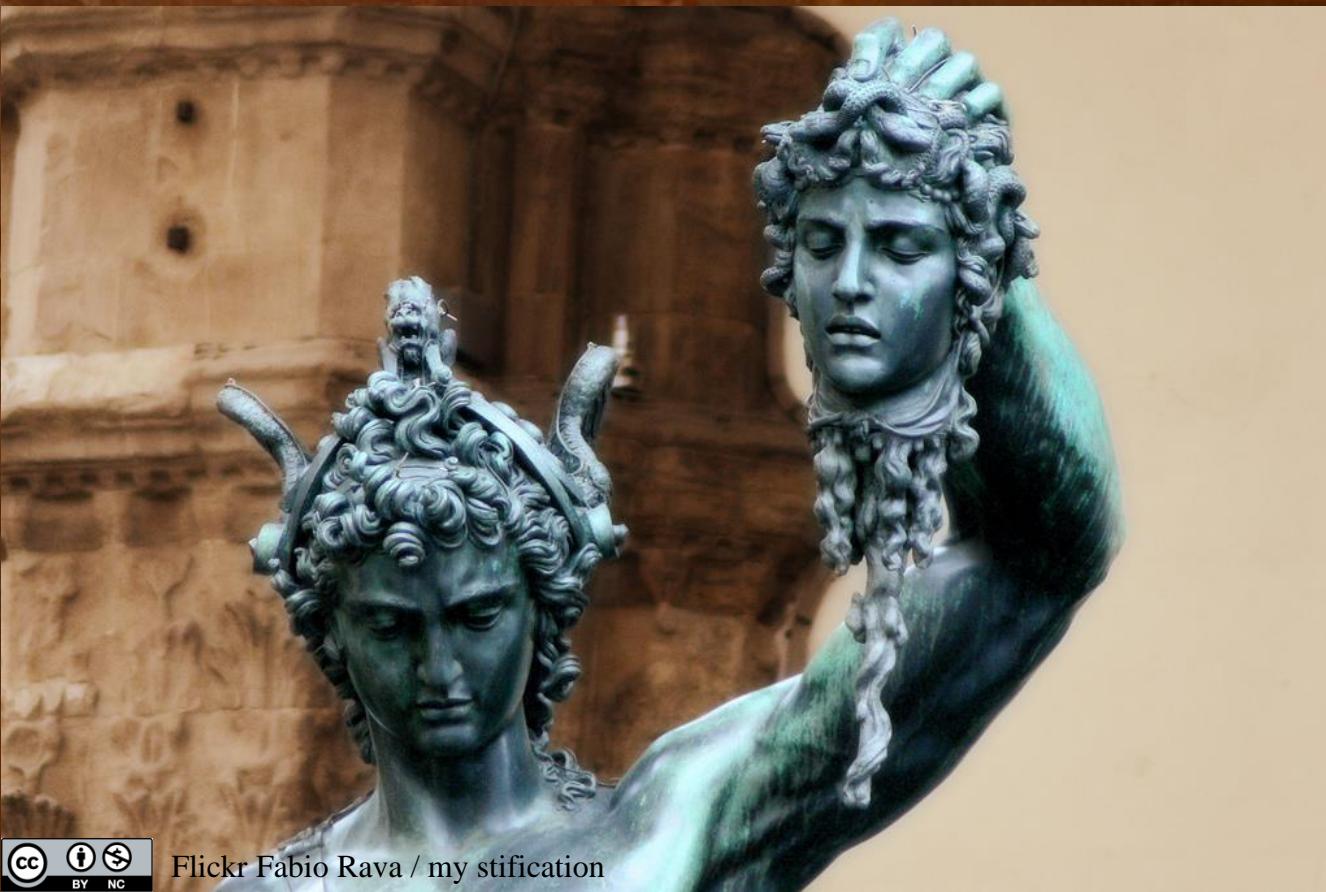
The Gray Women shared one eye. Perseus took the eye and forced them to reveal where the nymphs of the North were.



After finding the nymphs of the North, they kindly further gifted Perseus winged sandals, magical wallet, and, most important of all, an invisible cap.



When Perseus found that Gorgons were all sleeping, he cut Medusa's head. With invisible cap, Medusa's sisters found Perseus nowhere and he escaped successfully.



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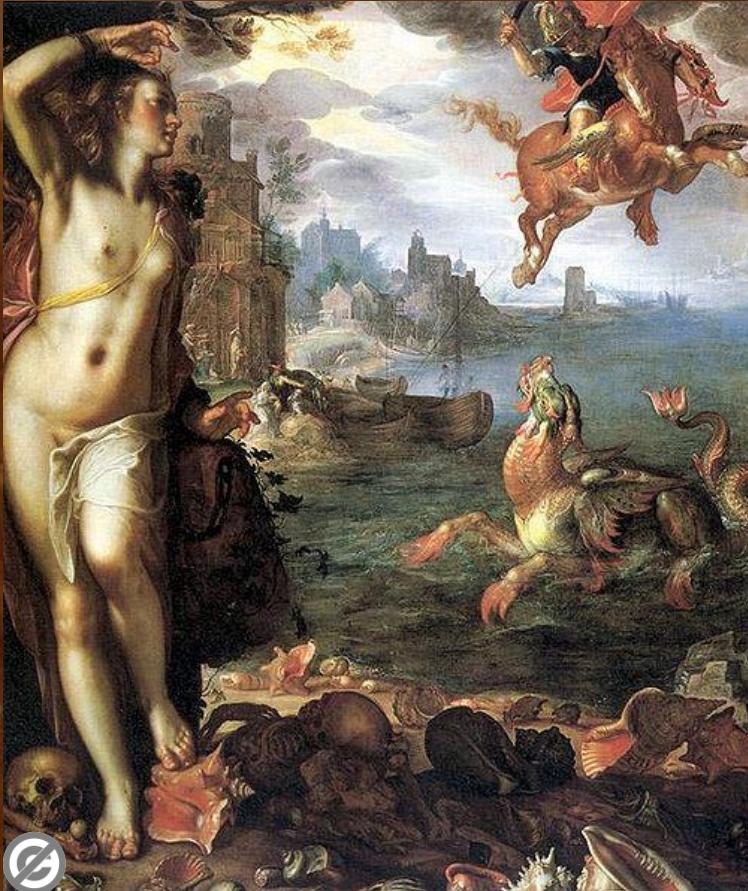


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On Perseus's way home, he saved **Andromeda** from the monster.



# Images of Perseus saving Andromeda



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Marrying Andromeda, Perseus found his home empty because Danaë didn't want to marry Polydectes. They were forced to hide themselves. (Dictys' wife died at this time, too)

Perseus heard that Polydectes's hosting a banquet. He seized the chance and went to the palace, showing Medusa's head while everyone's attention's on him.

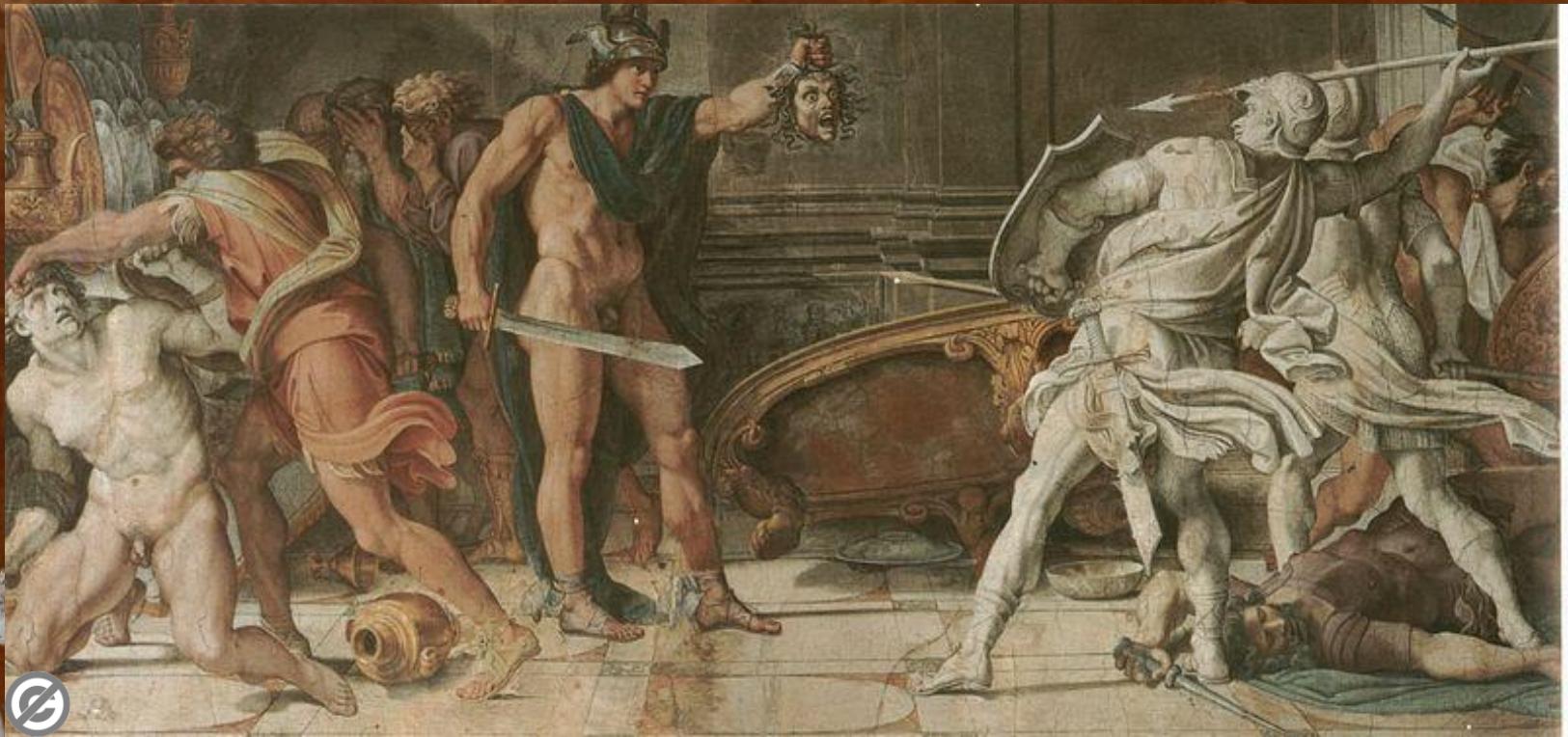
People all got petrified when watching into Medusa's eyes, and Polydectes is no exception.



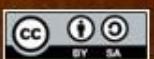


# Perseus's showing Medusa's head.

(This painting was displayed in National Palace Museum in 2012.)



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Perseus made Dictys the new king in the island.

He himself with mother and wife would like to return to Greece, seeing if they could reunite with Acrisius.

However, he killed Acrisius accidentally with the throwing of a heavy discus in a athletic contest.

Apollo's oracle was once again realized.



A character with many heroic stories.  
“NOTING WITHOUT THESEUS”

# THESEUS



# Theseus

The son of Athenian King, Aegeus.

After Theseus grew up, he took the sword and a pair of shoes Aegeus left him to claim him as father.

Medea wanted to spoil their reunion but in vain, escaping to Asia safely.



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King Aegeus sent Minos (the powerful ruler of Crete)'s son to kill a dangerous bull and caused his death.

To revenge, Minos, thereby, threatened to ruin Athens if they didn't hand in seven boys and girls for sacrifice for a half man, half bull monstor every year.

Theseus volunteered to be one of the victims, thinking of killing the monster, Minotaur.



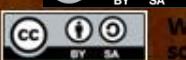
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# Minotaur's mini Profile



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Half bull, half man

Son of Pasiphae (wife of King Minos of Crete) and the white Marathonian Bull

Daedalus assisted to hide Minotaur. Once born, he created the Labyrinth to contain Minotaur.

Received humans to eat as a sacrificial offering.

However, Minos's daughter, Ariadne, fell in love with Theseus and helped him to kill Minotaur and escape.



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Theseus somehow lost Ariadne on his way home. (One saying is that he abandoned her, another he found her nowhere.)



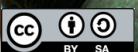
Theseus abandons  
**Ariadne** in the island  
of Naxos and sails  
home.



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He also forgot to lift the white flag so his father thought Theseus was died and killed himself out of grief.

Theseus became the new king when he returned, making Athens the happiest and most prosperous city with true liberty.



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# Stories about Theseus

- Accepted and protected Oedipus.
- Helped Argive to defeat Thebans and forced them to bury the dead.
- Saving Attica from being invaded.
- One of the men who sailed on Argo to find golden fleece.
- Friend to Pirithous and always helped him.
- Kidnapped Helen of the Troy when she's little.



# Theseus received Oedipus



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Most of the stories about Theseus show him a perfect and adventurous knight.

However, his marriage to Ariadne's sister, Phaedra, brought tragedy to his son, Hippolytus (the Amazon bore Theseus this son).

Hippolytus despised women and Venus. Venus, thereby, made Phaedra to fall in love with him.



Rejected by Hippolytus, Phaedra killed herself and left a letter accusing Hippolytus of raping her. This made Theseus banished Hippolytus to exile.



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Hippolytus went on exile. He fell from a chariot and was mortally hurt as a monster appeared on his way.

Artemis showed up and explained that Theseus had been deceived and tricked by Venus.



# The end of Theseus's story

Brokenhearted, Theseus found Hippolytus vanished with Artemis.

Theseus's death was so wretched. He got banished from Athens and killed by his host and friend.





# Q & A

- ① Can you come up with any other stories like Theseus who's being good but died in tragedy receiving no equal treatment? Share your ideas with us.
  
- ② Compared the heroes in Greek and Roman mythology with those in Chinese Culture. What are some similarities and differences? Or can you just share a heroic story from other cultures?



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