



The Titan's Curse

By Rick Riordan

Teacher's Guide

Written by A.L. Satterfield



CLASSROOM
FAVORITES

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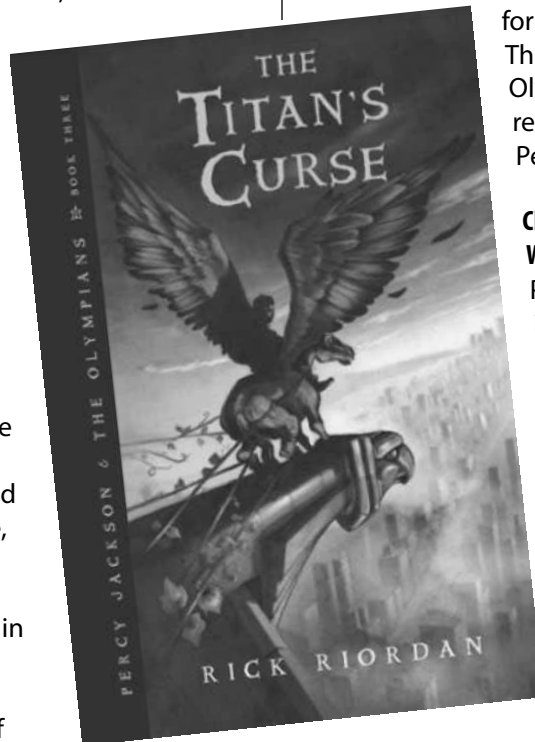
Synopsis

Introduction

The Titan's Curse is the second book in the *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* series by Rick Riordan, which transports ancient Greek mythology into a modern American setting. The underlying premise of the series is that the gods of Olympus are inextricably tied to Western civilization, which was created by the ancient Greeks. As long as the West remains, the gods will continue to exist, but their "headquarters"—the locations of Olympus and other important sites in Greek lore—shift with the shifting center of Western civilization. Currently, the United States is the heart of the West, so the gods are headquartered there as well; Olympus, for example, floats hundreds of floors above the Empire State Building in New York City, while the entrance to Hades is in Los Angeles.

The series follows the adventures of Perseus "Percy" Jackson, an American boy who is one of a number of demigods, children of a human parent and an immortal. Although these children have special powers, their lives are generally difficult: they are often unaware of their heritage and suffer from being different; because their brains are "hard-wired" for ancient Greek and battle skills, they are usually dyslexic and suffer from ADHD; and, even worse, they are frequently targeted by monsters. They become more noticeable to monsters as they approach puberty, so most demigods don't live past the age of about twelve. Those who are rescued by the gods' representatives find refuge at Camp Half-Blood, a school for young heroes on Long Island in New York. There, they learn of their heritage; study Ancient Greek and Greek mythology; learn battle skills such as javelin-throwing, sword-fighting, and chariot-racing; and prepare for difficult

quest. If they are lucky, they are "claimed" by their godly parent, although this is rare. Their training is to prepare them for a final, epic battle to save Western civilization from the forces of chaos, led by the pathologically evil Titan, Kronos, and his murderous demigod henchman, Luke. Kronos was torn into tiny pieces and thrown into Tartarus by Zeus eons ago, but never died, being immortal. Luke—a son of Hermes and former friend of Percy, Annabeth, and Thalia before he rebelled against Olympus—has been helping Kronos rebuild a new body. The novel covers Percy's eighth-grade year.



Chapter 1: My Rescue Operation Goes Very Wrong

Percy Jackson's mother, Sally, is driving Percy and his fellow demigods from New York City to a boarding school, eight hours away, in Maine. They are answering a distress call from Grover, their satyr friend whose job is to find and protect demigods and get them safely to Camp Half-Blood. Annabeth and Percy are about fourteen. Thalia has just recently been revived after being turned into a tree for seven years, starting when she was twelve.

Although technically she is nineteen, the transformation slowed the aging process, so that in reality she is just shy of her sixteenth birthday.

It is winter. The three demigods expect danger and have packed weapons. After Sally drops the youngsters off, they head into the school, where they encounter the menacing Dr. Thorn; although he remains in human form, they can tell he's a monster. Once they get past Dr. Thorn, they enter the school dance, where they find Grover with two half-bloods: the di Angelo siblings, Bianca and Nico. While they wait for an opening to rescue the di Angelos without attracting too much attention, Percy and Annabeth dance. This is especially awkward for Percy because Annabeth has outgrown him during the last year. Even more disturbing is the news that Annabeth's human father now has a new job and wants her to move with him across the country, to San

Francisco. She begins to tell him some additional important news, but is interrupted by the disappearance of Dr. Thorn and the di Angelos. She immediately takes off with Thalia and Grover, leaving Percy behind. Percy realizes that Dr. Thorn and the di Angelos have given them the slip. Wanting to prove himself, he follows without back-up, planning to rescue the kids alone. He finds them in a hallway, where Dr. Thorn turns into his monstrous form and injures Percy with a poison spike. Dr. Thorn takes Percy and the di Angelos hostage.

Chapter 2: The Vice Principal Gets a Missile Launcher

Dr. Thorn herds his captives outside. He is a manticores—a lion-bodied beast with a human face and a poisonous tail, like a scorpion's—and he is very fast and strong. On a cliff overlooking the sea, Dr. Thorn commands the trio to wait for their "ride"—a helicopter. While they wait, Dr. Thorn gloats about the evil plan that is being put into place. When Percy suggests that Dr. Thorn works for Luke, the manticore sneers: he works for the "General," who will soon explain everything. Further, the "Great Stirring" of monsters is already underway, and they will soon unleash "the most important monster of all," the one that will bring about Olympus' downfall. As the di Angelos look on in disbelief and Percy tries ineffectually to defend them, Annabeth, in her invisibility cap, ambushes Dr. Thorn and shields Percy and the kids from his spikes. Thalia and Grover join the battle. However, Dr. Thorn is too strong for them, and they are all soon trapped between him and the fully armed helicopter. Just as all seems lost, a band of middle-school-age girls wielding glowing silver arrows arrives and saves the day. Their leader is an otherworldly beauty of about thirteen. The girls attack, and Annabeth jumps on the monster's back to prevent him from killing a dazed Percy and Thalia. Suddenly, Dr. Thorn jumps over the cliff with Annabeth still on his back. The girls' leader raises her hand and turns the helicopter, which has begun to fire, into a flock of birds. On her orders, the other girls restrain a distraught Percy, who wants to jump into the sea to save Annabeth. Telling him that Annabeth is currently beyond their ability to save, the girl introduces herself: she is Artemis, Goddess of the Hunt.

Chapter 3: Bianca de Angelo Makes a Choice

Reactions vary. Percy is simply stunned. Thalia—who has already encountered Artemis and seems to be feuding with the goddess's lieutenant, Zoë Nightshade—is hostile. Grover is starstruck. Meanwhile, Bianca can hardly believe Zoë's explanation that she and Nico are demigods, while Nico is thrilled, equating this news

with his mythology-based game, Mythomagic. The di Angelos believe they are orphans whose schooling is paid for by a bank trust, but seem to remember little about their past. As Percy and Grover explain to them about Camp Half-Blood, Zoë asserts that there is another option—at least for Bianca—prompting an angry protest from Thalia. Meanwhile, Artemis convinces Percy that Annabeth is gone but not dead, and vows to find her if possible. Then, Artemis speaks with Bianca privately, leaving Percy and Thalia alone. Thalia turns on Percy, blaming him for the loss of Annabeth, then storming away, leaving Percy by himself on the cliff, holding Annabeth's invisibility hat.

Later, Percy finds himself in the Hunters' camp, which is guarded by falcons and white wolves. While Grover dresses his wound, Percy broods; secretly, he agrees with Thalia's harsh assessment. Percy tells Artemis what Dr. Thorn said about the General and the Great Stirring. At the mention of the General, Zoë appears greatly disturbed. Artemis declares that she will go alone to hunt for the unnamed monster, so she can prove to the Olympians that they are in danger. She commands a reluctant Zoë to go with the Hunters to Camp Half-Blood, which they apparently hate. Then, to Percy's horror, Artemis swears in Bianca as a Hunter. In exchange for a life of freedom and eternal maidenhood, Bianca swears allegiance to Artemis and renounces her responsibility to Nico, who will now have to live at Camp Half-Blood. This business done, Artemis summons a ride to camp for the Hunters and half-bloods—from her twin brother, Apollo.

Chapter 4: Thalia Torches New England

They wait for Apollo's arrival with the dawn, since he is the sun god. He pulls up in the modern equivalent of his sun chariot—a red Maserati—transforming it into a Turtle-Top shuttle bus to accommodate his passengers. A happy egotist, Apollo flirts shamelessly with Thalia and cajoles her into driving the sun bus to Long Island. Clearly terrified, Thalia drives erratically, causing freak weather conditions. Meanwhile, Apollo explains to a confused Nico and Percy that his version of the sun is *metaphysics*, not *physics*—it represents humans' ideas about the sun, not the actual, physical sun. Finally, they arrive at Camp Half-Blood.

Chapter 5: I Place an Underwater Phone Call

A light snow covers the camp; there are many decorative lights, but fewer campers than Percy expects. As the Hunters head to the Artemis Cabin (with Grover's unwelcome assistance), Bianca whispers something in

Nico's ear, but Nico just scowls; he has already decided he doesn't like the Hunters. Apollo leaves after cryptically advising Percy to "watch out for those prophecies"; this is significant, since Apollo is also the god of prophecy. Percy and Thalia take Nico to meet Mr. D, the camp director, and Chiron, the activities director. Mr. D is Dionysus, the god of wine and madness, who has been exiled to Camp Half-Blood by his father, Zeus, as a punishment. Mr. D is cynical, cruel, and apparently indifferent to the campers—he makes a great show of pretending not to remember their names, for instance—and he is especially mean to Percy; however, Mr. D is also powerful and unpredictable, and Percy knows better than to cross him. Chiron is the centaur who was tutor and trainer to the heroes of antiquity; a creature of great wisdom and honor, he protects the campers from Dionysus and is like a father to Annabeth. Percy tells them Annabeth is lost, and Mr. D hints that another camper has gone missing as well. Chiron is surprised to learn the Hunters are staying at the camp; he sends Nico with Grover to watch the orientation film so Percy and Thalia can explain what has happened. Mr. D denies Chiron and Percy's request for a quest to save Annabeth, implying that finding Annabeth is not worth the danger and effort. Outraged, Percy calls Mr. D a "lazy jerk" and reminds him that the civilization they're trying to protect is his own. Percy is saved from certain death by the interruption of Nico, who bursts excitedly into the room with Grover. While Mr. D is distracted, Percy and Thalia escape. Later, Thalia admonishes Percy: Ares is already an enemy; why antagonize Mr. D as well? Silently, Percy agrees. Thalia also confesses that after she became human again, she learned that her mother had died in a crash while driving drunk. However, Thalia bristles at Percy's sympathetic response, and huffs off to break up a fight between campers and Hunters, while Percy goes off to spread the word about a "friendly" game of Capture the Flag, to be held that evening between the Hunters and the campers.

In other developments, Percy learns that Clarisse—the Ares cabin leader who is his rival—has been missing for a month. In an "Iris message" (sent via the mist from a fountain in his cabin, courtesy of Iris, the goddess of the rainbow), Percy discovers from his Cyclops half-brother, Tyson (who works in Poseidon's undersea forge), that Oceanus and Aigaios, the ancient sea Titans, have awoken, and that Poseidon spends most of his time fighting them; further, Luke's demon-infested cruise ship, the *Princess Andromeda*, has entered the Pacific Ocean via the Panama canal. After talking to Tyson, Percy feels more depressed and isolated than ever. He feels even

worse the next morning, after a terrible nightmare in which Annabeth is tricked by Luke into carrying an impossibly heavy burden. Luke hints that this is a ruse to lure rescuers, and he leaves Annabeth in torment, offhandedly telling her to "try not to die." Percy is now convinced that Luke has put Annabeth in terrible danger.

Chapter 6: An Old Dead Friend Comes to Visit

The next morning, Percy confides his dream to Grover. Grover reveals that Zoë has had a similar dream revealing that Artemis has been kidnapped, and is angry that Chiron will not grant permission to leave the camp to find her. They speculate on who would be strong enough to take Artemis, ruling out Kronos because he has not yet re-formed. Grover also tells Percy he found a brochure from the Hunters in Annabeth's backpack, and thinks she may have been considering joining. Percy is distraught. Finally, in desperation, he consults the Oracle of Delphi—whose spirit now rests in a mummy in the Big House's attic—about what has become of Annabeth. Percy gets no answer, and leaves angrily.

That night, the campers battle the Hunters in capture the flag. Thalia and Percy co-captain the camp team, but Thalia is clearly the leader. Percy falls for a Hunter trick, disregarding Thalia's plan and losing the game, and he and Thalia nearly come to blows. They are interrupted by a frightening apparition: the Delphi Oracle has somehow propelled the mummy out of the attic. It bypasses Percy and speaks to Zoë instead. There is to be a joint camper-Hunter rescue mission for Artemis. One quester will die "in the land without rain," one will bear the "Titan's curse," and one will be killed by a parent. Message delivered, the oracle slumps to the ground.

Chapter 7: Everybody Hates Me but the Horse

Percy and Grover, the camp pariahs, haul the mummy back to the attic. Grover confides that he would like to resume his search for the god Pan. Later, a council is held to determine who goes on the quest. Zoë wants to take a crew of only Hunters, but the oracle specified a joint quest; however, Zoë is allowed to approve the participants, since the quest is for Artemis. From the Hunters, she picks Bianca and Phoebe, a tracker. Grover is chosen from the campers for his special woodland magic and tracking skills, and because he is not technically a boy. Thalia also volunteers. Percy is bypassed, his pleas to be included ignored. The quest is decided.

That night, Percy skips dinner. Grover and Chiron seek him out in the Poseidon Cabin. Grover and Chiron are sympathetic, but Chiron feels it is important to keep

Percy safe. Chiron also hints at the tragic history of Percy's sword, Riptide, suggesting its presence might distress Zoë; Percy doesn't know what he's talking about. Later, Percy contacts his mother via Iris message, and is surprised to see her on a study date with a handsome man from her English class—Mr. Blofis. Percy is also surprised when she tells him to listen to his heart and try to rescue Annabeth himself. She alone, among all the adults in his life, trusts his judgment.

That night, Percy has another nightmare. In the cave where Annabeth is barely holding up her burden, Artemis is now bound and bleeding. A deep, unfamiliar voice taunts her cruelly. Luke is taking orders from the unseen man, who is called the General. Artemis agrees to take Annabeth's burden. The General orders Luke to kill Annabeth, but Luke wants to save her as "bait." The General agrees to let her live until the winter solstice, a few days away. Luke carries her off for treatment.

Percy wakes to find the Pegasus, Blackjack, at his door. Poseidon created horses, so all horse-like creatures can communicate telepathically with Percy. Blackjack has been sent by the hippocampi—half horse, half fish—to rescue another sea creature. Percy hurries to help. On impulse, he grabs Annabeth's invisibility cap; he knows that Riptide will always reappear in his pocket.

Chapter 8: I Make a Dangerous Promise

Blackjack flies Percy out over the ocean. As the son of the sea god, Percy has underwater vision and an inability to drown. He can also withstand the water pressure on the ocean's floor, and his clothes never get wet unless he wants them to. At the bottom of Long Island Sound, Percy finds three frantic hippocampi surrounding a strange creature tangled in a fishing net. It looks like a baby cow with the tail of a sea serpent. Percy has never seen it before, and the hippocampi don't know what it is, either. Percy spends a long time untangling "Bessie" from the net, since the creature thrashes around in fear at the sight of Riptide. Finally, Bessie is free, and Blackjack takes Percy back to camp. There, Percy spies Nico, lurking behind some columns. Wearing the invisibility cap, Percy sets down near the boy. They overhear Zoë and Bianca talking about the quest. Zoë has sworn Bianca not to reveal a part of her dream concerning the General. Also, Phoebe, the other Hunter on the quest, is now in the infirmary due to a prank perpetrated by some campers. Although Bianca wants to find a replacement, Zoë insists there isn't time. They leave, and Percy reveals himself to Nico. He persuades Nico not to follow his sister; Percy will go in his place. Nico

wants Percy to promise he'll keep Bianca safe. Despite misgivings, Percy promises to try. Riding on Blackjack, Percy follows Zoe and the rest as they drive in the camp's white van toward New York City.

Chapter 9: I Learn How to Grow Zombies

Percy and Blackjack keep to the clouds to avoid being noticed. Taking a break on the Chrysler Building, they encounter Mr. D; he has, of course, detected Percy's escape. To explain his animosity toward Percy, Mr. D tells him the story of Ariadne, a maiden who risked all to help the hero Theseus, who then broke his promises and dumped her, leaving Mr. D to mend her broken heart and marry her. Mr. D hints that Zoë Nightshade has similar reasons to hate heroes, whom he characterizes as selfish users. However, since Percy may die on the quest, Mr. D has decided to let him go. Percy and Blackjack continue following the van to Washington, D.C., landing near the Washington Monument. Having sent Blackjack home to rest, Percy takes up the trail on foot. He spots Dr. Thorn (in human form) and follows him to the Smithsonian Institution's natural history museum. A haggard Luke and a huge, imposing military man—the General—wait inside. As Percy watches, the General's mortal minions plant dinosaur teeth ("dragon's teeth") in dirt around a display, watering it with what appears to be blood. Terrifying zombies emerge from the dirt; they can see Percy despite the cap. Percy escapes just in time.

Chapter 10: I Break a Few Rocket Ships

Percy runs to the Air and Space Museum to warn his friends. Though Zoë and Thalia are angry to see him, they relent at news of the enemy's presence. Zoë is shocked that the General is close by. In the meantime, the enemies have sent the pickup truck-sized Nemean Lion to fight the heroes. They defeat the lion thanks to Percy's quick thinking. Afterwards, Zoë agrees that Percy is fated to be the fifth person on the quest, and awards him the Lion's pelt as a spoil of war. The pelt turns into a full-length, golden-brown duster coat.

Chapter 11: Grover Gets a Lamborghini

The group takes off in the van, followed by the General's forces in a helicopter. Bianca suggests they leave the van for the subway, where they head to safety south of town. She mentions that Washington didn't have a subway when she and Nico lived there as little kids, a hint that the di Angelos may be older than believed. Meanwhile, the group changes trains twice before they lose the pursuing helicopter. At the end of the line, in an industrial area, the only other person is a homeless man

warming himself by a burn barrel. The man suggests they hitch a ride on a train carrying luxury cars. The leg-end on the train says "SUN WEST LINE." The man disappears, leaving a cold and empty barrel. They board.

Everybody relaxes in his own luxury car. From Thalia, Percy learns that San Francisco is dangerous for half-bloods because much Titan magic remains in the Mountain of Despair, now located at Mount Tamalpais. Thalia also acknowledges that she once refused to join the Hunters because it would have meant leaving Luke. Later, Percy is visited by the homeless man, who is Apollo in disguise. He tells Percy not to fear dreaming, and advises him to seek out Nereus, the Old Man of the Sea, in San Francisco, to get his questions answered. After Apollo disappears, Percy dreams he is an ancient hero being led in a desperate nighttime escape by a sad, beautiful princess with long, dark hair. She fears her father's wrath for helping him. She says he must escape the monster Ladon, and gives him her magical brooch as a token. It is called *Anaklusmos*—Riptide. It turns into a sword in his hand. When he awakens, Percy realizes he has dreamt a scene from Zoë's life; she is the beautiful princess, and the sword is his own: Riptide.

Chapter 12: I Go Snowboarding with a Pig

Their train has stopped in tiny Cloudcroft, New Mexico; it has no amenities and is accessible to nowhere. Zoë and the rest get coffee and pastries, while Percy talks to Bianca, learning more about her childhood, which involves hazy memories of living in a hotel, then being taken by a family lawyer to the boarding school in Maine where Grover discovered them. She explains her decision to become a Hunter: she needed to be free of the constant responsibility for Nico, and Percy's bravery convinced her that Nico would be taken care of at Camp Half-Blood. Percy spoils the moment by letting slip that he was eavesdropping on Bianca and Zoe before they left camp. Just then, the others return with food and coffee. Suddenly, Grover swoons, but not before the birds printed on his coffee cup take flight, and the rubber rat Percy has bought at the local convenience store comes to life and runs away. Though astounded, the others are distracted by an attack of the General's zombie army, now dressed in New Mexico state trooper uniforms and wielding pistols. Nobody's weapons work against them—except Bianca's: her knife-thrust causes one of the creatures to disintegrate. Grover has revived and is rhapsodizing about the "blessing of the Wild." Suddenly, the "blessing" appears in the form of a murderously angry, thirty-foot-tall pig, the Erymanthian Boar, which chases Percy and Thalia until Percy engi-

neers their escape by diving off a rickety train trestle onto the side of a mountain, while the boar plummets into a snow-filled crevasse below. In the process, Percy learns Thalia's big secret: the daughter of Zeus, Lord of the Sky, is afraid of heights. He promises not to tell anyone. Meanwhile, the boar, uninjured, is thrashing in the snow. Grover insists that it is their ride to the West Coast. Using woodland magic to suspend a delicious apple just beyond the boar's reach—"automatic steering"—Grover demonstrates the "ride" aspect by jumping on the boar's back. Zoë confirms that she, too, has felt the blessing—the brief presence of Pan.

Chapter 13: We Visit the Junkyard of the Gods

The heroes ride the boar for many miles to the west, until the animal reaches its western limit somewhere in the desert. They disembark, and the giant pig plows back eastward. Looking around, they find they're in the ghost town of Gila Claw, Arizona, on the eastern edge of a huge, ominous junk yard, which Grover's tracking magic reveals will be their next big challenge, even though he can't smell any monsters. They decide to camp out for the night and try the junk yard in the morning. That night, they speculate about the source of Bianca's power over the zombies, and it is revealed that Zoë is much older than they thought. They also learn that Bianca and Nico lived for "a few weeks" in a hotel in Las Vegas before moving to Maine. This news troubles Percy and Grover, who have had experiences with the Lotus Hotel and Casino, a supernatural trap where time seems to stand still. (Grover, Percy, and Annabeth once spent what seemed like a few hours there, but was really five days.) Upon further questioning, they discover that Bianca thinks the previous U.S. president was FDR—Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who died shortly before the end of World War II in 1945.

Suddenly, a limousine roars up, and out steps Ares, demanding that Percy enter the limo without the others. Everyone reluctantly obeys. In the limo is Aphrodite, who wants to talk to Percy. She dismisses the stated reason for the quest (rescuing Artemis), insisting instead that Percy is motivated by true love for Annabeth. The beautiful goddess is thrilled that Percy and Annabeth are providing a "good tragic love story," and assures him that "love conquers all." Aphrodite further reveals that she is the one who engineered Percy's participation in the quest—ensuring the elimination of the other Hunter, getting Blackjack to help him escape, etc. She urges him to forget about the Hunters and to rescue Annabeth from eternal maidenhood. Finally, she leaves him with the "reassurance" that his quest won't be bor-

ing or easy, and a warning not to pick up anything in her husband's—Hephaestus'—territory, the junk yard. At that, Ares pulls Percy out of the car, exchanges a few threats, and then disappears with Aphrodite, leaving the heroes alone in the abandoned town.

Percy evades everyone's questions; then they all head through the junk yard. They seem to have made it when, at the far edge, they awaken Talos, Hephaestus' enormous metallic giant. Percy realizes that Bianca has pocketed a small object, and he and Bianca fruitlessly battle the giant robot. Finally, a guilty Bianca vows to make things right. Giving Percy her find (a mythomagic piece for Nico) and a last message for her brother, she suddenly swings into the robot through a service door in its foot, gaining the controls. As the others watch in horror, she crashes Talos, saving her friends but losing her own life. Grover realizes she is the one who will be lost "in the land without rain." Percy is guilt-stricken that he wasn't the one who tried to control the giant.

Chapter 14: I Have a Dam Problem

Though miserable over the loss of Bianca, everyone knows they must continue the quest. At the junk yard's edge, they find an ancient tow truck, which they drive until they reach a river canyon. In borrowed canoes, they head upstream, aided by Naiads—river spirits—who help for Percy's sake. Although Percy tries to take the blame for the tragedy, Zoë blames herself for pushing Bianca. Zoë has been Artemis' lieutenant for two thousand years, and she had hoped to train Bianca to take over the role. Percy asks Zoë about Anaklusmos, and she reveals that she was exiled for helping a hero get past the dragon, Ladon, to steal the golden apples of the Hesperides. Zoë refuses to speak the hero's name.

The naiads stop at the massive Hoover Dam. In honor of Annabeth (a budding architect), they decide to visit the landmark. They make their way to the visitor's center, which is guarded by two enormous winged bronze statues (a gift from Athena when the dam—dedicated to Zeus—was built. As they approach the entrance, Percy and Grover hear a loud "Moo!" from the lake thirty feet below. It is the sea cow, Bessie, and it appears that Grover and Percy are the only ones who can hear it. Bessie is clearly trying to give Percy a warning. With a last urgent "Moo!," the creature disappears. At that moment, Percy spots zombies approaching the center.

Separated from his friends, Percy runs into the center and takes the elevator into the dam with a tour group; he recognizes the guide as Athena. Her advice leads

him to a dead end, but also to a mortal girl who helps him evade the zombies. He is shocked that she can see through the Mist. She introduces herself as Rachel Elizabeth Dare. Percy leaves to find his friends, but they can't beat the zombies, who corner them near the bronze statues. Thalia prays to her father, Zeus, who causes the statues to fly away with the heroes.

Chapter 15: I Wrestle Santa's Evil Twin

Thalia takes the trip with her eyes shut. The statues—self-identified as automatons—make happy plans to party with the "guys" at the Mechanics Monument in San Francisco. Percy tells Thalia about Rachel, and Thalia explains that some mortals can see through the Mist, for unknown reasons. Percy realizes his mother must have the same gift.

Once in San Francisco, the heroes are stumped. Taking Apollo's advice, they seek out Nereus, the old man of the sea, disguised as a homeless man sunning himself on the docks. Percy, as instructed, jumps on Nereus and doesn't let go, even when Nereus jumps into the sea. Shocked that Percy can't drown, Nereus agrees to answer one question. Percy asks for the identity of the terrible monster everyone's so afraid of. In answer, Nereus points to a spot near the dock, then disappears into the water. It is Bessie, the sea cow. With Grover translating, they learn the creature's true name: the Ophiotaurus. The Ophiotaurus says that "bad people" are nearby, and claims Percy as his protector. Zoë now remembers the ancient tales: the Ophiotaurus is an innocent creature whose sacrifice confers great power on its killer: anyone who burns its entrails will gain the power to overthrow Olympus. To Percy's dismay, Thalia is tempted; however, Grover's disruptive music snaps her out of it just as Dr. Thorn arrives with his troops to try to persuade her. A battle ensues, and the heroes are trapped on the docks. Finally, in desperation, Percy sends an Iris message to Camp Half-Blood, but gets Mr. D instead of Chiron. To Percy's shock, Mr. D saves them by sending grapevines and (temporary) madness to thwart the attackers. Thorn is killed, and his mortal assistants begin to behave insanely. Mr. D gives Thalia a stern admonition and warns them to hurry, telling them that Zoë knows where they must go. She points them to a distant mountain. Percy realizes that the god has, for the first time, called him by his correct name.

Chapter 16: We Meet the Dragon of Eternal Bad Breath

The heroes can only enter the garden of the Hesperides at sunset, which is fast approaching. They need a quick ride to Mount Tam. Meanwhile, they must transport the

Ophiotaurus to Olympus for safekeeping. Although the Ophiotaurus can appear in any body of water, it needs guidance to get back to Long Island, where Chiron can help with the final leg of the journey. Grover volunteers and gives it the blessing of the Wild for safety. Grover himself needs supernatural aid to survive underwater, so Percy prays to his father for safe passage. He accompanies the prayer with the biggest sacrifice he can offer: the skin of the Nemean Lion. As he throws it into the waves, he realizes that the hero who broke Zoë's heart was Hercules. He informs his surprised companions that he is not Hercules.

The remaining heroes face a time crunch. Thalia suggests that Annabeth's father might give them a ride to Mount Tam. At his house, Percy is surprised to find Dr. Chase, a professor of military history, to be a proud and loving parent, and his wife, Annabeth's stepmother, to be kind and supportive. They gladly let the heroes borrow their car. On the way, the heroes spot Luke's demon-infested ship, the *Princess Andromeda*, and narrowly escape the car before it is destroyed by lightning. Finally reaching the mountain on foot, they head to the garden of the Hesperides, discovering that Zoë's sisters still haven't forgiven her after several millennia. The first challenge is Ladon, the multi-headed dragon guarding the garden and the tree of golden apples. Zoë distracts it so Percy and Thalia can pass first, but at the last minute, Ladon turns on Zoë, wounding her with its poisonous fangs before they all manage to escape. Moving on, they see the ruins of Mount Othrys, the Titans' ancient stronghold; Zoë reveals that they are on Atlas' mountain, where he held the sky on his shoulders. At the summit, the meaning of Percy's dream is revealed: a battered and bleeding Artemis strains to continue holding the sky on her shoulders. Nearby stands the General, who taunts Zoë cruelly, threatening to kill her. Zoë admits that the General is Atlas—her father.

Chapter 17: I Put on a Few Million Extra Pounds

As the monsters ascend the mountain with Kronos' sarcophagus, Luke tries to recruit Thalia. Kronos will rise if Thalia agrees to sacrifice the Ophiotaurus. Instead, she joins Percy and Zoë in the fight against Atlas and Luke. Thalia fights Luke while Zoë and Percy target Atlas, but Percy's sword fails at a key moment and he is flung to Artemis' feet by a swipe of Atlas' javelin. Realizing he can fulfill the prophecy even if he can't win, Percy cuts Artemis' chains with his sword and persuades her to let him hold the sky. Artemis, now free, pretends to be injured, luring Atlas so she can use the leverage of his own javelin to kick him back under the sky, where he is

forced to resume his burden. Meanwhile, Zoë has been mortally injured by a blow from her father; Artemis rushes to her side. Elsewhere, Thalia battles Luke to the cliff's edge, and he falls over, apparently dead. Still, the demon army nears the summit and all seems lost. However, Dr. Chase saves the day, flying over the horizon in his refurbished World War I plane, a Sopwith Camel, and strafing the demons with celestial bronze bullets that he made himself. The heroes escape the mountain in Artemis' silver chariot.

Chapter 18: A Friend Says Good-bye

It is after dark when they reach Crissy Field. Artemis is unable to heal Zoë, who longs for rest. Percy realizes that Zoë has known all along that Atlas would kill her. As she is dying, Zoë receives her goddess' blessing. Zoë apologizes to Thalia, then turns to Percy. He was right, she tells him—he's nothing like Hercules, and she is honored that he carries Anaklusmos. She dies gazing at the stars. In tribute, Artemis transforms her spirit into a new constellation—the figure of a Huntress, running across the sky with her bow drawn.

Afterward, they must all return to Olympus in time for the solstice meeting. Artemis leaves separately, but she sends help: Blackjack, accompanied by two of his Pegasus friends, Porkpie and Guido. After bidding Dr. Chase farewell, Percy, Thalia, and Annabeth head for Olympus. On the flight back east, Annabeth thanks Percy for believing she was still alive and coming to rescue her. She insists that Luke is still alive, too, and under Kronos' spell. Although Percy doesn't argue, he is angry that Annabeth still has feelings for Luke. He is also terrified that she will join the Hunters. Finally, the trio arrive to an Olympus blazing with light; the Council of the Gods is already underway.

Chapter 19: The Gods Vote How to Kill Us

Olympus is an otherworldly paradise, beautiful and, for a hero, potentially dangerous. In the throne room, the twelve Olympians—each about fifteen feet tall—sit on their magnificent thrones. The room crackles with power. Grover is there, making a report to Zeus. The Ophiotaurus is also there, swimming happily in a giant, magical bubble of water. Artemis returns to her human form and greets the friends personally. Zeus has commanded that she and other Olympians fight on the various fronts of the new Titan war. Although the heroes are commended by some of the gods, others are not so kind, and Ares suggests that Thalia and Percy should be destroyed, since they could fulfill the prophecy. This draws objections from Zeus and Poseidon, as well as

from Artemis, who wants them rewarded for their service to Olympus. Meanwhile, Athena argues that it is “good strategy” to kill Percy and Thalia—especially since Thalia’s sixteenth birthday is imminent. However, Artemis nominates Thalia as her new lieutenant instead, and Thalia accepts; now, she will never turn sixteen. Percy is giddy with relief that it is Thalia and not Annabeth. Now, only Percy is left to fulfill the prophecy. He pleads not for himself, but for the Ophiotaurus, arguing that it is unjust to kill an innocent sea creature. Poseidon agrees, and vouches for both Bessie—whom he will keep guarded on Olympus—and his son. The majority of the gods vote to spare Percy, with only Dionysus, Ares, and Athena abstaining.

At the subsequent celebration party, Percy talks with several gods. Poseidon commends him and warns him, reminding him that Luke was once loyal to Olympus, too. He also confirms Annabeth’s insistence that Luke is still alive. Finally, Athena approaches Percy and explains her reasoning for wanting him killed. Although he doesn’t agree, he can’t refute her logic. She also tells him she disapproves of his relationship with her daughter, and reveals his fatal flaw: personal loyalty to his loved ones. Percy, she says, does not know when to give up on his friends and family, and Kronos will try to use this to bring about his downfall. She departs, leaving Percy sad and deflated. However, he gathers his courage and asks Annabeth—with whom he now shares a white streak of hair as a mark of his time carrying the Titan’s burden—for the dance they didn’t finish at Westover Hall.

Chapter 20: I Get a New Enemy for Christmas

Before leaving Olympus, Percy calls Tyson and Sally via Iris message. To his delight, Tyson will get the entire following summer off to spend with him at Camp Half-Blood; he’s also surprised but happy for his mother in her new relationship. Before going home for Christmas, Grover, Annabeth, and Percy visit Chiron at camp. Although pleased by the quest outcome, Chiron is also worried; Kronos, he says, will try to attack the camp directly now, probably in the summer, since by killing heroes—the tools of the gods—he will cripple the gods themselves in the upcoming war. Later, Percy tells Nico about his sister’s death, and gives him the mythomagic piece Bianca took for him. Nico blames Percy for failing to protect her. Although this is unfair, Percy is guilt-ridden. Nico also reveals that he has been having nightmares about Bianca’s death, and that he can “feel” that she is in the Fields of Asphodel being evaluated. As Nico’s anger percolates, four zombies suddenly appear and attack Percy. Thinking Nico is in danger, Percy tells

him to run, but Nico simply commands the skeleton warriors to go away, and they sink into cracks in the earth. Percy is stunned. Nico runs off in a rage, flinging the figurine to the ground. Percy picks it up and sees it is a statuette of Hades.

Later, Percy confers with Annabeth and Grover, and they decide not to tell Chiron what they have all realized—that Nico is Hades’ son. They reason that revealing this would create more division among the gods while lessening Nico’s chances of survival. Percy and Grover explain to Annabeth that Hades didn’t break the oath, since the di Angelo siblings were born before World War II and had been stuck at the Lotus Casino for decades. To protect Nico, Percy decides he will claim the prophecy himself, though he doesn’t want to. Finally, it is time to leave for Christmas; Annabeth will visit her family in San Francisco, and Percy will go home to Manhattan to see his mother. As they are preparing to leave, Grover, bursting with excitement, tells them he is packing his bags: he has heard Pan speak to him, and he is going once again to search for him.

Author Sketch

Texas native Richard “Rick” Riordan has won awards for his best-selling novels for both adults and younger readers. Born in San Antonio, Texas, on June 5, 1964, to a musician and a ceramicist, Riordan was a reader of mythology, science fiction, and fantasy from an early age, and submitted his first story for publication at thirteen. He initially trained as a musician, majoring in music at North Texas State College in Denton and singing with a folk rock band before transferring to the University of Texas at Austin. There, he changed his academic focus, graduating in 1986 with a double major in English and history. He subsequently taught middle school English and history in Texas and California for fifteen years while writing on the side, continuing to teach for several years after selling his first novel at the age of 32. As a teacher, he frequently incorporated lessons from Greek mythology, and these lessons were extremely popular with students. For teaching excellence, Riordan was recognized in 2002 by St. Mary’s Hall in San Antonio with its first-ever Master Teacher Award.

Inspired by his son Haley Michael—who has dyslexia and ADHD and wanted to hear bedtime stories about Greek gods and heroes—Riordan conceived the *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* series, which debuted in 2005 with *The Lightning Thief*. Although the series is a commercial and critical success, Riordan says he espe-

cially values the feedback of kids who read his books: "The ultimate compliment for a children's writer is when the kids like it." Now a full-time writer, Riordan lives in San Antonio with his family.

Critic's Corner

A best-selling writer for both youngsters and adults, Rick Riordan began his career as a novelist with *Big Red Tequila*, the first in his series featuring hard-drinking detective Tres Navarre. That series has earned him Anthony, Edgar, and Shamus awards and a featured alternate designation for the Mystery Guild, as well as listings in the Texas Institute of Letters and a suspense novel citation from the American Library Association. His first book in the episodic *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* series, *The Lightning Thief*, sold well over a million copies and has been translated into multiple languages. *The Lightning Thief* won the first of Riordan's two *New York Times* Notable Book citations, a *School Library Journal* best book, nominations for the Bluebonnet Award and Askews Torchlight Award, and comparisons to J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. Critic Amanda Craig of the *London Times* noted the Percy Jackson books' "fusion of the magical with the mundane." Dean Schneider described the book as "a rollicking story of great fun and adventure ... a brilliantly imagined quest tale." *The Lightning Thief* was followed by *The Sea of Monsters*, the second in the series, which was a hit as well, receiving the first of two *Child Magazine* Best Book for Children awards, and bestseller awards from *BookSense* and *Publishers Weekly*. *The Titan's Curse* is the third in the series.

Selected Other Works by Rick Riordan

For Adults

Big Red Tequila, 1997
The Widower's Two-Step, 1999
The Last King of Texas, 2000
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Mission Road, 2005
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For Young Readers

The Lightning Thief (*Percy Jackson and the Olympians*,

Book 1), 2005

The Sea of Monsters (*Percy Jackson and the Olympians*, Book 2), 2007

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The Last Olympian (*Percy Jackson and the Olympians*, Book 5), 2009

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The Red Pyramid (*The Kane Chronicles*, Book 1), 2010

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John Bierhorst, *The Mythology of North America*

Ray Bradbury, *The Electric Grandmother* and *Something Wicked This Way Comes*

Thomas Bulfinch, *Bulfinch's Mythology*

Lewis Carroll, "Jabberwocky"

Bernard Evslin, *The Adventures of Ulysses*

Bernard Evslin, Dorothy Evslin, and Ned Hoopes, *The Greek Gods*

The Titan's Curse Rick Riordan

Bernard Evslin, *Heroes, Gods and Monsters of the Greek Myths*
Susan Feldman, *The Storytelling Stone*
Roger Lancelyn Green, *King Arthur and His Knights of the Round Table*
Joel Chandler Harris, "Br'er Rabbit and the Tarbaby Story"
Edith Hamilton, *The Greek Way*
Edith Hamilton, *Mythology: Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes*
David Kalakaua, *The Legends and Myths of Hawaii*
Ursula LeGuin, *The Tombs of Atuan, A Wizard of Earthsea, and The Farthest Shore*
Lois Lowry, *The Giver and Messenger*
Alice Marriot, *Plains Indian Mythology*
Eloise Jarvis McGraw, *Mara, Daughter of the Nile*
Ovid, *The Metamorphoses*
Rick Riordan, *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* series, *Heroes of Olympus* series, *Kane Chronicles* series
J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter* series
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Cross-Curricular Sources

For more information about Rick Riordan, ancient Greek literature, Mount Olympus, mythic quest lore, epic, sacrifice, learning disabilities, and other subjects and issues deriving from the book, consult these sources:

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Aladdin

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Cupid and Psyche

The Electric Grandmother

Excalibur

Gifts of the North Wind

The Lightning Thief

Merlin

The Mists of Avalon

Mulan

The Natural

Sinbad

Something Wicked this Way Comes

Watership Down

General Objectives

- To identify classic Greek myths transposed to a modern setting
- To identify the morals or lessons of some of the myths
- To identify the human behaviors and foibles of various Greek gods and monsters
- To find elements of ancient Greek myths, including parallels between the adventures of Hercules and those of Percy and his friends
- To identify aspects of Greek life, such as worshipping in temples, training with weapons, and making burnt offerings to the gods
- To identify the role of hero, searcher, and teacher in myth
- To identify how the various heroes in the story reflect their divine parentage
- To discover how Riordan has updated many myths for a modern audience
- To examine ideas about heroes presented in the story
- To examine attitudes about personal responsibility and its limits as presented in the story

Specific Objectives

- To identify how Percy and others refine their ideas about personal responsibility and loyalty
- To examine the changes in Zoë's and Thalia's attitudes toward Percy in particular and male heroes generally during the course of the story
- To examine Percy's "fatal flaw," and to determine how this quality can be either an asset or liability
- To examine Percy's growing love for Annabeth, and how this affects the action of the novel
- To assess occasions of divine intervention, both overt and covert, in the lives of the young heroes
- To examine the relationship between prophecy and outcome in the narrative, as well as the role of personal agency in affecting outcomes that appear to be preordained, such as Zoë's death by the hand of her father, Atlas
- To examine why the Hunter lifestyle might be appealing to characters such as Annabeth, Zoë, and Thalia
- To examine the very human emotions of the various gods and supernatural personalities the heroes encounter

Literary Terms and Applications

For a better understanding of Rick Riordan's fiction,

present the following terms and applications:

- **Allegory:** a literary work that functions on two or more levels of meaning by comparing objects to symbols beyond the scope of the work. The structure of myths often parallels identifiable human behaviors and motivations, such as curiosity or pride.
- **Episode:** a coherent event, digression, or incident in a narrative or serial that stands out on its own merit. The entire *Percy Jackson* series is episodic, with the narrative threaded through a series of virtually stand-alone adventure stories. Examples include the battle at the Smithsonian Institution; the capture of the Erymanthian boar; the dramatic escape from the Hoover Dam; and the climactic fight with Luke and Atlas.
- **Myth:** a form of folklore that accounts for the creation of all things, the origin of good and evil, and the salvation of the soul. Style and subject matter vary, as with the Greek myths explaining human evils, oracles and prophecy, and such natural phenomena as the movements of the sun.

The Importance of Setting

Riordan's unique approach transposes ancient Greek myths to modern settings in and around the United States. Olympus is hundreds of floors above the Empire State Building; the entrance to Hades is in Los Angeles; a camp to train demigod heroes (and repository for the famous Delphi Oracle) is on Long Island; and Mount Othrys—the headquarters of the Titans during their war with Olympus in ancient Greek mythology—is located on the present-day Mount Tamalpais outside San Francisco, as is the Garden of the Hesperides. The heroes encounter many monsters and challenges straight out of ancient Greek mythology, such as a mantichore, spartoi (zombie warriors made from dragon's teeth), Ladon, the Nemean Lion, the Erymanthian boar, and the ancient (even by Olympian standards) sea god Nereus; the use ancient, fabled weapons like the sword Anaklusmos (Riptide) and the terrifying shield Aegis to defeat enemies. In some form, they often reprise the adventures of such legendary Greek heroes as Hercules, Achilles, and Perseus. They carry away with them trophies of Greek myth, translated into modern terms. For instance, the Nemean Lion's skin, which could deflect sword and spear and which Hercules wore, transforms into a duster jacket, and Apollo's sun chariot changes into a sports car, then a tourist bus, to accommodate the heroes and Hunters. By transporting the myths to the United States and modern American culture, Riordan creates endless opportunities for humor and

wonder, while making the myths relevant to his target audience of modern, mostly American, young readers. His approach provides an important teaching value as well; as befits a former award-winning teacher, Riordan has created stories that invite research and further learning, inspiring young readers to look up the original myths and historical settings for comparison. By modernizing the setting, Riordan ensures that, in addition to being a great adventure story, *The Titan's Curse*—like its companions in the *Percy Jackson* series—is also a great tool for teaching about ancient Greek civilization and the foundational myths and ideas of Western culture.

Themes and Motifs

A study of the central issues and situations in Rick Riordan's *The Titan's Curse* should include these aspects:

Themes

- Running from responsibility
- Accepting responsibility
- Power and its abuse
- Betrayal and its consequences
- Distrust of heroes
- Redeeming mistakes
- Love and friendship
- Fate versus self-determination
- Family reconciliation
- Standing by friends, even when they fail

Motifs

- Deciding whether to accept or reject romantic love
- Fulfilling a quest despite resistance
- Being blamed unfairly
- Allowing others the freedom to make mistakes
- Betrayal by a "hero"
- Being threatened with punishment for doing the right thing

Meaning Study

Below are words, phrases, sentences, or thought units that have particular meaning in the novel. Explain each in context. Chapter and page numbers indicate where each item appears.

1. The Friday before winter break, my mom packed me an overnight bag and a few deadly weapons and took me to a new boarding school. We picked up my friends Annabeth and Thalia on the way. (Chapter 1, page 1)
(From the opening sentence, Riordan sets the tone

for the book, which combines humor, personal growth, and peril in nearly equal measure. Every element of the first sentence is a kind of shorthand for all that is precious to Percy and makes him tick: his family [mom], his dangerous calling as a demigod hero [deadly weapons], learning and adventure [overnight bag and new school], and friendship and rivalry [Annabeth and Thalia].)

2. Not that I resented Thalia. She was cool. It wasn't her fault her dad was Zeus and she got all the attention. ... Still, I didn't need to run after her to solve every problem. (Chapter 1, p. 14)
(Percy is in the process of deciding between getting help from his friends or going it alone as he attempts to rescue the di Angelo siblings from a monster at a middle school dance. From his concerned mom to his older, stronger friend and rival Thalia, to his gifted friend Annabeth, Percy is feeling overshadowed. He struggles with issues of personal autonomy versus teamwork, and with the conflict between his sense of genuine friendship for his peers, and his desire to make his own mark. In this case, he chooses to go it alone—and leads himself and the di Angelos into danger from the murderous Dr. Thorn.)

3. After seeing Dr. Thorn turn into a monster and plummet off the edge of a cliff with Annabeth, you'd think nothing else could shock me. But when this twelve-year-old girl told me she was the goddess Artemis, I said something real intelligent like, "Um ... okay." (Chapter 3, p. 29)
(Percy meets Artemis for the first time. The patron of the Hunt and of maidenhood, she plays a critical role in the story—both as an unwitting instigator of the quest, which is officially launched to find her, and a savior and patron of Annabeth, Percy, and Thalia, whom she rescues from Atlas and defends against calls by other Olympians to execute the half-bloods. She is also an ongoing source of anxiety for Percy, who fears she will persuade Annabeth to join the Hunters and thus reject male-female romantic relationships for all eternity.)

4. "You are a half-blood," Zoë Nightshade said. Her accent was hard to place. It sounded old-fashioned, like she was reading from a really old book. "One of thy parents was mortal. The other was an Olympian." (Chapter 3, p. 30)
(Zoë Nightshade, Artemis' lieutenant, is explaining to the di Angelos what their true parentage is. While Nico thinks this is "cool," Bianca's reaction is more

typical: shocked disbelief. Zoë herself is revealing something about her ancient, non-human origins in her speech and manner; later, we discover that she is millennia old, and the daughter of a Titan and a sea goddess.)

5. The Hunters set up their camping site in a matter of minutes. Seven large tents, all of silver silk, curved in a crescent around one side of a bonfire. One of the girls blew a silver dog whistle, and a dozen white wolves appeared out of the woods. They began circling the camp like guard dogs. The Hunters walked among them and fed them treats, completely unafraid, but I decided I would stick close to the tents. (Chapter 3, p. 34)
(Percy gets a rare—for a boy—look at the camp of the Hunters of Artemis, girls who have sworn loyalty to the goddess and renounced the company of men and romantic love. In exchange, they gain immortality [unless they are killed in battle or renounce their vows], eternal youth, and a life of freedom in nature. Percy will soon discover that Bianca has decided to join, essentially abandoning her younger brother to the care of Percy and Camp Half-Blood.)

6. "I will find this creature," Artemis vowed. "And I shall bring it back to Olympus by winter solstice. It will be all the proof I need to convince the Council of the Gods of how much danger we are in." (Chapter 3, p. 40)
(Under questioning by Artemis, Percy has just revealed the gloating words of the mantichore, Dr. Thorn, before he was shot by the Hunters and disappeared with Annabeth: that all half-bloods were to be taken to the "General," and that the "Great Stirring" had begun, unleashing monsters that have been asleep for centuries. Among these is an unnamed monster that is the greatest danger of all—which Artemis decides she must hunt alone. Artemis has noticed an uptick in monster activity during her hunting activities, but the rest of Olympus is still in denial about the extent of the danger.)

7. I tried to imagine what she was saying. Being immortal. Hanging out with only middle-school girls forever. I couldn't get my mind around it. "So you just go around the country recruiting half-bloods—" "Not just half-bloods," Zoë interrupted. "Lady Artemis does not discriminate by birth. All who honor the goddess may join. Half-bloods, nymphs, mortals—" (Chapter 3, p. 41)
(Percy tries to grasp what it means to be a Hunter of

Artemis. Of course, it is a club he can never belong to, since he's a boy. The issue becomes much more personal for him when he discovers that Annabeth, whom he is beginning to realize he loves, was considering joining the Hunters.)

8. "Bianca, this is crazy," I said. "What about your brother? Nico can't be a Hunter."

"Certainly not," Artemis agreed. "He will go to camp. Unfortunately, that's the best boys can do." "Hey!" I protested.

"You can see him from time to time," Artemis assured Bianca. "But you will be free of responsibility. He will have the camp counselors to take care of him. And you will have a new family. Us." "A new family," Bianca repeated dreamily. "Free of responsibility." (Chapter 3, p. 42)

(As this exchange shows, Bianca's new life comes at the expense of rejecting her brother, and by extension, all males. This is a secondary consideration for Bianca, however. The selling point for her is freedom from the responsibility she's had for her brother for many years. Later in the book, we discover that she has taken care of Nico for much longer than it first appears. As the goddess of not only the Hunt, but of the moon, Artemis was traditionally characterized as occasionally distant and cold. Her dispassionate reaction to concerns about Nico is in keeping with this traditional aspect of the goddess.)

9. "But how does it work?" Nico asked. "I thought the sun was a big fiery ball of gas!"

Apollo chuckled and ruffled Nico's hair. "That rumor probably got started because Artemis used to call me a big fiery ball of gas. Seriously, kid, it depends on whether you're talking astronomy or philosophy. . . . This chariot is built out of human dreams about the sun, kid. It's as old as Western Civilization. Every day, it drives across the sky from east to west, lighting up all those puny little mortal lives. The chariot is a manifestation of the sun's power, the way mortals perceive it. . . ." (Chapter 4, pp. 50-51)

(Apollo, the sun god, is answering Nico di Angelo's questions about the nature of the sun. He is explaining the difference between science and cultural perception, or "philosophy," in his terminology. In the ancient myths, Apollo pulled the sun across the sky in his chariot. In the Percy Jackson version, the chariot is a fiery red Maserati sports car—or, for large groups, a Turtle Top shuttle bus.)

10. "You've already got Ares on your bad side," Thalia reminded me as we trudged toward the cabins. "You need another immortal enemy?" (Chapter 5, p. 62)

(Thalia admonishes Percy after he narrowly escapes destruction for telling off the camp director, Dionysus, for refusing a request to launch a rescue mission for Annabeth. Dionysus is the god of wine, sent to Camp Half-Blood for a hundred years by his father, Zeus, to "dry out" after his wine-loving ways got him into trouble. Mr. D, as he is known, detests Percy, and generally appears indifferent to the welfare of the campers. However, Mr. D is also extremely dangerous, and if Percy hadn't been distraught over the loss of Annabeth, he would never have challenged him. Percy agrees completely with Thalia, although he doesn't really regret his outburst. His first summer at Camp Half-Blood, Percy went on a quest that culminated in a sword fight with Ares, the god of war, who became Percy's sworn enemy.)

11. I stepped up to the pool. There was no note attached or anything, but I knew it could only be a gift from Poseidon.

I looked into the water and said, "Thanks, Dad." The surface rippled. At the bottom of the pool, coins shimmered—a dozen or so golden drachma. I realized what the fountain was for. It was a reminder to keep in touch with my family. (Chapter 5, p. 66)

(In the Poseidon cabin, Percy discovers a beautiful saltwater fountain of gray sea rock, and recognizes it as a mechanism for sending IMs—Iris Messages, through the goddess of the rainbow. Percy uses the fountain to contact Tyson, his Cyclops half-brother, where he is working in Poseidon's undersea forges, crafting swords and other weapons for the Titan war. From Tyson, Percy learns that the ancient sea Titans, Aigaios and Oceanus, are stirring, along with the monsters they once commanded, keeping Poseidon busy. Percy also learns the disturbing news that the Princess Andromeda—the demon-infested cruise ship piloted by Percy's nemesis, Luke, on behalf of the evil Kronos—is heading through the Panama Canal into the Pacific Ocean. Percy doesn't have the heart to tell Tyson that Annabeth is missing and feared dead. Although Tyson is happy for the message, Percy ends up feeling more worried and isolated than ever.)

12. "I knew I could count on you." He began to walk away as the trembling blackness threatened to

crush Annabeth.

"HELP ME!" she pleaded.

"Oh, don't worry," Luke said. "Your help is on the way. It's all part of the plan. In the meantime, try not to die..."

I sat bolt upright in bed, clawing at the sheets. ...

Only a dream, but I was sure of two things:

Annabeth was in terrible danger. And Luke was responsible. (Chapter 5, pp. 72-73)

(In a prophetic nightmare, Percy sees Luke trick Annabeth into carrying a deadly burden for him.

Although Percy doesn't recognize the location or the item in question, he understands that Luke has deliberately put Annabeth in harm's way, playing on her sense of loyalty from the days before Luke turned his back on Olympus and began to work for the overthrow of the gods.)

13. I'd like to say I took the news well.

The truth was, I wanted to strangle the Hunters of Artemis one eternal maiden at a time. The rest of the day I tried to keep busy, but I was worried sick about Annabeth. (Chapter 6, p. 78)

(Percy has just learned from Grover that Annabeth was considering joining the Hunters of Artemis. To his fear for her safety is now added the fear that even if Annabeth is saved from Luke and the General, she will still be lost to him forever.)

14. The Oracle's mouth opened, and a green mist poured out. I saw the vague image of a mountain, and a girl standing at the barren peak. It was Artemis, but she was wrapped in chains, fettered to the rocks. She was kneeling, her hands raised as if to fend off an attacker, and it looked like she was in pain. The Oracle spoke:

*Five shall go west to the goddess in chains,
One shall be lost in the land without rain,
The bane of Olympus shows the trail,
Campers and Hunters combined prevail,
The Titan's curse must one withstand,
And one shall perish by a parent's hand.*

(Chapter 6, p. 89)

(The Oracle of Delphi—a shriveled mummy animated by the ghostly spirit of the Oracle—makes a surprise visit to the woods, interrupting the fight that erupts between Percy and Thalia after the campers lose the game of capture the flag to the Hunters. The Oracle delivers an ominous prophecy about the upcoming quest. The visitation shocks and frightens the campers. Among other things, the prophecy foretells the deaths of two quest participants.)

15. "Why?" I asked. "What were you thinking?"

He clopped his hooves uneasily. "Just something the manticore said, about the Great Stirring. I can't help but wonder ... if all those ancient powers are waking up, maybe ... maybe not all of them are evil."

"You mean Pan?"

I felt kind of selfish, because I'd totally forgotten about Grover's life ambition. The nature god had gone missing two thousand years ago. He was rumored to have died, but the satyrs didn't believe that. They were determined to find him. They'd been searching in vain for centuries, and Grover was convinced he'd be the one to succeed. (Chapter 7, p. 91)

(Grover dreams of discovering the lost god of the Wild, Pan. Preoccupied with his own concerns and the rumblings of a Titan-Olympian war, Percy has forgotten this.)

16. "Chiron," I said. "You know what this Titan's curse is, don't you?"

His face darkened. He made a claw over his heart and pushed outward—an ancient gesture for warding off evil. "Let us hope the prophecy does not mean what I think. Now good night, Percy. And your time will come. ... There's no need to rush."

He said your time the way people did when they meant your death. I didn't know if Chiron meant it that way, but the look in his eyes made me scared to ask. (Chapter 7, p. 103)

(This bit of foreshadowing hints at the Titan's Curse, which we later learn is Atlas's burden of holding the sky on his back. Chiron subtly reveals that his real reason for not promoting Percy for the quest is his fear for the boy's safety.)

17. "Percy. ... You need to do whatever you think you have to."

I stared at her. "What do you mean?"

"I mean, do you really, deep down, believe that you have to help save her? Do you think it's the right thing to do? Because I know one thing about you, Percy. Your heart is always in the right place. Listen to it." (Chapter Seven, p. 105)

(Percy contacts his mother, Sally, via Iris message, explaining what has happened to Annabeth and Artemis, and that he has been excluded from the quest to find them. To his surprise, Sally suggests he should search for Annabeth anyway; he should trust

his intuition—which is rooted in his love for others and a genuine desire to see the best outcome for all involved—over the judgment of the Oracle or the others at camp.)

18. "Why do you hate me so much? What did I ever do to you?"
Purple flames flickered in his eyes. "You're a hero, boy. I need no other reason." (Chapter Nine, p. 123)
(Mr. D exhibits a great deal of enmity for Percy, a feeling shared by several of the gods toward heroes in general. This is ironic, since the gods' behavior is generally poor by human standards, and the heroes frequently act as the gods' agents in the earth. Dionysus tells Percy the story of Ariadne, the princess of Crete whom Theseus abandoned after she risked everything to help him defeat the Minotaur; Dionysus found her, healed her broken heart, and eventually married her, giving her immortality when she died. Of course, Mr. D is not guiltless himself, since he landed at Camp Half-Blood originally as a punishment for chasing a wood nymph, but Mr. D conveniently glosses this over. Nevertheless, despite his hostility—and hypocrisy—Mr. D seems to somewhat recognize the necessity of helping the heroes save Western civilization, giving Percy some help on the quest, and even saving him and his friends later in San Francisco.)
19. He was tall and muscular, with light brown skin and slicked-back dark hair. He wore an expensive brown silk suit like the guys on Wall Street wear, but you'd never mistake this dude for a broker. He had a brutal face, huge shoulders, and hands that could snap a flagpole in half. His eyes were like stone. I felt as if I were looking at a living statue. It was amazing he could even move. (Chapter Nine, p. 132)
(Percy gets his first glimpse of the mysterious General, who is identified as the titan Lord Kronos' senior commander. The General has a history with Zoë Nightshade, whose name he forbids his lieutenants to speak; he plays a crucial role in fulfilling the prophecy about the quest. Later, we learn that he is the Titan Atlas, bearer of the sky and Zoë's father.)
20. "Go," I said. "They'll be hunting me. I'll distract them."
"No," Zoë said. "We go together."
I stared at her. "But, you said—"
"You are part of this quest now," Zoë said grudgingly. "I do not like it, but there is no changing fate. You are the fifth quest member. And we are

not leaving anyone behind." (Chapter 9, pp.146-147)
(Despite her distrust of male heroes, Zoë Nightshade bows to fate and accepts Percy as a member of the quest after Percy defeats the Nemean Lion at the Smithsonian's Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C. Percy is vindicated, and is able to help find Annabeth. In the end, he fulfills a key part of the prophecy.)

21. "Such gratitude," (Dionysus) muttered. "The mortals will come out of it. Too much explaining to do if I made their condition permanent. I hate writing reports to Father."
He stared resentfully at Thalia. "I hope you learned your lesson, girl. It isn't easy to resist power, is it?"
Thalia blushed as if she were ashamed. (Chapter 15, p. 239)
(The heroes are in San Francisco. Via Iris-message, Mr. D has just saved them from Dr. Thorn and his minions. Thalia has narrowly resisted the temptation to sacrifice the Ophiotaurus and thus gain power over Olympus. As Percy, Grover, and Zoë look on—stunned that the normally hostile god would make an effort to save their lives—Mr. D reprovves Thalia for wavering. Her close call here shows her how easily she could have succumbed to her fatal flaw, susceptibility to the lure of power, and caused Olympus' downfall. This realization helps convince her to join the Hunters later in the story.)
22. I couldn't speak, but I brought out Riptide and put the pen in her hand. She grasped it contentedly. "You spoke the truth, Percy Jackson. You are nothing like ... like Hercules. I am honored that you carry this sword." (Chapter 18, p. 278)
(Zoë lies dying in Artemis' arms, felled by a blow from her father, Atlas, in fulfillment of part of the prophecy. As she does so, she makes peace with her companions, including Percy. She recognizes that unlike Hercules—to whom she originally gave Riptide, and who betrayed her—Percy is not interested in glory, but rather is motivated by a desire to help others. Her final statement to him is a kind of blessing on the young hero.)
23. "I will not have them punished," Artemis said. "I will have them rewarded. If we destroy heroes who do us a great favor, then we are no better than the Titans. If this is Olympian justice, I will have none of it." (Chapter 19, pp. 289-290)
(At the Council of the Gods on Olympus, Artemis stands up to the heroes' Olympian enemies, making

an impassioned plea on behalf of Percy, Thalia, Annabeth, and Grover after Athena and others have argued that the best way to protect Olympus is to kill Percy and Thalia—the two half-bloods with the ability to fulfill the prophecy. Although the gods spare the heroes, they almost agree to destroy the Ophiotaurus—until Percy pleads with his father to intervene on behalf of an innocent sea creature.)

24. "Father," (Thalia) said. "I will not turn sixteen tomorrow. I will never turn sixteen. ... I stand with my sister Artemis. Kronos will never tempt me again." (Chapter 19, p. 292)

(Thalia accepts Artemis' offer to fill Zoë's shoes as the goddess' lieutenant, surprising several people—including Percy, who has been sick with worry that the position would go to Annabeth. In doing so, Thalia ensures that she will never fulfill the prophecy, and she finally turns her back on the sad chapter of her life that includes Luke and his betrayal.)

25. Athena looked almost sorry for me. "Kronos knows your flaw, even if you do not. He knows how to study his enemies. Think, Percy. How has he manipulated you? First, your mother was taken from you. Then your best friend, Grover. Now my daughter, Annabeth." She paused, disapproving. "In each case, your loved ones have been used to lure you into Kronos's traps. Your fatal flaw is personal loyalty, Percy. You do not know when it is time to cut your losses. To save a friend, you would sacrifice the world. In a hero of the prophecy, that is very, very dangerous." (Chapter 19, 298)

(At the party on Olympus, Athena talks to the young hero, explaining why she wanted him executed. Though cold, her logic is, of course, flawless. As Athena points out when Percy protests, the most dangerous flaws—the ones that are hardest to combat—are those, such as loyalty, that are virtues in the right context.)

26. "... I choose the prophecy. It will be about me." "Why are you saying that?" (Annabeth) cried. "You want to be responsible for the whole world?" It was the last thing I wanted, but I didn't say that. I knew I had to step up and claim it. "I can't let Nico be in any more danger," I said. "I owe that much to his sister. ... I'm not going to let that poor kid suffer any more." (Chapter 20, p. 310) *(At the end of the novel, Percy makes the fateful decision to take responsibility for fulfilling the prophecy in two years, when he turns sixteen. His motive is*

selfless. He makes the decision after talking with Nico di Angelo, who blames Percy for failing to save Bianca during the quest. In typical fashion, Percy accepts this blame, even though it wasn't his fault. Still, Percy feels guilty and responsible, and with typical big-heartedness, seeks to shield Nico—as a son of Hades, another candidate to be the hero who decides Olympus' fate—from further pain.)

Comprehension Study

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important. Defend your answers by referring to passages in *The Titan's Curse*.

1. What is "the titan's curse"? Does it affect more than one character in the book? Who ends up fulfilling the prophecy? What unique characteristic of the curse makes it possible to restore it to its rightful bearer? Explain.

(The phrase "the titan's curse" is first mentioned in the Delphi Oracle's prophecy: "The Titan's curse must one withstand." The Titan's curse turns out to be Atlas' punishment of holding the weight of the sky on his back, thus preventing the sky from touching the earth. Of course, Atlas is also known as "the General," Zoë Nightshade's murderous father. In the course of the book, the curse is borne temporarily by Luke, Annabeth, Artemis, and Percy before it is returned to Atlas when Artemis tricks him into assuming it again. According to Artemis, Titans already bear the obligation to carry the sky, and so they can be forced—or tricked—to take on the load. All others, however, must willingly assume it, which is why Kronos' forces resort to emotional blackmail, using Annabeth's love for Luke, and Artemis' compassion for Annabeth, as persuaders. To save his friends, Percy also willingly chooses to bear the curse.)

2. Discuss the origins of Greek myths. How did they come about? What purpose did they serve? What lessons do they teach us today?
(Answers will vary. Greek mythology originated in the folk traditions of people who were literally trying to understand the meaning of life, to explain human nature and natural phenomena, and to derive a sense of comfort and control in the face of life's difficulties and the terrors of nature—all without benefit of advanced technology or great scientific knowledge. At its most basic level, Greek mythology was an attempt by humans to make sense of their world,

to humanize it, and to avoid its pitfalls. Although they no longer serve to explain natural phenomena, Greek myths are still valuable today for their literary merit and their insight into human nature and events. Perhaps most importantly, they help us understand Western culture, which is permeated with ideas and references derived from Greek myths.)

3. How does Percy's life vacillate between fantasy and reality?

(The child of a working single mother and an ancient Greek god, Percy seems to have a life straight out of fairytales. He has special gifts, such as the power to manipulate water and an inability to drown, not to mention amazing sword-fighting skills and an innate understanding of Ancient Greek. He regularly interacts with mythological figures, and he participates in quests that exist simultaneously in modern America and an alternative mythological reality. He may also hold the fate of Western civilization in his hands. On the other hand, Percy deals with issues faced with many adolescent boys everywhere. He has learning disabilities; longs to fit in but feels like a perpetual outsider; tries, and sometimes fails, to do the right thing and avoid messing up; and worries about his mother and his friends. He is a frequent object of criticism, some of it quite unfair. Further, he has recently become aware of romantic feelings for his friend Annabeth, whose mother disapproves. Though some details of his life are pure fantasy, his internal challenges and struggles to grow up are those of a real, ordinary boy.)

4. What are the key conflicts in the novel?

(Answers will vary. Key conflicts in the novel include the brewing war between Olympus and the Titans. A related conflict concerns who will fulfill the prophecy, and how the Olympians will deal with him or her. This is resolved in temporarily when the Olympians spare Percy's life, and he subsequently decides to claim the prophecy. Yet another set of conflicts relates to the coming of age of the main demigod characters. Percy's romantic problems and anxieties over his own role in the prophecy, Thalia's challenge to remain true to Olympus, and the di Angelo siblings' various issues, all are confronted. The pain and cost of betrayal is another source of conflict. Throughout the story, Annabeth, Thalia, and Percy all must deal with the ongoing fallout of Luke's betrayal; and the stories of both Zoë Nightshade and Dionysus' wife, Ariadne, highlight the costs of betrayal by and for heroes. This issue of betrayal highlights

another conflict: between the heroic ideal and the sometimes cruel reality of heroes' behavior, which has fueled the hatred of Dionysus and others.)

5. What important decision does Percy make at the very end of the novel? Why is this significant? How might this increase the danger he faces? What motivates him to make this decision?

(Answers will vary. After Thalia joins the Hunters and Nico leaves camp, Percy decides to claim the prophecy as his own. This is significant because it puts him in charge of his own destiny while increasing the danger he faces. Many have wanted to kill him based on the mere possibility that he is the prophesied hero; his claiming the challenge will no doubt make him an even bigger target now. His motives are altruistic and based in his personal sense of responsibility: regretful that he was unable to protect Bianca and convinced he has let Nico down, Percy takes on the burden to protect Nico and others. That Nico now hates him doesn't influence Percy's decision. Significantly, Percy does not want the burden; by accepting it, he is making a selfless sacrifice.)

6. What qualities do Greek myths inspire in readers?

(Greek stories value the grandeur and deadly strength of nature as well as the human capacity to appreciate and experience the world. Cosmic forces create a two-sided tension between the quest for glory through heroic achievement, and the danger of overreaching mortal limitations through hubris, or pride. By endowing immortals with human foibles—curiosity, ambition, competitiveness, vengeance, jealousy, daring, deceitfulness, disobedience—myths inform readers of the potential dangers of these characteristics and seek to explain the seeming capriciousness of the natural world. At the same time, myths posit a reward for the true heroism exemplified by Annabeth, Percy, Thalia, Grover, Bianca, and Zoë Nightshade, as well as by gods such as Artemis and mortals such as Dr. Chase. In each case, the decision to sacrifice for others and do what is right—though not always appreciated and often fraught with danger, pain, and the risk of death—ultimately brings honor and right outcomes.)

7. How do Greek myths compare with those of other folk cultures?

(Myths and folktales deal with themes common to humanity. As explained by the great mythologist Joseph Campbell, tales of dangerous love affairs, toying with godly powers, flights from danger, com-

peting in contests of strength, and violating heavenly sanctions belong in all mythologies. Universal human faults and foibles inform all mythologies; many stories parallel those of a too-loyal Percy, a rebellious and deceitful Luke, a Thalia tempted by power, a conflicted Annabeth, a cold Athena, an arrogant Atlas, and so forth. Stories of cosmic punishments are offset by tales of godlike heroism. Although these themes are common to most world mythologies, the Greek myths have been rightly noted throughout history for such qualities as vividness, breathtaking variety and detail, attempts to account for the seemingly incomprehensible, the juxtaposition of grandeur and humanity, and an exploration of such foundational themes of Western civilization as free will versus fate and glory versus hubris. In short, they are still deservedly studied today for their breadth, scope, beauty, and genius.)

8. Ironically, Zoë Nightshade initially dislikes heroes, yet becomes one herself. What is the origin of this dislike? How is her negative assessment of heroes resolved? In what ways does she become a true hero herself?

(Zoë's negative view of heroes, especially male ones, is rooted in past mistreatment: Hercules took advantage of her love for him, persuading her to betray her family to help him with a quest, then abandoning her without a second thought. During the course of the story, Zoë grows to feel friendship for Percy as she realizes that he is not like Hercules, even though he bears his sword and shares some personal characteristics. In her fearless fighting for her goddess and her friends—and especially in confronting her terrifying father even though she realizes he will kill her—Zoë displays the greatest heroic qualities: courage, self-sacrifice, and bearing one's fate nobly and uncomplainingly.)

Across the Curriculum

Education

1. In the *Percy Jackson* books, dyslexia and ADHD are a legacy of the demigods' parentage. Research and suggest methods of teaching and learning for real-life kids with these learning disabilities.
2. Propose a textbook entry and diagram of the two layers of gods, the Titans and the Olympians, accompanied by symbols, such as Zeus's thunderbolt, Iris's rainbow, Kronos's sunbeams, and other

depictions of what the gods brought to humankind. Show how the second layer refined and enhanced society, as with the skills learned from Artemis, Apollo, Hephaestus, and Athena.

Literature and History

1. Compare elements of Greek mythology with myths and legends of other cultures. Possible choices include, but are not limited to, the tales of King Arthur and the knights of the Round Table; stories of the Norse god Odin; the Native American myth of the Spider Woman; the legend of Robin Hood; Jewish folk tales concerning Elijah; the song of Roland; the Irish hero Cuchulain; Beowulf; the Cumaean Sybil; and the Monkey King. American stories for comparison might include Mano the shark, Daniel Boone, Molly Pitcher, Jim Bowie, Joe Magarac, Calamity Jane, Bigfoot, Sasquatch, John Henry, Betsy Ross, Johnny Appleseed, Pocahontas, Pecos Bill and Widowmaker, Mike Fink, Anansi the Spider, Davy Crockett, Barbara Allen, Rip Van Winkle, Sacagawea, High John the Conqueror, Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox, the sin-eater, Hiawatha, Br'er Rabbit and Br'er Fox, and the Devil and Daniel Webster.
2. List at least a dozen examples of transformation or transmutation in classical mythology—for instance, Grover's cloven hooves; Chiron's white stallion body; creatures such as the hippocampi, the Pegasi, and the Ophiotaurus; the "true form" of the gods; the transformation of Zoë Nightshade and others into constellations; and Percy's special underwater powers. Do similar changes of form occur in Native American mythology? Why do you suppose storytellers often confer nature powers on gods and heroes? Discuss.
3. The drachmas of ancient Athens featured an owl on one side. Why? What did the owl represent?
5. Choose a scene from Greek mythology not included in the book, and re-enact it for the class. Consult Edith Hamilton's *Mythology*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, or other similar works.

Psychology and Reasoning

1. In ancient Greek culture, the desire to achieve personal glory was balanced by warnings against *hubris*—arrogance or pride. Acts of hubris included shaming or mocking vanquished enemies, challenging the gods' authority, trying to claim

godly rights and privileges, or overestimating one's worth or abilities—especially, thinking oneself better or wiser than the gods. What characters—heroes, villains, or both—display hubris? What consequences do they face?

2. In a small group, discuss the book's depiction of strategy and clever trickery to defeat an opponent—particularly, when Artemis rescues Annabeth and when Atlas is made to once again bear his burden. How do apparently weaker opponents use their brains to overcome those who are physically stronger? How do some characters win while letting their opponents believe they have defeated them? Explain.

Alternate Assessment

1. Rick Riordan based some of the stories in *The Titan's Curse* on classic tales of the adventures of Hercules. Research Hercules' adventures and comment on any possible parallels, including which stories are used in the novel, how they are altered, and who in the book generally plays the role analogous to Hercules. Comment on the element of atonement in both Hercules' story and the novel.
2. With which characters in the novel do you sympathize the most? Why? Choose at least two, commenting on both their strengths and weaknesses.
3. At the end of the novel, Zoë Nightshade tells Percy that he is not Hercules. Why would she say this? What does she mean?
4. There are many fantasy stories for young people that contain elements of myth and the coming-of-age tale. What books have you read or heard of that remind you of *The Titan's Curse*, and why?
5. Make a list of negative feelings Percy experiences in the course of the story. Feelings might include uncertainty, pain, disgruntlement, fatigue, torment, separation, loneliness, alienation, shock, curiosity, and dread. Discuss why suffering is an important part of his maturity.

Vocabulary

Choose words from the following list that are synonyms for the words below. You will have words left over when you finish.

- | | | | |
|------------------|-------------|--------------|----------------|
| a. jealousy | f. ambrosia | k. prophecy | p. archery |
| b. constellation | g. betrayal | l. celestial | q. Pegasus |
| c. drachma | h. dyslexia | m. sacrifice | r. quest |
| d. oracle | i. pavilion | n. mummified | s. sarcophagus |
| e. solstice | j. curse | o. Titans | t. Hesperides |

- _____ prediction of future events
- _____ guardians of a golden apple tree
- _____ longest or shortest day of the year; midpoint
- _____ a search or hunt; expedition
- _____ envy or resentment
- _____ giving up something valuable for the sake of something or someone else
- _____ open building used for eating, meetings, etc.
- _____ disability that makes letters and numbers appear to be switched
- _____ bow-and-arrow shooting
- _____ having to do with the heavens or the gods
- _____ large coffin
- _____ winged, flying horse
- _____ treachery, disloyalty
- _____ ancient Greek coin
- _____ supernatural punishment
- _____ food of the gods
- _____ group of stars that form a figure
- _____ source of prophecies
- _____ powerful supernatural beings; in Greek myth, ruled before the Olympians
- _____ shriveled or dried up; preserved

Comprehension Test A

Part I: Character Identification (30 points)

Identify the characters described below:

- _____ 1. Artemis' lieutenant
- _____ 2. Mr. Thorn is one
- _____ 3. Father of Bianca and Nico
- _____ 4. Loves Mythomagic
- _____ 5. Guards the tree in the Hesperides' garden
- _____ 6. Kills Zoë
- _____ 7. Protects maidens
- _____ 8. Argues that Percy should die
- _____ 9. Thalia is tempted to sacrifice it
- _____ 10. Rescued by Dionysus
- _____ 11. Betrayed Zoë
- _____ 12. Her mother disapproves of Percy's friendship
- _____ 13. Titans' stronghold
- _____ 14. Promises not to make things "easy" for Percy
- _____ 15. Dies in the desert

- | | | | |
|----------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|
| a. Nico | e. Ariadne | i. Ladon | m. Hades |
| b. Ophiotaurus | f. Bianca | j. Hercules | n. Aphrodite |
| c. Artemis | g. Manticore | k. Annabeth | o. Athena |
| d. Mt. Othrys | h. Atlas | l. Zoë Nightshade | |

Part II: Quotation identification (20 points)

Beside each quotation place the name of the speaker and the person being addressed.

_____ 1a. "The hunting of all wild animals is within my sphere. And you, foul creature, are a wild beast."

_____ 1b.

_____ 2a. "Just because you were sent here as a punishment doesn't mean you have to be a lazy jerk! This is your civilization, too. Maybe you could try helping out a little!"

_____ 2b.

_____ 3a. "(W)hatever you decide, I love you. And I know you'll do what's best for Annabeth."

_____ 3b.

_____ 4a. "You're so cute. I wish all my daughters could break the heart of a boy as nice as you."

_____ 4b.

_____ 5a. "I hope you learned your lesson, girl. It isn't easy to resist power, is it?"

_____ 5b.

Part III: True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements either **T** for true or **F** if any part is false.

- _____ 1. Hades violated the pact.
- _____ 2. Kronos is Zoë Nightshade's father.

- _____ 3. The Ophiotaurus is an innocent sea-creature.
- _____ 4. Annabeth's mortal family has moved to San Francisco.
- _____ 5. Dionysus refuses to save Percy and his friends from Thorn.
- _____ 6. Thalia becomes Artemis' lieutenant.
- _____ 7. Zoë Nightshade was once in love with Theseus.
- _____ 8. Thalia is afraid of heights.
- _____ 9. Percy is the hero of the prophecy.
- _____ 10. Luke dies in the fall from Mt. Tam.

Part IV: Essay Questions (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Pretend you are a member of the Council of the Gods that judges Percy, Thalia, and other quest members, deciding whether to reward them or put them to death. Pick one side or the other, and argue it using examples in the book. Give good reasons for your position, and refute opposing views to the best of your ability.
2. The "fatal flaw" is a Greek idea that exists to this day. Discuss this idea as it pertains to Percy and Thalia. Athena tells Percy his fatal flaw; based on clues from the novel, what appears to be Thalia's? How are Percy and Thalia's fatal flaws used against them? In light of Athena's opinions on the subject, how might Percy's flaw, in particular, be used by Kronos in the war to overthrow Olympus?
3. Discuss the theme of betrayal and how it affects Percy, Annabeth, Luke, and other characters. Are accusations of betrayal in the book always accurate? Explain.
4. Discuss Percy's changing feelings for Annabeth during the course of the novel. How does his relationship with Annabeth change? How is it threatened? What does the revelation of her interest in joining the Hunters force him to realize? What does the fact that they both bear the Titan's curse say about their individual characters? Their future prospects?

Comprehension Test B

Part I: True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements either **T** for true or **F** if any part is false.

- _____ 1. Thalia is tempted to sacrifice the Ophiotaurus.
- _____ 2. The heroes ride west on a giant wild pig.
- _____ 3. Artemis is married to Apollo.
- _____ 4. The General is a tough but kind father.
- _____ 5. Because she likes him, Aphrodite has vowed to make romance easy for Percy.
- _____ 6. Bianca becomes Artemis' lieutenant after Zoë dies.
- _____ 7. After carrying the burden, Annabeth and Percy both get a streak of white in their hair.
- _____ 8. The gods agree to sacrifice the Ophiotaurus themselves.
- _____ 9. Percy is surprised at how many gods vote in his favor.
- _____ 10. After the vote, Olympus throws a party for the heroes.

Part II: Completion (20 points)

Fill in a name or term which completes each of these statements.

- 1. At Westover Academy, Percy fights a _____ named Dr. Thorn.
- 2. The zombie army is created by planting _____ in the earth, and "watering" them with blood.
- 3. Percy's magical sword is made of celestial bronze and named _____, or Riptide.
- 4. In the novel, _____, the Titans' stronghold, is now located near San Francisco, on Mt. Tamalpais.
- 5. With Bianca and Thalia out of the running, Percy and _____ are the only remaining demigods who could fulfill the prophecy.
- 6. In the face of calls by some Olympic council members to put the demigods to death, _____ argues passionately that the heroes should be rewarded.
- 7. To everyone's surprise, _____ comes to the aide of Percy, Thalia, Zoë, and Grover in San Francisco.
- 8. Annabeth's father, Dr. Chase, comes to the rescue in a World War I _____ retrofitted with celestial bronze bullets.
- 9. As a reward for her love and service, Artemis honors Zoë by turning her into a _____ after she dies.
- 10. To protect Nico and save others from turmoil and pain, Percy decides to claim the _____ for himself.

Anaklusmos Artemis Mt. Othrys Dionysus dragon's teeth
Sopwith Camel manticore prophecy constellation Nico

Part III: Multiple Choice (20 points)

Select an answer to complete each statement below.

- _____ 1. Bianca and Nico are the children of
 - a. Zeus.
 - b. Atlas.
 - c. Hades.
 - d. Poseidon.
- _____ 2. Thalia is afraid of
 - a. heights.
 - b. water.
 - c. power.
 - d. her father.
- _____ 3. Grover's goal is to find
 - a. Nature.
 - b. Pan.
 - c. Dionysus.
 - d. the Hunters.
- _____ 4. Percy is terrified that
 - a. Annabeth will join the Hunters.
 - b. Artemis will be lost.
 - c. People won't like him.
 - d. The manticore will find them.

- _____ 5. The Titan's curse is carried by
- Luke, Annabeth, and Percy.
 - Artemis.
 - Atlas.
 - All of the above.

- _____ 6. Zoë was betrayed by
- Hercules.
 - Odysseus.
 - Theseus.
 - Jason.

- _____ 7. The General
- is a Titan.
 - is a mantichore.
 - is Zoë's father.
 - both a and c.

- _____ 8. Dionysus dislikes heroes
- because they stole his wine.
 - because he is jealous of them.
 - because of Theseus' mistreatment of Ariadne.
 - because he believes they are plotting against him.

- _____ 9. Luke
- works for Kronos and the Titans.
 - tries to recruit Thalia.
 - survives the fall off the mountain.
 - all of the above.

- _____ 10. Athena
- argues in favor of executing Percy.
 - wants to reward Percy.
 - fears the Ophiotaurus.
 - wants to rescue Luke.

Part IV: Essay Questions (40 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

- The Mist creates illusions to satisfy the expectations of mortals, supplying comforting explanations for strange events, and shielding mortals and half-bloods from the consequences of dangerous knowledge. Is this always a good thing for Percy and his friends? Cite instances where the Mist appears to either help or hinder the young half-bloods, such as with Rachel Elizabeth Dare at the Hoover Dam. Is manipulating the Mist to shield the world of Olympus always the right thing to do? Why or why not?
- At the end of the novel, Nico has become Percy's enemy, claiming Percy broke his promise to protect Bianca and blaming him for his sister's death. Partially as a result of the guilt he feels over this incident, Percy decides to claim the prophecy for himself, ensuring Nico won't be the one directly endangered by it. However, is Percy really responsible for the death of Bianca, or for the other things for which he feels guilty? Discuss Percy's hyper-responsibility, and the way it relates to his "fatal flaw" of excessive loyalty.
- What is the novel's primary theme or message about life?
- What function does Luke serve in the novel? Explain.

Answer Key

VOCABULARY

- | | |
|-------|-------|
| 1. k | 11. s |
| 2. t | 12. q |
| 3. e | 13. g |
| 4. r | 14. c |
| 5. a | 15. j |
| 6. m | 16. f |
| 7. i | 17. b |
| 8. h | 18. d |
| 9. p | 19. o |
| 10. l | 20. n |

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Character Identification (30 points)

- l
- g
- m
- a
- i
- h
- c
- o
- b
- e
- j
- k
- d
- n
- f

Part II: Quotation Identification (10 points)

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1a. Artemis | b. Dr. Thorn (manticore) |
| 2a. Percy | b. Dionysus (Mr. D) |
| 3a. Sally Jackson | b. Percy |
| 4a. Aphrodite | b. Percy |
| 5.a Dionysus (Mr. D) | b. Thalia |

Part III: True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements either **T** for true or **F** if any part is false.

- F
- F
- T
- T
- F
- T
- F
- T
- T
- F

Part IV: Essay Questions (40 points)

Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: True/False (20 points)

- T
- T
- F
- F
- F
- F
- T
- F
- T
- T

Part II: Completion (20 points)

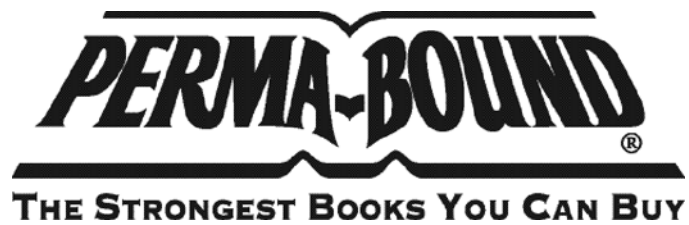
- manticore
- dragon's teeth
- Anaklusmos
- Mt. Othrys
- Nico
- Artemis
- Dionysus
- Sopwith Camel
- constellation
- prophecy

Part III: Multiple Choice (20 points)

- c
- a
- b
- a
- d
- a
- d
- c
- d
- a

Part IV: Essay Questions (40 points)

Answers will vary.



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