

Chapter Fourteen

A Hero's Destiny



What can you tell by reading the story?

1. What does Dana mean when she says her father is still alive? Why is Perseus ashamed?
2. What does Megapenthes tell Perseus?
3. Why does Dictys dislike oracles?
4. Why does Perseus not want to be king of Argos?
5. What does Perseus decide to do to make things better?

What can you tell by thinking about the story?

1. Dictys says that, whenever people try to change the future, they choose evil. "It is an evil choice." Why does he say it is an evil choice?

See our simplified star chart for a quick guide to finding Perseus, Andromeda, Cepheus and Cassiopeia in the heavens!

This cluster of stars and constellations is visible throughout the year in the Northern Hemisphere. You may wish to look for more complete star charts on line or in reference works, but our simple chart should help you get started. Most constellations have interesting stories behind them, and students may find ample opportunity for individual reports in retelling their stories and drawing them for others to enjoy and learn from! (Can you arrange a night together to do some skywatching?)

Response Key

What can you tell by reading the story?

1. Dana is saying that Dictys was a much better father to her than her own father. She lists the things that Acrisius did to her, then the things that Dictys did for her. Perseus is ashamed for a moment because he realizes, too, that Dictys has been more of a grandfather to him than Acrisius ever was, and he's embarrassed to think that maybe he seems ungrateful.
2. He reminds him that Acrisius hadn't agreed to even talk to him, and that there is a good chance there never would have been peace between the two of them. "My father and your grandfather were two very stubborn men," he says. Perseus is acting as though, if only Acrisius were alive, everything would have worked out. Megapenthes thinks it probably wouldn't have anyway.
3. He says that you ought to choose to do good things no matter what you think will happen to you. If you know that something bad will happen, you might choose to do something bad to try to keep it from happening. But it happens anyway, so you did something bad for no reason.
4. He feels that it isn't right for him to kill Acrisius, even by accident, and then get to be king because Acrisius is dead.
5. He asks Megapenthes to trade kingdoms with him. That means he won't be king of the place where he killed the old king. It also means that there will be peace between Argos and Tiryns. And it's especially fair because Megapenthes gets a richer kingdom, even though it wasn't his idea to trade.

What can you tell by thinking about the story?

1. Dictys feels that people should not try to see into the future because, even if they didn't make a choice as bad as throwing someone into the ocean or chaining them to a cliff for a sea monster, just the idea of trying to change these things out of greed, fear or pride is wrong. Dictys probably wouldn't say that someone who decided to be more generous in the future was evil, but what if the only reason they decided to do it was to change their fate, and not because they felt it was the right thing to do? (*Bring up Ebenezer Scrooge -- how did his view of the past, present and future change him? Scrooge changed because he saw how unhappy he was and how unhappy he made the people around him. Besides, he asked the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come if these were visions of what would be, or of what might be. In Greek mythology, they are always visions of what will happen.*)

And you may not be able to address religious topics with your class, but the objection to fortune-tellers in many religions is that seeking to know the future shows a lack of faith in God's plans and judgment. Dictys represents perfect faith and acceptance not only of what comes but of his moral obligations to those around him. There are a very large number of religious and philosophical systems in which achieving his attitude is a major goal.

Teachable moment: We've covered lots of teachable moments, including in the questions accompanying this chapter. Now, the "teachable moment" is that moment in which you sit back and let the kids talk about what they got out of the story. (*We hope you've enjoyed it, too.*)