

Chapter Nine

Human Sacrifice!



What can you tell by reading the story?

1. Why was Perseus not worried about finding his way home?
2. When he was blown off course, how did Perseus plan to find this way?
3. What was his third plan to get home?

What can you tell by thinking about the story?

1. Why do you think Aeolus sent a wind to blow Perseus off course?
2. What does Perseus want to do at the end of the chapter? What does the young woman want? What do you think?

Aeolus: (*EE-uh-luss*) Aeolus is a minor god, who has control over the four winds, which he keeps in a cave, either on Sicily or on the mythical island of Aeolia, depending on which sources you listen to. Aeolus doesn't swing a very big stick on Olympus, but he's allied with Poseidon, so it's best not to get on his bad side.

Also, with the importance of sailing in Greek culture, he's important on a day-to-day basis, even though he's not a very powerful god. A look in the dictionary will find a couple of interesting words derived from his name, though not any you'd expect to get to use very often!

Response Key

What can you tell by reading the story?

1. He knew how to steer by the stars, from his time as a fisherman. (We've already spoken about this, back in Chapter Six, when Perseus easily solved the riddle of the Gray Sisters.)
2. He knew he could follow the Nile River north to the sea. Look at the map and you'll see why most fishermen would know about the great Nile. For anyone in the Western Mediterranean, the Nile delta would be a major landmark! Perseus couldn't know how far south it went, but he would have known that it was a great river that went far inland.
3. When he saw a great body of water, he figured there would be sailors there who would be able to help him. Perseus is a good problem-solver, and, when something made his first and second plans not work, he quickly thought of a new plan.

What can you tell by thinking about the story?

1. The story says the immortals "were not finished with the young hero," but they've been very nice to him so far. Therefore, it wouldn't make sense to say they were simply trying to keep him from getting home. However, look where he ended up: A young woman is chained to a rock as a sea monster bears down upon her, intent on gobbling her up. The Olympians seem to have set things up to make Perseus come by at this precise moment. She may protest that he needs to go away and let the monster eat her up, but he isn't there by accident.
2. His first instinct is to cut her chains and get her out of there, but she insists that he go away. Perseus is a stranger in a strange land, and he has already thought that the people here may be very different than the Greeks. He worried about whether they would be friendly, and he said he didn't want a fight, he just wanted to get home. But now he is having a very strange argument, indeed, about whether he should rescue this young woman or let the monster eat her. Why you suppose she wants this to happen? Should Perseus respect her wishes? Could this be some custom that he doesn't understand and shouldn't interfere in?

Teachable moment: Perseus uses a couple of theories for getting home. What are some ways you can find your way when you are lost?

In the city, streets may be on a grid or on a hub-design. For kids who live in a city or large town, how do your streets run: Do the main streets lead to a central location (hub) or are they laid out in squares? Do railroad tracks, a river or an expressway cut through your part of town and give you a sense of where you are? What about a particularly tall or distinctive building or tower that you can see from many places?

Rivers and lakes, railroads and major highways can also be good landmarks for country kids. What other ways can you find your way around?

Imagine that you have a cousin coming who has never visited your town. Write up some instructions that would help that visitor find your school and then go to your home. Now pretend this cousin doesn't speak English, so you have to make a map instead of just writing down directions. Which is easier to make? Which is easier to follow?

Asking directions: Perseus planned on asking sailors for directions, since he is a fisherman. If you had to ask for help in a public place, how would you decide who to ask? What are the things you would need to think about first?