

The Winged Horse

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1 A lone seagull was flying over the barren country of Kisthene, swooping, soaring, a bright white streak in the gathering dusk.

3 All at once, there was a movement below. Medusa the Gorgon darted out of hiding, and her stony glance pierced the seagull like an arrow, and turned it into solid rock. The bird fell headlong out of the sky.

6 Medusa and her sister Gorgons ran capering over the rocks, snarling and clawing as they fought over the dead bird. Stone prey: their joy and their delight since time began.

8 A thousand miles away, Perseus sat talking with three gods: Hades, Hermes and Athene.

9 "Perseus," said Athene, "you must kill Medusa, and bring back her sliced-off head. Borrow Hermes' winged sandals, to carry you to her lair. Take Hades' helmet of invisibility to help you creep up on her unseen. And take my mirror-shield to save you from her stony glance."

13 The gods vanished, and Perseus buckled on his sword, and put Hades' helmet on his head and Hermes' sandals on his feet. Then he took Athene's glittering shield and flew, wind-fast, to Kisthene and the Gorgons' lair.

16 The three Gorgons were snuffling and snorting in their cave, asleep. Their snake-hair bristled at the whirr of Perseus' winged sandals, but he was invisible: unaware of the danger, Medusa and her sisters slept on.

19 Perseus turned his back on the Gorgons. Then he held up Athene's mirror-shield to guide his movements behind his back. He lifted his sword and sliced off Medusa's head. It fell on the floor and the deadly eyes flickered open. If Perseus had been looking straight at them, he would have been turned to stone.

23 He stuffed the head into a sack. Then he jumped back in amazement. Out of the blood from Medusa's neck a winged horse, Pegasus, was appearing and growing before his eyes.

26 Pegasus stretched his wings, whinnied and pawed the ground. Then, to Perseus' surprise, he spoke human words. "Quick, Perseus! Jump on my back. Hurry!"

28 Perseus scrambled onto Pegasus' back, and Pegasus reared and beat his wings for take-off. The sound woke the sleeping Gorgons, and he soared away just in the nick of time, leaving them clawing angrily at empty air.

31 Pegasus carried Perseus safely home, and set him down in a grassy field. Then he soared away to his master Zeus, high in Olympus. Perseus watched him climbing higher and higher, like a dazzling constellation in the sky.

1. Read the passage. Time yourself. How long did it take?
2. Re-read the passage. Time yourself. How long did it take?

Dive Deeper 1

Answer the questions, that are on the next page.

Dive Deeper 2

Mark your answers.

Dive Deeper 3

Next to each answer, write the skill/s that you have used.

Questioning	Find the meaning of the text and further your understanding.
Visualising	Use your imagination to picture what is happening in a text.
Sequencing	Write the things in time order.
Summarising	Find the key points and explain your understanding.
Predicting	Use clues from what you have read and what you already know to make an educated guess about what might happen next.
Retrieval	Retrieve (fetch) and record information directly from the text.
Deduction	Search for clues in the text to find evidence.
Inference	Use what you have read. Use what you know or have experienced before.
Stamina	Read quickly and with understanding for longer periods of time.
Speed.	Read quickly. Understand the text.

1. "Stone prey: their joy and their delight since time began" (paragraph 3). What is "stone prey"?

2. Draw lines to show which item Perseus borrowed from each god.

God	Item borrowed
Hermes	Mirror shield
Hades	Winged sandals
Athene	Helmet of invisibility

3. (a) Find and write the word that tells you how fast Perseus flew to meet the Gorgons.

(b) What does the word mean? _____

4. Write **three** words from paragraphs 3, 6 and 7 that the author uses to make the reader think of the Gorgons as animals.

5. Describe how Perseus used each of the gods' belongings to kill Medusa.

a. Winged sandals _____

b. Helmet of invisibility _____

c. Mirror shield _____

6. Do you think Perseus was wise to trust Pegasus? Yes No

Explain your answer fully, referring to the text.

7. "her stony glance pierced the seagull like an arrow" (paragraph 2). Give two reasons why the author chose to use the word "stony".

8. Perseus is the hero of this legend.

(a) What was his heroic task?

(b) What did the gods do to help him?

9. Suggest an alternative title for this legend and explain why you chose it.

Dive Deeper 4

Compare the text that you have read this week with the one you read last week. What is similar about the two texts? What is different?

If you were going to re-write this story and add another character, what character would you add? Why would you add this character?

After reading this story, I was left wondering what happened to the Gorgons after Perseus left Kisthene. Did you have any thoughts/questions in your head?

ANSWERS

1. One of the following:

- Prey that has been turned to stone
- Creatures that the Gorgons ate that they have turned to stone.
- Seagull/bird.

2. Hermes-winged sandals

Hades-helmet of invisibility

Athene-mirror shield

3. a) "wind-fast" (paragraph 6)

b) As fast as the wind/quikly/fast.

4. Three of the following:

snarling (line 6), clawing (line 30), prey (line 7), lair (line 15), snuffling (line 16), snorting (line 16)

5. a) Winged sandals: to travel to the Gorgon's lair.

b) Helmet of invisibility: to stay invisible so that the Gorgons wouldn't see him.

c) Mirror shield: "to guide his movements behind his back".

6. Yes

- Pegasus had wings and "spoke human words" (line 27).

- He told Perseus how he could save himself from the other Gorgons: "Quick Perseus! Jump on my back. Hurry!" (line 27).

No

- The horse came "out of the blood from Medusa's neck" (line 23-24). He had just killed Medusa and her eyes could still turn him to stone.