



Percy Jackson Novel Series: A Perfect Blending of Ancient Greek Mythology and Modern American Society

RESEARCH SCHOLAR

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Abstract:

Mythology is a body of myths, as that of a particular people or that relating to a particular person. According to *Oxford Dictionary* it is a traditional story, especially one concerning the early history of a people explaining some natural or social phenomenon and typically involving supernatural beings or elements. Being an important and integral part of the human culture they in the form of fables, fairy tales, sagas, folktales, epics legends, tales etc. Right from ancient Homer, Hesiod, Aescheles, Sophocles, and Euripides to modern James Joyce, Mary Shelly, Ali Smith, Susan Stocks Chapman used these mythologies in their writings. But their writing was limited only to highlighting the Greek mythology. But Rick Riordan, an American writer blended these stories with the modern American life. His novel series *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* (2005-2009) is a perfect example of incorporation between ancient and modern. In this five novels series there are ancient Greek gods as well as demigods and human beings. There is complete blending of characters, places, weapons, powers, vocabulary etc. The series is translated in 42 languages and movies are made on the first two novels of the series.

Keywords: mythology, demigods, reinvention, culture, blending of ancient and modern

Introduction:

Richard Russell Riordan, Jr., better known as Rick Riordan, was born on June 5, 1964. His best-known work, the *Percy Jackson & the Olympians* trilogy, is an American novel series. The *Lightning Thief* is the first book in this five-volume novel series, followed by *The Sea of Monsters* (2006), *The Titans Curse* (2007), *The Battle of Labyrinth* (2008), and *The Last Olympian* (2009). The books by Riordan have been published in 42 different languages and have been sold in excess of thirty million copies in the US. His *Percy Jackson* trilogy's first two books were adapted into films by 20th Century Fox. Other works by Riordan include *The Heroes of Olympus* (2010-2014), a follow-up to the *Percy Jackson* series, *The Kane Chronicles* (2010-2012), a trilogy with a similar premise focusing on Egyptian mythology, *Magnus Chase and the Gods of Asgard* (2015-2017), a trilogy focusing on Norse mythology, and *The Gods of Asgard*. Riordan is the author of several well-known book series.

Blending of Ancient and Modern:

Percy Jackson (12 year old) is the reinvention of ancient Greek warrior Perseus. Percy is a demigod born of Greek sea god Poseidon and one parent mother Sally Jackson. He gets attacked by Alecto, a mythical being known as a Fury, while on a Yancy field trip. Percy with his gifted pen (Anakulmos in Greek) encounters his enemies like Mrs. Dodds and Medusa. Then, his mother Sally Jackson and his friend Grover Underwood, a satyr, take him to Camp Half-Blood, a camp for demigods, or kids who have a Greek deity for one parent. Then, as though from within, Percy finds a mysterious strength and slays the Minotaur. Grover, a half-blood, is brought down to camp by him. Off the coast of Long Island is where the camp is. Annabeth Chase, a child of Athena and Daedalus, is there when he meets her. By the end of the novel they become good friends. Percy is charged with stealing the master bolt of Zeus. The thunderbolt must be brought back to Mount Olympus within ten days for him, Annabeth, and Grover to prevent a war between the gods and save his mother, who is being held captive in the Underworld by Hades, Lord of the Dead, after being taken by the Minotaur. They embark on a quest across America and run across numerous creatures along the way, including Medusa, the Echidna, and many others. Luke, a buddy Percy had made at camp, is seen to have stolen the bolt in order to aid Kronos in his attempt to escape from Tartarus. In this novel Selena Beauregard is the mythical Helen of Troy. The Half-blood camp is modern American summer camp located near Long Island. Modern Mr. D is God Dionysus. Taste of ambrosia is compared with the taste of chocolate chip cookies. The current bastion of the Western civilization is now relocated from Greek to America via Rome, Germany, France and Spain.

This book is, in the words of Artemis Fowl author Eoin Colfer, "A fantastic blend of myth and modern." In order to clear the cobwebs from our favourite stories, Rick Riordan takes the reader back to them. (Steve Bennett. San Antonia Express News, Monster Mania)

He is also Percy's half-brother and Poseidon's son. Annabeth travels with Percy to numerous hazardous islands.

In the second book of this series, *The Sea of Monsters*, Camp Half-Blood's magical border—Thalia's tree—has been poisoned. Being the son of Kronos, Chiron is held responsible for the poisoning and expelled from camp as a result. The Golden Fleece, which can be found on the island of Polyphemus in the Sea of Monsters, popularly known as the Bermuda Triangle, is the only thing that can cure the tree of its poison. Tyson, a teenage Cyclops who Percy befriended and who joins them on this expedition after defending Camp Half-Blood from two metal, fire-breathing bulls. He is also Percy's half-brother and Poseidon's son. Annabeth tells Percy many details about how Thalia died and brings up her prophecy as they travel to numerous hazardous islands. When Percy reaches the age of 16, she also informs him that he will have to decide whether or not to save the world, just like a child of one of the "Big Three" must. The "Big Three" vowed not to have children because of this. They depart after defeating Polyphemus and take the Golden Fleece. However, Luke kidnaps Percy, Annabeth, Grover, and Tyson. It turns out that Kronos's terrible intention to alter the prophesy that determines the fate of Olympus and the Twelve Olympians was what this whole thing was really about. At the Camp Half -Blood a desiccated mummy is the oracle of Delphi. The power of fire is compared in the thunderbolt. Words like lotus Casino in Las Vegas, snail mail, Hermes Overnight Express, Empire State Building, the 600th floor, artist's studio, ceilings, industrial lighting, polished stone floors, workbenches, machines, laptop computers, green oil, electrical wire are the symbols of blending modern with ancient.

In *The Titan's Curse*, Grover, a satyr, sneaks into a school to seek for half-bloods. Nico and Bianca di Angelo are two powerful siblings who Grover finds. While on this job, they come under attack by a mantichore, but the Hunters of Artemis Bianca step in just in time to save them. The goddess of beauty and love, Aphrodite, pays Percy a visit and expresses her interest in his relationship with Annabeth. At the Mountain of Despair on Mount Tamalpais in California, they learn that mighty Titan Atlas has abandoned his anguish and he is determined to stop the heroes from succeeding. Annabeth, then Artemis, have taken the position of Atlas. The gods Grover, Thalia, Percy, and Annabeth rejoice Atlas's defeat. Percy, Annabeth, and Grover initially believe that this violates the Big Three's agreement not to have any demigod children, but they later realise that the two

siblings had already been in the Lotus Hotel and Casino before the agreement was ever made by the Big Three, where time is nonexistent and you lose all sense of time. However, because Luke may try to enlist Nico so that he might destroy the world at the age of 16, Percy must conceal Nico's parentage because Nico is still a part of the prophecy.

This thrilling installment of the Percy Jackson & the Olympians series by Rick Riordan adds even more depth to the characters and story arc while maintaining its predecessors' nonstop laughs and action, According to Booklist's starred review of the book. The Percy Jackson & the Olympians series is based on the fantastic idea that the half-mortal offspring of Greek gods live among us, playing out struggles of mythic scale.

In the fourth book, *The Battle of Labyrinth*, Percy returns to Camp Half-Blood and learns about "The Labyrinth," a section of King Minos' palace in Crete that, according to Greek legend, was created by Daedalus. The entrance to the Labyrinth is discovered by Annabeth and Percy during a game or combat with enormous scorpions. Percy will lead his army through the labyrinth and right into the centre of camp after learning that Luke had used the entrance. Percy must locate a blue Delta Symbol on a passageway (representing Daedalus), touch it, and then enter the Labyrinth to discover Daedalus. The Labyrinth is known to grow on its own and to create madness that may result in death, Percy, Annabeth, Grover, and Tyson learn later. They (including Nico) find Pan in the Labyrinth, and he offers advice to everyone but Nico. Each character, with the exception of Nico, receives a portion of Pan's spirit after he dies. Later, Percy observes that Pan did not even acknowledge Nico. Luke's invasion is thwarted when Percy uses the Labyrinth to hunt down Daedalus and kill Luke's Ariadne's string (a string that allows anyone to navigate the Labyrinth without getting lost). He receives the assistance he requires from mortal Rachel Elizabeth Dare, who is also able to discern a route through the Labyrinth that leads to Daedalus. Kronos learns that Nico di Angelo is a Hades-born man who might also be the fulfilment of the prophecy. When Luke arrives at Daedalus, he obtains the Ariadne's rope and uses it to direct his army towards Camp Half-Blood. Grover steps in to help and unleashes a Panic to drive the adversary away. Daedalus closes the Labyrinth, which is connected to his life, by making a self-sacrificing sacrifice after the battle.

According to *Children's Literature*, "Fans will delight in the most recent exploits of their favourite characters, and readers who pick up the book for the first time will have no trouble slipping into the wonderful world."

Percy (Perseus) Jackson and his friends confront Lord Kronos, a mighty Titan, in the final chapter of the book *The Last Olympians*, in a conflict that mirrors the initial conflict between the Greek gods and the Titans. When Typhon, a gigantic monster that nearly devastated Olympus in the first war, is let loose from beneath Mount St. Helens, the gods are forced to flee and Olympus is left almost completely defenceless in the battle. Like Luke, Percy takes a bath in the River Styx to make his body invulnerable except for one location (the mortal point, in Percy's case the small of his back), which he uses to vanquish Kronos in the end. Then, in a last-ditch effort to stop Kronos from taking over Mount Olympus, Percy and his comrades engage in combat. Percy becomes 16 during this conflict, bringing about the fulfilment of the Great Prophecy. Annabeth instructs Percy to surrender the knife to Luke, leaving him defenceless. Luke then kills himself by stabbing himself in the heart in order to defeat Kronos and save Mount Olympus. Percy and Annabeth eventually become husband and wife.

As stated in the starred review for Booklist, "...Riordan's imagination soars in the climactic battle scenes but he manages to bring the whole series to a satisfying close in the down-to-earth conclusion."

Conclusion:

In this novel series, we have a number of mythological characters in the form of Greek gods, Titans, demigods, mortals, immortals, creature, monsters etc. The deep study of the novel series will make the readers aware that the ancient Greek myths and modern life has been blended appropriately by the author Rick Riordan. Though there is a huge time gap of thousands of years between ancient and modern the reader never feels this gap. Instead the reader accepts the stories and events in the contemporary style through the adapted and appropriated vehicle of pre-existing mythological narrative. Riordan has constructed a pleasingly familiar

narrative of his own. But this lack of fixity definitely allows the readers to make enter textual associations and form meanings and understanding of their own.

There is no doubt that by taking the Greek mythology as the basic structure of the book, Riordan has created a new mythology; a world of American demi-gods of the Greek Gods. He has tried to make his mythology parallel to the Greek mythology by comparing the characters and events of his books with the demi-gods/heroes of the original mythology. The readers will acknowledge both the pre-text and the re-version as re-invention, expansion instead of complication or contraction.

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