

Medusa

(Adapted from Greek Mythology)

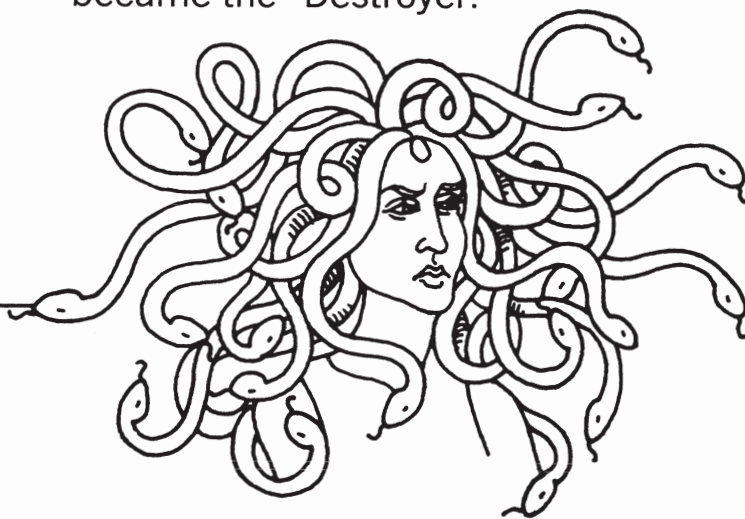
Perseus and his mother lived on a beautiful Greek island. The evil king of the island wanted to marry Perseus' mother. And at the same time, he wanted to get rid of Perseus. So he asked Perseus for a present. Perseus did not know it was a trick and said yes. The king then asked for the head of the monster Medusa. Too late did Perseus find out his mistake. But he would not back down. He would find Medusa and bring her head to the king.

Friends helped Perseus to get ready. They gave him useful things. One gave him a magic sword. Another gave him a bag to carry Medusa's head. Best of all was a shield, which was as polished and shiny as a mirror. Perseus was ready. He put on magic sandals. In no time, he landed in Africa where Medusa lived.

Medusa had once been beautiful. Now her hands were claws and her

hair was a nest of hissing snakes. Her face was so terrible that anyone who looked at it would turn to stone. So Perseus was careful to look into the shiny shield as he moved close to her. He was very quiet. Then quick! He swung the sword and cut off her head. With the snakes still hissing, he dropped Medusa's head into the bag.

When he got back to the island, the king could not believe that he had killed Medusa. So Perseus opened the bag. The king looked at her head and at once turned to stone. Perseus had killed a terrible monster. He had ended the life of an evil king. And he had saved his mother. His new name became the "Destroyer."



Main Idea

1. Choose the most important fact in the story.
 - a. Perseus was a Greek.
 - b. Medusa had once been beautiful.
 - c. Perseus killed Medusa.

Significant Details

2. Perseus used the shield as a _____ .
3. Perseus lived on an _____ .

Context Clues

4. *Sandals* are a kind of
 - a. sword.
 - b. shoe.
 - c. hat.

Drawing Conclusions

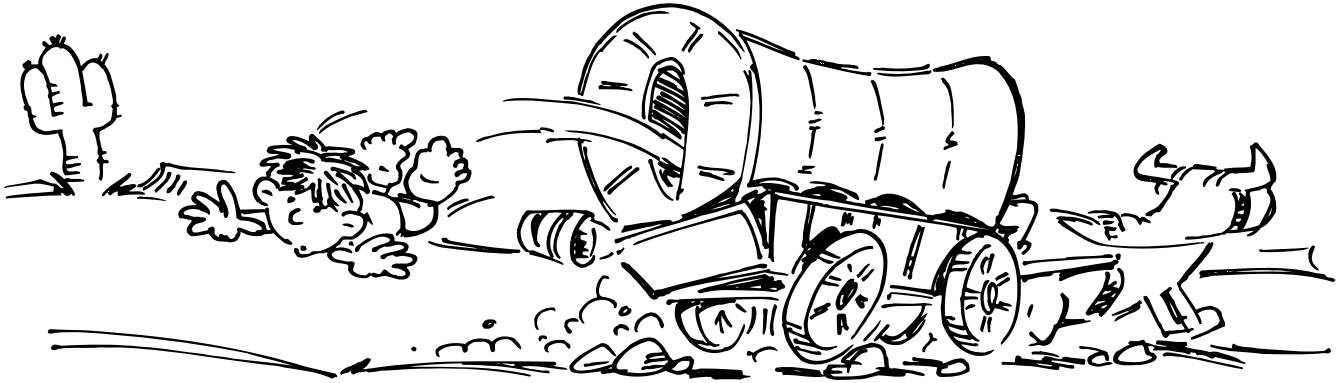
5. Perseus did not wish the king to
 - a. marry his mother.
 - b. get a present.
 - c. turn to stone.

Following Through

6. Perseus is one of the heroes in Greek mythology. Find out about other monsters he killed. Was "Destroyer" a good name for him? Explain.

Pecos Bill—A Tall Tale Hero

People enjoy hearing and telling tall tales—stories about people who have great adventures and can do amazing deeds. Sometimes the stories are based on a real person or a true event, but in a tall tale, the truth gets stretched.



When Pecos Bill was a toddler, his family decided to move West because they had too many neighbors. The closest one was only 50 miles away—much too close for comfort.

His parents loaded everything into a covered wagon along with their 18 children. As they crossed the Pecos River, the wheel hit a rock and little Bill bounced out of the wagon.

No one noticed he was missing until it was too late. An old coyote found Bill and adopted him. Since no one knew his real name, he became Pecos Bill.

The coyotes took good care of Bill and taught him everything they knew. He grew healthy and strong.

One day, as Pecos Bill ran through the desert, he met a cowboy named Chuck. “How come you’re running around like a coyote?” Chuck asked.

“Because I am a coyote,” Bill replied.

“Horsefeathers!” Chuck answered. “If you are a coyote, where is your long bushy tail?”

Chuck led Pecos Bill to a river where he could see his reflection. Bill was amazed. Chuck was right. He didn’t have a long, bushy tail. He wasn’t a coyote after all.

1. How did Pecos Bill get his name? _____

2. How did Bill discover he wasn’t a coyote? _____

Pecos Bill (cont'd)

Pecos Bill and Chuck headed off together. Suddenly a giant rattlesnake wrapped itself around Bill and began to squeeze. Bill squeezed even harder. He squeezed so hard the snake became as skinny as a rope. From then on, Bill used that old rattlesnake for a lasso.

One time a wowser attacked Bill. What's a wowser, you might wonder? Well, it's part grizzly bear, part mountain lion, part gorilla, and part tarantula. While they fought, Bill and that wowser kicked up such a dust storm it covered the whole state of Texas for seven days and seven nights. Finally, the wowser gave up. He became Bill's friend and companion.



Another time Bill was in such a hurry to get across Texas he lassoed himself a tornado. The tornado tried to buck him off, but Bill held on and rode that tornado all the way to New Mexico.

1. What is the author's purpose for writing about Pecos Bill?
 - A. To relay information to the reader
 - B. To entertain the reader
 - C. To persuade the reader to believe what he or she believes
2. Check the sentence that is true.
 A tall tale is a story about a giraffe's tail.
 A tall tale is a story that stretches the truth.
 A tall tale is a story about a tall person.
3. Could this story be true? Why or why not? _____

4. What's a wowser? _____

5. What do you think Pecos Bill might do if he wanted to travel to the moon?

The Ant and the Grasshopper

June

"Come little ant," sang Grasshopper. "Come sing and dance with me."

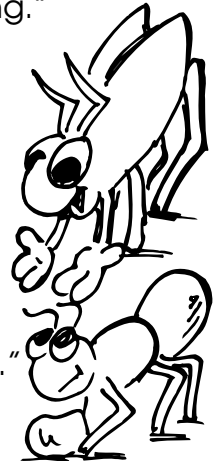
"Not today," answered Ant. "I am making a cozy home for winter."

"Winter's far away," sang Grasshopper. "Enjoy the summer while you can."

"Not today," answered Ant. "I'm storing food, for the winter will be long."

Grasshopper sang all summer. He hopped through the grass and danced among the flowers.

Ant worked hard all summer. He built a warm underground home. He stored seeds and nuts and grain.



September

"Come little ant," sang Grasshopper. "Come sing and dance with me."

"Not today," said Ant. "There is much work to be done before winter."

"Winter is still far away. Enjoy the autumn," sang Grasshopper.



December

"Little ant, little ant! Where are you? I'm too cold and hungry to dance and sing," shivered Grasshopper.

But Ant did not hear Grasshopper. He was warm and cozy in his underground home. He danced and sang as he enjoyed the seeds, nuts, and grain he had worked so hard to gather during summer and autumn.

Who would say each sentence? Write A for Ant or G for Grasshopper.

1. ____ Winter will be here all too soon.
2. ____ Dancing and singing is more fun than working.
3. ____ Who wants to plan ahead, if it means giving up fun now?
4. ____ Play is fun when the work is done.
5. ____ This is a great way to spend the winter.
6. ____ I wish I had worked hard last summer.

