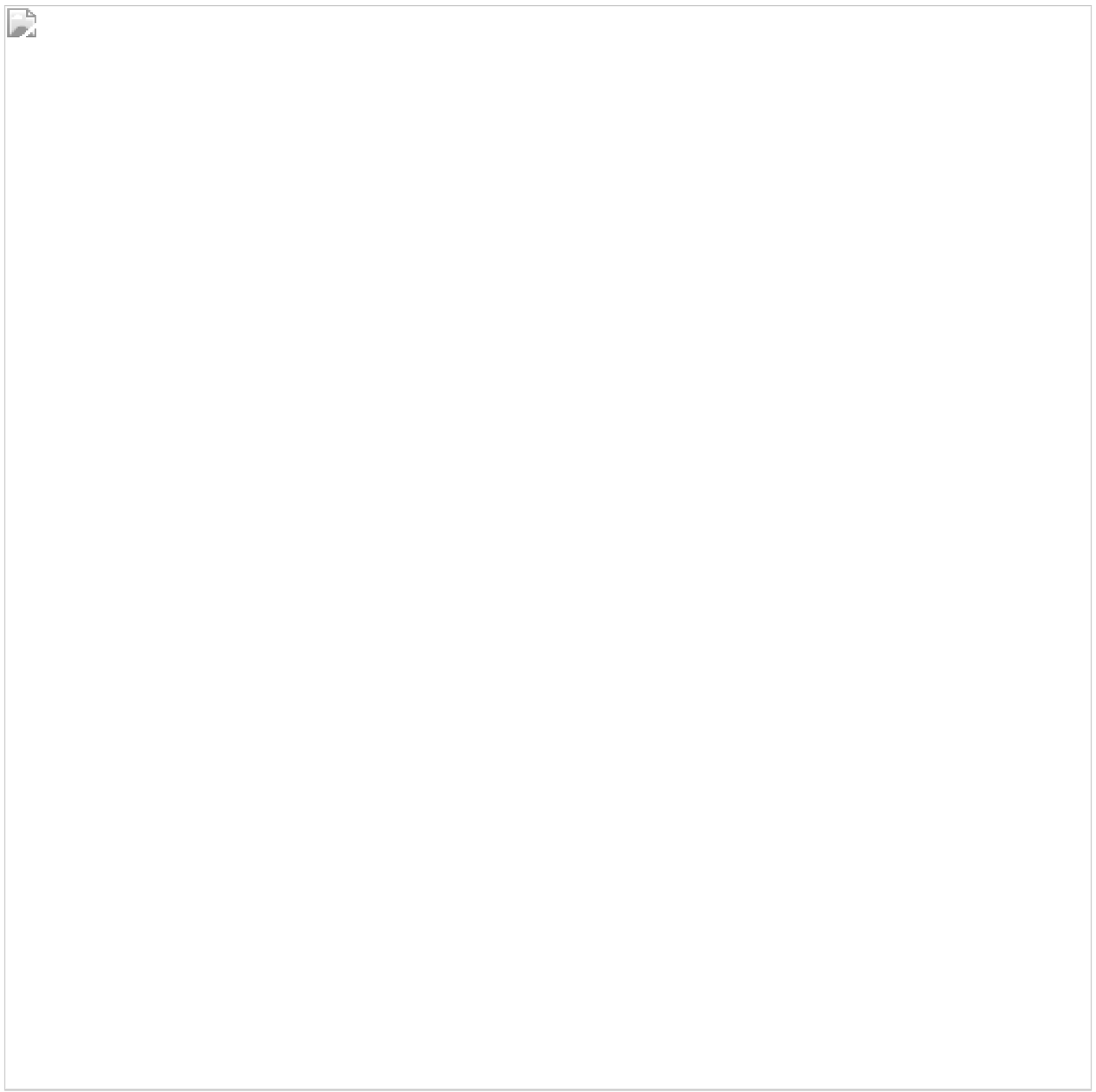
COLORING THE CLASSICS

Perseus

A Hero of Greece



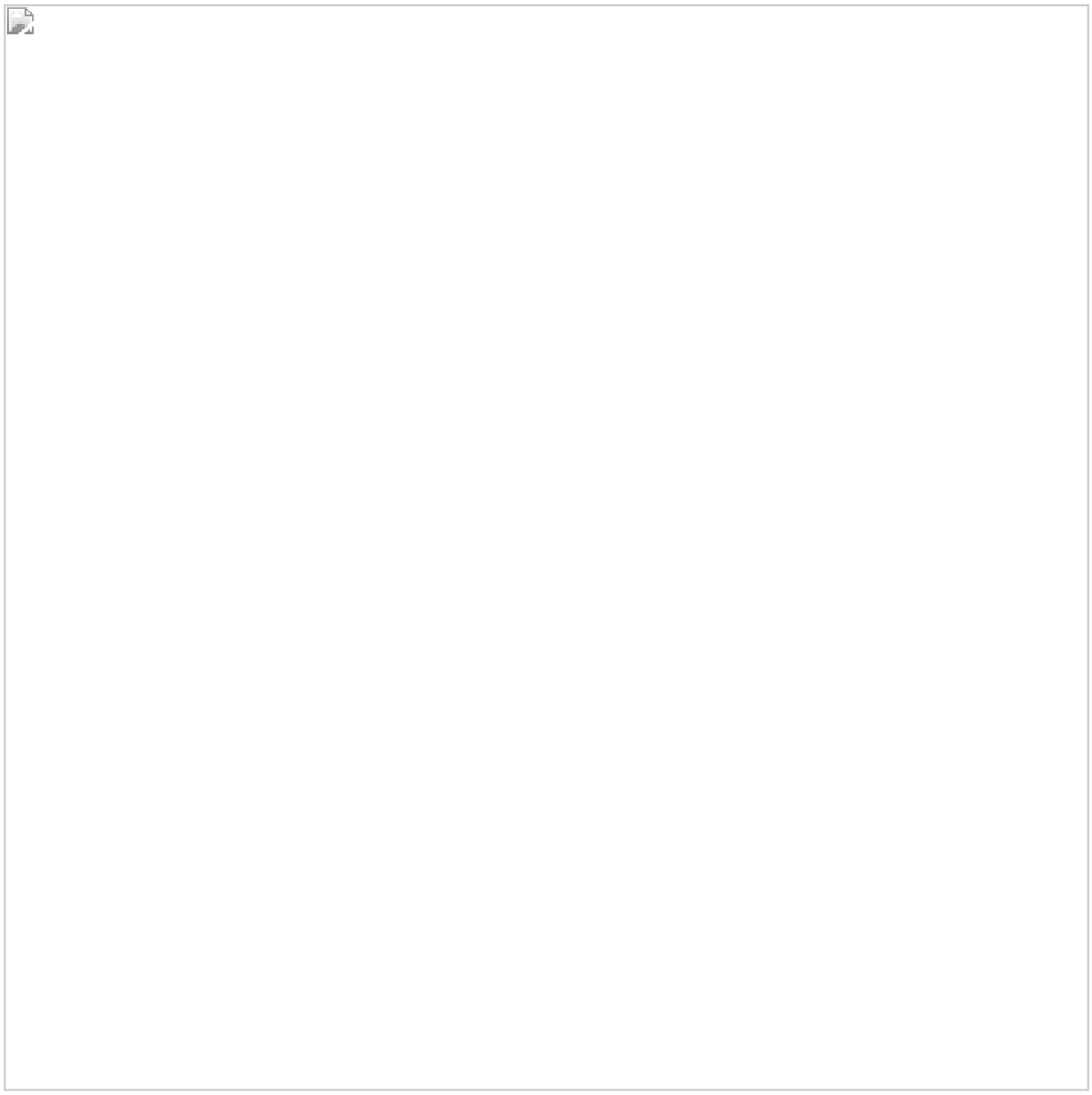
A cruel king shut his daughter Danae in a cave, because a prophet had told him that her son would one day be the end of him. When her baby was born, the king put them both in a great wooden chest and pushed it out to sea.

TALK ABOUT IT

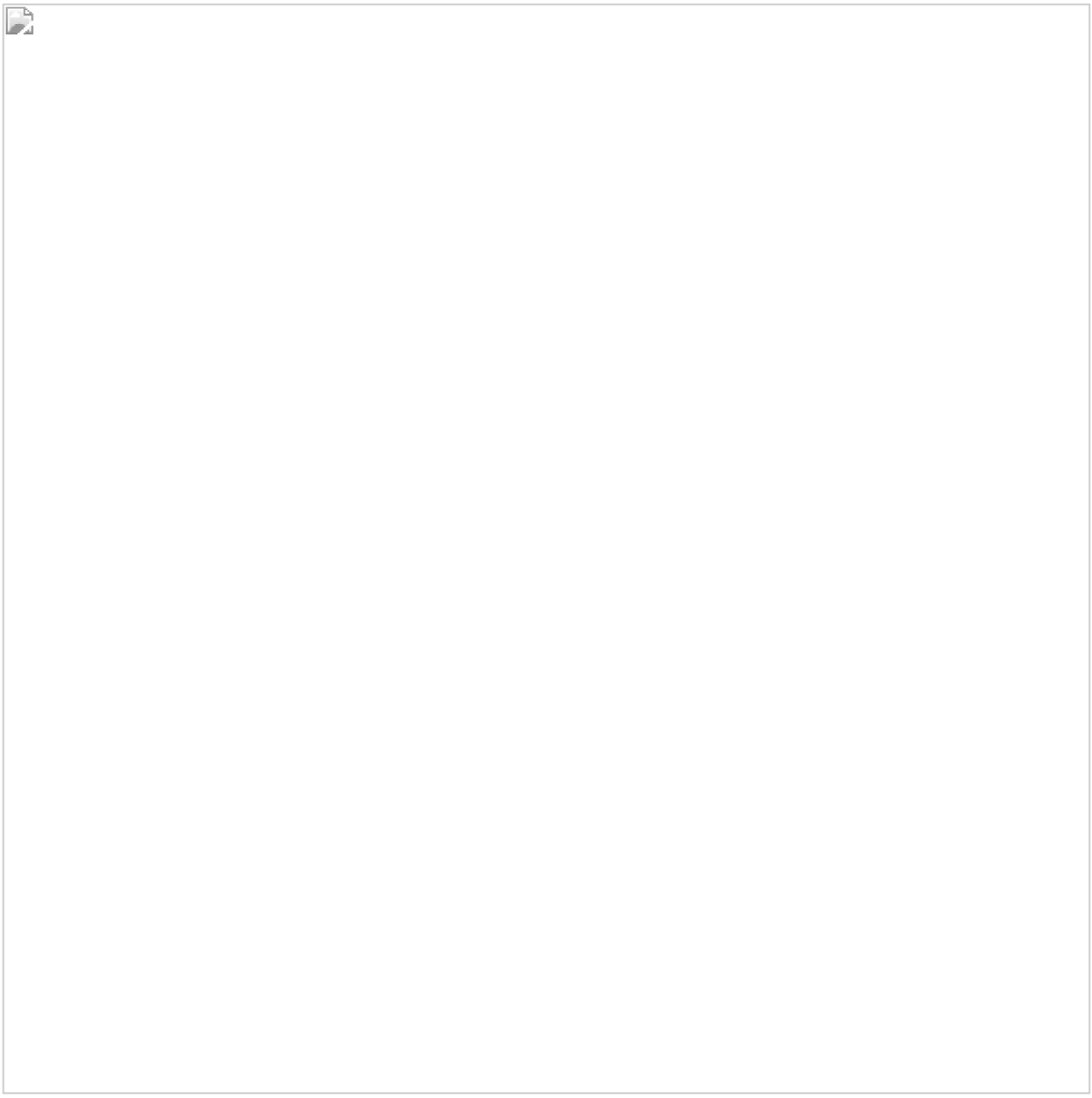
A mother and her tiny baby were out on the wide sea in a wooden chest. What do you think she did to take care of him?

This book belongs to _____

Perseus · another picture



Out on the Sea



Away they floated, before the northwest wind. The chest rocked on the waves, and the baby slept in his mother's arms.

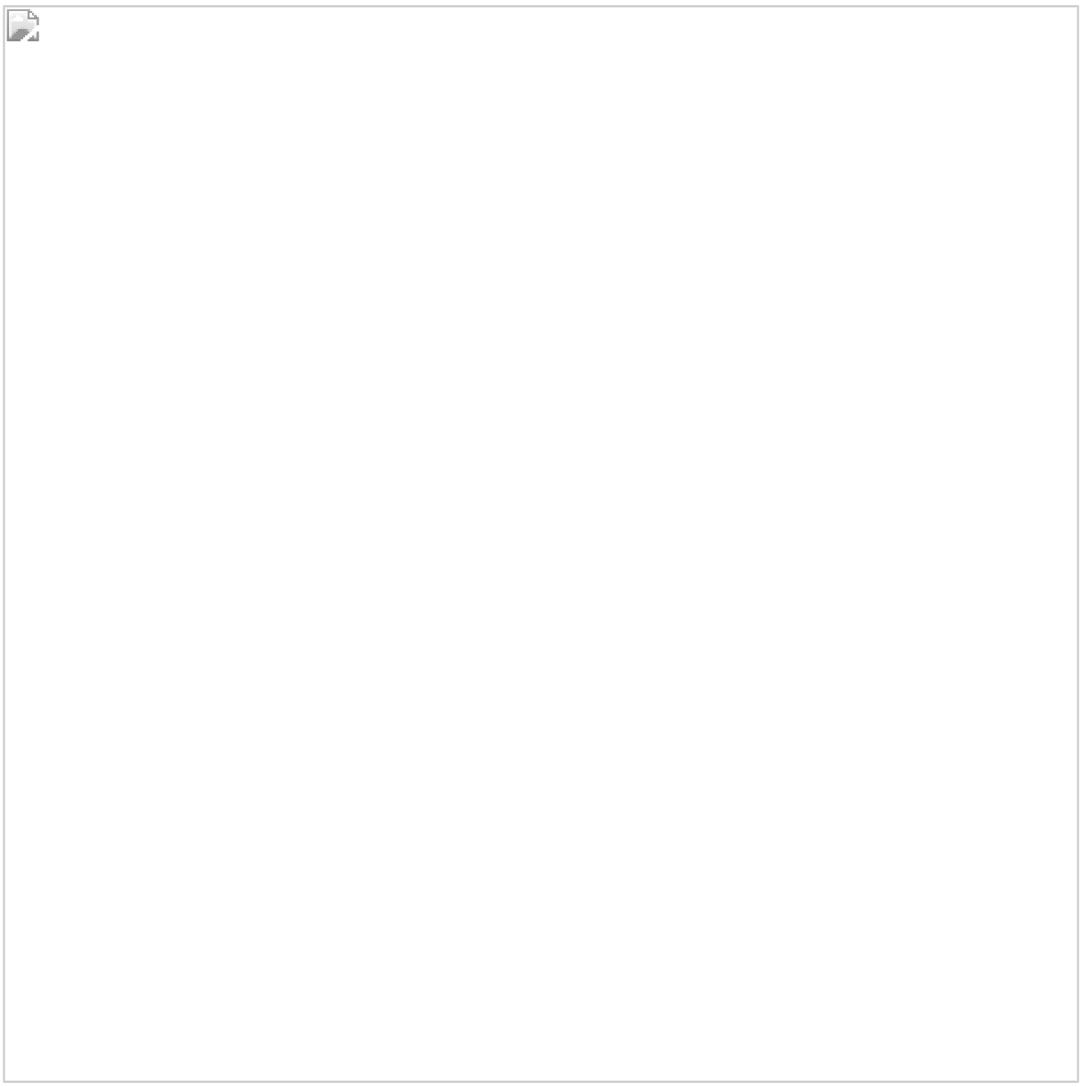
Danae could not sleep. She watched, and she sang to her baby. A night passed, and a day, and another night and day, until she was faint with hunger and tears.

At last she fell asleep with her cheek against his. When she woke, the chest was grinding on rocks, with tall cliffs above, and foam flying. She cried out for help.

TALK ABOUT IT

Danae sang to her baby even when she was afraid. What songs do grown-ups sing to you?

Out on the Sea · another picture

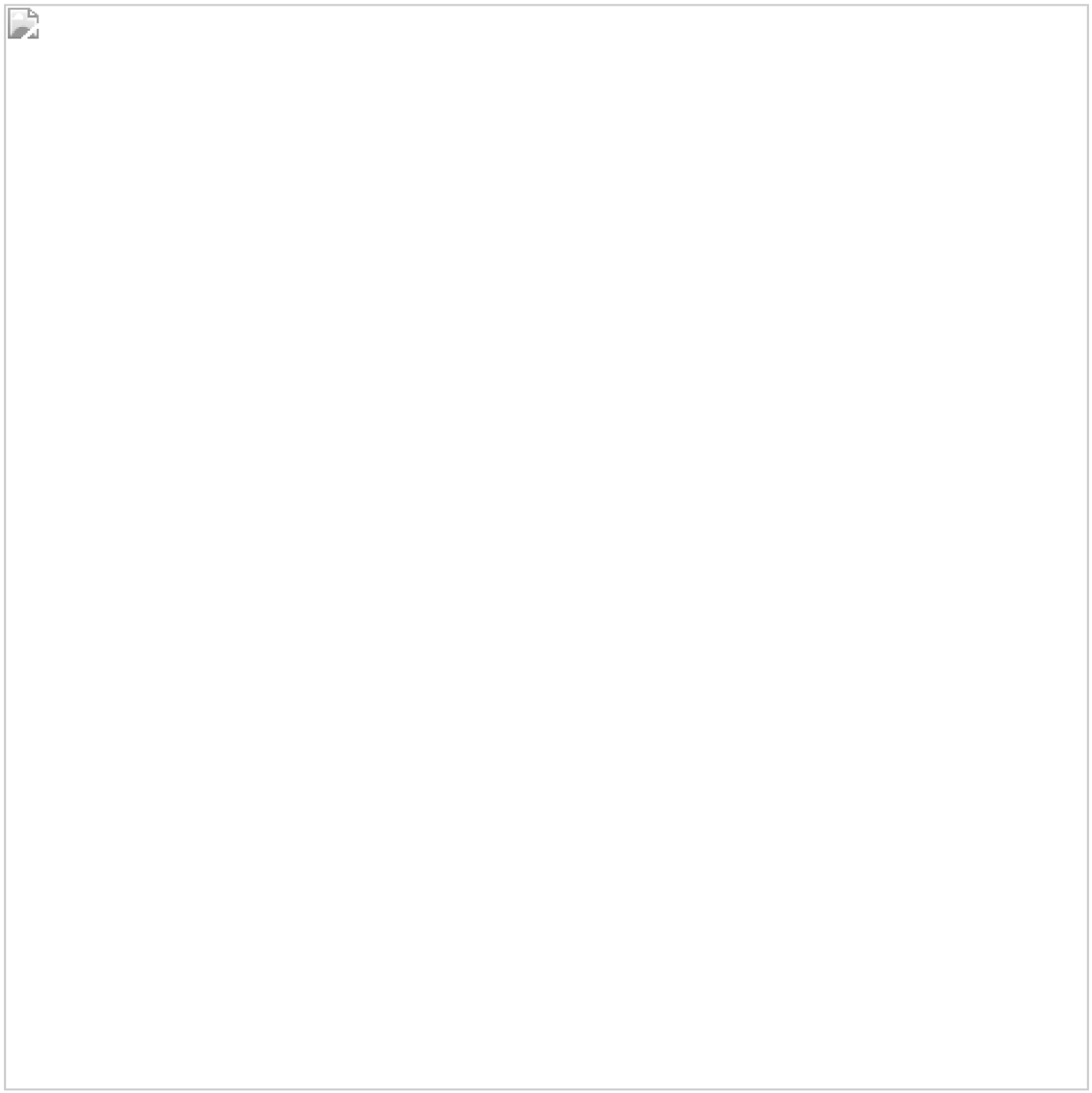


Think about it

1. What did Danae do on the sea while the baby slept?

- ○ She sailed the chest
- ○ She watched and sang to him
- ○ She shouted at the king

Dictys the Netter



And help came. A tall man with a trident and a casting net saw the chest below. He threw his net and drew Danae and the baby safe onto a ledge of rock.

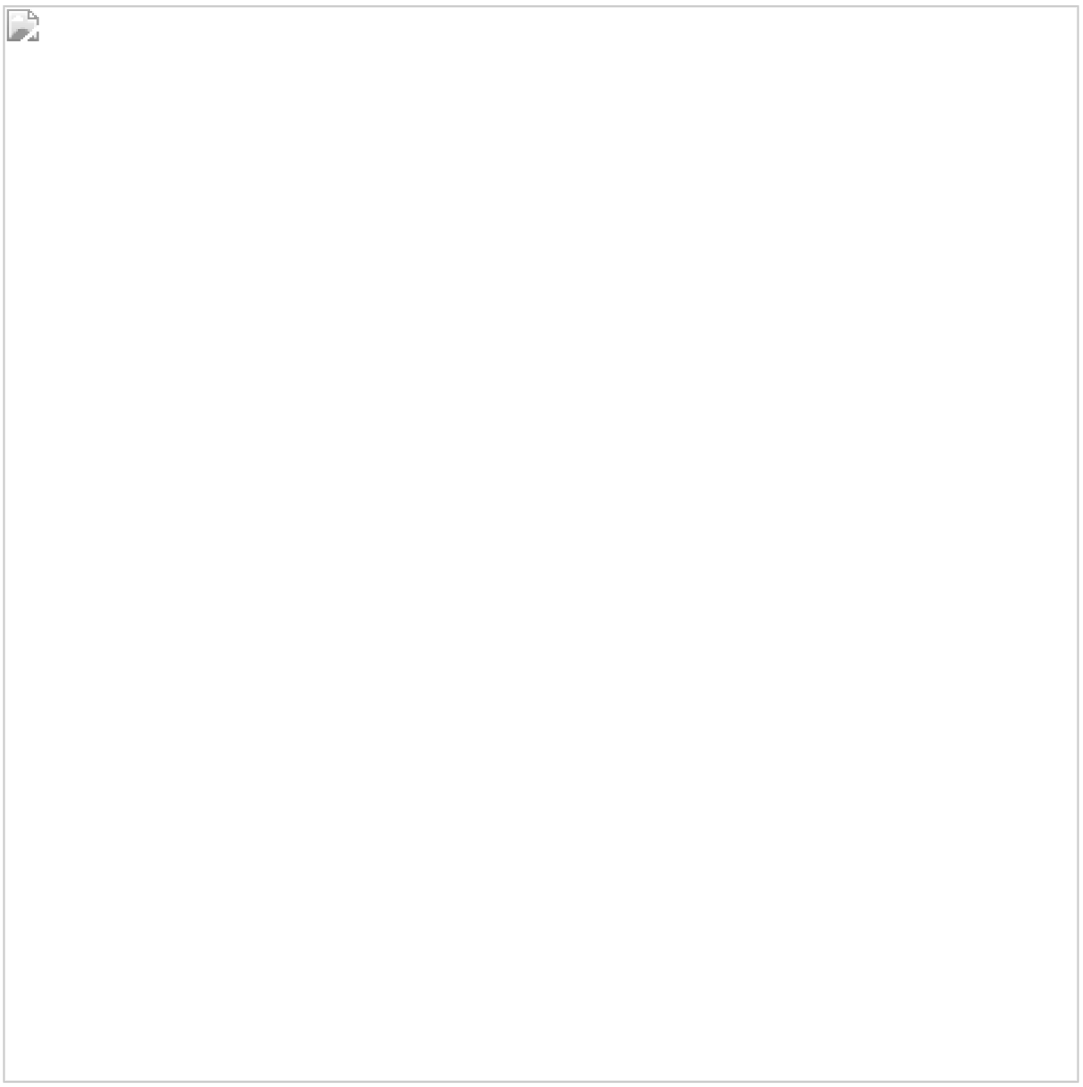
His name was Dictys, and men called him the Netter.

Danae fell at his feet. “Have pity upon a stranger,” she said, and she asked to work in his house.

But Dictys lifted her up. “I am old,” he said, “and my hairs are growing gray, while I have no children to make my home cheerful. Come with me, then, and you shall be a daughter to me.”

TALK ABOUT IT

Dictys had never met Danae, but he took her and her baby into his home. What do you think made him do that?

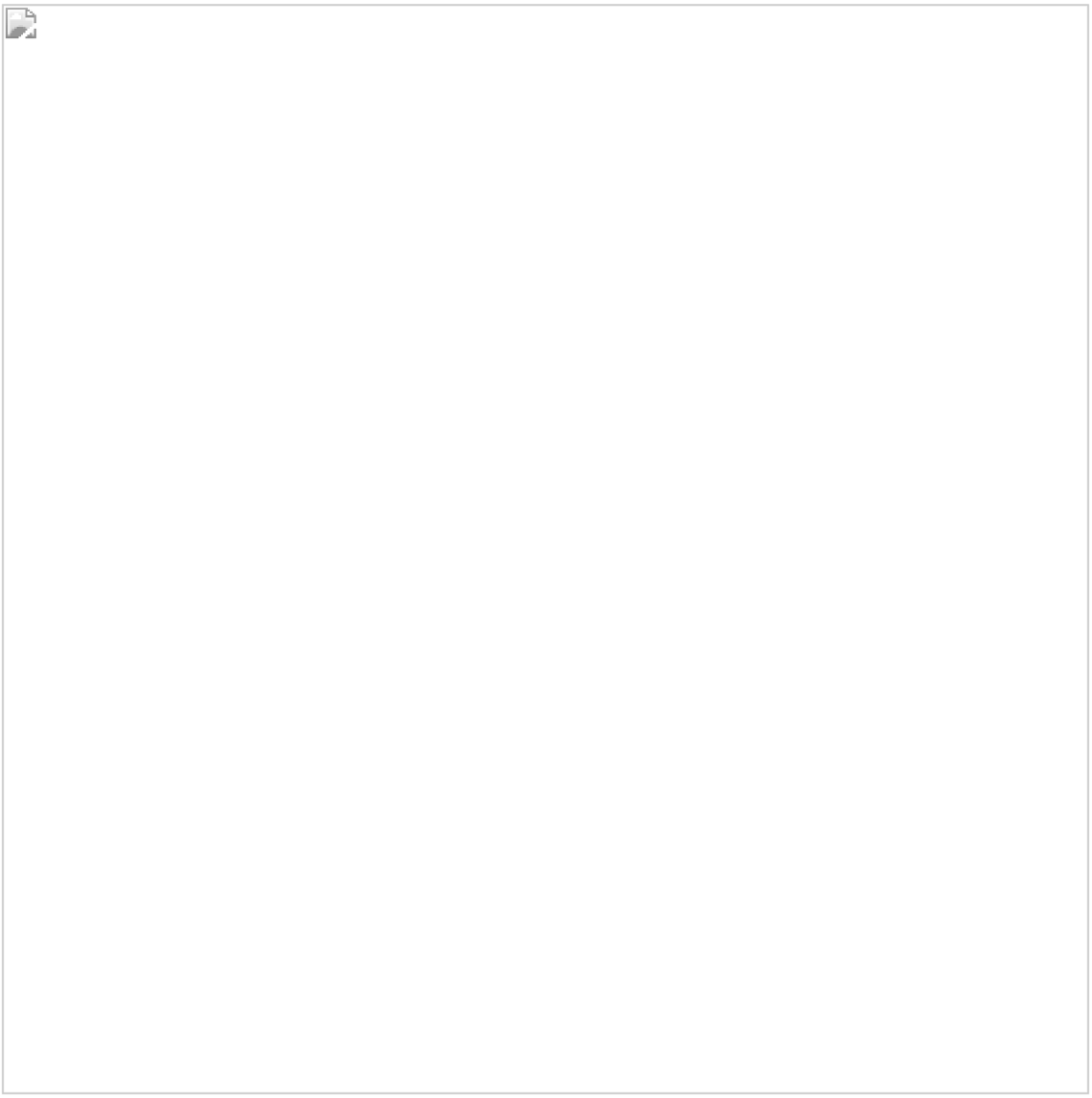


Think about it

1. How did Dictys catch the chest?

- ○ With a rope
- ○ He swam out
- ○ With a casting net

A Boy Grows Up



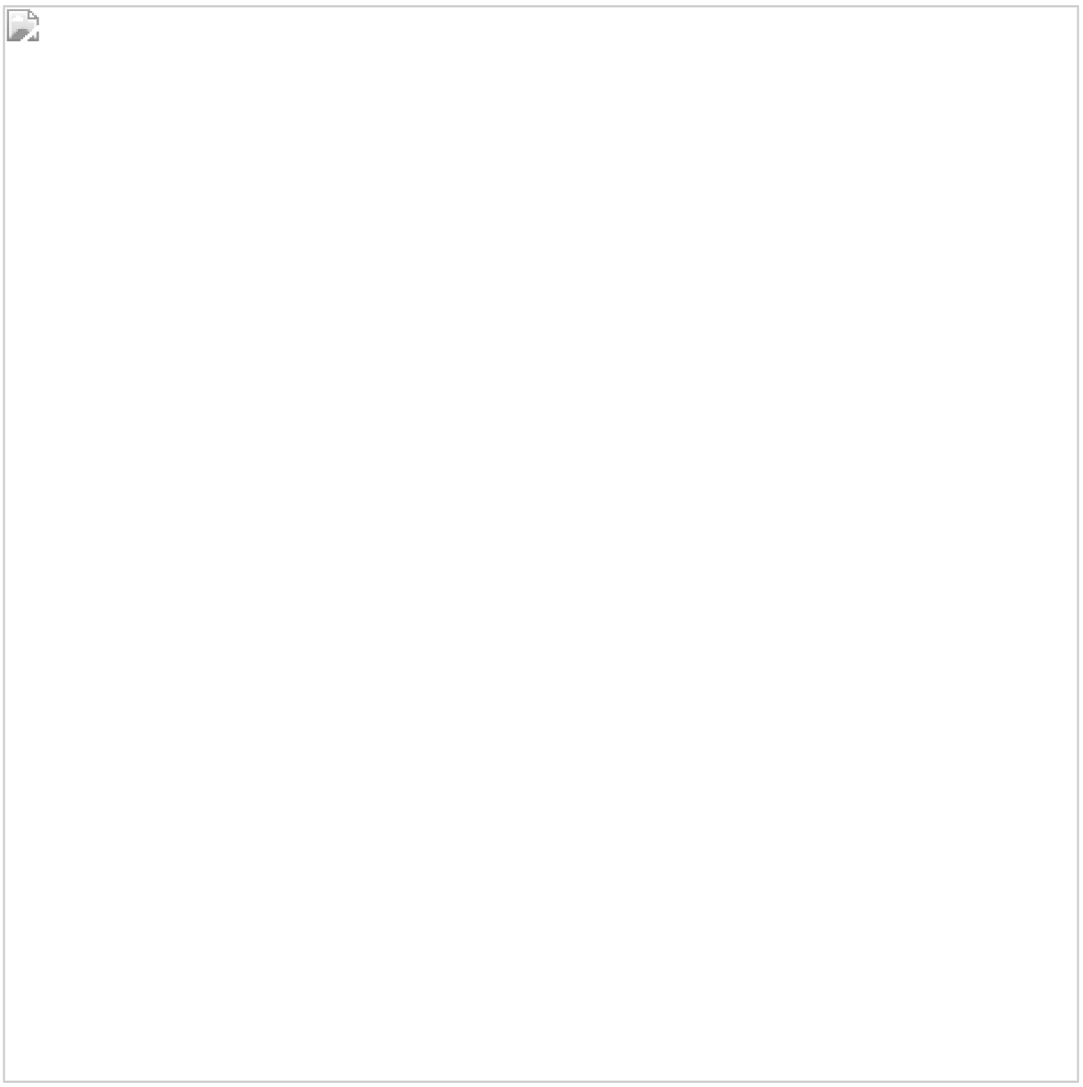
Fifteen years went by. The baby, whom his mother called Perseus, grew tall, taller by a head than any man on the island. He became a sailor, brave and truthful, gentle and courteous, because kind old Dictys had trained him well.

But the king of that island was Polydectes, the brother of Dictys, and he was not good. He wanted Danae to marry him. She would not.

While Perseus was away at sea, Polydectes took Danae from Dictys' house and made her a slave. She had to fetch water from the well and grind grain in the mill.

TALK ABOUT IT

Perseus was truthful and gentle as well as strong. Why might those matter as much as strength?

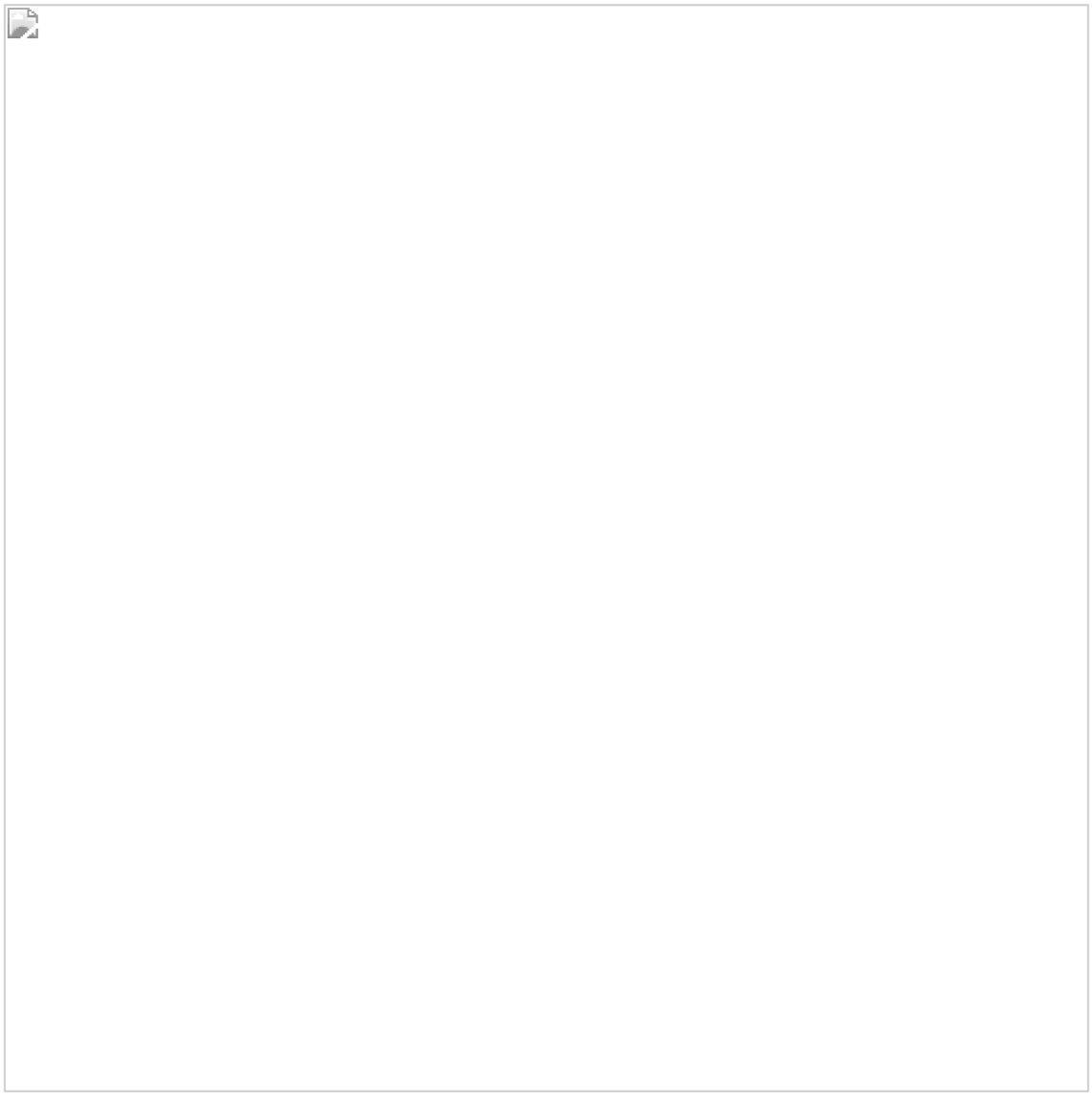


Think about it

1. Who trained Perseus to be brave, truthful and gentle?

- ○ Dictys
- ○ Polydectes
- ○ The king of the sea

Back to His Mother



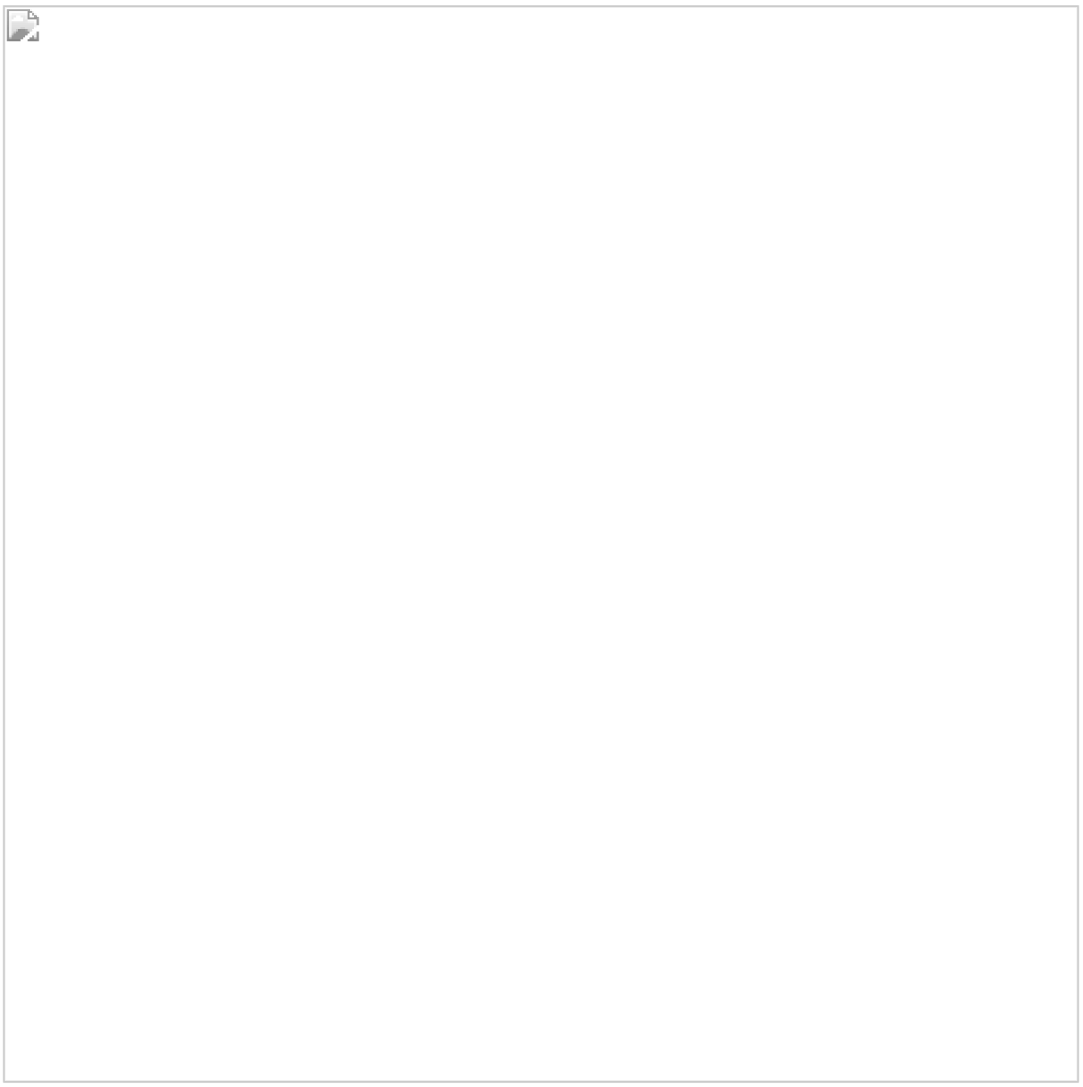
Perseus came home and heard the news. He went straight to the palace, through every room, until he found his mother, sitting on the floor and turning the stone hand-mill, and crying as she turned it.

He lifted her up and kissed her and told her to follow him out. But then Polydectes came in. Perseus was so angry that he picked up the stone mill.

His mother clung to him, and Dictys begged him to stop. Perseus put it down. He took Danae to the temple of Athene, where she would be safe, and he and Dictys and his wife visited her every day.

TALK ABOUT IT

Perseus was angry and strong, and he still put the stone down when his mother asked. Why was that hard? Why was it good?



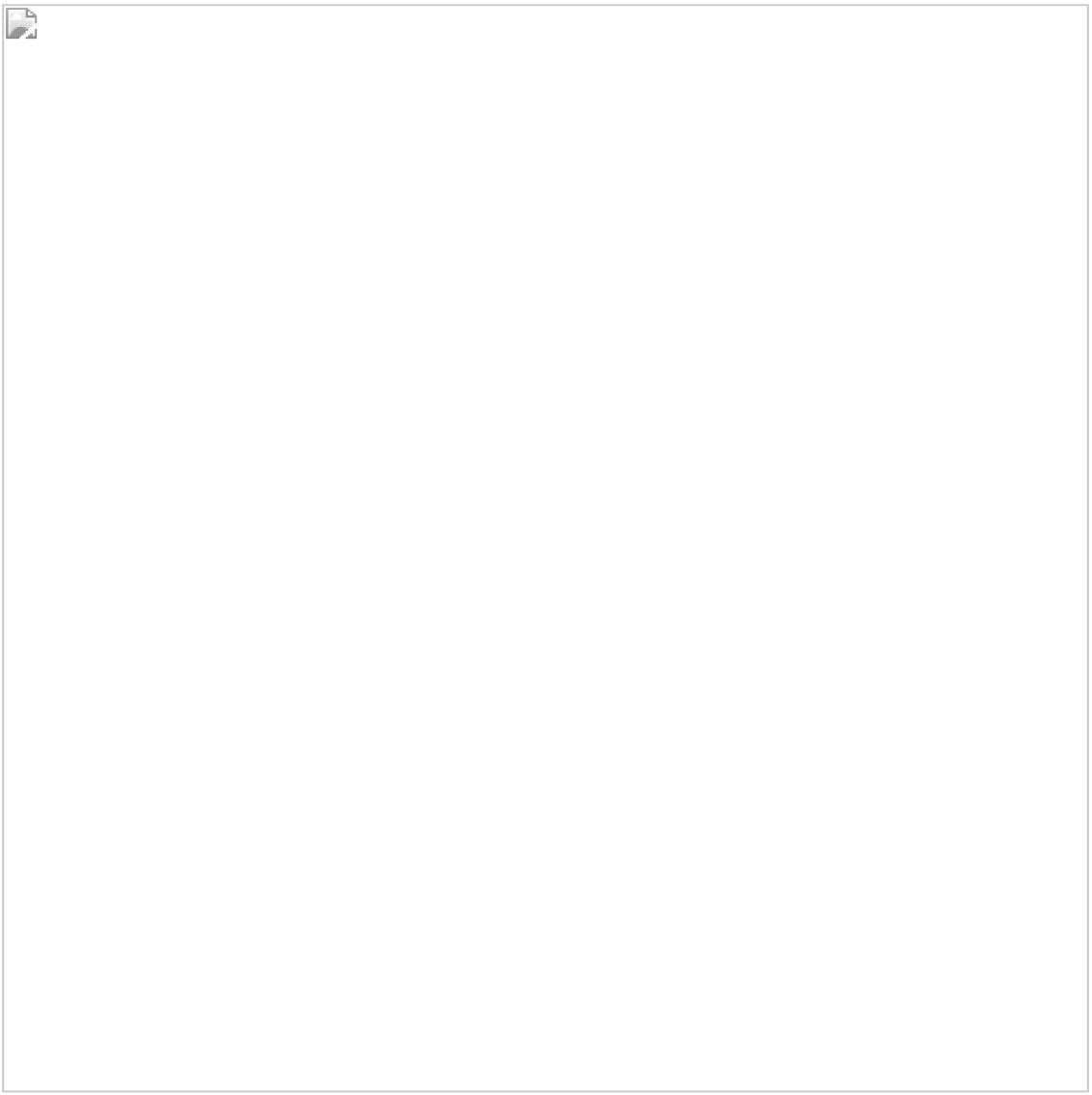
Think about it

1. Where did Perseus take his mother to be safe?

- ○ A ship
- ○ The temple of Athene
- ○ The mountains

2. God's old law says, “Honour thy father and thy mother” (Exodus 20:12). How did Perseus honor his mother?

A Rash Promise



Polydectes could not get Danae by force, so he made a plot. He pretended he was not angry anymore, and held a feast. All the young men came, and each brought the king a present: a horse, a shawl, a ring, a sword.

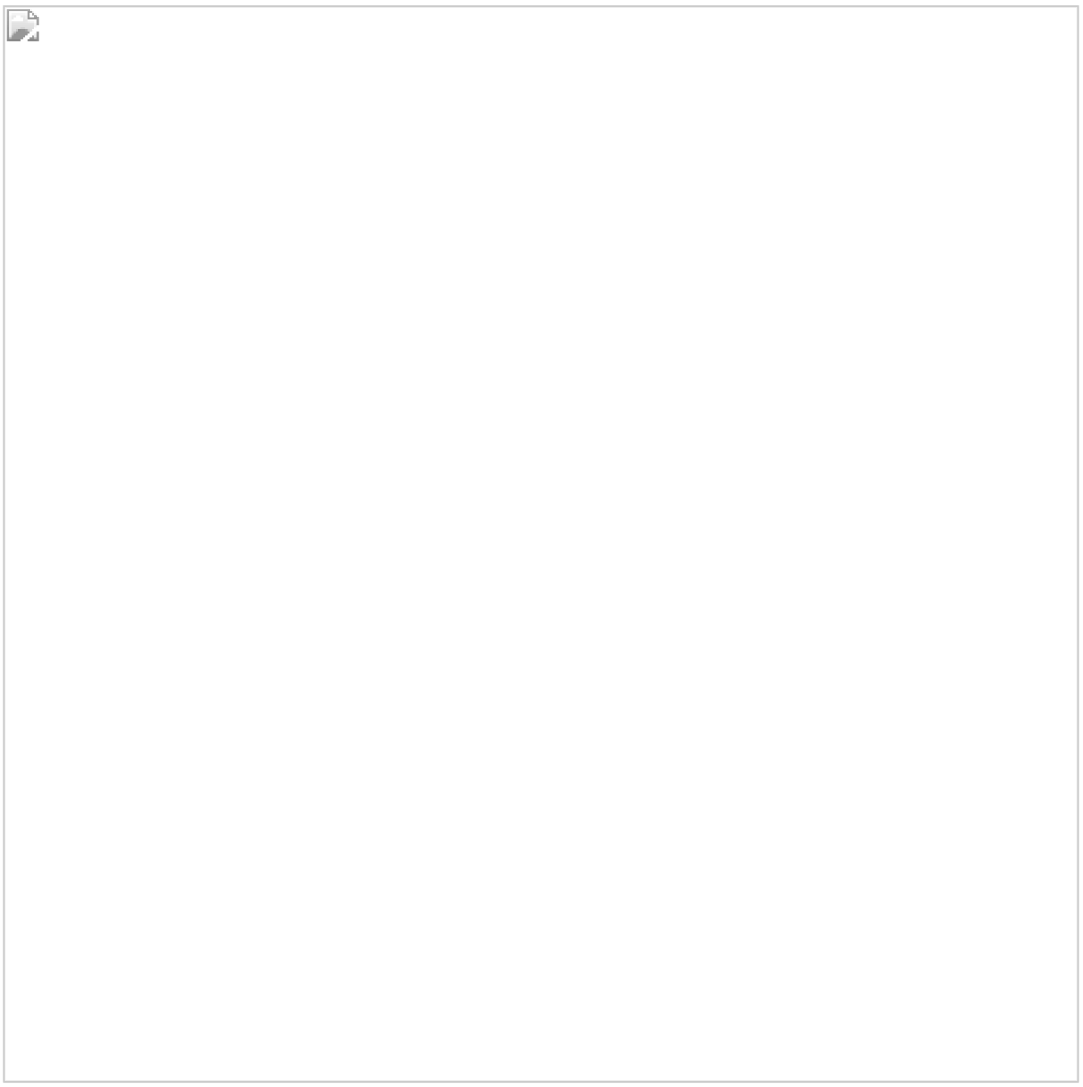
Perseus had nothing to give. The rich men pointed at him and whispered, “And what has Perseus to give?” They laughed until he was so ashamed that he cried out without thinking: “The head of Medusa the Gorgon!”

“Then never appear again in this island without it,” said Polydectes. “Go!”

Perseus saw that he had fallen into a trap. But he went out without a word.

TALK ABOUT IT

Perseus made a promise when he was angry and ashamed. Have you ever said something fast that was hard to do?

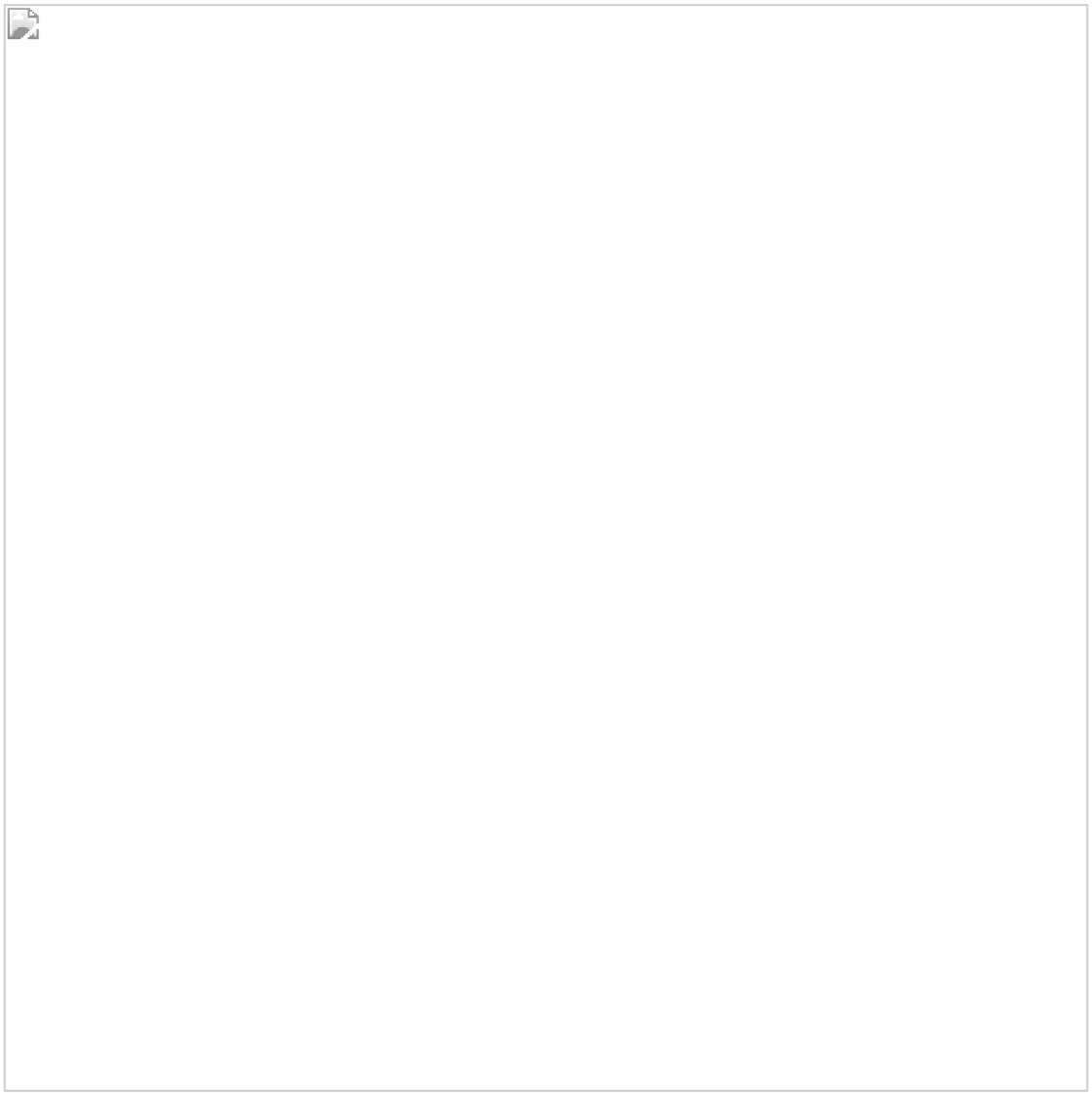


Think about it

1. What did Perseus promise to bring the king?

- ○ The head of Medusa the Gorgon
- ○ A horse
- ○ A ring

Help from Athene



At the cliffs, Perseus remembered a dream of gray-eyed Athene. Medusa had snakes for hair, and anyone who looked at her was turned to stone.

Three times he cried out, “Rashly and angrily I promised, but wisely and patiently will I perform.”

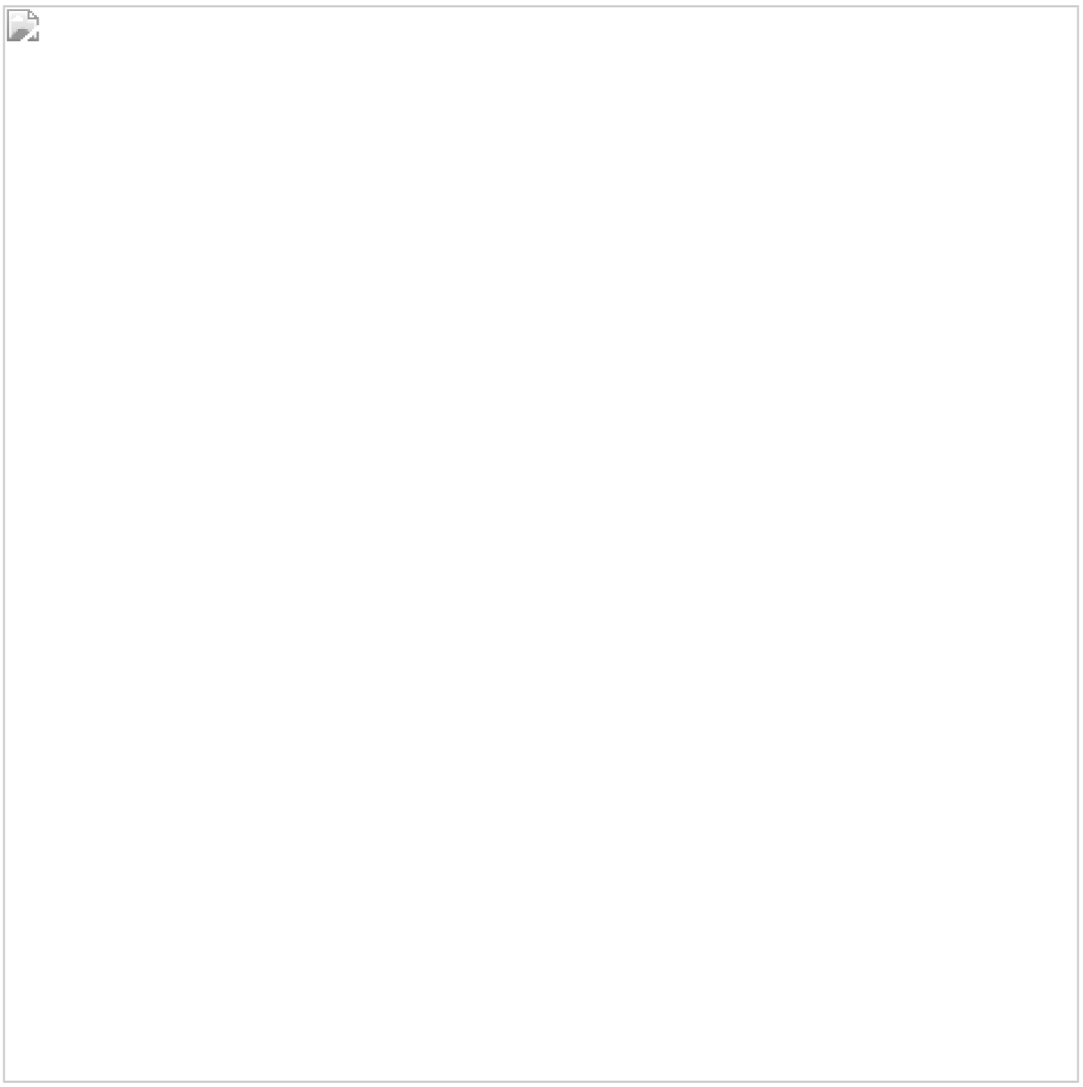
In a small white cloud came Athene and a young man. “Dare you brave Medusa the Gorgon?” she asked. She gave Perseus a polished shield, so he could look at Medusa's reflection instead of her face. The young man gave him winged sandals and a sword.

“Now leap from the cliff and be gone!” said Athene. Perseus leaped, and he flew.

TALK ABOUT IT

Perseus asked for help. Who do you ask for help when something is too big for you?

Help from Athene · another picture

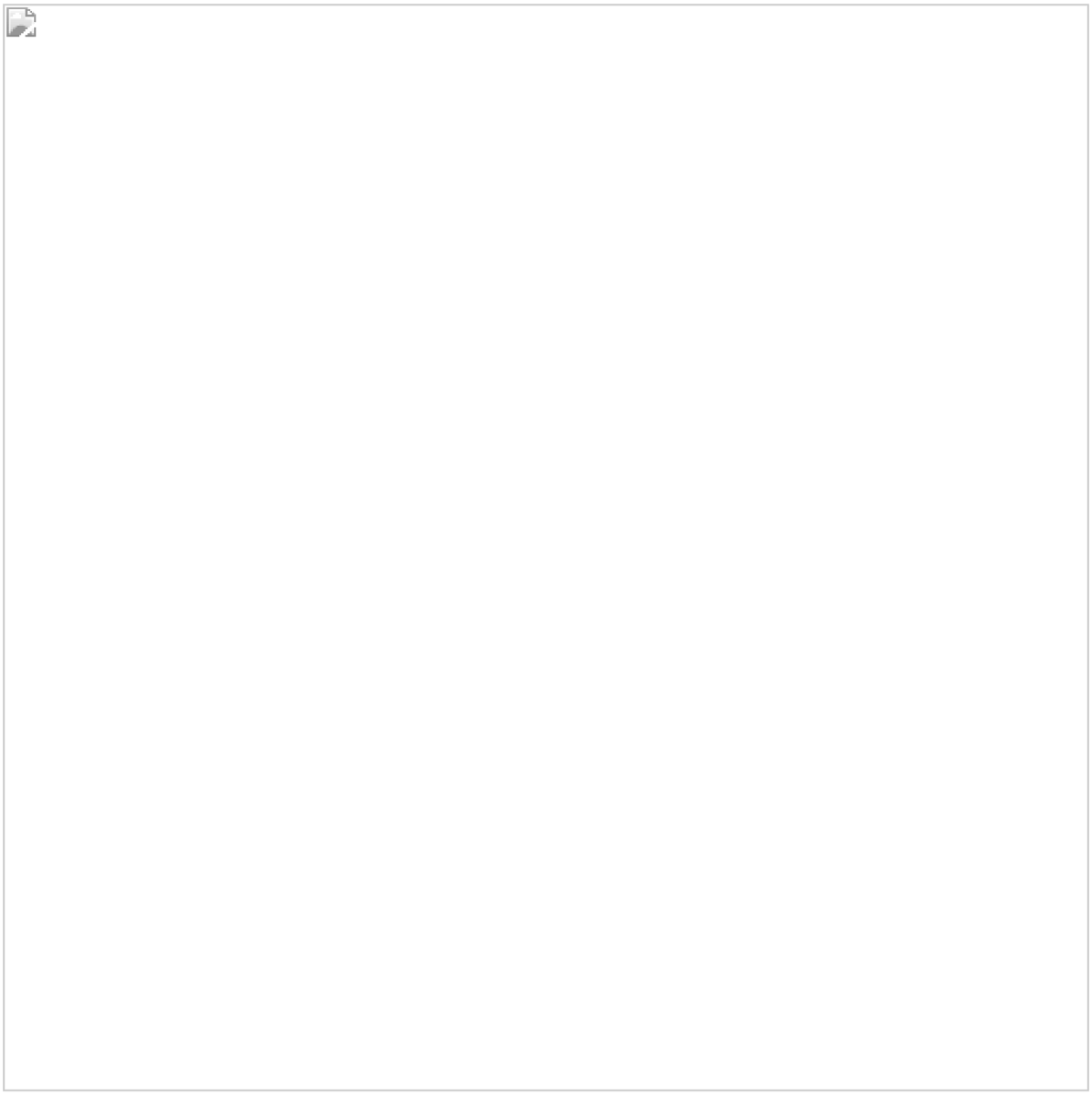


Think about it

1. How could Perseus look at Medusa without being turned to stone?

- ○ With his eyes shut
- ○ From very far away
- ○ In the reflection in the shield

The Gray Sisters and the Hat of Darkness



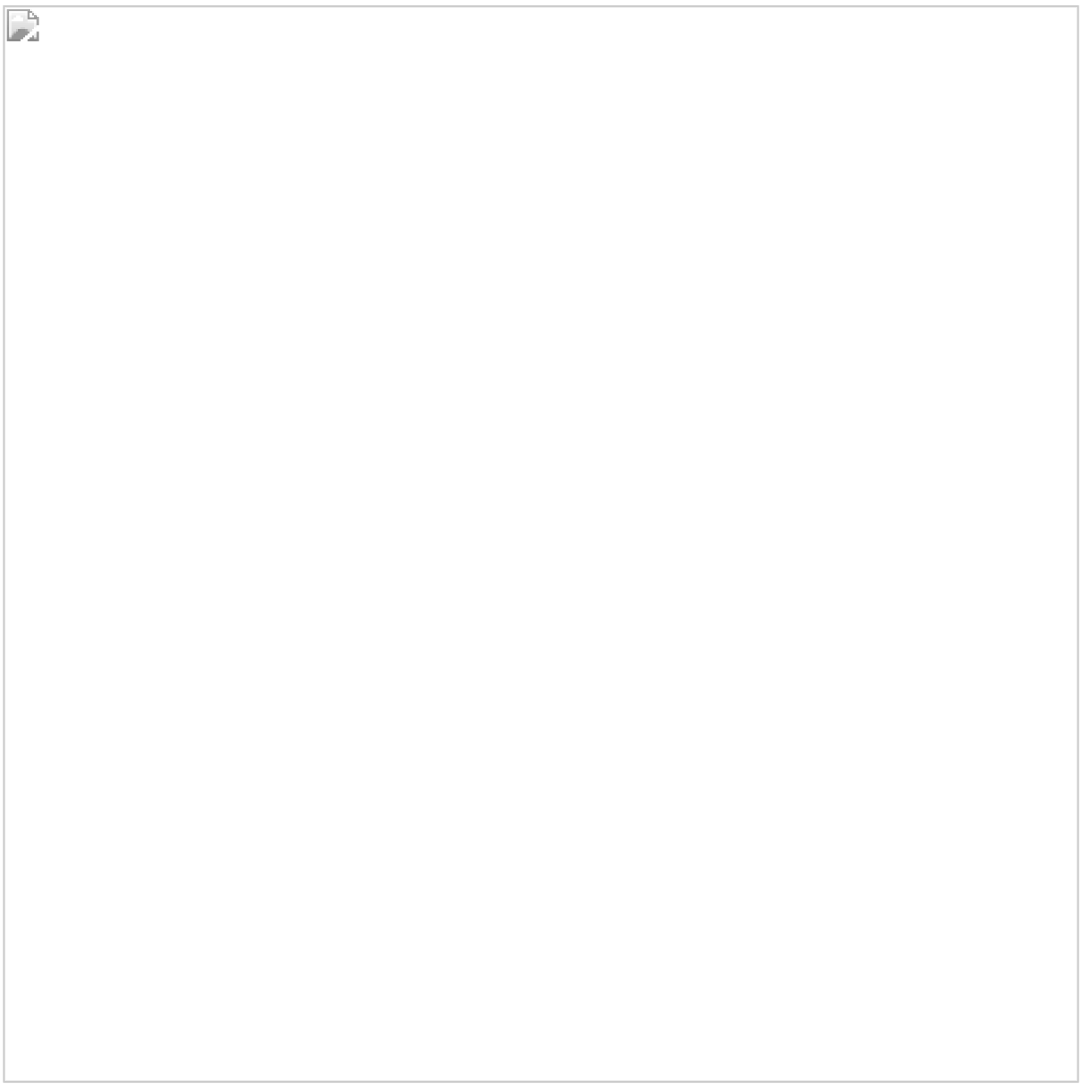
In the frozen north, Perseus found the Three Gray Sisters. They shared one eye and one tooth, passing them from hand to hand.

As one sister held out the eye, Perseus put out his own hand, and she put it into his. “I have your eye,” he said, “and I will throw it into the sea, unless you tell me the path.” They told him, and he gave it back.

In their garden, the daughters of the Evening Star wept for him, and gave him a magic hat. When he put it on, no one could see him.

TALK ABOUT IT

Perseus used his head to get the Gray Sisters to tell him the way. When is being clever better than being strong?

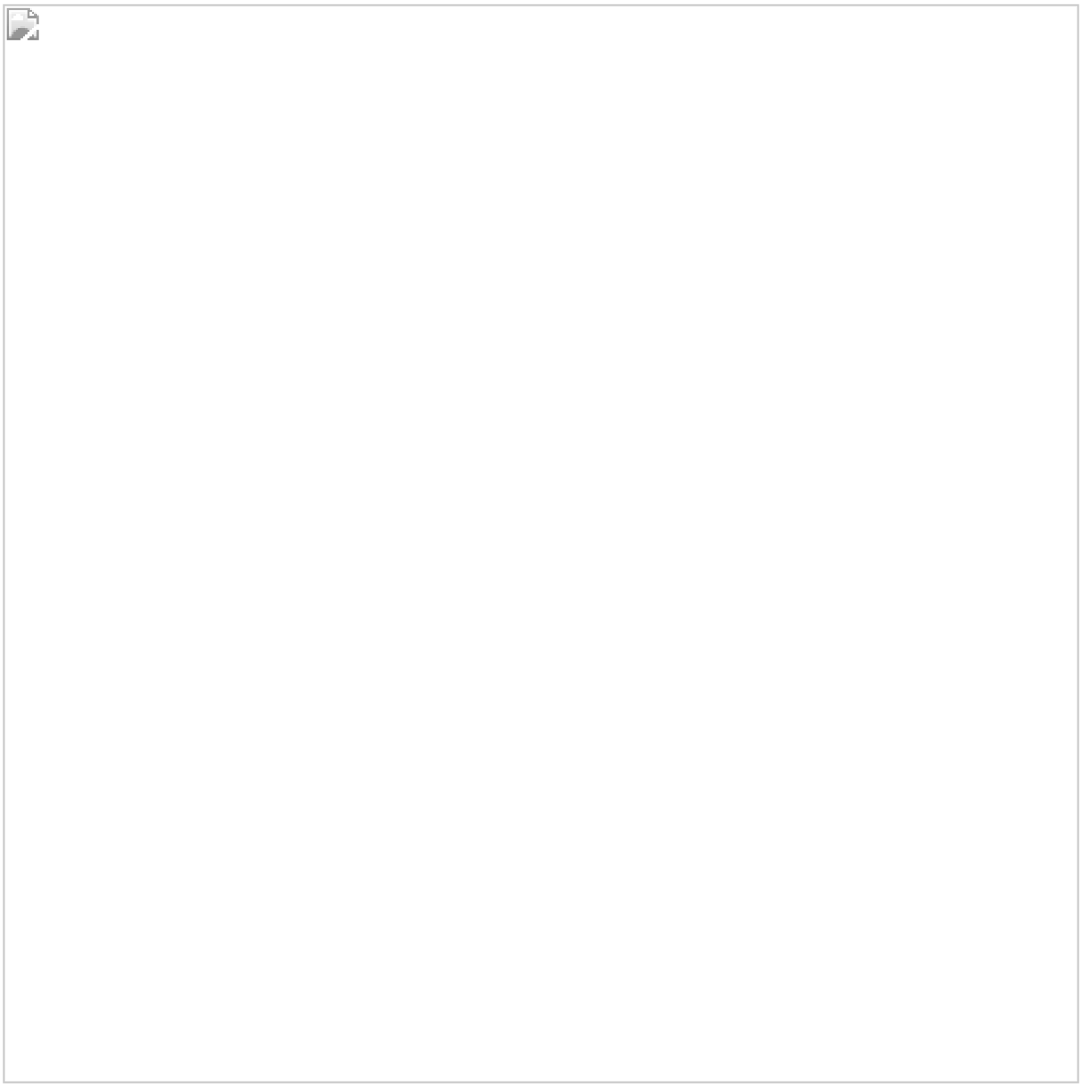


Think about it

1. What did the magic hat do?

- ○ Made him fly
- ○ Made him strong
- ○ Made him invisible

Medusa



Perseus flew over the sea to the island where the Gorgons lived. He held up the shield and looked only into it, and he saw three Gorgons asleep, as big as elephants.

Because of the hat, they could not see him. He came down quietly and, looking only at the shield, he struck once with his sword, and that was enough.

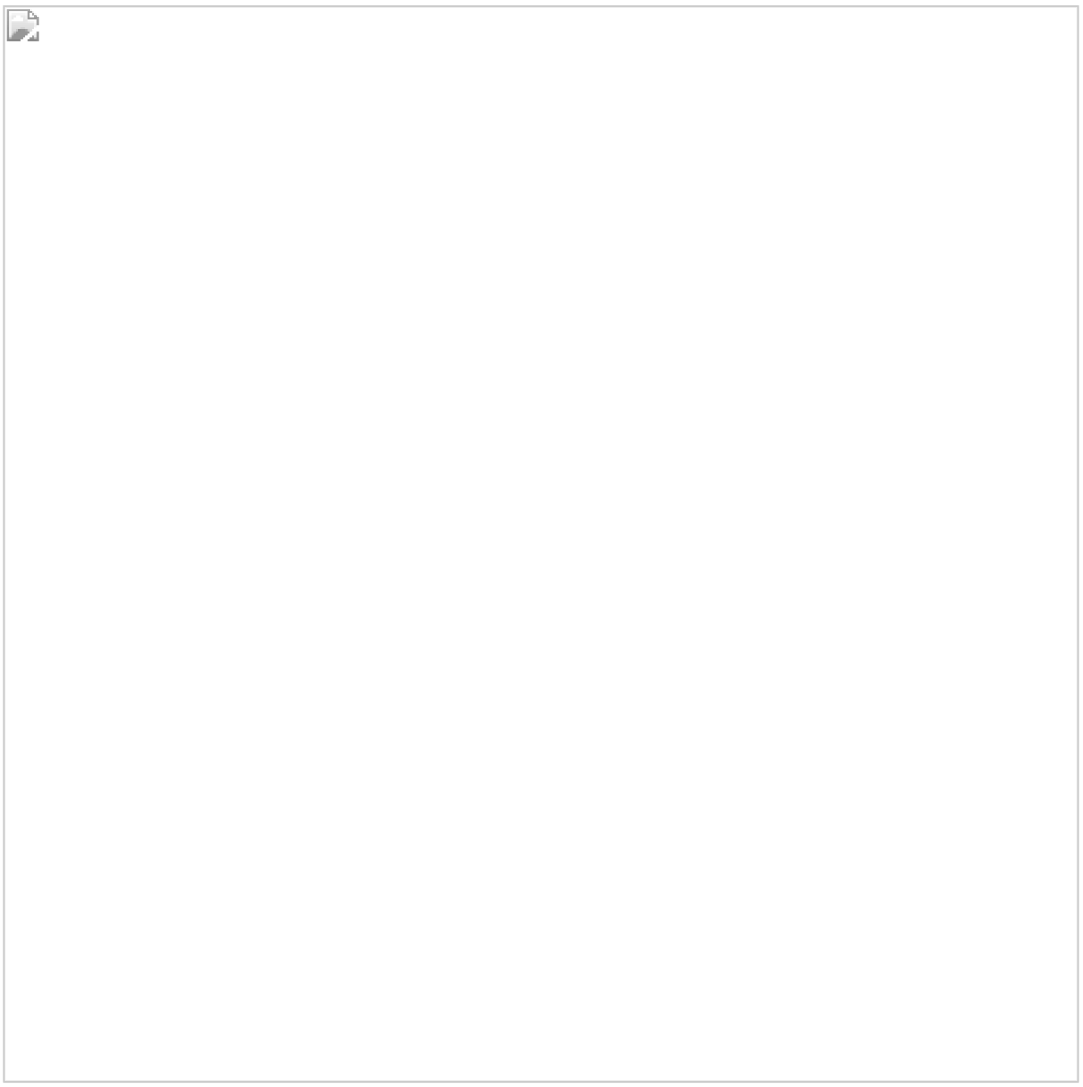
He wrapped Medusa's head in the goat-skin, with his face turned away, and flew up into the air faster than he had ever flown.

The daughters of the Evening Star begged him to stay. But Perseus would not. He went on, over the sea like a sea-gull.

TALK ABOUT IT

Perseus did exactly what Athene told him. Why do you think listening carefully mattered so much?

Medusa · another picture

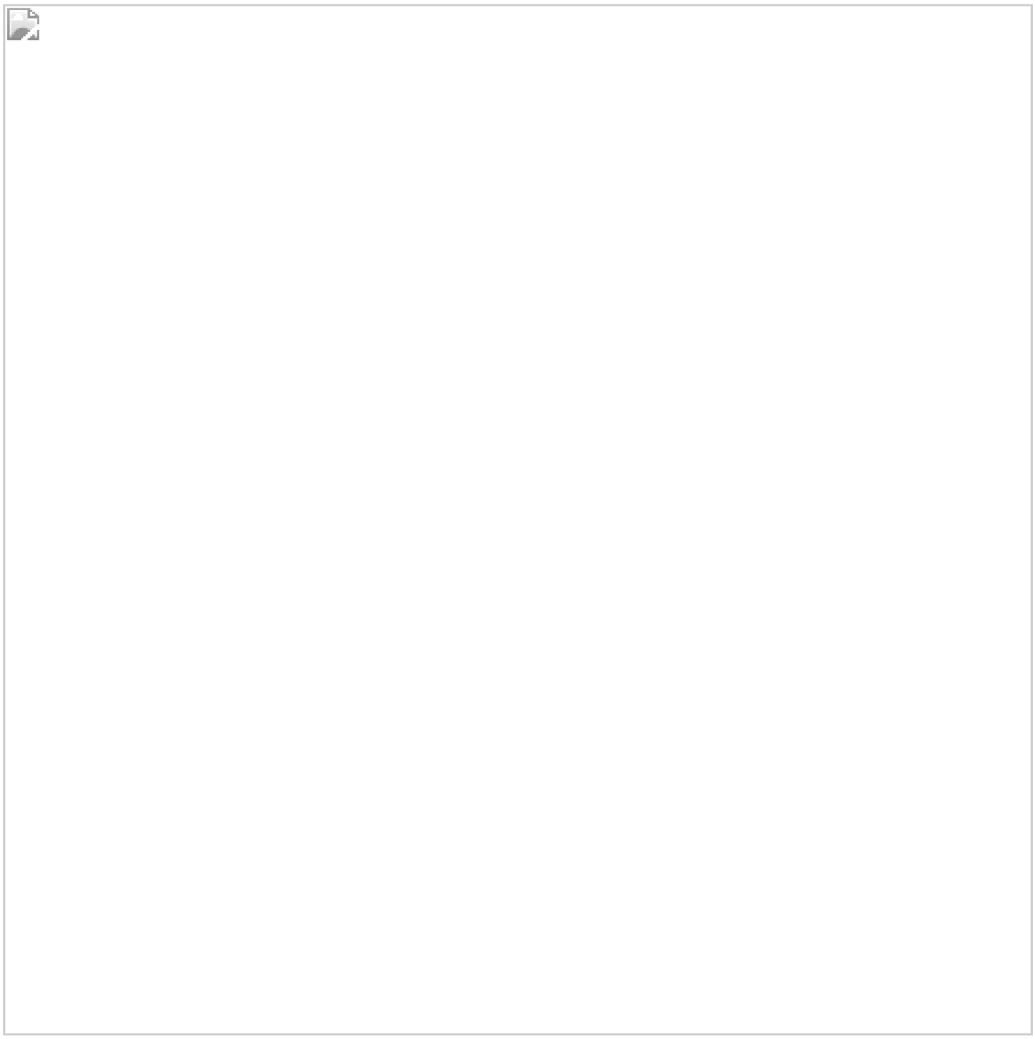


Think about it

1. How did Perseus carry the Gorgon's head?

- ○ In a sack of gold
- ○ Wrapped in a goat-skin with his face turned away
- ○ In a basket

A Princess on the Rock



On his way home, a gale blew Perseus off course. Hearing running water, he thought, “Surely Athene hath sent me hither. What if there be another noble deed to be done?”

By the sea he saw a maiden chained to a black rock with chains of brass. Perseus took off the hat. “Do not fear me, fair one. What cruel men have bound you? But first I will set you free.”

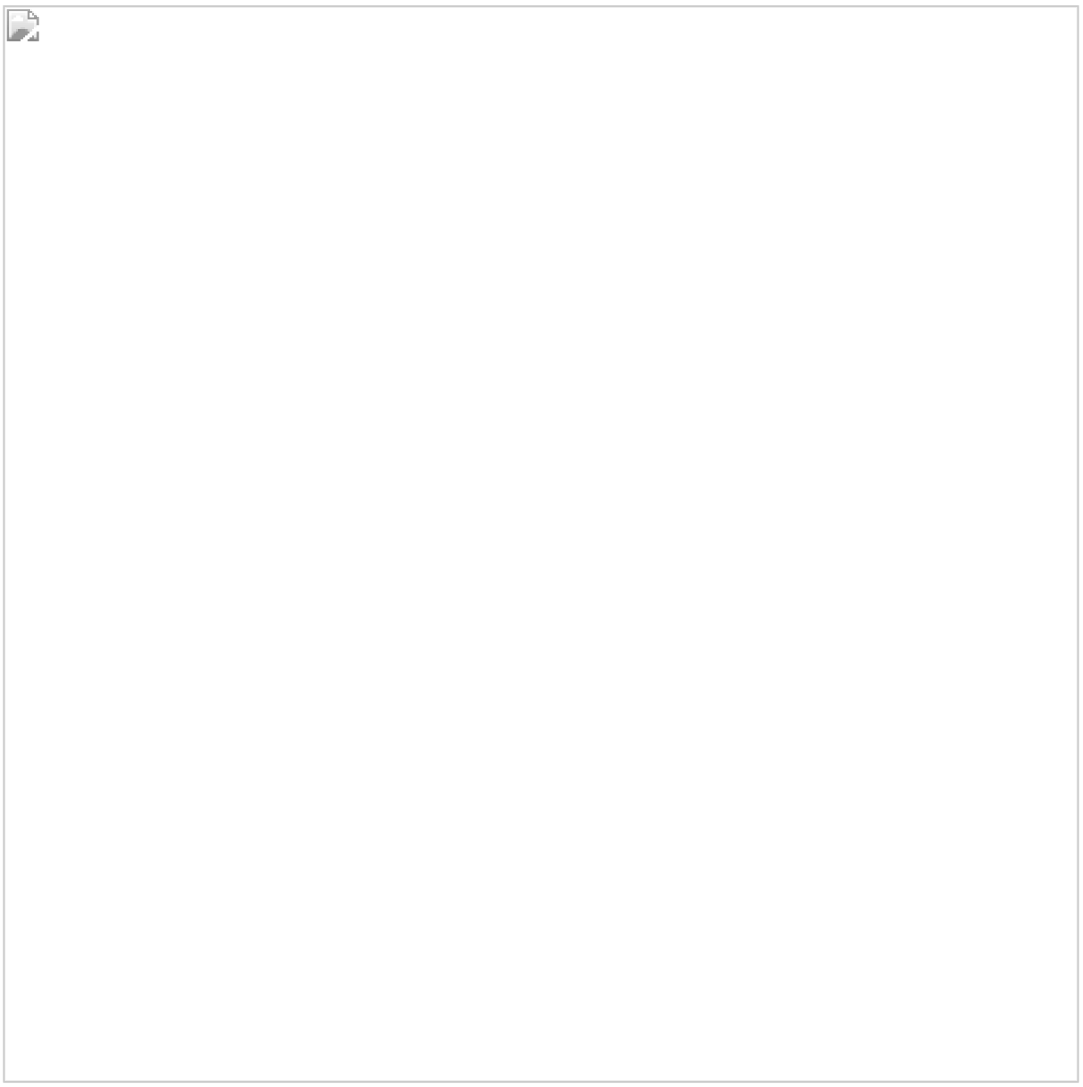
She was Andromeda, a king's daughter. A sea-monster was coming for her, because of something her mother had said.

“I have fought with worse than he,” said Perseus, and he cut the chains with his sword.

TALK ABOUT IT

Andromeda was a stranger. Perseus was already on his way home. Why do you think he stopped to help?

A Princess on the Rock · another picture

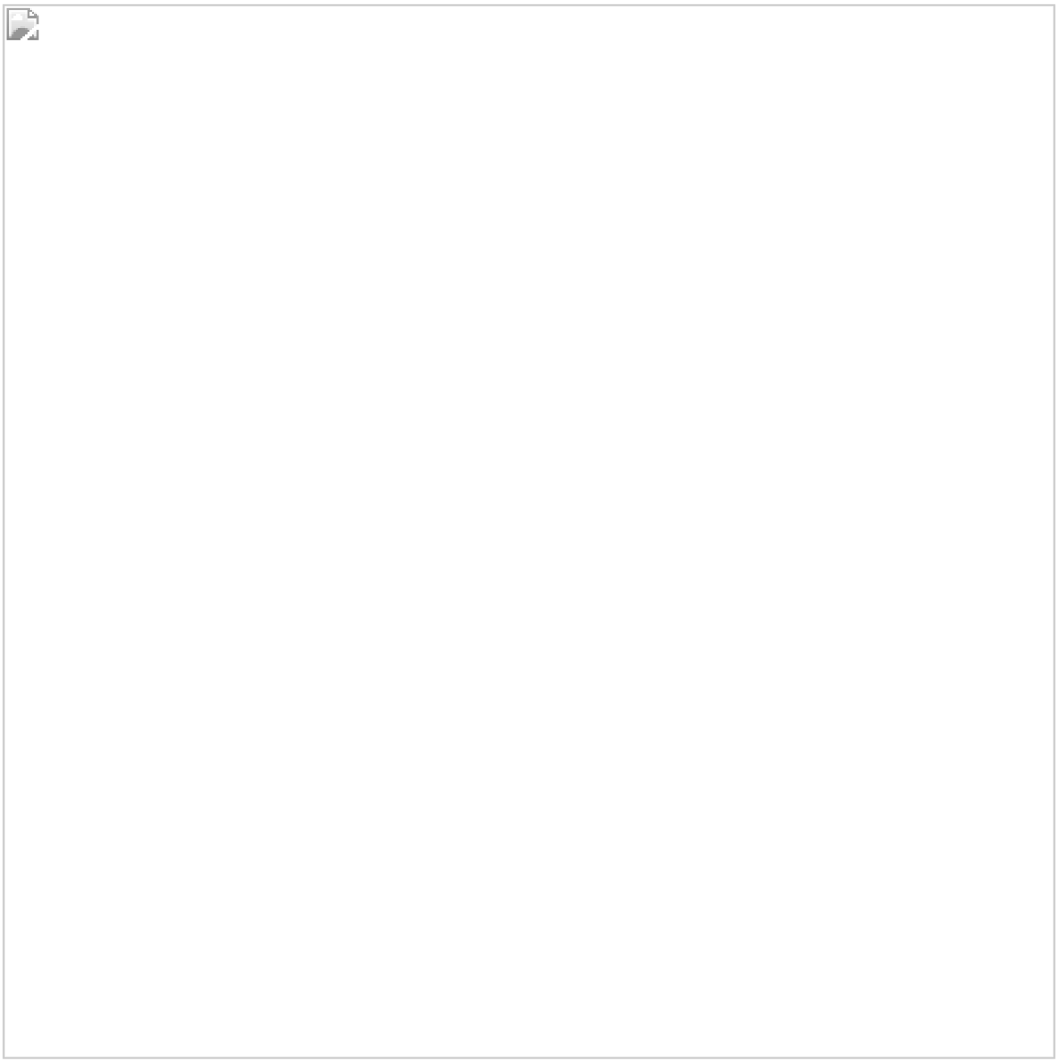


Think about it

1. What did Perseus do when he saw Andromeda chained?

- ○ He cut her chains
- ○ He flew away
- ○ He hid

The Sea-Monster



“Go!” said Andromeda. “Why will you die, young as you are?”

But Perseus asked her: if he saved her, would she come with him to his country? She said yes, and kissed him.

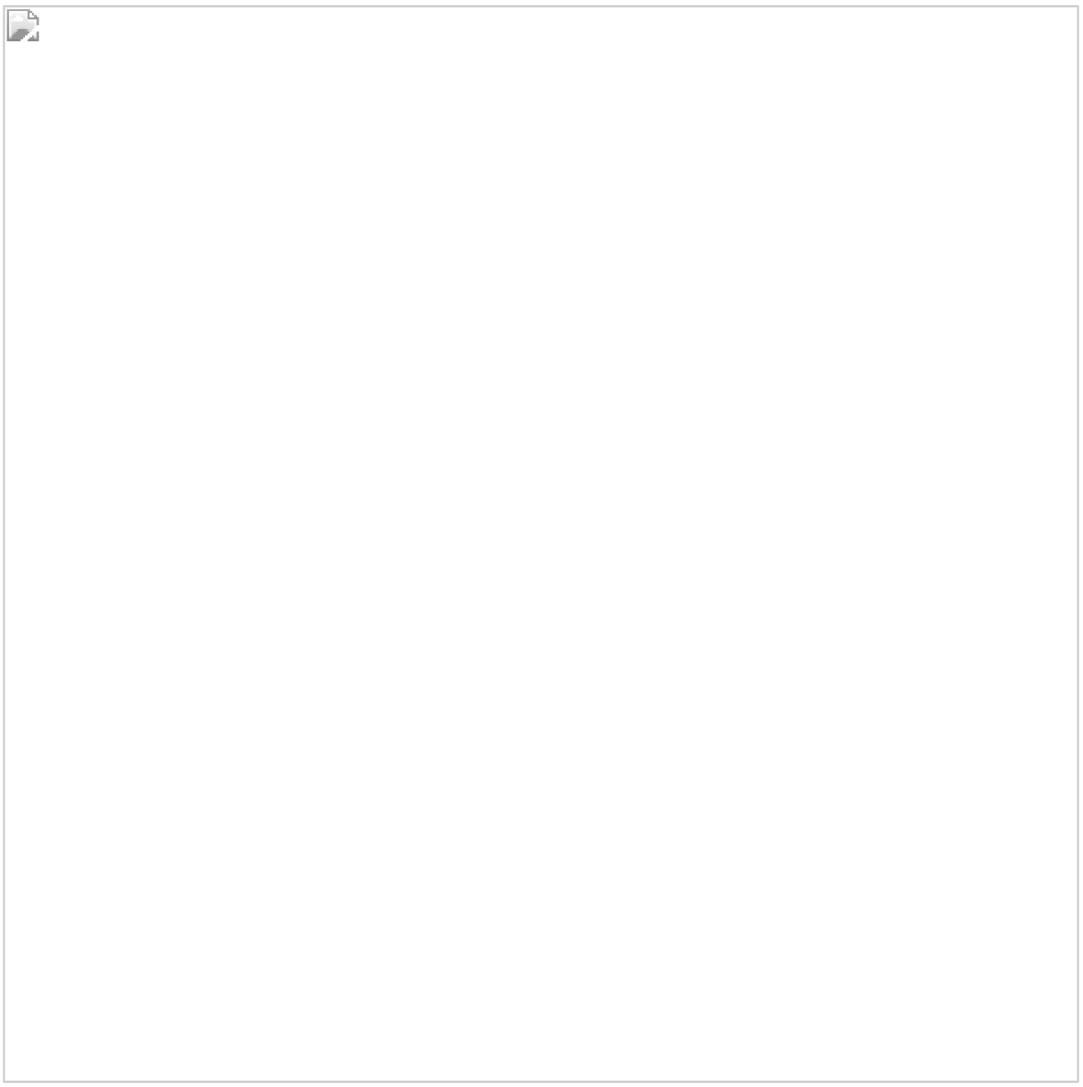
Then the great sea-monster came, lazily breasting the waves, and Perseus flew down from the sky like a shooting star.

When Andromeda looked up again, the monster was gone. A long black rock stood in the water, with the sea rippling quietly round it, and Perseus was coming back to her.

He carried her up the cliff, as a falcon carries a dove, and all the people came with songs and dances to welcome her.

TALK ABOUT IT

What do you think Andromeda's mother and father said when they saw her safe?

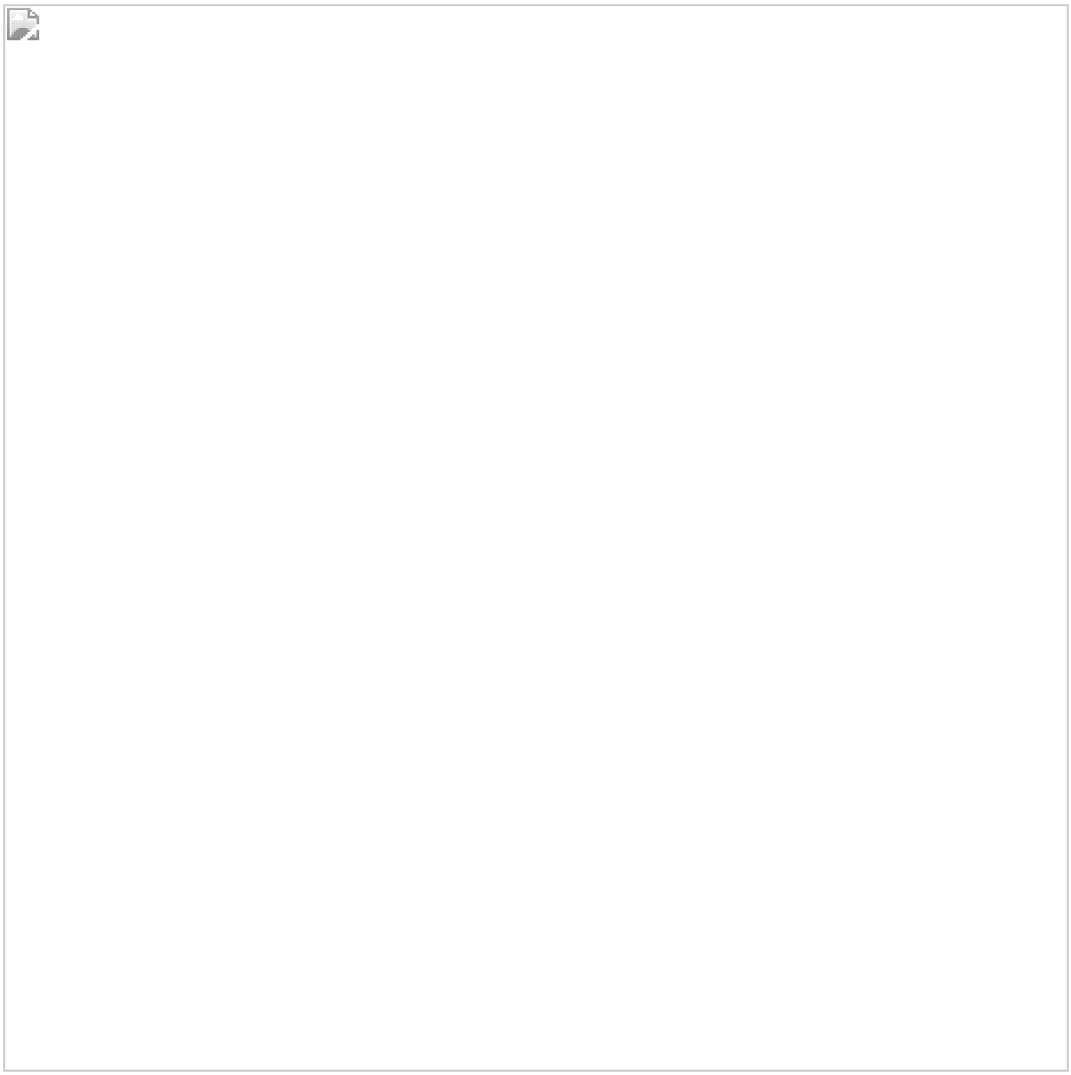


Think about it

1. What was left where the sea-monster had been?

- ○ A boat
- ○ A long black rock
- ○ A shell

Home Again



“Of your kingdom will I have none,” Perseus told Andromeda's father, “for I long after the pleasant land of Greece, and my mother who waits for me at home.”

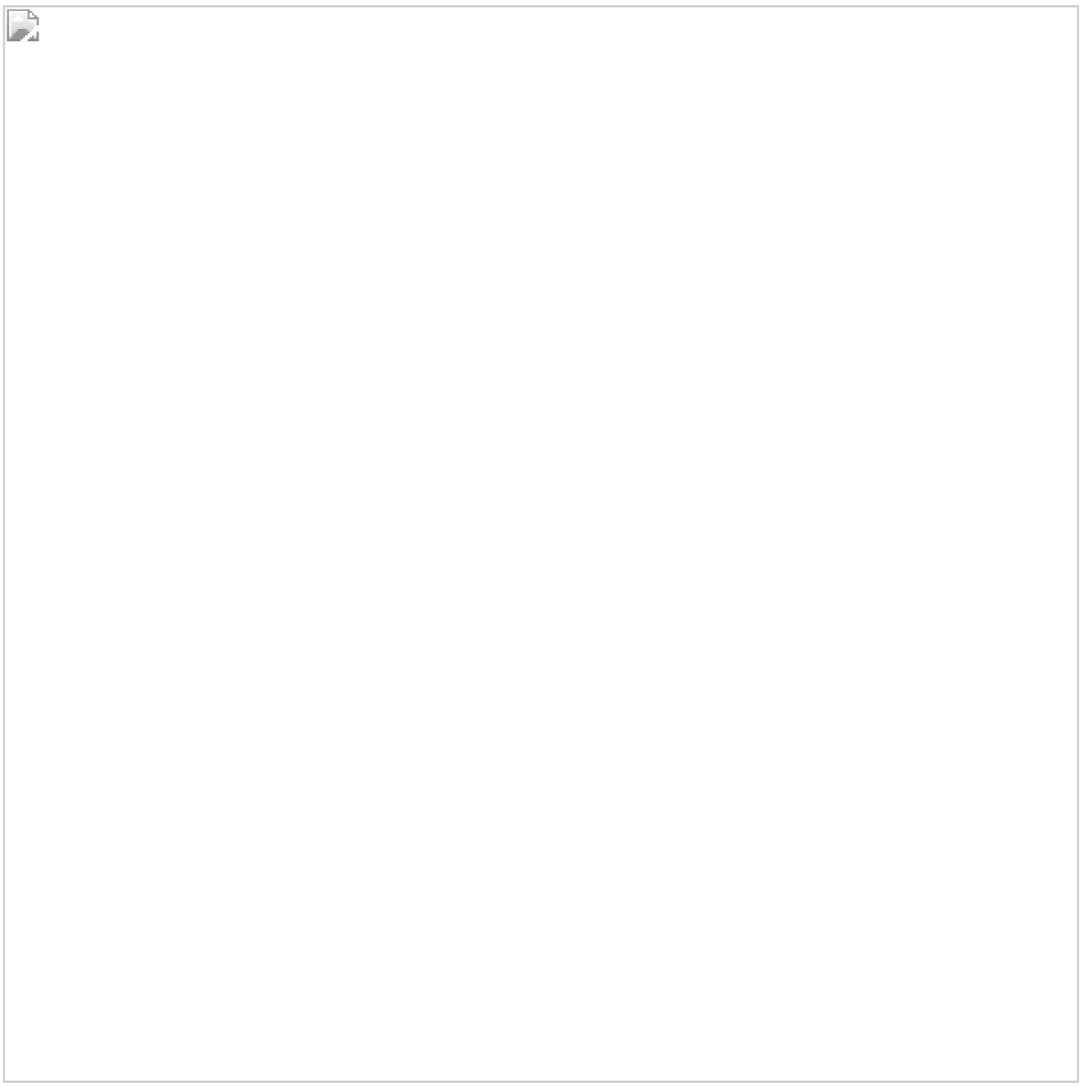
After the wedding, Athene took back the sword, sandals and hat in a dream. Perseus sailed home with Andromeda to his mother and Dictys. He had been away seven years.

Polydectes was feasting. “Have you found it more easy to promise than to fulfil?” he sneered. “Those whom the gods help fulfil their promises,” said Perseus. He held up the Gorgon's head. “Behold!” Polydectes and his guests turned to cold gray stone.

Perseus gave the island to good Dictys.

TALK ABOUT IT

Perseus said he had help from the gods. Why do you think he gave the island to Dictys?

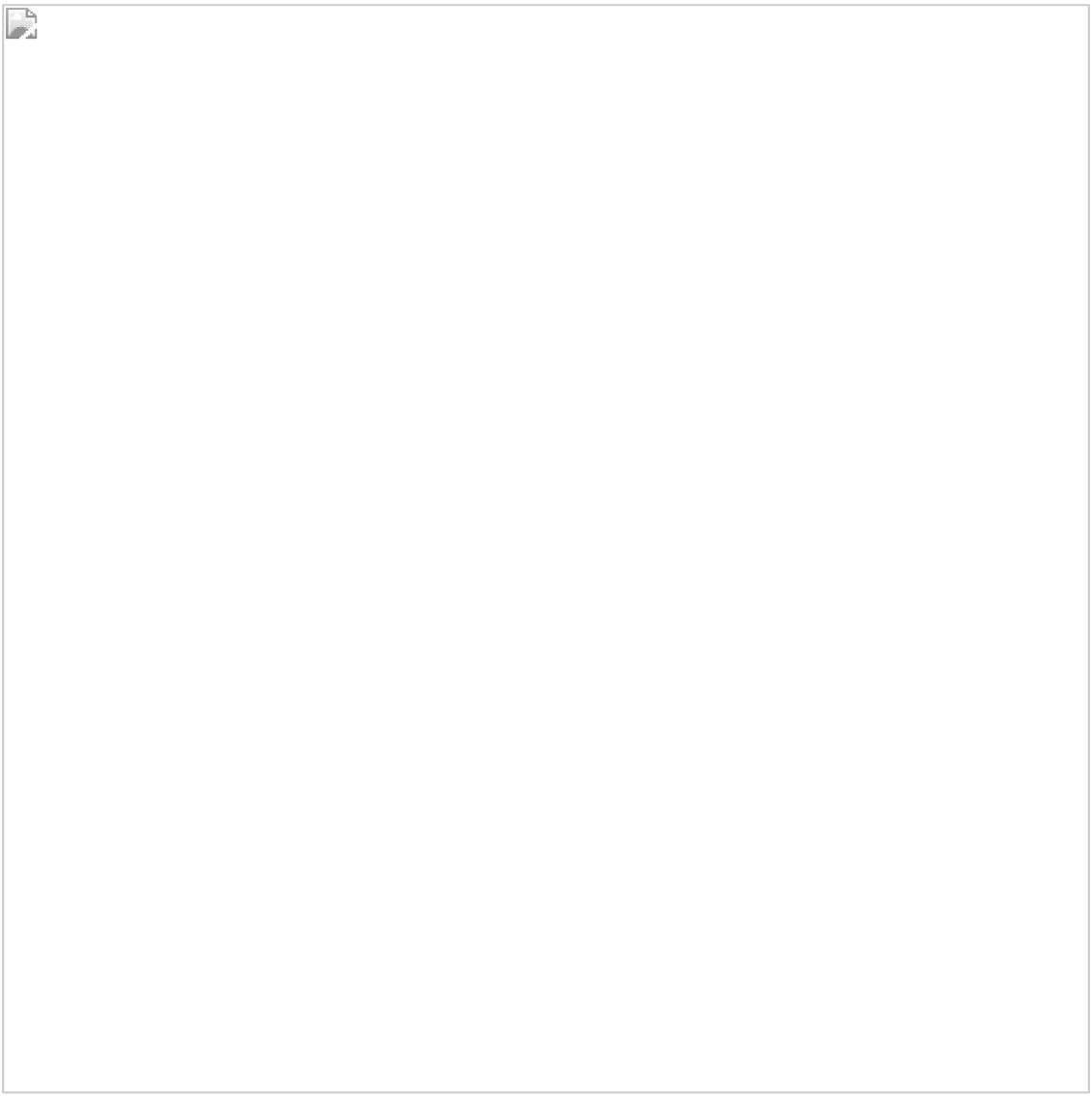


Think about it

1. Who did Perseus give the island to?

- ○ Polydectes
- ○ Andromeda's father
- ○ Good Dictys

The Games



Perseus wanted to find his grandfather, the king who had sent him out to sea as a baby. “Surely he will love me now that I am come home with honor,” he said.

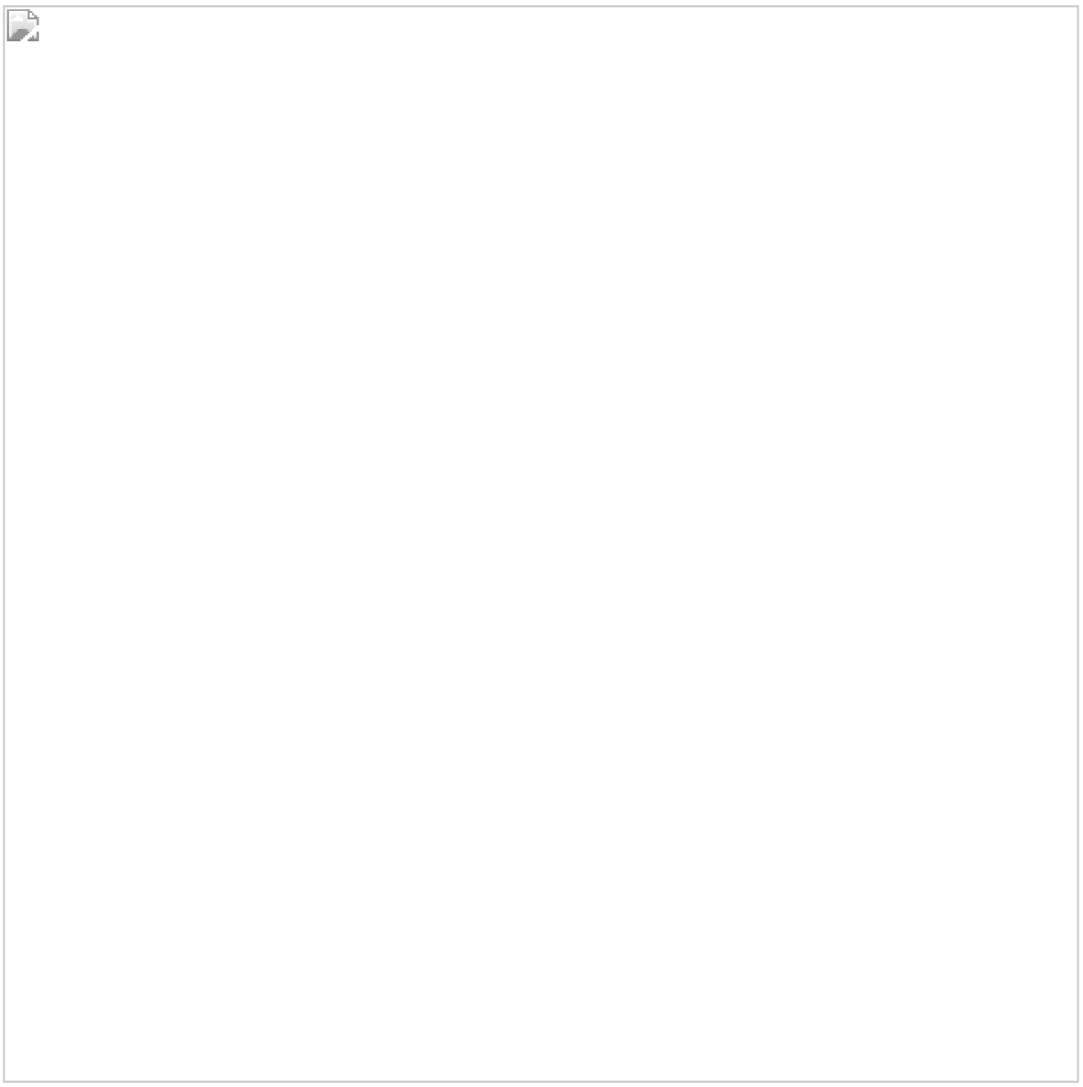
At games in the old king's land, Perseus won four crowns without saying who he was. Then he hurled the quoit, hoping for a fifth to lay at his grandfather's feet.

But a gust of wind carried the quoit aside, and it struck the old man. He did not get up again.

Perseus wept. He told everyone who he was, and he was cleansed of blame at the temple, because it had been an accident.

TALK ABOUT IT

Perseus came to the games hoping to make peace with his grandfather. How do you think it was for him to be sad about something he never meant to do?

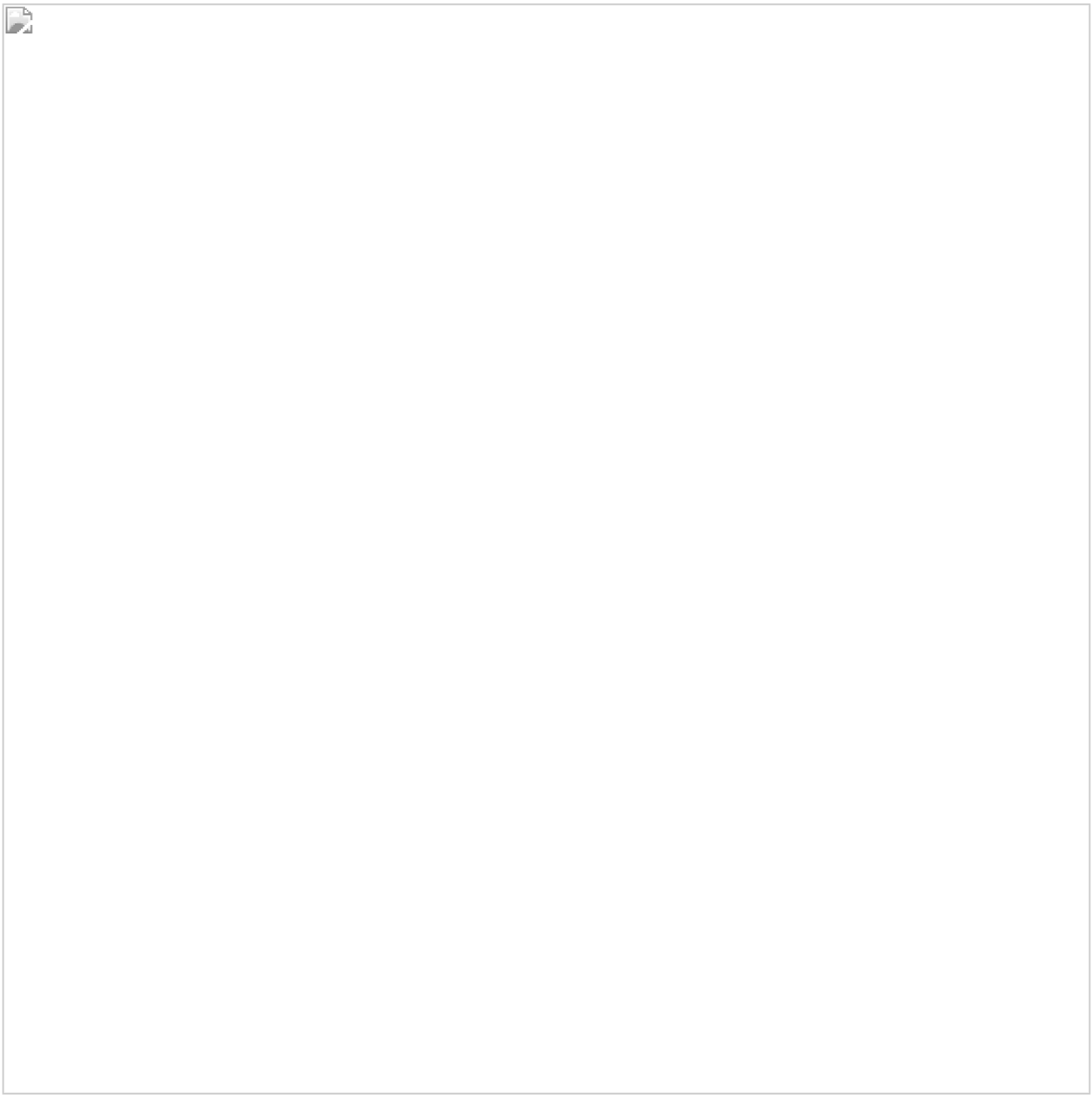


Think about it

1. Why did Perseus go to the games?

- ○ To find his grandfather
- ○ To win gold
- ○ To meet Medusa

Stars for Sailors

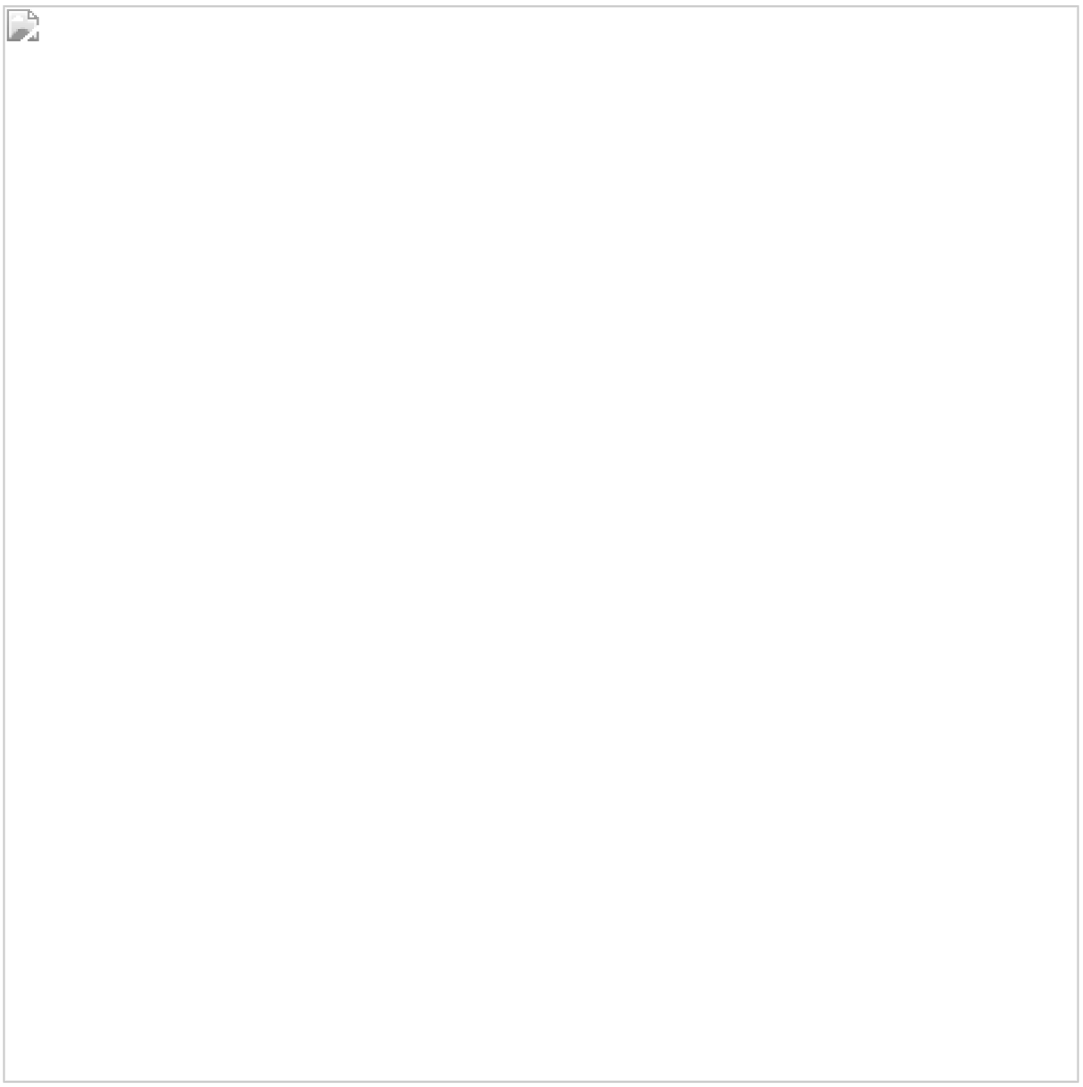


Perseus went home and ruled well with Andromeda. They had four sons and three daughters.

When they died, the old Greeks said, Athene took them up to the sky. All night, Perseus and Andromeda shine as a beacon for sailors who are wandering at sea.

TALK ABOUT IT

Perseus and Andromeda became stars to guide sailors. What is something you could do that would help someone find their way?



Think about it

1. What do Perseus and Andromeda do in the sky?

- ○ Fight monsters
- ○ Shine as a beacon for sailors
- ○ Hide behind clouds

2. What part of the story is your favorite? Why?

“There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”

— Yeshua HaMashiach

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