



storytime™

# WE ARE HEROES

PROTECTING YOURSELF AND OTHERS

1

IN THIS ISSUE

**PEGASUS  
PERSEUS  
AND MEDUSA  
PLUS**

**fun puzzles,  
activities,  
games and  
much more!**

## Welcome to **Storytime: We Are Heroes**, a new supplement that retells classic stories for modern times!

In the past, our ancestors told myths and legends about brave men, women, children and even animals facing their fears and coping with challenging situations.

Many of these myths were created hundreds or thousands of years ago, but they still have lessons to teach us today. **Storytime: We Are Heroes** is a special set of six supplements that feature myths and legends that are particularly relevant to the challenges we are facing in the current COVID-19 crisis.

We encourage parents and carers to read these stories with children, discuss the **Story Quest!** questions with them, and even help them do the puzzles in the **Playbox** section.

**We Are Heroes** is a set of six special supplements that is being published monthly from October 2020 to March 2021 by **Storytime**, 90 London Rd, London, SE1 6LN.

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# PEGASUS

**L**ong before the time of mighty Hercules, there was another great Greek hero. You might not have heard of him, but his name was Bellerophon and he was the son of Poseidon – the powerful god of the sea.

Although Bellerophon was brave and honest, he often had bad luck. First his brother died, and then, when he visited the court of King Proetus in Argos, the king's wife fell in love with him. When the handsome young hero rejected her, she was offended and told lies about him to the king! The king believed her and threatened to take Bellerophon's life unless he agreed to slay the deadliest monster of all – a fire-breathing horror known as the Chimera.

The Chimera had the tail of a dragon and three heads – one of a lion, one of a goat and one of a serpent. It also breathed red-hot flames. The Chimera lived in the mountains of Lycia, where it terrorised people and animals alike.

Courageous Bellerophon wasn't afraid, but he knew that to defeat this dangerous beast, he would need a special weapon.

He went to see the oracle, Polyidus, for advice. Wise Polyidus told him that he could beat the Chimera with the help of the winged horse, Pegasus. ➡



“So Pegasus really does exist!” said Bellerophon. He had heard many tales about this magnificent creature, but he had never believed them.

“Indeed,” said the oracle. “Pegasus sprang from the head of Medusa when Perseus defeated her. He is every bit as wondrous as you have heard. Once, when he landed on Mount Helicon, a fountain of the sweetest and most delicious water in the world sprang from his hoofprint. Legend has it that Pegasus often drinks there.”

“But how can I win this magical creature’s trust?” asked Bellerophon.

“You will need help, young man,” said Polyidus. “Take some gifts to the

temple of the goddess Athena. She may speak to you in your dreams.”

Bellerophon left for Athena’s temple, carrying many gifts. He knelt at the temple’s altar and prayed for help catching Pegasus, before falling asleep on the floor.

The goddess Athena came to him in his dreams, just as he had hoped.

“Brave hero,” she said, “this will lure the winged wonder that you seek.” And she held out a bridle made from pure gold, adorned with exquisite embroidery.

When Bellerophon woke at dawn, he was astonished to find the golden bridle by his side – it was no dream,





and Athena really had visited him! Filled with confidence, he set off to find the famed fountain of Mount Helicon, hoping that Pegasus would be there.

When he arrived, Bellerophon knew at once that this was a magical place. The grass was lusher and greener than any he had seen before, there was a carpet of sweet-scented wild flowers around the fountain in every colour of the rainbow, and the water itself sparkled like a million crystals.

Bellerophon found a hiding-place and waited for Pegasus. Several days and nights passed, with the hero often mistaking a rustle of leaves for a rush of wings, or the splash of the fountain for the sound of a hoof.

But he didn't give up, and waited patiently for the creature to appear.



At last, one night, when the full moon was shining brightly, Bellerophon was stunned to see Pegasus land next to the fountain. The horse's silvery wings seemed to radiate moonlight and his body was muscular and powerful, yet had all the elegance of a swan.

Bellerophon rose slowly and walked towards the fountain, where Pegasus sipped. When the magical horse saw him, he let out a nervous whinny and stepped backwards, but Bellerophon held out the golden bridle to him. ➡



### HOW DO YOU SAY IT?

Bellerophon: *buh-**ler**-uh-fon*

Poseidon: *poh-**sahyd**-n*

Pegasus: *peg-uh-suhs*

Chimera: *ki-**meer**-uh*

Olympus: *uh-**lim**-puhs*

Zeus: *zoos*

Pegasus looked at the bridle with great curiosity and took a step towards it, and then another step, and another. To Bellerophon's surprise, the winged horse slipped his head straight into the bridle, having been enchanted by its magical powers!

Bellerophon stroked the horse's mane. "Pegasus, my beautiful steed, will you let me ride you and help me to defeat the Chimera?"

Pegasus neighed in reply. Bellerophon mounted him, and they soared away into the night sky, climbing higher and higher until Bellerophon felt as if he could touch the stars. Excited by the journey ahead, he cried:

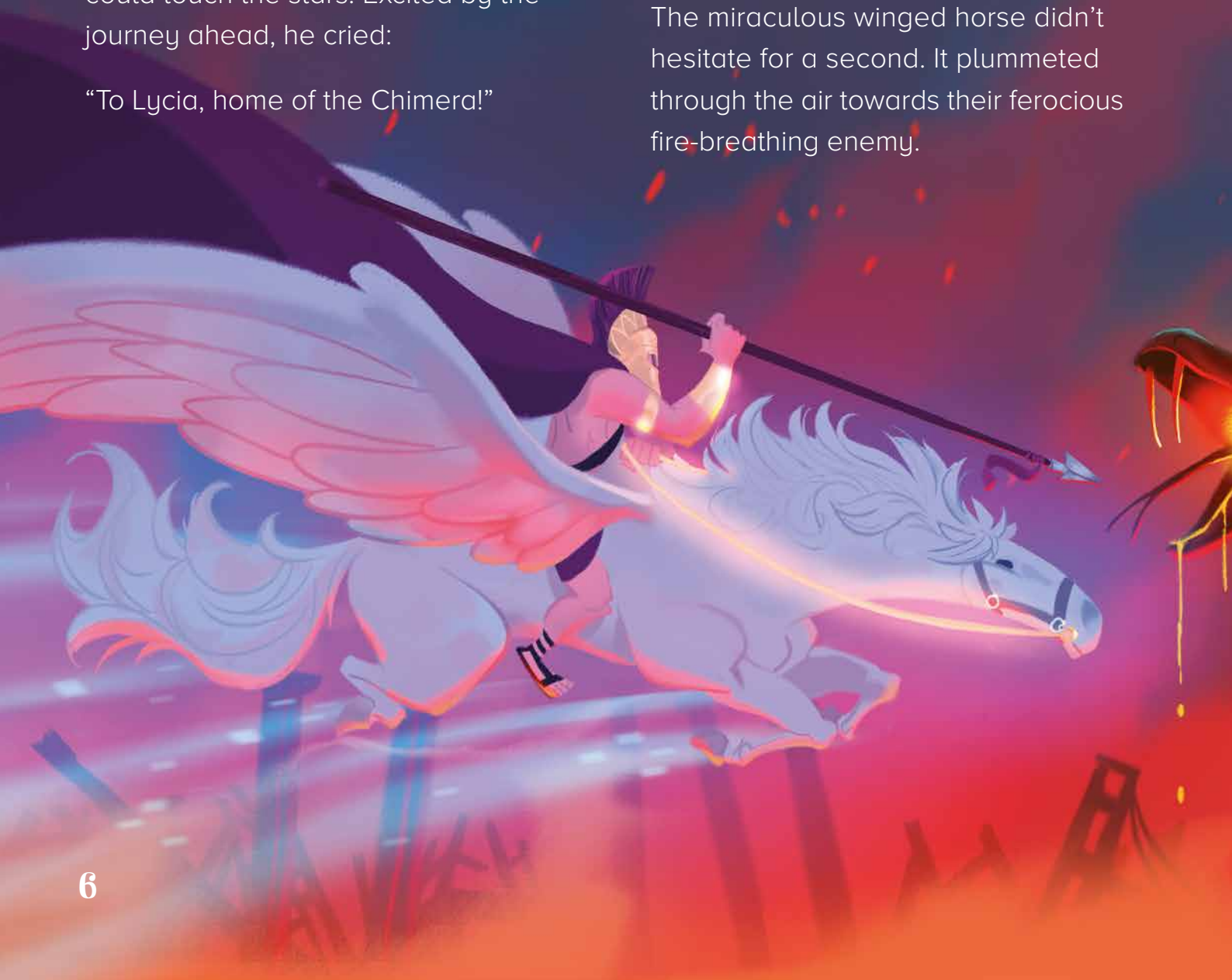
"To Lycia, home of the Chimera!"

Pegasus effortlessly changed direction, speeding towards their destination as swiftly as an arrow in flight.

They spotted the Chimera's searing flames long before they spotted the beast itself. In the dead of night, it had invaded a mountain village in Lycia, burning many homes to ashes. Men, women and children were grabbing anything they could to fight off the monster and save themselves.

The Chimera was looming over a young boy and about to lunge at him, when Bellerophon cried out, "Now, Pegasus! Now!"

The miraculous winged horse didn't hesitate for a second. It plummeted through the air towards their ferocious fire-breathing enemy.





When they were just an arm's length away from the monster, Bellerophon pulled out his spear. Narrowly avoiding a jet of searing-hot flames, he plunged the spear into the Chimera's heart, dealing it a fatal wound.

Pegasus landed safely and the young boy scrambled out of the way just in time, as the three horrible heads of the Chimera came crashing to the ground.

Its flames and its reign of terror were extinguished forever. The beast was dead and the people of Lycia were safe at last!

Triumphant, Bellerophon rode Pegasus all the way back to Argos to tell King Proetus the news.

The king forgave him, and declared him the bravest adventurer he had ever met. Bellerophon stayed at the court and took on even more heroic quests, before eventually marrying the king's daughter.

Pegasus, however, flew to Mount Olympus, where he was welcomed by the gods and treated with the greatest respect and care. He was considered to be the most important of all the magical creatures they owned.

The ruler of the gods, Zeus, valued Pegasus so highly that he gave the winged horse the job of carrying his thunder and lightning for him. So if you ever see a shimmering streak of white on a stormy night, it might just be Pegasus cantering across the sky. ★



# PERSEUS AND MEDUSA

**L**ong ago in Ancient Greece, there lived a strong, handsome and brave young man called Perseus. He was the son of Danae, the princess of Argos, and his father was the mighty god Zeus.

Perseus and his mother lived on an island that was ruled by King Polydectes – a cruel and vicious tyrant. The king kept asking for Princess Danae’s hand in marriage, but she always refused him. Perseus didn’t like the foul-tempered king, and did all he could to protect his mother.

King Polydectes hated being rejected, though, so he came up with a plan to rid himself of pesky Perseus. He arranged a great banquet, invited all the young men of the island to join him and insisted that they all bring gifts.

Alas, Perseus was far too poor to buy anything, so when he arrived at the banquet, he was the only guest who didn’t have a present. The scheming king taunted Perseus for daring to turn up empty-handed.



## HOW DO YOU SAY IT?

Perseus: **pur**-see-uhs  
Polydectes: poly-**dek**-teez  
Hermes: **hur**-meez  
Athena: uh-**thee**-nuh  
Gorgon: **gawr**-guhn  
Medusa: muh-**doo**-suh



Perseus was ashamed, but rather than show it, he claimed that he could get the king whatever he desired. Polydectes was delighted by the offer and demanded that Perseus bring him the head of Medusa. Medusa was a Gorgon – a terrible creature with the face of a beautiful woman, and writhing venomous snakes on her head instead of hair. A single glance from Medusa could instantly turn a person to stone.

Perseus had walked straight into the cunning king's trap. Polydectes was certain that Perseus would never survive such a dangerous quest.

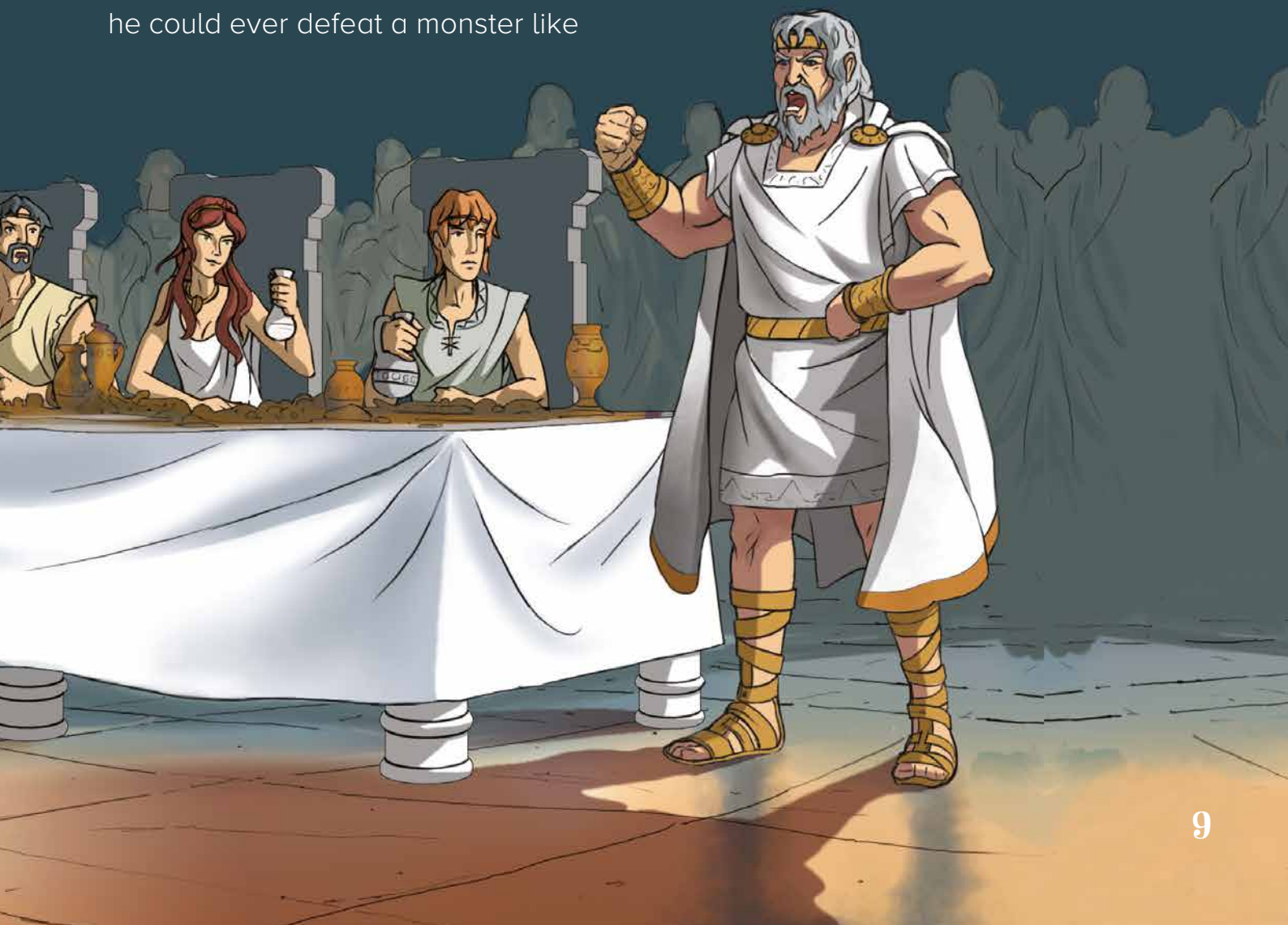


That night, Perseus felt despair – without a weapon, he didn't know how he could ever defeat a monster like

Medusa, let alone find her secret lair! Many brave adventurers had tried before him and they had never returned. In desperation, Perseus prayed to the gods for help.

Because he was the son of Zeus, the gods heard Perseus's plea and took pity on him. Moments later, the messenger god Hermes and Athena, the goddess of courage and wisdom, appeared before him. Hermes gave Perseus his own winged sandals, so that he could fly anywhere, and Athena handed him her shield, which was polished like a mirror.

She warned Perseus that he must only look at Medusa's reflection in the shield and never directly at her face. ➡

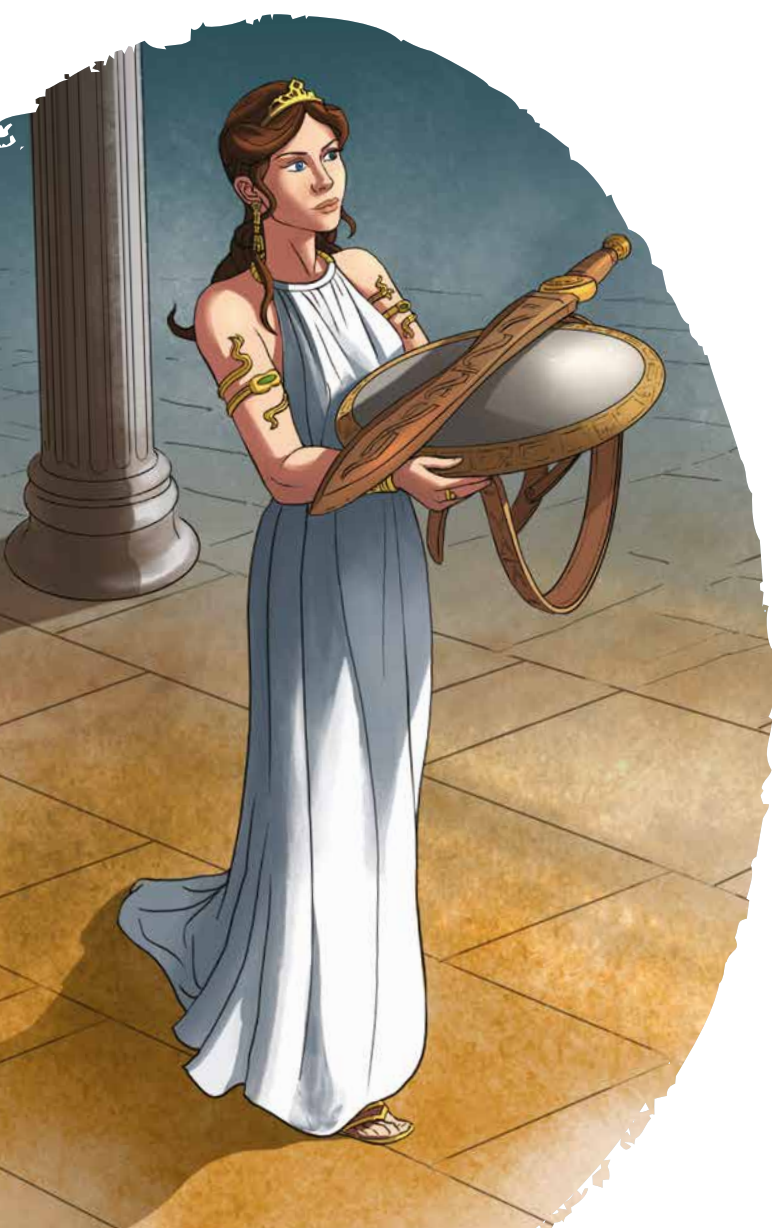


The goddess also gave Perseus a magnificent sword, a magical cap that made him invisible, and a bag to carry Medusa's head safely.

The gods told Perseus to seek three witches called the Grey Sisters – only they could direct him to Medusa's lair.

Armed with his weapons and filled with courage, Perseus strapped on the winged sandals and went in search of the Grey Sisters.

When at last Perseus found their cave, he saw that they were hideous old hags with just one eye and one tooth to share between the three of them.



Perseus hid outside for a while and watched the witches argue bitterly over the single eye. As one sister reluctantly rolled the eye across the cave floor towards another, he quickly grabbed it. He threatened to throw it away unless they told him where Medusa was hiding.

The witches screamed in horror, but finally gave Perseus the directions. He returned their eye and set off again, flying high across the stormy seas to Medusa's secret lair.

On his approach, Perseus could see that Medusa's home was a dreadfully cold and stony place, with no trees or animals nearby. As he drew closer, he shivered with fear as he realised that many of the stones were actually the statues of men who had looked Medusa in the eye – each statue bore a look of sheer terror.

Taking great care to look only in the reflection on Athena's shield, Perseus

## THE POWER OF PROTECTION

In ancient times, warriors carried shields and wore armour to protect themselves from their enemies' weapons. In legends, heroes often wear magic armour when they go on special quests – for example, Perseus is given



quietly crept into a deep, dark cave, which was filled with the echoing sound of hissing. With one hand gripped on his sword, he stepped carefully over the stony remains of Medusa's victims and deeper into the darkness.



Finally, in the reflection of his shield, he found Medusa sleeping in a dark, dank corner. She looked more horrible than he could ever have imagined and, though she was deep in slumber, the snakes on her head were wide awake.

As Perseus approached, the snakes began to wriggle violently and hiss wildly. Perseus tiptoed towards Medusa but, just as he was about to swoop down his sword, she opened her eyes and let out a blood-curdling scream. Perseus leapt back and his sword came down, slicing through the heads of some of the snakes.



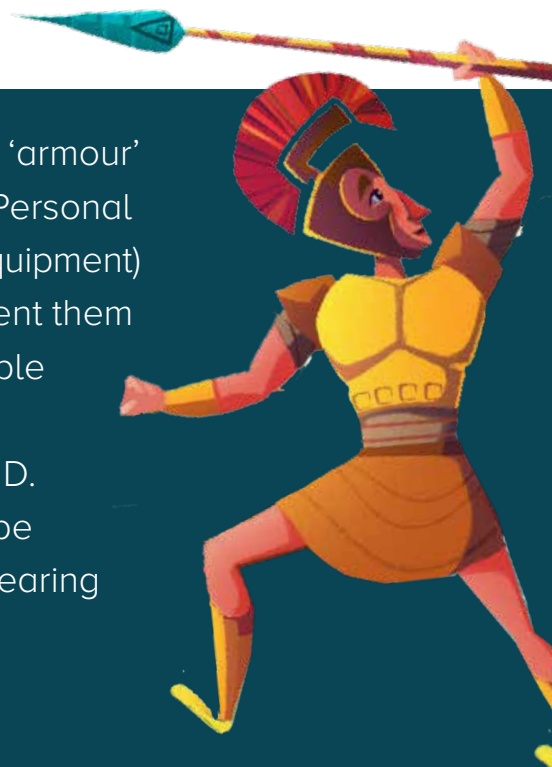
Perseus knew he had to work swiftly so, without taking his eyes off the reflection in his shield, he lunged forwards and chopped off Medusa's head. It rolled across the floor, with the snakes still writhing and spitting. ➡

a cap of invisibility and a mirrored shield to help him in his quest to hunt down Medusa.

In modern times, we don't need armour to protect us from weapons (unless we are a soldier!). However, we do still have gear to protect us – like helmets when we go cycling and kneepads for skating.

When the COVID-19 illness became a problem, people put on another piece

of protective 'armour' called PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) to help prevent them and the people around them getting COVID. People can be heroes by wearing their PPE!





To thank the goddess Athena for her help, Perseus gave her Medusa's head, and Athena put it on the front of her shield. Come up with your own shield design on page 15!

As quickly as he could, Perseus grabbed her head and stuffed it into his bag.

Unfortunately, Medusa's scream had roused her two Gorgon sisters and they flew towards Perseus, clawing and hissing at him. Perseus used all his strength to fight his way out of their lair. At last, on his winged sandals, he soared away. With the help of the gods, Perseus had succeeded in his quest.

Brave Perseus flew home feeling excited and proud. However, on his return, he was angered to discover that King

Polydectes was about to force his mother to marry him. Perseus realised that he had been tricked by the king!

In a great rage, he stormed into the king's court and grabbed Medusa's head from his bag. In an instant, King Polydectes was turned to stone. The king's face was twisted in terror at the sight of the dreaded Gorgon.

Perseus's mother was freed and the people of the island rejoiced to be rid of such a wicked ruler. Perseus was treated like a great hero – the hero who killed the snake-haired Gorgon. ★



# STORY QUEST!

The stories of Pegasus and Perseus and Medusa are exciting tales about heroes who defeated serious threats – with a little help from magical items! Answer these questions to explore the ideas in these stories.

1

When Bellerophon and Perseus were given the job of fighting horrible monsters, what did they both do?

2

What is a similar action that you could take in real life when you are faced with a challenging situation?

3

What were the five items that the gods gave to Perseus to help defeat Medusa?

4

What item did Zeus give to Bellerophon to help him in his quest to beat the Chimera?

5

In modern life we don't have magical items, but we do have some things that we can use to protect ourselves from dangers! Can you list three protective things that you have, and what they protect you from?

1. \_\_\_\_\_ helps protect me from \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_ helps protect me from \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_ helps protect me from \_\_\_\_\_

6

In the myths found in this issue, the people were threatened by the Chimera and Medusa – what do you think are different dangers that we face today?

RIDDLE

What is Medusa's favourite kind of cheese?

Answers: 1. They asked for advice and got the gear they needed to do the job; 2. You could ask other people for help and advice; 3. Winged sandals, a mirrored shield, a sword, a cap of invisibility and a bag; 4. A bridle to tame Pegasus with. Riddle: gorgon-zold!

# storytime

# PLAYBOX

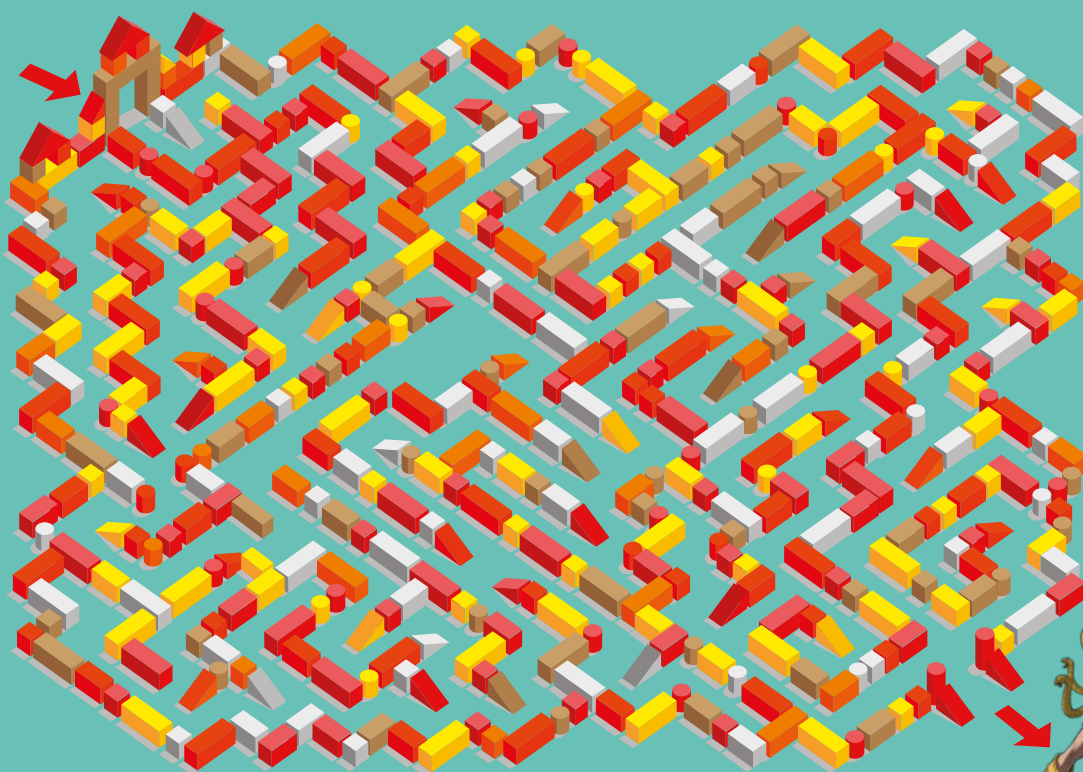
We hope you liked the thrilling tales about monster-fighting heroes! Now, see if you can help Perseus get through a maze, create your own monster, and complete our challenging crossword!

1



## MEDUSA'S MAZE

Can you help Perseus find his way to the end of the cave where the wicked Medusa lies in wait?



2

## ODD ONES OUT

Uh-oh! Perseus has left his magic items in a mess on the floor! Tick off the items given to him by the gods when you find them!



The items are:

- ☐ Sword
- ☐ Winged sandals
- ☐ Shield
- ☐ Cap of invisibility
- ☐ Magic bag



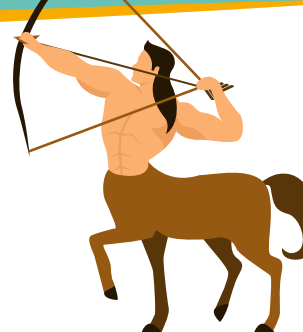


## 3 MONSTER MAKER

Draw your own mythical monster by mixing up two or more normal animals! (We have put pictures of other mythical beasts around the frame to give you ideas!)

My monster is called:

---



## 4 SHIELD ART!

Greek warriors liked to decorate their shields with cool designs or pictures of monsters. Draw your own on the blank shield to the left!

Answers on next page!

# HEROES CROSSWORD

## ANAGRAM TIME!

Arrange the coloured letters to work out what the last word is: "Social distancing helps to protect your..."

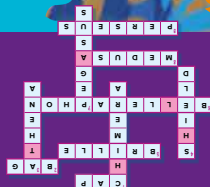


## ACROSS

1. What piece of clothing made Perseus invisible?
2. What did Perseus put Medusa's head in?
5. What did Bellerophon use to tame Pegasus?
6. The hero who slew the Chimera
8. The Gorgon whom Perseus promised to kill
9. The brave hero who defeated Medusa

## DOWN

1. A monster with the heads of a lion, goat and snake
3. The goddess who gave Perseus a mirrored shield
4. What did Perseus use to protect himself?
7. The winged horse from Greek mythology



ANSWERS: 1. Medusa's Maze – see right; Heroes Crossword – see right; Anagram Time! HEALTH (anagram)