

The Lightning Thief (Percy Jackson and the Olympians, Book 1)

By Rick Riordan

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Percy Jackson is a good kid, but he can't seem to focus on his schoolwork or control his temper. And lately, being away at boarding school is only getting worse-Percy could have sworn his pre-algebra teacher turned into a monster and tried to kill him. When Percy's mom finds out, she knows it's time that he knew the truth about where he came from, and that he go to the one place he'll be safe. She sends Percy to Camp Half Blood, a summer camp for demigods (on Long Island), where he learns that the father he never knew is Poseidon, God of the Sea. Soon a mystery unfolds and together with his friends -- one a satyr and the other the demigod daughter of Athena -- Percy sets out on a quest across the United States to reach the gates of the Underworld (located in a recording studio in Hollywood) and prevent a catastrophic war between the gods.

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The Lightning Thief (Percy Jackson and the Olympians, Book 1) By Rick Riordan Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Book Description

Percy Jackson is about to be kicked out of boarding school...again. And that's the least of his troubles. Lately, mythological monsters and the gods of Mount Olympus seem to be walking straight out of the pages of Percy's Greek mythology textbook and into his life. And worse, he's angered a few of them. Zeus's master lightning bolt has been stolen, and Percy is the prime suspect.

Now Percy and his friends have just ten days to find and return Zeus's stolen property and bring peace to a warring Mount Olympus. But to succeed on his quest, Percy will have to do more than catch the true thief: he must come to terms with the father who abandoned him; solve the riddle of the Oracle, which warns him of betrayal by a friend; and unravel a treachery more powerful than the gods themselves.

This first installment of Rick Riordan's best-selling series is a non-stop thrill-ride and a classic of mythic proportions.

Amazon Interview: Rick Riordan on *The Lightning Thief*



In our exclusive Q&A with Rick Riordan, bestselling author of the Percy Jackson and the Olympians series, learn about his inspiration for the character Percy Jackson, his long-time interest in Greek mythology, and more.

Amazon.com: Since *The Lightning Thief* was published in 2005 it’s sold more than a million copies, and the four subsequent books in the Percy Jackson and the Olympians series have been blockbuster bestsellers among kids and adult readers alike. When you were writing the first story starring Percy Jackson, did you

ever imagine it would become such a phenomenon? How has the success of the series affected your life?

Rick Riordan: I had no expectations other than to make a good story for my older son, Haley. I had no idea it would become a book, much less a series, until he encouraged me to write down the story.

I hoped the stories would get kids reading, but I never anticipated such exponential growth. It was not an overnight success, nor was it heavily marketed at the beginning. *The Lightning Thief* was passed around from kid to kid, teacher to teacher, parent to parent, and the series got bigger with each book. It really was a grassroots phenomenon. Still, I have trouble thinking in terms of millions. I measure success by anecdotes--the kid who told me he never liked books until he found *The Lightning Thief*, the parent who thanked me for turning her daughter into a reader, the teacher who said I turned her class around because they bonded over reading Percy Jackson every day. That's what it's all about for me.

It hasn't changed our life much other than making me busier, but doing something I love! I still drive the same car. My kids go to the same schools. We try our best to keep things simple at home.

Amazon.com: You've said that you wrote this series for your son, Haley, who, like the book's hero Percy, has been diagnosed with ADHD and dyslexia. How does Haley feel about being the inspiration for a bestselling series?

Riordan: Both my sons are always my first audience. I read the manuscripts to them aloud to make sure they work for young readers. Both are proud, though being teenagers they are also embarrassed by the attention they get sometimes. They don't like it when classmates ask them to get my autograph. Haley likes to play down his importance in the genesis of the series, but I think he's enjoyed growing up with Percy, and I know it has increased his interest in writing. Recently he came into my office and announced the manuscript he is working on now has a bigger word count than mine!

Amazon.com: Percy's stories are based on Greek mythology--classic tales that have been passed down for thousands of years. What lessons can kids today learn from the ancient myths?

Riordan: The stories have everything--romance, magic, mystery, action, and great characters. The Greek gods are our first superheroes. They have amazing powers, but they are also very human and subject to jealousy, envy, anger, etc. Kids especially respond to them because they are both powerful and accessible. Who wouldn't want to be the son or daughter of a Greek god? By reading about the struggles of gods and heroes, we learn a lot about being human, and that's something that hasn't changed over the millennia.

Amazon.com: Have you ever visited Greece? What was it like?

Riordan: I've been to both Italy and Greece, but only after I finished the Percy Jackson series, which is ironic. One doesn't need to travel there, however, to appreciate the stories from mythology. Those are quite universal. Greece actually reminded me quite a bit of my home in Texas--hot, green, hilly, somewhat arid, except the ocean is much better in Greece.

Amazon.com: Percy's guardian satyr, Grover, is strongly connected to the Earth, the well-being of animals, and humans' emotions. Moreover, Percy's life is relatively free of technology, in contrast to many people today. Is there a message about the natural world that you're hoping to convey through Percy and Grover?

Riordan: I don't consciously put messages in the books, because my job is telling a good story, not preaching. However, I do pick up on themes from Greek mythology that still resonate in the modern world, and certainly man's relationship to nature is one of those. I've always been fascinated by the god Pan, and his reported death in ancient times. It seemed a very relevant theme for modern readers.

Amazon.com: Percy encounters many dangers throughout his adventures--some that could be considered beyond the abilities of a normal 12-year-old. Though we know Percy is no normal kid, where does he find the find the strength to overcome all the challenges that he encounters?

Riordan: None of us knows what we're capable of until we are called to action. Percy may have demigod abilities, but he's a very normal kid in a lot of ways. He goes from a 12-year-old who is unsure of himself and his relationship with his friends and family, to a 16-year-old young man who steps up and leads a war to save Olympus. Most heroes are born out of dire circumstances, and Percy is no exception. He's afraid, unsure, doubtful, angry--all the things we would be if we were called to deal with a crisis. But he does the job anyway, and that is the definition of courage.

Amazon.com: It’s often said that writers write about what they know. Were you interested in the ancient world when you were Percy’s age? What kinds of books were your favorites when you were a kid?

Riordan: I've always loved mythology. I had a great English teacher who showed me that *The Lord of the Rings* (the only series I would read at age thirteen) was based on Norse myths, and from then on, I was a mythology buff. I taught mythology in my own classroom when I became a teacher, and it was consistently my students' favorite unit.

Amazon.com: If you discovered, like Percy, that you were the son of a Greek god, who would you want your immortal parent to be?

Riordan: I'd like Poseidon or Athena, but with my luck, I'd end up with Dionysus.

From School Library Journal
Starred Review. Grade 5-9–An adventure-quest with a hip edge. At first glance, Perseus Jackson seems like a loser (readers meet him at a boarding school for troubled youth), but he's really the son of Poseidon and a mortal woman. As he discovers his heritage, he also loses that mother and falls into mortal danger. The gods (still very active in the 21st-century world) are about to go to war over a lost thunderbolt, so Percy and sidekicks Grover (a young satyr) and Annabeth (daughter of Athena) set out to retrieve it. Many close calls and monster-attacks later, they enter Hades's realm (via L.A.). A virtuoso description of the Underworld is matched by a later account of Olympus (hovering 600 floors above Manhattan). There's lots of zippy review of Greek myth and legend, and characters like Medusa, Procrustes, Charon, and the Eumenides get updates. Some of the Labors of Heracles or Odysseus's adventures are recycled, but nothing seems stale, and the breakneck pace keeps the action from being too predictable. Percy is an ADHD, wise-cracking, first-person narrator. Naturally, his real quest is for his own identity. Along the way, such topics as family, trust, war, the environment, dreams, and perceptions are raised. There is subtle social critique for sophisticated readers who can see it. Although the novel ends with a satisfying conclusion (and at least one surprise), it is clear that the story isn't over. The 12-year-old has matured and is ready for another quest, and the villain is at large. Readers will be eager to follow the young protagonist's next move.–*Patricia D. Lothrop, St. George's School, Newport, RI*
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From Booklist
Gr. 6-9. The escapades of the Greek gods and heroes get a fresh spin in the first book in the Percy Jackson and the Olympians series, about a contemporary 12-year-old New Yorker who learns he's a demigod. Perseus, aka Percy Jackson, thinks he has big problems. His father left before he was born, he's been kicked out of six schools in six years, he's dyslexic, and he has ADHD. What a surprise when he finds out that that's only the tip of the iceberg: he vaporizes his pre-algebra teacher, learns his best friend is a satyr, and is almost killed by a minotaur before his mother manages to get him to the safety of Camp Half-Blood--where he

discovers that Poseidon is his father. But that's a problem, too. Poseidon has been accused of stealing Zeus' lightning bolt, and unless Percy can return the bolt, humankind is doomed. Riordan's fast-paced adventure is fresh, dangerous, and funny. Percy is an appealing, but reluctant hero, the modernized gods are hilarious, and the parallels to Harry Potter are frequent and obvious. Because Riordan is faithful to the original myths, librarians should be prepared for a rush of readers wanting the classic stories. *Chris Sherman*
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Carmine Adams:

The book The Lightning Thief (Percy Jackson and the Olympians, Book 1) give you a sense of feeling enjoy for your spare time. You can use to make your capable considerably more increase. Book can to get your best friend when you getting stress or having big problem with the subject. If you can make looking at a book The Lightning Thief (Percy Jackson and the Olympians, Book 1) to become your habit, you can get much more advantages, like add your own personal capable, increase your knowledge about several or all subjects. It is possible to know everything if you like open and read a reserve The Lightning Thief (Percy Jackson and the Olympians, Book 1). Kinds of book are a lot of. It means that, science reserve or encyclopedia or others. So , how do you think about this guide?

Vanesa Thomas:

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