

# **The Lightning Thief Study Guide**

## **The Lightning Thief by Rick Riordan**

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# Contents

<a href="#">The Lightning Thief Study Guide.....</a>	<a href="#">1</a>
<a href="#">Contents.....</a>	<a href="#">2</a>
<a href="#">Plot Summary.....</a>	<a href="#">3</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 1-2.....</a>	<a href="#">6</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 3-4.....</a>	<a href="#">9</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 5-6.....</a>	<a href="#">12</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 7-8.....</a>	<a href="#">14</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 9-10.....</a>	<a href="#">17</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 11-12.....</a>	<a href="#">20</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 13-14.....</a>	<a href="#">22</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 15-16.....</a>	<a href="#">24</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 17-18.....</a>	<a href="#">27</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 19-20.....</a>	<a href="#">29</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 21-22.....</a>	<a href="#">32</a>
<a href="#">Characters.....</a>	<a href="#">35</a>
<a href="#">Symbols and Symbolism.....</a>	<a href="#">42</a>
<a href="#">Settings.....</a>	<a href="#">44</a>
<a href="#">Themes and Motifs.....</a>	<a href="#">46</a>
<a href="#">Styles.....</a>	<a href="#">51</a>
<a href="#">Quotes.....</a>	<a href="#">53</a>

# Plot Summary

The Lightning Thief, the first in the Percy Jackson series, by Rick Riordan, begins with Percy Jackson taking a school trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Not everything is what it seems, as Percy's math teacher turns into a Fury and attacks him. Percy is able to defeat the monster through the use of a bronze sword. In the aftermath of the attack though Percy is surprised to find that nobody has ever heard of the math teacher before, making him wonder if it had been real or just a hallucination. Not even his best friend, Grover, knows what he is talking about.

As the end of the year draws near Grover insists on escorting Percy home from school. He believes that Percy is in some kind of danger, but can't say what. Here, readers are introduced to Percy's parents. His mother, Sally, is a kind-hearted woman who longs to be a writer. Sadly, she has never been able to achieve those dreams and works at a candy shop just to make ends meet. She is married to Gabe Ugliano, Percy's stepfather, who hates him. Gabe treats Percy like a resident at the house instead of a stepson, believing that Percy should provide him with money in exchange for room and board. Percy is not only frustrated with Gabe's behavior, but also his mother for sending him away to boarding school every year.

Percy and his mother attend a weekend retreat at the beach, where they are met with a horrible storm. In the evening Grover appears and reveals himself to actually be a mystical creature, a Satyr. He tells Percy that he's been watching over him until Percy was old enough to attend Camp Half Blood, a mystical summer camp for training demigods. Grover reiterates his earlier warnings about Percy being in danger, this time adding that monstrous forces are after his friend.

On the way to the camp, they are attacked by another mystical creature, the Minotaur. The Minotaur knocks out Grover and squeezes Percy's mother, causing her to disappear in a shower of golden sparks. Percy is heartbroken, assuming that he's just seen the death of his mother. He manages to save his best friend though, pulling him into the safety of Camp Half Blood. At the camp Percy is introduced to his Latin teacher, who reveals himself to actually be Chiron, a centaur and the trainer of legendary heroes. At the camp, Percy learns that the Greek gods are very much real and still present in our world today. He learns more about their present day mythology, such as the fact that Olympus hovers invisible over the Empire State Building. He also learns that in the last sixty years the "big three" (Zeus, Hades, and Poseidon) have refused to have mortal children, believing that any of their offspring would be too powerful. The other gods can still have children though, who make up the student body at the camp.

Percy meets Annabeth, who is a daughter of Athena. He also meets Luke, the son of Hermes. Not all of his introductions go well though, and Percy ends up making enemies with Clarisse, the daughter of Ares. At first, Percy doesn't know who his father is. During one of the training games it is revealed that he's in fact the descendent of Poseidon, the first in three generations. Shortly after this, Percy learns that there is trouble in Olympus. Zeus's master bolt has been stolen, and Zeus believes that Poseidon is the



one responsible. The master bolt is so important because it is the weapon that all other lightning bolts are modeled after.

Zeus believes that Poseidon used Percy to steal the bolt. He gives Poseidon ten days for the bolt to be returned. Poseidon doesn't want to risk war with Zeus, and he knows that he can't find the bolt on his own. He goes to Percy for help to find out where the bolt truly is and who took it. Chiron believes that Hades is the one who stole it in order to pit Poseidon and Zeus against each other. Percy has to travel to the Underworld, located in Los Angeles, to confront Hades. Before leaving, he consults with the Oracle. The Oracle warns him that he will fail to save what matters the most, and also tells him that he will be betrayed before the journey is over.

Percy sets out with the aid of Annabeth and Grover. During their travels, the group learns to trust each other and each undergoes their own personal journey. Grover overcomes his fear of monsters, which lets him convince the Council of Cloven Elders to allow him to search for the missing god, Pan. Annabeth learns to trust Percy, despite his father and mother being longtime rivals. Percy has to come to terms with anger towards his real father, who had ignored him for so long. On their journey they also meet more supernatural creatures, including the Medusa, a Chimera, Procrustes the Stretcher, and even the god Ares. Percy is given a mysterious backpack by Ares in exchange for a favor. Percy also meets a Nereid, who gives him three magical gems from Poseidon, which can send anyone to the sea no matter where they are.

The group finally arrives in the Underworld only to discover that Hades wasn't the true culprit. Instead it was the defeated Titan, Kronos, who has the ability to manipulate the dreams of both men and gods. Kronos was manipulating an unknown human to steal artifacts from Zeus and Hades in the hopes of starting a war between the powerful deities. Kronos's thief was captured by Ares though, who had given the stolen items to Percy in the backpack. The group is assaulted by an army of the dead, as Hades believes them to be the ones responsible. Percy can return them to the seas, but he wants to leave with his mother as well. Since he only has three gems he's forced to save himself and his friends, promising his mother that he will one day come back for her.

Percy and his friends escape to the surface and battle Ares. They manage to defeat him and return the stolen objects back to their proper homes. This gives Percy a chance to meet his father in Olympus, who says how proud he is of Percy despite initially being distant from his son. Poseidon tells Percy that his mother has been returned as a peace offering from Hades. He also warns Percy that he will have a difficult choice to make. Percy is then returned to his home where he finds the head of Medusa which he had mailed to himself earlier. Percy wants to use it to turn his stepfather to stone so his mother can be free, but she stops him and tells Percy that she has to be the one who leaves him.

Percy returns to the camp where he is betrayed by his friend Luke. Luke was the one who Kronos had initially used to steal the bolt in the first place. Luke poisons Percy and tells him that Kronos will rise and destroy all of the other gods. Percy is spared thanks to

Chiron's intervention. Chiron tells him that Percy's journey is far from over, and he must become a hero to fight the rise of the Titans and keep the other gods safe.

# Chapters 1-2

## Summary

### Chapter 1

The book opens with a warning to the reader. If the reader is trying to find out about half-bloods or thinks that they might be one, they should put the book down because they could be placing themselves in danger. Percy is a 12-year-old boy living in New York and, as he states in the opening chapter, he's been sent to a boarding school called Yancy Academy, which is for troubled students. He is considered a troubled kid because he can't read English, though he finds out at the Museum that he CAN read ancient Greek...which he finds 'odd'. He also challenges authority and is impulsive. The reader learns later that this is a chief characteristic of half-blood children to the gods.

At the Metropolitan Museum of Art Percy's teacher, Mr. Brunner, calls upon Percy to talk about the ancient Greeks, in particular Kronos. Percy, shocking his classmates, can talk expertly on the topic. Mr. Brunner adds that Zeus fed his father, Kronos a mixture of mustard and wine, which made him disgorge his other five children, who, of course, being immortal gods, had been living and growing up completely undigested in the Titan's stomach. Mr. Brunner turns to Percy and makes a point of telling him that the gods defeated their father, sliced him to pieces with his own scythe, and scattered his remains in Tartarus, the darkest part of the Underworld. Many of the students think the tale is gruesome. Percy is intrigued.

Grover, Percy's friend who has to use braces and crutches to walk, flanks him as they view the displays in the museum. Later, as they are eating lunch, a mean girl purposely drops her lunch in Grover's lap. This ticks Percy off and he confronts the girl. She ends up in the fountain and claims that the fountain just 'grabbed her'. Before much can come of it the math teacher, Ms. Dodds, who is also chaperoning the group, steps in and asks Percy to step into the next room....supposedly to punish him for his actions.

She transforms into a monster and says that she's been waiting for him to show himself. She begins to attack him but suddenly Mr. Brunner shows up, throws Percy a ballpoint pen that converts into a sword, and steps back to watch Percy fight the monster. He not only fights her, but he slices her in half and she vaporizes into thin air. When Percy turns around, Mr. Brunner is gone...as if he were never there. The sword is once again a pen.

Percy worries that he's losing his mind. When he returns to the group, he notices that there's a different math teacher there...a Mrs. Kerr, and no one seems to have any knowledge of a Mrs. Dodds. Percy is convinced that he's losing his mind.

### Chapter 2



The incident just makes things worse for Percy at school, as his grades continue to plummet and he begins getting into trouble. He learns that he's not going to be allowed to return the following year.

While he's glad that he's going to be going home to see his mother (Yancy is a boarding school), Percy is sad that he's going to disappoint her. When he determines to go get some tutoring help from Mr. Brunner for his upcoming Latin exams he overhears Grover telling Brunner that something is about to happen on the summer solstice. Brunner tells Grover that they only have to keep him alive until the following fall.

Depressed that his only favorite teacher thinks he's a failure, Percy and Grover go back to his home in NYC by bus. During the long ride Percy asks Grover about the conversation that he's overheard. Then the bus breaks down and suddenly Grover is very nervous. Nearby is a fruit stand manned by three old women who are knitting a pair of blue socks. Then, one of the old women stares directly at Percy and cuts a long thin strand of yard. It seems almost ritualistic to him.

Grover manages to get Percy back on the bus, and he tells Grover about the old woman cutting the yarn. Suddenly, Grover is terrified.

## Analysis

Chapter 1 introduces the main character (protagonist) Percy Jackson. He has been told that he suffers from ADHD and many other compulsive disorders. Living with these sorts of labels he's become aggressive, sarcastic, and makes trouble wherever he finds himself. While on a field trip to a museum he begins on a journey of self discovery. It is interesting to note that even with all of the events that happen, including a short explanation by Mr. Brunner, Percy still rejects the notion that he's anything more than a 'troubled kid'. This shows that he has a very low opinion of himself and has allowed labels to define who and what he is and will do in life.

Chapter 2 continues this theme of identity and coming of age with the school telling Percy that he's not going to be allowed to return the following year. The reader sees that Percy has made friends at this school, which is unusual for him, and it hurts him particularly when he is told he can't come back. He has managed to find a teacher that he likes, too, in Mr. Brunner. Brunner has been the only adult male in his life that has cared enough to work with him and to counsel him, treating him as if he weren't damaged goods. Percy doesn't feel particularly good about himself for many reasons, and getting kicked out of school, compounded with the fact that his mother has sent him away from her to be at the school, figures heavily into his feelings of worthlessness, of wanting to belong. This also explains some of his anger and resentment toward authority figures.

## Discussion Question 1

Why has Percy been sent to Yancy School?



## Discussion Question 2

After everything that happens at the museum, why do you think Percy still rejects the notion that he's a demi-god?

## Discussion Question 3

Why does Percy like and respect Mr. Brunner?

## Vocabulary

kleptomaniac, pulverize, vaporized, contaminate, Tartarus, disgorge, misinterpret, immortal



# Chapters 3-4

## Summary

### Chapter 3

This chapter sees Percy and Grover making it back into NYC. While Grover goes to the restroom at the bus terminal, Percy calls a cab and heads home. Home is a sarcastic thought in Percy's mind since his mother has remarried someone that not only hates Percy, and treats him like a slave, but he smells incredibly bad. In fact, Percy calls him 'smelly Gabe' behind his back.

When Percy arrives at the apartment Gabe is playing poker with some of his buddies and immediately hits Percy up for any money he might have on him. Percy gives him the money left over from the cab ride, but inside he is seething. His mother deserves better than Gabe.

When Sally Jackson arrives home (Percy's Mother) she tries to get Percy to talk about school and his friends, but Percy is evasive. He opts not to mention the odd ladies at the fruit stand, Mrs. Dodds, the pen, or Mr. Brunner. She tells Percy that they will be going the next day to visit a beach house that they both love and this seems to make Percy relax some.

This is not long lived, as Gabe becomes verbally abusive towards Sally and Percy almost loses it. Sally reminds him that they will be out of his hair for a few days and Gabe goes ballistic. Sally calms him down by promising a full refrigerator while they are gone. He consents to let her use his car.

On the drive to the beach house at Montauk Beach Sally tells Percy that this beach was where she first met Percy's real father. This is why she tries to return there every year and as often as she can. Percy asks if she's going to send him away to boarding school again at the end of the summer. His mother hesitates and tells him that his real father had wanted him to attend a certain summer camp, but that she's afraid that if he goes there she might never see him again.

This line of conversation upsets Sally so badly that Percy just drops it. Later that night Percy dreams about horses and eagles fighting on the beach. When he wakes up there is a hurricane blowing in all its glory outside their beach house. Before he can get to his mother, Grover has appeared at the door, and he's different. Grover has furry legs and hooves like a goat.

Sally joins Percy at the front door and doesn't seem surprised at Grover's appearance. Instead, she urges both boys to get into the car....fast.

### Chapter 4



They all get into the car and start to drive quickly. Meanwhile the weather has gone haywire and lightning has begun striking all around them. The car stops and Sally urges them to get out quickly and to run toward the top of the hill. Grover tells Percy that if they can get to the top of the hill that he will be safe. They start running but Sally falls behind. She tells Percy that it is okay, that the monsters aren't really after her, only him. Percy continues to run, but then, just as he's about to step across the Camp Half-blood line a Minotaur steps out. The Minotaur grabs Percy's mother and she disintegrates in his hands. Enraged, Percy attacks the Minotaur and breaks off one of its horns. He uses it to stab the Minotaur and kill it. Then, he passes out.

## Analysis

In Chapter 3, it becomes evident that home life is not a good situation for Percy. His mother has married someone that hates him. Gabe not only verbally abuses Percy, but it is suggested that he physically abuses Sally, Percy's mother. Percy can't understand how someone like his mother could marry someone like Gabe, who really smells. The author, by making Gabe particularly stinky, is both making a comment about the character of Gabe, but is also giving the reader a clue for later on in the story. All Percy knows is that he's a troubled kid with massive learning disabilities, a disgrace and disappointment to his mother. Most of all it is evident that Percy feels helpless to change anything, even helpless to get his mother away from a life that she obviously hates, too.

The bright side to the chapter is when they leave to go to Montauk Beach. Sally tells Percy that this is where she met his father, and the reader sees that she still is in love with Percy's father. Percy pushes her for more information about his father, but Sally remains silent. She does suggest that there's another school, a camp, that he might want to think about attending. She mysteriously says that it's a place for 'kids like him'. Of course, Percy thinks that this is just another indication of his worthlessness.

### Chapter 4

When they are attacked, Sally has to tell him the truth in seconds. Grover appears as his real self, a satyr, which Sally takes in stride; a fact that Percy notes right away. His biggest champion and fan, Percy is devastated and reaches a personal low when his mother dies. However, he also discovers a strength inside of him that he didn't know existed when he kills the Minotaur. His mother's disappearance is too much for him and he faints just shy of the Camp Half-blood safety line. Grover pulls him to safety, showing the reader that Grover will be an integral part of Percy learning about who he truly is.

## Discussion Question 1

What does Gabe ask Percy for when he returns from Yancy?



## Discussion Question 2

What is Percy's relationship like with his mother?

## Discussion Question 3

Why does his mother take a trip to Montauk Beach every year with Percy?

## Vocabulary

occasional, obnoxious, solstice, eavesdropping, smirked, fidgety, mumbled, hallucination

# Chapter 5-6

## Summary

### Chapter 5

Percy wakes up on the front porch of a farmhouse. It is incredibly beautiful and he feels guilty for feeling this way since his mother is dead. Everyone is wearing camp t-shirts that say 'Camp Half-blood'. A beautiful girl with princess hair gives him a drink that she tells him will make him feel better. The amber colored liquid tastes like his mother's homemade chocolate chip cookies. He learns that he's in a place for demi-gods called Camp Halfblood and that it is a sanctuary for half children of the gods.

Grover is there, which makes Percy feel better. He also meets a girl named Annabeth who informs him that he drools in his sleep. Grover gives him a present in a shoebox. It is the horn that Percy ripped off of the Minotaur. He takes him to see someone named Chiron and Mr. D, the camp's administrators. Along the way, Grover fills Percy in on life at the camp.

Chiron ends up being none other than Mr. Brunner and Percy is ecstatic to see a familiar face. Mr. D, short for Dionysus, is the camp director by default, having been sentenced there as a punishment for having a relationship with a Nyiad, which was against the rules. As he is the god of wine he is often swilling down a bottle of it.

Chiron tries to explain to Percy that he is the child of one of the gods, and Percy does not believe him. However, through careful explanation Mr. Brunner convinces him that he is the son of one of the gods, but that they don't know which one, yet. None have stepped forward to claim him, which makes Percy feel depressed and angry. Chiron, who is still in his wheelchair, tells Percy that until they decide who his parent is that he can stay in Cabin 11, which is where the unclaimed kids go. Before he leaves, Chiron stands up out of the wheelchair and Percy realizes that he's a centaur (half man, half horse).

### Chapter 6

Annabeth gives Percy the briefest of camp tours, and takes him to Cabin 11. Percy meets Luke, one of the student counselors, and Percy notices that Annabeth blushes around Luke. Cabin 11 is the cabin dedicated to Hermes' children, or those who haven't been claimed yet. They also meet Clarisse, who is the camp bully and doesn't waste time trying to make her domination of the camp clear to Percy by attempting to dunk his head in the nearest toilet. Before it can be accomplished, the water in the toilet completely comes up over Percy's head and splashes Clarisse and her followers.



## Analysis

### Chapter 5

The theme of identity and family are both addressed in this chapter when Percy is told the truth about who he is, and that the gods of mythology are real. Reeling from the loss of his mother, learning that he is a son of a god is almost too much for him. Grover gives him the horn that he broke off of the Minotaur during the fight to protect his mother, and Percy disregards it. To Grover it is a symbol of Percy's legacy and proof that he is who they say that he is. Percy, in shoving it aside, is essentially rejecting that part of himself still.

This chapter is also about arriving at the camp and learning the rules of living there. Percy is shocked to find out that his old Latin teacher, Mr. Brunner, is actually Chiron whose job it has been over the centuries to train new heroes.

### Chapter 6

As Percy learns more about the camp and its residents, he is alternately confused, bemused, and angered at the way the gods have treated their children. He finds a kindred spirit, in some respects, when he meets Luke, who is also passive aggressive about his undecided and uninvolved parent.

Percy learns, too, that his world has always been a lot bigger than he thought, even when he wasn't aware of it. He is still reeling from his mother's death, and on top of it is confronted with all of this new information. It is no wonder that he considers the fact that he's gone completely insane and just doesn't know it.

## Discussion Question 1

What does Percy learn about Mr. Brunner?

## Discussion Question 2

Why did the Minotaur attack Percy, Grover, and his mom?

## Discussion Question 3

Why does Clarisse immediately hate Percy?

## Vocabulary

strewn, nauseous, pursed, rebellious, vivid, goading, sympathy, scowled

# Chapters 7-8

## Summary

### Chapter 7

Percy finally becomes overwhelmed and tells Annabeth that he just wants to go home. Incredulous, she tells him that he doesn't get it, that he IS home.

Annabeth tells Percy that she lives in cabin 6, Athena's cabin. She says her mortal parent is a history teacher at a college that Athena fell in love with. Percy learns that when the gods step forward to 'claim' their children, they usually send a sign indicating whose child they are. Some gods never do claim their children. Percy remembers seeing some of the 'unclaimed' in cabin 11. Clarisse, overhearing their discussion, tells Percy not to worry that he's not 'big three material', meaning the three most powerful gods: Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades.

Annabeth says that she's been at the camp since she was seven, when she arrived with Luke, Thalia, and Grover. She tells him that they don't leave unless they've been given a quest to undertake, because to do otherwise would be suicide. Percy learns that demi-gods give off a particular odor or trace element that the monsters can sense. The camp is protected from monsters, but once they step outside, they are fair game.

Annabeth tells Percy that something is up as the Winter Solstice is coming and she's caught Grover and Chiron whispering. She's also excited because it may mean a quest and a chance to prove herself. Percy learns that Mount Olympus does not any longer reside in Greece, but in New York City, masquerading as the top floor of the Empire State Building.

### Chapter 8

This chapter sees a new day starting for Percy and on his first day he's going to be part of a battle simulation game called Capture the Flag. Chiron briefly gives him the details for the game. During the day, while prepping for the battle, Luke gives Percy some quick sword lessons, in which Percy excels....much to Luke's astonishment. Percy has been forming a plan and keeps asking Grover and others about trips to the Underworld.

Capture the Flag brings out Percy's first ability with water, and hints at who his father might actually be. Clarisse, taking it out on him for the toilet incident, hits him with her electric spear and knocks him into the boundary creek at the camp. Instead of yielding to the attack, Percy suddenly feels invincible and instinct seems to take over. He is able to defeat a whole band of game players to allow his team to capture the flag. Annabeth puts two and two together, asks him to step back into the creek, where a soft glow forms above Percy's head. The glow forms into the symbol of a trident. The campers gasp and fall to their knees. Poseidon has claimed Percy.

## Analysis

In Chapter 7 Percy finds out that he's not the only one who has had a bad childhood. Most of the campers have had terrible trouble at home with their mortal parents. Many of them were attacked as children by monsters. A great many of them harbor resentments towards their immortal parents, especially those who haven't been claimed. Percy speaks with several of the campers who have never known who their immortal parents were. They are bitter and angry, and for the first time Percy sees how he might become if he allows himself to agree with them.

Annabeth's experiences with her mortal father aren't any rosier, and Percy can identify with all of the campers who, up until coming to Camp Half-blood didn't feel as if they fit in anywhere else on the planet. This parallels a universal theme of belonging and the need to be a part of something. This is why almost all of the campers hope for a quest to go on, so that they can prove their 'worth' to their parents (both mortal and immortal).

Chapter 8 introduces Clarisse, who does know her father, Ares. Unfortunately, his idea of being parental is to ridicule and criticize her openly. This makes Clarisse determined to be the best and the meanest of all the campers. After they play a game of capture the flag, and Percy's team wins, Percy's immortal father claims him by placing a glowing trident over his head. There are rightfully gasps all 'round because the big three (Zeus, Poseidon, Hades) are NOT supposed to have had children. Their powers were deemed too much to pass along to a mortal child.

Percy goes into the cabin that is saved for the children of Poseidon and still feels like he's in an alien world. He misses his mother and has been formulating a plan to rescue her from the Underworld. What this tells the reader is just how close he was to his mother and even though he's been claimed by his real father, he feels alone without her. She was the only one that accepted him unconditionally, just the way he was. His whole sense of identity is now beginning to shift and he feels rudderless and alone, even with people who are trying to befriend him.

## Discussion Question 1

Why is fitting in so important for Percy and those like him?

## Discussion Question 2

What risk did Poseidon take in claiming Percy?

## Discussion Question 3

What advice does Percy give Annabeth about her father?

## Vocabulary

skeptically, summoned, resemblance, intact, obsidian, levitate, stalactite, mesmerize, ultimatum, tremor



# Chapters 9-10

## Summary

### Chapter 9

Percy has been having nightmarish dreams that he can't interpret and that leave him feeling drained and afraid. He's moved into his father's cabin, number 3, but is in there all alone. He has begun training with Luke in earnest now since a hell hound had been sent to attack Percy the previous day, and it had nearly killed him.

Percy also learns, courtesy of some camper who doesn't like him, that he is a wanted criminal in the real world. His mother's disappearance and the condition of the car that was found has made him suspect number one in his mother's disappearance. Chiron is able to shed some light on the dreams and the bad weather patterns that have suddenly begun occurring. Zeus and Poseidon are having the feud of the century over Zeus's loss of the 'master bolt', which is the lightning bolt that Zeus uses to rule. Because Poseidon has claimed Percy, Zeus now automatically thinks that he had his son steal the bolt. Chiron and Mr. D tell Percy that he has little choice but to go on a quest to get the bolt back, and to do so before the Winter Solstice.

Before Percy goes or agrees to go on the quest he must speak with the oracle. The oracle, who is a mummy in the attic, spouts a prophecy that Percy can't understand. Chiron figures out some of the prophecy and knows that most likely Hades has stolen the bolt in order to cause his other brothers to fight among themselves. Percy is going to get his wish and go to the underworld, which is located in L.A.

### Chapter 10

Percy, Annabeth, and Grover gather their things and leave the camp. They are driven to the bus station in Manhattan since they can't fly (that's Zeus's territory and he'd strike Percy out of the sky). Among the notable items that they are given is Riptide, a special pen that converts into a sword for Percy, an invisibility Yankee's ball cap that Annabeth has, and a pair of flying sneakers that Luke gives to them. Percy gives the sneakers to Grover, as the idea of flying right now is not a great idea.

On the bus, Grover tells Percy that his mother married Gabe to mask his scent and to lose his identity in the throng of a large city. Percy is just beginning to understand many things about his mother that he never knew. Three old women get onto the bus, too. They are the furies and sit glaring at the three demi-gods.

Annabeth gives Percy her invisibility hat and she and Grover brace for an attack. The three advance on them and Percy manages to go invisible, mess with the steering wheel of the bus, and crash them into a nearby tree. All of the passengers get off except the demi-gods and the furies. They manage to send the furies back to Tartarus.

(because they can't die) and barely manage to get off of the bus before it explodes. Though Percy doesn't know it, one of the tourists from the bus has taken his photo.

## **Analysis**

In Chapter 9 Percy has to contend with dreams that frighten him. They leave him feeling disoriented and confused. This mirrors how he feels about everything that has been going on since he arrived at the Camp. As if he didn't already feel badly about his mother's death, he now learns that the 'outside world' doesn't want him anymore, thanks to his stepfather, Gabe who has told everyone that he's a criminal and unstable. They are, essentially, blaming him for his mother's disappearance.

Percy understands now that even if he wanted to go back home, he couldn't. He must return the bolt to Zeus. As part of the ritual before undertaking a quest, Percy has to visit the Oracle. The Oracle gives him a prophecy that does not make sense, but it also unsettles him as it says that someone close to him will betray him. He keeps this part of the prophecy back when he tells Chiron and Mr. D about his meeting with the Oracle. Betrayal is the last thing that Percy needs, and it just furthers his feelings that everyone is against him and that he is unwanted.

In Chapter 10, Annabeth, Grover, and Percy set out on the quest and it doesn't take long before they are in trouble. He also is given a piece to the puzzle about his mother and Gabe. Grover tells him that she purposely married Gabe because his stench was enough to cover up Percy's smell and keep him safe. Percy fights his first real battle with Hades' furies, who try to destroy him. He finds that he can take pride in his father's gift of a sword, named Riptide, and that he is actually very good at something: fighting. Percy is also upset when Annabeth tells him to hide instead of fight. This sets the scene for tension between them later on. He finds that it matters to him what she thinks about him.

## **Discussion Question 1**

What did Grover tell Percy about his mother and her marriage to Gabe?

## **Discussion Question 2**

What was Percy's dream about?

## **Discussion Question 3**

Why doesn't Percy tell Chiron the entire prophecy?

## Vocabulary

repetition, feigned, grimaced, prevail, consulted, domain, obscures, propaganda, withered, quivering

# Chapters 11-12

## Summary

### Chapter 11

The bus has exploded and incinerated all of their money, and most of their gear. They are trying to decide what to do when they smell greasy roadside food coming from a tourist souvenir shop and they decide to follow their stomachs. It is a shop that is full of plastic knick-knacks and cement lawn ornaments.

Later, of course, they realize that the 'lawn ornaments' are actually frozen people who've been turned into stone by Medusa's stare. Annabeth barely manages to warn Grover and Percy before they look into Medusa's eyes. Using a round reflective ball, they are able to attack Medusa and lop off her head. Annabeth sticks the head into a mailing box and addresses it to Mount Olympus with their regards. Interestingly enough, they find the address for the underworld on Medusa's desk.

### Chapter 12

They spend a very cold night in the woods and Grover is appalled by the litter they find there. He tells Percy about his desire to become part of an elite group that seeks out Pan, the god of wild places. Percy confesses that the only reason he's really on the quest is to go to the underworld to get his mother back. He doesn't care about the bolt or returning it at all. The others are angry at him.

While he sleeps Percy has another dream. This time a voice from the underworld seems to be telling Percy that he will bargain with him, and shows him a picture of his mother in the underworld. Annabeth wakes him from his nightmare and he sees Grover holding a pink poodle, who tells Grover that he ran away from a rich family who is offering a reward for his return. He agrees to be turned back in so that the kids can have money to continue their quest.

## Analysis

Chapter 11 suggests that when things tempt a person that they would do well to carefully consider it from all angles. The heroes let their hunger do the talking and they find themselves in the lair of one of the most notorious Greek monsters of all: Medusa. One can also infer that the author is making a pointed statement about people being frozen in time, potential unrealized. The fact that the heroes battle their way out of the situation and manage to also cut off Medusa's head suggests that they will find ways to survive and succeed. We also see Percy's rebellious streak coming out in the way he talks to Medusa and his decision to send her head back in a box to the gods on Mount Olympus. It may seem at this point that he's quite resentful towards the gods and how 'hands off' they are with their children.



In Chapter 12 the author takes a moment to illustrate the devastating effect of pollution in some of the wild places still left, and in particular the part of the woods where they decide to camp for the night. Percy learns that even satyrs have dreams and ambitions and Grover tells him about wanting to get his Searcher's license. Here the reader sees that everyone develops an idea of what they want and why they want it. Grover has failed to get his license because someone on his watch died while on a quest.

## **Discussion Question 1**

What is Medusa's name while on Earth?

## **Discussion Question 2**

What lures the kids into Medusa's emporium?

## **Discussion Question 3**

When the heroes overcome Medusa and leave the Emporium what important lesson have they learned?

## **Vocabulary**

shrill, content, trance, faltered, navigating, distorted, preserve, indignantly, nostalgic, abyss, treacherous

# Chapters 13-14

## Summary

### Chapter 13

One mystery is solved: Percy now knows that it is his stepfather who has put his name at the top of the 'most wanted' list. The tourist's picture from the bus ends up in the paper, making it even more difficult for the heroes to move about freely in public. While Grover sleeps, Percy tells Annabeth about his dream. She analyzes it and says that it is unlikely that it is Hades bargaining for the bolt. Why bargain for something you already have? But if it isn't Hades, then who is it?

Annabeth changes topics and tells Percy about her father, who basically didn't want her and ignored her most of the first part of her life. The worst part was when her father remarried, had two 'normal' children, and then Annabeth was discarded. Monsters attacked the home and her father all but suggested that she leave....at the age of 7.

Their money takes them as far as Denver, with a layover in St. Louis. They decide to go up into the arch. They enjoy the scenery and Annabeth lectures them about its design. The elevator is small and when a large woman and her chihuahua get on to ride up, it is a tight fit. Coming back down, Percy opts to let Grover and Annabeth go first. The large woman and the chihuahua turn into monsters and attack him. The only way to save himself is to dive off of the arch toward the river below, hoping that his father or his father's abilities will save him when he hits.

### Chapter 14

Luck is with Percy and he lands comfortably into the Mississippi where he regains his lost sword/pen and meets a water spirit who gives him a message from his father. The message says that Sally isn't dead, just in limbo, and that she can still be restored. The water spirit tells Percy that he must go to the beach at Santa Monica. He also realizes that he can breath underwater and that, despite being underwater, is staying completely dry. All of his wounds sustained from the attack are healing. He surfaces to a lot of emergency vehicles, boats, and helicopters in the area. He avoids all of the chaos, hooks up with his friends, and learns that he's being credited for blowing up the St. Louis arch.

## Analysis

Chapter 13 shows Percy learning more about Annabeth and Grover and their background before coming to Camp Half-blood. Percy's stepfather places him in the hands of the police as the most likely suspect in the disappearance of his mother. This angers Percy but he knows he can't do anything more than he is doing. Readers do see him become even more determined, however, as a result of this. Percy also ends up



fighting some more monsters who corner him and force him to take a huge leap of faith, literally, off of the St. Louis Arch into the Mississippi River. Both incidents (Gabe's accusations, and the monster attacks), while horrible, are also catalysts to change and he discovers more about himself as a result of that terrible event happening.

In Chapter 14 the reader learns that Percy's trust in his father, Poseidon, is well placed as he lands unharmed in the river. He also meets a water spirit who communicates with him on behalf of his father. Percy is upset that his father didn't come himself, but the water spirit explains to him why that would be unwise. Percy accepts her explanation, but still feels alienated and abandoned by his father. To make matters worse, he is public enemy number one in the mortal world as they are saying that he is the one that blew up the St. Louis Arch. Still, for the first time since all the craziness has hit, Percy has hope. His mother is still alive and can be saved.

## **Discussion Question 1**

What keeps happening to Percy and what does he learn after each encounter/event?

## **Discussion Question 2**

Why do you think Gabe dislikes Percy so much?

## **Discussion Question 3**

What message does the water spirit give Percy?

## **Vocabulary**

immune, plummeted, inconvenient, pry, descend, confirmed, deceitful, silt, vicious, veered



# Chapters 15-16

## Summary

### Chapter 15

The heroes have purchased a car and stop at a DIY carwash to make an Iris Call (using water to speed dial the Camp). They reach Luke who reasons with them that it must be Hades who has stolen the bolt. Afterward, the kids decide to go to an all night diner for some food. A large biker-dude enters the diner, abuses the waitress, and then strolls over to Percy and the others. He is Ares, the god of war. Percy immediately doesn't trust him, let alone like him.

Ares makes them a deal, stating that he knows their current car won't get them to LA in time. He offers to give them a godly ride if they will retrieve something for him in the Tunnel o' Love at a nearby amusement park. Reluctantly, they go to retrieve his shield and sword from the park.

It turns out to be a trap, involving metallic spiders, and Annabeth and the others barely make it out safely. As it turns out, the whole story involves Ares having an affair with Aphrodite, and Aphrodite's husband, rigs the sword and shield that would have tied Ares to Aphrodite.

### Chapter 16

The heroes go back to the diner and confront Ares, who continues to act like a jerk to them. Nonetheless, he makes good on his promise and tells them that their ride is with a wild animal transport company. The heroes are less than thrilled but they have no choice. Ares gives them food, backpacks, and some money, then tells Percy that his mother is not dead, only in limbo and that she is being kept as a pawn in order to control Percy.

Ares leaves and the heroes get into the back of the transport truck. The animals are in sad shape and the kids share their food with the animals. Grover is particularly upset since he can talk to the animals. While on the ride they discuss many things, including Thalia's death, Grover's involvement with her death, and the ring that Annabeth wears around her neck. She says that the ring is from her father who has remarried and wants her to come back. Annabeth says that she tried last summer to do that but monsters smelled her and attacked. She has written her mortal family off. Percy urges her to reconsider.

Percy has another bad dream where he overhears some sinister voice talking to another familiar, yet unidentifiable voice, talking about taking the bolt and delivering it to 'his lord'. The truck stops, waking Percy, and the heroes hear the drivers coming back to check on the animals. When they hide, the zebra calls Percy 'lord' and asks him to free him. Recalling that his father, Poseidon, created horses, he understands why he can



talk with them. They free all of the animals, Grover blesses them so they will get away safely, and they find that they are in Las Vegas.

After walking for a while they reach the Lotus Casino and go in. Designed to make their wildest dreams come true and to keep them happy, the heroes decide to stay just a short while to rest and eat and plan their next moves. Percy happens to be walking in the main room one day and notices the date. They've lost five days and the solstice is coming soon. Frantic, he goes to find the others and manages to pull them outside. They have one day left until the solstice.

## **Analysis**

Chapter 15 actually shows the heroes acting responsibly by checking in with Camp Half-blood, which means that despite the labels the outside world has given them, they are actually good people trying to do the right thing. When Ares confirms what Percy was told by the water spirit, Percy makes up his mind to do what he has to in order to get his mother back. The quest is secondary to him at this point, though he doesn't share that with them at this point.

Additionally, in Chapter 16, the reader gains insight into the characters through their interaction and reaction to the plight of the animals in the back of the truck. They are shown to be compassionate people who have a highly developed sense of justice and right/wrong. They set the animals free. While riding in the truck Percy has another bad dream where he overhears a conversation about the bolt. The author does this so that the reader can gain additional information on other characters motives and activities without losing the first person voice that has been established. The fact that Ares has placed them in harm's way, and asked them to do his dirty work shows that the heroes will take on hard tasks if it is for the greater good.

## **Discussion Question 1**

Why do the heroes agree to help Ares?

## **Discussion Question 2**

What does Annabeth say about her father?

## **Discussion Question 3**

Describe Grover's character. How is he different from Annabeth and Percy?

## Vocabulary

wail, lithe, barrel, impale, parapet, chide, metamorphosis

# Chapters 17-18

## Summary

### Chapter 17

Percy and the others manage to make it to Santa Monica, where Percy wades into the ocean. Soon he is taken by shark fin to the ocean's depths. There a Nereid appears with a message and gift from Poseidon. She tells him not to trust Hades, and gives him three transport pearls. Whenever he needs to get somewhere fast, he has only to smash the pearl and think of where he wants to be.

He meets back up with Annabeth and Grover and they take a bus to look for the entrance to the Underworld, which goes by the name of DOA Record company. While they look for it a number of monsters start appearing. Percy also sees his stepfather on a television set being interviewed by Barbara Walters, claiming that Percy was horrible and a troubled teen capable of any sort of criminal act.

When the heroes duck into a water mattress store to avoid a gang of rich kids, Annabeth and Grover are captured as they lie on the beds. Percy shows up and tricks the monster into lying down on a bed himself. When he does so, Percy commands the water bed to capture the monster. Percy cuts off his head, and saves his friends. Then they all notice that the entrance to the Underground is one block away (it was on a calendar behind the monster's desk in the store).

### Chapter 18

The heroes enter the Underworld and Percy makes sure to give each of them a transport pearl, just in case. They reach the river Styx and meet Charon, the ferryman. They pay Charon with stolen money from the water mattress store and reach the other side. Cerberus, the three headed dog, tells Grover that he's going to eat them soon, but Annabeth decides to distract Cerberus by playing fetch with him. She tosses a ball from the water mattress store and then after he retrieves it, tells him to sit and stay. They cross quickly past him, but alarms go off because their magical gear has been detected.

They find a hiding place and wait.

## Analysis

The three pearls that Percy receives in Chapter 17 are meaningful for several reasons. First, pearls represent wisdom and purity, which Poseidon has gifted to his son. Secondly, the pearls are a means of escape, which indicates that Poseidon is taking a more active role in seeing his son remain safe. Lastly, it is the exact number of heroes on the quest, indicating that Percy's father understands how important his friends are to him. The theme of friendship is underscored in this chapter as he not only receives the



pearls from his father, but he also saves his friends from capture while at the mattress store.

All of these events take the sting out of the fact that Gabe's accusations have escalated as evidence on a special interview with Barbara Walters. This also serves to increase the tension and sense of urgency for the reader because being a wanted criminal is going to make appearing in public problematic for Percy. This time, however, instead of being depressed, or angry, Percy laughs. He knows that the people who know the truth about him don't accept the television's depiction of him. This is a turning point for Percy, as he is now beginning to understand who he is and that he has worth.

Chapter 18 begins with the heroes entering the Underworld. They approach Charon, the ferryman, and use the money from the water mattress store to pay him for a ride. At first the boat appears to be an elevator, but then turns into a boat. The author shifts from reality to fantasy throughout the heroes' stay in the Underworld giving the entire chapter a sense of impermanence and unpredictability. This mirrors the discomfort that the heroes, themselves, are feeling.

At first they are overwhelmed with the idea that they are in the Underworld, but soon Percy presses them on, for he has his ulterior motive - the need to find his mother. He feels responsible for her predicament and wants to make it right, no matter what the cost.

## Discussion Question 1

Who is Charon and why must he be paid?

## Discussion Question 2

Why do the heroes dash into the water mattress store?

## Discussion Question 3

How do the heroes find out where the entrance to the Underworld is?

## Vocabulary

hurtling, realm, critical, inconsiderate, sniffing, glumly, transparent, straitjacket

# Chapters 19-20

## Summary

### Chapter 19

In the Underworld the heroes learn about the fields of Ashphodel, and Elysium (the isle of the blessed). Before they can be too curious about anything, the winged sneakers that Grover has put on start acting strangely. They start flying without Grover's direction and start pulling him away from the group. They follow along attempting to hold him down long enough to pull the shoes off. It is no good. The shoes pull Grover into a cave that opens into a very wide cavern. One of the shoes comes off of Grover's feet and shoots down into the cavern while Grover holds on for dear life to the sides of the cave. Both Annabeth and Percy manage to get the other shoe off and they get to safety. Once outside of the cave Percy tells the others that the backpack that he's carrying has become very heavy. He is embarrassed to admit that, but all time for bravado has left them. Suddenly they hear a whisper coming from the cave and they realize that it's the entrance to Tartarus.

They make their way to Hade's palace, made of Obsidian stone and guarded by the skeletons of dead soldiers. When they reach Hades, Percy calls him 'Uncle' and this further angers Hades, who accuses Percy of stealing not only the bolt, but his Helm of Darkness. Percy denies it, but Hades doesn't buy it. He calls Percy a liar and says that the bolt is right there, in Percy's backpack. Percy adamantly denies this but opens up the bag to reveal....the bolt. Percy has no idea how the bolt got in there and he and the others begin to fear for their safety. Hades tells Percy he will barter the Helm of Darkness for his mother's life. He says she isn't dead, yet, but that she can be if Percy doesn't come through. He asks Percy to show him the transport pearls that Poseidon has given him. Hades tells him that he must choose whom will remain behind, but Percy makes the choice to leave his mother behind, and to return for her at another time. They break the pearls and escape to Santa Monica Beach. He knows who has set him up and they determine to find Ares as soon as possible.

### Chapter 20

They find Ares on a motorcycle near the beach. Percy accuses him of trying to start a war, and Ares doesn't deny it. However, he does say that he didn't directly steal the items of power, but rather had someone else do his dirty work. In fact, though he hadn't initially stolen the bolt, he had caught the thief and used it to his benefit. His plan had been to frame Percy, have the bolt show up in the Underworld, and to start a major war between the big three. He and Percy begin to fight and Percy wins when he slices Ares in the leg with his sword, Riptide. The police show up in major numbers but when Ares blows up all of their cars, they retreat to a safe distance. When Ares disappears the Helm of Darkness is left in the sand. The furies arrive to collect the Helm and have

overheard most of Ares's conversation with Percy. They realize that he did not steal the Helm.

Time has almost run out and the heroes realize that if they are going to give the bolt back to Zeus that they are going to have to fly, which means entering into Zeus's territory.

## **Analysis**

In Chapter 19 they pause to look around and Percy is stricken by how many people have chosen to do evil in the time that they had while living. He also notes that the Elysium fields are not as full as Ashphodel and he feels sorry for those souls who have wasted their lives chasing things that didn't matter. This is, of course, the author expressing some of the novel's themes...to make the most of the life that one has and to do something good with it; that every life has the potential for heroism.

Percy's resolve is tested when Hades discovers the bolt in his backpack. Terrified and angry, Percy has come to a crossroads. The old Percy would have thrown the bolt down and stalked out of the room. The new Percy stands his ground and argues his case with Hades. Then, in an act of selflessness he gives both Annabeth and Grover each one of the three pearls. In doing this he's opted not to free his mother, which he could have done. He vows to return for her. Smashing the pearls, the heroes escape and arrive at the Santa Monica Beach.

In Chapter 20, Percy doesn't have to protest his guilt for very long as several of Hades' minions (Furies) witness the confrontation between Percy and Ares. It is evident that Percy becomes disrespectful to authority figures when they don't deserve his trust or his kindness. In Ares' case, Percy views him as a threat, and confronts him, regardless of the harm he is likely to embrace. As it turns out, Percy's hunch is correct and when he wounds Ares and the god of war disappears, then the Helm of Darkness (Hades' power item) appears on the shore. The Furies have witnessed the entire ordeal and tell Percy that he is forgiven. What this chapter shows is that Percy isn't afraid to stand up for what he believes in, and moreover, he is beginning to trust his own intuition and intelligence.

## **Discussion Question 1**

Contrast and compare Ashphodel to Elysium.

## **Discussion Question 2**

Why did Ares plant the master bolt on Percy?

## Discussion Question 3

What does Hades' Helm of Darkness do to the wearer?

## Vocabulary

eons, flanked , grotesquely, pomegranates, lithe, portico, perimeter, skewer

# Chapters 21-22

## Summary

### Chapter 21

As an unintended consequence of the fight on the beach, the police have now determined that Percy wasn't working alone and that he has been the victim of a kidnapping and forced to commit all of the crimes that had happened. The reporters feel so sorry for Percy that they give him and the others plane fare to return 'home'. The heroes take a plane to NYC and the plane nearly crashes. Once on the ground Percy tells Annabeth and Grover to go back to Camp Half-blood to tell them what is going on. Percy strikes out for the Empire State Building to return the bolt.

When he enters the throne room, only Zeus and Poseidon are there and it is evident that they've been arguing. Percy goes and kneels in front of his father, which angers Zeus. Poseidon tells him to 'cool it', that it is only right that he should greet his father first. Percy tells them everything and, in particular, says that he has heard whispers from Tartarus and fears that Kronos is waking. Zeus dismisses this part of the tale, focusing more on getting his bolt back.

Poseidon shrinks to mortal size and speaks with Percy, telling him how proud he is of his son and that his mother has been restored to him, returned to the apartment in the city. As Percy leaves all of the inhabitants at Mount Olympus kneel or bow in his honor. He is a true hero, now. Percy returns to the apartment to find his mother worried to tears. She doesn't remember anything about the Minotaur attack and Gabe has told her that Percy is a wanted criminal. Percy consoles her and tells her that it isn't true. Gabe begins to abuse Percy's mother, but Percy has had enough. Noticing that a shipping box has arrived, and recognizing it as Medusa's head that's been delivered, Percy uses it to freeze Gabe into a statue. Sally sells it for a lot of money and is able to start her career as a writer. Percy tells her that in order for her to remain safe he will have to go live at Camp Half-blood. He leaves that night.

### Chapter 22

Back at Camp, Percy, Annabeth, and Grover return to a hero's welcome. They are the first to ever return after a quest. Grover has been awarded his Searcher's license, finally, and he's determined to leave immediately to search for Pan. As they enjoy the Fourth of July fireworks that summer, Percy muses about some of the lines from the Prophecy that he doesn't understand..most notably that someone close to him would betray him.

Luke shows up and asks if he wants to go for one last hunt in the woods. Percy agrees, but becomes immediately suspicious when he sees Luke drinking a real Coke out of a can (they aren't allowed in Camp). Luke pulls a sword on Percy and lets him know that



he works for a greater power than even the big three. Luke conjures a scorpion to attack Percy, then escapes from the Camp. Percy is found and treated with Ambrosia. Chiron goes to make a report in person on Mount Olympus, Annabeth is going home to try and patch things up with her father, and Percy determines that he will also make a trip home to visit his mother.

## Analysis

Chapter 21 brings vindication for Percy as he learns that as a result of his fight with the 'biker' on the beach, he's now being viewed as a victim of a kidnapping. The reporters give the heroes money for a ticket to New York City, which they quickly take advantage of. What this shows, then, is that Percy has made a transformation back into a better version of himself than he was when he began his quest. He's shown courage, selflessness, and genuine concern and care for others. He has also come to a point where he believes that he can succeed, that he is worth something, and that he finally has friends who truly care about him.

He furthers his transformation when he visits his father in the Empire State building on Mount Olympus. His father tells him that he is proud of him, something Percy has never heard from anyone other than his mother. Likewise, she has been restored by Hades back to the apartment with no memory of what happened. When Percy returns to the apartment in NYC, he has changed so drastically that when Gabe starts to abuse and treat them as he has in the past, Percy stands up to him, creating a cement statue out of him using Medusa's head. This freezing of Gabe effectively and symbolically signals an end to that way of life for both Percy and Sally.

Chapter 22 ties up loose ends in the story and sees Percy having enjoyed himself there for several months. The 4th of July rolls around, a celebration of independence, and all of the heroes have decided to face some of their worst fears. Annabeth will try and reconcile with her father, while Grover determines to set out to find Pan. Percy will take the chance and visit his mother briefly, and all vow to return once the summer is over.

## Discussion Question 1

What are some of the dangers of jealousy? Which of the gods were jealous and what did they do because of their jealousy?

## Discussion Question 2

Discuss the idiom: Cloud with a silver lining. How might this apply to Percy's transformation?



## Discussion Question 3

Why does Percy decide that it would be best if he lives permanently at Camp Half-blood?

## Vocabulary

commotion, abducted, delinquent, turbulence, evade, obliged, pawns, vengeance

# Characters

## Percy Jackson

Percy is a 12-year old boy. He describes himself as a troubled boy, as he has attended six schools in six years. His mother is married to a guy named Gabe, who is always making life harder for Percy and his mom. Percy believes himself to be a normal boy. When he finds out he is the son of the Greek god, Poseidon, his world is turned upside down. Throughout the book he is chronicling his adventure as a demi-god.

Percy's character addresses all of the major themes in the novel: coming of age and identity, family, and trust. All of these Percy must face, come to terms with, and reach a more mature understanding of himself and others. In the area of family, several 'types' of families are offered for Percy to comment upon, including a blended family, a broken family, estrangement, and reconciliation. Finding out who he is and accepting it is a large step in the character's development, one without which the story could not have moved forward.

Percy is conflicted and confused for most of the novel due in large part to the actions of the adults in his life. As he finds when he attends Camp Half-Blood, many demi-god children have the same issues. Impulsive, quick thinking, and certainly possessing some of his father's abilities, Percy has to come to terms with his heritage, as well as convince the gods that he's no thief, and that there is greater mischief afoot. Percy's one great weakness are his friends, whom he is intensely loyal to.

Throughout the series, and in particular in this novel, Percy's character traits are his largest asset and his greatest weakness. Many monsters immediately hone in on his desire to protect those he cares about and use this to motivate him to take even greater risks. When he must make a choice between saving his mother, or saving his friends, he has come to a crossroads. Choosing his friends, who are still alive, over the chance to rescue his mother who was held in limbo, constitutes a large point of change for him.

## Annabeth Chase

Annabeth is the daughter of Athena. Athena gave her a magical hat that makes her disappear when she wears it. She is one of Percy's friends, and loves to have friendly competitions with him. She always has a plan, and strategizes well. Annabeth has been at Camp Half-Blood since she was seven-years old and ran away from home. Both Annabeth and Percy had family issues and terrible step-parents. Her father was a professor too busy with work and didn't want her. He eventually married, and her step-mother was cruel. Annabeth was blamed for putting the family in danger because of monsters that would hunt her down.

Annabeth tests Percy when they first meet, considering him to be unintelligent. She quickly learns otherwise, and she lets her guard down, developing true feelings of



friendship. Annabeth's mother is Athena, goddess of wisdom. Annabeth longs for a quest so that she can prove herself to the gods.

This desire to prove herself is something that she shares with all of the demi-god children at Camp Half-blood. To successfully complete a quest, and to do so in heroic fashion earns them a spot at Mount Olympus; in other words, a chance to be with their godly parent. Each demigod child is willing to risk it all just to reconnect with a parent who has abandoned them. Annabeth has had some limited interaction with her mother, as of this first novel, and as such, longs to be with her. She feels that no one understands her in the mortal world, and she wouldn't be wrong. Only in the company of other demigods does she feel a sense of purpose and belonging.

## **Grover Underwood**

Percy met Grover at Yancy Academy, and quickly became best friends. Grover is scrawny and crippled. He is crippled because he is a Satyr, half man and half goat, though his true form is hidden by something the magical beings call a 'mist'. To the outside world he looks like a crippled boy, but in reality he is a satyr. He is trying to get his searcher's license so he can be part of the satyr group to search for Pan, the god of wild places. In order to get his license he must bring a demi-god safely to Camp Half-Blood. He has failed twice and must succeed in bringing Annabeth and Percy safely back to their camp after their quest is complete.

## **Chiron (Mr. Brunner)**

Mr. Brunner is a Latin teacher at Yancy Academy. He teaches history and believes in Percy, quickly becoming Percy's favorite teacher. Mr. Brunner is wheelchair-bound, which is the 'mist' covering up the fact that he is really a centaur. Later on in the book, we find out that Mr. Brunner is really Chiron. Chiron is a super smart centaur who has trained many heroes before Percy. It is Chiron that gives Percy the ballpoint pen that transforms into a sword.

## **Sally Jackson**

Sally is Percy's mother. She lives in Manhattan, New York with Gabe, her husband, and Percy's step father. She is very outgoing and positive. Poseidon and Sally met on a beach one summer and fell in love, and Percy was the result of that time together. She married Gabe, who is smelly, to protect Percy from the monsters that would sense him and hunt him down. She is killed in front of Percy by a Minotaur right before they get to Camp Half-Blood.



## Gabe

Gabe is the step-dad of Percy Jackson. Percy cannot stand him and believes his mother deserves better than Gabe, who treats her horribly. He does not understand that his mother sacrificed having a healthy relationship for his safety. Gabe tells people that Percy is a troubled boy and has many issues. He hits Sally occasionally, but she gets him back when she turns him into a statue using Medusa's head.

## Luke

Luke is a camp counselor at Camp Half-Blood. He helps Percy during his first couple of days there at camp. He's known as one of the best swordsmen in the past three hundred years. Luke isn't always helpful and nice, as he tries to kill Percy with a scorpion. He then confesses to being the original thief of the helm of darkness as well as the master bolt. Luke is not all bad, though, and the reader learns that Luke has done what he has because of his father's inattention or lack of recognition, and that many years ago, he and two other demi-gods(Annabeth, Thalia...and Grover) barely made it to camp half-blood. Thalia lost her life, as a result. It is Luke who tinkers with the gifts that Percy receives to succeed in his quest.

## Clarisse

Clarisse is the daughter of Ares, the god of war. She is the camp bully and tries to beat Percy twice. Both of these times Percy is able to overcome her and win. The first time, Percy talks to the water to use it against her. The second time, she tried to beat him up again, but Percy is better at playing her game. Clarisse challenges Percy and goads him into learning more about himself, when he otherwise would not. She is fierce, and like most of the other demi-gods is anxious to go on a quest to prove herself to her father. She is constantly ridiculed by her father for her lack of prowess, which according to everything the reader sees, isn't so.

## Thalia

Thalia died while protecting Annabeth, Grover, and Luke from the Furies. When she died, Zeus took pity on her right before she died and planted a pine tree which caught her spirit. The pine tree protects Camp Half-Blood with powerful magic in which it is immersed. She was the daughter of Zeus. She was born after the Big Three gods made a pact that none of them would have children with women of the mortal world. Of course, all of the gods have broken that promise.

## **The Gods**

The Olympians are twelve gods and goddesses who rule on mount Olympus. The Olympians are: Zeus, Hera, Poseidon, Demeter, Ares, Athena, Apollo, Artemis, Hephaestus, Aphrodite, Hermes, and Dionysus.

## **Poseidon**

One of the three sons of Kronos, he is a member of the Big Three. He is the ruler of the sea and Percy's father. Percy finds it hard to tell if his father loves and cares about him, however throughout the book readers learn that he is very proud to be his father, and that many times he visited Percy without Percy's knowledge. Poseidon has kept his distance to protect Percy, and to keep the secret of his birth from the other gods.

## **Zeus**

Zeus is one of the three sons of Kronos. His father ate his older siblings: Poseidon, Hades, Hera, Hestia, and Demeter. He was saved by his mother, Rhea, who hid him away from Kronos in a cave. When he grew up, he sought after his dad and made him throw up his siblings. They then defeated the Titans and sent them to Tartarus, a pit deep in the Underworld. He is the god of sky as well as the leader of the Olympians. His symbol is the lightning bolt, which as the story goes, has been stolen.

## **Hades**

Hades is the ruler of the underworld and all its inhabitants and the last of the Big Three. Percy thinks that Hades is the first god he has seen that lives in a Godly manner. Hades is 10 Feet tall dressed in all black silken robes with a golden woven crown on his head, his hair is black and shoulder length and his skin is like porcelain. He exudes power even though he isn't as buff as Aries. Hades believes that Poseidon has sent Percy to take the Master Bolt and his own Helm of Shadows, his godly artifact. It is clear that Hades does not care for his brothers, nor the fact that he has been left the 'scraps' to rule over.

## **Ares**

The son of Zeus, he is the God of War. Percy and his friends are sent on a mini-quest by Ares. They must retrieve his lost shield from the water park he believes to be rigged with a trap. He is the father of Camp Half-Blood's bully, Clarisse.



## Mr. D (Dionysus)

Dionysus, also known as Mr. D, is the God of Wine. He is the director of Camp Half-Blood. He was sentenced to centuries of being the director at Camp Half-Blood by his father, Zeus, due to falling for a wood nymph who was declared off limits. He is characterized by his overzealous attitude toward fighting, and drinking, most often carrying around a club in one hand and a glass of wine in the other.

## Athena

Athena, mother to Annabeth, is the Goddess of Wisdom. Zeus is her father. Athena chastises Poseidon after finding him and Medusa having relations in her sacred temple. Because of this, she cursed Medusa and made her the monster that she has become. She helped Annabeth get to safety when she decided to run away from home at age seven. She indirectly assists her throughout her quest.

## Aphrodite

Aphrodite is not present during Percy's journey. Readers do know that she is married to Hephaestus and the girlfriend of Ares. She is the Goddess of Love and there are many demi-gods that claim her as their parent. Most of her children are beautiful and charming.

## Demeter

Demeter is the Goddess of Agriculture and sister to Zeus. When Hades' kidnapped her daughter, Persephone, she traveled everywhere to find her. Persephone and her captor, Hades, came to an agreement about their marriage; six months spent in the Underworld with him and six months spent above with her mother. Which in return made Demeter happy. At the time that Percy travels to the underworld, Persephone is still in Hades' halls.

## Hermes

Hermes is the messenger of the gods, as well as the God of Thieves and Travelers. Luke is one of his children. Hermes doesn't always claim his demi-god children, and could seem to care less about them.

## Hephaestus

Hephaestus is the son of Zeus, but was thrown over a cliff as a baby because Zeus thought he was ugly. He is married to Aphrodite and is always trying to humiliate Ares



and her in from of the other Olympians. He is a talented blacksmith and his demi-god children are talented as well.

## **Charon**

Charon ferries dead spirits across the River Styx into the Underworld. The waiting list to get to the Underworld is so long, that the only way to get onto his boat is to bribe him. Percy finds this out when he must go into the underworld to rescue his mother, and to see Hades to get the bolt.

## **The Minotaur**

The Minotaur is a huge larger than life man, with horns, almost like a bull and man combined. The Minotaur attacks Percy, his mother, and Grover while they are on their way to Camp Half-Blood. Percy is able to kill him after tearing off the horn and stabbing him with it.

## **Medusa**

Medusa was turned into a monster by Athena after being caught with Poseidon in Athena's sacred temple. Her face can turn anyone into stone, and she calls this her artwork. Hades displays many of her statues in the Underworld. Medusa also is known as Auntie Em. She owns Auntie Em's Garden Gnome Emporium in the woods of New York. Grover, Percy, and Annabeth barely escape with their lives. Grover discovers that his Uncle, who had been missing for hundreds of years, fell victim to Medusa.

## **Mrs. Dodds and Her Sisters (The Furies)**

They are just a few of the monsters who hang out in the Underworld and guard Hades. They are a deadly Trio. One of the sisters, poses as a math teacher named Mrs. Dodds at Yancy Academy. She almost kills Percy but Mr. Brunner comes to his rescue. The trio chase Percy and his friends during their quest.

## **The Oracle**

The Oracle can offer prophecies or predications by being able to see into the future. She speaks in riddles, which makes understanding her hard. She lives in a decaying mummy's mouth in the attic at Camp Half-blood. She tells the prophecy about Percy and his quest.



## The Cyclopes

They are giants, with one eye in the center of their forehead, who are very good at making and building things. It is believed that they built Olympus for the Olympians. They live under the ocean, most likely because it is rumored that they are his half-children, which allows Poseidon some influence over the making of Zeus's lightning.

# **Symbols and Symbolism**

## **Lightning Bolt**

Zeus's lightning bolt is the sole reason that Percy's life gets turned upside down. It begins and ends the story. It represents total power and the right to rule.

## **Poseidon's Trident**

This is the three pronged weapon (looks like a harpoon with three prongs) that Percy's real father leaves in his cabin. Percy views it as a symbol of his father's presence.

## **Cabins**

The cabins at Camp Half-blood indicate whose father or mother was a god/goddess and that the child has been claimed. There is also a cabin where children stay that haven't been claimed yet, which makes for a great deal of resentment.

## **Riptide**

This is a magical ballpoint pen that turns into a sword for Percy Jackson. It is a gift from his father.

## **Yankee's Cap**

Annabeth's mother, Athena, has gifted her with a Yankee's ballcap that will render her invisible. This is also highly symbolic of how invisible Annabeth (and many of the others ) feel to their parents.

## **Winged Shoes**

Tennis shoes with wings are a gift that Luke gives to Percy for their quest. Unfortunately, it is a bad gift because Luke has tasked them with taking Percy to Tartarus.

## **Medusa's Lair**

Auntie Em's Emporium is filled with statues of wayward travelers and those who came to try and conquer her. Medusa almost succeeds in freezing all of those on the quest except they realize who she is and what will happen.

## **Gabe's Car**

Smelly Gabe begrudgingly gives Sally and Percy his car to take to Montauk Beach. It is completely destroyed and forces them to run for the safety of Camp Halfblood.

## **The Minotaur**

This is the half man half bull creature that attacks Percy, Grover, and Sally outside of Camp Half-blood. The Minotaur is representative of the incredible odds that he's going to face, and the cost that will be paid by those who are around him.

## **The Fates**

At the bus stop three old women are knitting and hold up a long blue thread, which one of her sisters prepares to cut. This alludes back to the mythological tale of the three fates determining the lifespan of humans (or in this case demi-gods).

## **Three Pearls of Poseidon**

Poseidon gifts Percy with three transport pearls in order to help them escape from Hades once they had accomplished their tasks. Not only does this show that he is very much on Percy's side, but that he cares.

# Settings

## Yancy Academy

Yancy Academy is a private boarding school in upstate New York. It is for kids who are troubled. The kids who surround Percy come from better off families, however it is clear their families don't care about them as much as Sally, his mother, cares for him. At the end of the year, Percy learns that he will not be invited back to attend Yancy Academy during his seventh grade year. He is actually disappointed because he had come to respect Mr. Brunner and was friends with Grover.

## Montauk Beach

This is where Sally and Poseidon met and fell in love. Percy has always remembered visiting the beach with his mother. While they were on vacation, all of their worries just went away and they became carefree. Percy recalls his mom always seemed to get younger every time they visited Montauk. While visiting when he was little, Percy saw the faces of smiling women in the waves on the beach. He didn't realize until later on that the faces were Nereids keeping watch over him.

## Sally Jackson's Apartment

Sally's apartment is in Queens, New York. Percy wants to go home, but that means confronting his step-father. Percy's room has turned into Gabe's smelly 'office'.

## Camp Half-Blood

Camp Half-Blood is where the demi-gods and demi-goddesses are trained to defeat the monsters, along with surviving in both the mortal and immortal worlds. The weather at Camp Half-Blood is always nice unless Zeus decides to make it otherwise. While campers and counselors are at Camp Half-Blood, they are protected from outside forces, such as monsters, by enchanted boundaries and Thalia's pine tree. However, if a camper were inside the camp and for whatever reason decided to summon up a monster, they can.

## The Underworld

The Underworld is ruled by Hades, Zeus' brother. The entrance to get inside is located in Los Angeles. It is divided into three fields: The Fields of Punishment, The Asphodel Fields, and the Elysian Fields. In order to get to the Underworld, they must travel across the River Styx which is polluted by human hopes, dreams, and wishes that have never come true. Percy describes the entrance as being a cross between a turnpike and



airport security. There are two toll booth lines the dead have a choice of going through. The Attendant on Duty line is where one would go if they wanted to try to get to Elysium. Here they are judged by three judges, and must pass or they are sent to the Fields of Punishment. The second line is for those who choose not to be judged, The Ez Death booth, and are sent to the Asphodel Fields. Percy and his friends must first get past Cerberus, a three-headed Rottweiler who sniffs out the living from the dead.

## **Mount Olympus**

To access Mount Olympus, Percy must ride the elevator to the 600th floor of the Empire State Building. After getting to the top, he must then walk across a very narrow bridge that hangs thousands of feet above the city of Manhattan. Mount Olympus is the home of the gods, which can only mean it is ritzy and gorgeous. Percy states that the room of the Olympians makes the Grand Central Station look like a tiny closet. Each one of the Thrones in the room shows the personality of its ruler.

## **Lotus Casino**

The Lotus Casino is where Percy and his friends go for what they think is only a few hours but ends up being five days. The Lotus Casino makes the visitor so happy that they do not want to leave. Percy runs into a kid who tells Percy that the year is 1977. When the group begins to leave, the casino becomes more enticing, to try and lure them back in.

# Themes and Motifs

## Identity and Coming of Age

A big part of the book is identity and coming of age. This is shown throughout Percy's journey where he has to grow up and accept his fate as a hero. Throughout the book, Percy learns more about himself and the world around him, which further helps to shape who he is and makes him into the hero he needs to be by the end of the book.

His identity is fully in question at the beginning of the book, as the reader learns. He knows, and finally accepts that he is the son of a god, but as he doesn't know 'which' god, everything he's ever done, liked, been drawn to, comes into question as he tries to figure out which god might be his father. More to the point, he worries that he will not be 'claimed'. He has visited Luke and some of the others who both know and don't know and all seem bitter. He doesn't want to become like that, but he also understands it, fully. When Poseidon finally claims him, however, Percy is proud to have been claimed, but realizes quickly that this brings with it a whole new list of problems and worries.

Because he is one of the 'big three's son, more is expected of him. Additionally, he has powers that he can't begin to control, and everyone seems to turn to him to solve all of their problems. This proclivity to take on others' problems as his own is something that will move with him throughout the novels in the series, and serves as a motivation for almost everything he does. He feels the burden of the success or failure the most.

The reader sees that Percy is maturing when he realizes that he is not to carry the burden of each and every quest by himself, that there is a power in having true friendship. He is able to both give and receive help toward the end of the novel, and comes to work in tandem with the other demigods to achieve their goals.

Likewise, he is still his mother's son, too. He feels desperately guilty at having been the cause of his mother's situation and potential death. This, and other events (such as Aunt Em's Emporium) propel Percy into an adventure that not only teaches him more about who he is and how to embrace his demigod legacy, but also matures him and opens his mind and heart to life as it will be for him from now on.

## Family

Percy has to accept his parents for who they are. Percy is initially frustrated with both his mother for choosing to cast him away to boarding school every year, as well as his father for being absent for so long. Percy comes to learn that his parents weren't trying to push him away, but were instead looking out for him. His father just wanted to keep him safe, and his mother was only trying to get him away from the abusive Gabe. We're also shown numerous examples of what happens when family can't work together, which is what prompts the gods to nearly go to war in the first place.



For example, in the first few chapters Percy has a dream that the sea is fighting the sky. When he shares that with Annabeth he is unaware that Zeus and Poseidon are at war. Zeus has accused Poseidon of having Percy steal Zeus's lightning bolt. This has caused the weather patterns to go awry in the mortal world, as a result. This illustrates that when family members fight, it affects more than just the parties involved. Everyone suffers (in this case, on a grand scale).

Additionally, the reader learns about Annabeth's upbringing. Her father was left with a baby girl, gifted to him by Athena. He was not only ill equipped to raise her, but seems to have been overwhelmed at the prospect. Though it is apparent that he loved her, he also was at a loss as to how to raise her. When he remarries he believes that he's found the solution to his problems, but Annabeth's problems increase as monsters begin to attack his new family.

When Annabeth begins to be plagued by spiders, a curse by Arachne on all of Athena's children, and her stepmother dismisses it, Annabeth determines that she should leave. The reader sees how these children of the demigods, in many instances, have no home, and no family. In Annabeth's case, she found Camp Half-blood and they became her family. However, Luke does not view the camp as family and is resentful and angry.

Clarisse's relationship with the stormy Ares isn't much better. Here the reader sees the destructive affect that a parent can have on their child. Clarisse is driven to great lengths to prove herself to her father, who is verbally abusive and alienating. He is critical of her every accomplishment and this drives her to take risks with herself and others to win at any cost.

Percy's homelife and family life were not much better, other than she did have a caring and loving parent. Through his mother, Percy learns about unconditional love, sacrifice, and the strength of love. These characteristics of love serve him well as he uses this gift from his mother to develop the strength necessary to successfully complete his quest. His family life is used as a point and counterpoint to Annabeth's in that his mother was willing to go to great lengths to protect him, whereas, her's weren't able.

## Trust

Trust is another important theme in the Lightning Thief. Percy and his friends would never have succeeded if they didn't learn to work together and trust each other. Had Zeus trusted Poseidon in the beginning there wouldn't have been the initial threat of war. Luke betrays Percy and the others because he felt like he wasn't part of a family and was unwanted by his mortal parents. Examples of those who trust juxtaposed with those who do not are evidenced throughout the novel, and the series.

The reader sees Percy learning about trust, not only in others, but in himself. His perspective towards himself, his self identity, had been to see himself as a 'bad' kid, incapable of staying out of trouble or doing well in school. However, when he is offered a different version of his life, one where he has explanations for why he does what he



does, everything he thought about himself is challenged and he begins to emerge as a person who is learning to like himself, to trust in his own perceptions, thoughts, and skills.

This ability to trust himself translates, also, to his ability to trust others and to be trustworthy. Annabeth, at first, does not trust that Percy knows what he is doing. He's only newly arrived at the camp, hasn't been there nearly as long as she has, and yet, manages to help their side win the first battle simulation to capture the flag. After this, she also begins to see him as he sees himself and learns to trust him. When he shares some of his memories of times with his mother, Annabeth trusts him with her family stories as well.

Likewise, trust becomes an issue between Zeus and Poseidon, who have NO trust for one another at all. It is their lack of trust of taking the other's word that causes the entire initiating conflict. The bolt goes missing and automatically Zeus accuses his brother. Despite Poseidon's protests, Zeus does not trust that his brother is telling him the truth. His lack of ability to trust his brother is a flaw that almost brings Mount Olympus to its knees.

In Aunt Em's Emporium, Grover, Annabeth, and Percy must trust one another when they determine to take on Medusa in her own lair. Working together, and trusting that everyone will stand and fight, they are able to succeed in capturing Medusa, boxing up her head, and saving each other's lives. Left to their own devices, unable to work together, they would have joined the other statues in the garden.

Lastly, trust is seen as something that is a new feeling for Percy. Other than his mother, he's never trusted anyone. He's had the perspective that everyone was out to get him(which in some cases was EXACTLY true). When he meets Annabeth and the others at Camp Half-blood, however, he realizes what he's been missing by having real friends, people that he can trust with his safety, his feelings, and his life.

## Destiny/Fate

Several times throughout the story Percy feels as if he has no control over his own life. When Grover becomes terrified at the sight of the old woman cutting the blue thread, Percy learns that the Fates have dominion over a person's life and this makes him angry. He determines that everyone should have the power to make their own fate and own destiny.

The reader sees this determination, in particular when Hades forces him to make a choice in the Underworld: save his friends, or his mother. Hades tells him that there is no other choice, but Percy does not accept this fate. He challenges the rules and creates another option, one where he saves his friends AND his mother. By finding and giving Hades what he wants (his Helm of Darkness) he gets what he wants....his mother. She is restored to him at the end of the novel, due in large part to Percy's





decision to continue to challenge the rules, create his own destiny, and challenge the obstacles that fate puts in front of him.

When Percy goes to see the Oracle before leaving on his quest, he memorizes the prophecy, but leaves out a portion of it when he recites it to Chiron. The reader might ask why he would do this, but when one considers that it has to do with one of his friends betraying him, then it becomes easier to understand. Percy, at this point, has determined that having the prophecy is nice, but relying on his friends and his own conscience means more to him.

Interestingly, the reader should note that all along the way there are those that respect what he is doing and help him out with just exactly what he will need to continue. They do not make it easy, but they also give him the necessary components to complete the next tasks. One can see this in the entire sequence at Santa Monica Beach where the demigods run into Areas.

Ares appears like a Biker and sends them on a small quest, which could have gone very, very badly. In the end, however, whether he acknowledges it or not, he gives Percy the needed supplies and transportation to move along to his next step of the journey. Ares, of all the gods, appreciates someone who is fighting against fate and destiny. Having to sneak around with Aphrodite because he has been destined to not be married to her, puts him in an interesting position to understand Percy's mindset.

Finally, in the Lotus Casino the reader sees Percy and his friends fighting against the Fate that would have them live out their lives there. It is when Percy begins to ask questions, to challenge their 'reality' that he 'wakes up' and is able to rescue the others. While they've lost a few days in the casino, many of the other demigods in the casino have been there for decades.

## Following One's Own Conscience

Percy and Annabeth are often presented with situations that cause them to ponder the course of action that they should take. Annabeth, hailing from the goddess of wisdom, is always apt in pointing out the pros and cons, but in the end, it is Percy who acknowledges that following his own sense of right and wrong, and choosing to do the right thing, even though it may be the harder thing to do, is the right course of action. The reader sees this when he determines that he must get the bolt back to Zeus, not because Zeus needs his bolt back, or that it would make his father proud, but because he knows it is the only way he might get his mother restored to him.

It would be extremely easy for all of the demigods who go on the quest, to be into it for the glory, fame, and attention from their parents, but in the end, that is not the motivation for either Annabeth or Percy. They are doing it because it is the right thing to do and they are good people. Their character, then, is established for the rest of the series: no matter what they may come up against in subsequent novels in the series,

both will always choose the right thing based on what their conscience is telling them is right.

It is Percy's conscience that makes him feel badly about his mother's marriage to Gabe, in the first place. While he doesn't know the reasoning, initially, behind his mother's decision, he constantly defends his mother against Gabe's attacks. Later, when they are attacked by the Minotaur Percy doesn't think twice about jumping on its back and killing it. He does everything that he does because he believes it to be the right course of action.

The theme of following one's own conscience comes into play when the reader sees how it grieves Percy that the press and media believe that he's kidnapped his mother, blown up the St. Louis Arch, and is responsible for the destruction at Santa Monica. Later, he is vindicated when the press comes around to his perspective (of a sort) and portrays him as a victim. Of course, he is neither. What is evident is that his conscience and grasp of what is right or wrong is very strong, as is his sense of justice.

In the end, possessing the lightning bolt, and at one point, the Helm of Darkness, Percy could have used both of these to drive the gods from Olympus. He could have used them to exact vengeance on the gods for his life, how they treated their demigod children, and the world, in general. Instead, he does not hesitate to give back the Helm to Hades and the Bolt to Zeus. This act is recognized and rewarded by both gods.

# Styles

## Point of View

The *Lightning Thief* is told from the first person perspective of Percy. This leads to the audience being given very vivid descriptions of the amazing world that Percy is seeing. Readers are able to see Percy relate the mystic world to the modern day that we live in, creating very unique, but also easy to understand, descriptions. This also gives readers more insight into Percy himself, since readers are able to directly hear his thoughts. At the same time, this type of style also lets Percy quickly go over important details, letting the reader know exactly what they need to without bogging them down in lengthy exposition.

Percy's viewpoint is accompanied by an unnamed narrator that assists the reader in gaining a larger and broader understanding of various character's actions, as well as Percy's motivations for taking the actions that he takes. In the end, the narrator gives the reader insight into how Percy will most likely act when he comes into possession of the bolt. The narrator also serves to explain some of the statements that Annabeth and Percy, as well as others, make in the story. This is particularly noticeable in the earlier chapters where Percy's mother speaks about her summer romance, and long time love affair, with Poseidon.

Percy is often an unreliable narrator, himself, thus making the need for a 'reliable narrator' necessary. The reader can see the false assumptions that Percy makes as he thinks about events that have happened, or are likely to happen. It is through this narration that the reader sees Percy's hesitancy, the circumstances in his past, and his fears about the future that both help and hinder him throughout the book.

Using a first person, limited point of view is the best choice for a novel of this type, as it places the reader squarely in the mindset of the main character. This allows the reader to vicariously experience the roller coaster ride of emotions and circumstances that Percy faces throughout the novel. While third person would have allowed for a broader understanding of all of the characters, it must be stated that seeing the events through just one person's eyes increases the suspense and urgency of the novel, and will set the tone for subsequent novels in the series.

## Language and Meaning

The author's use of language is entertaining, and at some points, even educational when speaking about Greek Mythology. The characters speak and use current dialogue and idioms common to the modern era, which makes this work very accessible for the reluctant reader. The lexicon falls along the 6-8th grade range (U.S.).

As the main character is a young teen, troubled in the mortal world, coming from a highly dysfunctional, blended family, his perspective on events is often put in the terms

and frame of reference inherent to a teen. His descriptions of various monsters and weapons, scenery, and people almost always correlate to something from a teen's life, from video games to cotton candy, to cheerleaders, to amusement parks.

The author uses a distinctive sense of humor, which is portrayed mainly through the protagonist, Percy Jackson. His sarcastic, sassy, often irreverent language is both playful and insightful. For the reluctant reader it holds the attention, and for the reader who enjoys wordplay, the banter is fantastic fare.

## Structure

Divided into 22 chapters, most of them range between 12-15 pages in length. The book follows the traditional plot line arc of inciting incident, rising action, climax, falling action and resolution. There is a cliff hanger at the end, which sets up the reader to reach for the next book.

The initiating conflict is Percy being attacked in the museum and Chiron/Grover managing to help him fight off the infamous Mrs. Dodd. Later, he learns that he's being accused of stealing something that he didn't even know existed. The rising actions include a myriad of adventures and misadventures, including fighting the Minotaur, meeting others like himself, fighting legendary monsters, and trying to rescue his mother. He also learns more about himself, his father, and his powers, and how all of it fits into his view of himself.

The climax occurs when Percy fights to return the bolt to Zeus and clear his name. He knows that he must do this or the world will come apart at the seams. The prophecy included a part about a betrayal of a friend, and as the falling action, the reader learns that Luke is the betrayer, the one that sabotaged the winged shoes, almost sent them to Tartarus, and who initially stole the bolt.

The first part of the book is constructed in such a way as to allow the reader to discover along with Percy the whole story about himself, and the lightning bolt. This includes him learning more about himself as a person, maturing and coming of age, and learning to trust himself as well as others. The second portion of the book is a trial by fire section, where many of the physical obstacles parallel Percy's inner struggles with self-esteem, feelings of guilt, and anger towards his father. The last portion of the book sees Percy coming to terms with the choices that his mother and his father have made, so much so that he urges Annabeth to give her father a second try. This section also sees him feeling a sense of belonging that he never had before.

## Quotes

If you're reading this because you think you might be one, my advice is: close this book right now. Believe what-ever lie your mom or dad told you about your birth, and try to lead a normal life. Being a half-blood is dangerous. It's scary. Most of the time, it gets you killed in painful, nasty ways.

-- Percy (Chapter 1 paragraph Page 1)

**Importance:** This quote sets the tone for the entire novel, and the series, in that Percy's life is not normal, and those who are like him, including Percy, are in danger for what and who they are.

He said, "You saw her snip the cord." "Yeah. So?" But even as I said it, I knew it was a big deal. "This is not happening," Grover mumbled. He started chewing at his thumb. "I don't want this to be like the last time.

-- Grover/Percy (Chapter 2 paragraph Page 29)

**Importance:** This short exchange is important because it reiterates that Percy is in danger, and that only Grover really, at this point, knows what's going on. The reader can also infer from this that Grover has had experiences similar to this that perhaps ended badly.

Grover ran for the Camaro-but he wasn't running, exactly. He was trotting, shaking his shaggy hindquarters, and suddenly his story about a muscular disorder in his legs made sense to me. I understood how he could run so fast and still limp when he walked.

-- Percy (Chapter 3 paragraph Page 44)

**Importance:** This is important because Percy is beginning to understand that he is not normal, and those around him, those who are his friends, aren't 'normal' either.

The last thing I remember is collapsing on a wooden porch, looking up at a ceiling fan circling above me, moths flying around a yellow light, and the stern faces of a familiar-looking bearded man and a pretty girl, her blond hair curled like a princess's. They both looked down at me, and the girl said, "He's the one. He must be.

-- Percy (Chapter 4 paragraph Page 57)

**Importance:** This quote happens right after Percy has fought the Minotaur and his mother has died. He has fainted and is wounded from the battle. The sense of being disoriented is offered by the moths circling the bulb, and the mysterious statement that he must 'be the one'.

Finally, he showed me the cabins. There were twelve of them, nestled in the woods by the lake. They were arranged in a U, with two at the base and five in a row on either side. And they were without doubt the most bizarre collection of buildings I'd ever seen.

-- Percy (Chapter 6 paragraph Page 94)

**Importance:** The quote is significant as the number twelve matches the twelve gods.

Let's just say I messed things up for everybody else. The last two years, ever since my trip to the Garden of the Hesperides went sour, Chiron hasn't allowed any more quests. Annabeth's been dying to get out into the world. She pestered Chiron so much he finally told her he already knew her fate. He'd had a prophecy from the Oracle. He wouldn't tell her the whole thing, but he said Annabeth wasn't destined to go on a quest yet. She had to wait until... somebody special came to the camp.

-- Luke/Percy (Chapter 7 paragraph Page 108)

**Importance:** This quote further deepens the mystery of who Percy is and why Annabeth is so eager to work with him. Luke, on the other hand, is shown to be resentful towards his father, the camp, and Chiron in particular.

My face felt hot. I wished I hadn't opened my big mouth. "The weather since Christmas has been weird, like the sea and the sky are fighting. Then I talked to Annabeth, and she'd overheard something about a theft. And ... I've also been having these dreams.

-- Percy (Chapter 9 paragraph Page 151)

**Importance:** In essence, the sea (realm of Poseidon) and the sky (realm of Zeus) have been feuding.

The warehouse was filled with more statues-people in all different poses, wearing all different outfits and with different expressions on their faces. I was thinking you'd have to have a pretty huge garden to fit even one of these statues, because they were all life-size. But mostly, I was thinking about food.

-- Percy (Chapter 11 paragraph Page 186)

**Importance:** This sets up the fact that they are heading into a trap, but all Percy can think about is his stomach. This is indicative of how impulsive he is and it is what continues to get him into trouble until he learns to think things through.

Annabeth kept worrying at her necklace. She was pinching the gold college ring that hung with the beads. It occurred to me that the ring must be her father's. I wondered why she wore it if she hated him so much.

-- Percy (Chapter 13 paragraph Page 215)

**Importance:** This quote is significant in developing Annabeth's character. It is clear that she says she dislikes her father, but on the other hand, she keeps the ring that he gave her around her neck on a chain.

Chiron had to break up a fight," Luke shouted to me over the music. "Things are pretty tense here, Percy. Word leaked out about the Zeus-Poseidon standoff. We're still not sure how-probably the same scumbag who summoned the hellhound. Now the campers are starting to take sides. It's shaping up like the Trojan War all over again. Aphrodite, Ares, and Apollo are backing Poseidon, more or less. Athena is backing Zeus.

-- Luke (Chapter 15 paragraph Page 246)

**Importance:** This sets up the main conflict in the book. The gods are angry and are taking sides. This is causing divisiveness in the camp as well.

She nodded. "It has been many years since a child of the Sea God has been born. We have watched you with great interest." Suddenly I remembered faces in the waves off Montauk Beach when I was a little boy, reflections of smiling women. Like so many of the weird things in my life, I'd never given it much thought before.

-- Nereid (Chapter 17 paragraph Page 288)

**Importance:** This quote is significant because it is a large piece of Percy's history that he did not know. It also lets him know that his father did care about him and has always kept an eye on him from a distance.

I turned and faced my mother. I desperately wanted to sacrifice myself and use the last pearl on her, but I knew what she would say. She would never allow it. I had to get the bolt back to Olympus and tell Zeus the truth. I had to stop the war. She would never forgive me if I saved her instead. I thought about the prophecy made at Half-Blood Hill, what seemed like a million years ago. You will fail to save what matters most in the end.

-- Percy (Chapter 19 paragraph Page 326)

**Importance:** This is a turning point for Percy. He realizes what some of the lines of the prophecy mean at this juncture. Likewise, he understands that the right choice isn't always the easiest one.

From the top of the clouds rose the decapitated peak of a mountain, its summit covered with snow. Clinging to the mountainside were dozens of multilevel palaces-a city of mansions-all with white-columned porticoes, gilded terraces, and bronze braziers glowing with a thousand fires. Roads wound crazily up to the peak, where the largest palace gleamed against the snow. Precariously perched gar-dens bloomed with olive trees and rosebushes. I could make out an open-air market filled with colorful tents, a stone amphitheater built on one side of the mountain, a hippodrome and a coliseum on the other. It was an Ancient Greek city, except it wasn't in ruins. It was new, and clean, and colorful, the way Athens must've looked twenty-five hundred years ago.

-- Percy (Chapter 21 paragraph Page 346)

**Importance:** This is a description of Mount Olympus, residing in downtown New York City. Its grandeur and the way it makes Percy feel set the tone for the task he has set for himself.

We were the first heroes to return alive to Half-Blood Hill since Luke, so of course everybody treated us as if we'd won some reality-TV contest. According to camp tradition, we wore laurel wreaths to a big feast prepared in our honor, then led a procession down to the bonfire, where we got to burn the burial shrouds our cabins had made for us in our absence.

-- Percy (Chapter 22 paragraph Page 397)

**Importance:** This quote shows that they have returned against great odds, and that Percy is happy for the celebration, but it is bittersweet.