

The Reading Realm: Greek Myths

Example text

Ariadna and the Hellish Helixous

A long time ago, in a hot and dry land called Ancient Greece, there was an island. This island was called Crete. It was a small island, surrounded by the glistening, turquoise Aegean Sea. Sometimes the sea sparkled, reflecting the golden sun and sometimes it was a raging monster – smashing angrily against rocks and sending desperate seafarers to their watery graves.

But this was not all Crete was famous for. You may have heard the tragic, brutal tale of Ariadna and the evil Helixous. Indeed, you may think you know how this young girl defeated the ancient, bloodthirsty creature. Yes, you may think you know, but the true story is far more chilling...

Most stories start with a hero. They are brave and strong and daring. However, Ariadna was none of these things. She was a quiet girl and often hid beneath her soft, brown hair, using it as a curtain to hide from people. She would often creep under the shade of the olive trees, dreaming and thinking. Many children in Crete were loud, happy and carefree; a few (like Ariadna) were nervous and shy. **Nothing exciting ever happened to her and that's how she liked it.** She did the same thing every day. She helped her mother to clean. She washed the clothes. She fed the goats. The same thing, day in, day out. Luckily, her mother had taught her how to read and write (not many girls in Ancient Greece were afforded this luxury). But one day, a chain of events began which would change her life forever.

BANG! What was that? Ariadna was suddenly awoken by the sound of terrified screaming. The wails tore through the night like banshees screeching. She peered out. Chaos. Heart thudding, she ran to the door. Ariadna could just make out something in the darkness.

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Something strange and evil, looming over the town like a temple. It stomped and picked up people like they were nothing more than ants. The white stone houses were torn and destroyed. Nothing but rubble was left. No sooner than it had all started, it was over. Sweat **pouring from her brow, she called out, "Mother? Are you OK?"** Nothing. She searched the house. Nothing. She raced through the deserted town. Nothing. Whatever it was that had come to Crete had stolen her mother in the dead of night. The whole town was empty. What would she do?

Ariadna took a deep breath to steady her nerves. It had to be her. She was the only one who could save her mother and save her **village (if they're even alive, she thought to herself). Suddenly, a blinding flash filled the night sky. The stars blazed and she covered her eyes with her hand. Standing in front of her was Zeus, the almighty king of the gods. She trembled and bowed her head.**

"Ariadna," he boomed, "you are the only one who can save your people from this terrifying threat!" His voice shook the heavens and the his stern, powerful face silenced any questions or doubts she had.

"You will go to the city of Athens. Deep underground your people are being held by the most fearsome beast ever to have walked this land: the Helixous. Your mother is there."

"But...I'm...just....a....." she spluttered nervously. Zeus raised a strong hand, which was almost the size of Ariadna's entire torso. Silently, he handed her a gleaming, sharp sword and a golden shield. It took all her strength just to hold these stunning weapons, weapons forged by the gods on the top of Mount Olympus. FLASH! She peered around, confusion written over her face. Zeus had vanished, leaving nothing but a cloud of whispery, white smoke.

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The very next morning, when the lemony sun was just beginning to peek up over the horizon, Ariadna set off. In her bag she carried **some dried fruit, figs, bread and goat's cheese. She lugged the** dangerous weapons behind her, panting in exhaustion as she journeyed to Athens. And what a journey it was! She travelled over the choppy, ferocious Aegean Sea, under cascading waterfalls and through deserted cities, which lay in ruins. Everywhere she looked there was misery – houses had been shattered and the debris of buildings lay strewn across the wrecked landscape. The Helixous had destroyed her beloved home. She was running out of food and her **back ached from carrying her sword and shield. Things couldn't get** any worse.

It was on the fourth day of her journey that things got considerably worse. Ariadna was resting in the entrance of an abandoned cave, to shelter from the sweltering midday sun. She heard excited whispers and groans. Although her hands were shaking, she ventured into the depths of the gloomy, slimy cave. Hunched over, in a circle, were the three most hideous creatures she had ever seen. They had dagger-like teeth, warts and pale, translucent skin.

“We are the Three Grey Sisters,” they chorused.

Ariadna took a step back, repulsed by their haggard appearance.

“Turn back now, little girl,” they cackled maliciously, “for there is only death and misfortune in your future!”

Full of fear and anger, Ariadna ran like the wind away from the cave and the wicked sisters. Ignoring their warning, she continued on. What other choice did she have?

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Finally, she reached Athens. It was barren, no sign of life. Beneath the ruins of a temple, she found the entrance to the beast's lair. She stepped in, feeling cobwebs brush against her red, blistered skin.

"WHO ARE YOU?" hissed a voice. It was a cold, metallic voice.

"Why hello!" Ariadna cried, pretending to feel confident, **"My name is Ariadna and I'm here to free my people. Now, if you wouldn't mind just handing them over that would be great! Then I won't have to kill you!"**

The Helixous was confused. No one had ever spoken it like that before. Certainly not a pathetic, puny girl!

"DON'T YOU KNOW WHO I AM?! I BESTED THOR! I BEAT MEDUSA! ALL THE GODS TREMBLE AND SHIVER UNDER MY COMMAND!"

"Well come on then!" roared Ariadna, sounding fiercer than she felt.

With her sword held high, she ran forward, as quick as a lightning bolt. She ducked! She dived! The creature swiped at her with its talons. Heart thumping, she swung at it again. The sweat poured from her brow as she desperately tried to strike the roaring, thrashing monster but it was too fast for her. Through the mist, she could just make out its hideous fangs, fangs that dripped with blood. It was covered in gleaming, metallic scales and seemed to be taller than a temple. Like a demon, it stealthily slid and slipped through the ghostly mist. It was coming! Closer and closer. This was it! It would all be over for Ariadna, surely?

She straightened her back. No. She would defeat this deadly monster and rescue her family. She plunged with all her might at the Helixous and stabbed it through its armoured skin. It writhed in agony, piercing

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screams ripping through the air. Finally, after what seemed like ages, it collapsed. She had defeated it!

She frantically ran through the creature's lair and there, cowering in the darkness, were her family, friends and fellow villagers.

"Ariadna!" they sobbed. Her mother collapsed in her arms.

"I have come to save you," she panted.

A cheer of triumph and happiness rang out. Ariadna was a hero! She had beaten the creature and saved the whole of Ancient Greece from its reign of terror. Her name would be remembered for ever more. But deep in the darkness, the creature stirred...

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Planning – Draw and label your ideas

Hero	Monster
Hero's special weapons	Setting

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Planning – draw and write your ideas!

Opening – describe setting	Introduce hero	Problem – what is the creature doing?
Hero sets off	Climax – battle!	Ending/twist – maybe the creature opens an eye or takes a breath just as the story ends!

Email stories to
ian@thereadingrealm.co.uk



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Name.....Age.....

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