

Perseus

Perseus was the son of Zeus (the king of the gods) and of Danae. Danae was the daughter of Acrisius (king of Argos). Acrisius was warned that he would be killed by his grandson Perseus, so Acrisius locked Perseus and his mother in a chest and he cast them into the sea.

They drifted to the island of Seriphus, where they were rescued and where Perseus grew into a man. The king of Seriphus (called Polydectes) fell in love with Perseus' mum. He thought that Perseus might get in the way of his plans to marry Danae, so he sent Perseus to collect the head of Medusa. Medusa was a monster - if you looked at her face, you were turned into stone instantly.

Aided by Hermes (messenger of the gods), Perseus made his way to the Gray Women (called the Fates in Hercules film) - these women shared one eyeball between them. Perseus took their eye and he wouldn't give it back to them until they told him where to reach the nymphs of the north. They told him the directions, and when he reached the nymphs, they gave him some winged sandals, a magic wallet (which would fit whatever was put into it), and a cap to make him invisible. Hermes gave him a sword which could never be bent or broken, and Athena gave him a shield. Perseus found Medusa and killed her (looking in the reflection in the shield to avoid being turned into stone). Medusa had some sisters who were not very happy, but Perseus managed to escape because he was wearing his cap. He put Medusa's head into the wallet and flew on his winged sandals towards home.

As he was passing Ethiopia, he rescued the princess Andromeda as she was about to be sacrificed to a sea monster and he took her with him as his wife. At Seriphus, he freed his mother by turning the king into stone (using Medusa's head). They all then returned to Greece, where Perseus accidentally killed his grandfather Acrisius with a discus (as he had been warned in the past). According to one legend, Perseus went to Asia, where his son Perses ruled over the Persians, from whom they were said to have gotten their name.