

Perseus was the son of the God Zeus and Danae, a woman from the Greek island of Seriphos. Perseus was a very brave young man, and the jealous king of Seriphos wanted to get rid of him. So the king sent Perseus to find the monster Medusa and cut off her head. Medusa had sharp fangs and claws, and her hair was made of poisonous snakes. Anyone who looked into her frightening face would be turned to stone and instantly killed. The Goddess Athena gave Perseus a shield made from a mirror and a sword to help him fight Medusa. After several months of traveling, Perseus found the monster's dwelling place in the mountainside. He lit a torch and entered Medusa's cave. Medusa charged into view, screaming that she would kill all intruders. Perseus used the mirrored shield to see her reflection—since he could not look directly at her face—and cut off her head with his sword. Then, he placed Medusa's head in a sack, because her face could turn people to stone even after she had died. Before returning home, Perseus brought Medusa's head to the king of Aethiopia, to prove his bravery and ask for Princess Andromeda's hand in marriage. He held Medusa's head above a fountain outside the palace, so the king and princess could see its reflection in the water safely and not be turned to stone.

Perseus (pronounced PURR-see-uss)

Zeus (pronounced ZOOSS)

Danae (pronounced DAN-ay)

Seriphos (pronounced SERR-ih-fohz)

Athena (pronounced uh-THEE-nah)

Medusa (pronounced meh-DU-sah)

Aethiopia (AY-thee-OH-pee-ah)

Andromeda (an-DRAH-meh-dah)

(fold)

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Modern situation: the look on a parent's face when a child returns home long past curfew time