

INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH SIDE READERS

國際英文輔助讀物

# STORIES OF GREECE

## 希臘故事

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1100 WORD LEVEL

1100 常用字範圍



遠東圖書公司

INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH SIDE READER.-

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# STORIES OF GREECE

Retold or Dramatized by

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**1100 WORD LEVEL**

**THE FAR EAST BOOK CO**



## 編輯要旨

1. 本叢書共選出日常用字1500字，均屬說話、書寫、閱讀及兒童讀物中出現率（word frequency）極高之基本字彙。
2. 本叢書分爲十五冊，第一冊以日常用字 100 字爲度，第二冊以 200 字爲度，以此類推至第十五冊，日常用字即達 1500 字。
3. 本叢書內容包括童話、寓言、故事、戲劇、文學名著等，各種文體俱備。
4. 本叢書每冊皆附有生字表及成語註釋，以便查閱。
5. 本叢書每冊後均附有練習，以供讀者自修。
6. 凡注有星號（\*）之字爲超出1500字範圍以外者，書中均以插圖或文字解釋。

## CONTENTS

	Page
1. DAMON AND PYTHIAS . . . . .	3
2. THE SWORD OF DAMOCLES . . . . .	8
3. THE STORY OF ANTIGONE . . . . .	12
4. ODYSSEUS AND CIRCE . . . . .	17
QUESTIONS AND TESTS . . . . .	29

This book is a Side Reader to be read with any series. It is written in simple but idiomatic language suitable for reading after the *third* year of learning English.

Words outside the 1100 WORD LEVEL are starred (\*) and illustrated or explained in the text.

**MASTER THE 1100 WORD LEVEL.**

**THEN READ THE STORIES QUICKLY WITHOUT TRANSLATION TILL YOU ARE READING EASILY.**

**THEN GO ON TO THE 1200 WORD LEVEL.**



## DAMON AND PYTHIAS

*(Pythias has been taken in war by King Dionysius. Damon, a friend of Pythias, has begged for the life of Pythias, but Dionysius has refused to change his mind. He has said again that Pythias must die.)*

### ***1. Before King Dionysius***

*Pythias.* I do not fear death, King Dionysius, but before I die, I wish to ask a favor.

*Dionysius.* To those about to die the gods may be generous, and so may kings.

*Pythias.* I desire to be permitted to visit my family once more, before I die. For the sake of my loved ones, I ask this.

*Dionysius.* But you live a long way from here,

Pythias. Do you suppose for one minute that I'll let you leave my country? No, young man, I can't trust you. If I let you go, I'd probably never see you again.

*Pythias.* I'm willing to swear on my word of honor to return and give myself into your power again.

*Dionysius.* What is the worth of a promise given by an enemy? As long as you are here, I know where you are.

*Damon.* May I speak, O Dionysius? Will you let my friend go if I take his place until he returns?

*Dionysius.* How do you know that he'll return, young man? I advise you to think carefully before you say this.

*Damon.* If Pythias gives you his word that he will return, I shall be quite safe, because Pythias is a man who never breaks his sworn promise.

*Dionysius.* If he failed to return, would you be willing to die instead of him? You must understand that Dionysius also is a man who keeps his word. If Pythias failed to return, I'd most certainly see to it that you died in his place. You clearly understand this, don't you?

*Damon.* I do. If Pythias has not returned in three weeks' time, then I will die in his place.

*Dionysius.* I'm surprised to find a man willing to die for a friend. Pythias, you may go home

if you desire, but you understand the condition. Do you promise that you will return in three weeks' time?

*Pythias.* I promise, King Dionysius. Oh, Damon, how can I thank you for your kindness? You have my word as a gentleman; I shall be back within three weeks so that you may be freed.

## **2. Three Weeks Later**

*(Damon is standing before Dionysius.)*

*Dionysius.* Well, young man, where's your friend, Pythias?

*Damon.* I don't know, but I can say this, if he's alive, he's coming here as fast as he can.

*Dionysius.* So you still trust him.

*Damon.* I do, just as much as ever.

*Dionysius.* Even when you know that tomorrow you must die if he hasn't returned?

*Damon.* Even then. Something unexpected has happened to prevent him from coming.

*Dionysius.* He probably cares more for his own life than for your life, young man. I'm sorry, but tomorrow you must die.

*(A soldier enters and speaks to Dionysius.)*

*Soldier.* Sir, there's a man outside who wishes to see you at once.

*Dionysius.* Very well; send him in.

*(The door opens and Pythias enters.)*



*Damon.* Pythias! My dear friend!

*Dionysius.* Pythias! You're the last man I expected to see.



*Pythias.* Sir, I'm sorry I have been so long returning. I simply wasn't able to arrive sooner.

*Dionysius.* I thought I had seen the last of you, young man. I was just telling Damon that he must be prepared to die in **your** place tomorrow. What prevented you from coming?

*Pythias.* There have been great storms at sea which made it impossible for my ship to arrive before today. I fear that you may have suffered on my account, dear Damon. I really should not have let you take my place.

*Damon.* Pythias, I never believed for one minute

that you wouldn't return. King Dionysius can tell you that I trusted you fully. Haven't we been friends since we were at school together?

*Pythias.* But never before have I known your worth, Damon.

*Dionysius.* Such great friends are seldom seen in these days. It's a strange sight for a king to see sincere people who can be trusted with life and death. Pythias, if you'll give me your word as a gentleman not to fight or speak against my kingdom, I'm willing to pardon you and give you your freedom.

*Pythias.* I had not hoped for life, King Dionysius. I willingly swear to keep the peace.

*Dionysius.* You are free, young men, both of you. It's a fine thing to see young men of your kind, one ready to die for his friend, the other brave enough to return to what he thought was certain death.

*Pythias.* I'm truly thankful to you, King Dionysius, for your kindness.

*Dionysius.* I would give all I have in the world to know that I had such a sincere true friend as yours, Pythias.

## THE SWORD OF DAMOCLES

*(Dionysius, a powerful and at times cruel Greek king, was greatly hated by some of his people. He is talking with Damocles, one of his followers and friends.)*

### 1. In the \*Palace Garden

*Damocles.* What a happy man you must be, Dionysius! You have everything that a man could want. It must be very pleasant to be a king.

*Dionysius.* Ah, my friend, because I have riches and live in a palace, you think I must be a happy man. Well, kings are not always happy, let me tell you.

*Damocles.* Why not? You have no money worries, you are waited on by as many servants as you desire, you ride the finest horses, you eat the best foods, and you wear clothes that are the best that money can buy. What more could anyone desire?

*Dionysius.* You have never been a king, Damocles. How little you understand the life that a king must live! Would you like to change places with me for one day, my friend?

*Damocles.* Certainly I would! Who wouldn't be a king if he could, even for a day? What a wonderful time I'd have! A king for a day! But of course I understand it's quite impossible for me to take your place.

*Dionysius.* Not at all. You shall be king for a day. Tomorrow I'll be just one of the common people and Damocles shall be king.

## 2. *In the Palace*

*(Damocles is seen sitting in the King's place at a long table, eating his dinner, with servants waiting on him. Dionysius is seated on one side taking a quiet interest in the way Damocles is ruling his followers.)*

*Damocles.* What wonderful food! I've never eaten anything so good before. And to think that you have this every day!

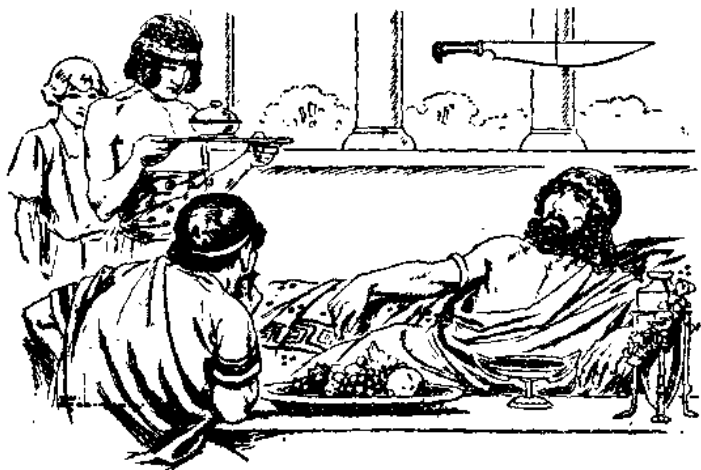
*Dionysius.* Yes, every day. And oh how tired of it I become!

*Damocles.* And every day all these servants wait on you. You never had to do anything for yourself, did you, Dionysius?

*Dionysius.* I had to *think* for myself, Damocles; that's about all. I have not as yet found followers who could do my thinking for me. And so you like to have people always ready to serve you, Damocles? But there would come a time when people would tire you; you would come to hate these people always around you or before you or behind you so that you might never be alone. Even at night in your sleep you would dream of the thousands of people from whom you might never be free. Alone and yet not alone! At last

their worries and troubles would become so much a part of you that you would come to understand that a king and his kingdom are one.

*Damocles.* I don't agree with you. Pardon me, Dionysius, but I think your troubles are really in your mind. Why should you worry about what



the common people are thinking? Aren't there soldiers to watch over you night and day? Being perfectly safe, you should live as you please.

*Dionysius.* I suppose you think you are perfectly safe now, my friend?

*Damocles.* I've never felt safer in my life.

*Dionysius.* Look above your head, Damocles, and see if you are quite as safe as you thought.

*Damocles (looks up).* What! A sword over my head?

*Dionysius.* Yes, a heavy sword, and it's kept from falling by a single horse-hair. Now, do you feel safe?

*Damocles.* Suppose the sword should cut through the hair? Or suppose the hair should break?

*Dionysius.* In either case, Damocles, the sword would kill you. No, don't move. I desire you to stay where you are as long as you wish to be king.

*Damocles.* But why is the sword there? Why doesn't someone take it away?

*Dionysius.* I want you to know what it feels like to be in danger every minute of your life. Wherever I go, I have the sword of somebody's hate held over my head. A king cannot please all his people. At any time I may lose my life. Now, Damocles, do you still wish to be king?

*Damocles.* No, Dionysius, not even for a day. I see my mistake. Kings are neither so happy nor so safe as they seem.

*Dionysius.* Then you don't wish to change places with me and live in this splendid palace?

*Damocles.* No, indeed! In future I shall be perfectly satisfied with my little home in the mountains.

*Dionysius.* Ah, my friend, I thought you would say that.



## THE STORY OF ANTIGONE

*(This is one of the very old stories of Greece, which have been told and sung through hundreds of years. It is a story of a daughter's love for her old father, and of a sister's love for her brother.)*

### **1. King Oedipus and Antigone**

King Oedipus of Thebes, fearing the gods because he had not led a good life, put out his own eyes, and left Thebes to wander in other parts of Greece. His son Eteocles became ruler of Thebes in his place. His daughter, Antigone, might have remained in Thebes, but her love for her father made her leave Thebes with him. And so the people of another land saw a strange sight—a king

led by his beautiful daughter from place to place, begging for food.

After many months they came to Athens. By the kindness of Theseus, ruler of Athens, they were permitted to make their home there.

## **2. *The Two Sons***

Oedipus had two sons. Eteocles, who had driven his father out of Thebes, was the younger. Eteocles had also driven out his elder brother Polynices. By right Polynices should have been king of Thebes, so he called together soldiers and friends, and prepared to make war on his younger brother. Before going to fight, he came to Attica to see his father and sister. There, he made Antigone promise to make certain that his body was properly \*buried<sup>1</sup> if he should be killed. The Greeks believed that the spirit would never find rest if a body were not buried with the honor usually given to the dead. They said that the spirit would have to wait on this side of a dark river, unable to go over to the land of the spirits on the other side.

## **3. *Antigone's Promise***

Antigone promised her brother that she would arrange for him to be properly buried if he lost

1 bury=to put the body of a dead person in the ground or to cover it with earth.



his life fighting. Polynices then went away to lead his army against the forces of Eteocles.

Not long after this the old king died, and Antigone returned to her home in Thebes.

#### **4. The Great Battle**

From Thebes she saw the army of Eteocles go out to meet the forces of Polynices. A great "battle" took place. During the fight the two brothers found themselves face to face. They fought each other to the death. Thus, after many brave soldiers had lost their lives, neither brother became king of Thebes, for both were killed in the battle.

#### **5. Creon becomes King**

Instead of either of the brothers, their uncle, Creon, was made king. Creon had favored Eteocles, so when the bodies of the brothers were found on the battlefield, he had the body of Eteocles carried into Thebes and buried with great honor. The body of Polynices was left unburied just where it lay. Creon hoped that it would be torn to pieces by birds and wild animals. Further, he said that anyone who buried the body would be killed.

#### **6. A Good Sister**

When Antigone heard that by her uncle's order

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1 battle=a fight of soldiers in war.