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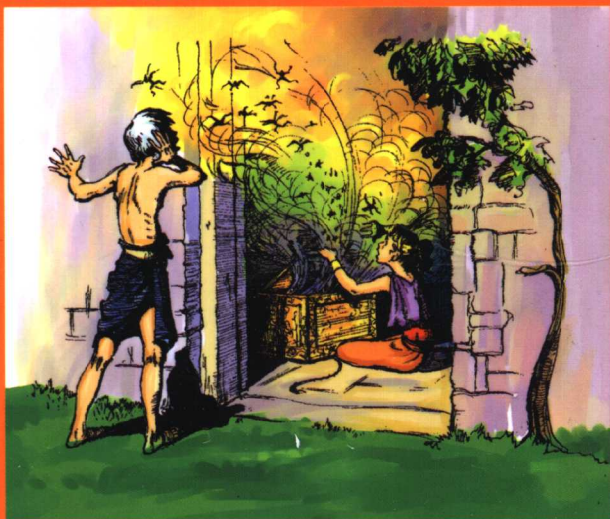
Wonder Tales from Greece

希腊神话故事

MARGERY GREEN

原著 梅格里·格林

这里有英勇的武士和令人兴奋不已的冒险，有肋生双翅的飞马，有怪兽、巨人、高贵无畏的英雄和闭月羞花的女王。经久不衰的古希腊神话在此书里又重焕生机……



WJ
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注释 张 颖



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出版说明

为了促进我国中学生的英语学习,培养他们的文化素养和文学修养,上海外语教育出版社经过长时间的酝酿和市场调研,决定将英国麦克米伦出版公司的一套文学名著简写本引荐给我国的中学生。

麦克米伦出版公司是从20世纪初开始陆续出版这套文学名著简写本的。为了满足世界各地英语为非母语国家、也包括英语国家不同程度中学生的阅读需要,他们请专家对一些大家耳熟能详的世界文学名著进行了改写,在保留原著的故事情节和原著者的创作风格的同时,适当地降低了语言的难度,至今已经推出了200多本。若干年过去了,这些书仍然受到世界各地读者的欢迎。

外教社从麦克米伦出版公司的这套文学名著简写本中精心挑选了40本,汇成一套“轻松读经典丛书”,难易程度跨越“英语课程标准”的3级—8级。这套丛书选编了英、美、法等国文学大师的经典之作,包括莎士比亚、狄更斯、马克·吐温、哈代、大仲马等著名作家的作品。为了让中学生在阅读过程中更好地把握原书的精髓和作家的创作历程,外教社还特地对读物中的语言难点做了注释;并加入了一篇关于作家、作品的背景介绍。

我们衷心希望“轻松读经典丛书”能够有助于提高我国中学生的文学欣赏水平,陶冶他们的道德情操,增强他们的英语阅读能力,成为开启中学生英语文学名著阅读之门的金钥匙。

外教社编辑部

2002年11月

简 介

希腊神话是古代希腊人创造的一份丰富多彩的民间口头文学宝藏。它不仅是希腊艺术成长的土壤,也是欧洲文学艺术的源头之一,无数文学作品都曾以此为题材。许多关于希腊神话中的英雄及其历险的词汇已成为英语词汇中的一部分,所以要了解欧美文化背景,没有对希腊神话的了解是行不通的。

在改编过程中,简化了许多复杂的句子结构,同时尽量保持了原书文体的原汁原味。

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THE GORGON'S¹ HEAD

WHEN Perseus² was a very little boy, he and his mother were put into a wooden chest and floated out to sea. Danaë was the name of his mother, and she was the daughter of a king. There were wicked men in her country who hoped to get rid of Danaë and her child in this way.

The mother held her son closely in her arms as the wooden chest floated far out from the land. The waves tossed them up and down but the chest did not sink. It came at last one evening to the shore of an island, where it was caught in a fisherman's net and safely brought to land. The wooden chest on its strange voyage had come by chance to the island of Seriphus³.

Fortune had favoured the mother and child,

1 Gorgons: 戈耳工, 希腊神话中的三个蛇发女怪 2 Perseus: 珀耳修斯, 天神宙斯和达那厄之子, 希腊神话中的大英雄之一 3 Seriphus: 塞里福斯岛, 在今爱琴海西南部

for the fisherman was a good and kind man. He took Danaë and Perseus to live with him and he looked after them with great kindness. As the years went by, Perseus grew big and handsome and strong; and he became skilful with his sword and shield, as was the custom in those days.

Now the fisherman had a brother who was ruler of the island of Seriphus, and his name was Polydectes. He was not good and kind like his brother the fisherman; he was wicked and cruel.

When this wicked king saw that Perseus was now a young man, he decided to send him on some dangerous errand. He might perhaps be killed and then Danaë would be left alone without her son, and this would please the wicked king. At last King Polydectes sent for Perseus.

The young man came to the palace and stood before the king's throne.

‘Perseus,’ said the king, ‘you and your mother have received much kindness from my brother and me. I expect you would be glad to repay us in some way.’

‘I would willingly risk my life to do so, your Majesty,’ answered Perseus.

‘Then I have a little adventure for you,’ said the king. ‘As you are brave and daring, it will give you a chance to show your strength. You have heard that I am soon to marry the beau-



tiful Princess Hippodamia? It is usual to give the bride a present that is rare and interesting. Today I have thought of just the thing. '

'And can I help you to obtain it?' asked Perseus, eagerly.

'You can, if you are brave enough,' said King Polydectes. 'I wish to give the princess the head of the Gorgon Medusa¹. Bring that to me and I shall be very pleased with you. '

'I will set off tomorrow morning,' answered the young man.

'And Perseus,' added the king, 'be careful not to damage the head when you cut it off. I want it in very good condition when I give it to Princess Hippodamia. '

As soon as Perseus had left the palace the king laughed cruelly, for he knew that he had asked the young man to do something which was almost impossible.

The people of the island soon heard the news that Perseus had undertaken to cut off the head of Medusa and they rejoiced. They were nearly all as wicked as the king himself and they hoped for some misfortune to come to Danaë and her son. The only good man on the island seems to have been the fisherman who helped them.

1 Gorgon Medusa: 墨杜萨, 又称美杜莎, 三个戈耳工之一

Now, at that time there were three Gorgons. They were the most strange and terrible monsters that had ever been seen since the world began, and Medusa was one of them. They were three sisters, but anything less like women can hardly be imagined. They were more like a kind of dragon and their bodies were covered with armour¹ of iron. Instead of hair, each of them had a hundred snakes growing on their heads, alive and twisting and turning, each with its poisonous tongue that darted in and out of its mouth. The Gorgons had teeth like tigers' tusks, and their claw-like hands were made of brass. They had huge wings that shone bright and dazzling in the sun, for every feather was made of gold.

If anyone happened to see a Gorgon flying in the sunshine, he ran to hide as quickly as he could. It was not only the snakes on the Gorgons' heads that made people afraid, nor the thought of those terrible teeth and claws—though they were bad enough. No, the worst danger from these dreadful creatures was that if anyone looked them in the face he was immediately turned to stone!

And so Perseus had a difficult task indeed. He had to fight a terrible monster and cut off its head; he had to kill a Gorgon with golden wings,

1 armour: 盔甲



iron body, tiger teeth, brazen¹ claws, snaky hair—but he must not look at the awful monster, or he would be turned into stone.

Perseus did not tell his mother about the difficult task that the king had given him. He put on his sword and he took his shield, and then he rowed a boat over to the mainland. Here he sat down in a quiet place and thought about what he had to do. The difficulty and danger of his task made him very thoughtful indeed.

While he sat there, a voice suddenly spoke beside him.

‘Perseus, why are you sad?’

He lifted his head and found that he was not alone. A man stood beside him; a bright, intelligent looking young man in a cloak. He had a strange cap on his head, a twisted staff in his hand, and a crooked sword hanging by his side. He looked so gay and lively, and he seemed so ready to be cheerful and helpful that Perseus felt better at once.

‘I am thinking about a difficult adventure that I have undertaken,’ he said.

‘Well, I have helped many a young man, in difficulties that looked very alarming at first,’ said the stranger. ‘You may have heard of me.’

¹ brazen: 黄铜制成的

Sometimes I am called Mercury¹, but Quicksilver suits me just as well. Let us talk the matter over and perhaps I may be able to help you. '

At once Perseus felt he could trust this young man with all his story. He told how King Polydectes wanted the head of the Gorgon Medusa, and how he had undertaken to get it for him, but he was afraid of being turned into stone.

'And that would be a great pity,' said Quicksilver, with a smile. 'I'm sure you would rather be a young man for a few more years than a stone statue for a very long time—even if it was a handsome one!' He then went on to tell Perseus that the first thing to do was to find the Three Grey Women.

'The Three Grey Women!' cried Perseus. 'I have never heard of them. '

'They are three very strange old women,' said Quicksilver. 'They have only one eye between them and only one tooth. We must find them by starlight or in the twilight² of the evening, for they never show themselves in the light of the sun or the moon. '

'But why should I waste time in looking for these Grey Women,' asked Perseus, 'when it is

1 Mercury: 墨丘利,即希腊神话中的赫耳墨斯,众神的使者,掌管商业、交通、畜牧等 2 twilight: 微光



the Gorgons that I have to find?’

‘There are other things to be done before you come to them,’ said his new friend. ‘Now, first you must polish your shield until you can see your face in it clearly.’

Perseus thought it was more important that his shield was strong, but he set to work with a will. He polished as hard as he could, until his shield shone like the moon at harvest time. He nodded and smiled at his bright reflection in the shield. Quicksilver did the same; then he took off his own short and crooked sword and put it on Perseus, instead of the one he was wearing.

‘This sword can cut easily through iron and brass,’ Quicksilver said. ‘Now we must be going.’

He set off very fast and Perseus found it hard to keep up. He looked sideways at Quicksilver several times as they went along. He fancied that he saw wings on his feet and at the sides of his head, but when he looked again he found he was mistaken.

Quicksilver soon saw that Perseus was out of breath. ‘Here,’ he said, ‘you take the staff, for you need it more than I do.’

‘I could go faster,’ Perseus said, looking again at his companion’s feet, ‘if only I had a pair of winged shoes!’



'Here,' he said, 'you take the staff.'

'We must see if we can get you a pair,' answered Quicksilver, as they set off again.

Perseus found himself going much faster now. The stick seemed to be alive in his hand and it lent him new life.

When at last they found the Three Grey Women, Perseus was astonished to see that they used their one eye in turn. It was only by cleverly capturing this eye, and leaving the Three Grey Women in darkness for a while, that Perseus and his friend made them tell how best the Three Nymphs¹ could be found.

1 Nymphs: 希腊神话中的林泽仙女



These Nymphs had in their charge three things which Perseus must have to succeed in his adventure: the magic wallet, the flying slippers and the helmet of invisibility¹.

The Three Nymphs were very different from the Three Grey Women. They were young and beautiful instead of being old, and they each had two bright eyes of their own instead of only one between them. They seemed to know Quicksilver well, and when he told them about Perseus and his adventure they at once offered to help.

First they brought to Perseus the magic wallet. It was like a purse made of deer-skin, and it was beautifully embroidered². Then they brought a pair of slippers, with a nice little pair of wings at the heel of each.

‘Put them on, Perseus,’ Quicksilver said.

Perseus knelt down and began to put one on, while he placed the other beside him on the ground. Suddenly, this other slipper spread its wings and began to fly upwards. It was only Quicksilver’s leap in the air that luckily caught it in time.

‘You must be more careful,’ he said to Perseus. ‘It would frighten the birds in the sky if they saw a flying slipper!’

1 helmet of invisibility: 隐身帽 2 embroider: 刺绣

When both the slippers were safely on his feet, Perseus found it quite difficult to stay on the ground. The slippers began to take him up into the air at once.

‘It is always difficult to manage these high-flying affairs at first,’ said Quicksilver, laughing at him, ‘but you must wait for the invisible helmet.’ The Nymphs had it all ready for him to put on. And then there happened something that was more wonderful than anything Perseus had known before. One moment he stood there, brave and handsome, with the crooked sword at his side and the brightly polished shield on his arm—and the next moment, he had disappeared!

‘Where are you?’ asked Quicksilver.

As soon as the helmet was on, Perseus was invisible—even the helmet itself could not be seen!

‘Why, here, of course—just where I was a moment ago,’ answered Perseus. ‘Can’t you see me?’

‘No,’ said his friend, ‘and the Gorgons won’t see you, either. Quick—follow me, and let us try your skill with the winged slippers.’

As Quicksilver said this, the cap on his head spread its wings too, and off they flew, hundreds of feet up into the air.