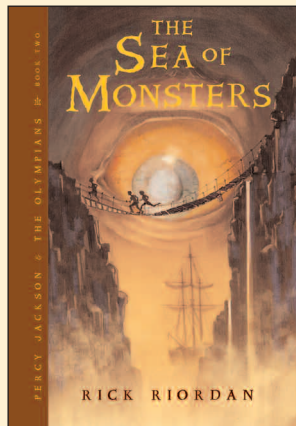


This guide was created by Tracie Vaughn Zimmer, a reading specialist and author of the book *Sketches from a Spy Tree*. Visit her Web site to find dozens of guides to children's literature at tracievaughnzimmer.com.

A Teacher's Guide for *The Lightning Thief* can be found on the Hyperion Web site at hyperionbooksforchildren.com.

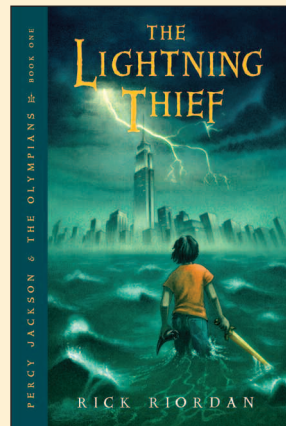
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Sea of Monsters

Tr. ed. 0-7868-5686-6

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Book One: The Lightning Thief

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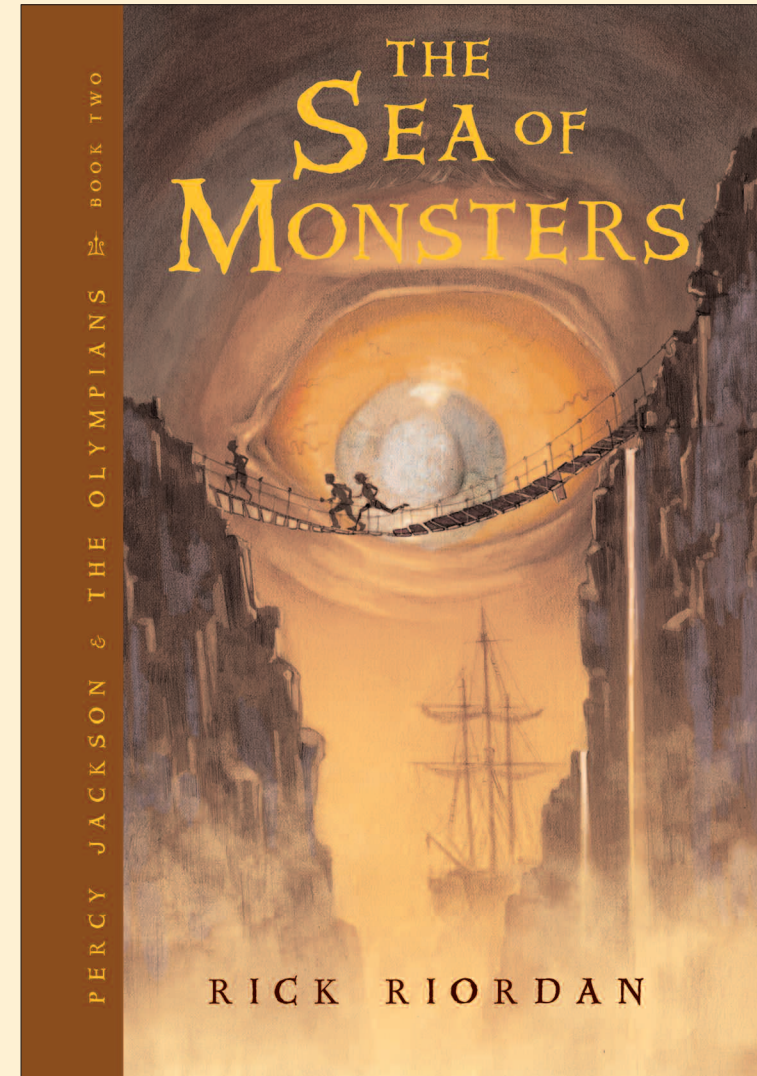
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DISCUSSION GUIDE

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ABOUT THE BOOK

Percy Jackson's seventh-grade year has been surprisingly quiet. Not a single monster has set foot on his New York prep-school campus. But when an innocent game of dodgeball among Percy and his classmates turns into a death match against an ugly gang of cannibal giants, things get . . . well, ugly. And the unexpected arrival of Percy's friend Annabeth brings more bad news: the magical borders that protect Camp Half-Blood have been poisoned by a mysterious enemy, and unless a cure is found, the only safe haven for demigods will be destroyed.

In this fresh, funny, and action-packed follow-up to *The Lightning Thief*, Percy and his friends must journey into the Sea of Monsters to save their camp. But first, Percy will discover a stunning new secret about his family—one that makes him wonder whether being claimed as Poseidon's son is an honor or a curse.

ABOUT THE GUIDE

This guide includes discussion questions and projects intended to extend the use of the novel into classrooms, book clubs, and literature circles. It should promote discussion on the themes of the novel, including friendship, heroism, family, hubris, betrayal, and identity.



The title is centered and features a decorative flourish above and below the text. The text is in a serif font, with 'PERCY JACKSON' on the top line, '&' in the middle, and 'THE OLYMPIANS' on the bottom line. The lines are separated by horizontal bars.

PERCY
JACKSON
&
THE
OLYMPIANS

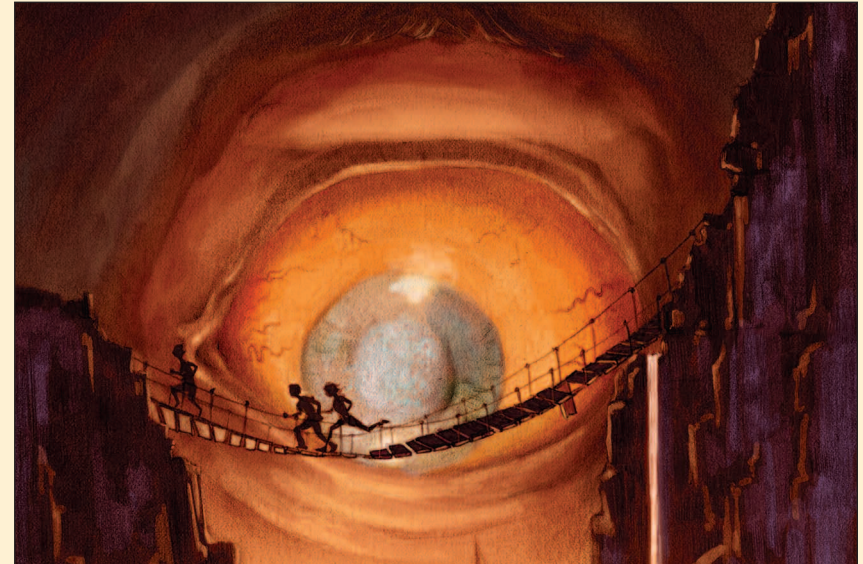
PRE-READING

Did you read *The Lightning Thief*? Do you remember how it ended? What did Percy learn during his last quest? What do you think he will have to face in this novel? Does the title give you any clues? Do you think he will be successful?

DISCUSSION GUIDE

- 1 Describe Percy Jackson. Why must he change schools each year? What problems does he have in his academic life? How do these same qualities help him as a demigod? What are his unique skills and abilities? What are his weaknesses?
- 2 What is Percy's relationship to Grover? Why is he willing to risk everything to rescue him? Would you do the same for a friend? What does this tell us about Percy's character? Do you think he would be as brave if he didn't know who his father was? Why or why not?
- 3 How is Tyson treated at Meriwether Prep? Why? How is he different? Is he treated better at camp? Do his classmates' pre-conceived opinions have any validity? Is this different from any other kind of prejudice? Why or why not? How is his parentage a source of embarrassment for Percy?
- 4 Describe the various battles in the novel. Which one did you find the most exciting? Why? Which monster had the best description? Whose powers impressed you most? Why? Which tools described would you most like to have at your disposal?
- 5 Why is the camp in danger? How had it been protected before? Could the magic be restored? What would need to be done to insure the safety of the half-bloods? Who was a nemesis to the camp? Why? What do they hope to accomplish?
- 6 What is a quest? Why is Clarisse given one instead of Percy? Who helps Percy begin his quest without permission? Why? How do the goals of that god and Percy's conflict? How is the conflict resolved? Who else joins him on his quest? What do they learn from each other?

- 7 Although Tyson has some definite drawbacks to his personality and appearance, he also has special skills and abilities. What are they? How does he overcome what others think of him? Is his finest ability those things he can create with his hands or his loyalty? If you could only have one these which would you choose? How does he surprise everyone in the novel?
- 8 The novel is full of interesting details that bring both characters and settings to life. What details were your favorites? Why? Which mythical creature described in the book would you least like to meet in person? Why? Have you ever heard of any of these creatures before? Were you surprised to learn that they were from Greek mythology?
- 9 What is Chiron's prophecy? Why do the gods not want Percy to know about it? How can knowing the prophecy affect his choices? Would you want to know? Why or why not? How does the prophecy protect him from Kronos and the other gods? Why won't they just kill him and foil the prophecy?
- 10 Who is Luke? What are his plans? What do you think he will try to do in the next novel in the series? Do you think our heroes will be able to stop him? Will Kronos continue to gain power? In the end, who else becomes part of the prophecy? Why?
- 11 Describe the scene where Annabeth and Percy encounter the Sirens. What are they? What do they reveal about someone? What does Annabeth learn about herself? What do you think Percy would learn? What do you think would be revealed to you? What is hubris?
- 12 Does Percy's story encourage you to study the original Greek myths? Why or why not? Why do you think the myths and the characters within them have survived through the millennia? What can writers today still learn from these stories?



PROJECTS

VISUALIZING

While reading a chapter, highlight (or use sticky note flags) words or phrases that really helped you get a picture in your mind of what was happening in the story. In at least two places create predictions of what you think might happen later on in the story, based on what you've just read.

ART

Create a 3D scene from the story. You can use any materials you like, but try to get as many details from the scene incorporated into your art.

MUSIC

Choose classical music that would work as a background to a particular battle scene in the story. In a short journal explain why you picked this piece.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Create a chart which organizes the following information: character's name, child of whom, special powers, tools of choice, goal, and affiliation (Kronos or Olympus).



Becky Riordan

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rick Riordan is a former middle-school teacher and the author of *Percy Jackson and the Olympians, Book One: The Lightning Thief*. His previous novels for adults include the hugely popular Tres Navarre mysteries. He lives in San Antonio, Texas, with his wife and two sons.

AUTHOR INTERVIEW

What was your process for writing the second book?

Did it differ greatly from that of your first book, The Lightning Thief?

Actually the process for *The Sea of Monsters* was almost identical. Once I formulated the general idea, I told *Sea of Monsters* to my son as a bedtime story, just as I had for *The Lightning Thief*. I made up most of the details as I went along, pulling ideas from Greek mythology. My son loved it and didn't want the story to end, so I figured I was on the right track. Then I spent about a year writing and revising the novel. When I was done, I read it to my son and also let a few of my former middle-school students pass judgment on the manuscript. It's very important for me that kids like the story, first and foremost. After all, I'm writing for them.

Why do you think the Greek myths have endured the ages?

When did you first become fascinated with them?

I've loved Greek mythology for as long as I can remember. What's not to like? Brave but tragic heroes. All-powerful gods. Outrageous personalities. Scary monsters. Magic. Love. Fighting. The myths have it all! I think mythology has endured so long because these old stories describe something timeless. Hearing the exploits of the gods and heroes, we learn a lot about the best and worst of human nature.

Your hero, Percy Jackson, must straddle two worlds, the human and the mythical.

Why did you decide to make him half human?

All the old heroes of Greek mythology were half human and half god: Heracles, Perseus, Theseus. That idea has always fascinated me, because the heroes never completely belonged in either world. That made them more sympathetic to me. I also think all middle-school kids feel that from time to time—caught between childhood and adulthood, not really comfortable in either place. Maybe that's why middle-school kids find it easy to relate to Percy.

What's the best part about writing for kids?

Do you miss being in the classroom?

Writing for kids has made me a better writer in general. Kids have little patience for extraneous information, so I've learned to tell a tighter story. They expect humor, action, good characters, interesting settings—all of which makes for a good novel. When I write the Percy Jackson books, I imagine that I am reading them in front of my class. That helps me to keep the pace fast and the interest level high. I want my readers to love reading, not feel bored! I do miss having my own classroom, but I still visit schools as an author all the time, so in a way I can reach more students now than I ever did as a classroom teacher.

What authors and stories have most influenced your work?

Obviously I love mythology and folklore! Aside from that, the first thing I remember reading for pleasure was *The Lord of the Rings*. I was a big fantasy fan in middle-school and high school. I loved *The Earthsea Trilogy*, *The Phantom Tollbooth*, and the work of Roald Dahl. I still read a lot of great young adult fantasy, everything from J.K. Rowling to Philip Pullman to Eoin Colfer.

Visit Rick Riordan's Web site at www.rickriordan.com