

FROM THE WORLD OF PERCY JACKSON

# THE SUN AND THE STAR

A NICO DI ANGELO ADVENTURE

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

Disney • HYPERION

NEW YORK TIMES #1 BEST-SELLING AUTHOR

AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR

**RICK RIORDAN** AND **MARK OSHIRO**

## ABOUT *THE SUN AND THE STAR*



Demigods Nico di Angelo and Will Solace must endure the terrors of Tartarus to rescue an old friend in this thrilling adventure cowritten by *New York Times* #1 best-selling author Rick Riordan and award-winning author Mark Oshiro. Percy Jackson fans, rejoice! Nico and Will have a book of their own! As the son of Hades, Nico di Angelo has been through so much, from the premature deaths of his mother and sister, to being outed against his will, to losing his friend Jason during the trials of Apollo. But there is a ray of sunshine in his life—literally: his boyfriend, Will Solace, the son of Apollo. Together the two demigods can overcome any obstacle or foe. At least, that’s been the case so far. . . . Now Nico is being plagued by a voice calling out to him from Tartarus, the lowest part of the Underworld. He thinks he knows who it is: a reformed Titan named Bob whom Percy and Annabeth had to leave behind when they escaped Hades’s realm. Nico’s dreams and Rachel Dare’s latest prophecy leave little doubt in Nico’s mind that Bob is in some kind of trouble. Nico has to go on this quest, whether Mr. D and Chiron like it or not. And of course Will insists on coming with. But can a being made of light survive in the darkest part of the world? And what does the prophecy mean that Nico will have to “leave something of equal value behind”? Nico will have to face demons both internal and external as his relationship with Will is tested to the core in this stand-alone adventure featuring two of the most popular characters in the Percy Jackson saga.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**RICK RIORDAN** (RickRiordan.com) is the author of three *New York Times* #1 best-selling series with millions of copies sold throughout the world: Percy Jackson and the Olympians, the Kane Chronicles, and the Heroes of Olympus. His Greek myth collection, *Percy Jackson’s Greek Gods*, was a *New York Times* #1 best seller as well. His previous novels for adults include the hugely popular Tres Navarre series, winner of the top three awards in the mystery genre. He lives in Boston, Massachusetts, with his wife and two sons.


**MARK OSHIRO** is the award-winning author of *Anger Is a Gift* (2019 Schneider Family Book Award) and *Each of Us a Desert*, both with Tor Teen. Their middle grade debut, *The Insiders*, came out in 2021. When not writing, they are trying to pet every dog in the world.



## EXPLORING *THE SUN AND THE STAR* THROUGH DISCUSSION AND WRITING

The following questions may be utilized throughout the study of *The Sun and the Star* as targeted questions for class discussion and reflection or, alternatively, these questions can be used as reflective writing prompts.

- As the novel opens, readers are told that “Nico faced the worst decision of his life, and he was certain he was going to mess it up.” How does learning that Nico is only trying to determine which Star Wars character he’d want to take on a date offer some levity at the moment before the events to come?
- Nico thinks, “Why, oh why, did it feel like such a victory to make Will laugh? For a long time, Nico had assumed he himself did not have a heart. He was the son of Hades, after all. Love didn’t find people like him. But then came . . . Will.” Given what you learn early in the novel, what are some of the ways Nico has changed due to his relationship with Will? Predict what the biggest challenges for them will be.
- As he visits with Kayla and Austin before they leave Camp Half-Blood to return to their “normal” lives, Nico considers the idea of normal: “What was normal for someone like Nico? Epic battles. Constantly facing the threat of defeat and death. The dead talking to him. Prophecies.” How does knowing this is Nico’s regular reality make you feel? Given all he goes through, do you think he handles it well? Why or why not?
- Why are so many of the campers fearful of traveling in the “Chariot of Damnation,” the taxi operated by the Gray Sisters? Nico shares that while the sisters “were thorny. Difficult. Stuck in their ways. Chaotic, yet weirdly dependable. They wore their darkness on their sleeves. . . . they shared a single eye,” he still appreciates them and even decides they are his favorite people in the world. What do you believe it is that he sees in them that others may not?
- While considering the challenges of doing so, Nico states, “Well, that’s what this quest is all about, isn’t it? . . . We have to fix what’s been broken.” Do you agree with his assessment? Do you see this as Nico’s responsibility? What does his commitment to doing so help you better understand about him?
- What are the main reasons Chiron and Mr. D are concerned about Nico feeling compelled to go rescue the Titan Iapetus, known as “Bob”?

- 
- In *The Sun and the Star*, readers learn that Nico's journey through the Underworld with Will is in some ways similar to the one he once took with Percy. "Funny how the older Nico got, the more he saw things about Percy differently." Based on your prior knowledge, how has the relationship between Percy and Nico changed throughout the years? In what ways is Percy's relationship with Annabeth similar to the one Nico now has with Will?
  - Consider the troglodytes and the society they have created in the Underworld. What makes them so special and unique?
  - Why does Nico choose to keep the fact that he's met Nyx before a secret? Do you believe he made the right decision to do so?
  - Nico tells Will, "You are a legitimate demigod Care Bear." Do you see this as a compliment? In what ways is Will's caring nature ultimately what Nico needs?
  - Gorgyra tells Will and Nico, "Pain helps us learn. . . . It is unfortunate, but we rarely forget the lessons taught to us in moments of pain." Based on the events of the novel, as well as other pain they have each endured in their lives, what are the lessons you believe the two of them will not forget?
  - Will tells Nico, "You *survived*. You continue to survive. You've been through more in your fifteen years than most people will endure in an entire lifetime." In what ways is Nico's resilience a quality that Will so greatly admires in his boyfriend?
  - *The Sun and the Star* is told in the third-person point of view. In what ways would the novel change if it were in first person, and do you believe it would make it better or worse in any way?
  - Based on your reading of *The Sun and the Star*, what makes Nyx problematic and Nemesis such a formidable foe?
  - Though Nico and Will are different in so many ways, why do you believe their relationship still works so well, even when times are challenging?
  - In *The Sun and the Star*, Nico represents what many readers have experienced: loss, grief. He is a ball of darkness that turns to light. What are some of the ways he demonstrates that?



## EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

The following extension activities may be utilized throughout the study of *The Sun and the Star* as a means of creating to extend the novel's instructional impact and learning for readers.

### SOCIAL MEDIA REEL OR TIKTOK VIDEO CHARACTER PROFILE

- Over the course of the novel, readers witness the trials and tribulations endured by characters of *The Sun and the Star*. Assuming the identity of either Nico and Will, create a Instagram Reel or TikTok video capturing an epic moment of your choosing.

### PERSONAL SHOWCASE

- One of the major themes of *The Sun and the Star* is being who you want to be and not caring about what others think or want you to be—it's about being true to yourself. Using the ways that both Nico and Will achieve this in the novel as inspiration, create either a digital or physical personal showcase about yourself focusing on sharing the things about you that you believe are most “you.”

### TRAVELING TO TARTARUS

- Through a discovery of Greek mythology, readers learn that Tartarus is both a god and a place in the Underworld, one of chaos, darkness, and danger, but also rebirth. Thinking about the difficulty of traveling to such a place, what three things, besides friends, would you take there? Create a presentation where you feature the three things you would take on your journey and why.

### EXTENDED WRITING OPTIONS

- In the narrative of *The Sun and the Star*, readers learn that “There cannot be light without darkness, nor darkness without light. You must have the contrast for both to exist.” Consider this quote. Do you believe it to be true? After allowing for some personal reflection to make a case to support or oppose this notion, write a persuasive essay for your position, being sure to use textual examples to defend your opinion.
- When a nymph tells Will and Nico, “Pain is a part of all lives, mortal and immortal.

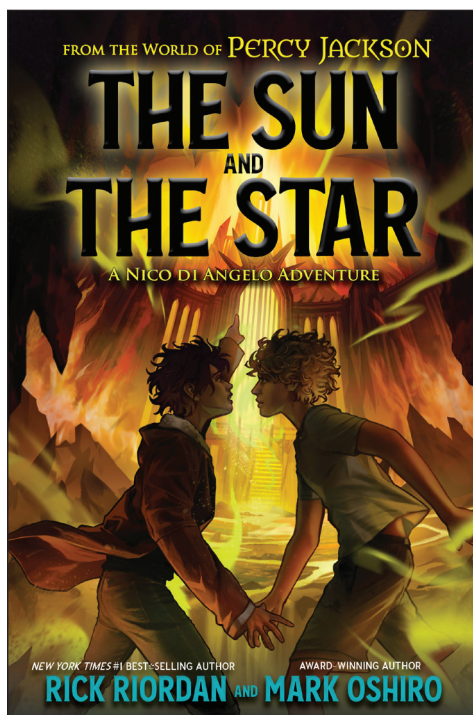
It is inescapable. We all must navigate this river to get where we want to be,” their responses are vastly different. While Will would like to aim to avoid it, Nico knows it’s not so simple. Reflect on this discourse between Nico and Will. Based on their past experiences, why are their positions about dealing with pain so different? Using their conversation as a springboard, look back at your own life. Are there ways in which pain has helped you grow? Learn? Or have all your experiences been negative? Using your own personal reflections, create a response about your own experiences with pain.

- Similar to the writing collaboration between authors Rick Riordan and Mark Oshiro, in *The Sun and the Star*, the authors explore the idea that when two people respect each other enough to accept them for who they are, their relationship will work well. Considering your own relationships. Is there a particular one that you feel fits this model? Create a journal entry reflection where you showcase this particular relationship and offer details about what makes it work well for you and the other person.
- In *The Sun and the Star*, readers witness the characters mature and grow throughout the course of the book. Based on your observations, which of the major characters do you believe demonstrates the greatest growth? Compose a short persuasive essay offering your position on this issue. While considering your selected character’s experiences, use textual evidence to provide specific examples to support your case.



This guide was created by Dr. Rose Brock. Rose is an associate professor in the Library Science Department in the College of Education at Sam Houston State University and holds a PhD in Library Science, specializing in children's and young adult literature.

**Many more guides can be found on the Disney • Hyperion website at [www.DisneyBooks.com](http://www.DisneyBooks.com)**



## **THE SUN AND THE STAR**

*Hardcover*

978-1-368-08115-3

\$19.99

**Disney • HYPERION**

Los Angeles • New York  
[www.DisneyBooks.com](http://www.DisneyBooks.com)