

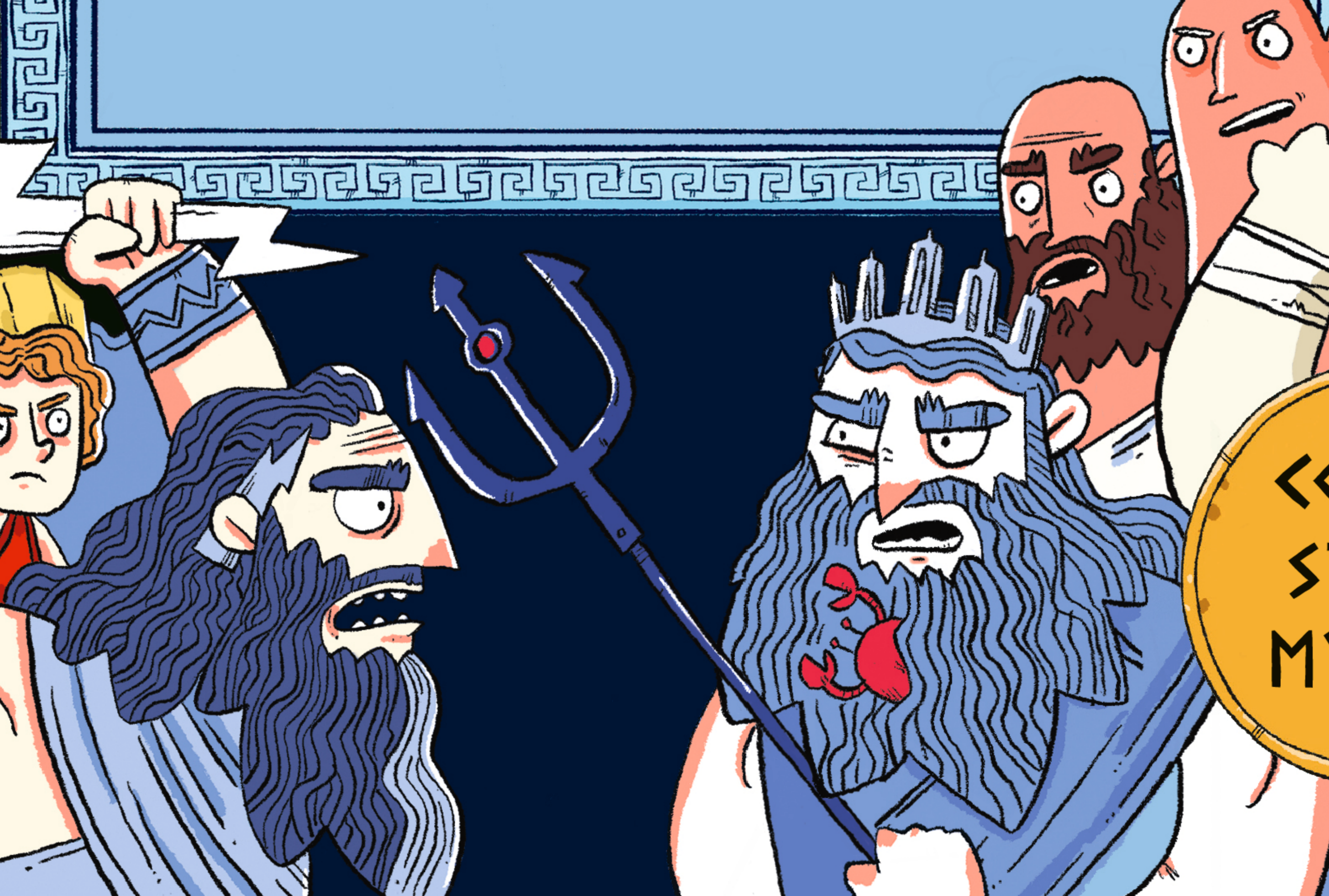


MYTHS, MONSTERS
AND MAYHEM

IN

ANCIENT GREECE

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COMIC
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MYTHS

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WHAT ARE THE GREEK MYTHS?

The ancient Greeks were a civilisation known for their fierce warriors, great artists and clever thinkers. They lived between 2600 BC – AD 300 in what is now mainland Greece and the Greek islands. Like many other ancient civilisations, the Greeks told fantastical stories to teach lessons about right and wrong, tell the history of their gods and explain the world around them – from why the seasons changed to where human beings came from. These epic tales of deadly monsters, heroes and gods became known as the Greek myths.



SO WHO WERE THE ANCIENT GREEKS?



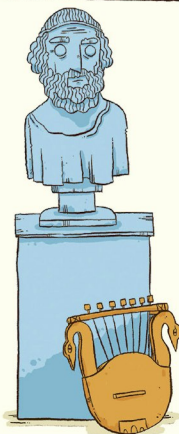
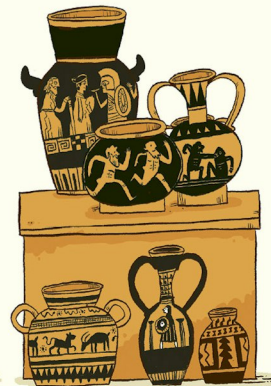
The Greeks developed one of the most influential civilisations in the ancient world. Surrounded by the sea, they became wealthy through trade and built impressive cities and grand temples to honour their many gods. It was an innovative society – they founded the first theatre, built the first theatres and held the first Olympic Games! Even today, their culture still influences our everyday lives.



The ancient Greeks were wonderful craftsmen and created many beautiful things – including brightly painted sculptures of their gods and goddesses. Ancient Greece is also well known for its pottery, with intricate patterns and paintings decorating the clay. These works often tell the stories of the Greek myths, and give us valuable clues into what Greek life was like.



Greek myths were originally passed around by word of mouth. The famous poet Homer is known for his epic poems about the Trojan War – *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. To keep a record of their history, teachings and stories for future generations, the Greeks developed their own alphabet. Today, their tales of brave heroes and impossible quests still captivate readers around the world.



CHAOS AND CREATION

Every culture has a creation story about how the world began, and the ancient Greeks were no different. Here is the wild and chaotic story of how the Greeks believed the world came into being.

Before the world began, there was only chaos. Out of this swirling void came the first beings.



Gaia created the trees, the grass and the babbling brooks. She fell in love with Uranus – the god of the stars and the planets.

In the endtimes was in the sky!

Together, Gaia and Uranus brought many unusual children into the world.



THE TITANS (TWELVE OF THEM!)

THE CYCLOPES (ONE EYE EACH)

THE HECATONCHIRES (50 HEADS EACH!)

So he cast them into the fiery pits of Tartarus, the Underworld.

Gaia was mortified. She asked one of her Titan sons, Kronos, to take care of her mean husband.

Kronos was only too happy to help. He chased down his father with a scythe (a weapon with a curved blade) and took Uranus's crown.



Kronos and his wife, Rhea, took to their thrones. Kronos enjoyed being in charge and they quickly settled into royal life.



But Kronos was afraid. He'd heard a prophecy that one of his children would overthrow him – just as he had done to his own father. So, naturally, he started to eat them.

The royal couple had six adorable little god children.



Foaky slithering babies...

Kronos ate and ate and ate. Soon, he needed a nap. Disgusted with her husband's actions, Rhea saw her opportunity and swapped her youngest child, Zeus, for a rock.



Eat THIS, you monster!

Borp.

There the young god grew up brave and strong.

He grew clever. He grew a giant bushy beard.

And together, Zeus and Rhea plotted to overthrow Kronos.



While Kronos tucked into his next course, the queen fled with baby Zeus hidden under her cloak.



Oww!

Rhea took Zeus to Mount Ida, and hid him in the mountain's deep, dark caves.



Mummy!

On his return to Mount Olympus, Zeus disgusted himself as a servant, and presented Kronos with a delicious glass of wine.



Your wine tastes nasty!

Gnomed.

Of course, the wine was poisoned. Zeus watched as Kronos vomited up all of his brothers and sisters. It was a very smelly family reunion.



Argh!

Kronos was furious, but young Zeus had all the rage of a lightning storm. Zeus rallied his brothers and sisters and together they declared war on their father. For ten long years the world shook as gods, Titans, monsters and giants fought in brutal combat. This epic series of battles became known as Titanomachy.



At last, the dust settled on a battleground full of giant bodies and moaning monsters. It was over. Zeus had won. Kronos was captured and imprisoned in the Underworld.

Zeus shared the world with his friends. He rewarded those who had been loyal to him...

...and punished his enemies. The Titan, Atlas, was forced to hold the sky up on his shoulders for all eternity.

The gods returned to the peace and beauty of their home on Mount Olympus. From their golden city, they set back to watch the world flourish – and to occasionally meddle in the lives of humankind.



I need a lie down.



MEET THE

The ancient Greeks believed that many gods and goddesses watched over them from their palace above Mount Olympus, the tallest mountain in Greece. In many ways the gods behaved a bit like humans — they fell in love, married and often argued — but they were also very powerful and lived forever.



GREEK GODS

The Greeks believed that their gods controlled every aspect of their lives and they built many impressive temples where they left the gods offerings of money, flowers or even food. There were 12 main gods and goddesses who lived on Mount Olympus — let's meet them...



ZEUS

The King of the Gods, and god of thunder and the skies. Zeus was famous for throwing thunderbolts at anyone who disobeyed him.



HERA

Hera, Queen of the Gods and wife of Zeus, was the goddess of marriage and children. She had a terrible temper — when she failed to win a beauty contest, she helped the Greeks destroy a whole city (p46).



ATHENA

Goddess of wisdom and war. Athena was known to help heroes who found themselves in dangerous situations. The capital city of Greece, Athens, is named after her.



DIONYSUS

Dionysus was the god of the grape harvest, wine, festivity and theatre. Wine was an important part of ancient Greek life and was often used in religious ceremonies.



APHRODITE

Aphrodite was the beautiful goddess of love. She wore a magical golden belt that made people fall in love with her.



POSEIDON

Poseidon was the god of the sea. He carried a big fork called a trident and could send storms and earthquakes near anyone who annoyed him!



HEPHAESTUS

Hephaestus was the god of fire and sculpture. He forged weapons and armour for the gods and goddesses of Mount Olympus. His wife was the beautiful goddess, Aphrodite.



DEMETER

Demeter, the goddess of the harvest, controlled the grains and crops that fed the people of ancient Greece.



ARES

The bloodthirsty god of war, Ares, was known for his quick temper and violent outbursts. He was always getting into trouble and wasn't the most popular god on Mount Olympus...



ARTEMIS

Artemis was the goddess of hunting and was very skilled at archery. She cared for the natural world and protected wild animals.



APOLLO

Apollo was the twin brother of Artemis. He was the god of light and healing, and a famous shrine was built to honour him in the city state of Delphi.



HERMES

Hermes was the light-footed messenger of the gods. He was able to travel between the mortal world and Mount Olympus, delivering news and guidance.

PANDORA'S BOX

In the beginning, the Earth was a beautiful, but very quiet place. The only sounds were the crashing of the waves and the wind whistling through the trees.

The only living creatures were the Titans, the children of the gods Gaia and Uranus.

From his home on Mount Olympus, Zeus watched over Earth. But Zeus was not content – he felt that something was missing. So he tasked two Titan brothers called Prometheus and Epimetheus with creating living creatures to fill the land and the oceans.



In their workshop, the twin Titans went wild. They created the strangest creatures they could imagine.



When their work was complete, and life breathed into their magnificent sculptures, the world was full of howling and stomping and biling. It was amazing.

Zeus was pleased with their work, but he had one final request. He wanted Epimetheus and Prometheus to create the most perfect, beautiful being. Naturally, it was to look like him.

Prometheus rested while Epimetheus got to work. This was going to be tricky...



At last, Prometheus completed his creation. He named it mankind.

As a final touch, he reached up to the Sun, plucked down a flame and gave it to man.

With the power of fire, men could have heat and light. They could explore, hunt and cook.



For many years, harmony reigned on Earth. That is, until Prometheus suggested that mankind play a trick on the gods. Each year, mankind prepared a delicious feast to show their respect for the gods. Except this year, Prometheus had a different kind of a feast in mind...



Instead of rich, delicious meat, the feast was made up of bone, gristle and guts... it was disgusting.



Zeus was furious. With a snap of his fingers, he extinguished every spark of fire on Earth.



Prometheus felt guilty that mankind had been punished for his trick. Sneaking as quietly as a Titan can, he slipped into Zeus's private chambers and stole the fire back.



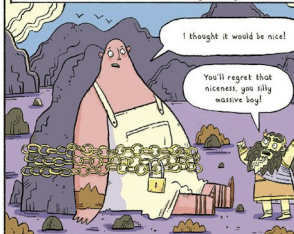
Mankind were delighted. Once again, they could sit by roaring fires and cook their meals. Prometheus knew he'd done the right thing.



But of course, Zeus found out.



Outraged that Prometheus had disobeyed him, Zeus chained the Titan to an enormous rock and threw away the key.



At Zeus's call, three mighty eagles swooped down from the sky. They circled over the helpless Prometheus.



Zeus's punishment was brutal. Each day the eagles tore out Prometheus's liver. And each night, his liver grew back again. The pain was endless.



Epimetheus was very lonely without his brother. He wandered the Earth and cried a lot.



Zeus asked Hephæstus, god of fire and sculpture, to create something very special. The first mortal woman.



He wanted Hephæstus to make the first woman the most charming and beautiful of all his creatures.



But Zeus had more plans. Big, mean plans to punish Epimetheus and mankind for the trick.

