

**LEGENDS OF THE NIGHT SKY: PERSEUS AND
ANDROMEDA**
(for translation)

AESOP

Good evening ladies and gentleman, boys and girls.
Thank you so much for coming to my class. Today I'm
going to tell you an old and wonderful story, one that I
know you will enjoy. Let me just -
Now, where is he?...Late as usual.
Ah...there you are. Well hurry it up, our class is waiting.
Well, thank you Socrates.

SOCRATES

You're welcome.

AESOP

Now where were we...
Ah, yes...the story.
Long ago, farmers knew that it was time to harvest their
crops when certain stars filled the heavens.
In order to remember which stars were which, they
grouped certain stars together to form the basis of an
image—
-like a harp or a ram or even a herdsman.
These are called constellations. To help remember the
various constellations, these farmers created wonderful
stories, very dramatic and sometimes tragic.
Now, farmers weren't the only people to create these
stories. There were poets and early astronomers as well,
who looked to the night's sky and imagined such
wonderful things.
The Night Sky has within its stars one such story...the
story of Perseus and Andromeda.

A long time ago, in the faraway land of Argos there was a
king called Acrisius. He had a beautiful daughter named
Danae and she loved her father very much.

But King Acrisius wanted a son, not a daughter and
despite Danae's love for the King, he was a cold and
unloving father.

He even went so far as to beg the Gods above to deliver him a son.

Well, even the Gods were shocked at how terrible this man was to his very own daughter and they decided to show him a thing or two. The gods told the king that they would *not* grant him a son, but his daughter, Danae, the one he despised, *would* have a son.

And, to make matters worse, they predicted that one day, this son would *kill* King Acrisius.

King Acrisius was now really sorry that he ever asked in the first place for he was terrified for his own life!

He figured that the only way to prevent Danae from having a child would be to lock her up for good, making sure no one would ever see her again.

So he built an underground house of bronze, which might sound kind of nice, but it was a prison nonetheless!

Danae's only view of the outside world was through a small slit in the bronze ceiling.

And so the days passed... the clouds drifted by... the stars twinkled and faded... and all Danae could do was dream...

Zeus, the god of all gods, was watching Danae from above. He had promised her a son, but now she was locked away, so Zeus himself went down to the land of the mortals disguised as a golden shower of raindrops. He fell lightly through the narrow window in the house of bronze and with his magical powers, gave Danae a baby boy.

Well, when King Acrisius heard about this he just about flipped. What was he going to do? This grandson of his was extremely dangerous!

So he put Danae and her son into a wooden trunk and threw them into the sea.

Zeus, the all-powerful, wasn't going to let this inconvenience spoil his plans so he guided the floating trunk to a small island.

There the mother and son were found by two very kind people who took them in as their own family.

They spent many happy years together and as time went by, Perseus grew into quite a handsome fellow. He was

training to be a mighty warrior and, like all warriors, he must have all sorts of really cool gadgets.

So the gods gave him a powerful sword, a very sheik bronze shield, winged sandals that made him fly, a magic purse, and even a small potion that would make him invisible.

The day came when Perseus was ready to test his courage and skills. He decided to slay the legendary, infamous Medusa.

Well, we all know that Medusa was a horrible creature with hair made of live snakes and eyes, so evil, that just one glance would turn any mortal who dare look at her to stone.

Now why Perseus decided to go after Medusa as his first challenge is beyond me.

I would have chosen a two hundred pound lion...

SOCRATES

(SHOUTS)

AESOP

Or even a giant cyclops...

So off Perseus went, to the nearby island where the dreaded Medusa creature lived...

SOCRATES

Ahem! Excuse me, but aren't you forgetting to tell them about Cepheus and Cassiopeia?

AESOP

(to mouse)

I know, I know! Who's telling this story?!

(to audience)

Ahem! Yes, uh, but more on that later.

First I need to tell you about this other thing that was happening at the same time in another faraway land.

In this other kingdom lived King Cepheus and Queen Cassiopeia, and they had a daughter named Andromeda. Now the Queen was incredibly vain. She boasted far and wide that she was the most beautiful woman, ever, even more beautiful than the Sea Goddesses.

Well, when Poseidon, the god of the sea, got wind of this, he vowed to make Cassiopeia pay. No mortal could be more beautiful than the Sea Goddesses!

So Poseidon, who was really mad by this time, called on his fiercest, meanest creature of the deep - Cetus the sea monster - and instructed the beast to go and devour the people of the Kingdom.

When Cassiopeia found out what was about to happen to her Kingdom, she begged Zeus to stop the insanity and let her people live.

But Zeus, although the God of all Gods, has to respect the other Gods' decisions, and said he would not stop Poseidon's punishment.

But he did agree to have a talk with Poseidon and see if they could come up with another arrangement.

It was then decided that the King and Queen's Kingdom would not be devoured after all, but that they would still have to be punished.

Their daughter, Andromeda, would be tied to a rock and offered as a sacrifice to Cetus, the sea monster.

Everything was going to work out just fine for everybody - except of course, Andromeda.

And so the whole of the kingdom gathered by the seashore to watch Cetus dine on poor Andromeda.

SOCRATES

Ah, excuse me. What about Perseus?

AESOP

(through clenched teeth)

Thank you, Socrates...

(to audience)

Yes, let us not forget about young, brave Perseus who was out to destroy the dreaded Medusa.

Perseus arrived on Medusa's island.

Despite the increasing sense of doom, he moved on.

It occurred to Perseus that if he can't look at this scary creature directly without turning to stone, maybe he could look at her reflection!

Perseus looked into his shield of bronze, saw her reflection, and.....with one mighty stroke of his mighty sword, chopped off her head!

As the blood of her body flowed into the sea, the mixture gave birth to Pegasus, the great winged horse, who sprang from the sea and flew higher and higher into the sky.

Perseus, now a mighty warrior, put Medusa's head in his bag, packed up his things, and headed home, flying with his winged sandals... But what's this?!

Down below! A sea monster and a fair maiden in distress! But sort of like Medusa, just one glance at Andromeda changed Perseus forever - he fell instantly in love.

Cetus was closing in on Perseus' new love so the mighty Perseus swooped down on his winged sandals and blocked the sea monster.

What chance does Perseus have against such a powerful and fierce creature?! But wait! He's got a bag full of cool gadgets!

The Beast was killed and the kingdom was freed from Poseidon's Curse. Andromeda and Perseus fell in love and were soon married and ruled over their kingdom together for many happy years.

To this day, you can find this happy family together in the night sky. The great King Cepheus, the beautiful Queen Cassiopeia, the lovely Princess Andromeda, the mighty warrior Perseus, and let's not forget the magnificent winged horse, Pegasus.

Now that you've heard this story, every time you gaze at the night sky, you will remember them like old friends.

SOCRATES

[That one gets me every time!...](#)

AESOP

Each season you will learn to celebrate their return and miss them while they are gone. Other friends may come and go, but the constellations shall be there for all the seasons of your life...

SOCRATES

What about the prophecy?! You forgot to tell them about King Acrisius!

AESOP

(to the mouse)

I didn't forget! I just... well... never mind!

(to the audience)

You are probably wondering what ever happened to the prophecy of King Acrisius.

One day, Perseus was practicing his discus throwing for the upcoming Olympic Games.

He threw the discus so hard that it flew through King Acrisius' window...

...and hits him square in the head.

And so the story ends. But there are other seasons and many more stories, each as wonderful and fascinating as this.

So come back next season, and I'll tell you another story, of another time and another place...