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Lightning Thief, The (Percy Jackson And The Olympians, Book 1)



Synopsis

Percy Jackson is a good kid, but he can't seem to focus on his schoolwork or control his temper. And lately, being away at boarding school is only getting worse-Percy could have sworn his pre-algebra teacher turned into a monster and tried to kill him.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I held off buying THE LIGHTNING THIEF for a couple years. The market seems glutted with YA fantasy at the moment, and I read quite a bit of it with my 9-year-old. We've discovered several good series, but THE LIGHTNING THIEF seemed too long to hold his attention when it first came out. This year we noticed it in the book fair at school, then saw that it was an Accelerated Reader book. So I picked it up and read a couple chapters to try it out. I was 50 pages into it when I realized I needed to be reading this to my son. I did read it to him. We FLEW through the book (375 pages!) in 6 days because he kept pestering me to read it to him. We finished it up in a 5-hour marathon yesterday, hanging onto every page as Percy and his friends tried to save the world and put things to rights in their own lives. THE LIGHTNING THIEF is a great book for adults and kids. I've already recommended it to a couple of adult friends who experienced the same kind of can't-put-it-down pull

that I did. Percy Jackson, the hero of the book, comes across as every kid you'd ever meet or ever would. He's no brainiac (he has dyslexia and ADHD) but he has friends who are. But he is courageous and clever, stubborn and loyal. He is the best he can be, and he's getting even better. Riordan works in many of the Greek myths in the novel. There was a time when knowing Greek mythology was a pre-requisite for having a "classical" education. Many morals and philosophies are presented in the tales. From the very beginning of the novel, we find out Percy is different when he ends up fighting a harpy in the museum while on a school trip.

I am a senior citizen--a librarian--a woman-- who could not possibly be interested in the story of a 12-year-old boy whose ADHD behavior causes him to be moved from private school to private school or that he has momentary lapses when strange behavior takes over or that he finally learns that he is a half-blood (no, not a HP half-blood), but the son of a god. No, I could not possibly be interested in such a far-fetched story, but then again I AM interested in this story because--WOW--what a story!! Percy Jackson (Perseus at that!) learns in this first installment of The Olympians that he is indeed the son of a god and not some little podunk god, but one of the big three--Poseidon, god of all the seas. As a half-blood, he is given a quest: to find Zeus's thunderbolt. Someone has stolen it, giving rise to the book's title: the Lightning Thief. If all this seems really strange, then you are normal. After all, we thought Greek mythology was dead. How little we knew, when in reality, it is alive and well and operating in the New West---America. The reader gets so caught up in this new telling of the old myths, ahem, stories of the living gods, that it becomes fresh and vibrant again. In fact, Mt. Olympus is now located on the 600th floor of the Empire State Building and accessible only through a special elevator ticket. You must have an appointment to get there. Percy Jackson's pursuit of the lightning thief is just plain out fun reading. When I had to stop for any period of time, I couldn't wait to get back to the story. If the reader thinks it unrealistic that a 12-year-old is the hero, then put two and two together. Being a hero does not always take brawn--often thinking, intellect, strategy are required to solve a problem.

There's always the "what to read while waiting for the next HP" question for some of us, but...now don't get upset folks - I like Harry Potter as much as you do - "Percy Jackson and the Olympians" has a modern, hip, even urban style that people weary of Harry's earnest heroism may actually PREFER. Plus, people with an interest in legends and myths will bug their eyes out with excitement, because the premise of "Percy Jackson" is that there are a handful of kids who are in fact the children of Greek gods and goddesses, who had come down to dally with modern Americans.

These kids, called "half-bloods" in the book, grow up not knowing their origins, alienated by their disjointed lives and absent parents. (A nice conceit of the book is that many half-bloods have dyslexia, but only because their minds are wired for ancient Greek, and ADHD, but only because their minds are wired for hunting, a notion that should give a lot of comfort to real kids with these real problems.) But there are forces of darkness - monsters - whose aim it is to destroy such kids. They are only protected at a special camp - "Camp Half-Blood." Percy, who turns out to be a son of Poseidon, lands at this camp, but must eventually leave it and risk the monsters, to fulfill a Quest. Even on the basis of this short description you can see there are a lot of superficial similarities to the Potter books - an orphan, with supernatural powers, who has two friends (one brainy girl and one geeky sidekick), several envious rival students. He goes to a special school and learns he is highly skilled at the school's favorite sport (in this case chariot racing). He is personally charged with a quest that, should he fail, will result in the ruin of the world.

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