

Moody Planetarium Self-Guided Tour ***Perseus and Andromeda Laser Show***

ABOUT *PERSEUS AND ANDROMEDA* LASER SHOW

- ♣ The show lasts about 20 minutes.
- ♣ It is the Greek legend of Perseus and Andromeda
- ♣ Show may be scary for some children (i.e. when Acrisius puts Danae and Perseus in a box and throws them into the sea, when Cetus is about to eat Andromeda)
- ♣ Laser show operator will turn on the stars after the laser show and point out 3 constellations (Perseus, Andromeda, Cassiopeia)

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Before coming to the Planetarium, study the legend of Perseus and Andromeda
2. Enter planetarium and help students find seats
3. Lights will dim
4. Watch *Perseus and Andromeda* laser show
5. While operator shuts down the laser show and turns on the stars, discuss the legend of Perseus and Andromeda
 - a. Questions to ask students: what did the gods give Perseus? (sword, shield, invisibility potion, winged sandals, magic purse)
 - b. How did Perseus use the gifts given to him by the gods?
 - c. What Olympic sport was Perseus practicing that caused Acrisius' death? (discus)
6. Operator will point to Perseus, Andromeda and Cassiopeia constellations

SUGGESTED CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

- ♣ Make a scary sea monster mask
- ♣ Read Greek myths
- ♣ Study other cultural legends about the origin of the constellations

VOCABULARY

- ♣ Characters: Acrisius, Danae, Zeus, Perseus, Medusa, Cassiopeia, Cepheus, Poseidon, Cetus, Andromeda, Pegasus
- ♣ Constellation: a group of stars visible from Earth that forms a distinctive pattern and has a name linked to its shape, often derived from Greek mythology
- ♣ Gorgon: a monstrous woman with snakes for hair, who turned those who looked at her into stone
- ♣ Legend: a story that has been passed down for generations, especially one that is presented as history but is unlikely to be true
- ♣ Myth: a traditional story about heroes or supernatural beings, often explaining the origins of natural phenomena or aspects of human behavior
- ♣ Titan: someone whose power, intellect or physical size is extraordinarily impressive

The Legend of Perseus and Andromeda

[Note: this version is slightly different from the laser show, but the names of the characters are the same]

Greece: the legend of Perseus encompasses seven separate star groups including Cepheus, Andromeda, Cassiopeia, Pegasus, Cetus, Medusa (at one time considered a separate constellation) and of course, Perseus himself.

Abas the Invincible, king of Argolis, had two sons, Acrisius and Proetus, who quarreled continuously. Following their father's death, Proetus became infatuated with Acrisius' daughter, Danaë, which of course irritated his brother no end. They divided the kingdom and Acrisius locked his daughter in a tower after learning that she would bear a son who would cause his death. Zeus, naturally, fell in love with Danaë and she bore him a son, Perseus. Thinking the boy to be his brother's child, Acrisius locked mother and child in a wooden ark and put them to sea. The tiny boat drifted across the water to the island of Seriphos, the realm of Polydectes, where they were saved by his brother, Dictys, a fisherman. Polydectes fell in love with Danaë and Perseus grew to become a strong and athletic young man. The king told Danaë that he wanted her to become his wife. She refused and Perseus came to his mother's aid. Pretending to seek another princess' hand in marriage, Polydectes shamed Perseus into giving him as a wedding gift the head of the Medusa, believing this would be the end of Perseus' interference in his quest to make Danaë his wife

With the help of Athena, Mercury and Hermes, Perseus set out on his quest. Athena gave him a mirror-shield. He would be able to look at the reflection of the Gorgon without turning to stone. Mercury allowed Perseus the use of his winged sandals so he would be able to fly to the island where Medusa lived with her sisters, the helmet of Hades that would render him invisible and the kibisis, a bag into which he could place the head of the monster. Hermes crafted a magic sickle that would cut through the Gorgon's neck with one blow. Equipped for battle, Perseus flew to the land of the Hyperboreans where Medusa and her sisters lived. There surrounded by frightening statues of previous victims, Perseus put the helmet on his head, slipped past Medusa's sisters, and approached the sleeping Gorgon backwards, watching her reflection in Athena's shield. When he could hear her breath and the hissing of the serpents in her hair, Perseus cut off her head with one swipe and placed it in the kibisis. Pegasus and his brother Chrysaor, children of Poseidon's conceived during an ill-fated liaison, flew from the neck of the monster.

Flying back home by way of northern Africa, Perseus stopped near the Hesperides and visited with Atlas. Wishing to stay for a few days and asking the Titan for permission, Perseus was insulted when Atlas refused. Removing Medusa's head from the kibisis, Perseus changed the giant to stone known today as the Atlas Mountains located in northwest Africa.

Continuing across Africa, he flew over Philistia, where he encountered the sight of the beautiful Andromeda chained to a rock as a sacrifice to appease the Nereids, nymphs who served Poseidon. Andromeda's mother, Cassiopeia, was a beautiful woman who claimed her beauty was greater than that of the Nereids. To punish Cassiopeia, the sea god sent the monstrous Cetus to destroy Philistia, its ships, coasts and people. Cepheus the king and Cassiopeia went to the oracle to learn what needed to be done to stop the destruction. After being told that the sacrifice of their daughter would be the only protection against the horrific monster, the tearful parents chained Andromeda to a rock on the beach and awaited her fate. Perseus offered to kill Cetus on the condition that they give him Andromeda's hand in marriage. Meaning to turn the monster to stone with the head of the Gorgon, Perseus flew into the sky above Cetus. Instead, the sea monster attacked the man's shadow on the surface of the water. Perseus flew down and cut off its head with his sickle. Perseus married Andromeda and flew back to Seriphos with her.

Polydectes believed that Perseus was dead when he didn't return from his quest. The king decided he didn't need to pretend that he planned to marry another princess and set his mind to taking Danaë by force. She fled to the temple of Athena where Polydectes couldn't follow. The king had the temple surrounded and refused her food and water until she married him. Pulling the head of Medusa from his bag, Perseus turned Polydectes and his generals to stone. The king's brother Dictys, who had pulled the infant Perseus and Danaë from the sea, became a wise and benevolent king. Perseus, Andromeda and Danaë returned to their original home in Argolis where he became king when his grandfather Acrisius fled. Perseus reunited the two halves of his great grandfather's land. Some years later, at the funeral games of a neighboring king, Perseus threw a discus. It landed wide of its mark and fell into a crowd of spectators. The discus hit Acrisius, killing him and fulfilling his prophesied death at the hand of Danaë's son.

Source: <http://www.ufrsd.net/staffwww/stefanl/myths/perseus.htm>