



2003

There's A Monster in the Alphabet

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Fry, Emily (2003) "There's A Monster in the Alphabet," *Children's Book and Media Review*. Vol. 24 : Iss. 1 , Article 14.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol24/iss1/14>

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Rumford, James. *There's A Monster in the Alphabet*. Illustrated by James Rumford. Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002. ISBN 0618221409. \$16.00. 30 pp.

Reviewer: Emily Fry

Reading Level: Primary, Intermediate

Rating: Dependable

Genre: Historical fiction;

Subject: Cadmus (Greek mythology)--Juvenile fiction; Alphabet--Juvenile fiction; Books—Reviews;

James Rumford presents the story of the Phoenician prince, Cadmus, who brought the alphabet to Greece. Cadmus was a young prince from Phoenicia who sailed to Greece to seek his fortune. From the beginning, fortune sought out Cadmus. The gods of Greece helped Cadmus with special messages as well as helped him to defeat the serpent's angry army, so that he could build the world famous city of Thebes.

Rumford's picture book is a unique alphabet book. The idea is a terrific one that would fascinate children with a love for Greek mythology or linguistics. Rumford includes a chart in the very back that shows the Phoenician alphabet and all of its descendants (which includes English), there are even messages written by the author on every page using the Phoenician alphabet. This would be a great resource to use in a unit on Greek mythology. The content is too heavy for younger children, so steer away from this book as a learning-the-alphabet-book. For a child to read this book and understand it, there would have to be background knowledge about Greece and the other ancient societies that are mentioned in the book.