



2005

The Lightning Thief

Donna Cardon

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Cardon, Donna (2005) "The Lightning Thief," *Children's Book and Media Review*: Vol. 26 : Iss. 2 , Article 19.
Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol26/iss2/19>

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Riordan, Rick. *The Lightning Thief*. Hyperion, 2005. ISBN 0786856297. 17.95. 375 pp.

Reviewer: Donna Cardon

Reading Level: Intermediate

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Fantasy fiction; Adventure stories;

Subject: Mythology, Greek--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Percy Jackson thinks his life is tough. He struggles with ADHD and always seems to be in trouble. He has attended one school after another and nothing seems to work out. On top of that he has a loser step-dad, and he doesn't even know who his real father is. But all his troubles seem like nothing compared to what he has to face once he finds out that his real dad is an Olympian god. Suddenly he is being chased by fiends from Hades and he has to depend on new-found skills and new-found friends to survive.

This fast-paced action adventure will appeal to even the most reluctant readers. In every chapter Percy is fighting for his life against a vast array of creatures from ancient mythology. Upper grade-school teachers who have Greek civilization in their curriculum will appreciate the many reference to stories from Greek mythology. The novel gives enough details about the mythological stories to carry the plot, but there is enough left unsaid to encourage additional research in the topic. Riordan has transposed some mythological ideas into fresh modern settings. For example, Ares appears on a tricked-out motorcycle dressed in black leather and spikes. Even children not familiar with mythology will enjoy Percy's adventures. The book will appeal to both boys and adventure-loving girls because one of Percy's side-kicks is a Hermione-like daughter of Athena. This is a truly auspicious a beginning to the "Percy Jackson and the Olympians" series.