



Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief

Teen Book Review

Transfiguring Adoption is a nonprofit organization seeking to nurture growth in foster and adoptive families by giving a HOOT about their families. Transfiguring Adoption does not intend for its reviews nor its reviews nor its this discussion packet to be professional, medical or legal advice. These reviews and discussion guides are intended to help parents to better be able to connect and understand their children who come from traumatic backgrounds.

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As far back as ancient Greece people were utilizing books as methods for working through various ailments. The term, bibliography, is what we pair with the phenomenon of using media, specifically books, to help people suffering from trauma or psychological issues. While the Transfiguring Adoption is NOT claiming to be professionals in the psychological or mental health arena, we do believe that families can glean from this concept in using movies, video games, and, naturally, books, to help foster or adoptive children process their story.

Section I

Why are we using books, movies, and video games to help children?

- **Partially disengage mind from fear/problems**
Immersing yourself in media helps you to escape from reality for a bit. This can give our minds a partial break from the worry and stress so that we have more energy to attach the issue when we come back to it.
- **Introduced to new solutions**
We might discover new solutions to problems as we experience a character in media conquer an issue.
- **Emotional vocabulary**
Discovering more ways to express how we feel and think can help us to communicate our own thoughts and feelings. Overall, more effective communication allows us to ask for better assistance with our feelings and issues.
- **Identify with characters/stories**
You have heard the saying, “no man is an island.” No person wants to feel like they are alone in their thoughts, feelings, or experiences. When we discover a character in media struggling with similar issues as our own, it helps to “normalize,” our life situations and feel comforted. This can also help us to discover our own identify as a character goes through process in their life.

Section II

This Only Works TOGETHER - Parent & Child.

Here is why it is IMPERATIVE that a parent or trusted adult walk through these questions and media with a child:

- **Trauma Triggers**

An event or language in a piece of media might remind our children of past events in their lives which were traumatic. If we are to assume that they have not yet had enough life experience to successfully walk through these situations and make sense of them, then they will need a safe adult to be able to process feelings and emotions.

Some caregiver might be nervous or scared to discuss the details of sexual abuse, physical abuse, and so on. Our children are also scared but have no choice but to live through it. Our children need an adult who can help them process through issues by listening. They need an adult who knows when information needs to be given over to a trusted therapist and other professionals.

- **Reliving Trauma**

Some media might not simply suggest or bring up past trauma but could expose a child to a similar situation as what they have experienced. If a child is exposed to such media, it goes without saying that they will need a safe adult to help them process their thoughts and emotions. They will even need a safe adult who may not have the right answers but can get the child to a professional who can help.

- **Living in a Dream World**

As much as negatively living through trauma can have a devastating effect on our children, too much of a good thing can also have a poor effect when it is experienced on their own. Some children who have come from traumatic backgrounds may have trouble separating fantasy from reality. When given media where the main character is always rescued in the nick of time, the waif always marries royalty, or all problems are solved in a neat package, our children could be given over to considering this is how the world operates and that the solutions of the characters will produce similar fantastical results. It is important to have a trusted adult on duty who can applaud the fun of a tale but also bring everyone back down to reality.

- **Never Really Find Results**

Again it can be a pitfall for caregivers to be nervous about a topic and simply hope that children will learn by experiencing a book or movie on their own. The problem is that many of our children lack the life experience to be able to connect the dots to see how a character's struggles and life solutions could be compared to their own life.

A trusted adult can help a child to glean solutions and conversations from a piece of media to make real life change begin.

Section III

How To Use Our Discussion Packets:

1. **Exposure as a Family**

Watch, read, or play the respective media this packet discusses together before you begin the conversation. It is important that parent and child experience things together. Natural bonding and teachable moments come about when we experience things together.

2. **Wait for the Right Time**

As foster and adoptive parents, many of us want to help our children so badly that when we get a new resource we want to try it out faster than a child wants to open up presents on Christmas. However, it is important to judge when your child is ready to talk about issues brought up by media.

If your child is struggling with habitual lying and just reprimanded earlier in the day at school, there might be intense feelings of guilt and embarrassment. It may not be the correct time to point out that Pinocchio gets in trouble when he lies and try to begin a discussion about how lies can harm your life. Instead wait a day or two when everything is going right in your family's world, and then try to begin a conversation.

People who are hurt, angered, frustrated or depressed due to a topic are not going to be open to having a dialogue about the issues.

3. **Nudging Toward Identification**

If we look at this conversation as a swimming pool, "Nudging Toward Identification" is going to be the shallow end of the pool. The goal is to simply notice - just notice - similarities you might see in a character's life and your child's life. This step is helping our children to see that they might be able to relate with a character. The media is going from merely a source of entertainment to something we possibly - POSSIBLY - could connect with in some manner.

This might come in the form of phrases such as:

- "Hey, did you notice that in the book Sally had to figure out how to make friends at school too?"
- "Tom's brother in the movie was really good at soccer just like you, right?!"
- "Too bad you're not in the story with Samantha, because you like learning about science as much as she does, right?"

4. **Emotional Involvement**

In Step 3 we helped our child to consider that they might be able to connect with a character. During this step, if the atmosphere is still good for conversation, we are going to push the similarities with the media character a bit further. We are going to take a look at specific situations and emotions. We are going to take a look at issues that characters confronted and discuss solutions and emotional outcomes. Hopefully, through this step our children will be able to more deeply and emotionally be able to identify with a character.

We might ask questions such as:

- "Sally made up stories to try and make new friends. Do you think this was the right way to make friends? Why? What should she have done differently?"

- “How do you think Tom felt when missed the goal and lost the soccer game for his team? What would you tell him? Do you ever feel like Tom?”
- “Which do you think made Samantha feel better, winning the science fair or making new friends at school? Do you ever feel like that? Why?”

5. **Continued Conversations**

Always remember that helping children walk through trauma is not a sprint but a marathon. Do not get discouraged if the right time to talk about themes in a piece of media don't turn up right away. Do not get discouraged if your child doesn't want to talk about anything “deep” or life changing.

Some people have reported that their children might watch a movie, lightly discuss it, and then a month later begin asking deeper questions about a theme or topic in the media.

As parents our job is to create an atmosphere where learning and growth can happen AND CAN CONTINUE HAPPENING. We need to equip ourselves with the tools to be ready for those small windows of time that our children are ready to discuss and learn from us.

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Comprehensive Review

Transfiguring Adoption's Overview:

The target audience appears to be children that are middle school age and up. I believe this book would be great for all families with teen or preteen boys and girls. This book is good for foster and adoptive families because it is engaging, full of action, and doesn't shy away from hard topics. Percy deals with a bad relationship with a step-parent, the loss of relationship with his dad, problems at school because of learning and behavior issues and trouble making friends. These are topics that many foster and adoptive families of pre-teen and teenagers deal with on a daily basis.

I personally love this book and the entire series of books from this author. The writing keeps the story moving at a good pace and it is a great "starter book" for teens who are not interested in reading. The story revolves around Greek mythology and some of the stories and characters can be found in pop culture. They may even recognize a few of the heavy hitters like Zeus, Medusa, and Aphrodite. This book deserves five hoots because anyone over the age of 10 could sit down and enjoy themselves while reading.

While reading this book it is important to notice how Percy changes. He starts out as an mistrusting loner like many of our kids do when they come into care, but once he starts to develop trusting relationships his mindset begins to transform and he begins to understand life can not be done alone.

**** Spoilers Could Be Ahead ****

How Is This Relevant To Adoption & Foster Care?

Some things to be mindful of when reading or thinking about when your teen is reading: the relationship between gods and demigods is similar to a birth parent and foster child. It isn't always 50/50 and the demigods must work a little harder for attention from their parent. Another is the relationship between the campers and Chiron and Dionysus. They are the overseers of camp and act like foster parents to the demigods. They provide food, clothing, training, counseling and protection to the campers. They also provide them with quests or challenges to help the demigods grow and become better.

Families should love this book because it is easy to read and tackles some harder emotions that can be difficult to express. Percy experiences loss, grief, anger, elation, confusion, and so many more throughout the 375 pages of this book. His way of dealing with these emotions can be a

helpful jumping off point for parents to show their kids how to effectively express or describe these feelings too.

Discussion Points:

- **The main character's Identity shift from "bad kid" to "hero!"**
(on-going theme throughout the book)
Percy Jackson is a walking calamity, trouble seems to follow him wherever he goes, but a startling discovery that his isn't who he thought he was changes everything. Your reader may relate to this change. Many foster/adopt kids have trouble settling in to a new situation, but once we are able to get them to buy in they begin to flourish!
- **How do the two worlds in this story different?**
Percy learns that the Greek Gods of legend are real and they interact with humans frequently. Humans are not able to see the differences because we choose to see what is safe to us. Our minds trick us into seeing past the differences between our world and the world of the gods. Our readers could relate to this simply because what they have been through. Most kids their ages will never have to experience or see the things that have become commonplace in their lives before care. Trauma triggers can lurk around every corner and our readers have to always be vigilant about their surroundings.
- **What is the overall theme of this book?**
This question may lead to many answers depending on when you ask it. I believe the most common theme is love. The Percy feels the love of a parent, a friend, a caregiver, or even a foe throughout the story and it overwhelms the negative feelings he has. Our readers may not pick up on this right away, but in the beginning of the book Percy is a loner and believes his mom is the only person that cares about him. She is taken from him early on and he must learn to trust and care for other people to help him reach his goals. Our kids have similar backgrounds and sometimes breaking those walls around them can take a LONG time, but as they begin to trust they begin to love.
- **What did you learn from Percy at the end of the story?**
Percy teaches us many things, but I believe the most powerful thing that be taken from this book is this: The world can be a violent place, but friendships and relationships can get us through it. Our readers are aware of the first part of this statement. They have seen and felt violence in their lives either with bio-parents or at school. The second part of the statement may lead to a breakthrough with them though. We are not made to go through life alone and the friendships/relationships we grow can lead us out of many dark places. Living life as a loner is only going to lead to you being alone.

Cautionary Points:

- **Loss of a Parent**

Percy loses his Mom pretty early in the book. This is a traumatic experience that has ripples throughout the rest of the story. It may feel similar to a removal from a bio-parents home. **Chapter 4**

- **Thoughts of Afterlife Leading to Thoughts of Passed Loved Ones**

Some readers may be triggered by the scenes in the Underworld if they have lost a parent or loved one. It is described as a not very happy place to end up which might bring up some deep feelings. **Chapter 19**

- **Domestic Violence**

There is a reference to domestic violence near the end of the book. Percy learns his mom was being abused by his step dad. The situation is left alone in the moment and that may not sit well with some readers. **Chapter 21**

Discussion Questions

Chapter 1

1. **Why do you think Percy always finds himself in trouble?**

Caregiver Note: Percy has been removed from every school he has been admitted to. He is a willing participant and creates havoc wherever he goes. Some of this can be attributed to the fact that he is a loner and has very few actual relationships. Your reader may relate to these behaviors, but they also may find themselves in trouble for much different reasons.

2. **What setbacks or diagnosis affect Percy? How do these things affect him?**

Caregiver Note: Percy has ADHD and Dyslexia both are common with Demigods. They are also prevalent with kids and adults who have experienced trauma. These diagnoses are the reason Percy cannot do well in school. These diagnosis seem to be present in most schools and most reader with trauma have issues with paying attention. These commonalities could give them a reason to Bond with Percy.

3. **Who do you think Mrs. Dodds was? (Fun Question)**

Caregiver Note: This is a character posing as a teacher who attacks Percy. He fends her off and then blacks out. When he comes to no one will acknowledge that Mrs. Dodds was even a teacher on the trip. Encourage your readers imagination and then listen.

Chapter 2

1. **How would you feel if you were Percy at the start of this Chapter?**

Caregiver Note: In the first couple pages Percy is feeling the fallout from the attack from Mrs. Dodds. Everyone is still denying her existence and Percy is on a downward spiral. Only Grover gives him hope that he isn't crazy. When he asks Grover about Mrs. Dodds he hesitates before denying her to him. Our readers can often feel like they are in a similar place, who is their confidant when life seems hopeless?

2. **What would you do if you were Percy and overheard Mr. Brunner and Grover talking about you?**

Caregiver Note: Percy overhears Mr. Brunner and Grover talking about his safety and his maturity while walking the halls later at night. He isn't all that pleased that they are hiding something from him, and he wonders why they are concerned for his safety. How would your reader react to hearing you and your spouse discussing their issues? This is very similar to how Percy feels when these two are talking.

3. **Can you relate to being called “not normal”?**

Caregiver Note: After a hard final exam Mr. Brunner tells Percy that this school isn't for him. He tries to back pedal by telling Percy he is “not normal”, but that just compounds the hurt and mistrust Percy has been feeling. This was his favorite teacher and someone he looked up to. Often times our readers feel "not normal" based on their trauma and experiences, this question may lead to a longer more angry conversation about what "normal" means.

Chapter 3

1. **What are Percy's parents like?**

Caregiver Note: Percy's mom is described as the “best person in the world.” His dad was a sailor who was lost at sea while sailing across the Atlantic Ocean, but never married his mom. His stepdad, Gabe, is mean to him and his mom, he smells like moldy garlic pizza, and he forces Percy to give him money to gamble with. Many readers might be able to relate to Percy's view of Gabe rather than his mom. They may have dealt with a Gabe at a prior foster home or a bio parent.

2. **Do you have a favorite getaway place with your family? (Fun Question)**

Caregiver Note: Percy and his mom go off to a cabin in Montauk to get away from the city. They have been going there every summer since Percy was little and his mom for years prior too. It is a special place for them both.

3. **How surprised were you to read that Grover had hooves? (Fun Question)**

Caregiver Note: Grover was posing as a student to protect Percy in the mortal world. He is actually a keeper which is the term given to satyrs.

Chapter 4

1. **Why do you think Percy's Mom can't enter the camp? (Cautionary Point)**

Caregiver Note: While being attacked Percy's mom is forcing him to run toward the camp. He refuses to leave her and she finally has to tell him that she can not enter the camp. Our readers imagination might go wild here, but be watchful for a trauma trigger. Percy believes his mother is killed by the monster he is being attacked by. Sally Jackson is his rock and the only solid ground Percy has.

2. **Were you happy to see Gabe's car Destroyed? (Fun question)**

Caregiver Note: Gabe is a jerk and the Minotaur smashed his car up!

3. **What do you think the line “He’s the one. He must be.”?**

Caregiver Note: Percy is laying on the ground dazed and sees a pretty girl and a familiar looking man. This line is said as Percy loses consciousness. It would be interesting to see where your teen’s imagination is. Our readers often hear things that they don’t always understand due to trauma and sometimes have to ask questions about it once they process it. This could be hours or days later once they have had time to process what was said.

Chapter 5

(Not much trauma substance in this chapter, we are just introducing new characters and getting some backstory)

1. **What would you do with the Minotaur horn? (Fun Question)**

Caregiver Note: Percy broke the horn of the Minotaur and used it to dispatch the monster. After he woke up two days later Grover presented him with a horn, and it reminded him that everything that happened was real.

2. **Who are Mr. D and Chiron?**

Caregiver Note: Mr. D and Chiron run the camp. They oversee the campers and the activities. Chiron is a character we have met before. He is Mr. Brunner from Percy’s school.

3. **If you were Percy, how would you feel about being told that the Greek Gods are real?**

Caregiver Note: While meeting with Mr. D (the god of wine) and Chiron, Percy is informed that the legend of Greek mythology is true events. He doesn’t begin to believe them until he figures out that Mr. D is Dionysus the god of wine.

Chapter 6

1. **Do think Grover did a good job protecting Percy and getting him to camp?**

Caregiver Note: Grover was responsible for Percy’s safety and Mr. D was less than impressed with the way they arrived at camp. Grover was knocked unconscious by the Minotaur attack and Percy had to drag him over the protective barrier into camp. He now faces a meeting with the Council of the Cloven elders and Mr. D because this was his second chance to do his job after a previous failure. Readers may have a friend or someone that they know who tried to help them, but didn’t do a great job. Things worked out in the end, but the "protector" was not a lot of help. This is what happened with Grover.

2. **Which cabin would you like to stay in a camp?**

Caregiver Note: Camp Half-Blood has various cabins that all represent a different God. They are adorned in different decorations that are specific to the god they represent. Percy is placed in the cabin 11 which is for campers whose parent is Hermes, but also is for travelers or those who are undetermined. The undetermined campers will move into their own cabin once claimed by the god parent. This could be similar to a group home setting if any of our readers have come from this type of foster care.

3. **Have you ever thought that your weaknesses were your strengths?**

Caregiver Note: After seeing his cabin, Annabeth sheds some light on Percy's situation. She accurately describes his behaviors in school, the dyslexia, and his ADHD. These are actually traits of a demi-god. For so long, Percy believed these things were bad and now he's learning that these traits are actually what make him different and they come from his dad, who is a god. As mentioned above, many of our readers have similar diagnosis, but also coupled with trauma too. Now you can maybe convince them that their "weaknesses" might actually be strengths if we change our mindset.

Chapter 7

1. **When was the last time you felt ignored?**

Caregiver Note: In the beginning of this chapter Annabeth explains more about the relationship between god and son/daughter. She also tells Percy that sometimes the gods don't claim their kids, they just ignore them and focus on other things. This may be a trigger warning for some foster kids dealing with parental loss and the trauma that goes along with it. They also may feel ignored or forgotten by their birth parents.

2. **(Side note)** – In this chapter Annabeth explains that Percy is now home. She tells him that many of the campers are year-rounders and stay at the camp all the time. So, Percy, who is 12, has been transplanted into a different environment and is now told that this is his new normal. This feeling of loss and insecurity can be easily translated to foster/adopt kids that have literally felt this exact feeling in one way or another.

3. **Do you now know what Annabeth meant by Percy being “The One”?**

Caregiver Note: Luke tells Percy that Annabeth was she destined to go on a quest, but first must wait for someone special comes to the camp. Percy believes that she thinks this is him, but Luke tells him she thinks it is every new camper.

4. **What is your favorite food? What would you ‘sacrifice’ to the gods? (Fun Question)**

Caregiver Note: Before the campers eat their food they put the best of what they have in a fire pit as an offering to their god ‘parent’. These gifts include the ripest fruit, juiciest meat, or the warmest most buttery roll. I wonder what your teen would consider a worthy “offering”? This is also a foreign tradition to Percy. What traditions did your reader have to adapt to?

Chapter 8

1. **Do you understand Percy’s bitterness toward his Dad?**

Caregiver Note: Early in this chapter Percy is beginning to understand Luke’s bitterness. He is aware of his dad is a god but can’t fathom why he doesn’t reach out to him. Our readers may harbor bitterness and regret when it comes to bio-parents or previous foster parents. These feelings are normal and natural, but this could be a time that you reaffirm their feelings.

2. **Why did the Big 3 choose to not have any more mortal kids? Do you think it was the right choice?**

Caregiver Note: After WWII Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades all took an oath on the River Styx to not have a mortal affairs because their children cause a lot of trouble fighting each other in the mortal world. This could be an interesting topic for our readers. They could feel like the Gods were terrible parents and they shouldn’t have more kids, but could also not agree too.

3. **Were you surprised to find out who Percy’s dad was? (Fun Question)**

Caregiver Note: At the end of the chapter Percy is attacked by a hell hound. Once the beast is dispatched Percy is told to get into the nearby creek. When he enters the creek, his wounds begin to heal and a trident appears above him meaning Poseidon is his dad.

Chapter 9

1. **Who do you think was fighting in Percy’s dream? Who was the voice telling him to calm down?**

Caregiver Note: After the events of capture the flag, Percy is loved into his own cabin. He has a dream with two people fighting over something like toddlers. The fighters are most likely Zeus and Poseidon. The voice of Hades come from below telling Percy to calm down as he yells for the gods to stop fighting. Trauma experiences can lead to crazy dreams that our readers must try to process. Reading that this character is also having to do this will further that bond.

2. **What question would you ask the Oracle? (Fun Question)**

Caregiver Note: Percy meets the Oracle in the attic of Chiron's home. He is given instruction to go west to find a missing item, he is told a friend will turn on him and he will not be able to save what he wants to most. It would be interesting to hear what your teen would ask this all knowing being if given the chance.

3. **If you had to go on a trip (or quest) who would you bring as your two companions?**

Caregiver Note: (Fun Question) Percy is given a quest to go to the underworld and confront Hades. He is told he can bring two companions and he chooses to have Grover and Annabeth accompany him on the Quest. Your teens may have 2 close friends or confidants they would adventure with this may help you learn more about their circle.

Chapter 10

1. **If you had the chance to know your destiny would you want to know, or would you want it to be a surprise?**

Caregiver Note: Throughout the first part of this Chapter Percy is being prepared for the quest and the topic of destiny keeps getting brought up. Percy has an inkling of his destiny and understands the part he plays in it, but he also seems like he'd rather not know what his future may or may not hold. Trauma will normally force our readers to forget the past and hope for the future. The chance to learn more about where they are going might be too good to turn down.

2. **What has someone sacrificed for you?**

Caregiver Note: We learn that Percy's mom married and stayed with Gabe because of the odor he gave off helped mask Percy's presence to monsters. The smell worked as a camouflage and without Gabe, Percy may have not lasted if he did. So, Sally (Percy's Mom) sacrificed her happiness to be able to care for her son. Often we are parents/caregivers sacrifice many things for our kids. They may not understand at the time, but maybe they get older or have kids of their own they might understand.

3. **What is Percy's goal for this quest? Do you understand his motives?**

Caregiver Note: Just reading this question you may think this one is straight forward. The easy answer would be to say he wants to prevent the war between the gods by finding the lightning bolt and returning it. However, Percy is more focused on trying to rescue his mom from the underworld. His mom is number 1 and saving the world would be the number 2 goal. How many of our readers have a prioritized goal list for every situation? For example, my son would do his homework because it would get me off his back, and secondly his grade would improve so he could play sports.

Chapter 11

1. **When is the last time a friend was giving you good advice and you decided to do your own thing instead?**

Caregiver Note: Grover did not want to go near Aunty Em's at all. He tried to persuade Percy and Annabeth to leave, but they decided to be led by their stomachs not their brains. This leads to an encounter with Medusa of all people! Our readers get advice from many sources and if yours are like mine they rarely listen. Sometimes its on purpose and other times is trauma brain and they can't fully understand what is going on around them.

2. **Ask your reader where Percy sent Medusa's head. See if they understand what impertinent means. If not, look it up with them. (Fun Question)**

Caregiver Note: After the battle with Medusa, Percy is left with her head as a spoil of war, He proceeds to wrap the head in cloth and a plastic grocery bags before placing it in a box and sending it to Mount Olympus. Grover says the Gods will be think he is Impertinent, and Percy tells Grover that he is. Impertinent – Not showing proper respect; Rude

Chapter 12

(Not a lot of content in this chapter, once again just building the story)

1. **Who do you think was invading Percy's dream this time?**

Caregiver Note: Percy once again has another prophetic dream and is being persuaded to revolt against the gods by using the lightning bolt to free him. Likely this person is Kronos, but the reader will not have any idea who he is.

Chapter 13

1. **Were you surprised that Annabeth wouldn't try to rescue her dad if he was in peril?**

Caregiver Note: Once again, we are reminded that these teens have not had the best upbringing and our readers may be able to relate more and more to them. Annabeth was treated as an inconvenience by her dad, he even asked Athena to take her back to Olympus because he was too busy to raise a child. When Athena refused, he was forced to care for Annabeth, but she always felt like a freak or afterthought in her dad's eyes. He also married and had 2 "normal" kids with his new wife who also did not appreciate Annabeth. This could be how an adopt/foster reader might feel living in a home with "bio" children.

2. **What is the biggest “leap of faith” you have ever taken?**

Caregiver Note: Near the end of this chapter Percy is once again attacked by a monster. The monster compels him to jump from the gateway arch to the Mississippi River far below and trust his father’s powers to save him. Percy is injured and can feel himself fading fast, so he takes the leap and prays to his father to help him as he begins to plummet. Your reader may have some interesting answers with this question, you also may have to explain the leap of faith concept too.

Chapter 14

1. **Have you ever gotten a gift without expecting it?**

Caregiver Note: Good news, Percy didn’t die in after diving over 600 feet into the river. Instead he is given a message to meet his father at the Santa Monica Pier. Percy thanks his father multiple times for keeping him safe from the fall and healing him after the monster attack. An unexpected gift for foster/adopt readers might be unconditional love. It could be a completely foreign concept to them since their experiences lead to people giving up on them.

2. **Have you ever been accused of something by someone without most of the facts?**

Caregiver Note: Percy is now a wanted man in the US. He first was reported missing with his mom, then implicated in the bus attack in NYC, and now was seen causing the damage and destruction in St. Louis. All these things look terrible at face value, but that is because the people looking cannot see all the facts. They can only determine the “facts” based on their perception and this is not good for Percy. Many foster/adopted readers have come from a troubled background and this can lead to accusations of wrongdoing just based on prior history. They may feel like they are thought to be guilty until proven innocent in most situations.

Chapter 15

1. **Do you think all the God’s kids take after them? (Fun Question)**

Caregiver Note: We meet Ares in beginning of this chapter and understand that Clarisse reflects his behavior and mannerisms to a tee. This could lead to a good discussion about what we inherit from our bio parents and what he learns. Annabeth’s mom is Athena, which explains her wisdom and cunning, Percy’s dad Poseidon is portrayed as a mostly chill guy with some flashes of anger, and Clarisse’s dad is Ares the god of War, and is looking to engage anyone at any time. (This could lead down a more religious path depending on the reader. The point was about the Greek gods in this book, but could lead down a path to discussing the "Big G" God.

Chapter 16

1. **Who do you think has Percy's Mother? Why do you think they'd take her?**

Caregiver Note: Ares tell Percy his mom was transported somewhere. This is why he saw the gold dust when she disappeared. She wasn't dead, but she was someone's captive. Ares also tells Percy that his mom was taken to control him. As Ares put it "you take someone to control somebody else." Readers reaction to this news may depend on their situation. If they have lost a parent due to death it could be a trigger, but if their bio-parents are alive it could also reduce their anxiety for Percy's situation.

2. **Do you think its fair that the Demi-gods must suffer for their parent's misfortunes or fights?**

Caregiver Note: Throughout the book we are reminded that certain gods have fought with others and now their children also fight each other. It's explained just as a matter of fact. The demi-gods also must deal with repercussions of fights with certain monsters. Like how spiders attack children of Athena because of a fight with Arcane or how Medusa wanted to rip Annabeth into shreds because of a disagreement over Poseidon. I wonder how your reader will internalize these events. Many foster/adopt kids deal with the "sins" of their bio-parents through prolonged trauma for much of their lives.

3. **Can you relate more to Grover now that you know more of his story?**

Caregiver Note: We learn in this chapter about Grover's first attempt to rescue a hero and bring them to camp. He was supposed to get Thalia and bring her to camp. He also ended up with Annabeth and Luke who were traveling with Thalia, a daughter of Zeus. When they were almost to camp the party was attacked and Thalia did not make it to camp. Grover blames himself and is desperately trying to past for his past sins. Our readers may also have past issues where they hold themselves accountable, but in all actuality they had little control over the outcome.

Chapter 17

1. **Have you ever had so much fun that you lost track of time? What were you doing? (Fun Question)**

Caregiver Note: At the end of chapter 16 and into 17 we find the demi-gods at the Lotus casino which seems to a time loop where you never understand how much time has passed and it's a whole lot of fun. By the time Percy figures out that this casino is an elaborate trap they have lost 5 days. This means that they now only have 1 day to save the world. This may be one of those times that the fun time did not equal what you had to give up.

2. **Who do you think is working with Hades to steal the master bolt?**

Caregiver Note: Percy has another dream and he overhears another person speaking with a god who he believes to be Hades. They are discussing Percy and the how they took the master bolt, but Percy cannot see who this mysterious person or god is. He only speculates with Annabeth and Grover that it is Hades and another hero.

Chap 18

1. **Who is Cerberus and why is he important?**

Caregiver Note: (Fun Question) Cerberus is a rottweiler that guards the gates of the Underworld. He is very big and has 3 heads. His job is to keep the living out of the underworld and the dead in. Annabeth uses a rubber ball to trick him into letting the three heroes enter while he was distracted.

Chapter 19

1. **What are your first impressions of the Underworld? What place does he first experience? (Caution Point)**

Caregiver Note: Percy describes the initial view of the underworld as a huge rock concert with millions of people, but no lights and the concert hasn't started and will never begin. This would be called the Fields of Asphodel and is a place for those who haven't really done anything remarkable in their lives. He describes the people here as not scary, but sad. If your reader has experienced loss due to death this chapter might strike some deep seated feelings or triggers.

2. **Who do you think was trying to capture Grover? What gift do we now know couldn't be trusted?**

Caregiver Note: While on their way to Hades palace, Grover's winged shoes start going haywire. They drag him across the underworld and nearly into Tartarus, which is similar to a high security prison for monsters. The shoes had a mind of their own and turns out that they were the gift that couldn't be trusted. Our readers normally do not trust people easily, this scene may hit them hard because gifts are normally a big deal for foster/adopt kids. Gifts are normally a great thing and to have one that tries to kill you might not sit well.

3. **What was the hardest decision you've had to make? LOADED QUESTION**

Caregiver Note: Near the end of the chapter Percy is found to have the master bolt in the bag Ares gave him. Hades is also missing his helm and believes that Percy stole that too, but Percy has no idea how the bolt got into the bag or where the helm is. The trio is trying to escape, and Percy has three pearls that will assist them, but Hades mentions that he has Sally Jackson. Percy must now choose to leave someone behind and save his mom or leave his mom in the underworld and save his friends. He chooses his friends and vows to bring Hades his helm back for his mom. ALL of our readers have

been put in a position to make hard choices, some are harder than others, but be prepared for them to drop a bomb or maybe elaborate on a situation you are familiar with.

Chapter 20

1. **What would you call your greatest victory?**

Caregiver Note: During the fight with Ares, Percy manages to wound the God and the fight ends with Ares ascending into the sky with a brilliant light. After the fight is finished three furies emerge after witnessing the entire exchange and retrieve Hades helm of darkness. They confirm that Percy had been set up all along. This may seem like a fun question, but could lead to a more thought provoking answer depending on the reader. Some readers may go to sports or scholastic achievement. While others could go deeper like speaking out against someone that hurt them or standing up for an abused parent or sibling.

Chap 21

1. **Do you think Percy should deserve a reward for his role in bringing the master bolt back to Olympus? Did he get one?**

Caregiver Note: Percy only reward for returning the bolt is Zeus promises not to kill him that day. Unless he stays in Olympus too long and then he would be forced to strike him down. Although Percy does get a slight reward by being able to see and speak to his dad for the first time in a long time. In this conversation Poseidon refers to Percy as his son and tells him that will never be taken away. This maybe more of a reward than even he was expecting. Foster/adopted readers normally have a strong feeling about fairness. They may not see Poseidon's words as a fair reward based on the achievement, but its our jobs as caregivers to remind them that rewards aren't always tangible.

2. **How would you have handled Gabe? (Caution Point)**

Caregiver Note: At the end of the chapter Percy goes home and sees that his mom has been returned safely and that Gabe is still there. It becomes obvious to Percy that Gabe has been abusing his mom and he threatens Percy. Sally talks Gabe down and he gives Percy 15 minutes to pack a bag and leave. In Percy's room a package was sitting on his bed. It is the package containing Medusa's head! Percy offers to dispatch Gabe for his mom, but she says he can't do something like that. Instead he leaves the package for Sally to do with as she pleases, and he goes back to camp. Some readers may be angry at Sally's response to Percy. They my come from homes where parents have been abused and they were powerless to help. Now that Percy has the power to help he is directed to not make matters worse. That can hit home for many of our readers based on past experiences.

Chapter 22

1. **Do you approve of Sally's choice about Gabe?**

Caregiver Note: We find out that Sally sold a one of a kind concrete sculpture called The Poker Player for enough money to get a better apartment, pay for a semester of college, and put a down payment in for a private school for Percy. I for one love the decision!! Most readers will celebrate justice being done and may even laugh about how Gabe met his end.

2. **What choice would you make if you were Percy, Half-Blood Hill or New York City?**

Caregiver Note: Percy must choose whether or not he will stay at camp for the entire year or if he will go back to his mom's home for the school year. Both choices have their good and bad outcomes, but it would be interesting to hear what your reader would say. Our readers might have to think about this one for a minute. Percy now has two "families" to choose from and our readers may also have been in a similar situation before. Give them time to think this one out.

3. **Were you surprised that Luke was the friend that turned?**

ASK THIS QUESTION WHEN THE READER HAS FINISHED THE BOOK!!

Caregiver Note: Luke turns out to be a traitor who has been coerced into deceiving his friends and family by the Titan Kronos. Kronos is the father of the gods and has been trapped in a deep part of Tartarus for a long time. His goal is to emerge from the pit and make a war with his children. Luke intends on aiding him in this quest and has left the camp. Many of us, including our readers, have dealt with people who turned out to be completely different than we originally thought. Betrayal isn't normally a new topic for foster/adopt readers, but it would be interesting to hear their thoughts about a friend being the one that does the betraying.

About the Reviewer

Steve Madole

I am an adoptive dad of three boys living near Grand Rapids, MI with my wife, our cats and dog. We also fostered many other children in the last 5 years! I have done many trainings with the Dr. Karen Purvis Institute and try to keep up on different trauma training's monthly. My whole family nerds out on comic books, video games, movies and regular books! We often read a lot of the same comics and books which can lead to some awesome conversations!