Bringing Olympus Down to Earth

By

Amanda M. Goings

Advisor: Dr. William L. Holbrook

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Abstract: My Thesis for Those on the Run

Bringing Olympus Down to Earth is a compilation of two works; each brings a traditional Greek/Roman myth to a more modern era. The stories are based on and inspired by the myths of Hades and Persephone, and Cupid and Psyche.

"The Pomegranate" is the story of Harley and Pearl; they are present-day Hades and Persephone. Set in New York, the story explores an actress's struggle to make a name for herself.

"Step Right Up!" tells a story of blind love. Cupid and Psyche take the form of Aaron and Shiri, two 1920s teenagers who have known no other life than that of the traveling circus.
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*A Statement by the Writer*

No matter how progressive a society is, no matter how advanced the technology or forward the people, there will always be a fascination with ancient cultures. Even from the beginning of a child’s academic life, the importance of the Greeks and Romans is apparent; government, literature, language, and countless other sections of life as we know it were influenced by cultures that flourished thousands of years ago.

It is said that when things go out of fashion, it is only a matter of time that they will soon be back in fashion. In recent years, updates and modern film versions of Shakespearian texts and texts as old as Homer’s *The Odyssey* have proven popular among a varied crowd.

When I chose to rewrite Greco-Roman myths into different eras, I was blissfully unaware of the resurgence of popularity that such works were enjoying. I was struggling to find a creative project that would encompass both my major, public relations, and my minor, creative writing. Working with myths allowed me to write and therefore do what I truly love to do while using my professional training in public relations to work out ideas on how to present an old idea in a new light.

Originally, I intended to write four to five myths. Only after my advisor suggested some soul-searching did I come to the conclusion that such an undertaking would take far longer than I had. Even a concise myth could be expanded into a long story if given the proper time and attention. As any writer knows, characters and plots have a way of expanding without the author’s consent. With the addition of intended
graphics to accompany my writing, I decided that two myths would be succinct proof of my academic and creative talents, and would also give me enough time to give each myth the time needed to properly adapt it.

Another part of my proposal was that I would include pictures with my work. To keep with my theme of presenting an old idea in a new light, I chose to alter pictures of celebrities; in Greek and Roman times, scandalous stories of the gods and goddesses were basically what celebrity tabloids are today.

I chose two myths that I thought had potential for common themes. The first myth that I worked with was the myth of Hades and Persephone. After discarding several ideas, I finally settled upon a modern setting that I could really sink my teeth into: present-day Broadway. Actors provided the amount of flair nearly necessary for a mythical work, and Broadway provided the romanticism that I wished to work with. The finished result was "The Pomegranate."

The second myth proved to be a much bigger challenge. The myth of Eros (Cupid) and Psyche, though a beautiful one, is filled with more magic and mysticism than the tale of Hades and his bride. To do this tale justice, I felt I needed to set it in a time and place of magic. The setting I chose certainly wasn’t what many would, but the 1920s circus life fit me and the characters of "Step Right Up!" perfectly.

Once the stories started to take their own shape, the common themes began to shine through. In each of these stories, a forbidden kinship is shared despite the leanings of a loving, if slightly overprotective, deified mother. Persephone’s mother is Ceres (Demeter), goddess of the earth and harvest, while Eros’s mother is Venus (Aphrodite),
the goddess of beauty and love. Taking the offspring of goddesses and letting them do what they wanted was an interesting experience.

Through this project, I’ve learned much about mythology, but more importantly, I’ve learned much about my own work ethic and writing style. I feel that I have explored and in some cases expanded upon themes and elements in the myths that were not originally expounded upon, which is what I really longed to do.
There is no possible way I could have completed this thesis by myself, and I have a whole lot of people to thank.

First, I'd like to thank the one person who I think put just as much time, work, and thought into this as I did: my thesis advisor, Dr. Bill Holbrook (Wild Bill, Ph.D.). He helped me through more rough spots and instances of stubborn writer's brain than I can even count, and never hesitated to point out when my ideas were below my usual standard.

Secondly, college and writing would have been nothing but dreams to me if it hadn't been for my parents, Bill and Nina Goings.

A slew of other people helped me along the way as I forged through this, just to finish up the list, Heather Goad for being a sounding board, Allen Sundstrom for helping with graphics problems, and Dr. Joanne Edmonds for everything wonderful she's done in connection with my Honors College experience and with this thesis.
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Bibliography: The Writer Gives Credit Where Credit is Due


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