

## Video transcript

# The story of Perseus and Medusa

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**Narrator:** Athena had not only told Perseus how to destroy the Gorgon, she had given him the means. He now carried her brightly polished shield in one hand and his sword in the other. He knew that he must be getting close to Medusa's cave.

The valley in which he stood was filled with stone people, some trapped as they'd turned to run, others frozen in horror, their mouths open, the screams still on their lips. It was as if they had been photographed in the last second of their life, their reaction in that second had been caught for eternity.

One young soldier had covered his face, but then he had tried to peep through his fingers. A local government official stood rigid, his stone fingers clutching a scrap of yellowing paper. There were stone women and stone children.

Now Perseus saw the mouth of a large cave yawning darkly at him. Holding the shield more tightly than ever, he climbed down the gentle slope and taking a deep breath, entered the gloom.

**Perseus:** Medusa!

**Narrator:** His voice sounded lost in the shadows. Something moved at the back of the cave.

**Perseus:** Medusa!

**Narrator:** Now he could hear breathing and the sound of hissing.

**Perseus:** I am Perseus!

**Medusa:** Perseus?

**Narrator:** Came a deep throaty voice from the back of the cave. It was followed by a horrible giggling.

**Medusa:** Have you come to see me?

**Narrator:** The Gorgon stepped forward into the light. For a dreadful moment Perseus was tempted to look up at her, to meet her eyes. But with all his strength, he kept his head turned away as Athena had instructed him. And instead of looking at Medusa, he looked at her reflection in the shield.

Now he could see her green skin, her poisonous red eyes and her yellow teeth all reflected in the polished bronze. He lifted his sword.

**Medusa:** Look at me! Look at me!

**Narrator:** The Gorgon cried. Still he' kept his eyes on the shield. He took another step into the cave. Now the reflection was huge, the teeth snarling at him out of the shield.

**Medusa:** Look at me! Look at me!

**Narrator:** How could he find her when all he could see was the reflection? Surely it would be easier to kill her if he just took one quick look, just to make sure he didn't miss.

**Medusa:** Yes, that's right! Look at me!

**Perseus:** NO!

**Narrator:** With a despairing cry, Perseus swung his sword wildly. He felt the sharp steel bite into flesh and bone. A fountain of blood spouted out of her neck as her body crumpled.

Then, at last, it was over. Still not looking at it, Perseus picked up the grim trophy of his victory and dropped it into a heavy sack.