

by Kim Esop Wylie  
Directed by Kat Singleton

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# Myth ADVENTURES

by Kim Esop Wylie  
 Directed by Kat Singleton

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Midas / **Jason Contini**

Persephone / **Maria Tholl**

Zeus / **Chauncy Thomas**

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# SETTING THE SCENE

Mythology is a set of stories, traditions or beliefs created to help people understand the world around them. Different cultures and countries throughout history have created mythologies of their own to explain things like nature, science and even what is right and wrong. In the play *Myth Adventures*, we see examples of stories in Greek mythology. Created in ancient Greece, these stories involved gods, animals and people having adventures in three different worlds—the heavens, the earth and the underworld.



In Greek mythology, the gods lived in the heavens which were on Mount Olympus, the highest mountain. Humans were not allowed to visit Mount Olympus, and only the best and most powerful gods lived there. The second place, earth, was the realm of people. Humans, animals, plants and all other creations made their homes on earth, but since the gods created earth, they often visited and played with its inhabitants. The final world of the play is the underworld. This is the world of the dead where everyone goes when they die. In this world some people are rewarded for good lives and some are punished for being evil. The gods can visit the underworld, but they don't often stay since they are immortal and cannot die. Together, these three realms make up life as a whole.

## WHO'S WHO?

Powerful, mighty **ZEUS** is the top dog, the King of the gods.

Zeus' brother, **POSEIDON**, is the ruler of the sea.

**HADES** is also Zeus' brother; he is the lonely and silent ruler of the underworld.

When Zeus gets bored, he orders **PROMETHEUS** to create humans to play with, but he gets more than he bargained for.

**EPIMETHEUS** helps Prometheus by creating lots of creatures for the earth.

One of Epimetheus' creations, **PANDORA** is the first human woman, and Zeus gives her a very special gift.

Goddess of plants, **DEMETER** is a powerful goddess.

**PERSEPHONE** is Demeter's beautiful daughter, who is admired by Hades.

Crazy, party-boy **DIONYSIS** is the god of wine and song.

**KING MIDAS** is a greedy ruler, but he loves his daughter, the **PRINCESS**.

The **SERVANT** works for King Midas, and doesn't always enjoy her job.

**ECHO** is a nymph who gets a nasty punishment when she lies.

Once a sweet shepherd, **NARCISSUS** turns into a jerk when he becomes selfish and cruel.

The little rascal, **EROS**, is able to make people fall in love with his magical bow and arrow.

# WHAT'S THE STORY?

“Why are we here?”

“What happens when we die?”

“Why is there winter?”

Kim Esop Wylie’s new play *Myth Adventures* gives us some of the answers to these questions, as told by the ancient Greeks. If you are telling the stories of ancient Greeks and their gods, everyone knows the best place to begin is with the head honcho himself—Zeus. We first meet Zeus just as he has created the planet. He has light, darkness, plants, water, but nothing to amuse him. The king of the gods commands one of the lesser gods, Prometheus, to create him some creatures—something to play with. Prometheus enlists the help of Epimetheus, and together the two set to work.

Meanwhile, Demeter, Zeus’ sister and goddess of plants, is talking to her flowers and seeds, urging them to grow. Her daughter, Persephone, helps her choose the colors for a field, until the beautiful girl is kidnapped by the god of the underworld, Hades. He takes the young girl to his realm and there he tricks her into eating pomegranate seeds, which makes her his captive. Demeter is beside herself with grief at the loss of her daughter, and runs off to ask Zeus for help.

All this time, Epimetheus has been creating new creatures for the gods to play with. He’s made many different animals, but Prometheus has an even better creation

idea—humans! Prometheus makes his human and wants to give him a very special gift, just like Epimetheus has given to all his animals. He decides the best gift would be a tiny piece of Zeus’ firebolt which would create fire. Epimetheus warns him not to steal from the king, but Prometheus doesn’t listen. When Zeus sees what has been done, he becomes very angry. He is just about to punish Prometheus when he is distracted by a beautiful woman that Epimetheus has created. The woman, Pandora, will live with Prometheus’ men, and so Zeus decides to give her a gift that will create trouble for the humans that made off with his fire. He gives her a box and makes her promise to leave the box closed.

Pandora is very curious about what’s in the box, but leaves it shut for the time being, wondering what is inside.

Just as all of this is happening, Demeter asks Zeus to help her get her daughter back from the underworld. He discovers that she has been tricked into eating the food of the underworld, so he can’t get her out. This makes Demeter so angry that she swears never to help anything grow until her daughter is returned. As a compromise, Zeus makes Hades return Persephone to her mother for half of each year. In these six months, Demeter is happy and everything grows beautifully. In the other half of the year, however, Persephone returns to the underworld and Demeter mourns, causing everything to shrivel and die until her daughter is back again. This ongoing cycle creates the seasons.



As the gods are sorting all this out, Pandora is still interested in what's inside the box Zeus gave her. She finally gives in to temptation and opens it, releasing evils like "lies" and "cruelty" into the world.

Fortunately, she also lets "hope" out of the box, so humanity has some goodness as well. The evils set out into the world and their first victim is King Midas. He is bitten by "Greed" and asks the party-boy god, Dionysus, to let him turn things into gold. The god grants his wish and soon Midas is turning everything he touches into gold.

Meanwhile, in a forest somewhere, another evil has bitten a lovely wood nymph

named Echo. She is bitten by "Lies" and starts lying about everything. Unfortunately for her, she lies to Zeus, who promptly punishes her in a very unique way. Just at this moment, Echo is mistakenly hit by one of Eros' arrows, which makes her fall in love with a shepherd named Narcissus. She sets off, chasing her love, who wants nothing to do with her.

Back at Midas' home, he is turning everything he sees to gold—including his daughter; Pandora's evils are still biting everyone they see; Echo is trying to catch Narcissus; and everyone is running amuck! Will the gods be able to sort it all out?

## WORDS TO THE WISE

Greeks are people who live in Greece—a country in Europe. Greece is a very, very old country, and these myths are stories created by ancient Greek people.

To **scurry** means to run around very quickly.

A **realm** is the domain, place or kingdom that a certain person or god has control of.

Zeus thinks men are **conniving** or sneaky and plotting.

Pandora is very **curious** which means she always wants to learn new things.

Persephone eats a **pomegranate** which is a tough red fruit filled with many seeds.

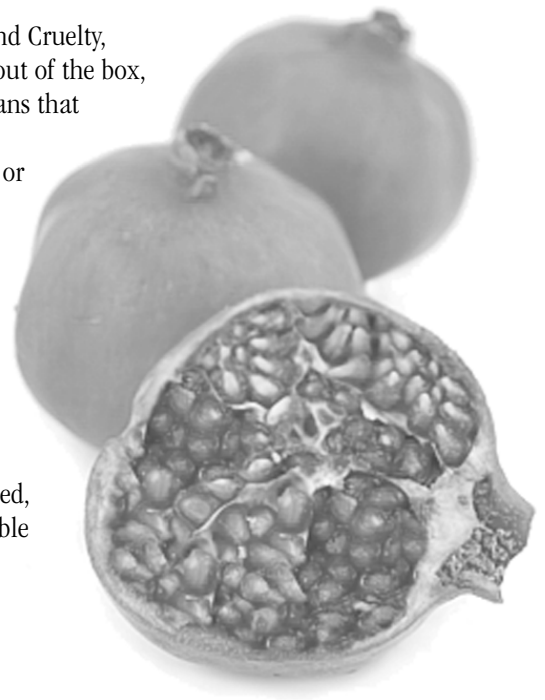
Hades traps Persephone for **eternity** or forever.

Along with Greed, Lies and Cruelty, Pandora lets **Apathy** out of the box, which is a word that means that you are uninterested, or don't care about anyone or anything.

A **plague** is a widespread problem or trouble.

A **satyr** is a woodland creature who is part human and part goat.

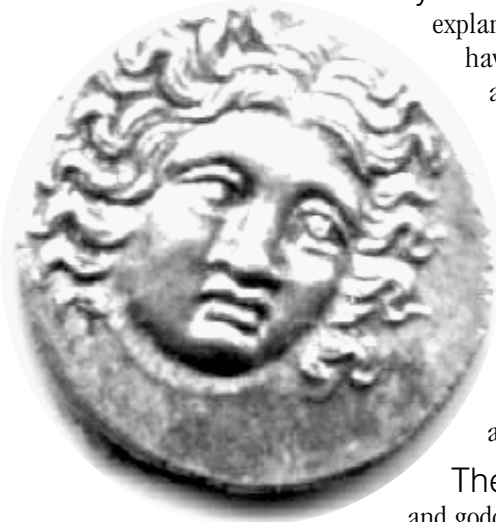
Before he is bitten by greed, Midas is **gallant** or noble and kind.



pomegranate

# God Squad

Mythology is the study of myths, or stories, which use supernatural explanations to understand natural events. Most ancient cultures have a mythology of their own, including Roman, Egyptian and Norse. Our play, *Myth Adventures*, tells stories from ancient Greek mythology. The earliest Greek civilizations thrived nearly 4,000 years ago, and had a very rich culture which centered around their beliefs. Cities often devoted themselves to a particular god, erecting temples and monuments in their honor. The gods were honored in festivals, song and art, and sacrifices of animals or riches were often made. For the Greek people, mythology was a way of life and affected everything they did.



The principle figures in Greek mythology were the gods and goddesses. These beings resembled humans in their forms and emotions, and they lived in a society that was similar to what humans knew. The crucial differences between gods and humans were: 1) Gods were immortal; humans could die and 2) Gods had powers that humans did not. These differences made gods the rulers over everything.

The 12 most powerful gods and goddesses are known as the Olympians.



## ZEUS

The most powerful of the Olympians is Zeus. Ruler of all the gods, he is the king because he overthrew his father, Cronus, to free his brothers and sisters. As supreme ruler, Zeus' domain is the sky. His weapon is a thunderbolt, which he hurls at anyone who displeases him. Zeus is married to Hera, but is not a faithful husband.

## POSEIDON

Brother of Zeus, Poseidon has been given control of the seas. Worshiped by sailors and seamen, Poseidon rules all waters and is known to cause dangerous storms at sea if he is angered. His weapon is the trident which can shake the earth and shatter any object. Poseidon is second in power only to Zeus.

## HERA

Hera is Zeus' wife and is the protector of marriage and married women. Her husband is often unfaithful, but wily Hera is usually able to interfere in his plans and outsmart him. Her sacred animals are the cow and peacock.

## HADES

Zeus' other brother, Hades rules over the underworld. The underworld is the world of death, where both humans and gods can be held captive. Hades has as a weapon, a helmet that makes him invisible. Hades is also the god of wealth, since there are precious gems and metals underground.

## DEMETER

Demeter is the goddess of crops and the harvest. Sister to Zeus, she is the mother of Persephone who Hades kidnapped and kept as his wife. In anger at the loss of her daughter, Demeter set a curse on the world that it would wither and die in the months she was not allowed to see her daughter. This created the seasons.

## ATHENA

Daughter of Zeus, Athena has no mother but was said to have sprung forth from her father's head, fully grown. She is the goddess of the city of Athens as well of reason and wisdom. As Zeus' favorite child, Athena is allowed to use his thunderbolt and is fierce in battle.

In addition to the 12 Olympians, Greek mythology had several other secondary gods and demi-gods. Some deities were equal to the Olympians in that they were immortal and powerful, but their powers were to a lesser degree. The demi-gods were only part god; they might have had one parent that was human. Some demi-gods were also known as heroes.

### HESTIA

One of Zeus' sisters, Hestia is the goddess of hearth and home. She does not play a large part in many myths, but most ancient Greek cities had a public hearth dedicated to her where an everlasting fire burned.

### DIONYSUS

God of the vine, Dionysus is the rascal god of wine and merriment. Son of Zeus and Semele, Dionysus is the only god who has a mortal parent. He was worshiped by cults that would drink wine and celebrate him in large festivals.

### EROS

This god of love is the son of Aphrodite. Often represented as blindfolded because love is blind, Eros is the winged archer whose arrows can produce love in his targets.

### THE MUSES

These nine girls are the daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne. Each is known for inspiring a different creative art. The muses specialties are history, astronomy, tragedy, comedy, dance, epic poetry, love poetry, songs to the gods and lyric poetry.

### THE FATES

Said to be older than the gods, these three women have the awesome power of deciding destiny. To each mortal, the fates assign a thread which represents how long a human will live. It is not always clear how far their power extends, and it is possible that they determine the fate of the gods as well.

### HERACLES

Heracles was the son of Zeus and the mortal woman Alcmene. He was known for his great strength and bravery.



This group of deities lives on Mount Olympus and are all somehow related to one another.

### ARES

Son of Zeus and Hera, Ares is the god of war. He is disliked by many of the gods, but is often called upon by mortals to assist them in battle.

### APOLLO

Son of Zeus, Apollo was born to Leto in one of his father's many infidelities. His twin sister is Artemis. Apollo is god of music, medicine and light. His most important task is to drive his chariot across the sky, leading the sun and lighting the world every day. He is known as the masculine ideal.

### ARTEMIS

Twin sister of Apollo, Artemis is the goddess of the wild and the huntswoman of the gods. Like her brother, she is an archer and hunts with silver arrows. All animals are sacred to Artemis, especially the deer. Because it is said she caused her mother no pain, Artemis is also the goddess of childbirth.

### APHRODITE

There are two accounts of the birth of Aphrodite. One myth says that she is the daughter of Zeus, but another says she was born of the sea. She is the most beautiful goddess and is the ruler of love, desire and beauty. Aphrodite is the wife of Hephaestus, but she often taunts mortal men.

### HEPHAESTUS

God of the fire and forge, Hephaestus is the son of Zeus and Hera. He is the only god that is known to be ugly, and he is also deformed. Hephaestus uses a volcano as his forge, and he creates the weapons and armor of the gods.

### HERMES

Son of Zeus and Maia, Hermes is the fastest of the gods and therefore serves as Zeus' messenger. He is also the god of thieves and of commerce. Along with his messenger duties, Hermes guides the dead to the underworld. He is often pictured with winged sandals and a winged hat.



# It's Greek To Me!

Greece is a small country in southeast Europe. It has an area of mainland, which is very mountainous, and hundreds of small islands dotted around in surrounding seas. The earliest Greek civilizations thrived nearly 4,000 years ago; yet, their culture still impacts our lives today in the arts, philosophy, science, math, literature and politics.



## City-States

Ancient Greece wasn't one large empire but a collection of smaller city-states. The term the Greeks used was polis, which meant "city-state." A polis was bigger than a city but smaller than a state. Some of the more famous city-states were Athens, Sparta, Corinth, Delphi and Thebes. The people living in these city-states were all Greek, but the people of each city-state did different things and had different beliefs. It was good for all of these city-states to take control of their own ways of life; however, the bad side was that different beliefs often led the city-states to fight against each other.

In the Peloponnesian War, several of the city-states participated in a huge battle which left them all too weak to defend themselves from outside invaders.

## Government

Athens, one of the largest city-states, was the birthplace of democracy. Democracy is a kind of government system in which each citizen has a say in what happens. The USA is a democracy, which means that once a

person turns 18, he or she can vote and therefore help make the decisions that decide how our country is run.

## Olympics

The city-state of Olympia created the Olympics, a series of great athletic contests. These games took place every four years to honor Zeus. The Olympic Games also served to celebrate achievement in a peaceful way and to bring people together in times of war. Greek Olympics took place until sometime around the year 400 BC. Today's modern Games were started again in 1896 and invited countries from all over the world to compete. Some of the events in our modern Olympics were started in ancient Greece. Examples are found in the track and field events such as the marathon, javelin throw and long jump.

## Daily Life

Ancient Greece was a society very different from what we're used to today. Women and men had dramatically different lives, and the ancient Greeks used slaves as the work force. Men had all of the power in society, and their jobs included politics, arts and crafts, construction, agriculture, sea-faring, manufacturing and trade. Men were also soldiers and spent much time defending their city-states. Women's lives were at home; they had no political rights and were controlled by men. Duties included agricultural work such as harvesting fruit, vegetables and olives.





Women were also in charge of raising the children, spinning, weaving and sewing the family's clothes.

## School

Education in ancient Greece was limited to boys who all spent two years in a state school devoted to the overall physical and intellectual development of a young man. Very wealthy boys had the opportunity to attend private schools like the Academy of Plato, where they learned more advanced subjects like philosophy, mathematics, logic and rhetoric. Although girls in ancient Greece received no formal education, many of them were taught to read and write informally, in the home.

## Science

The ancient Greek people were the first to record and study a body of knowledge that attempts to explain the universe. Science, the word for many different kinds of study, includes things such as medicine, logic and

astronomy—all things first practiced by the ancient Greeks. These inventions led to the discovery of many very important things about our world, which we still use today.

## Art

Though art has been practiced since the dawn of civilization, the ancient Greeks revolutionized several art forms.

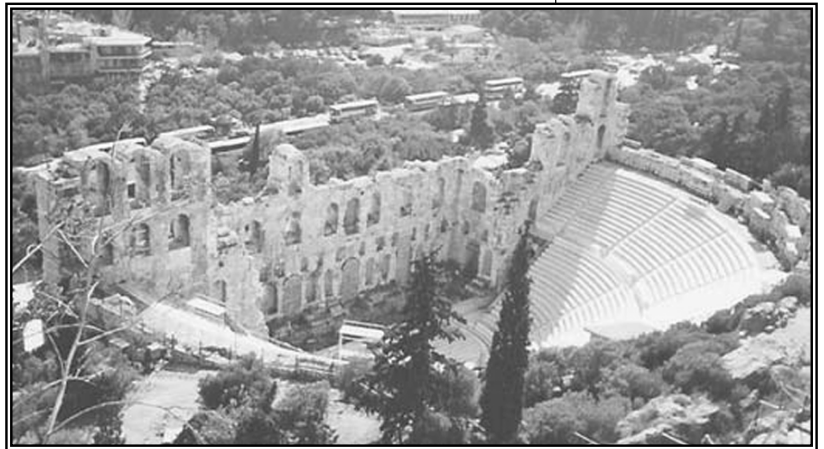
Architecture, sculpture and painting were all used as

ways of honoring the gods or exploring the beauty of the world. Some techniques used by the ancient Greeks are still revered today, and classic works that they created are housed in museums all over the world.

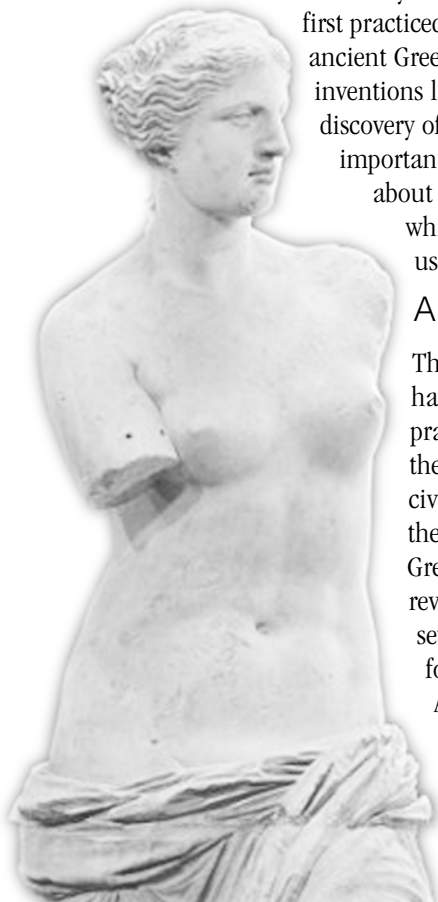
## Literature

Like art, the ancient Greeks perfected many different types of literature. Epic poetry, persuasive writing and lyric poetry were all developed during this time period. Works such as Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* told epic tales of the gods, and plays by people like Plautus were adapted into everything from Shakespearean works to modern movies.

## Theatre



Anything you see on stage today had its start in ancient Greece. All types of theatre including tragedy, comedy and musical, date back to festivals honoring the gods. The most common festivals were honoring Dionysus, who presided over such things. Actors would portray different characters and events in song, dance and costume, and often the gods were even part of the performance. Though they were quite different than they are now, these theatrical presentations led the way for plays that you see today.



# Make A Myth

The ancient Greeks made up myths as ways to explain the world around them. They did not have the science to explain lightning, for example, and so they made up a story in which lightning bolts were weapons of Zeus. Today we know that lightning is actually a flash or spark of electricity in the sky, but what if we didn't have science to teach us these things? Pretend you live in ancient times and you are confused about the world around you. You can make up your own myth to explain the world.

## What?

On the line below write what your myth will explain. Maybe it will be something about nature like fire or clouds, or maybe it will be something about people like love or jealousy. It could even be something completely different, like where chocolate came from!

## Who?

Every story has to have characters so on this line write the main characters in your myth. For example, if you were telling the story of Midas, your main characters would be King Midas, Dionysus and the Princess. Your characters can be whomever you like, including yourself.

## How?

Now write a few lines that tell us how your story will go. Give a very short description about how the action will take place.

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Now that you've got all the pieces figured out, all you need to do is write your myth. Be sure to include everything someone might want to know about what you're creating. Tell your story on the lines below and decorate around the outside with pictures illustrating your myth.

MY MYTH:

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# Pandora's Box

When Pandora opens the box in *Myth Adventures*, she accidentally lets out all sorts of bad stuff into the world. Things like greed, lies and cruelty set out into the world and start causing trouble everywhere they go. These evils are in the world all around us, and sometimes they might even give us a little trouble of our own. However, there are plenty of things we can do to make sure we avoid all of Pandora's trouble. We can practice kindness and truthfulness; we can make sure that we are doing our best not to let these little troublemakers into our lives.



In the world around us, Pandora's words are often causing trouble. What are some of these evils that you know of?

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No matter how hard we try, there are probably times when we are less than perfect. We might even have a day when we are influenced by some of Pandora's troubles. On the lines below, write down a time you acted in a way that you wish you wouldn't have.

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Just like we have bad days, sometimes our friends and family members do too. Tell about a time when someone may have been acting like one of Pandora's words. What word do you think was causing them to act out? What might they have done instead?

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Lucky for us, Pandora also let something good out of the box—hope. In addition to hope, there are lots of good things in the world to fight the troublemakers. What are some good things you know of?

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We have bad days when the trouble gets us, but there are also good days when we do the right thing. Below, write about a time when you had an especially good day full of good deeds and actions.

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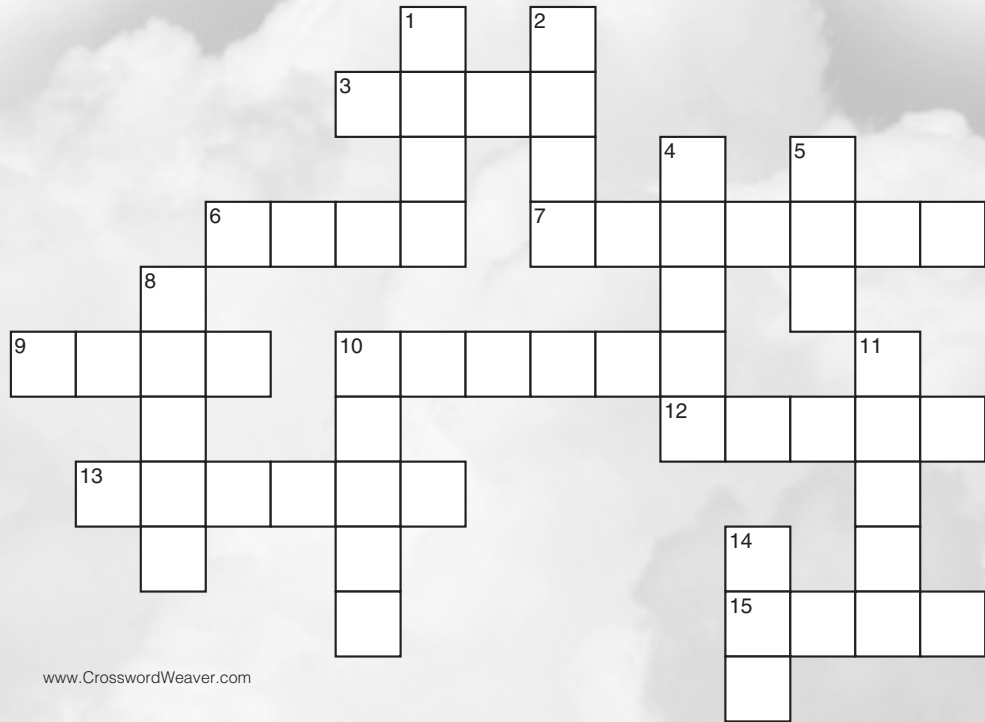
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# Myth Adventures

Fill in the blanks with the answers to the questions below.



www.CrosswordWeaver.com

## Across

- 3** Little Eros is the god of this.
- 6** Hades tricks Persephone into eating these bits from a pomegranate.
- 7** When Demeter lost her daughter, she created Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter which are known together as this.
- 9** Prometheus steals a bit of Zeus' lightning bolt to give this to the humans.
- 10** This is the country that all of these myths come from.
- 12** Dionysis' little buddy is one of these creatures, who is half human and half goat.
- 13** Dionysus punishes Midas by turning him into this.
- 15** She was a person who fell in love with Narcissus, but her name also means "to repeat a sound or word."

## Down

- 1** King Midas thought it was a gift but it turned out to be a curse when he turned everything he touched to this.
- 2** He's the king of the gods, the head honcho.
- 4** This is the name of the underworld and also the god who runs it.
- 5** Pandora opened this and out came a lot of trouble, but also hope.
- 8** Eros shoots Narcissus with one of these, which makes him fall in love with his own reflection.
- 10** This word that Pandora released is what makes Midas want so much gold.
- 11** Echo is one of these sweet woodland creatures who like to play with deer.
- 14** Zeus' brother Posiedon is the swimming god of this.