Robin Diver, "Entry on: The Faber Book of Greek Legends by Faith Jaques, Kathleen Lines", peer-reviewed by Susan Deacy and Daniel A. Nkemleke. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2021). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1180. Entry version as of November 05, 2026.

Faith Jaques , Kathleen Lines

The Faber Book of Greek Legends

United Kingdom (1973)

TAGS: Achilles Aeneas Agamemnon Antigone Chronos Comatas Creon Cronus / Kronos Demeter Dionysus / Dionysos Echo Erigone Gaia / Gaea Hades Hector Helen Melampus Narcissus Odysseus / Ulysses Pandora Paris (Trojan Prince) Persephone Priam Thetis Zeus





We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	The Faber Book of Greek Legends
Country of the First Edition	United Kingdom
Country/countries of popularity	English speaking countries
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	1973
First Edition Details	Kathleen Lines, *The Faber Book of Greek Legends*. London: Faber and Faber, 1973, 268 pp.
ISBN	0571139205
Genre	Anthology of myths*, Fiction
Target Audience	Children
Author of the Entry	Robin Diver, University of Birmingham, robin.diver@hotmail.com
Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Susan Deacy, University of Roehampton, s.deacy@roehampton.ac.uk Daniel A. Nkemleke, University of Yaoundé 1, nkemlekedan@yahoo.com

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Creators



Faith Jaques , 1923 - 1997
(Illustrator)

Faith Heather Jaques (b. Leicester 1923) was a British children's author, illustrator, stamp designer and artist. She began her career in the Women's Royal Naval Service, then attended the Central School of Arts and Crafts from 1946-1948. Edward Ardizzone was one of her teachers, and Jaques would later talk of him as an influence. Her favourite illustrators in early life were Rex Whistler and Eric Fraser. After this, Jaques taught at Guildford School of Art and Hornsey College of Art. In 1987 she moved from London to Bath. By this point, she was known as a campaigner for the rights of freelance artists.

Jaques is particularly known for illustrating the first edition of Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (1967) and some of Alison Uttley's *Grey Rabbit Tales* series; Uttley has also worked with Kathleen Lines. Jaques provided over 500 illustrations for the Radio Times. She illustrated additional mythical works; Henry Treece's *The Windswept City: A Novel of the Trojan War* (1967), the 1974 edition of Andrew Lang's *Red Fairy Book* and Arthur Ransome's 1971 *Old Peter's Russian Tales*. She has provided illustrations to the work of many big-name authors, including E. Nesbit, Nina Bowden and Philippa Pearce.

Her 1997 obituary in the Independent states, "Faith Jaques was one of the outstanding illustrators responsible for the renaissance of British picture books during the last three decades. Her special gift was an ability to translate the emotional tone of a text into the strong visual atmosphere created by her pen-and-ink drawings."* Chris Beetles Gallery adds "The quiet power of Faith Jaques' illustrations lies in a combination of meticulous research, sensitive interpretation and clear observation."**

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* independent.co.uk (accessed: February 9, 2021).

** chrisbeetles.com (accessed: February 9, 2021).

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Sources:

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chrisbeetles.com (accessed: February 9, 2021).

Bio prepared by Robin Diver, University of Birmingham, RSD253@student.bham.ac.uk



Kathleen Lines , 1902 - 1988
(Author)

Kathleen Mary Lines (b. September 1902, Edmonton, Alberta) was a Canadian editor, anthologist, librarian and book critic. Lines worked with the National Book League, now the Booktrust, to compile *Four to Fourteen: A Library of Books for Children* (1950/1956), an annotated bibliography of books suitable for children. Her interest in myth and fable is demonstrated by other titles she edited, including *The Faber Book of Magical Tales* (1985), *The Faber Storybook* (1961, including Greek myths) and *Tales of Magic and Enchantment* (1966, written by Eric Kincaid). She also edited books of nursery rhymes, *Lavender's Blue* (1954) and *Jack and the Beanstalk* (1960).

Sources:

Kathleen Lines. *The Faber Book of Greek Legends*. London: Faber and Faber, 1973. Author biography, front of book.

books.google.co.uk (accessed: February 9, 2021).

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Additional information

Summary

This is a collection of Greek myths retold for children by a range of authors, with accompanying line drawings depicting key scenes. The second half of the book deals with stories relating to the Trojan War. At the back, Lines lists other children's retellings she recommends and provides an index of names and subjects. The foreword and list of recommended retellings are clearly aimed at parents and teachers, not children.

In her foreword, Lines tells us her interest in myth was originally captured by A. J. Church's version of the *Iliad*. She then gives a summary of previous famous anthologies of myth (e.g. Lamb, Hawthorne, Lang) and asserts there have never been more myth books being published than today (today being 1973). She thanks professor A. J. Rose, whose books on Greek myth and literature she has apparently consulted heavily for this work. Lines implies she is also a friend of famous myth anthology author Roger Lancelyn Green, calling him "my old friend" (p. 25)*.

Featured Stories:

- In the Beginning (summary of Hesiod's *Theogony*, written by Dr. William Montgomerie for this collection).
- Persephone (written by Rosemary Sutcliff for this collection).
- Apollo and the Oracle at Delphi (claimed in opening lists to be based on Homeric Hymn but actually fairly different, presumably written by Lines).
- Echo and Narcissus (based on Buckley's 1908 *The Children of the Dawn* version).
- Hermes, Messenger of the Gods (claimed in opening lists to be based on Homeric Hymn, presumably written by Lines).
- Helle and Phrixus (lightly edited from Andrew Lang's 1907 *Tales of Troy and Greece*).
- Artemis, Orion and the Seven Sisters (assembled from classical dictionaries and reference books, presumably written by Lines).
- The Youngest God (Dionysus, claimed in opening lists to be based on Homeric Hymn, presumably written by Lines).
- Apollo and Hyacinthus (written by Rosemary Sutcliff for this collection).
- Melampus – Physician and Prophet (assembled from classical dictionaries and reference books, presumably written by Lines).

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- Pygmalion (assembled from classical dictionaries and reference books, presumably written by Lines).
- Erigone and her Dog (story of Icarius, lightly edited from Roger Lancelyn Green's *Tales the Muses Told* 1965).
- The Sacred Honey Bees (Comatas, assembled from classical dictionaries and reference books, presumably written by Lines).
- The Tragic Story of Antigone (written by Christopher Martin for this collection).
- Baucis and Philemon (written by Naomi Lewis for this collection).
- Peleus and Thetis (based on Hutchinson's 1905 *The Golden Porch* version).
- The Apple of Discord (assembled from classical dictionaries and reference books, presumably written by Lines).
- The Childhood of Achilles (written by Dennis Butts for this collection).
- Helen of Troy (based on A. J. Church's 1891 *Story of the Iliad*).
- Achilles and the Death of Hector (based on A. J. Church's 1891 *Story of the Iliad*).
- The Homecoming of Agamemnon (written by Dennis Butts for this collection).
- Odysseus and Circe (lightly edited from Charles Lamb's 1808 *Adventures of Ulysses*).
- The Wanderings of Aeneas (written by Dr. William Montgomerie for this collection).
- The Founding of Rome (assembled from classical dictionaries and reference books, presumably written by Lines).
- The Golden Ass (written by Dr. William Montgomerie for this collection).

* All page numbers refer to 1986 edition: Kathleen Lines, *The Faber Book of Greek Legends*, London: Faber and Faber, 1986.

Analysis

Lines uses a lot of lesser known mythology, such as the stories of Icarius and Erigone, Melampus and Comatas. Most of the retellings stick closely to ancient source material. Whilst many children's anthologies rely heavily on Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (for which see Roberts 2015)*, this collection uses other ancient sources, including

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Hesiod, Aeschylus, the Homeric Hymns and Sophocles. The Trojan War makes up a huge portion of this book, and it is contended the difficulty faced by the Greeks in getting home is due to the disgust of the gods at their cruelty when destroying Troy.

The first story in the book is Dr. William Montgomerie's "In the Beginning". This retells Hesiod's *Theogony* fairly closely, but in this version Gaea has Cronus depose Uranus not because Uranus has imprisoned her children inside her, but because she does not want more children – "When she felt she had produced enough children, Gaea called her son Cronus and persuaded him to attack Uranus." (p. 28).** Montgomerie also implies Zeus' power comes from a degree of androgyny. He describes Zeus' two brothers and three sisters, then says, "In Zeus himself were combined the grace and beauty of his sisters with the strength of his brothers, which produced the glorious perfection of immortal majesty." (p. 30).

Montgomerie maintains Hesiod's misogyny in the Pandora myth. He makes it clear Pandora is indeed the forerunner of all women, whilst other anthologies imply there may already have been women and she is simply an additional woman added by the gods. Her traits gifted by Hermes, "deceit, wantonness and foolishness" (p. 38) are thus implied to be characteristic of all women, as is the fact Pandora has "no idea in her head beyond pleasure; she did not want to help Epimetheus or to do anything useful" (p. 39). Lines, as editor, may in fact have considered maintaining Hesiod's misogyny an important part of authenticity. In the section at the end listing other anthologies, she recommends James Reeves' *Heroes and Monsters*, but complains Reeves lists "wisdom" as one of the gifts given to Pandora (p. 259). Lines may therefore have valued a retelling closer to Hesiod that did not attempt to soften controversial elements.

In the chapter on Dionysus, credited only as a retelling of the Homeric Hymn but presumably written by Lines herself, it is suggested the perceived femininity of Dionysus' cult was what made it threatening and that men resented it for this reason. The book states "many of the Dionysian rites were for women only. Except as priestesses and the mouth-pieces of oracles, women had held, up till then, a secondary place in the worship of the gods." (p. 86). Dionysus' arrival is thus positioned as something of a religious feminist revolution.

"The Tragic Story of Antigone", written for this collection by Christopher Martin, is retold in the language of courtly romance,

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which sets a strikingly different tone from the other retellings. Creon is called a Duke, Haemon a count, and Eteocles is Creon's "gallant nephew" (p. 112). Creon and his council also plan sorties.

Jaques' illustrations are very dark line drawings of various sizes, usually focusing on key characters. Many focus on moments of relaxation rather than always showing conflict; for example, Persephone chats casually to playmates, Apollo plays his lyre and Comatas relaxes beside some goats.

* D. H. Roberts, "The Metamorphosis of Ovid in Retellings of Myth for Children", in L. Maurice, ed., *The Reception of Ancient Greece and Rome in Children's Literature: Heroes and Eagles*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015, 233–258.

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Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Achilles Aeneas Agamemnon Antigone Chronos Comatas Creon Cronus / Kronos Demeter Dionysus / Dionysos Echo Erigone Gaia / Gaea Hades Hector Helen Melampus Narcissus Odysseus / Ulysses Pandora Paris (Trojan Prince) Persephone Priam Thetis Zeus
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Animals Conflict Heroism Love Violence War
Further Reading	Roberts, Deborah H., "The Metamorphosis of Ovid in Retellings of Myth for Children", in Lisa Maurice, ed., T*he Reception of Ancient Greece and Rome in Children's Literature: Heroes and Eagles*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015, 233–258.

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