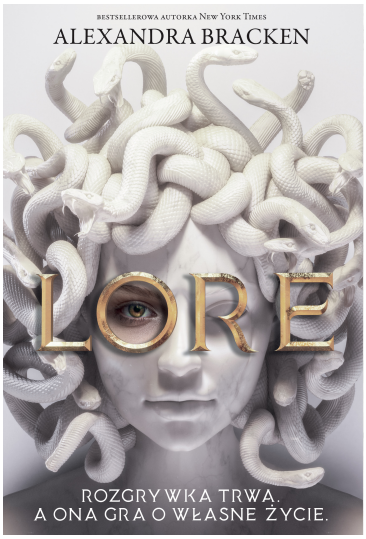
Alexandra Bracken

Lore

United States (2021)

TAGS: Ares Athena Deucalion Medusa Pyrrha



Cover of the Polish edition. With permission of the publisher, Wydawnictwo Jaguar.

General information	
Title of the work	Lore
Country of the First Edition	United States of America
Country/countries of popularity	Worldwide
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2021
First Edition Details	Alexandra Bracken, *Lore*. Los Angeles, CA: Disney-Hyperion, 2021, 480 pp.
ISBN	9781484778203
Official Website	Alexandrabracken.com (accessed: July 5, 2022)
Genre	Action and adventure fiction, Fantasy fiction, Urban fiction
Target Audience	Young adults
Author of the Entry	Mel Kennard, University of New England, mkennard@myune.edu.au
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This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Creators



Alexandra Bracken in 2018 at the United States National Book Festival, Washington, DC. Author Fuzheado, retrieved from Wikimedia Commons (accessed: July 5, 2022).

Alexandra Bracken , b. 1987
(Author)

Alexandra Bracken was born in 1987 in Phoenix, Arizona. As the daughter of a *Star Wars* collector, she grew up attending conventions and toy fairs and these experiences helped spark her love of storytelling and her own creative pursuits. After graduating from high school, she studied History and English at the College of William and Mary in Virginia. While studying, she produced two manuscripts, one unpublished, while the second, *Brightly Woven*, which was initially written as a present for a friend, ended up being sold and published while Bracken was still a senior in college. After graduating magna cum laude, Bracken moved to New York City where she began working in children's publishing as both an editorial assistant and in marketing. Since leaving the publishing industry to write full-time, she has published many series, including *The Darkest Minds* series, the first book of which has been adapted into a film, and the *Passenger* series. Perhaps fittingly, given her childhood experiences with *Star Wars*, Bracken also wrote the *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope* illustrated novel. She currently lives in Arizona with her dog Tennyson.

Sources:

Lore (Author bio at end of novel);

Official Website (accessed: July 5, 2022);

Wikipedia (accessed: July 5, 2022);

Disney Press Release (accessed: July 5, 2022).

Bio prepared by Mel Kennard, University of New England, mkennard@myune.edu.au

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Mel Kennard, "Entry on: Lore by Alexandra Bracken", peer-reviewed by Daniel A. Nkemleke and Elizabeth Hale. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2022). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1462. Entry version as of November 05, 2026.

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Additional information

Translation

Lore has been translated into sixteen languages, including:

Dutch: *Lore,* trans. Anne-Marieke Buijs, ill. Keith Robinson, [Utrecht]: Blossom Books, 2021.

French: *Lore*, trans. Jean-Baptiste Bernet, [Paris]: De Saxus, 2021.

Polish: *Lore*, trans. Michał Zacharzewski, Warszawa: Jaguar, 2021.

Spanish: *Lore*, trans. Jaime Valero Martínez, Madrid, Buenos Aires, Santiago de Chile, Ciudad de México: Puck, Ediciones Urano, 2021.

Hebrew: □□□, Am Oved, 2022.

Russian: *Лора* [Lora], trans. Irina Litvinova, Moskva: AST, 2022.

Summary

In *Lore*, 18-year-old Melora Perseus, better known as Lore, lives a seemingly ordinary life in a New York brownstone with her friend Miles. But as the last of her family, Lore's life is anything but normal. The descendent of one of five surviving Greek bloodlines, Lore grew up training to fight in the Agon, a competition that takes place every seven years and sees nine Greek gods and goddesses: Aphrodite, Ares, Dionysus, Hephaestus, Poseidon, Artemis, Athena, Hermes and Apollo, turned into mortals and hunted by the Greek houses in the hope that one of their own will kill a god and claim their power. When Lore's family were brutally murdered at the end of the last Agon, she swore she was done with the tradition. But as the next Agon dawns in contemporary New York City, Lore finds herself forced into the competition as goddess Athena shows up on her doorstep, injured and bleeding. Lore binds her life to the goddess', swearing to protect her throughout the Agon, in exchange for one thing: revenge. New god Wrath, formally known as Ares, is responsible for killing Lore's family at the end of the last Agon, and Lore is determined to make him pay.

When Lore returns to Thetis House, home of the Achilleos bloodline where Lore trained as a girl, in order to find out more information about the poem that recounts the creation of the Agon, she is shocked to discover that her childhood friend Castor, who was sick with leukaemia and dying during the last Agon, has claimed the power of

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the god Apollo, and has thus "ascended". When Phillip Achilleos attempts to kill Castor, Lore saves his life and, alongside Castor's cousin Evander, they return to the brownstone, where Castor heals Athena using Apollo's power. Although resentful of the new god, Athena agrees to an alliance with him for the duration of the Agon. Athena believes that one of the new gods, Wrath, is looking for a poem that will help him both survive the Agon and bring it to the Agon.

In search of the poem, Lore, Athena, Castor and Evander head to a property in Manhattan, which is owned by the Odysseos bloodline. Here, they find the god Wrath torturing members of the Odysseos bloodline, including new god Heartkeeper, who possesses the powers of the goddess Aphrodite. When Wrath kills Heartkeeper, Lore manages to save his mortal daughter, Iro, another of her childhood friends. Iro reveals that the poem Lore and her companions are looking for can be found on the Aegis, the shield worn by Perseus when he slayed the gorgon Medusa, owned by Athena, and now only accessible to Lore as the last of her bloodline.

Lore, Castor, Miles and Athena then go to The Frick Museum, after Miles recognises it in the background of a photo of Reveler, another new god who possesses the powers of the god Dionysus. Upon arriving, they find evidence of another slaughter, but Miles' hunch has proven correct and they also find Reveler. Before they can convince him to join their alliance though, Hunters arrive and injure him. Athena then kills him out of mercy. Before he dies, however, Reveler reveals that Lore's deceased landlord, boss and friend, Gil, was actually the god Hermes, and has since actually been killed by Wrath at the beginning of the Agon.

Upon leaving The Frick, Lore runs into Belen, the mortal son of Wrath and one of her childhood tormentors. She chases him and cuts off his thumbs, so that he will no longer be able to hunt in the Agon, thus bringing shame to both him and his family. A drone, operated by one of Wrath's Hunters, drops a bomb on Fifth Avenue. Castor saves Lore from being injured or killed in the blast and Athena holds a stone façade, preventing it from falling on those helping the victims of the blast.

After recovering from the blast, the group is lured to Morningside Park by Artemis, who injured Athena at the beginning of the Agon. Here, Artemis uses her powers over wild animals to attack the group. Artemis then falls to her own death. Iro shows up with reinforcements

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and kills Castor. Full of rage, Lore does not notice when Castor comes back to life and tells Iro to leave before Lore can kill her. Suddenly, a flood begins.

As New York City becomes inundated with water, Lore and her friends know that it isn't the result of any natural event, but rather the work of a god – of Tidebringer, Poseidon reborn. Lore and Athena descend into the sewers to find Tidebringer imprisoned at River House, a property owned by the Kadmou bloodline. They find Tidebringer and she reveals that it was not Wrath who killed Lore's family, but rather Athena herself. This is because, during the last Agon, Lore snuck out and stole the Aegis. Athena sought to find it and tortured and killed Lore's family in order to do so. Lore stabs herself, hoping that in doing so she will also kill Athena, whose life is bound to hers, but Athena reveals she did not, in fact, bind her life to Lore's. Athena attacks Lore and flees. Lore, guided by a vision of Gil/Hermes, makes her way through the sewers, eventually passing out. Castor finds her and heals her, before leading her from the sewers back to her friends.

Lore retrieves the Aegis where she hid it at the end of the last Agon. She and her friends discover that Athena has allied with Wrath and the two plan to end the Agon by making a sacrifice to Zeus by killing all the humans in New York. The flood has functioned as a way to force people to evacuation points, such as Grand Central Station, where Athena and Wrath will kill them. Lore pleads with Athena, who eventually turns on Wrath when Lore willingly gives her the Aegis, killing him. She then forces Lore to stab her, thus willingly giving her own power to Lore and dying. Lore uses her new powers to stop the deaths of those at the evacuation points.

The plan foiled, Lore and her friends return to the brownstone, where Lore and Castor admit their feelings for one another, knowing that when midnight strikes, the Agon will be over and both of them, now in possession of gods' powers, will lose their mortal forms until the next Agon. Castor realises that the god Apollo must have willingly given his powers to him, a dying twelve-year old, much like Athena gave her powers to Lore, and that this is why Castor was still immortal and unable to be killed by Iro. As midnight draws closer, Lore pleads with Zeus to let the Agon end, to let her and Castor remain mortal. She closes her eyes and when she opens them, both she and Castor are still mortals, still on the roof of Lore's brownstone. "As the eighth day began, Lore smiled and kissed him".

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Analysis

Lore is an example of modern young adult fantasy literature that takes place in a contemporary setting. Rather than just being inspired by stories from Greek mythology, however, *Lore* transports such stories to the modern era, imagining a world where the Greek gods and goddesses continue to exist, but rather than being revered and worshipped, are instead hunted by the different bloodlines. The conflict between the gods and the mortal bloodlines can be read as both symbolic of a greater cultural resistance to those in power, be it political power or the power of religion in society. However, such conflict can also be read at an interpersonal level, as the conflict experienced, perhaps, between adult parents and their adolescent children, i.e. the target audience for this novel.

Although *Lore* is set in contemporary New York City, it draws upon and references Greek mythology constantly throughout its narrative. This is seen not only through the narrative presence of the Agon, drawn from the Greek god of contest, but also through the different bloodlines in *Lore* who enter the Agon in the hopes of killing a god or goddess. Each of these bloodlines is named for a different, mortal hero from Greek mythology and thus the mortality of the different bloodlines is directly contrasted with that of the immortality that they seek to claim from the gods and goddesses. Similarly, many of the characters in *Lore*, from Castor and Evander to Lore's deceased family members, are named for figures from Greek mythology. However, these names are not uncommon or unheard-of ones, in fact, they are names that are often used and heard in contemporary society. Thus, *Lore* emphasises the enduring resonance of Greek mythology in contemporary society by drawing upon names that are used not only in Greece but are heard globally.

In transporting figures from Greek mythology into a contemporary setting, *Lore* recontextualises how we understand the gods and goddesses and Greek mythology as a whole. No longer the stuff of myths, the powers of the gods and goddesses are both real and tangible things in *Lore* and they exist beyond the realms of mythology. However, these powers, once something to be feared, are also depicted in *Lore* as something to be desired, and this renders the existence of the gods and goddesses during the Agon extremely precarious. Furthermore, *Lore* examines how the possession of such powers could be exploited within contemporary society by those who

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claim them, as bloodlines with a member who has claimed the powers of a god are able to use them to their (often financial) advantage – such as the Kadmou bloodline, whose leader Wrath possesses the power of god of war Ares, investing in weapons.

Further to this, *Lore* also modernises many motifs from Greek mythology. The Stymphalian birds, Herakles' sixth task in Greek mythology, are reinvented in the form of the drone which drops a bomb upon New York City. Evander's technology-reliant tracking program Argos is named for Argus, a figure from Greek mythology who had one hundred eyes. The flood that engulfs New York City at the end of the novel, as well as Athena and Wrath's desire to be its sole survivors, closely resembles the story of Deukalion and Pyrrha, the sole survivors of an Earth-destroying flood. When Lore journeys into the sewers with Athena, only to be injured by her, it is Castor who rescues her and leads her out – an event which directly references, and mirrors, the tale of Orpheus and Eurydice. In this way, not only does Lore transport the gods and goddesses of Greek mythology into a contemporary setting, it also reinvents and modernises events and figures from mythology.

Finally, it is important to note the feminist angle from which *Lore* approaches its narrative. Protagonist Lore is a strong female character, who is able to fight and hold her own. Furthermore, unlike in Greek mythology, where female characters functioned as side characters who assisted the male heroes in their quests, Lore is the hero of her own story, aided, interestingly, by a predominantly male band of sidekicks. Similarly, Bracken takes the time to reinvent and reimagine at least one tale from Greek mythology – that of Medusa. In *Lore*, Lore discusses Medusa's fate with Athena, noting that the goddess unfairly punished Medusa by turning her into a Gorgon after she was raped in one of the goddess' temples by Poseidon. However, Bracken reframes this act not as a punishment by the goddess, but rather as an act of protection, with Athena noting of Medusa "'I transformed Medusa,' Athena continued, 'so that she would have protection against all those who tried to harm her.'" (p. 347). In doing this, *Lore* does not recreate stories from Greek mythology, but rather recontextualises them so that they work alongside the novel's narrative and its feminist angle.

Ares Athena Deucalion Medusa Pyrrha

Classical, Mythological,

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Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Family Friendship Revenge Romance Violence
Further Reading	Jones, Mary, "Q&A with Alexandra Bracken", *Publishers Weekly* Online, 2018. Krul, Rosalind, "Young Adult Appeal and Thematic Similarity in Urban Fantasy", *New Review of Children's Literature and Librarianship* 22. 2 (2016): 142–158.

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