Elizabeth Hale, "Entry on: Run Damon, Run! by Anne Bower Ingram, Junko Morimoto", peer-reviewed by Susan Deacy and Hanna Paulouskaya. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2022). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1468. Entry version as of November 05, 2026.

Anne Bower Ingram , Junko Morimoto

Run Damon, Run!

Australia (2000)

TAGS: Damon Dionysius of Syracuse Pythias Syracuse





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

General information	
Title of the work	Run Damon, Run!
Country of the First Edition	Australia
Country/countries of popularity	Australia
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2000
First Edition Details	Anne Ingram, Junko Morimoto, *Run Damon, Run!* Sydney: Random House Australia, 2000, 32 pp.
ISBN	9780091840761
Genre	Picture books
Target Audience	Children (6–10)
Author of the Entry	Elizabeth Hale, University of New England, ehale@une.edu.au
Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Susan Deacy, University of Roehampton, s.deacy@roehampton.ac.uk Hanna Paulouskaya, University of Warsaw, hannapa@al.uw.edu.pl

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Creators



Anne Bower Ingram , 1937 - 2010
(Author)

Anne Bower Ingram was an Australian author and editor. She was born in Manila, NSW. She left school at the age of 15 and began working in a book shop. Later, she travelled to the United Kingdom, where she worked at the publisher, William Collins. Ingram became heavily involved in the literary industry, and was a key figure in children's publishing in Australia, promoting Australian works overseas at events such as the Bologna Book Fair. She championed Indigenous storytelling in Australia, and developed a number of collections of legends from around the world.

Source:

Aaustlit.edu (accessed: July 27, 2022).

Wikipedia (accessed: July 27, 2022).

Bio prepared by Elizabeth Hale, University of New England, ehale@une.edu.au



Junko Morimoto , b. 1932
(Illustrator)

Junko Morimoto was born in Hiroshima, Japan. She is an author and illustrator, and an artist of Sumi brush painting techniques. She studied Fine Arts at Kyoto University, and ran the Children's Art Studio in Osaka. She emigrated to Australia in 1972. Her picture book works include the story of her experiences of the bombing of

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Hiroshima *My Hiroshima* (1987). She collaborated with Anne Bower Ingram on several works, including *Mouse's Marriage* (1985) and *The Twin Stars* (1986).

Source:

Sbs.com (accessed: July 27, 2022).

Austlit.edu (accessed: July 27, 2022).

Bio prepared by Elizabeth Hale, University of New England, ehale@une.edu.au

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Additional information

Summary

Run Damon, Run! is a picture book retelling of the story of Damon and Pythias (a legendary story of friendship and loyalty). In ancient Sicily, a shepherd named Damon is preparing to help his sister celebrate her wedding. He goes to the city of Syracuse to find a present, and to invite his great friend, Pythias. He discovers Syracuse, which was once a happy city, is full of sadness and fear. Pythias explains that the new king, Dionysius, is cruel, greedy, and lonely, and prone to executing anyone who complains. Damon decides to visit the king to find out why he is so angry. Guards drag him to the king, who commands them to execute Damon. Damon then proposes to demonstrate the meaning of friendship and trust. He will go home to his sister's wedding, and return by sunset in three days' time. Pythias will stand in his place, and will die for him should he not return in time.

Damon returns for his sister's wedding, then sets off at dawn the following morning. But overnight a huge storm has hit. In place of the river is now a huge torrent. Damon takes a deep breath and swims through it. He climbs over the mountain pass, leaping over a band of robbers on the way, then runs over the land to Syracuse. He is only just in time. King Dionysius has broken his promise and is about to execute Pythias. Damon rushes through the crowd and the friends are reunited. Dionysius then declares that because Damon and Pythias have shown the value of friendship and trust, his kingdom will be free.

The picture book closes with a page explaining "The Story behind this Story" (p. 32), in which Anne Bower Ingram refers to the fable *Melos, Run!* written by a Japanese writer named Dazai, based on "The Hostage," a poem by the German writer Friedrich von Schiller. Further research involved reading versions written by Robert Graves and Roger Lancelyn Green. In different versions, Ingram notes, Pythias is called Selinuntus, Philoistratus, or Phintias, though the legend is consistent in naming Dionysius, King of Syracuse.

Analysis

This picture book uses simple text and large, full-page illustrations to introduce young readers to a famous tale of friendship and loyalty. Morimoto's illustrations (in soft pastels) present the story in its

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ancient setting: characters are dressed in traditional clothing. Damon, the protagonist of the story, wears a short chiton, and has a white fillet tied around his forehead, and as the feature character. He runs barefoot. The main characters Damon, Pythias, and Dionysius loom larger in the frame than other characters, who are all dressed in white, and blend into a generalised background. This has the effect of emphasizing the myth's import and the urgency of Damon's actions. Similarly, as Damon runs through the landscape, the illustrations emphasize the challenge he faces – running through large meadows, swimming through a turbulent river, climbing a rocky mountain, leaping over fierce bandits. The soft pastels of the illustrations confirm a sense of movement and urgency.

Ingram's text emphasizes the folkloric qualities of the story – the rhythm of the journey (from home to city), the different obstacles the heroic Damon faces (river, mountain, bandits, time), and the power, trickiness, and eventual capitulation of the king. The fable can be seen as a story of friendship, but also of the transition from dictatorship to democracy (or at least from tyrannical dictatorship to benign dictatorship), offering insights into models of leadership. As Ingram notes, the legend of Damon and Pythias has many variants, and has reached us today through a number of different paths.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts

Damon Dionysius of Syracuse Pythias Syracuse

Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture

Character traits Friendship Society Sport

Further Reading

Bateman, Theresa and Layne Johnson, ill., *Damon, Pythias, and the Test of Friendship*, Park Ridge, IL: Albert Whitman Publishers, 2009.

Rogers, Cynthia M., Danna Nolan Fewell, Caroline Vander Stichele

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and Hugh S. Pyper, “No Greater Love: Jonathan and His Friendship with David in Text, Tradition, and Contemporary Children’s Literature” in Caroline Vander Sichele and Hugh Pyper, *Text, Image, and Otherness in Children’s Bibles*, Atlanta, GY: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012, 123–153.

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