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Anne Ursu

The Siren Song (The Cronus Chronicles, 2)

United States (2007)

TAGS: Calypso Cetus Charybdis Poseidon Proteus Scylla Sirens





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

General information	
Title of the work	The Siren Song (The Cronus Chronicles, 2)
Country of the First Edition	United States of America
Country/countries of popularity	United States, United Kingdom, Australia
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2007
First Edition Details	Anne Ursu, *The Siren Song*. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2007, 448 pp.
ISBN	1416905898
Genre	Fantasy fiction, Fiction, Teen fiction*
Target Audience	Young adults (Middle Grade; 8–12 years old)
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Creators



Anne Ursu (Author)

Anne Ursu is an American writer of both adult and middle-grade novels within the mystery and fantasy genres. She is based in Minneapolis, Minnesota and in addition to writing is a member of the faculty at Hamline University's MFA in Writing for Children and Young Adults. Her books include *Spilling Clarence* (2002), *The Disappearance of James* (2003), the three books of the *Cronus Chronicles* trilogy (2006–2009) and more recently, *Breadcrumbs* (2011), *The Lost Girl* (2019) and *The Troubled Girls of Dragomir Academy* (2021).

Source:

Official website (accessed: July 28, 2022)

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Additional information

Adaptations

The Siren Song was adapted into an audiobook in 2013 and is narrated by Cassandra Morris.

Sequels, Prequels and Spin-offs

The Siren Song is the second book in the *Cronus Chronicles* Trilogy.

It is preceded by

The Shadow Thieves (2006)

and followed by the final book in the series, *The Immortal Fire* (2009).

Summary

Five months after the events of *The Shadow Thieves*, both Charlotte and Zee have managed to find a return to normality following their victory over Philonecron and his shadow army. However, despite their world-saving heroics, not all is well. As a result of abruptly leaving during the middle of the night, Charlotte has been grounded by her parents since her return from the Underworld, and Zee is still traumatised by being under the control of Philonecron.

The book opens with Charlotte calling her mother from the school office, to notify her that she will be coming home with Maddy, her best friend who has since recovered from having her shadow stolen in the first novel. Begrudgingly, Mrs. Mielswetski agrees, and this leads to if Charlotte would be able to come on a trip with Maddy and her family to Florida. Charlotte is unsure given her current punishment. The girls then also discuss Zee, who Maddy has a crush on, and makes Charlotte bristle at the idea of her best friend and cousin striking up a relationship.

After being dropped off by Mrs. Ruby (Maddy's mother), Charlotte begins to broach the topic of possibly going to Florida for Spring Break with Maddy. However, much to Charlotte's surprise, her parents tell her that they have something else planned and that because Mr. Mielswetski has received a teaching award for his work and as a result will receive an all-expenses paid cruise charting American revolutionary history. Despite their excitement and Charlotte's apathy to a historical cruise, she reluctantly agrees to go,

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despite the narrator's warning that the cruise, named Clio (after the Greek muse of History) should have set off alarm bells in Charlotte's mind because she, of all people, should "know to beware Greek bearing gifts" (p. 18).

While Charlotte is preparing for the trip, Zee is feeling increasingly isolated following his battle with Philonecron. He is reluctant to talk about these feelings with Charlotte and feels that they should both move on, despite still having a sense of unease. This "sense" however turns out to be a forewarning and after pursuing a strange man in an aqua three-piece suit and bowler hat, is kidnapped by his henchmen on the orders, as it turns out, of Philonecron who has been missing "Zero" and wishes to control him into being his friend and confidante. Zee is taken to Poseidon's ship where Philonecron is currently staying.

To account for Zee's absence from Hartnett Middle School, Proteus, the strange man in the suit and bowler hat shapeshifts into replicate of Zee. At first, Charlotte does not notice anything amiss with her cousin but after he promptly breaks up with Maddy and begins to date some of the popular "Ashleys" all the while ignoring her, Charlotte becomes concerned, but before she can do anything about this, "Zee" disappears, as does Charlotte's crush (and Zee's friend) Jason Hart. However, nearing the beginning of spring break, Charlotte has her own things to focus on, such as embarking on the historical cruise.

While on this cruise, Charlotte promptly realises that the trip is dreadfully boring, compounded by the fact that there are hardly, if any, children/teenagers on the ship. However, it does not take too longer for things to begin to go awry, with the presence of a singer, Thalia enchanting all of the passengers, night after night and Charlotte spotting, of all people, Jason aboard the ship. Following her initial recognition, Charlotte again notices Jason on the night of a storm that causes the cruise ship to end up in the Mediterranean. After catching up to Jason who has been running throughout the ship, he tells her that Thalia the onboard entertainment and alluring singer is in fact a siren that has all of the passengers under her spell, and that the ship is in the Mediterranean because Poseidon has willed it so, in order to feed it to the Ketos as part of his entertainment for an upcoming celebration.

Aghast, Charlotte urges Jason into action and the pair manage to leave the boat, taking a life-boat from the ship to navigate themselves to

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Poseidon's super-yacht. Along the way, Charlotte experiences a journey of epic proportions, coming face to face with Scylla and Charybdis and when on the ship, Calypso. After making her way to find Poseidon and to either steal his trident or to convince him to stop his plans to use the cruise ship as sea-monster bait, Charlotte fails and is thrown from the ship where she is rescued/swallowed by a giant squid, once an English gentlemen known as Sir Laurence Gaumm who angered Poseidon in an earlier time. Together, they devise a plan to return to the ship and put a stop to Poseidon's plans. This is successful to an extent as Charlotte retrieves the trident but then comes face to face with Jason who has been missing for most of her time on the ship, and he reveals that he wanted the trident for himself and that he is in fact the son of Proteus, the man in the aqua suit and bowler hat she saw at school several weeks ago. After locking them in a room together, Charlotte then attempts to flee the ship, which is under attack from Sir Laurence, but it is discovered by Philonecron who then informs (and shows her) that he had kidnapped Zee. It doesn't take long for Charlotte to blast Philonecron and take Zee with her back to the cruise ship in an effort to save all those onboard, which she eventually (and expectedly) succeeds in doing.

By the end of the novel, Poseidon has disappeared, Sir Laurence has been transformed back into his human form, Zee is back in control of his own mind and Charlotte is once again reunited with her parents. In the closing pages of the book however, Philonecron, swallowed by the Keto has come into the possession of Poseidon's trident and is able to escape his intestinal prison, all the while Charlotte and Zee receive a letter from Mr. Metos who has been absent from the entirety of the novel that, "there is something afoot, something that may affect the fate of us all, and I'm afraid the two of you are involved".

Analysis

As the sequel to *The Shadow Thieves*, Anne Ursu's second novel more fully blends the mythical and mortal realms through a series of effective reception choices.

Reeling from their battle against Philonecron in the Underworld, both Charlotte and Zee are now facing the consequences of having left their homes in the middle of the night to save the world. Charlotte is grounded and Zee is traumatised. Through both characters in the early stages of the book, Ursu is able to incorporate several key tropes related to being a teenager; Charlotte is frustrated and defying her

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parent's authority (for the right reasons, of course) and Zee suffers from a loss of identity and a reluctance to express himself to others. This is where Ursu shines, her allusions to Zee's mental health is an important, if not necessary inclusion in the narrative and normalises mental health to a target audience likely to experiences their own challenges in the years that follow.

In terms of reception choices, the labours that Charlotte and Zee both endure, align with *The Odyssey*, which is the overarching myth that guides the majority of the plot. This is evident through appearances of Scylla, Charybdis, the Straits of Messina as well as Calypso and several Cyclops. This myth provides the background for Charlotte and Zee's own odysseys that they undergo throughout the novel. In addition to these choices, Ursu also adds further mythical allusions into the text through the inclusion of Proteus and his son, Jason (whose physical description as a teenage boy with black hair and green eyes is eerily similar to descriptions of Percy Jackson, the eponymous character from Rick Riordan's hit series). In short, the mythical choices are better selected in Ursu's novel to represent and support the key concerns of the main characters, and in doing so, develops a novel where the plot and concerns align, establishing a more engaging novel for the readers than the first novel provided.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Calypso Cetus Charybdis Poseidon Proteus Scylla Sirens
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Friendship Identity Mental health* Relationships
Further Reading	Brown, Sarah Annes, "The Classical Pantheon in Children's Fantasy Literature" in Brett M. Rogers and Benjamin Eldon Stevens, eds., *Classical Traditions in Modern Fantasy*, Oxford: Oxford University

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