Ayelet Peer, "Entry on: Hercules the Strong Man (Myth Men: Guardians of the Legend, 1) by Laura Geringer Bass, Peter Bollinger", peer-reviewed by Lisa Maurice and Susan Deacy. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/238. Entry version as of November 05, 2026.

Laura Geringer Bass , Peter Bollinger

Hercules the Strong Man (Myth Men: Guardians of the Legend, 1)

United States (1996)

TAGS: Atlas Geryon Heracles Hercules Hydra Nemean Lion





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

General information	
Title of the work	Hercules the Strong Man (Myth Men: Guardians of the Legend, 1)
Country of the First Edition	United States of America
Country/countries of popularity	United States
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	1996
First Edition Details	Laura Geringer and Peter Bollinger, *Hercules the Strong Man.* Scholastic INC. New York, 1996, 32 pp.
ISBN	0590845004
Genre	Comics (Graphic works), Didactic fiction, Instructional and educational works, Mythological fiction, Myths, Picture books
Target Audience	Children (ca 10 years)
Author of the Entry	Ayelet Peer, Bar-Ilan University, ayelet.peer@gmail.com
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Creators



Laura Geringer Bass (Author)

Laura Geringer Bass is a writer, editor, teacher and publisher for children's books. She graduated from Barnard College and Yale University. She is a faculty member of New York Writer's Workshop as well as working in other institutions. She also received awards for her works. Since 1996 she has been the head of Laura Geringer Books imprint.

Sources:

Official website (accessed: July 4, 2018).

Profile at the www.biography.jrank.org (accessed: July 4, 2018).

Bio prepared by Ayelet Peer, Bar-Ilan University, ayelet.peer@gmail.com



Peter Bollinger (Illustrator)

Bollinger is an award wining illustrator and digital artist. He is renowned in the field of commercial art. He works traditionally as well as digitally.

Source:

Profile at the shannonassociates.com (accessed: July 4, 2018).

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Additional information

Summary

This is a picture book (mostly one big picture per page) with selected episodes from Hercules' labours. There is no background for Hercules' life; the story simply starts with the labours.

The pictures are very colourful, and there are also a few black and white illustrations. The main story told is the search for the golden apples. However, Hercules needs to capture a strange entity first, referred to as "the Old One". Then Hercules encounters Atlas. Atlas is drawn as a green, jewelled giant who resembles a genie.

Analysis

This is an educational picture book. It gives limited information regarding Hercules and his origin but starts by narrating that Hercules' "had big muscles- the biggest in the world" (p. 3). This clarifies that the presentation, as indicated by the title, is centred on Hercules' physical strength. From the introduction, we understand that the book is aimed at a young audience. With the younger audience in mind, unsurprisingly, there is no mention of the murders committed by the hero. It continues by stating that "Hercules went to work for a bad king" (p. 4). This is how the author avoids introducing the labours as Hercules' punishment for a crime, and they are therefore presented as a kind of "job" Hercules had to do for his boss. Furthermore, this presentation makes Hercules a hero who fights monsters for no apparent reason other than the whim of his boss. There is no heroic journey here.

In the illustrations, Hercules is a very muscular blond man with long hair. Of course, this follows a long tradition of depicting Hercules as a hulk, although not all works portray him as blond. There is no specific reason to describe Atlas as a genie unless it was an artistic decision. It certainly does not relate to Atlas' role as the holder of heaven. Perhaps the illustration was meant to create an exotic and otherworldly experience and atmosphere for the book. Hercules is not fighting in the real world or time but in a mythic and mystic universe.

The moral at the end of the book, after Hercules tricked Atlas, is not that Hercules was strong enough to lift the sky, but that Hercules was smart "Oh no. Instead they said, 'And that, my children, is how Hercules proved he was smart'" (p. 32). The emphasis is that Hercules

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	had brains rather than brawn. The booklet gives a brief taste of Hercules and is perhaps meant to entice children curious to read more about his adventures and probably push more purchases of the books from the series.
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Atlas Geryon Heracles Hercules Hydra Nemean Lion
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Adventure Appearances Character traits Intellect

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