Kimberly MacNeill, "Entry on: The Battle of the Labyrinth (Percy Jackson & The Olympians, 4) by Rick Riordan", peer-reviewed by Susan Deacy and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/634. Entry version as of November 11, 2026.

Rick Riordan

The Battle of the Labyrinth (Percy Jackson & The Olympians, 4)

United States of America (2008)

TAGS: Calypso Campe Daedalus Hecatoncheires / Hundred-Handed Hephaestus Hera Janus Monsters Theseus



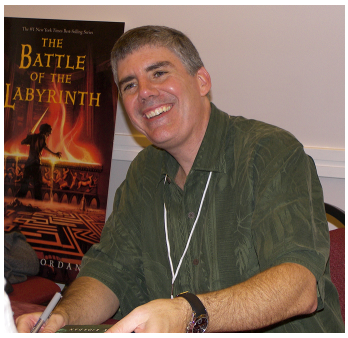


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General information	
Title of the work	The Battle of the Labyrinth (Percy Jackson & The Olympians, 4)
Country of the First Edition	United States of America
Country/countries of popularity	Worldwide
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2008
First Edition Details	Rick Riordan, *Percy Jackson: The Battle of the Labyrinth*. New York City: Hyperion Books for Children, 2008, 361 pp.
ISBN	9780141321271
Official Website	rickriordan.co.uk (accessed: July 12, 2018)
Genre	Action and adventure fiction, Alternative histories (Fiction), Fantasy fiction, Mythological fiction, Novels
Target Audience	Crossover (Aimed at ages 9+)
Author of the Entry	Kimberly MacNeill, University of Roehampton, macneilk@roehampton.ac.uk
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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



Rick Riordan by Larry D. Moore, 2007. Retrieved from Wikimedia Commons, licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0 (accessed: December 22, 2021).

Rick Riordan , b. 1964
(Author)

Rick Riordan previously taught History and English at middle school in the American education system. He began writing mystery novels for adult readers before creating the *Percy Jackson* series, which began as a bedtime story for his son. Prior to *Percy Jackson*, his adult crime novels the *Tres Navarre* series received numerous nominations and awards. Most notably the final novel in the series, *Rebel Island*, won the Anthony Award, Shamus Award and The Edgar Allan Poe Award – the "big three" of the mystery genre. Though it is through the success of *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief* and its subsequent purchase by Disney which has led Riordan to leave teaching to pursue writing as a full-time career. He is now one of the *New York Times* bestselling authors.

Source:

Q&A with the Author (accessed: January 10, 2018).

Bio prepared by Kimberly MacNeill, University of Roehampton, macneilk@roehampton.ac.uk

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Additional information

Adaptations	Audiobook: English, German, Swedish Graphic novel: *Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Battle of the Labyrinth: The Graphic Novel.* Adapted by Robert Venditti, Art by Attila Futaki, Disney-Hyperion, 2018.
Translation	Czech: *Bitva o labyrint*, trans. Dana Chodilová, Fragment, 2011. Danish: *Slaget i labyrinten*, Carlsen, 2011. Finnish: *Labyrinttitaistelu*, trans. Ilkka Rekiaro, Otava, 2010. German: *Die Schlacht um das Labyrinth*, trans. Gabriele Haefs, Carlsen, 2011. Hungarian: *Csata a labirintusban*, trans. Acsai Roland, Könyvmolyképző Kiadó Kft, 2012. Italian: *La battaglia del Labirinto*, trans. Loredana Baldinucci, Mondadori, 2011. Norwegian: *Slaget om labyrinten*, trans. Torleif Sjøgren-Erichsen, Schibsted Forlag, 2011. Portuguese: *A Batalha do Labirinto* trans.Raquel Zampil, Intrínseca, 2010. Polish: *Bitwa w Labiryncie*, trans. Agnieszka Fulińska, Galeria Książki, 2010. Romanian: *Batalia din labirint*, Arthur, 2014. Russian: *Перси Джексон и лабиринт смерти* [Persi Džekson i labirint smerti], Eksmo, Domino, 2010. Slovak: *Percy Jackson – Boj o labyrint*, trans. Ema Liptáková, Fragment, 2011. Spanish: *La batalla del laberinto (Percy Jackson y los dioses del Olimpo 4*), trans.Santiago del Rey, Salamandra, 2013.

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Turkish: *Labirent Savaşı*, Doğan Egmont Yayıncılık, 2009.

Sequels, Prequels and Spin-offs

1. *Percy Jackson: The Lightning Thief*,
2. *Percy Jackson: Sea of Monsters*,
3. *Percy Jackson: The Titan's Curse*,
4. *Percy Jackson: The Last Olympian,*
5. *Percy Jackson: The Demigod Files*,

The Heroes of Olympus series:

1. *The Lost Hero,*
2. *The Son of Neptune,*
3. *The Mark of Athena,*
4. *The House of Hades,*
5. *The Blood of Olympus,*
6. *The Demigod Diaries.*

Percy Jackson and the Greek Gods,

Percy Jackson and the Greek Heroes,

Percy Jackson: The Ultimate Guide.

Summary

The fourth book in the *Percy Jackson* series finds Percy visiting another prospective school. His time here is interrupted by the appearance of two empousai disguised as cheerleaders. The ensuing battle ends with the school on fire and Percy escaping with Rachel Dare, the mortal he met the previous year at the Hoover Dam. Percy is unable to dwell on the serendipitous nature of her appearance as both Annabeth and the police arrive, with the former suggesting they should return to Camp Half-blood. On arrival at Camp they find that Mr D is away and meet a new sword instructor, Quintus, and his pet hellhound Mrs O'Leary. Percy discovers that Quintus is also a Half-blood, one of the few to make it into late adulthood. Grover is facing a hearing of the Council of Cloven Elders who are meeting to decide if Grover can continue his quest to find the god Pan as they are unconvinced about his encounter with the god the previous summer. Tyson has returned to camp for the summer after a year in Poseidon's forges. Percy receives an Iris Message (a communication method

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similar to Skype, whereby the caller creates a mini rainbow and offers a drachma to the goddess Iris) from an unknown caller, who shows that Nico, missing since the previous summer, is camping in the Underworld and is accompanied by an unseen presence trying to bring his sister Bianca back from the dead. Percy tells no one about the message as at breakfast talk turns to plans to help Grover in his quest to find Pan. Percy discovers that King Minos labyrinth has been growing underground and now covers North America also linking mythic locations such as the Underworld. Annabeth suggests that Grover uses it to locate Pan as vast distances can be covered in little time. Luke is rumoured to be investigating the maze, searching for Ariadne's string: the only method to navigate the labyrinth successfully.

During a combat game, Annabeth and Percy stumble upon an entrance to the labyrinth within the camp's boundaries. That night, Percy dreams of Daedalus and a young boy in a prison cell. In the morning, Chiron calls a war council and decides Annabeth should lead a quest into the labyrinth to find Daedalus's workshop and Ariadne's string before Luke. After consulting with the Oracle, Annabeth requests that Percy, Grover and Tyson join her on the quest. The night before they set out on the quest Percy dreams about Luke and Kronos discussing their plans and receives another Iris message, this time with Nico speaking to the ghost of Theseus. In the morning, the group set out with supplies and a dog whistle made from Stygian ice given to Percy by Quintus. The whistle can summon Mrs O'Leary to any location.

The labyrinth is found to be a mix of different architectural styles from different time periods and the group discovers the layout of the labyrinth is in constant flux. The group encounter Janus and Hera, the latter hinting they should visit Hephaestus to discover the location of Daedalus. On the way to Hephaestus' smithy they escape an unseen threat by emerging from the labyrinth – straight into Alcatraz. There they rescue the Hekatonkheire Briares, who is being held prisoner by Kampê. They narrowly escape the monster by retreating into the maze once more, but Briares leaves them soon after. Continuing their journey, they find another exit to the surface and encounter Eurytion and Geryon at the ranch of the sacred cattle of Apollo, they also find Nico. Geryon betrays them to Luke, but they escape back into the labyrinth with a robotic spider given them by Eurytion to guide them to Hephaestus. Annabeth faces the Sphinx who guards Hephaestus' workshop and speaks with the god. Tyson persuades Hephaestus to

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helps, which he agrees to do if they complete a task for him. Back in the maze once more, the group split up as Grover and Tyson continue the mission to find Pan. Annabeth and Percy discover Telkines at Hephaestus' forge under Mount St Helens. Percy is captured and erupts the volcano in order to aid their escape, subsequently waking on Calypso's island where he is offered immortality if he stays.

Deciding to return to his quest Percy is washed up back at camp and arrives at his funeral. During his time with Calypso, Percy has realised that they need a mortal who can see through the mist to guide them through the maze and calls Rachel Dare. Once back in the maze they encounter Luke hosting combat matches between half-bloods and mythical creatures, which must be fought to the death. They escape using Mrs O'Leary and reach Daedalus' workshop; it is here that Quintus reveals himself to be Daedalus, his body now an automation. Percy and Annabeth also discover that Daedalus has already given Luke Ariadne's string. Luke's army burst in, as does Nico and Minos. Nico uses a skeleton army to defeat Minos and Percy, Annabeth, Nico and Rachel escape using Daedalus' wings. Once back in the labyrinth, they find themselves at Mount Othrys and discover that Kronos' spirit has been transferred into Luke's body. Unable to defeat him, with the help of Nico they are able to escape back into the maze and find Tyson and Grover and Pan. Pan speaks with the group briefly, declaring that the protection of the wild is everyone's responsibility, before disappearing. Now Grover's quest is complete they return to Camp Half-blood where everyone is prepared for battle. Luke's army of monsters and half-bloods emerge from the labyrinth entrance and invade the camp. The camp are losing until the arrival of Daedalus, Mrs O'Leary and Briares. The battle concludes with Luke's army retreating when Grover unintentionally invokes Pan's call of panic and Nico creates a wall of skeleton soldiers. Daedalus apologizes for his actions and states that he has made peace and is ready to die, the labyrinth dies with him, therefore protecting the camp from a further attack.

At the conclusion, Percy is having his fifteenth birthday party at home. Paul Blofis asks Percy if he can marry his mother to which he happily agrees. Poseidon visits, thanking Percy for his actions. Nico also arrives and he and Percy are reconciled. The book ends with Nico stating he may have a way to defeat Luke/Kronos.

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Analysis

The geographical fluidity of the labyrinth means that this adventure is unrestricted in terms of location. With openings and entrances throughout North America, the emphasis is focused predominately on how the heroes can use their strengths to navigate the maze itself. This is in contrast to the first book in the series, *The Lightening Thief*, in which, due to the protagonists' ages, they were limited by public transport or the provision of lifts. Plot-wise this facilitates a swift change of location, with each chapter serving as a new mythical theme or encounter.

With themes of the hero descending into the darkness, and a quest to retrieve something, the labyrinth can function as a pseudo Underworld, with the hero following some of the heroic itinerary of the katabasis. The language used also reflects this as the maze is described as gloomy and without sunlight. In this narrative, the labyrinth serves as an anabasis for characters that usually reside in the dark. For Nico, who is already a resident of the Underworld, his journey through the maze sees his transformation from being revengeful and bitter to a member of the team. At the conclusion of the story, although he is still an outsider at Camp Half-blood (there is no cabin for the children of Hades), he is both accepted by, and accepting of, Percy's extended family. Nico's consumption of Percy's blue birthday cake, innocuous though it may seem, when taken in the context of the importance of the consumption of food in the Underworld, may be of greater significance. By eating with Percy he is, in effect, tethering himself in part to the world above, much as Persephone tied herself to the Underworld with her consumption of the pomegranate.

Similarly, in his ascent, Daedalus begins his journey to redeem himself for his past sins. Atonement and compassion are strong themes in the book as are forgiveness and regret. Many of Daedalus' crimes are recounted during the story, ones that have generally fallen from the public consciousness. He is cold and embittered by his lot and indifferent to which 'side' he takes. It is Annabeth, during the confrontation in Daedalus' workshop, who reminds him of what it truly means to be the child of Athena. Daedalus ultimately makes the decision to sacrifice himself in order to protect the camp.

Pan's final words assure Rachel, the daughter of a property developer, that it is not too late to make amends and reverse the damage done to

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	the environment. The theme of redemption is echoed throughout. This message perhaps hints at the fate of Luke: Annabeth believes there is still conflict within him and he can be saved. The power of compassion is further expanded upon from previous books in the series. Dionysus explicitly tells Percy not to underestimate the power of compassion, surprising Percy with an act of his own. Grover's personal quest to find the lost god Pan concludes with success tinged with sadness. Grover finds the god, only to see him fade away. The encounter facilitates the transference of Pan's role onto everyone: a strong environmental message that we are all complicit in the protection of nature and cannot merely seek out a saviour. The prison appears as a motif, both in a physical and emotional sense. Percy and Co. discover Briasis imprisoned by Kampe in the real prison Alcatraz. Known historically as inescapable it is comparable to a human version of Tartarus, and as such is guarded by the gatekeeper of Tartarus. Though Briasis has the physical strength to escape he is mentally broken and already defeated. Calypso's island is another form of prison. Though an idyllic island where she is attended to by servants, she cannot leave. The loneliness is stifling as she is alone save for the appearance of the odd hero. Her servants, though attending to her physical needs, are both silent and invisible and as such cannot offer the companionship Calypso so desperately craves. Isolation and its effects, both chosen and enforced, are a theme of the book.
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Calypso Campe Daedalus Hecatoncheires / Hundred-Handed Hephaestus Hera Janus Monsters Theseus
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Coming of age Emotions Family Friendship Humanity Identity Individuality Knowledge Learning Pop culture references Sacrifice Values

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Further Reading

Paul, J., "The Half-Blood Hero: Percy Jackson and Mythmaking in the Twenty-First Century" in H. Hoyle and V. Zajko, eds., *A Handbook to the Reception of Classical Mythology*, New Jork: Wiley-Blackwell 2017, 231–242.

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