Lynnette Lounsbury, "Entry on: Story Maze. The Wooden Cow (Story Maze, 3) by Terry Denton", peer-reviewed by Elizabeth Hale and Daniel A. Nkemleke. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/83. Entry version as of November 03, 2026.

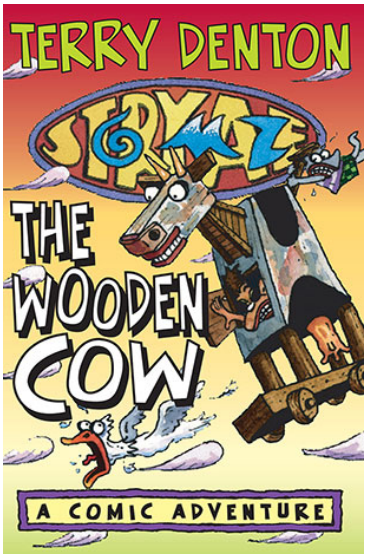
Terry Denton

Story Maze. The Wooden Cow (Story Maze, 3)

Australia (2002)

TAGS: Chorus Golden Fleece Gorgon(s) Hades Ithaca Trojan Horse





Terry Denton's *Story Maze 3: The Wooden Cow (*Sydney: Allen & Unwin Children's Books, 2002). Courtesy of the Publisher.

General information	
Title of the work	Story Maze. The Wooden Cow (Story Maze, 3)
Country of the First Edition	Australia
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2002
First Edition Details	Terry Denton, *Story Maze. The Wooden Cow*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin Children's Books, 2002, 120 pp.
ISBN	9781856087832
Genre	Action and adventure comics, Comics (Graphic works), Fantasy fiction, Fiction, Fractured fairytales*, Humor, Illustrated works
Target Audience	Children
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Creators



Terry Denton , b. 1950
(Author)

Born the youngest of five boys in Melbourne, Australia, Terry Denton loved art from a young age and drew constantly in his spare time. He studied architecture at Melbourne University, was a comedic theatre actor and regularly created cartoons for the University newspapers. After University he spent time on his art working in animation, painting, etching, sculpture, cartooning and shop window design. In 1984 he wrote and illustrated *Felix and Alexander* which was published in 1985 and won the Australian Children's Book Council Picture Book of the Year in 1986. Since then he has written and/or illustrated more than 100 books, including the *Gasp!* books and TV series, the *Wombat and Fox* books, and the *Bumper Books* (1, 2 and 3). He began collaborating with Australian writer Andy Griffiths in 1997 and they developed the *Just!* series, followed by *The Cat on the Mat is Flat*, *The Bad Books* and more recently the hugely successful children's comedy series *The Treehouse* books-13, 26, 39, 52, 65 and 78. He has won more than fifteen children's choice awards throughout Australia and another 40 more with Andy Griffiths. These include the Australian awards – The Multicultural Book of the Year, Best Designed Picture Book, Speech Pathology Australia Book of the Year Award 2014 and The Australia Book Industry Association Book of the Year for older readers in both 2012, 2013 and 2015.

In 1991 he worked for the Australian Children's Television Foundation on the TV show *Lift-Off,* spending two years planning the program and designing the puppets. Terry does many school visits throughout the year holding both writing and artistic workshops. He is also a fine artist and has held several exhibitions in Melbourne.

Sources:

Official website (accessed: July 3, 2018).

Morriss, Maureen, "Highlights of the 1995 Children's Book of the Year shortlist [Book Review]" [online], *The Australian Journal of Language*

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and Literacy 18.3 (1995): 219–227.

Winner of the 2015 ABIA book of the year [online], *Incite* 36.6/7 (2015): 12–13.

Profile at the thelitcentre.org.au (accessed: March 3, 2018).

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Additional information

Sequels, Prequels and Spin-offs	Previous book: *Story Maze* (Series, Book 2):*The Eye of Ulam*. Next book: *Story Maze* (Series, Book 4):*The Golden Udder*.

Summary

The third in the "Storymaze" series follows the surfing adventures of Nico, Claudia, and Mikey through parallel worlds and across the universe. Nico is once again attempting to compete in the World Surfing Championships – the ones he keeps missing due to their adventures. In The Wooden Cow, the three use their time-traveling device, called M.I.T., to reach Fresia, a small planet in the Bovine Galaxy, and the location of the surfing championship. M.I.T., which doesn't want to do as it is told, takes them to the location, but 4000 years too early and they find themselves on opposite sides of both a wall and a battle. The world they travel to is populated by cows. The battle is the siege of Queen Chateaubriand by Ulysses, who has been told by the Madame of the Maze, an oracle reminiscent of Sibyl of Cumae, in the Underworld, that if the Queen lays eyes on him they will fall in love and live happily ever after. Ulysses is attempting to break into her city to meet her, but she has resisted for nine months. Nico and Mikey, who have been trapped on Ulysses side of the wall, remember the story of the Trojan horse, from their school days and convince Ulysses to build a giant wooden horse to attempt infiltration of the city. The horse is initially successful and the Friesians haul it into the city; however, when the Queen hears a sneeze from inside the beast, the idea is thwarted and the horse tipped over a cliff into the ocean. Their second attempt is a wooden cow, which they believe more aptly suits the Fresian people. Niko, Mikey, and Ulysses purchase a false udder from a Scotsman who turns out to be the Madame of the Underworld Maze in disguise. They begin to recognise that everything is orchestrated by the Madame across the Storymaze. The wooden cow is also accepted by the Queen and then tipped off a cliff into the ocean, again subverting the traditional Trojan myth. At this point, McHaggis makes a deal with Ulysses offering him the Queen in exchange for the Golden Udder, which is kept in the palace. McHaggis is planning an escape from the Underworld. McHaggis, using a food truck to gain entry, sneaks Ulysses, Niko, and Mikey into the city. They are exposed by a flock of loud geese but when they are brought before the queen the prophecy is fulfilled and Ulysses and

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Chateaubriand fall instantly in love. Claudia, Nico, and Mikey are tasked by Ulysses with delivering the stolen Udder to McHaggis, but while trying to space-time travel they become lost and return to the future and then to a land where giant erasers are attempting to remove them from existence. They finally settle by the beach in Ithaca and the story ends with the heroes unsure of what to do next both with the Udder and with themselves.

Analysis

Graphic novel for children, with a science-fiction and comedy approach to classical myth and antiquity.

The Wooden Cow is a fractured re-version of the tale of the Trojan Horse. This time it is not Ulysses who is from Ithaca, but the human heroes of the story, who use their own knowledge of Greek history to inform Ulysses, the Bovine king, of the idea of a horse/cow that might trick the besieged city into allowing them entry. Interestingly in this tale, it doesn't work and the Queen tosses the wooden animals off a nearby cliff into the ocean. The tale also includes a re-imagining of the tale of the Golden Fleece – in this case, a Golden Udder – and Ulysses' victory over the city becomes tied to the theft of the Golden Udder. The story is a farcical interpretation of both myths and combines other elements of Greek story including the judgemental chorus-style narrator, references to Hades, Gorgons, and the Underworld, and a deconstructed storyline that is both self-referential and full of double-meanings. The language of the characters also refers back to Greek mythology, particularly their use of expletives such as "By Hades!" and "Who in the Pantheon are you?" The story ends with Ulysses gaining entry to the city but losing his victory due to the fact that he has stolen The Golden Udder and thus started a further war. This continues the series episodic style and connects the Trojan horse parody with that of the Golden Fleece.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts

Chorus Golden Fleece Gorgon(s) Hades Ithaca Trojan Horse

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Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Adventure Friendship Future Humour Science Superstition

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