Ayelet Peer, "Entry on: Eos the Lighthearted (Goddess Girls, 24) by Joan Holub, Suzanne Williams ", peer-reviewed by Lisa Maurice and Susan Deacy. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/843. Entry version as of November 21, 2026.

Joan Holub , Suzanne Williams

Eos the Lighthearted (Goddess Girls, 24)

United States of America (2018)

TAGS: Aphrodite Artemis Athena Hyperion Nyx Tithonus Zeus





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

General information	
Title of the work	Eos the Lighthearted (Goddess Girls, 24)
Country of the First Edition	United States of America
Country/countries of popularity	Worldwide
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2018
First Edition Details	Joan Holub and Suzanne Williams, *Goddess Girls: Eos the Lighthearted*. New York: Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing Division, Aladdin Press, 2018, 272 pp.
ISBN	9781481470223 (eBook)
Genre	Alternative histories (Fiction), Bildungsromans (Coming-of-age fiction), Fiction, Humor, Mythological fiction, Novels, School story*
Target Audience	Children (Older children, 8–12 years)
Author of the Entry	Ayelet Peer, Bar-Ilan University, ayelet.peer@biu.ac.il
Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Lisa Maurice, Bar-Ilan University, Lisa.maurice@biu.ac.il Susan Deacy, University of Roehampton, s.deacy@roehampton.ac.uk

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



Photo courtesy of Joan Holub.

Joan Holub , b. 1956
(Author)

Joan Holub is a prolific children's author from the USA. Graduated from college in Texas with a fine arts degree. Worked as an art director at Scholastic trade books in New York. She has written and/or illustrated over 150 children's books. She has developed a range of series for teenagers on mythological themes: *Goddess Girls*, set in Mount Olympus Academy, *Grimmtastic Tales* series, set in Grimm Academy, *Thunder Girls*, about Norse gods set in Asgard Academy, and *Heroes in Training*, in which the male Greek gods, as very young men, set out on a range of adventures. For pre-school children, Jan Holub has written on a range of topics including several works with religious and historical themes. These include: *This Little President*; *This Little Trailblazer*, *Hooray for St. Patrick's Day!*, and *Light the Candles: A Hanukkah Lift-the-Flap Book*. Joan Holub trained in fine art and worked as an art director at a graphic design company before becoming a children's illustrator and then author.

Sources:

Official website (accessed: July 2, 2018).

Profile at the penguinrandomhouse.com (accessed: July 2, 2018).

Profile at the simonandschuster.com (accessed: July 2, 2018).

Bio prepared by Sonya Nevin, University of Roehampton, sonya.nevin@roehampton.ac.uk and Allison Rosenblum, Bar-Ilan University, allie.rose89@gmail.com and Ayelet Peer, Bar-Ilan University, ayelet.peer@gmail.com

Questionnaire

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1. What drew you to writing / working with Classical Antiquity and what challenges did you face in selecting, representing, or adapting particular myths or stories?

I learned to love Greek and Norse mythology in elementary school. I'm very comfortable adapting the framework of an existing myth or fairy tale by pushing it into a different setting, adding humor, and/or building in a nonfiction component. Staying true to the essential core of each myth along the way is important to me. A young *Goddess Girls* reader once told me she enjoyed the series because she "learned something". In other words, while she liked being entertained, she appreciated that her familiarity and factual understanding of the original myths was broadened at the same time.

2. Why do you think classical / ancient myths, history, and literature continue to resonate with young audiences?

Kids have questions about their world. So it's interesting to them to learn how ancient Greeks and other cultures answered questions about how their world worked in exciting tales of heroes and beasts. How did the sun cross the sky? In a chariot drawn by the god Helios. What caused night? The goddess Nyx's starry cape covered the sky. Thrilling stories of courage and danger, such as Heracles' twelve labors, the Trojan Horse, and the Argonauts never go out of style.

3. Do you have a background in classical education (Latin or Greek at school or classes at the University?) What sources are you using? Scholarly work? Wikipedia? Are there any books that made an impact on you in this respect?

I have an entire shelf of mythology resource books. Some of my favorite go-to sources are the *Scholastic Mythlopedia* series, Edith Hamilton's *Mythology, Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes*, and www.theoi.com (accessed: May 28, 2018).

4. How concerned were you with "accuracy" or "fidelity" to the original? (another way of saying that might be – that I think writers are often more "faithful" to originals in adapting its

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spirit rather than being tied down at the level of detail – is this something you thought about?)

Each book in the *Goddess Girls* series (ages 8–12, Simon and Schuster) and *Heroes in Training* series (ages 7–10, Simon and Schuster) is a retelling of one or two Greek myths, with a twist. We stay as true as possible to the core bones of an original myth in order to give young readers a good understanding, but we include kid situations and humor to entertain. As an example, in *Goddess Girls #1: Athena the Brain*, Athena is summoned to attend Mount Olympus Academy, where Zeus is the principal. MOA teachers include Mr. Cyclops, who teaches Hero-ology, a class where students are graded on their abilities to maneuver small hero figures such as Odysseus, around a gameboard to enact the Trojan War, etc. Meanwhile, Athena, who is the goddess of invention among other things, inadvertently turns mean-girl Medusa's hair to snakes and gives her the power to turn mortals to stone by means of a shampoo-like invention called Snakeypoo at the MOA invention fair.

5. Are you planning any further forays into classical material?

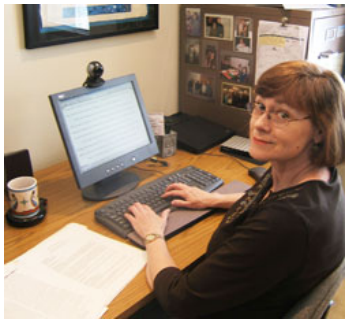
Suzanne Williams and I have written a new middle grade series called *Thunder Girls* (accessed: May 28, 2018), which is a twist on Norse mythology featuring strong girl characters. The first book Freya and the Magic Jewel releases May 2018 for ages 8–12, published by Simon and Schuster.

Prepared by Allison Rosenblum, Bar-Ilan University, allie.rose89@gmail.com and Ayelet Peer, Bar-Ilan University, ayelet.peer@gmail.com

Suzanne Williams , b. 1953
(Author)

Suzanne Williams is an American prolific children's author and former

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Courtesy of the Author from her personal website.

elementary school librarian. She has written over 60 books for children.

She grew up in Oregon and graduated with a bachelor's degree in sociology and a master's in library science from the University of Oregon. She currently lives in Reno, Washington.

Source:

Official website (accessed: May 29, 2018).

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

Questionnaire

1. What drew you to writing / working with Classical Antiquity and what challenges did you face in selecting, representing, or adapting particular myths or stories?

Writing about Greek mythology was my co-author, Joan Holub's idea. She's loved mythology since childhood. Her enthusiasm for the subject got me excited about it too. *Goddess Girls* (ages 8–12) was our very first collaboration. Soon there will be 26 books in that series. One of the challenges we've faced in writing our (soon to be four) myth-based series for young readers is how to handle the sexual and violent content of many of the myths.

To downplay the violence, we often make it cartoonish and lighten it with humor. Since most of our gods and goddesses are pre-teens (as are our readers!), we deal with inappropriate sexual content by making changes that still allow us to keep to the spirit of the myth. For example: in introducing the Adonis myth, in which Aphrodite and Persephone fight over a beautiful youth they both desire, we decided to make Adonis a kitten, rather than a young man.

Another challenge has involved familial relationships among the

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various gods and goddesses. In *Goddess Girls*, Zeus is an adult, the principal of Mount Olympus Academy, the school attended by our "goddessgirls" and "godboys". In mythology he would likely have fathered a good portion of the student body! So we made a decision that only Athena would call him "Dad". (Until Hebe popped forth from a lettuce in Book 21, that is.) We do acknowledge many other family relationships. For example: Apollo and Artemis as brother and sister. Medusa and her sisters Euryale and Stheno. Persephone and her mother, Demeter.

2. Why do you think classical / ancient myths, history, and literature continue to resonate with young audiences?

Myths have got all the elements that draw us to stories: action, conflict, drama, humor, etc. What's not to like?

3. Do you have a background in classical education (Latin or Greek at school or classes at the University?) What sources are you using? Scholarly work? Wikipedia? Are there any books that made an impact on you in this respect?

Neither Joan nor I have a classical education. I did take an online Greek and Roman mythology class a few years ago, however. (Taught by Peter Struck, University of Pennsylvania.) Terrific class!

For our Greek mythology-based series, Edith Hamilton's *Mythology* is the reference we rely on the most. My co-author and I do consult Wikipedia and other online resources, especially for lists of monsters and maps and general information about ancient Greece. References for *Thunder Girls*, our soon-to-be-published Norse mythology-based series include: *The Norse Myths* by Kevin Crossley-Holland, D'Aulaires' *Book of Norse Myths*, *Norse Mythology: A Guide to the Gods, Heroes, Rituals, and Beliefs* by John Lindow, *The Poetic Edda* (translated and edited by Jackson Crawford), and *The Prose Edda* by Snorri Sturluson (Penguin Classics).

4. Are you planning any further forays into classical material?

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In addition to *Goddess Girls*, my co-author and I have also collaborated on a second Greek mythology-based series called *Heroes in Training* (ages 6–9). It's a humorous quest/adventure series with Zeus, Poseidon, Hades and other Olympians as ten-year-olds on the run from King Cronus and the Titans. *Freya and the Magic Jewel*, the first book in *Thunder Girls*, our Norse mythology-based series, publishes May 1, 2018. I travel to Norway frequently to visit my daughter, granddaughter, and Norwegian son-in-law, so I am very excited to be doing a Norse-myth series. Aladdin (Simon & Schuster) publishes all three of Joan's and my mythology-based series. We will be doing a fourth myth-based series with them soon – for ages 5–8. Tentative title is *Little Goddess Girls*, and it will be another Greek myth-based series.

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

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Additional information

Summary

Eos is the 11 year old goddess girl of dawn. Eos attends a mortal middle-school, where she is the only immortal. Her best friend is the mortal Tithonus (from a royal Trojan family) who is obsessed with insects. Eos' story follows a few story lines: Eos is invited to celebrate the commemoration of the statue of Nyx, goddess girl of the night, at Artemis temple and thus she spends time with the Mount Olympus Academy girls. During this time, Aphrodite becomes jealous of her since she thinks Eos is being too friendly with Aphrodite's boyfriend, Ares. To teach her a lesson, Aphrodite casts a spell on Eos. The spell states that Eos would fall in love with a bug and her spells would be redirected. Eos wishes to make her human friend, Tithonus, immortal and asks for Zeus' permission. However, her spell goes sour (because of Aphrodite's spell) and Tithonus is turned into a grasshopper instead. In order to turn him back to his human form, Eos needs to go to Tartarus and seek the advice of her father, Hyperion. Hyperion has been locked in Tartarus even since the war between the Titans and the Olympians. In the end, after successfully transforming Tithonus, Eos learns to accept her father and Tithonus as who they are and also comes to term with herself and her own feelings.

Analysis

The title of the book is *Eos the Lighthearted*. While this aspect of her personality is certainly emphasized, Eos is also hiding deep pain and anguish inside. She usually tries to be cheerful and light-hearted, but at times her thoughts wander to what she names a "sad-mad-dad" thing. Eos cannot overcome her feeling of anger with her father for not returning from the war, and also her feeling of loneliness. Her mother is preoccupied with her own activities and Eos feels alone, but strives to hide her sadness by acting light-heartedly and cheerfully all the time. Losing a family member is a recurring theme in this story. Eos feels especially close to Tithonus, since he also lost his father in the Trojan War. This loss, therefore, strengthens their relationship. This is also why Eos wishes for Tithonus to be immortal like herself, since she hates the thought of losing him later to old age and death. This of course is a reference "to ancient versions of the myth", in which Eos gave Tithonus immortality but without eternal youth and he eventually becomes a grasshoper. In our story, the authors gave Tithonus the choice of whether to be immortal or not and also altered to myth to give it a happier conclusion.

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Another challenge Eos faces is that of being the only immortal at school. She constantly thinks that the other students are afraid of her or do not really like her and she wishes she could just fit in. She therefore tries to hide her wings or her magical powers in order not to alarm them. However, when she gets angry with a girl who mentions her father, Eos almost loses control of her powers. Since she constantly represses her feelings, when she does become angry, she can hardly control her rage.

As noted, this story deals with loss and finding your place among your peer-group. It also deals with learning difficulties, such as those faced by Tithonus. Therefore the narrative covers various themes which affect adolescents. The fact that goddess also faces similar problems makes her character easier for the readers to relate to; this is a recurring theme of the entire *Goddess Girls* series.

The answer to most of these difficulties is the support of family and friends. Eos helps Tithonus study for his school project and her mother decides to relinquish some of her activities and spend more time with Eos. Furthermore, Eos must respect the fact that Tithonus does not wish to be immortal. Finally, she needs to accept her father and try to forgive him.

Eos did not lose her father in the conventional sense. He is in prison. Thus the story very sensitively follows the feelings of a girl who adored her father whom society suddenly treats as a dangerous criminal. Eos wonders whether her father is truly a good or bad person. It is a very complex situation and very realistic. The story tries to smooth this situation by making Zeus more accepting of Hyperion. He plays chess with him every week and does not view him as a terrible person. Thus while Hyperion was involved in a coup against the god, the severity of his crime is lessened in the story, and he is described as a loving and caring father to Eos. The authors chose to focus on reconciliation between Eos and her father and therefore they did not make him a monstrous figure.

In many stories in the GG series, the characters must face unpleasant situations concerning their family (for example, Medusa's selfish sisters and estranged parents). Accepting one's family but also understanding that you are different from them helps the god boys and goddess girls in the series grow and develop as individuals. Eos must come to terms with her father's crime and punishment and she must not punish herself for it. She cannot deny her true nature but

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	must accept her immortality and her powers so she can use them to do good. Finding her place among the other students does not mean she must conceal who she really is, but rather accept herself. Only then will the other students also feel comfortable around her.
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Aphrodite Artemis Athena Hyperion Nyx Tithonus Zeus
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Adversity Character traits Family Friendship Magic Self
Addenda	The review refers to the Kindle edition.

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