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Perseus and the Gorgon: The Myth of Medusa's Defeat

In the ancient world of Greek mythology, there lived a monstrous creature named Medusa, a Gorgon with snakes for hair and a gaze that could turn anyone into stone. The story of her defeat by the hero Perseus is a legendary tale of bravery, cunning, and divine aid.

Medusa was once a beautiful maiden, but her beauty caught the attention of the sea god Poseidon. Poseidon and Medusa found themselves in Athena's temple, and as punishment for this sacrilege, the goddess Athena transformed Medusa into a hideous creature. From that day forward, Medusa's hair became a writhing mass of snakes, and her gaze had the power to petrify anyone who looked into her eyes.

As time passed, Medusa and her Gorgon sisters, Stheno and Euryale, took up residence on an isolated island at the edge of the world. Their presence struck fear into the hearts of all who heard their name. Yet, the fate of Medusa was bound to change when the hero Perseus came into the picture.

Perseus was the son of Zeus, the king of the gods, and Danaë, a mortal woman. Perseus was raised on the island of Seriphos by a kind fisherman named Dictys. However, his life took a dark turn when the tyrant king Polydectes became obsessed with Perseus's mother Danaë. To get rid of Perseus, King Polydectes devised a cunning plan. He demanded that Perseus bring him the head of Medusa as a wedding gift, thinking it was an impossible task.

Perseus, determined to save his mother from an unwanted marriage, set out on this perilous quest. Along the way, he received help from various gods and mythical beings. Athena, the goddess of wisdom and warfare, provided him with a polished shield to use as a mirror to avoid Medusa's gaze. Hermes, the messenger god, gave him winged sandals for swift travel, and Hades, the god of the underworld, lent him a helmet of invisibility.

Guided by these divine gifts, Perseus ventured to the Gorgon's island. He carefully approached Medusa's lair, using his polished shield to reflect her image, ensuring he did not meet her eyes directly. When the moment was right, Perseus raised his sword and swiftly decapitated Medusa. From her severed neck, the winged horse Pegasus and the giant Chrysaor were born.

With Medusa's head safely tucked in a magical pouch, Perseus embarked on his journey back to Seriphos. Along the way, he encountered various challenges, including rescuing Andromeda from a sea monster. Ultimately, Perseus returned to King Polydectes' court and revealed the hideous head of Medusa. The mere sight of it turned the tyrant king and his courtiers into stone statues.