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# Corydon and the Island of Monsters

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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Tobias Druitt is the pseudonym for a member of the English faculty at Oxford and her ten-year-old son. While rooted in classical Greek mythology, presumably it is this combination which moves *Corydon and the Island of Monsters* along at a cracking pace. It is a lively adventure story, the first in a series, featuring Corydon, a young shepherd, who was born with one goat's leg instead of a normal leg. His oddity makes him a target for the inhabitants of his village, who regard him with suspicion, making him a pharmakos, a scapegoat for the ills of their community and turning him out onto the bare mountains. Here he is captured by pirates who include him in their freak show of mythical monsters including Medusa, the Minotaur and the Sphinx. Corydon liberates this menagerie, but no sooner are they settling into a peaceful life on the island, than they are invaded by a vast army led by Perseus, son of Zeus. The ensuing battle is full of drama, as the various dramatis personae singly and together pit their strange powers against the invaders.

The reader's empathy with the 'monsters' is cleverly built, stripping back their bizarre appearances to reveal creatures that are in some cases lonely, and in general very 'human' in their characters. In particular, gorgon Medusa, while retaining her tragic role in the story, is portrayed as a maternal type at heart. The interaction of her two gorgon sisters, all three prototypes for Shakespeare's witches in *Macbeth*, provides comic relief.

Some classicists may frown at liberties taken with the more traditional versions of the stories upon which *Corydon and the Island of Monsters* is based, but to this non-expert classicist reader, it is a lively story which may encourage some readers to delve further into the realms of antiquity. VC

Running Order:

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