

Perseus: Pop Culture Superstar

Intro

Jordan: Hi, I'm Jordan.

Kit: And I'm Kit.

Jordan: Welcome to Starry Time, where stars plus lines

Kit: Equal stories.

Jordan: In this week's episode, we'll be getting silly and exploring the pop culture of our constellation of the month, Perseus.

Kit: In this episode, we share our favorite and least favorite occurrences of this month's constellation in pop culture, and then we take over the brand to wish upon a star for what we wish existed.

Jordan: Perfect, Kit. That's the premise.

Favorites

Let's get started with our favorite.

Kit: Yeah, so there was actually a fair amount to choose from for Perseus. Popular. But honestly, just like you with Lyra, as soon as I saw Perseus, I was like, I know I'm going to pick. It's going to be the one, the only Perseus "Percy" Jackson of the Percy Jackson and the Olympians book series by Rick Riordan. The first book titled the Lightning Thief from 2005. This is basically a children's, YA, it's really maybe like middle grade, at least the first one, but I think you kind of grow up with characters. It is a, um, Greek myth inspired contemporary fantasy series. Percy Jackson is the protagonist of this series, and so it was going to be my obvious first choice.

Jordan: Great choice. That marks two months in a row that our constellation has also been the name of a protagonist of a very influential and popular YA uh, literature series. So shout out to Percy Jackson, who we might have more to say about him in that series later this month. So stay tuned for that.

Kit: Yeah, and this is something, it's really interesting, so, I think I was a little bit too old for this series when it came out. Uh. Cause the first book, as I said, is really like middle grade. It came out in 2005. But I did recently read the first book, um, on the recommendation of one of my friends who is a teacher that works with folks, uh, in this age range. And she's like, my students love this book. We're obviously fans of Greek myth. I have written a, uh, book that I'm querying that involves Greek myth for an older age range. And so she was like, you have to read this, like, I think that you will love it. And yeah, it's definitely for kids. But Percy is in the first book, twelve. He's notable for having dyslexia and ADHD. He's also a demigod. I don't think that's a huge spoiler. It's a great book. If you have, have or know kids that are into Greek myth, this might be a really good series for them to check out.

Jordan: Percy Jackson, everybody. That is an absolutely great choice and hard to really

contend with as far as pop cultural impact goes. But I would like to tell you my favorite appearance of Perseus in pop culture.

Kit: All right, I'm ready,

Jordan: Kit, my favorite is something called the JOOLA Ben John's Perseus 16 mm pickleball paddle. [laughter]

Kit: Wow. I didn't even see this.

Jordan: Some of the reviews for this pickleball paddle are quite incredible. It has an overall rating of 4.8, 95 percent on Amazon. Quote: "I'm definitely loving this paddle. I've been using a different paddle for the last four months and I fell in love with the JOOLA Ben John's Perseus paddle. After I received the paddle, I went to play with a group. I fell in love with this paddle even more." So. But there are a few things that I liked about it. The first is the copy has a lot of constellation artwork.

Kit: Oh, yeah, I'm seeing it here.

Jordan: I just posted it and, uh, sent you a picture for our socials. And it also is sponsored by Ben Johns, who is apparently the world's number one ranked pickleball player.

Kit: Okay.

Jordan: Michael Jordan of

Kit: Pickleball.

Jordan: Pickleball. So if Michael Air Jordan has his shoes, well, Ben Perseus Johns has his official paddle. And whether or not pickleball constitutes pop culture or not, I think it's only a matter of time.

Kit: I think it definitely does. It's a real phenomenon. Um, for those of you listening, I think it's probably important context to know that my partner, BoP, uh, does play pickleball. Have a few friends that are really in on pickleball. Uh, we even when Jordan and I are on vacation, we saw some pickleball on tv. So I think Pickleball is pretty big and it's pretty, um, a pretty notable part of pop culture right now.

Jordan: To all my pickleball heads out there,

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Jordan: I can't recommend Perseus 4.8, 95 percent any higher.

Kit: Did you have any runners up or anything that went into favorites before we move on to least favorites?

Jordan: Um, not really. Like I said, I had to dig hard for this one just as a favorite

Kit: I don't have any real runners up for favorite, but I do have some, like, not favorite nor least favorite. Just sort of like other stuff I thought was interesting. So let's move on to our least favorites and then we can tack on any other, uh, important, notable Perseus pop culture appearances before we get to wished for. Sound good?

Jordan: That sounds perfect.

Least Favorites

Kit: Do you want to start us off with your least favorite?

Jordan: For my least favorite, I am going with the portrayals of Perseus by Harry Hamlin in the 1981 film Clash of the Titans.

Kit: Mhm.

Jordan: As well as the portrayal of Perseus in the 2010 and 2012 films being Clash of the Titans, the second being a sequel called Wrath of the Titans where Perseus is played by Sam Worthington. So these are two attempts at Perseus in popular depiction. Probably some of the more famous Greek mythology movies. I personally like the original better just for its special effects which were much more practical and claymation.

Kit: I literally have the same thing written. I neither put this in my favorite, nor least favorite, but I also looking at the practical effects from the 1981 Clash of the Titans, the Medusa looks wild, much more in the monster category. And wow, there's a lot going on there with the practical effects.

Jordan: And the film ends with them being put up in the constellations Perseus, Andromeda, Pegasus and Cassiopeia. It's also worked on by Ray Harryhausen, who's a stop motion animation famous for King Kong and all those early monster movies. So I love that one. I think Harry Hamlin's an okay actor. They don't give him really a lot to

work with. It's very classic. But I think he has more range as an actor which you get to see later in his career both in LA Law and Mad Men. And he's in all sorts of other things. My least favorite is by Sam Worthington in the most recent Clash of the Titans reboot. And again, I don't think he did anything particularly much worse than Harry Hamlin did. However, Sam Worthington always and forever be known to me as the one and only Jake Sully from Avatar.

Kit: The masterpiece?

Jordan: The masterful, yeah, Acting, uh, work he displayed in Avatar as Jake Sully has been impossible to look past

Kit: Consuming.

Jordan: Even when I tried to see him as Perseus. Yes, it is consuming. All I can think of is Jake Sully and his adventures on Pandora. Um, that movie came out in 2009 and then his Clash of the Titans reboot was the next film that he was in and starring in in 2010. But for me personally, I've never been able to separate the two. So seeing Jake Sully trapped in ancient Greece, uh, it's gonna be my least portrayal of Perseus, that's gonna my...

Kit: Do you remember who played Zeus in the most recent, uh, remake of Clash of the Titans?

Jordan: Yes, they've gotten two great Zeuses. The first one was Lawrence Olivier. And then of course, the next Zeus is Qui-Gon himself, Liam Neeson.

Kit: Wow. I also did look up the Clash of the Titans Rotten Tomatoes scores. Um, would you like to take a guess on, uh, the 2010 Rotten Tomatoes critics score

Jordan: Kit, unfortunately, I also looked them up. Maybe our audience could guess as well. And these are, uh, both below 30% ranking. I saw 27 and 20%.

Kit: Mhm. 27% on Rotten Tomatoes The 1981 film faring better, around 64%. Um, and I think the audience definitely appreciates that, uh, old nostalgia of the 1981 film, for sure.

Jordan: Yeah, I wouldn't say it's actually a much better written film, but definitely has nostalgia going for it. But how about you, Kit? Where'd you go for your least favorite appearance of Perseus in pop culture?

Kit: So this is another example, which I feel like I often come up with, which is like, um, either I like or feel neutral about the thing, but I hate the name. So I want to tell you the mission statement for the thing first, which I think is very good. And then I'll tell you the name. So the mission statement for this thing I've chosen is "to make a full record of humanity as intellectually

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Kit: accessible as possible to every human being, regardless of linguistic or cultural background." Okay!

Jordan: Sounds like a good mission statement.

Kit: Right? Absolutely. Now, this is called the Perseus Digital Library. No, just like, why?

Why not the muses digital library? Or Hermes or Apollo? Like, this makes no sense to me. It makes me mad because I'm like, this is obviously a cool project. This is a, I believe, an academic project that sort of started out by digitizing ancient Greek works and translations of those things, it's open source and I think it sort of expanded beyond sort of Greco Roman texts to other things. But I'm like, this is very cool. This is a cool idea. I like the premise, but why this name? Why? Why?

Jordan: It's a total misnomer. When I think Perseus I do not think of

Kit: Books, knowledge.

Jordan: A highly refined academic career. So I think that's a pretty good choice. Again, fine mission statement. But, uh, if you're going to be creating a library of all man's knowledge, maybe show off like a tiny morsel of that, uh, knowledge in the naming of the project, perhaps. Maybe if you want.

Kit: Maybe. I also had a couple of other things that popped up. Apparently there's a Perseus store in Grand Theft Auto. Um, I haven't seen Grand Theft Auto since ooh probably when the, you know, Percy Jackson books were coming out. I don't know when the first one came out, but seems like in the two thousands. Yep, and so I don't know anything about that, but I thought it was worth mentioning. And if it's a place where you can buy weapons and equipment, that seems like a good choice, uh, of a name, since we know Perseus was geared up to the gills for his battle with Medusa. I also came across Perseus the spy, which was a code name of a possible Soviet spy who was spying, [laughter]

Jordan: Yeah. [laughter] Espionaging?

Kit: Espionaging in the 1940s. And that was a weird rabbit hole to go down. I just didn't really know what to think about it. But there, the wiki is quite long, so if, like, that's something that sounds interesting, you can check that out. And those are some of the things that I came across that just sounded kind of interesting, but I didn't feel strongly enough about them to put them in my favorite or least favorite.

Jordan: I'm on the Perseus spy wiki right now. And, yes, it is quite extensive. And the first image you have is just of the Trinity nuclear test.

Kit: Yeah.

Jordan: Explosion. Quote: "jad Perseus been real, he would allegedly have given crucial information about this test to the Soviets, according to one source." This is, uh, an explosive. I don't know. Could you even call this a conspiracy theory? I'm not sure what you would call it. Some espionage hypothetical, uh, history hypothetical.

Kit: Yeah, yeah. And there's some proposals of who it might like, who the person was, like their alleged identity. There's some pop culture appearances or sort of connections to this in pop culture. So this just seemed like an interesting rabbit hole. It's not an area that I'm that interested in. So I didn't go down that rabbit hole, but somebody else, if that's your jam, if you're like, I'm into spy stuff. Uh, yeah, that wiki is waiting for you.

Wish Upon a Star

Jordan: So now we've brought up our favorite, our least favorite, our most meh, and perhaps interesting to other people, examples of Perseus in pop culture. Now let's wish

upon a star for what pop culture Perseus we wish existed.

Kit: That sounds great.

Jordan: So we were talking about the Perseus library or the Perseus project, and you're right, that doesn't really make a lot of sense to me. Perseus as you said, was loaded up to the gills. I think of all the magical tools that you could use to eliminate pests and rodents. So instead of trying to kill the Medusa who's just hanging out with her sisters, Perseus, there are people out there who need your help. So what I'm looking for, inspired hopefully, by a better myth of Perseus himself, is the Perseus pest and animal control services. Our logo is a Greek demigod with a fistful of snakes. Hey, did you just buy a new property and you need a de snake it? Are you having a real bug or rat problem? Perseus

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Jordan: has all the tools to eliminate these vicious pests. What do you think of that one?

Kit: I like that. I actually sort of had a similar, like, process of trying to think about, like, okay, like, Perseus is kind of a, uh, word that's hard to work with, I think, in some ways. And so, you know, I started the process, like, okay, in myth, he's this rescuer. He's a monster slayer. So, like, what would we trust him to create or do for us? And so pest control, I think, is a great, um, option. I decided to go with the Perseus protocol app.

Jordan: Ooh,

Kit: Yeah. Which is an app designed to get you out of bad situations, whatever that

looks like. And I'm kind of inspired by, I was at a bar recently, and in the bathrooms, they had up little signs that were like, is somebody bothering you? Here's several ways we can support you. Like, just, like, let our bartender know somebody is not taking no for an answer. Let us know if you'd like somebody to walk you to your car. Let us know if you'd like us to, um, help you get to your car ride share. And so I was sort of inspired by this idea of, like, you know, wouldn't it be great if you had this app that could, like, help you get out of sort of tricky or bad, uh, situations? Maybe, um, it's some kind of, like, bodyguard on demand service. Maybe it's just like, somebody to come walk you to your car. Maybe it's somebody just to come over and pretend that they're meeting up with you so you don't have to talk to somebody who's talking to you. Just like something like this. Um, I didn't flesh it all the way out, but just this idea of, like, you need to get out of a pickle. And, uh, this is the app that you use and it has sort of an array of services. And, uh, that's what I came up with.

Jordan: Perseus hero on demand, basically. Hero share program.

Kit: Yeah, hero share.

Jordan: We both have the same idea. Perseus save us.

Kit: Save us when we ask you to.

Jordan: Kit, that was a great choice. And I hope it's only a matter of time before one of our wishes comes true.

Outro

Kit: This has been Kit

Jordan: And Jordan.,

Kit: Sisters, lovers of stars and stories.

Jordan: And we'll see you next week

Kit: On Starry Time.

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