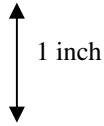


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Student Name

Mr. Marcinkus

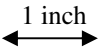
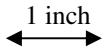
Survey III

12 September 2003

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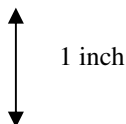
Hero Fails His Quest to Educate

Junior year is perhaps the most challenging year in high school. Students are faced with their last year of learning before proving their worth on ACT and SAT exams, as well as earning their final grades before it is necessary to present those marks to competitive colleges that will supposedly guarantee a future in a well-paying career. The only hope of standing out before the hordes of other prospective candidates is to be offered challenging coursework, taught with both rigor and compassion, in order to gain confidence that the student is the best of the best. Therefore, being presented with a reading such as “Theseus: An Ancient Greek Myth” is questionable and disturbing. This offering by Holt, Rinehart, and Wilson’s *World Literature* anthology is beneath the capability of Advanced Junior English students who require more demanding studies. In addition to the simplistic writing style, “Theseus: An Ancient Greek Myth” is a deplorable inclusion in the anthology due to its failure to narrate the main action and poor character development.



[Insert Body Paragraph 1]

All good writers know that well-written plots follow the “show – don’t tell” method of narrating a story, which is poorly executed in the selection. It can be argued that the most important aspect of the Theseus myth is his journey into King Mino’s labyrinth and his battle with the Minotaur. Despite being an “action” scene, the “labyrinth” has become a metaphor for obstacles and decisions one makes, which is present in many heroic tales. Thus, fully narrating this section of the myth would serve a dual role in engaging seventeen-year-old readers and providing the background of a common mythic tradition. The selection relates the meat of this scene with two sentences: “Theseus entered, ran his hand along the thread in the darkness and came upon the sleeping Minotaur just after midnight. As the moon rose, he cut off the monster’s head with a razor-sharp sword lent him by Ariadne, then followed the thread back to the entrance where his friends stood anxiously waiting” (31). Instead of developing this scene with dialog and interesting description, the selection focuses on Theseus’s quest to help his friend steal



Persephone away from King Hades and ends with Hades chuckling about the hero's failure to complete his quest, which is not only depressing but confusing for students seeking to create meaning and importance out of every selection offered in class. While the failure to narrate the main action is reason enough to exclude this translation of the Theseus myth from the anthology, the resulting confusion causes one to wonder about the character of the hero.

[Insert Body Paragraph 3]

With the glaring atrocities of simplistic writing, failure to narrate the main action, and poor character development, it is impossible to see why "Theseus: An Ancient Green Myth" graces the pages of the advanced Junior English text, *World Anthology*. The reading is insulting to the capabilities of advanced students seeking a rigorous education. It is also difficult to understand how the skills and themes presented provide a solid foundation for any standardized test that ensures entrance into competitive colleges. It is obvious that if the entire Junior year were composed of readings such as this, the second-to-last year of high school would not meet the expectations of being challenging; in fact, it would be viewed as a regression to a level somewhere between kindergarten and second grade.

Work Cited

Graves, Robert. "Theseus: An Ancient Greek Myth." *World Anthology*. Ed. Patricia McCambridge. Austin: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 2001. 29-32.