



Roman Myths



Retold from the classic originals
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STERLING CHILDREN'S BOOKS
New York

What Do *You* Think? Questions for Discussion



Have you ever been around a toddler who keeps asking the question “Why?” Does your teacher call on you in class with questions from your homework? Do your parents ask you about your day at the dinner table? We are always surrounded by questions that need a specific response. But is it possible to have a question with no right answer?

The following questions are about the book you just read. But this is not a quiz! They are designed to help you look at the people, places,

and events from different angles. These questions do not have specific answers. Instead, they might make you think of these stories in a completely new way.

Think carefully about each question and enjoy discovering more about these classic myths.

1. In the story “The Oak and the Linden Tree,” Baucis and Philemon are poor people with rich hearts. How does their behavior serve them when they encounter Jupiter and Mercury in disguise? Do you think the old man and woman would have behaved differently if they knew they were in the presence of two gods?

2. Both Prometheus and Io find themselves in terrible situations. How are their punishments similar? How are they different? Do you think either once deserves the torment?

3. Hercules thinks his eleventh labor—to steal the golden apples from the Garden of

the Hesperides—is absolutely impossible, even though he has already completed ten impossible tasks. How does Hercules complete his eleventh labor? Do you think he uses more of his strength or his brains to complete this task?

4. Romulus and Remus are twin brothers, but are they alike in any way besides looks? How are they different? Would Rome be different if it had been created and ruled by Remus?

5. Romulus and Remus are raised by a she-wolf who loves and protects them as if they were her own. Do you think this is strange? Have you ever heard of an animal coming to the aid of an animal of another species?

6. In Carthage, Aeneas and Dido fall in love through the power of Cupid's arrow. Do you think they would have fallen in love without the gods' magic? Would Aeneas have been able to sail to Italy without Dido's help? Do you think Aeneas wanted to leave Dido?

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

7. Aeneas finds out that his future descendants will create the city of Rome. Do you think this knowledge will affect his future actions? Do you think he now feels responsible for generations of men and women?

8. In the story “Cupid and Psyche,” Psyche’s curiosity overcomes her. What happens as a result? Would you be content to remain in the dark and be pampered? Or would you be curious enough to try and find out the truth?

9. In “Minerva and Arachne,” the maiden Arachne angers the goddess Minerva and pays dearly for it. What exactly is her crime? Do you think her punishment fits her crime?

10. Otus and Ephialtes, the twin giants, also are punished for angering the gods. How exactly does their pride and mischief get them into trouble? In this story, Diana turns herself into a deer in order to trap the giants. What do you think the significance of this animal is?