

Rick Riordan

For Rick Riordan, a bedtime story shared with his oldest son was just the beginning of his journey into the world of children's books.

Already an award-winning author of mysteries for adults, Riordan, a former teacher, was asked by his son Haley to tell him some bedtime stories about the gods and heroes in Greek mythology. "I had taught Greek myths for many years at the middle school level, so I was glad to comply," says Riordan. "When I ran out of myths, (Haley) was disappointed and asked me if I could make up something new with the same characters."

At the time, Haley had just been diagnosed with ADHD and dyslexia. Greek mythology was one of the only subjects that interested the then second-grader in school. Motivated by Haley's request, Riordan quickly came up with the character of Percy Jackson and told Haley all about "(Percy's) quest to recover Zeus's lightning bolt in modern-day America," says Riordan. "It took about three nights to tell the whole story, and when I was done, Haley told me I should write it out as a book."

Despite his busy schedule, Riordan managed to carve some time out of his daily routine to write the first Percy Jackson and the Olympians book, *The Lightning Thief*. And in deference to his son, Riordan chose to give the character of Percy certain attributes that hit close to home.

"Making Percy ADHD and dyslexic was my way of honoring the potential of all the kids I've known who have those conditions," says Riordan. "It's not a bad thing to be different. Sometimes, it's the mark of being very, very talented. That's what Percy discovers about himself in *The Lightning Thief*."



"I think kids want the same thing from a book that adults want—a fast-paced story, characters worth caring about, humor, surprises, and mystery."

Born and raised in San Antonio, Texas, Riordan started writing as a young adult. He wrote short stories, unsuccessfully submitted a few of those stories for publication, and edited his high school newspaper. But he didn't take writing seriously until after he graduated from college and was teaching in San Francisco. While Riordan and his family (wife Becky and sons Haley and Patrick) enjoyed living in California, he was nostalgic for Texas. On an impulse, Riordan decided to try his hand at a mystery novel, which he set in his hometown of San Antonio. Featuring a private-eye/English Ph.D. named Tres Navarre, *Big Red Tequila* was published to rave reviews in 1997. Today, Riordan's Tres Navarre series has won the top three awards for the mystery genre—the Edgar, the Anthony, and the Shamus.

Despite his success in the adult mystery market, writing for children was never far from Riordan's mind.

"Back when I taught middle school and wrote adult mysteries, my students often asked me why I wasn't writing for kids," says Riordan. "I never had a good answer for them. It took me a long time to realize they were right. Kids are the audience I know best."

Young readers—in addition to reviewers, booksellers, librarians, and educators—agree. *Kirkus*, in a starred review, called *The Lightning Thief* "[a] riotously paced quest tale of heroism that questions the realities of our world, family, friendship and loyalty," while *Publishers Weekly* praised *The Sea of Monsters*, book two in the Percy Jackson and the Olympians series, as "a sequel stronger than (the) compelling debut," containing "humor, intelligence and expert pacing." Both titles in the Percy Jackson series have received accolades and awards, and *The Lightning Thief* has recently been optioned for a feature film.

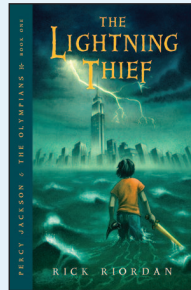
And while it's obvious that Riordan has a knack for writing for kids, he readily admits that writing for young readers is not that much different than writing for an older audience.

"I think kids want the same thing from a book that adults want—a fast-paced story, characters worth caring about, humor, surprises, and mystery," says Riordan. "A good book always keeps you asking questions, and makes you keep turning pages so you can find out the answers."

Recently, Riordan made a "reluctant" decision to leave teaching, a career he thoroughly enjoyed, to write full-time. However, he's keeping his hand in education by conducting lots of author appearances in classrooms across the country, and even some in Europe. "I love teaching," says Riordan. "I love working with kids . . . maybe some day I'll go back to the classroom. I'm not ready to say it'll never happen. But for now, the books are keeping me very busy."

To learn more about Rick Riordan,
visit his Web site at www.rickriordan.com

BOOKS BY **Rick Riordan**

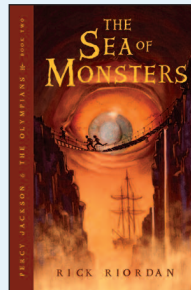


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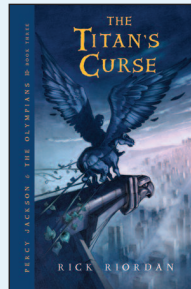


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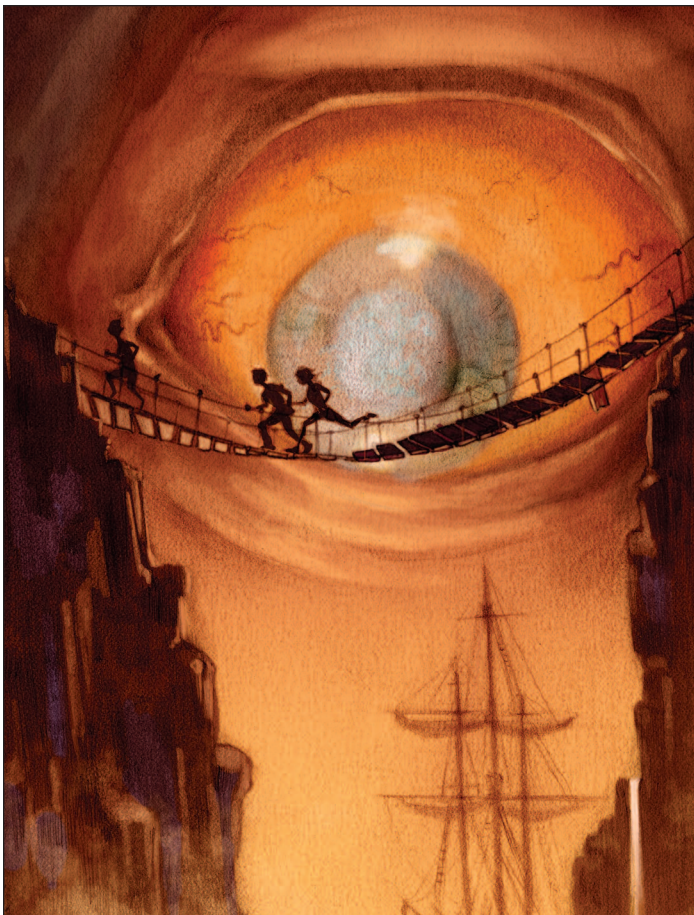
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