



## Eye of Zeus: Legends of Olympus, Book One

**Alane Adams**

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*With twists, loyalty between friends, and its cast's cleverness, the middle grade fantasy The Eye of Zeus hits all the right notes.*

Action-packed and empowering, Alane Adams's *The Eye of Zeus* combines plucky modern characters with a historically rooted adventure in Greek mythology.

Phoebe has been in foster care in New York her whole life. Trouble seems to follow her everywhere she goes, even when she tries to be good. Luckily, she has Carl, her faithful social worker, and her best friends Angie and Damian, who stick by her side even when rude bullies at school are unfair and unkind.

When Phoebe discovers that she has the surprising, seemingly impossible ability to control the weather, as well as finding out that supernatural creatures are present at her school, she begins a quest to discover her own origins. The god Ares forces her hand by kidnapping someone who matters to her, and she is transported, with her friends, to ancient Greece. There, she endeavors to avoid a prophesy that states that she will one day destroy Olympus.

Phoebe and her friends need to make enough allies along the way to be able to defeat the many monsters in their path. The ultimate question is whether they can they show enough patience and thoughtfulness to anticipate the choices made by Ares, God of War, in his quest to rule Olympus, and whether they can defeat Ares once and for all.

Phoebe, Damian, and Angie are excellent heroes, with enough positive qualities to be likable and flaws substantial enough to make them dynamic, as with Phoebe's hotheadedness and impatience. Their conversations with friends and enemies are natural and help to propel the story. Transitioning between high action and careful conversations, the book's scenes, including every fight and escape, make an impact.

Scary images and mild gore in battle scenes with monsters make the book no less suited to its target audience. Greek mythology is incorporated in a thorough way, resulting in lessons about the past, often thanks to background explanations from Phoebe's smart, well-read friend Damian. Some basic background knowledge about Greek mythology will help coming in, but is not required.

Time-paradox issues are handled well; the children's knowledge of Greece's future results in small advantages over their enemies. Sticklers for clarity may find the prophecy elements of the book confusing, since Phoebe is trying to fulfill one prophesy while she avoids fulfilling a second one; this work is rather tangled in the conclusion, which is otherwise emotional and positive.

With twists, loyalty between friends, and its cast's cleverness, the middle grade fantasy *The Eye of Zeus* hits all the right notes.

LAURA LEAVITT (January 21, 2020)

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