**Athena and the Parthenon.**

The sun beat down on the dry, dusty grounds as hundreds of people swarmed around the half-finished Parthenon like ants. Everyone was busy. All around you could hear the tap-tapping of chisels as people carved the huge blocks of stone needed for the construction. When each stone was finished it was loaded onto a wooden sledge and wrapped in long ropes. Hundreds of people would then drag it up a large ramp towards the top of the Parthenon.

Athena, the Greek goddess, watched with fascination. As a goddess of wisdom, it was her job to protect the Parthenon. Construction had taken 10 years already but Athena knew it would be worth it as people were building it for her.

The Parthenon was already impressive, thought Athena, even though it was not yet finished. Placed high above Athens, it reached up high towards the heavens. When it was completed, it would be able to be seen for miles and miles. Surely, there could not be a more magnificent sight in the whole world? Then everyone would know just how powerful the Greek goddess of wisdom was!

That night, Athena was woken suddenly by shouting outside of the Parthenon. What was going on? She rushed outside to find a scene of complete chaos. There was panic in the air, as people ran around with looks of terror on their faces. In the torchlight, Athena could just about see the outline of the Parthenon in the distance. But there was something else, a large shadow seemed to be moving towards her. What was it? The creature moved eerily slowly towards Athena.

“Run for your lives!” screamed someone as they ran past frantically.

“Don’t look at her in the eye, she’ll turn you to stone!” bellowed another person running.

Athena wanted to run, but her legs had frozen in fear. Then she saw it. Out of the darkness emerged a huge, terrifying woman with the body of a beautiful women but with a tangle of sinister snakes slithering on her head! Horrified, Athena suddenly realised what it was. She had heard people talk about this legendary creature before, but she had never actually believed she was real. It was Medusa!

At that moment Medusa stopped, then quietly whispered at the crowds of people as they huddled in fear, not looking at her in the eye, “none shall approach this Parthenon unless they are found to be worthy. This is the will of the gods.” With that, Medusa tossed her head from side to side and the snakes lunged at the cowering people. Athena ran away as fast as she could.

The next morning, she gathered the gods and goddesses together.

“What are we going to do?” asked one of the gods. “Medusa won’t let anyone near the Parthenon.”

“We have to show that we are not afraid,” said Athena. “We need someone who is brave and strong.”

“I’ll do it. I’ll kill her.” Perseus, the son of the Zeus, boldly declared. That night Athena told Perseus exactly what he needed to do…

In the golden morning sun, Medusa slept contently on the Parthenon step enjoying the peace as she knew she was untouchable, or so she thought… Perseus, using the reflection of a shield which Athena had given her, tip toed towards Medusa. Never looking at her directly. Never looking at her eyes. His heart was beating. Mouth dry. Palms sweating. He held the heavy shield in one hand and a mighty sword in the other. He crept towards her, slowly. He finally got to Medusa where he could see her take every breath as her body would rise up then back down. He swiftly lifted the mighty sword up high above his head and with one swoop, he chopped off her head!

People gathered around in celebration as they realised Medusa had been defeated! Celebrations could be heard across Athens, people embraced one another and Athena was praised for her wisdom to use the reflection of the shield!