

Medusa For Discussion

1. Medusa did not want all the attention for her looks that she received before she was turned into a Gorgon. Once her hair is replaced with snakes, is she happier? Why or why not?
2. Why didn't Athena aid Medusa? Why didn't she punish Poseidon instead?
3. In what ways is this myth retold with modern twists? What happens after Medusa's rape that would be similar to the treatment of rape victims in today's world?
4. Medusa and Perseus both believe that they are in love after they begin to share their secrets. Was this intimacy truly love or was it infatuation? Is it possible that both can exist at the same time?
5. Danaë would have been able to escape the king's attentions if she'd had money to move away or to hire protection for herself. Do you see that as a real solution? Do you think women today view money as a way to protect themselves from harm? In what ways?
6. What do her snakes come to mean to Medusa? How does she learn to accept them as part of herself, and "intrinsic" to her soul?
7. When Medusa admits she isn't Merina, "a lightness sang through" her, and for the first time, she acknowledges and accepts all parts of herself. Are there parts of yourself that you've resisted fully embracing? Why? What do you think would happen if you did?
8. Despite his initial reaction, Medusa still holds out hope that Perseus will love her from a distance. "If Perseus loved me, then I might learn to love myself too." How does this sentiment of hers evolve during the subsequent series of events?
9. Medusa and Danaë suffered in similar ways in the hands of men. Despite this, Perseus is unsympathetic to this connection and determines he must kill Medusa. Why do think that is? Do you think he truly considered another option?
10. Of Perseus's decision to kill Medusa, Burton writes that "something else louder than love spoke to him that day." What do you think it was that spoke to him?

11. After turning Perseus to stone, Medusa says she is growing accustomed to “living in the grey areas of life.” What does she mean by this? Are there areas of our lives that could be considered “grey?” What are the benefits of accepting these? What are the challenges of seeing the world in black and white?

12. Burton has dramatically altered the ending of this myth. Why did she make that choice? Do you think that she could have kept the original ending and still written Medusa in the same way? Why or why not?