

Mark of Athena Book Review by Sarina

The Mark of Athena is the third installment in Rick Riordan's "Heroes of Olympus" series. This novel follows the journey of seven demigod heroes as they continue to undertake a critical mission to save their world from impending doom. Low-stakes and fun!

The story picks up with the Argo II, a majestic flying ship commanded by Percy Jackson, Annabeth Chase, Leo Valdez, Piper McLean, Jason Grace, Hazel Levesque, and Frank Zhang, all demigods of both Greek and Roman descent. Their quest is to travel to Rome and unite the Greek and Roman demigods to prevent the rise of the giants, who are prophesied to bring about catastrophic events.

Annabeth's quest to retrieve the Athena Parthenos, a powerful statue hidden in Rome, is the central focus of the plot (it's in the name). She believes that recovering it will be key to rallying both Greek and Roman forces and ensuring victory in their struggle. Annabeth's personal stakes are high, as she is determined to prove herself and live up to her mother Athena's expectations.

The Argo II's journey is full with danger and challenges. Upon approaching Rome, the crew faces fierce opposition from both mythical creatures and rival forces. Annabeth's quest is particularly intense, filled with trials that test her bravery and resolve. She must confront her fears and insecurities, particularly as she leads the mission to find the Athena Parthenos. The Roman demigods are wary and even hostile, adding to the difficulty of their mission and emphasizing the need for unity.

Simultaneously, Percy grapples with his own role in the prophecy and his relationship with Annabeth. Throughout the story, Percy learns even more about his place in the grand scheme and the responsibilities that come with it. A book series was not enough. Leo also struggles with feelings of inadequacy, yet his cleverness and ideas are crucial in navigating the ship's many challenges. Piper and Jason face their own trials, as their personal relationships and self-doubts come to the forefront. No one said this whole thing would be easy.

The ultimate climax occurs in a dramatic confrontation in Rome. Annabeth finally locates the Athena Parthenos, but not without a series of fierce battles against the giants and their formidable leader, Porphyron. The fight tests the heroes' skills, courage, and unity.

By the end of the novel, the heroes succeed in recovering the Athena Parthenos and return it to Camp Half-Blood. This act helps to mend the rift between the Greek and Roman demigods, though the victory is tempered by the realization that their journey is far from over. The team must prepare for even greater challenges as they move closer to the final confrontations foretold in the prophecy.

The Mark of Athena blends thrilling action with deep character exploration, just in true Rick Riordan fashion. It sets the stage for the upcoming challenges the demigods are yet to face in the stories to come and leaves readers (myself included!) on the edge of their seats and considering a binge-read session. I rate this book an 8/10!