“Shrouded in Myth” By Jessica Fisher Neidl

A long, long, long time ago, even before Perseus was born, his grandfather, Acrisios, the king of Argos, was given a prophecy that he would someday be killed by his grandson. To protect himself from this fate, the terrified king imprisoned his only daughter, Danae, in an underground dungeon so that she could never marry or have children. Certain that he would never be a grandfather, Acrisios relaxed. But Zeus, the great father of the gods, had other plans. Zeus had been watching Danae and thought she was stunning—too beautiful to resist. He turned himself into golden rain and poured through the bronze bars in the roof of her elaborate dungeon. As the rain fell upon Danae, its magical powers caused a child to begin growing within her. Nine months later, she gave birth to a son and named him Perseus. Outraged as well as frightened when he learned of a grandson's birth, Acrisios enclosed mother and son in a chest, which he flung into the sea. After drifting about for a long time, the chest finally washed up on a distant island. A fisherman found it and brought it to his brother, King Polydectes, who took Perseus and his mother into his palace. When Perseus grew up, Polydectes gave him a series of challenging tasks to complete. Armed with a sword made by the god Hermes, winged sandals, and a shiny bronze shield given to him by the goddess Athena, Perseus slew the dreaded monster Medusa. This hideous creature had writhing snakes for hair, elephant­like tusks for teeth, and blood­red eyes. Whoever looked at her was instantly turned to stone. As success followed success, Perseus began to think about the stories he had heard about his grandfather, Acrisios. So, after a brief visit to his mother, the young hero set sail for Argos. Before he reached it, however, Acrisios got word that his long­lost grandson was coming and fled the city, for he still feared the prophecy. While waiting for Acrisios to return, Perseus attended festival games being held in a neighboring town. A skilled athlete, Perseus entered the discus contest. As he prepared to throw it, he lost control and the heavy disk went hurtling into the crowd, striking a man and killing him. Alas, the tragic prophecy had proved true—the dead spectator was Acrisios. Perseus was so troubled about the accident that he chose to leave Argos and build his own city—the legendary Mycena