My creative project is an experimental short-story that explores two toxic male protagonists in completely different forms. The first is a brand new myth that exists within the confines of traditional myth and is told through a structural parody of Homer's *The Iliad*. The other half of the story is a parody of the university assignment told through footnotes and the inclusion of a "Critical Defence" section.

This project began when I learned that in the English program, because Mythology is often translated into English, the purpose of any myth-based course is more aligned with comprehension than analysis. With this in mind, I proposed a creative alternative to the course required essay with which I could adequetely prove my own understanding of the myths taught during the course.

Told through Footnotes, the Critical Defense framing device functions as a secondary narrative about a teaching assistant whose obsession with bees sends a professor to the hospital.

"Travel to Lerna and defeat the beast Hydra. Then return to me a vial of its venom. If you are able to slay the many heads of this water-beast and return with my requested poison, then a story of you it is destined I write."

Upon smelling his sweet foot, all manners of snakes, even land snakes, approached and heard his instruction as Abensteous gave them: "Go, snakes, and enter the Hydra through one of its mouths and wriggle within. It will be not long before the beast explodes and you will all be freed and rewarded."

When all the snakes were eaten, the Hydra paused and Abensteous was proud. But then the Hydra turned to Abensteous and gestured in gratitude, for he had fed the beast well and it was grateful. Abensteous recognized the gesture and held out the vial from Ovid, which the grateful Hydra spit into and filled with its toxic venom. And for this reason, Abensteous is also known as Abensteous the Snake Giver or Snake Giver Abensteous.

UMMERE

Hero: Abensteous

Main Adventures: Retrieves venom from the Hydra. friends. Retrieves a pomegranate seed from Tartarus and escapes unseen. He does all of the above to be worthy of having his story told.

Human Antagonist: Abensteous the Lamb Chef (the better known Abensteous) Opposing Deity: Zeus, who is at risk of being embarrassed by Abensteous the Unseen, summons two gods to assist Abensteous the Chef into greatness. Aiding Deity: Hera, who is mad at Zeus and Abeis for their infidelity, punishes both by insuring that Abensteous' journeys are embarrassing and foolish. She this by gifting Abensteous with the ability to tame and ride any animal by standing on its head or back. She is also the scribe to whom Abensteous tells his story (though

Death: Abensteous chokes on lamb (it is implied that it was prepared by Abensteous the Lamb Chef) as he finishes telling his story to Hera. Thus, she is able to end The books 2 and 3, but not the rest of the collection, which Hera reprints whenever Zeus sleeps with someone that isn't her.)

Parentage: Abeis (A-Bee-Us); Zeus

Travels between Thrace, Crete, Troy, and Colchis on the backs and heads of animals in an attempt to make four

that is not ever mentioned beyond my note at the beginning of Book 8).

Abyss by admitting that he died in an embarrassing way. (Zeus succeeds in destroying

My story describes two toxically masculine protagonists who ultimately destroy themselves.

> In true toxic fashion, neither character would ever admit fault, instead blaming a chef with the same first name or an employer for their own errors.

"I can see why you cry like a goddess, whose immortality makes mere flesh wounds into incredible importance, and thus their eyes are tearful and inconsolable for mere minutes until their own mothers heal their wounds, for that is how you sound." (12)

"And so Abensteous went to him, Ovid, and sat in the nearest chair and spoke: "You are lucky to be seated next to me, for I will be your greatest subject." (6)

PRAISE

90/100 "Noah, This was an absolute pleasure to

read! There is much I would like to say, but limited time for me to write my comments (marks are due in a few hours and I have many papers to go). But this was hilarious. You really captured the style of myth perfectly! Paul Harrison,

Jun 22, 2021 at 4:33am"

RESEARCH

Ovid. The Metamorphoses of Ovid. Trans. by Allen Mandelbaum, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017.

Euripides, Heracles. Trans. William Arrowsmith. U of Chicago P, 1958.

Euripides, Alcestis. Trans. Richmond Lattimore. U of Chicago P, 1958. 11–57.

Homer., et al. The Iliad of Homer. University of Chicago Press, 2011. Homer, The Odyssey of Homer. Trans. Richmond Lattimore. Harper & Row, 1967.

"Traditionally, it takes 1000 bee stings to kill a human. So if you're ever trapped in a classroom with 500 bees there is actually no reason to panic."

-Former TA Thomas Fitz

Noah Farberman

University of Toronto Scarborough Campus