

“Percy Jackson and the Olympians” didn't quite blow it out of the water

COLUMN BY
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COPY EDITOR

Percy Jackson and the Olympians, a book series by Rick Riordan, hit living rooms everywhere as a television series adaptation.

The first season of the show is available for viewing on Disney+ and covers the first book “The Lightning Thief,” in which Percy Jackson finds out he’s the son of a Greek god and has to relocate to Camp Half-Blood for safety, only to immediately go on a quest to find Zeus’s stolen master bolt before war breaks out among Olympus.

The previously attempted movie adaptations by 20th Century Fox failed in 2013 after releasing the second movie “The Sea of Monsters” ultimately due to bad ratings and straying too far from the source material, upsetting fans and Rick Riordan.

This time around Riordan had a direct hand in writing the show.

As a longtime fan of the books, I waited patiently for them to try again with another on-screen adaptation and I wanted to see it done right. Although I have my grievances, I love this adaptation.

The casting is excellent. Walker Scobell is right on the money for Percy Jackson. He gets it all right, from the sarcasm to the confusion to his looks. When casting began for this series the only requirement was he had to be able to play a 12-year-old. While other fans of the series complained about his character being cringey, I



(From left to right) Aryan Simhadri, Leah Sava Jeffries and Walker Scobell in “Percy Jackson and the Olympians”

think that’s exactly what Percy Jackson should be due to his age.

Additionally, Leah Jeffries is a wonderful choice for Annabeth.

Annabeth is blonde in the books and because of her looks, she is constantly thought to be not as smart as she is.

Book Annabeth challenged stereotypes that were more accurate about women 20 years ago. Not only is Jeffries a phenomenal actress, but this new casting challenges a similar stereotype that black women are often unfairly faced with.

Grover is my only complaint in casting, although I’ve grown to love the actor’s portrayal of him on-screen, I wish they would have aged him up. Grover is supposed to be 24-years-old but pretending to be 12 and in the books he has a thin wispy beard, while on screen he seems like he could be 15 at the oldest.

It’s a nit-picky request, but I would have loved to see someone on-screen who looked a little too old to be 12.

Each episode of the show is about 40 minutes long, so the show moves quite fast for how much source material they have to cover.

The show does a bad job of keeping the suspense built. Each obstacle the three main characters encounter is made anticlimactic by how quickly they solve problems and seem to know everything about their opponent right off the bat.

I think increasing each episode’s runtime to an hour would fix this issue easily as it’s occurring largely due to lack of time.

The way this show approaches the idea of monsters and gods is very different from the book, making it a more complicated dynamic between them and demigods.

When the trio runs into Medusa she’s allowed to tell her version of the story rather than just being portrayed as a scary monster trying to turn them to stone.

This storyline begins to challenge the perceptions of what constitutes a monster and how the gods treat those that are loyal to them both in the minds of Percy, Annabeth and Grover, but also in the mind of the viewer.

Medusa refers to herself as a survivor, likening herself to Percy’s mother by saying they were both victims of the same monster and calls what Athena turned her into a gift allowing her not to be bullied anymore.

With Annabeth being Athena’s daughter and Percy being the son of Poseidon, they begin to question their allegiance to their parents and it brings nuance to the show that will carry through



Poster for “Percy Jackson and the Olympians”

the rest of the seasons. for the upcoming season.

The finale has the same problem the rest of the show does as it was incredibly rushed. It did not deliver on everything the entire first season of the show has built up to is over within the first 20 minutes of starting.

It does however do a good job of setting up for the rest of the show. It was another situation where they figured everything out too easily for it to be exciting to watch but it wraps up all of the loose ends while leaving some suspense

I would recommend this show to both fans of the books and people interacting with the story for the first time. The show changes a lot of the storyline keeping existing fans on their toes while also doing a good job making it easy to follow for people who are new here.

The show is not perfect, but it is a complete upgrade from the movies and has so much potential moving forward. Now it’s time to wait patiently for it to be renewed for another season.

Official Score: 6/10

You need to calm down, Taylor Swift is not at the center of a conspiracy

COLUMN BY
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LIFE EDITOR

Taylor Swift fans are notorious for coming up with outlandish theories. It is not uncommon for Swift to give clues or “Easter eggs” which leads to fans searching for meaning in every little move she makes.

But what is Taylorscheming? An album? New tour dates? Psychological operations for the Democratic Party?

In case you haven’t heard, Taylor Swift is being accused of being a part of a conspiracy to ensure Biden wins the 2024 election.

This may seem ridiculous, but since the Kansas City Chiefs won the AFC Championship, conspiracy theories involving the singer have dominated headlines.

Everyone knows the biggest celebrity couple right

now is Swift and her football player boyfriend, Travis Kelce. According to many right-wing voices, this duo came together to brainwash the American people.

Vivek Ramaswamy, a former presidential candidate for the Republican Party, took to X, formerly Twitter, to share his thoughts on this.

“I wonder who’s going to win the Super Bowl next month. And I wonder if there’s a major presidential endorsement coming from an artificially culturally propped-up couple this fall. Just some wild speculation over here, let’s see how it ages over the next 8 months,” Ramaswamy said.

Many figures from the right wing believe Swift is going to endorse Biden at the Super Bowl. According to them, the Chiefs will win because the game is rigged.

In short, they are mad

about an endorsement she has not made, but might.

It’s not out of the question for Swift to make a political endorsement. She endorsed Biden in 2020 and endorsed two Democratic candidates in Tennessee back in 2018.

I’m sure Biden would love an endorsement from Swift and it would probably urge lots of sequin-adorned voters to head to the polls.

In addition, The Rolling Stone reported Trump supporters are planning to wage a “Holy War” against Swift if she does make an endorsement.

However, this is not a grand conspiracy.

Swift does not need the Chiefs to win the Super Bowl to create a platform. Both Swift and Kelce have large followings and could make significant endorsements regardless of who wins what game and who is dating whom.



Travis Kelce (left) and Taylor Swift after the AFC Championship game.

Taylor Swift is a powerful force. But if she is planning any kind of world domination, it probably has more to do with album sales or Spotify streams than political gain.

Student Speak: What is your favorite dorm recipe?



Photo by Shelby Russom | Staff Photographer
Lillian Glidewell is a sophomore environmental and philosophy double major

Lillian said:

“I am more into steamed vegetables because they’re really filling and easy to make in a microwave. I usually pair them with those microwaved Bob Evans mashed potatoes. I am a vegetarian so maybe some meat substitute.”



Photo by Shelby Russom | Staff Photographer
Laderykah Rockett is a junior nursing major from Memphis.

Laderykah said:

“Chili. I don’t eat meat, so that’s just not in it. I’m vegetarian, so it just doesn’t have meat and whatever vegetables I want to put in it is what I do. I like to make it because it’s cold outside, and it’s easy to make to just put it in the pot.”



Photo by Shelby Russom | Staff Photographer
Ethan Rose is a first-year computer science major from Benton, Arkansas.

Ethan said:

“Ramen. It’s just the Walmart cheapest brand I can find, like the fifty cent ones.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF MACKENZIE WHITE
Mackenzie White is a first-year multimedia journalism major from Trumann.

Mackenzie said:

“I like to make tuna! With a tuna packet, mayo, mustard, everything bagel seasoning and pickles! I eat it with saltine crackers!”

Car maintenance you can (mostly) do in your dorm parking lot

COLUMN BY
RACHEL RUDD

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

You may think since you’re at college, there isn’t much you can do to maintain your car. However, you’ll find you can do a lot of basic maintenance with a few inexpensive tools from Walmart, all in the comfort of your dorm parking lot.

Wash your car without water

First things first, you actually can do a quick wash/wax of your car without ever driving to a car wash. I use Meguiar’s Ultimate Waterless Wash and Wax, which will run you about \$10. You have to use a microfiber cloth with this but don’t worry, you can get a 10-pack of these for around \$5.

This is great for removing grime in concentrated areas or doing a quick general wash on your car. This won’t replace an actual car wash (you still need to do those), but it will save you money on gas to and from the car wash, as well as actual wash fees. Just follow the directions on the back of the bottle.

Replace windshield washer fluid

It’s also easy to refill your windshield washer fluid. You can get all-season windshield washer fluid for \$3-4. All you need to do is pop your

hood and unscrew the lid on the windshield washer fluid reservoir. It has a windshield symbol with a vertical dotted line representing the fluid.

A good rule of thumb is to add more about every two months. Add fluid until it almost reaches the top, putting the cap back on when you’ve finished.

Remove snow and ice

With winter in full swing, you’ll want to keep excess snow and ice off your car to prevent it from melting and then refreezing on locks or windshield wipers. Don’t worry about removing snow and ice as it’s falling, instead, do it slightly before things start to melt.

You can get a two in one ice scraper and snow brush for your car for about \$7, which helps combat both hard ice and powdery snow.

While you’re scraping, try to have the car on and set to defrost- this will make your job a lot easier. You can also pour some isopropyl alcohol on the ice and scrap afterwards. Never use hot water, the temperature difference can cause some serious damages, such as cracking your windshield. Never use your ice scraper on the paint.

Air up tires regularly

You should maintain the amount of air in your tires, or your tire pressure. You can

always check your tire pressure using a tire gauge, which you can get for around \$4.

Your tires have a certain amount of air needed to keep them properly inflated, with the amount (measured in pounds per square inch, or PSI) usually found on the door jam of the driver’s side. If you can’t find it, your owner’s manual should tell you.

To check your tire pressure, unscrew the cap of the valve stem, which is a little stem sticking out from the wheel (to clear up any confusion: the tire is the rubber that makes contact with the road, while the wheel is the metal thing turning the tire).

Place the ball end of the tire gauge against the stem, making sure you have a seal. If you hear air leaking when the gauge connects with the stem, you don’t have a seal. You should hear a slight pop when they connect properly. This will push a measuring stick out the opposite end of the gauge, allowing you to get your reading.

If your pressure reads four PSI or lower than your recommended amount, you need to air up your tires. This is where you do need to go off campus, usually to a gas station. I always air up my tires at Kum and Go, because it’s free and close to campus.

Rachel Rudd's
car maintenance
toolkit

- waterless wash and wax
- ice scraper
- tire gauge
- windshield washer fluid
- isopropyl alcohol
- microfiber cloths

Graphic by Caroline Averitt | Life Editor

Once arriving at the gas station, turn on the compressor (there’s usually a labeled button) and remove the cap of the valve stem. Similar to the gauge, connect the end of the compressor hose to the valve stem and

create a seal. You should hear air going into the tire, not leaking out. Hold the hose on the valve for three to four seconds and then check your pressure, adjusting if necessary. Don’t forget the spare tire! Overall, basic things such

as these will help keep your car running smoothly and looking nice, as well as keep you safe. If you’re ever unsure about something, watch a reputable YouTube video or consult your owner’s manual. Good luck!