

# Who Let the Gods Out?

A troubled boy's life is turned upside down when an immortal crashes out of the sky onto his barn. They go on adventures together but accidentally release a daemon. With help from the gods, they begin a quest to save the world that takes them to incredible places on Earth and beyond.

## Author

Maz Evans began her career as a TV journalist and still broadcasts regularly on the radio. As well as writing books, she also writes songs and musical theatre productions. *Who Let the Gods Out?* has received over 20 award nominations worldwide, including Waterstones' Book of the Year. She has written several sequels to the book and narrates audiobooks for them.

## Cultural context

The immortals are part of Greek mythology. Zeus is the king of the gods and his daughters Aphrodite and Athene are the goddesses of love and wisdom respectively. Hermes is Zeus' personal messenger.

Daemons are spirits. Hypnos is the spirit of sleep, Thanatos is the spirit of Death and Charon is the ferryman who carries the dead to the underworld.

Constellations are semi-divine spirits. Greek myths explain how each constellation came to be.

## Characters

### Elliot

Elliot is a lonely boy who looks after his farm and his sick mother. He has lots of worries about money and school. His love for his mother and home lead him to take perilous risks and face danger courageously.

### Josie

Josie is Elliot's mother. She has an illness that prevents her from looking after her son and home. Elliot often takes the role of a parent when looking after her.

### Virgo

Virgo is an immortal constellation. She is bored with her perfect life in Elysium and seeks adventure on Earth. She becomes good friends with Elliot. Virgo often breaks the rules, for selfish and unselfish reasons.

### Immortals

There are five types of immortal: gods like Zeus, constellations like the Zodiac Council, elementals, neutrals and daemons. They all wear a kardia, which is a type of necklace. Immortals become mortal without their kardia.



Charon, the ferryman

## Settings

### Farm

Elliot lives on a ramshackle farm. It has crumbling bricks, dirty windows, peeling paint and 'holes where fallen tiles made the roof look like a mouth missing some teeth.'



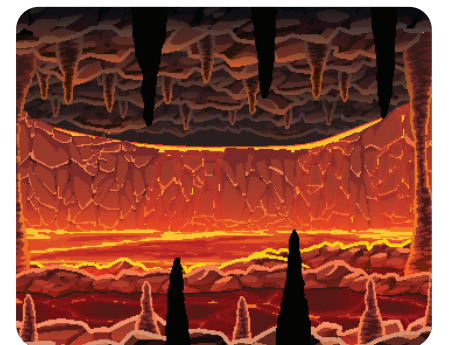
### Elysium

The gods and constellations live in Elysium. It is the most perfectly beautiful place, with cloud meadows, heavily laden fruit trees and a river that 'dropped into a waterfall that shimmered with refracted rainbow light.'



### Tartarus

Tartarus is the underworld where the daemons live. It is a 'fiery wasteland' where prisoners perform everlasting punishments. It is guarded by a three-headed hound.



## Themes

- courage
- friendship
- rules
- family
- love



## Story timeline

These are some of the key chapters in the novel. When you read the chapters, use the questions as starting points for discussion.

### Chapters 1 and 2

Elliot is given a detention by the odious Mr Boil. He returns to the dilapidated farm, which he loves, to find his meddlesome neighbour trying to worm her way in. She wants to purchase the land and turn it into a housing estate. What are your first impressions of Elliot's life?

### Chapter 3

In Elysium, Virgo is bored in a Zodiac Council meeting. She plans to break the rules so she can visit Earth. Do you think she is right to do this?

### Chapter 4

In this chapter, the reader discovers the sad truth about Elliot's life. How would you describe the relationship between Elliot and his mother?

### Chapter 7

An evil daemon is released into the world. Do you think Elliot acted wisely?

### Chapter 29

Elliot promises to continue his quest and a mysterious guest appears. Do you like the ending of the novel?

## Humour

There are many examples of humour in this novel, making it very entertaining to read. Humour is created through misunderstandings, such as Virgo thinking Kowsh Ed is a region rather than a building. It is also created by unusual similes, such as *'as nutty as a squirrel's packed lunch'* and original names, such as *'Call Me Graham'* and *'Patricia Horse's-Bum'*. Humour is also created using irony, such as *'...she always made sure her telescope was positioned where no one else could look at it – she loathed nosy parkers.'*

## Structure

*Who Let the Gods Out?* is a fantasy adventure novel. It has several settings and often switches between them, for example, some chapters are set on the farm, some in school and some in Elysium. Most chapters end on a cliff-hanger, which adds a sense of urgency for the reader. The third person narration is broken up with poems in the form of emails or newspaper articles to move the plot along.

## Dramatic irony

Dramatic irony is when the reader knows more about a character's situation than the character does. This can only be achieved with a third person narrator. In this story, the reader often knows about the risks and dangers before Elliot does. This increases the reader's anxiety for him.

## Literary terms

### cliff-hanger

A cliff-hanger is when a section of a novel or film ends and you don't know what is going to happen next. You are held in suspense until the next instalment.

### fantasy

Fantasy stories involve magic, good and evil characters and adventure.

### irony

The irony of a situation is odd or amusing because it involves a contrast that you would not expect.

### simile

A simile compares one thing to another using like or as. For example, *'like a china doll on a bad hair day.'*

### third person narrator

A text in the third person is written about a character but is not told from their point of view. For example, *'Elliot stared at Virgo through his puffy red eyes.'*

