

Metamorphoses Book Notes

Metamorphoses by Ovid

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Author/Context

Ovid (Publius Ovidius Naso) was a Latin poet born in 43 B.C. in Sulmo, 100 miles east of Rome. In preparation for a career as a public servant, Ovid learned the craft of rhetoric from Arellius Fuscus and Porcius Latro, the most esteemed Roman rhetoricians of that time. Then he studied Philosophy in Athens before traveling around the eastern Mediterranean. When he returned to Rome, Ovid held several minor government offices before giving up that line of work to be a poet at approximately twenty years old, around the same time that Augustus began his reign. He joined the ranks of other Latin poets such as Tibullus, and Messalla, a statesman, was their patron. Ovid married three times, and his third wife was related to Paullus Fabius Maximus, a close friend of the emperor, Augustus.

Ovid's inspiration was found in the active bustle of Rome itself, and his work usually struck a chord with the younger, more sexually liberated of Roman society. Augustus disagreed with the increasing sexual liberation with which Ovid was identified because the emperor believed that it threatened the family and therefore society as well.

In roughly 16 B.C., Ovid published his *Amores* (Loves) and *Ars amatoria* (Art of Love) followed it 17 years later. This began the poet's fame, and by A.D. 8 Ovid was a prominent poet. But later that year, he was exiled to the remote town of Tomis. Although the reasons for his banishment are uncertain, there is speculation that Ovid was exiled because Augustus disapproved of Ovid's *Ars amatoria* combined with Ovid's alleged role as an accomplice in the adultery of Augustus' granddaughter. These theories are based on Ovid's description of his offenses as a "poem" and an "indiscretion" added to the knowledge that she was exiled that same year for adultery.

Ovid's major work, *Metamorphoses*, was completed before he was exiled. This epic poem is written in hexameter, unlike his other works. The poem also creates an epic that centers on mortal characters rather than heroes or the gods. Ovid even goes so far as to portray the gods as self-absorbed and vengeful in the many stories that *Metamorphoses* relates.

"Ovid, far more than any other ancient poet, was the model of the European Renaissance and the English Elizabethan and Jacobean ages: the translation of the *Metamorphoses* by Arthur Golding (1565-67) made a decisive impact on Shakespeare's mind (*Midsummer Night's Dream* is in part inspired by Ovid's work)."

Ovid's other works include *Heroides* (Heroines), *Medicamina Faciei Femineae* (On Taking Care of a Woman's Face), *Remedia Amoris* (The Cures of Love), *Fasti*, *Tristia* (The Lamentations), and *Epistulae ex Ponto* (Letters from Pontus).

Ovid was very unhappy in his banishment, and neither Augustus, nor his successor, Tiberius, ever recalled the poet from exile. Ovid remained in Tomis until his death in A.D. 17.



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Plot Summary

Metamorphoses is a collection of ancient stories of mythology written in poem form. Each of the stories that Ovid presents contains some sort of transformation, or metamorphosis, and that is the link that ties them all together. Ovid uses sources like Virgil's *Aeneid*, as well as the work of Lucretius, Homer, and other early Greek works to gather his material. Although some of the stories he presents are true to these sources, Ovid also adds his own twist to many of them and changes details where it better suits his purpose.

The theme throughout the stories is the power of the gods, but towards the end, the poem seems to emphasize the greatness of Rome and its rulers. Many of the metamorphoses that take place throughout Ovid's work are changes wrought by the gods as punishment for something that a mortal has done. There are a few times, however, when a transformation takes place in order to save a mortal from death. Although there is considerable evidence to support the superiority of the gods in the poem, Ovid does include some moments that rattle that theory.

Ovid ties the stories together using characters as links from one transformation myth to the next. These characters, their interactions with each other and the gods, are the primary focus of *Metamorphoses*. Some of the more prevalent themes that recur throughout the poem are rape, revenge, and violence. A few of Ovid's stories echo others in the collection, but they all have some unique aspect that qualifies it for the poem.

Since this poem was written in 17 or 18 B.C., it has become one of the most important surviving Roman works. Its translation to English has made these myths a cornerstone of literature.



Major Characters

Saturn: He is the ruler of the world before Jove. He is the father of Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto.

Jupiter (Jove): He is the chief of the gods and a son of Saturn and husband of Juno.

Neptune: Neptune is Jupiter's (Jove) brother and the god of the sea.

Themis: She is a goddess of justice and has oracular powers.

Apollo (Phoebus): He is the son of Latona and Jove. He is the god of sight of the past, present, and future, as well as song and healing.

Cupid: He is the son of Venus and god of love.

Diana: Diana, daughter of Latona and Jove, is Apollo's twin sister. She is a virgin huntress and also the moon goddess.

Juno: She is the queen of the gods, sister and wife of Jove.

Mercury: He is the son of Jove and Maia, also the messenger of the gods.

Pan: He is the god of woods and shepherds.

Athene (Pallas, Minerva): She is the daughter of Jove, goddess of wisdom and technical skill. She is also a virgin goddess and the patron goddess of Athens.

Vulcan (Hephaestus): He is the husband of Venus and god of fire, the blacksmith god.

Mars: Mars is the god of war, and the son of Jove and Juno.

Venus (Aphrodite): Venus is the goddess of love, mother of Cupid and of Aeneas. Vulcan is her husband.

Bacchus: He is the god of wine; son of Jove and Semele.

Furies, aka. Fates: Allecto, Megaere, and Tisiphone are three sisters whose function is to avenge and punish. They live in the Underworld.

Medusa: Medusa is one of the three Gorgons.

Atlas: Atlas is a mountain in Northern Africa personified as a giant. He is the son of Iapetus and the father of the Pleiads.

Graiae: The twin daughters of Phorcys are Medusa's guardians. They share an eye between them, and Perseus got to Medusa by stealing the eye from the sisters as they were changing turns to use it.



Pegasus: Pegasus is a winged horse sprouted from the blood of Medusa when Perseus severed her head. His hoof created the spring Hippocrene when it touched the earth.

Proteus: He is a sea god who can change into many forms.

The Muses: The muses are nine sisters who are like patron saints of poetry, song, drama, and other art forms.

Ceres: Ceres is the goddess of agriculture and sister of Jove. Proserpine is her daughter.

Pluto: Pluto is a brother of Jupiter and Neptune and god of the Underworld.

Latona (Leto): She is the mother of twins, Apollo and Diana.

Hecate: She is the goddess of enchantments.

Dawn: She is the personification of the sunrise.

Hunger: She is the personification of hunger.

Hercules: He is the son of Jove and Alcmena who, with his heroic feats, earned the right to immortality.

Ilithya: She is the goddess of childbirth.

Hebe: She is youth.

Isis: She is an Egyptian goddess.

Thetis: She is a sea-nymph, daughter of Nereus, wife of Peleus, and mother of Achilles.

Achilles: He is the son of Peleus and Thetis.

Sleep: He is the personification of sleep.

Rumour: She is the personification of rumor.

Circe: She is a goddess and enchantress, also daughter of the sun.

Aeolus: He is the god of the winds and father of Alcyone.

Cybele: She is the mother of the gods.

Aesculapius: He is Apollo's son, the god of medicine.



Minor Characters

Giants of Earth: These are huge creatures born of earth, fertilized by the blood of Heaven (Uranus), father of Saturn.

Lycaon: Lycaon is an evil man who tried to trick Jove into eating mortal flesh.

Iris: Iris is the rainbow, and is the messenger of the gods. It was believed that the ends of the rainbow gathered water to refill the clouds.

Deucalion and Pyrrha: Deucalion and his wife, Pyrrha, are the only mortals to survive the great flood that Jove sent down to destroy mankind.

Daphne: Daphne is a daughter of the river Peneus.

Io: Io is a Naiad, daughter of the river Inachus.

Argus: Argus is a man with a hundred eyes.

Syrinx: Syrinx is the Naiad Pan chased through the woods.

Phaethon: He is the son of Clymene and Phoebus, the sun god.

Cycnus: He is a kinsman and lover of Phaethon.

Callisto: She is a nymph follower of Diana.

Arcas: He is the son of Callisto conceived when Jove raped her in the forest.

Coronis: Phoebus fell in love with Coronis.

Erichthonius: When Vulcan tried to seduce Athene, his semen fell on her leg and she wiped it onto the earth. Erichthonius is the result.

Aglauros: Aglauros is one of the daughters of Cecrops.

Chiron: Chiron is a centaur -- half man, half-horse. He trains the elite of Greek heroes.

Ocyrhoe: She is the daughter of Chiron, the centaur, who has the gift of prophecy.

Aesculapius: He is the unborn child of Phoebus and Coronis. His father removed him from his dead mother's womb and took him to Chiron to be raised.

Battus: He saw Mercury hide Apollo's herd in the woods.

Herse: She is one of the daughters of Cecrops.

Europa: She is the young daughter of the King of Sidon.



Cadmus: Cadmus is the founding father of Thebes

Harmonia: She is the wife of Cadmus, and daughter of Mars and Venus.

Actaeon: Actaeon is Cadmus' grandson.

Semele: Semele is Cadmus' daughter.

Tiresias: Tiresias is a prophet.

Narcissus: He is the son of the river-god Cephisus and the Naiad Liriope.

Echo: Echo is a nymph in love with Narcissus.

Pentheus: He is a king of Thebes and son of Echion.

Acoetes: He is a follower of Bacchus.

Daughters of Minyas: These women are skeptical about Bacchus' divinity.

Pyramus and Thisbe: These two are lovers kept apart by the great wall that separates their houses.

Leucothoe: She is a daughter of Orchamus, and Phoebus fell in love with her.

Clytie: She is loved by Phoebus and changed to a heliotrope (violet).

Salmacis: She is a pool in Caria and its water nymph.

Hermaphroditus: He is the son of Mercury (Hermes) and Venus (Aphrodite).

Athamas: He is the husband of Ino.

Ino: She is a daughter of Cadmus and wife of Athamas.

Perseus: Perseus is the son of Danae and Jove, who impregnated her through a golden rain.

Andromeda: She is the daughter of Cepheus who is rescued by Perseus.

Phineus: He is Cepheus' brother.

The Pierids: These are nine sisters who challenged the Muses to a talent contest and were changed to magpies.

Proserpine: Proserpine is the daughter of Ceres and Jove, also the wife of Pluto.

Cyane: She is a fountain-nymph changed into water.



Arethusa: Arethusa is a water nymph loved by Alpheus and turned into a spring.

Ascalaphus: He is the son of Acheron and Orphne.

Triptolemus: He is the son of Celeus, King of Eleusis.

Arachne: She is a Lydian girl who is an excellent weaver.

Niobe: She is the wife of Amphion, king of Thebes, and mother of seven sons and seven daughters.

Lycian Peasants: They denied Latona water in their village and she turned them to frogs.

Marsyas: He is a Phrygian satyr and river who challenged Apollo.

Pelops: He is the son of Tantalus and brother of Niobe.

Tantalus: He is Pelops' and Niobe's father. He is sent to the Underworld and his eternal punishment is tantalization. Fruit hangs just above his head and water at his feet, but when he reaches for either, it recedes from his grasp.

Tereus: He is the king of Thrace and Procne's husband.

Procne: She is Pandion's daughter, Philomela's sister, and Tereus' wife.

Philomela: She is Procne's sister.

Boreas: He is the North Wind, and a god.

Orithyia: She is Procris' sister and Boreas' wife.

Jason: He is the leader of the Argonauts and Medea's husband.

Medea: Medea is the daughter Aetes, king of Colchis, and Jason's wife. She is a sorceress.

Aeson: Aeson is Jason's aged father whom Medea restored to youth.

Pelias: He is Aeson's half-brother.

Theseus: He is the son of Aegeus and father of Hippolytus.

Minos: He is the son of Jove and Europa and king of Crete.

Aeacus: He is the king of Aegina, son of Aegina and Jove.

Cephalus: He is a prince of Athens and Procris' husband.



Phocus: He is a son of Aeacus, half-brother to Telemon and Peleus.

Procris: She is a daughter of Erechtheus. Procris married Cephalus.

Scylla: She is the daughter of King Nisus, of Megara.

The Minotaur: Minos' wife cheated on him with a bull, and the half-man, half-bull monster that is born is the Minotaur.

Daedalus: He is the inventor who created the labyrinth and built waxed wings to escape exile. Icarus is his son and Perdix is his nephew.

Ariadne: She is the daughter of Minos who is deserted by Theseus.

Icarus: He is the son of Daedalus.

Perdix: Perdix is Daedalus' nephew who invented the saw and the mathematical compass.

Meleager: He is a prince of Calydon, the son of Oeneus and Althaea.

Atalanta: She is an Arcadian girl loved by Meleager.

Althaea: She is a queen of Calydon and Meleager's mother.

Achelous: He is a river and a river-god.

Philemon and Baucis: They are a poor, old couple who offered gods disguised as strangers all that they had in their home.

Erychthon: He is a sacrilegious king.

Cyane: She is the nymph who gave birth to Caunus and Byblis

Byblis: She is Miletus' daughter who fell in love with her twin brother, Caunus.

Caunus: He is Miletus' son and Byblis' twin brother.

Iphis: She is a Cretan girl, the daughter of Ligdus and Telethusa.

Ligdus: He is Iphis' father.

Telethusa: She is the wife of Ligdus and mother of Iphis.

Orpheus: He is the musician and poet of Thrace, son of Apollo and Calliope, and husband of Eurydice.

Eurydice: She is the wife of Orpheus.



Cyparissus: He is a young boy loved by Apollo and turned into a cypress tree.

Ganymede: He is Jove's cupbearer.

Hyacinth: He is a Spartan boy loved by Apollo.

Propoetides and Crestae: They are races of people transformed by Venus for their scorn.

Pygmalion: He is a sculptor from Cyprus.

Cinyras: He is the son of Pygmalion and the father of Myrrha.

Myrrha: She is the incestuous daughter of Cinyras.

Adonis: He is the son of Myrrha who is loved by Venus.

Atalanta: She is the daughter of King Schoeneus.

Hippomenes: He is the son of Megareus and husband of Atalanta.

Silenus: He is a satyr and guardian of Bacchus.

Midas: He is a king of Phrygia.

Laomedon: He is a king of Troy and father of Priam.

Peleus: He is the husband of Thetis and father of Achilles.

Ceyx: He is a king of Thracis and husband to Alcyone.

Daedalion: He is Ceyx's brother.

Alcyone: She is Ceyx's wife and daughter of Aeolus, the god of the winds.

Aesacus: He is a son of Priam.

Priam: He is the last king of Troy and husband to Hecuba.

Paris: He is a son of Priam and Hecuba, and Hector's brother. He kidnapped Helen and started the Trojan War.

Calchas: He is a Greek soldier who made Iphigenia a sacrifice to Diana.

Agamemnon: He is a king of Mycenae and Greek soldier during Trojan War.

Cycnus: He is a son of Neptune.

Nestor: He is a king of Pylos who is famous for his wisdom and eloquence.



Caeneus: Caenis is a woman turned into a man after Neptune raped her.

Pirithous: He is a friend of Theseus and husband of Hippodame.

Centaur: They are a race of creatures that are half-man, half-horse.

Periclymenus: He is Nestor's brother who is killed by Hercules.

Hector: He is Paris' brother and Priam's son.

Ajax: He is a son of Telamon and a great Greek hero of the Trojan War.

Ulysses (Odysseus): He is a king of Ithaca and a great soldier of the Trojan War.

Philoctetes: He is a friend of Hercules and keeper of Hydra's arrows.

Hecuba: She is Priam's wife.

Polydorus: He is Priam and Hecuba's youngest son.

Polymestor: He is a king of Thrace and Priam's son-in-law

Polyxena: She is Priam and Hecuba's daughter

Aeneas: He is the son of Venus and Anchises. He is a Trojan hero.

Scylla: Once a beautiful girl, she became a sea-monster and then a cliff.

Galatea: She is the sea-nymph love of Acis and Polyphemus.

Polyphemus: He is a giant Cyclops who loved Galatea.

Acis: He is the son of a river and love of Galatea.

Glaucus: He is a fisherman transformed to merman.

Dido: She is a queen of Carthage who killed herself because Aeneas left her.

Sibyl: She is the priestess of Apollo at Cumae. She is also a mortal who lived for centuries because she wished to have as many birthdays as grains of sand in a small pile. Her body withered away as she aged.

Acheamenides: He is a shipmate of Ulysses who'd been rescued by Aeneas.

Macareus: He is a shipmate of Ulysses.

Picus: He is a king of Latium and son of Saturn.

Turnus: He is a king of Rutuli of Latium.



Diomede: He is a Greek hero and friend of Ulysses.

Pomona : She is a wood nymph of Latium and wife of Vertumnus.

Vertumnus: He is an Italian deity, the god of the changing seasons.

Romulus: He is the son of Mars and father of Roman people.

Numa: He is the second king of Rome.

Myscelus: He is the founder of Crotona.

Pythagoras: He is a famous Greek philosopher.

Hippolytus: He is Theseus' son.

Cipus: He is a legendary Roman praetor.

Julius Caesar: He is a Roman statesman.

Augustus: He is the first of the Roman Emperors.



Objects/Places

Styx River: The river Styx flows through the underworld, and a vow made by that river is binding even for the immortals.

Python: Python was a great snake created by Earth against her will after the flood that destroyed mankind. Python stretched across an entire mountainside, and it took a thousand of Apollo's arrows to kill the serpent. To honor his triumph over the beast, Apollo instated the sacred games known as Pythian, which are held at Delphi every four years since 6 B.C.

Laurel Tree: Daphne was transformed to a laurel tree trying to escape Apollo, and so that became his sacred tree.

Naiad: Naiads are water nymphs, the daughters of rivers.

Syrinx: It is a pipe reed that Pan created for music when the nymph he chased was transformed to marsh reeds.

Peacock: The peacock is a bird sacred to Juno and the myth claims that when Mercury killed Argus, Juno gathered the slain man's hundred eyes and put them in the feathers of her sacred bird.

Amber: Phaethon's sisters mourned him so long that they became poplar trees and the tears that they wept for him formed amber.

Swan: Cycnus, Phaethon's kinsman and lover, also mourned him grievously and he became a swan, a bird that trusts neither Jove, nor the sky because of the great lightning bolt that destroyed Phaethon.

Great Bear and Little Bear constellations: These neighboring constellations at the North Pole are the mother and son duo, Callisto and Arcas. Callisto had been transformed into a bear when she gave birth to Arcas, a son of Jove. Jove made them constellations in order to prevent Arcas, a hunter, from killing his mother.

Crow: In saving a beautiful young girl from the advances of Neptune, Athene turned her into a crow so that she could fly away.

Mare: Ocyrhoe, daughter of Chiron, is a prophetess who is turned into a mare after foreseeing the great healing power of Aesculapius and her own father's death.

Narcissus: The narcissus is a flower named after the young man who fell in love with his own reflection and pined away because he could not reach the object of his love.

Mulberry Tree: Pyramus and Thisbe planned to meet under the mulberry tree, and that is where they died. Their blood stained the white berries to the burgundy color they now maintain.



Frankincense: Phoebus fell in love with Leucothoe, but when her father heard a rumor of their affair, he killed the girl. Phoebus could not save her, but when she was prepared for burial, he poured nectar on her body and she became the fragrant frankincense bush.

Violet: Phoebus turned Clytie to a heliotrope, or violet.

Bats: The daughters of Minyas are turned into bats for denying that Bacchus is a true god.

Underworld (Hades): The Underworld is where the spirits of dead mortals go.

Coral: Coral first formed when Perseus wrapped Medusa's severed head in fresh seaweed. The plant became hard when it came in contact with Medusa's head.

Magpies: The nine Pierid sisters are turned into magpies for their insurrection against the nine Muses.

Screech Owl: Prosperine turned Ascalapus into a screech owl for telling that she has eaten seven pomegranate seeds.

Lynx: Ceres turned Lyncus into a Lynx when he tried to kill Triptolemus.

Spider: Arachne, a mortal, challenged Athene to a weaving contest. Athene turned her into a spider.

Frogs: The Lycian peasants denied Latona a drink from their pool of water, and so she turned them to frogs.

Nightingale: Philomela is transformed into a nightingale.

Swallow: Procne is changed to a swallow.

Hoopoe: Tereus is changed to a bird called a hoopoe.

Golden Fleece: Athamas' two children by his first wife, Nephele (Cloud), are threatened by their stepmother, Ino, daughter of Cadmus who founded Thebes. Nepehle rescued her children, and put them on the back of a golden fleeced ram. In their flight, Helle (Nephele's daughter) fell from the ram's back and drowned at what is now called the Hellespont. Phrixus, Helle's brother, came to Colchis and sacrificed the ram in gratitude for his escape. The Golden Fleece remained at Colchis until Jason took it away.

Osprey: King Nisus, Scylla's father, is transformed to an osprey when she kills him.

Partridge: Daedalus' nephew whom he'd killed by throwing him from the Acropolis becomes a partridge.

Guinea Fowl: Meleager is turned into a guinea fowl after his own mother kills him because he has killed her brothers.



Cornucopia: The horn Hercules broke from Achelous' head when he was a bull is made into the horn of plenty by Achelous' water nymphs.

Weasel: Galanthis, Alcmena's servant, is transformed into a weasel because she tricked the goddess Ilithyia.

Lotus Tree: Dryope is changed to a lotus tree for picking blossoms from a tree that was once a nymph.

Cypress: Once Cyparissus, a young boy loved by Apollo. The boy begged to die when he accidentally killed a sacred stag. He is changed to the cypress tree.

Hyacinth: Apollo named this flower for a boy he loved who was killed by a discus that Apollo had thrown.

Harlots: Venus invented prostitution when she turned the Propoetides into harlots to shame them for scorning her divinity.

Myrrh Tree: Myrrha is transformed to a myrrh tree after her incestuous relationship with her father resulted in pregnancy and she fled his home.

Lion: Atalanta and Hippomenes are changed to lions for defiling a sacred shrine.

Anemone: Venus made Adonis an anemone when a boar killed him.

Maenads: They are frenzied women who worshiped Bacchus.

Hawk: Apollo transformed Daedalion into a hawk.

King Fisher: Ceyx and Alcyone are transformed into these birds that mate for life and live on the water.

Elysium: Elysium is The Islands of the Blessed, like Heaven.

Dog: Hecuba is transformed into a dog after she clawed Polymestor's eyes out.

Dew Drops: The morning dew is Aurora's tears for her son, Memnon, killed by Hercules.

Doves: Bacchus turns Anius' daughters to doves.

Charybdis: Charybdis is a whirlpool across from the treacherous cliff known as Scylla.

Woodpecker: Circe turned King Picus into a woodpecker because he refused her love.

Phoenix: A phoenix is a bird that rises from the ashes of its deceased predecessor.



Quotes

Quote 1: "in the whole world the countenance / Of nature was the same, all one, well named / Chaos, a raw and undivided mass, / Naught but a lifeless bulk, with warring seeds / Of ill-joined elements compressed together." Book 1 -- The Creation, lines 7-11

Quote 2: "Third in succession came the race of bronze, / Of fiercer temperament, more readily / Disposed to war, yet free from wickedness." Book 1 -- The Ages of Mankind, line 125-7

Quote 3: "'Leave / My temple, veil your heads, loosen your robes, / And cast behind you your great mother's bones.'" Book 1 -- Deucalion and Pyrrha, line 376-9

Quote 4: "a strange new bird, a swan, that fears / To trust the sky or Jove, remembering / The unfairness of that fiery bolt he hurled." Book 2 -- Phaethon, line 376-8

Quote 5: "'Grow strong, dear boy, / Healer of all the world. Often to you / Men shall owe health and life, and yours shall be / The right to win again departed souls, / And, though you dare this once in heaven's despite, / Jove's bolt will thwart that gift a second time. / You, now divine, shall be a lifeless corpse, / And from a corpse become divine again, / And twice you shall renew your destiny.'" Book 2 -- Ocyrhoe, line 640-8

Quote 6: "'Was that a sacred snake / My spear transfixed when I had made my way / From Sidon's walls and scattered on the soil / The serpent's teeth, those seeds of magic power? / If it is he the jealous gods avenge, With wrath so surely aimed, I pray that I / May be a snake and stretch along the ground.'" Book 4 -- The Transformation of Cadmus, line 571-6

Quote 7: "'I'm too great to suffer Fortune's blows; / Much she may take, yet more than much she'll leave. / My blessings banish fear.'" Book 6 -- Niobe, line 91-3

Quote 8: "'You'll pay my score one day. I'll shed my shame / And shout what you have done. If I've the chance, / I'll walk among the crowds: or, if I'm held / Locked in the woods, my voice shall fill the woods / And move the rocks to pity.'" Book 6 -- Tereus, Procne, and Philomela, line 46-50

Quote 9: "'Grant, / Thous best of sires, so many citizens / To me and stock again my empty walls!'" Book 7 -- Minos, Aeacus, The Plague at Aegina, and The Myrmidons, line 26-8

Quote 10: "'Take care / To fly a middle course, lest if you sink / Too low the waves may weight your feathers; if / Too high, the heat may burn them. Fly half-way / Between the two.'" Book 8 -- Daedalus and Icarus, line 198-202



Quote 11: "What shall I do? / Before my eyes I see my brothers' wounds, / The picture of that slaughter -- yet, again, / A mother's loyal love rends my resolve." Book 8 -- Althaea and Meleager, line 504-8

Quote 12: "Rumour who talks and loves to tangle true / With false, and from near nothing flourishes / On her own lies" Book 9 -- Hercules, Nessus, and Deianira, line 141-3

Quote 13: "To you (Pluto) are owed / Ourselves and all creation: a brief while / We linger; then we hasten, late or soon, / To one abode; here one road leads us all; / Here in the end is home; over humankind / Your kingdom keeps the longest sovereignty. / She too, when ripening years reach their due term, / Shall own your rule. The favour that I ask / Is but to enjoy her love" Book X -- Orpheus and Eurydice, line 31-9

Quote 14: "Long to our love seems every waiting hour, / But by my father's radiance I swear, / If only the Fates let me, I'll return / Before the moon twice fills her silver orb" Book 11 -- Ceyx and Alcyone, line 52-5

Quote 15: "This wrong you've done me needs an enormous wish -- / Put pain like that beyond my power. Grant me / To cease to be a woman -- everything / That gift will be to me." Book 12 -- Caenis, line 201-4

Quote 16: "He who destroyed your many brothers, / He destroyed you, Achilles, doom of Troy / And my bereaver. But when Paris' arrows / And Phoebus' felled him, now for sure, I said, / We need not fear Achilles: now again / I had to fear him: in the sepulchre / His ashes raged against our race; entombed, / We felt him as our foe. For him I bore / My children! Mighty Ilium lies low. / In tragedy our nation's ruin reached / Its end; but end it has. For me alone / Troy lives; my woes stream on." Book 13 -- Hecuba, Polyxena, and Polydorus, line 501-10

Quote 17: "seek / Their ancient mother and ancestral shores." Book 13 -- The Pilgrimage of Aeneas, line 376-77

Quote 18: "Why prefer you Acis' arms to mine? / Acis may please himself and please, alas, / You, Galatea. Give me but the chance, / He'll find my strength no smaller than my size. / I'll gouge his living guts, I'll rend his limbs / And strew them in the fields and in the sea." Book 13 -- Acis and Galatea, line 863-8

Quote 19: "hates a stony heart." Book 14 -- Pomona and Vertumnus, line 697

Quote 20: "There is no death -- no death, but only change / And innovation; what men call birth / Is but a different new beginning; death / Is but to cease to be the same." Book 15--The Doctrines of Pythagoras, line 72-5



Topic Tracking: Revenge

Book 1: The Ages of Mankind

Revenge 1: Revenge is a common theme throughout *Metamorphoses* because it's usually the motivation for whatever transformation the stories are explaining. The gods are constantly avenging themselves and changing mortals into birds or beasts to prove their superiority. The first instance of a revenge transformation is when Jove turns Lycaon into a wolf as a punishment because he was skeptical that Jove was a god.

Book 1: Io

Revenge 2: Juno gets revenge against Io even though Jove raped the girl. Juno is a jealous goddess who takes much of her anger out on the mortal women her husband rapes. She can't reproach Jove because he is the chief god, so she gets her revenge against those in whom he's interested.

Book 2: Mercury and Battus

Revenge 3: Mercury tested Battus' word, and then when Battus didn't keep his promise, Mercury zapped him. The odd thing is that Mercury seemed to enjoy his revenge against Battus. By testing the man's promise, it's almost as if he were hoping that Battus would break his word.

Book 2: The Envy of Aglauros

Revenge 4: Athene bided her time to get Aglauros back for breaking her promise to the goddess. Rather than immediately turning the girl into a bird or beast, Athene let Aglauros' cunning put her in the perfect position for Athene to get revenge. Athene didn't even have to do the dirty work. She sent Envy to infect the girl and then Mercury is the one who changed Aglauros to stone. Athene's revenge was very calculated.

Book 3: Diana and Actaeon

Revenge 5: Diana's revenge here is ironic and particularly brutal. Whether or not Actaeon saw her naked, changing him to a deer and having him ripped to pieces by his own hounds seems to be an excessive punishment. Diana does that a great deal. She is not a very forgiving or compassionate goddess. Bacchus avenges himself in a similar manner with Pentheus later in Book 3.

Book 6: Arachne, Niobe, The Lycian Peasants, and Marsyas

Revenge 6: In each of these stories, mortals either challenged or offended the gods. As punishment for their insurrection, each of the bold mortals was transformed from their human shape.

Book 6: Pelops



Revenge 7: Tantalus' punishment is one of the well-known stories of the Underworld and a fitting consequence of his crime. The story is also the origin of the word "tantalize".

Book 9: The Death and Apotheosis of Hercules

Revenge 8: Nessus had his revenge on Hercules because he had tricked Deianira into believing that the poisoned shirt was a talisman for love. The shirt destroyed Hercules' flesh, but the centaur's revenge wasn't total because Hercules was made immortal.

Book 9: The Birth of Hercules

Revenge 9: Juno bribed the goddess of childbirth to prevent Alcmena from delivering her baby, Hercules. Juno was jealous because Jove was the baby's father, and so she wanted to make it as difficult as possible for Alcmena. Ironically, Alcmena's servant, Galanthis, tricked the birth goddess, and Alcmena delivered the child. In retribution for the servant's deception, the birth goddess turned Galanthis into a weasel.

Book 14: Scylla and Glaucus

Revenge 10: Although Scylla scorned Glaucus because she didn't think him handsome, he still loved her and wanted her to love him. Unfortunately, he made Circe mad because he rejected her for Scylla, and so Circe turned Scylla into a sea-monster. She got vengeance against them both at the same time.



Topic Tracking: Violence

Book 1: Io

Violence 1: Violence occurs in almost every story in *Metamorphoses* mostly in connection with vengeance. Rape is also part of that violence. Here Jove forces himself upon Io and goes to great lengths to have his way with her despite her disinterest.

Book 2: The Raven and The Crow

Violence 2: Phoebus rashly kills his lover for her rumored infidelity and too late to save her, he finds out that she's carrying his child. He regrets his extreme violence, but there's nothing he can do to save her.

Book 3: Cadmus

Violence 3: When Cadmus planted the teeth of the great serpent and armed men sprung from the ground, a bloody battle took place. Although the notes summarize the violence and only present the outcome, Ovid gives a detailed description of the blood and gore of the battle as he does in several other moments throughout the poem. Such violence really isn't necessary, but it seems that Ovid likes to go all out when writing a battle scene.

Book 3: Pentheus and Bacchus

Violence 4: Both Bacchus and previously, Diana, get grisly revenge against mortals who cross them. Rather than turn them to stone, the gods both have the mortals who've angered them ripped to pieces. Bacchus had Pentheus' mother and sisters kill him, while Diana used Actaeon's hunting hounds to kill Actaeon. This is a gory way to get back at someone.

Book 5: Perseus' Fight in the Palace of Cepheus

Violence 5: The description of this battle goes on for pages and pages, but the summary is just a narration of the outcomes of the fight. Ovid goes into great detail about how most of the characters were killed, and the story is extremely violent.

Book 6: Marsyas

Violence 6: Apollo ripped Marsyas skin off because the satyr challenged him to a pipe-playing contest. That seems a rather extreme punishment for his crime.

Book 6: Tereus, Procne, and Philomela

Violence 7: This story is particularly gruesome because it contains kidnapping, rape, mutilation, and cannibalism.



Book 8: Althaea and Meleager

Violence 8: Meleager commits the first crime by killing his uncles, but it is shocking and gruesome the way that his mother burns him alive by throwing the brand that holds his life force into a fire.

Book 9: The Death and Apotheosis of Hercules

Violence 9: The way that Hercules dies is gross. His skin is burned away because of Hydra's poison that is on the shirt Deianira sent him. So as the poison disintegrates Hercules' mortal body, he becomes immortal.

Book 11: The Death of Orpheus

Violence 10: Orpheus is ripped limb from limb by the Maenads, Bacchus' followers, because he'd only loved young boys since his wife died. Ovid describes the way that his body parts were scattered, and it's a very gruesome scene.

Book 12: The Battle of the Lapiths and Centaurs

Violence 11: This is another of Ovid's lengthy and vivid battle scenes.



Topic Tracking: Women

Book 1: Io

Women 1: The role of women in *Metamorphoses* is very extreme. Either they are the virginal girls running from the gods who want to rape them, or they are malicious and vengeful. Io provides the perfect contrast of both characters because Io is the virginal water nymph and Juno is the bitch goddess who gets revenge on the girl despite the fact that Jove forced himself on her. The goddess always avenges herself against the women that Jove dallies with in spite of the fact that they didn't want anything to do with him in the first place.

Book 2: Callisto

Women 2: Here Callisto, the rape victim, is abused further by Diana, who ostracizes her, and then, of course, Juno, who transforms her into a bear to get her back for being attractive enough to make Jove rape her.

Book 4: The Sun in Love

Women 3: In this story, Clytie, a jealous woman, is responsible for the death of Phoebus' new lover. These stories constantly play women against each other. Juno is always seeking revenge against the women her husband has affairs with and mortal women are vying for the attention of other gods. Because of this, the women who are not victims in these stories often come across as petty and malicious because they are seeking to get back at some other woman.

Book 4: Salmacis and Hermaphroditus

Women 4: Here is a different sort of woman. Salmacis is aggressive, and she attacks Hermaphroditus instead of being attacked by him. Unfortunately, although sex is what she wants, she ends up becoming a permanent part of Hermaphroditus. Jove doesn't find himself in these situations when he wants to rape someone, but maybe that has more to do with him being a god rather than a man.

Book 6: Arachne

Women 5: A new type of woman appears in Book VI. No longer the victim or the jealous lover, some of the female characters in Book VI, Arachne and Niobe in particular, are boastful mortals who perceive themselves as greater than the gods. Although their presumption results in either their downfall or transformation, the swagger of these women is vastly different from the helplessness of some of the female characters that have appeared before now.

Book 7: Medea and Jason, Medea and Aeson...



Women 6: Medea is a well-known woman of mythology. She was a sorceress, and she was also ruthless. To get what she wanted, whether love or revenge, she would do anything. These stories show the depths of her cruelty by highlighting the way she betrayed her father for Jason's love, killed Jason's enemy, and then killed her own children when he fell in love with another woman. She is one of the most powerful women in mythology.

Book 8: Althaea and Meleager

Women 7: Althaea is put in a tough spot when she has to choose between avenging the deaths of her brother and saving her son. Because Meleager killed his uncles, she would have to kill him to avenge their deaths. It's a difficult decision for a mother to make, but Althaea decides to avenge her brothers, and so she destroys the brand that holds Meleager's life force, thereby killing her own son. There is a bit of Medea in that story.

Book 9: The Birth of Hercules

Women 8: Galanthis, Alcmena's servant girl, proved to be too smart a girl for her own good. Although she helped Alcmena deliver Hercules, the servant was changed into a weasel because she'd outsmarted Ilithyia, the goddess of childbirth.

Book 9: Byblis

Women 9: A new type of female character is introduced with Byblis and recurs later with Myrrha. The incestuous longing of these women is another way of showing women as evil and unclean. When these characters are raped even Juno sees it as their fault because their beauty attracted the gods. When the women are sexually aggressive or cunning, they are portrayed as wicked. Now we have the incestuous theme that is always initiated by the female character.

Book 12: Caenis

Women 10: After Neptune rapes her, she finds the solution to her problem, which is her gender, and she wishes to be a man so that she won't be victimized any more. There is some impressive truth about the role of women throughout these stories that is revealed in that one wish.



Book 1: The Creation

Before land, sea, and sky existed, "in the whole world the countenance / Of nature was the same, all one, well named / Chaos, a raw and undivided mass, / Naught but a lifeless bulk, with warring seeds / Of ill-joined elements compressed together." Book 1 -- The Creation, line 7-11 All of the elements of the universe were at odds with one another until a god resolved the conflict. He created Earth and the sky. Then man was made perhaps by the great Creator, or perhaps the earth so recently separated from the heavens maintained some of that ethereal essence and Prometheus used that earth to mold man. Thus earth and mankind were created.



Book 1: The Ages of Mankind

During the golden age, mankind lived in harmony with nature. The earth provided all that man needed to live, and there was no need to farm or to work. War was unknown and all men were faithful and righteous, content with the land that they knew and unmoved to seek out new territory. The golden age was a constant springtime of pleasure, peace, and contentment.

When Saturn was overthrown by his son, Jupiter, the silver age began. Jupiter (Jove) introduced man to summer, autumn, and winter, and these climate changes forced men to seek shelter and to harvest the land for their food.

"Third in succession came the race of bronze, / Of fiercer temperament, more readily / Disposed to war, yet free from wickedness." Book 1 -- The Ages of Mankind, line 125-7

Treachery, deceit, and greed marked the Iron Age that followed. Men began to seek out new territories, mine for wealth, and battle each other for the spoils of war. Earth was a realm of murder and mayhem and the last of the immortals fled, but even the heavens were not safe. In their lust for power, giants born of the earth piled Mount Pelion on top of Mount Ossa in an attempt to reach Mount Olympus, the domain of the gods. Jove struck them down with his lightning and destroyed them, but it is said that their remains were fashioned into human form just as evil as the other men of the age.

Jove was so disgusted with the depravity of mankind that he called a meeting of the gods and goddesses to determine what to do with the degenerate mortals. Jove swore by the river Styx that he had tried everything to purge the evil from mankind, but that the only solution was to destroy the human race in order to save the earth itself.

Jove told the collect of immortals how he had descended from Olympus and walked the earth in mortal disguise to determine the severity of mankind's ruin. He went to the palace of Lycaon, where the mortal greeted the disguised god with disbelief and scorn. Although Jove had made his true identity obvious to the mortals, Lycaon tried to feed him the boiled flesh of a mortal man to test whether or not Jove was a god. As a punishment for Lycaon's impudent action, Jove destroyed the man's home and turned him into a wolf.

Topic Tracking: Revenge 1

Jove sentenced all mankind to death for their sins and promised that a greater race of humanity would be created after this first race was destroyed. He sent a flood to wipe out the first race of mankind.



Book 1: The Flood

Jove locked the north wind in a cave and sent out the south wind to bring storms. Iris, the rainbow and messenger of the gods, refilled the rain clouds, and Neptune, god of the seas and brother to Jove, called forth the rivers and oceans to rise from their beds and cover the globe. The world was covered in water and the flood destroyed everything living.

Book 1: Deucalion and Pyrrha

Deucalion and Pyrrha were the only survivors of the flood. Their raft grounded at the peak of Mount Parnassus, and they immediately gave thanks to the gods of the mountain and to the prophetess Themis, guardian of the oracle. Because Deucalion and his wafer (wife?) were righteous, Jove made the storms abate. Neptune called the waters back into their banks and Earth was restored.

When the mortals realized that they were the only remaining humans on earth, they were daunted by the prospect of repopulating the earth. Desiring to do the gods' will, Deucalion and his wife went to an oracle to seek guidance from Themis. The couple asked the goddess how to restore mankind to the earth, and the goddess told them: "Leave / My temple, veil your heads, loosen your robes, / And cast behind you your great mother's bones." Book 1 -- Deucalion and Pyrrha, line 376-9 This command baffled Pyrrha because throwing her mother's bones would be disrespectful to her mother's ghost, and so Deucalion decided that Themis meant that Earth is their great mother and her bones are stones. So Deucalion and Pyrrha followed the command, and as the stones landed behind them, they lost their rigid shape and grew into mortal forms. The stones that Deucalion had thrown became men and the stones that Pyrrha threw behind her became women. The warmth of the sun and the moisture of the recently flooded earth combined to sprout new forms of life and to rekindle other life forms that the great flood had destroyed.

In this production of life, the earth even formed a great serpent never seen before. Men called this monstrous snake, Python, and it sprawled across an entire mountainside striking fear into the hearts of mortals everywhere. Apollo, the Archer god, destroyed the enormous snake with a thousand of his arrows, and then to ensure that man would not forget the great feat he had performed, Apollo founded the sacred games known as Pythian.



Book 1: Apollo and Daphne

Apollo chided Cupid for using a bow to ignite love. Apollo claimed that the bow was his creation and best suited for his purposes, not the games of the love. Cupid avenged his slighted honor by shooting Apollo with a golden-pointed arrow that induces love and shooting Daphne, daughter of the river Peneus, with a lead-pointed arrow that repels love. Apollo fell in love with Daphne, but she wanted to be like Diana, virgin goddess of the hunt. So when Apollo called out to her, she ran away from him. He chased her and kept trying to explain who he was and that he was in love with her, but Daphne refused to stop running. As she ran through the brambles and brush of the forest, her skin was scratched, and Apollo called out to her to run carefully so that she would not hurt herself. Apollo followed only a few steps behind her and she was losing strength. Then she saw her father the river ahead and called out to him to change her and destroy her beauty that had brought such a plight upon her. Peneus changed his daughter into a laurel tree. Apollo still loved her and because she could not be his wife, he made the laurel his sacred tree. He wrapped his bow and lyre in laurel wreaths and wore it in his hair. He also made it the honorary decoration of the conquering lords of Rome.



Book 1: Io

Io, daughter of the river Inachus, caught Jove's eye one day as she was returning from her father's stream. When Jove descended to possess her, she ran into the forest. Although he told her who he was, she wouldn't stop running, so he covered the earth in darkness so that she wouldn't be able to run away from him. In the artificial night, he ravished Io.

Topic Tracking: Violence 1

Juno, Jove's wife and sister, noticed the fake night that darkened earth and knew that her husband was up to something, so she descended from Olympus and dispersed the clouds. Jove turned Io into a white heifer so that he wouldn't be caught in his infidelity. Juno, though suspicious, couldn't help but admire the beautiful animal, and she asked for it as a gift. Knowing that if he refused to give the heifer to his wife she would become suspicious, Jove agreed. Juno gave the heifer to Argus, a man with a hundred eyes, to keep watch over her. Day and night Argus watched over Io and she was miserable in her new form. During the day when she was allowed to graze she wandered to her father's stream and there she followed him and her sisters, but none recognized her until she scratched her name into the dirt with her hoof. Her father was distraught at the fate of his daughter, and Argus separated the family. He took Io to a distant field where he could sit on a mountaintop and guard her. Jove felt sorry for Io, and so he sent his son, Mercury, to kill Argus.

Mercury descended to Earth and wore a shepherd's disguise. He played a pipe so enchanting that Argus invited the stranger to share the shade with him. Mercury sat with Argus for hours and told stories and played soothing music on the reed pipe to lull the guard to sleep, but although many of the eyes closed, Argus managed to keep a few eyes open to watch Io.

Argus asked where the reed pipe had come from because he'd never seen one before, and so Mercury told him the story of how Pan fell in love with a Naiad named Syrinx. Syrinx was a chaste nymph who was often mistaken for Diana, the goddess of the hunt, because she was also a beautiful and chaste huntress. Pan saw her and desired her, but she ran away from him. She was running through the woods when she came to a river, and she begged her sisters, the water nymphs, to change her from her human form so that she could escape Pan. When Pan reached her, she had been changed into marsh reeds, and he sighed out his disappointment. The sigh played through the reeds like a song, and so Pan waxed together reeds of different length and made a pipe that bears the name syrinx after the Naiad he lost.

Argus had fallen asleep before Mercury made it through the story, so the god sealed his sleep and then lopped off his head. Juno took Argus' eyes and put them into the feathers of her bird, the peacock. She was furious, and so to get revenge against Io, her rival, she put a spell of madness on the heifer. Io ran around the world terrified until she came to the banks of the Nile. She grieved so deeply that Jove begged his wife to



remove the spell. He swore on the river Styx that he would not be unfaithful with Io again. Juno was satisfied, and so she returned Io to her human form. Io became a goddess and bore a son named Epaphus from the seed of Jove.

Topic Tracking: Revenge 2

Topic Tracking: Women 1



Book 2: Phaethon

Epaphus was friends with Phaethon, son of Clymene. Clymene told Phaethon that his father was the sun god, Phoebus or Apollo, but the boy wanted proof. Phaethon journeyed to the palace of the sun in Ethiopia to ask the sun god for proof that he was the boy's father. Phoebus vowed on the river Styx that as Phaethon's father, he would grant him his heart's desire. Unfortunately, Phaethon's wish was to drive his father's chariot across the sky. Powerful, fiery horses pulled Phoebus's chariot and their journey across the sky from east to west is what provided sunlight to the earth each day. Phoebus tried to dissuade his son because of the grave danger of the journey, but Phaethon wouldn't give up his wish, and so Phoebus had to agree because he'd made a binding vow to his son.

Phaethon took the horses up into the sky and the chariot raced out of control because the boy couldn't control the horses. Weaving throughout the constellations and up to the apex of the sun's journey, the horses ran wild through the sky leaving a trail of fire behind them that dried the rivers of the earth and evaporated the oceans. The heat turned the skin of the Aethiops black and created the vast Sahara desert. Even the heavens were in flames. The earth cracked and trembled in pain and Mother Earth cried out to Jove for help. Jove could not make it rain because all the water had disappeared, so he hurled a lightning bolt to knock Phaethon and the chariot from the sky. The bolt extinguished the great fire and killed Phaethon.

Phaethon's body was buried in a tomb in that foreign land, and his mother and three sisters set out to find the tomb. When they reached his burial place, the women mourned there so long that the girls turned into poplar trees and their tears formed amber.

Cycnus, Phaethon's kinsman and lover, left his home and came to Phaethon's tomb to mourn him among the poplar grove of Phaethon's sisters. There the man grieved until he was transformed into "a strange new bird, a swan, that fears / To trust the sky or Jove, remembering / The unfairness of that fiery bolt he hurled." Book 2 -- Phaethon, line 376-8

Phoebus was so distraught over his son's death that he refused to drive the chariot of the sun anymore. He was angry that Jove had killed Phaethon. For a day the earth went without the light of the sun. Finally Jove forced Phoebus to drive the chariot again.

Book 2: Callisto

Jove went through the heavens and earth repairing the damage that the great fire had done. While he was on Earth, he saw a nymph, one of Diana's chaste followers, and fell in love. Disguising himself as Diana, he approached Callisto. She greeted him warmly believing him to be her favored goddess, but when he kissed her savagely, she knew that he was someone else in disguise. She fought against Jove, but he overpowered her and had his way with her before disappearing.

Soon after, Diana and her followers passed by and Callisto tried to hide the shame of her violation. For nine months she kept her secret hidden until one day when Diana and her nymphs were going swimming in a stream. Callisto was reluctant to undress, and so the other nymphs ripped her clothes off. When they saw her pregnant body, Diana banished her from their cult. Callisto bore a son, Arcas, and Juno was furious. She'd been waiting to exact her revenge, and so when the nymph gave birth to a boy, jealous Juno transformed Callisto into a bear.

The changed woman roamed the woods and countryside with the body of a bear and the mind of a woman until her son was 16 years old. They encountered each other in the woods, and Callisto recognized her son. She stared at him intensely, and this frightened the boy because he had no idea that the bear staring him down was his mother. Arcas raised his javelin to kill the animal, but Jove stopped his hand. To prevent this crime from occurring, the greatest of gods swept both Callisto the bear and her son, Arcas, into the sky and made them neighboring constellations, the Great Bear and the Little Bear.

Juno saw this and was furious because Jove had made one of his paramours immortal in the stars, but there was nothing she could do about it.

Topic Tracking: Women 2

Book 2: The Raven and The Crow

The raven was once a white bird, but his tongue was his undoing. The story is that Coronis was Phoebus' love, but the raven discovered that she was unfaithful to the sun god. As he was winging his way to tell Phoebus the bad news, the crow warned that he might be better off keeping his beak shut.

The crow had been in a similar situation with Athene, and tattling had not served her well. When Vulcan had made an attempt to seduce chaste Athene, he had ejaculated on her leg. The semen she wiped onto the ground combined with the earth to produce Erichthonius. She hid the child in a sealed basket and gave the basket to the three daughters of Cecrops on the condition that they were not to open it. After Athene left them, the crow stayed behind to see if they kept their promise, and of the three, Aglauros scornfully broke her word. Inside the basket she saw the baby, and she knew Athene's secret. The crow rushed away to tell her goddess what she knew. Athene banished the prattling crow, and this shocked the bird because Athene had transformed the girl into a crow to begin with.

Before she became a crow, she had been a beautiful girl pursued by men. One day as she walked along the beach, the sea god, Neptune, saw her and fell in love. When she was not willing to give herself to him, he tried to force her. As she ran across the beach, the sand kept hindering her escape and so she cried out for help. Athene, also a virgin, pitied her plight and transformed her into a bird so that she could escape the sea god. She and Athene were close companions until the goddess banished the crow and put her in rank lower than that of the owl, a girl transformed to a bird for her incestuous desire for her own father.

The raven ignored the crow's warning and sped to Phoebus to tell of his love's betrayal, and Phoebus immediately acted out and shot her through the heart with an arrow. As she died, she told him of his son that she carried in her womb that would now die with her because of his rash actions. Phoebus was heartbroken, but nothing could be done to save Coronis. Before her body was burned on the funeral pyre, Phoebus took the unborn child from her womb and gave him to Chiron, the noble centaur and tutor of Greek heroes, to raise. And although the raven had been right, Phoebus turned him black and forever exiled him from the breed of white birds.

Topic Tracking: Violence 2



Book 2: Ocyrhoe

Ocyrhoe was Chiron's daughter born of a water nymph, and she had the gift of prophecy. She came to her father's cave and saw Phoebus's son, Aesculapius. She told him, "Grow strong, dear boy, / Healer of all the world. Often to you / Men shall owe health and life, and yours shall be / The right to win again departed souls, / And, though you dare this once in heaven's despite, / Jove's bolt will thwart that gift a second time. / You, now divine, shall be a lifeless corpse, / And from a corpse become divine again, / And twice you shall renew your destiny." Book 2 -- Ocyrhoe, line 640-8

Ocyrhoe also predicted that her father, an immortal, would be granted death by the other gods because the pain of a serpent's venom would torment him. Before she could finish her prophecy, she turned into a mare.



Book 2: Mercury and Battus

Chiron had called out to Apollo to help his daughter, but Apollo was in a far away pasture disguised as a shepherd and thinking thoughts of love. While he was thus distracted, the flock in his charge wandered away. Mercury, prankster of the gods, stole the herd and drove them into the woods where they were hidden from their shepherd. The only witness to his action was an old man named Battus, which meant "chatterbox." Mercury offered the old man a cow for his silence, and the man assured him that a stone would speak sooner than he would. To test him, Mercury pretended to leave and then disguised himself. He returned to Battus and offered him a cow and a bull for information on the missing herd. The man quickly complied without realizing the trick, and in punishment for his betrayal, Mercury turned Battus' heart to stone.

Topic Tracking: Revenge 3



Book 2: The Envy of Aglauros

While Mercury was flying over Athens after hiding Apollo's herd, he saw a beautiful girl taking part in the festival of Pallas Athene. She was one of the daughters of Cecrops, Herse. Mercury entered Cecrops' palace and Aglauros, the faithless sister who had broken her vow to Athene, questioned his identity and his intent. When he told her that he was in love with her sister, she agreed to help him win Herse, but only if he paid her a large sum of gold. Because the god did not have the gold with him, she chased him from the palace. Athene saw all that was happening and decided to get her revenge against Aglauros for her betrayal. Athene went to foul Envy's rank hovel and told her to infect Aglauros with her poison and Envy obeyed.

When Mercury came the next day to see Herse, Aglauros blocked the doorway and would not let him in. She was jealous of the god's affection for her sister, and she swore that she would not move until he was forced away. After she uttered those words, Mercury transformed her into a statue, and her dark and evil thoughts stained the statue's stone.

Topic Tracking: Revenge 4



Book 2: Jupiter and Europa

Jove (Jupiter) sent his son Mercury down to earth in the kingdom of Sidon. Mercury had to move the royal herd closer to the shore where the king's daughter, Europa, played. While Mercury was moving the herd, Jove made himself a great, white bull. He gently lured the beautiful girl to him and won her over until she was trusting enough to climb onto his back. Then he carried her out into the waves of the ocean and took her to Crete against her will.



Book 3: Cadmus

Cadmus was sent out by his father, king of Sidon, to find his sister, Europa. Their father was so distraught over his daughter's kidnapping that he threatened Cadmus with exile if he didn't find her. Cadmus, knowing that he could never trace where Jove had taken the girl, went to the oracle of Apollo and asked where he should make his new home. The god told him that he would meet a cow that had never borne the weight of a yoke or plough, and if Cadmus followed that cow to where she laid down, that's where he should found a new city. Cadmus did as Apollo told him, and everything went according to the prophecy. When Cadmus and his henchmen reached the spot upon which he planned to found a new city, he sent his men into the woods to find water for a sacrifice to Jove.

In the woods, a giant snake guarding the stream killed his men. After they had not come back for a while, Cadmus went to look for them. He found their slain bodies and the great serpent, and after a great struggle, Cadmus killed the snake. He stood staring at the snake when Athene descended and told him not to stare at the snake and warned that one day he would be a snake as well. She told him to take the serpent's teeth and sow them in the ground. He followed her instructions and where he had sown the teeth, full-grown, armed men rose from the ground. Frightened, he raised his weapons, but one of them spoke out against civil strife. With that, the men began to slaughter each other and at the end, all were killed but five who formed a peace pact at Athene's order. These five men became the heads of the five aristocratic families of Thebes, and that's how Thebes was founded.

Topic Tracking: Violence 3

Book 3: Diana and Actaeon

Thebes grew into a strong city and Cadmus had wed Harmonia, daughter of Mars and Venus. Life was good until an unfortunate accident caused the death of Actaeon, Cadmus' grandson. One day the young Actaeon was out in the woods hunting when he got lost. He wandered through the woods and stumbled upon Diana's bathing pool and accidentally saw her naked form. Furious at his invasion, Diana turned him into a deer. His own hounds ripped him apart, and only his death satisfied Diana's fury.

Topic Tracking: Revenge 5



Book 3: Semele and The Birth of Bacchus

Cadmus' family was not finished with their grief yet because his daughter, Semele was Jove's lover and had conceived his child. Juno was jealous and decided to punish the proud girl by tricking her. Juno disguised herself as Semele's nurse. She convinced the girl that the only way to know if it was Jove himself who came to her and was the father of her child was to ask him to appear to her in all his glory as a god, the way that he appeared to Juno when they were making love. Semele agreed with the plan and then asked Jove for an unnamed favor to prove his love. He vowed on the river Styx to give her anything she wanted, and when she made her request, he could do nothing but fulfill it despite its fateful consequences. So Jove called upon the thunder and lightning that were in his command and came to Semele in all his divine power, but her mortal frame was destroyed by his powerful divinity and she died. Jove took the partly formed child from her womb and sewed it into his thigh until it came to term. That is how Bacchus was born. Jove gave the baby to Semele's sister to be raised, and she gave him to the nymphs of Nysa after she had nursed him during his infancy.



Book 3: Tiresias

Juno and Jove were playfully arguing about whether love was better for men or women. Jove believed that it had to be better for women, and Juno disagreed, so they called on Tiresias. The old man was the expert on the subject because he'd been born a man, but when he'd one day hit mating snakes with a stick, he was transformed into a woman. Years later he came across the snakes again and hit them so that he would be transformed back into a man. Tiresias sided with Jove in the argument, and Juno wrathfully blinded him. To make up for Juno's cruelty, and since he couldn't break her spell, Jove gave him the gift of prophecy.



Book 3: Narcissus and Echo

The first to seek Tiresias' guidance was a water nymph enquiring about her son's future. Tiresias told her that her son, Narcissus, would live a long and happy life as long as he did not know himself. When Narcissus was 16, he was out in the woods and a nymph, Echo, saw him. She fell in love with him, but she could not call out to him because Juno had reduced her powers of speech to only repetition because the nymph used to stall her with conversation while Jove and the other nymphs escaped from her. So when Narcissus called out to his friends, Echo answered him with the last words that he cried. They played the game back and forth, and he was intrigued, so she ran out of the cover of the woods and wrapped her arms around him, but he pushed her away. He rejected her, and she was so crushed, that she returned to the woods and pined away until all that was left of her was her voice.

Narcissus was scornful of all that loved him, and one day a rejected lover wished that the boy would know the sting of unattainable love. Not long after that, Narcissus saw his own reflection in a pool of water and fell helplessly in love with it. But each time he reached out to hold it or kiss it, it slipped away from him. He pined away for this evasive love until he realized that it was his reflection. Distraught at the impossibility of ever reaching the object that he loved so dearly, the boy died. When the nymphs came to bury his body, they found only the flower that now bears his name, the narcissus.

Book 3: Pentheus and Bacchus

Pentheus was a skeptical man who doubted Tiresias' prophecies, so when the blind man foretold that Pentheus would disrespect the power of Bacchus as a god and be ripped apart by the hands of his own mother and sisters for his faithlessness, Pentheus didn't believe him.

The skeptical man was angry at the way the citizens of Thebes rushed around in drunken frenzies in their worship of Bacchus. He set out to prove that Bacchus was not a real god, so he sent his men out to capture the imposter. When they returned, they had only a follower of the cult, and before Pentheus sentenced him to death, he asked him who he was and where he was from.

The man was Acoetes, a helmsman aboard the ship that tried to kidnap Bacchus. Acoetes was the only man among the crew who believed that Bacchus was a god and refused to take part in the kidnapping. When Bacchus turned the rest of the crew to dolphins, he spared Acoetes. The man then became Bacchus' follower.

Pentheus didn't believe the story, and so he sent the man to prison to be punished. While the instruments of torture were being prepared, Acoetes' cell was magically opened and his chains unlocked. Furious, Pentheus set out into the woods himself to find and capture the false god. When he stepped into a clearing, members of the Bacchus cult, including his own mother and sisters attacked him. Bacchus had infected them with madness that made Pentheus appear a boar to them, and though the man called out for help, he received no mercy at the hands of the worshippers.

Topic Tracking: Violence 4

Book 4: The Daughters of Minyas

Although Pentheus had been shown the penalty of his skepticism, not all the Thebians complied when Bacchus' priest declared a feast day and ordered the women to put away their work and worship the god of wine. The daughters of Minyas refused to leave their weaving or allow their servant women to join the festival. To pass the time, they decided to tell stories to one another, and so the first daughter began the tale of Pyramus and Thisbe.



Book 4: Pyramus and Thisbe

Pyramus and Thisbe were neighbors in ancient Babylon, and their homes were separated by a large, brick wall. Although they loved one another, they could not marry because of a disagreement between their fathers, and so they talked with each other through a narrow chink in the wall. They decided to meet one night at Ninus' tomb in the woods outside Babylon. While Thisbe waited for her lover, a lioness came to the nearby stream, and it frightened Thisbe away. When she fled, she dropped her shawl and the lioness ripped it with her bloody jaws and then left the stream. Pyramus came to Ninus' tomb and found his love's ripped, bloody shawl and assumed that she'd been killed by a lion. He killed himself with his sword to be with his love. Thisbe soon returned and found Pyramus slain there, and so she killed herself as well. Their blood changed the color of the mulberry tree under which they lay. The berries changed from white to burgundy from the lovers' blood.



Book 4: The Sun in Love

The second of Minyas' daughters began her story about when the sun god, Phoebus, fell in love with Leucothoe. Apparently Phoebus had seen Mars and Venus having an affair, and so the sun god took it upon himself to tell Venus' husband, Vulcan, that his wife was cheating on him. Vulcan forged a bronze chain that was so thin it was invisible to the naked eye and placed it around Venus' bed. When she and Mars were in bed together again, the chain snared them. Vulcan brought all the other gods of Olympus in to see Venus and Mars in their shame, and the gods made fun of them for it for a long time afterward. However, it is generally believed that the gods do this because they are envious of Mars and Venus.

Venus plotted her revenge against Phoebus, and she made him fall hopelessly in love with Leucothoe. To get the girl, he disguised himself as her mother and went into her room. When he'd sent all the servants away, he revealed himself to her. At first she was frightened, but then she was flattered that the god was in love with her, and so she did not fight off his advances.

Clytie, a girl who had been rejected by Phoebus, was jealous, and so she spread the word of the sun god's affair with Leucothoe. The girl's father was so ashamed that he buried his daughter alive for her unchaste behavior, and Phoebus could not save her from the burial or revive her lifeless body. So when she was prepared for burial, he poured nectar on her body and she became a frankincense bush.

Clytie pined away for Phoebus, who would have nothing to do with her. She sat for nine days in a field where she could watch her love's daily journey across the sky. She wasted away with longing and turned into a violet.

Topic Tracking: Women 3



Book 4: Salmacis and Hermaphroditus

The third of Minyas' daughters told this story. Salmacis was a water nymph who was gathering flowers near her pool when she saw Hermaphroditus one day. She fell in love with the son of Mercury and Venus, but Hermaphroditus denied her advances. She pretended to leave him there in the woods, and soon he was swimming naked in her pool of water. She dove in with him and wrapped herself around him as he struggled to get away. She said that they would never be separated again, and the gods granted her wish. The two fused into one being, and Hermaphroditus was now half-man, half-woman. Distraught at his emasculation, he begged his parents to make any man that bathed in Salmacis' pool turn half-man and half-woman.

Topic Tracking: Women 4

Book 4: The Daughters of Minyas Transformed

After the Daughters of Minyas spent the festival day working, they heard a loud clamor outside their home. While they hovered inside in fear, the weaving they had done turned to ivy vines and their yarn became grapevines. Then shadows of beasts and monsters prowled around the room and the house began to shake. The girls cowered in a dark corner trying to hide, but they couldn't hide from Bacchus. As they hid there, they turned into bats.



Book 4: Athamas and Ino

Athamas and his wife, Ino became the object of Juno's scorn because Ino had been Bacchus' surrogate mother after Juno had his biological mother, Semele, destroyed. Juno decided to use madness, the power of Bacchus, to exact her revenge. She went down to the gates of the Underworld and found one of the three Furies to aide her revenge against Cadmus' family. Juno sent Tisiphone to infect Ino and her husband with madness so that they would destroy their children and themselves. The vile Fury wrapped herself in a cloak of human gore and with snakes wrapped around her arms and in her hair; she went to Ino's palace. Both Ino and her husband were terrified when they saw Tisiphone, but they couldn't escape. She took snakes from her hair and threw them at the couple. The snakes didn't bite, however. They breathed a poisonous breath on the couple and infected their minds with frenzied madness. Athamas trapped his wife and one of their small sons in a net as if they were animals. Then he bashed the baby's head on a granite stone. Ino, calling out Bacchus' name, grabbed their other son and ran away to the edge of a cliff with him. The sharp rocks below did not prevent her jump from the cliff, and so she and her son would have perished if Ino's grandmother, Venus, had not intervened. She asked Neptune to make them immortal, and so he did. The attendant's of Ino's house didn't know that the woman had been made immortal, though, and when they saw her footsteps continuing to the edge of the cliff, they cursed Juno's cruel punishment and mourned their mistress. Juno heard them and punished them for their insurrection against her by turning them to stone.



Book 4: The Transformation of Cadmus

Cadmus and his wife were besieged by grief with the news of Ino's death. After the string of misfortune their family had run into in Thebes, the city Cadmus founded, he and Harmonia left the city. The two were talking of earlier times when Cadmus said, "Was that a sacred snake / My spear transfixed when I had made my way / From Sidon's walls and scattered on the soil / The serpent's teeth, those seeds of magic power? / If it is he the jealous gods avenge, With wrath so surely aimed, I pray that I / May be a snake and stretch along the ground." Book 4 -- The Transformation of Cadmus, line 571-6 No sooner had he said the words, than he turned into a snake. His wife, terrified to lose her husband, cried out as she let him coil around her neck that she, too, wanted to be a snake. Within moments, she had been transformed as well, and the two went to live in the woods nearby and bothered man no more.



Book 4: Perseus and Andromeda

Perseus, whose mother, Danae, was impregnated by Jove in a shower of golden rain, flew over the earth with Medusa's severed head in his hands. Drops of blood that fell into Libya turned into deadly snakes that remain in the desert to this day. Blown around the earth three times, Perseus landed in the land of Atlas to rest and take off the winged sandals he'd borrowed from Mercury and the nymphs.

Atlas was a giant who ruled the farthest lands and seas of the earth. His land was covered with golden orchards and numerous herds. When Perseus introduced himself as the son of Jove, Atlas mistook him for the son of Jove prophesied to steal the Golden Fleece from his orchard. To protect his treasure, Atlas tried to send Perseus away, but Perseus would not give up. He showed the head of Medusa to Atlas, and it turned the giant into a mountain.

When Perseus began his flight over earth again, he saw Andromeda chained to a rock by the sea. He fell in love and flew down to where she was and asked her why she was there. She bashfully and tearfully explained that her mother had bragged about her own beauty so much that she had roused the jealousy of the Nereids. To please them, Neptune was going to flood the earth, but the oracle of Jupiter said that Neptune would be appeased if Andromeda was chained to a rock by the sea as a sacrifice to the sea monster.

As the monster approached, Perseus struck a deal with her parents that if he saved her from the monster, he would marry her and inherit their lands. They agreed, and he defeated the sea monster.

After the battle, he wrapped Medusa's head in seaweed to protect it, and it turned the seaweed into rock. That's how coral was formed.

Perseus made three altars and three sacrifices -- one to Mercury, one to Jove, and one to Athene -- for their assistance in his battles against Medusa, Atlas, and the sea monster.

Back at Cepheus' palace, Perseus and Andromeda were married. After the happy ceremony, Perseus' father-in-law asked him how he'd gotten the head of Medusa, and so Perseus told the story. He'd stolen the one eye that the Graie sisters, Medusa's guardians, shared between them. Then he'd gone to Medusa's lair and lopped off her head while she slept. He never looked directly at Medusa's head, but in order to see her, he looked at her reflection in his bronze shield. Out of the blood that poured from her body when Perseus beheaded her sprung Pegasus and his human brother, Chrysaor.



Book 5: Perseus' Fight in the Palace of Cepheus

While Perseus told his new bride's family stories about his adventures, Andromeda's uncle and betrothed, Phineus stormed in with an army to reclaim the bride he'd lost to Perseus. Cepheus warned his brother to just let it go because he'd lost his claim to Andromeda when he'd not even tried to save her from the sea monster. Cepheus explained that Phineus' betrothal to Andromeda ended when Perseus saved her. Phineus refused to give up his claims, and so a bloody and gruesome battle took place in the halls of Cepheus' palace. Hundreds were killed, and Perseus fought like a champion while Phineus hid behind an altar and occasionally took shots at Perseus with a javelin. Athene appeared to her brother during the battle to give him courage. When it seemed that Perseus was nearly overwhelmed by all the men clamoring for his death, he pulled out Medusa's head and yelled at his allies to turn away. Phineus' men turned to marble statues while Phineus kept his eyes averted and tried to make a deal with Perseus. The only deal Perseus was willing to make with Phineus was to turn him to a statue like his friends that decorated the palace.

After the battle, Perseus took Andromeda with him to Argos, his ancestral city. Once there, Perseus challenged Proteus to settle an old grievance and avenge his grandfather. Perseus turned Proteus to stone as he also did to Polydectes who had sent him to retrieve the Gorgon's head so that he could seduce Danae, Perseus' mother.

Topic Tracking: Violence 5



Book 5: Minerva Meets the Muses at Helicon

Athene (Minerva) left her watch over Perseus and went to Helicon to see the Muses. She wanted the sisters who inspired song, poetry, drama, and other art forms to show her the spring that had issued forth from Pegasus' hoof. The Muses took her to the beautiful stream that was said to inspire poetry, and Minerva was impressed by the beauty of the Muses' home. As the goddess of war talked with the Muses, nine magpies gathered near the window. Another of the sisters told Minerva the story of the Pierid sisters who challenged the Muses to a talent duel. The deal was that whoever lost the duel would leave their sacred spring. Nymphs were chosen as judges, and one of the nine Pierid sisters went first.

The Pierid song was about the battle between the gods and the giants, and she sided with the giants, calling the gods cowards for disguising themselves. That's not such a good idea.

Calliope, the muse of poetry, went first for the Muses, and the song she sang was about the rape of Proserpine.



Book 5: The Rape of Proserpine

Ceres, goddess of the harvest had a daughter fathered by Jove, and the girl's name was Proserpine. When Pluto, god of the underworld, had come up to earth, Cupid's arrow instilled love for Proserpine in his heart. The king of Hades kidnapped the girl from the field she played in, and he took her, unwillingly, to the Underworld.

Cyane, a water nymph who pitied Proserpine, tried to block Pluto's entrance to the Underworld, but he used his powers to make a hole in the earth and descend to his realm despite her. Cyane was so sad for Proserpine and so hurt that the glade around her stream had been violated that she cried herself away and dissolved into her own pool.

Ceres looked everywhere for her daughter, but no one knew where to find Proserpine until she came to Cyane's pool and saw Proserpine's scarf floating on the water. Furious that no one could help her, Ceres began to destroy the crops of Sicily, where she had discovered her daughter's scarf. Then another water nymph helped her. Arethusa told Ceres that she had come to Sicily from her homeland, and she had traveled through the Underworld to get there. While she had been part of the river Styx that flows through Hades, she had seen Proserpine below as the Queen of Hell.

Ceres was undone. She went to Jove demanding that he get Proserpine back for her, and though he tried to argue that Pluto was a fine son-in-law, Ceres would have none of it. She wanted her daughter back, and Jove said that if Proserpine had eaten none of the food of Hades, she could return. Unfortunately, Proserpine had eaten six pomegranate seeds, and she had been seen by Ascalaphus. He told what he had seen, and so Proserpine was forced to stay in the Underworld for half the year while she could spend the other half with her mother. In revenge, Proserpine turned the boy into a screech owl, the harbinger of bad news. It was said that Proserpine's ascent to earth and descent to Hades cause the change in seasons.

Book 5: Arethusa

The second muse's song was the story of how Arethusa became a river. She had been a water nymph and huntress of Diana's cult. One day after hunting, she went swimming in a quiet stream. This stream was Alpheus, and he fell in love with her. She fled naked from his waters, and he gained human form and chased her. She ran until she could run no more and then cried out for Diana's help. The goddess shrouded Arethusa in a cloud, but Alpheus, her pursuer, waited, watching the spot where her footprints disappeared. Arethusa was so afraid that she began to feel a cold sweat pouring off her and she became a river. Alpheus resumed his water form and joined his river with hers. Diana created a riverbed that allowed Arethusa to flow past Ortygia, an island sacred to the huntress and her followers, and that is how Arethusa ended up beside Cyane's stream.



Book 5: Triptolemus

A third muse sang of Triptolemus, Ceres' helper. She sent him to spread seeds around the land and to share the gift of cultivation. When he stopped in Scythia, the king, Lyncus, offered him a place to stay. During the night, the king tried to kill Triptolemus so that he could take credit for cultivation himself. Before he could harm her helper, Ceres turned the king into a lynx.

When the story ended, the nymphs declared the Muses the winners of the talent contest. The Pierids were still unsatisfied and they were hurling insults when the Muses changed them to magpies to punish their insurrection.



Book 6: Arachne

Athene listened to the Muses' story of avenging themselves against impudent mortals, and she was reminded of a tale she'd heard of a girl named Arachne who bragged that her weaving gift was greater than Athene's. The goddess decided to take her up on the challenge. She first appeared to the girl in the disguise of an old woman to warn her against challenging the gods, but Arachne would hear none of it. Athene then appeared as herself and they had a weaving contest. Athene chose to show scenes of the gods wreaking vengeance on mortals who challenged them, while Arachne wove scenes of the delinquency of the gods. When they were done, Athene could find no flaw in the girl's work and flew into a rage. She beat Arachne in the head with the wooden shuttle from the loom, and rather than take such abuse, Arachne tried to hang herself. In a moment of pity, Athene commanded that the girl must hang, but live, and she transformed Arachne into a spider.

Topic Tracking: Women 5



Book 6: Niobe

Niobe was a wealthy woman of Thebes, mother of seven sons and seven daughters. In that respect, she counted herself as greater than Latona, mother of Apollo and Diana, because the goddess had only two children. Niobe said, "I'm too great to suffer Fortune's blows; / Much she may take, yet more than much she'll leave. / My blessings banish fear." Book 6 -- Niobe, line 91-3

In anger over the mortal woman's presumption, Latona sent Apollo and Diana to kill her seven sons. Niobe's husband committed suicide in his grief. Niobe still boasted of her greater motherhood because she had seven children left. Latona took care of that and finished off the other seven before she turned Niobe to stone and used a whirlwind to place the statue on a nearby mountain.

In the same vein of warning against scorning the gods, the next two stories were told.

Book 6: The Lycian Peasants

When Latona left Delos after giving birth to Apollo and Diana, she ended up in Lycia. When she tried to drink some water to slake her thirst, the Lycian peasants denied her the water and even went so far as to stir up the mud in the bottom of the pond so that she couldn't drink there. For their inhospitality, she turned them to frogs.

Book 6: Marsyas

Marsyas was a satyr who challenged Apollo to a pipe contest and lost. Apollo ripped his skin off and as the satyr suffered his awful death, the earth took the tears of his friends and made them the river Marsyas.

Topic Tracking: Violence 6

Topic Tracking: Revenge 6



Book 6: Pelops

When the people of Thebes were mourning the grief recently visited on their city, only Pelops, the son of Tantalus, felt pity for Niobe. Pelops had an ivory shoulder because his father killed him and served him as a meal to the gods to test their omniscience. Ceres accidentally ate Pelops' shoulder in her distraction over the loss of Proserpine. When the gods rejoined Pelops, they had to replace his eaten shoulder with a piece of ivory. Tantalus was sent to the Underworld where he was allowed to become very hungry and thirsty. He is surrounded by water and luscious fruit, but each time he tries to eat the fruit or drink the water, they move just out of his reach.

Topic Tracking: Revenge 7

Book 6: Tereus, Procne, and Philomela

When leaders from neighboring cities were visiting Thebes to offer their condolences, Athens was not among them. Athens was in a war, and Tereus and his army saved Athens from their foe. Procne, the king's daughter, married Tereus as part of Athens' gratitude for Tereus' help. He took her back to Thrace, his home, and after a while there in happiness, she missed her sister. Tereus went back to Athens to bring Philomela back for a visit. Their father, Pandion, was reluctant to let his only other daughter leave, but he did. What Pandion didn't know was that Tereus had fallen in desperate love with Philomela. When they arrived in Thrace, he took Philomela to a hidden cottage in the woods and raped her. She humiliated and furious at the betrayal of her brother-in-law, and she said: "You'll pay my score one day. I'll shed my shame / And shout what you have done. If I've the chance, / I'll walk among the crowds: or, if I'm held / Locked in the woods, my voice shall fill the woods / And move the rocks to pity." Book 6 -- Tereus, Procne, and Philomela, line 46-50. So Tereus cut out her tongue and locked her away where none would ever find her.

Tereus went to his wife and told her that he'd found out that Philomela was dead when he got to Athens. A year passed and Procne mourned her sister. Meanwhile, Philomela wove the story of her kidnapping, rape, and assault into a tapestry and got it to her sister. Procne saw the tapestry and understood what had happened, so during the Bacchic rituals when women go into the woods to worship Bacchus, she rescued Philomela and took her back to the home that she shared with Tereus. The sisters then killed Itys, Procne and Tereus' son, and cooked him. Procne called her husband in and served him the meal. When he called for his son, Philomela came out of the kitchen and presented him with the boy's severed head. In his horror and fury, he chased the women with his sword, vowing to kill them for their treachery. Philomela was changed to a nightingale; Procne became a swallow; and Tereus was transformed to a hoopoe.

Topic Tracking: Violence 7

Book 6: Boreas and Orithyia

Pandion's grief over his daughters killed him, and Erechtheus took over rule of Athens. Boreas, the king's winged son, was in love with Orithyia. Unlike most men, Boreas preferred to win Orithyia with words rather than just kidnap her and rape her. However, this gentle approach wasn't working so well for him, so he stole Orithyia away and made her the mother of his twin sons who grew wings during their adolescence and journeyed with the Argonauts.



Book 7: Medea and Jason

Jason and the Argonauts came to Colchis to claim the Golden Fleece. The king set up two impossible tasks for the Jason to do before he could win the Fleece. Medea, the king's daughter, fell in love with Jason. Betraying her father, she used the magic of Hecate to help the Argonaut perform the feats. When he got the Fleece, Jason left the island and took her with him, as he had promised he would.

Book 7: Medea and Aeson

They went back to Thessaly. As a favor to her beloved Jason, Medea used her magic to make his father, Aeson, younger. She mixed a potion of youth and emptied the old king's veins of his blood. When she refilled his body with the potion, he was younger.



Book 7: Medea and Pelias: Her Flight

Medea left her home and went to Pelias pretending that she and Jason weren't getting along. Pelias' daughters welcomed and befriended her, but all along she was plotting. She told them how she'd made Aeson young again, and so Pelias' daughters asked her to do the same for their father. She showed them the ritual with a sheep so that they could see how she refilled the animal's emptied veins with the youth potion. When she performed the rite on Pelias, she asked his daughters to drain the blood from his body, and he awoke as they were cutting him. Medea let him die, leaving his daughters as his murderers.

Medea went back to Corinth where Jason had a new wife. She burned the palace and killed the children that she had borne to him. Then she rode away on a chariot drawn by dragons and married Aegeus.

Topic Tracking: Women 6

Book 7: Theseus

Theseus came to Athens and met with King Aegeus, the king not realizing that Theseus was his son. Medea made up an evil potion that would poison him, and as Theseus went to drink, Aegeus recognized his son's royal crest and knocked the cup from his hand. Medea fled, and Aegeus declared a feast day to celebrate Theseus' return. They told stories of the hero's feats and welcomed him to Athens.



Book 7: Minos, Aeacus, The Plague at Aegina, The Myrmidons

Minos threatened war against Athens in retribution for his son's death. He had made alliances with many armies, but the army of Aegina didn't join his forces because the king, Aeacus was allied with Athens. So as Minos' Cretan ships were leaving Aegina, Cephalus came to seek help for Athens. Aeacus agreed.

Cephalus asks why there are so many young men in Aegina and most of the men he'd known there years before were missing. Aeacus told him of the plague that Juno had sent on the island because it was named for her rival, Aegina, Aeacus' mother by Jove. In despair at the destruction the plague had reeked on the city's population, Aeacus had asked Jove for help. He said, "Grant, / Thous best of sires, so many citizens / To me and stock again my empty walls!" Book 7 -- Minos, Aeacus, The Plague at Aegina, and The Myrmidons, line 26-8 Standing beneath an oak, Jove's sacred tree, he saw a line of ants and wished that their great number could repopulate his city. The tree began to shake and bend. In a dream that night, the ants turned to men, and when Aeacus awoke, the dream had come true.

After that story, Cephalus and his men went to bed.



Book 7: Cephalus and Procris

The following morning, Cephalus and his men woke before Aeacus, and so the king's youngest son, Phocus, talked with them. The boy noticed Cephalus' javelin and asked him where he'd gotten it. Although it was a sore subject with Cephalus, he told the boy the story behind the javelin.

Cephalus married Procris, but two months after they were married, Dawn kidnapped him from the woods where he was hunting. Cephalus pined away for his wife, and so Dawn let him go, but warned him that he'd be sorry. From her warning, Cephalus believed that Procris had been unfaithful to him while he was gone or that she would be in the future. He decided to disguise himself and test her faithfulness, and Dawn changed his features so that Procris wouldn't recognize her husband. Although Cephalus found Procris pining away, he kept his disguise and tempted her. She didn't give in, but he kept trying to find her. Finally she faltered in her fidelity, and he revealed himself. She fled their home in anger and joined Diana's cult in the woods as a huntress. Cephalus finally apologized to her and she came back to him giving him the javelin that Diana had given her and a hunting hound.

The hound was so great that he almost caught the great fox that plagued Thebes. Just before the hound's teeth caught the fox, Jove changed both the fox and the dog to marble out of some sense of justice that determined that two creatures so equally great should not destroy each other.

So Cephalus and Procris were happy together. Each day he would go hunting in the woods, and when his hunting was done, he'd lie down in a clearing and let the breeze soothe him. Someone overheard him calling out to zephyr, the breeze, and thought that he was having an affair with a nymph named zephyr. The eavesdropper told Procris about zephyr, and she had to see for herself that her husband was cheating on her, so she followed him to the woods the next morning. When he called out to zephyr, she was in the woods nearby, and her movement made a noise. Cephalus thought she was a dangerous animal and threw his javelin into the brush. He heard Procris cry out and found that he'd stabbed his wife in the heart with the javelin she'd given him. She asked him not to marry zephyr and he realized the misunderstanding. Although he explained the mistake and tried to bandage her wound, she died.



Book 8: Scylla and Minos

When Cephalus and the troops from Aegina returned to Athens, Minos had been battling against King Nisus for six months. During that time, King Nisus' daughter, Scylla, fell in love with Minos, his enemy. After trying to squelch her love, she gave in to it and killed her father. She took his purple lock of hair to Minos and presented herself as his bride and her country that he'd been fighting to conquer as her dowry. Minos was horrified by her treachery, and he took his fleet and left. Scylla realized that she would be shunned from her own country and all others for her betrayal, and so she swam after Minos' ships. She was clinging to the bow of one ship when her father, who had been transformed to an osprey, attacked her and made her fall from the ship. She, too, was transformed into a bird.



Book 8: The Minotaur

Minos returned to Crete, his home, and found that his wife had been unfaithful to him. The Minotaur, half-man, half-bull, was the result of her adultery, and Minos had Daedalus construct a labyrinth to hide the Minotaur in. Every nine years villagers of Attica were sacrificed to feed the monster, and Theseus volunteered to be part of the third sacrifice. Once inside the labyrinth, he killed the Minotaur and found his way out with the thread that Ariadne, Minos' daughter, had given him. She was in love with Theseus, so she betrayed her father as Scylla had done her own. Theseus took her away with him, but instead of marrying her as he'd promised, he left her on an island. She remained there and later found comfort in the arms of Bacchus, who made her crown a constellation in the night sky.



Book 8: Daedalus and Icarus

Daedalus was an inventor, and he hated being in exile, so he decided to build wings for himself and his son, Icarus to escape. As they made their flight across the sky, he warned the boy: "Take care / To fly a middle course, lest if you sink / Too low the waves may weight your feathers; if / Too high, the heat may burn them. Fly half-way / Between the two." Book 8 -- Daedalus and Icarus, line 198-202 Icarus, carried away with the freedom of his wings, flew too close to the sun, and his wings melted. He fell into the sea and drowned. In his memory, the sea where he drowned bears his name.



Book 8: Perdix

Daedalus was burying Icarus when he saw a partridge nearby taking joy in his sorrow. The partridge had once been Perdix, Daedalus' nephew. Daedalus was supposed to train the boy, but he'd gotten jealous when the kid invented first the saw, and then the mathematical compass. So in his rage, Daedalus threw the boy from the Acropolis and killed him. Athene transformed Perdix into a partridge, a bird that remembers his far fall from the sky and keeps close to the ground as a result.



Book 8: Meleager and the Calydonian Boar

Daedalus went to Athens and rested in the city that Theseus had saved. Theseus was so heroic that Meleager had asked for his help to get rid of the boar that was terrorizing Calydon. Diana had sent the great boar as a plague to the city, and it was destroying the crops. So Meleager called together a great assembly of heroes, among them a woman named Atalanta. Meleager was impressed by her looks, but he focused on the task at hand. Many of the great warriors fell to the boar, and Atalanta gave the boar his first wound. Meleager, after many tries, finished the animal off. He shared the spoils of the defeat with Atalanta, and two brothers jealously took away the prize he'd given Atalanta. Meleager's wrath overcame him and he killed them both.



Book 8: Althaea and Meleager

Althaea, Meleager's mother, heard about the death of her two brothers. When she learned that her own son had killed them, she was torn between a sister's vengeance and a mother's love for her child. "What shall I do? / Before my eyes I see my brothers' wounds, / The picture of that slaughter -- yet, again, / A mother's loyal love rends my resolve." Book 8 -- Althaea and Meleager, line 504-8 When she had given birth to Meleager, the Fates had attached his life force to a brand. After wrestling with her anger and her reluctance, she threw the brand into the fire. At his palace, Meleager felt the fire burning his body and he died from the pain. As his spirit rose, Diana made him a guinea fowl.

Topic Tracking: Violence 8

Topic Tracking: Women 7



Book 8: Achelous and the Nymphs

Theseus and his men were on their way home to Athens when they came to a swollen river. Achelous, god of that river, invited them into his cave. He told them how the islands in the distance had once been water nymphs, but he'd transformed them to islands because they forgot to include him in a feast they had. An island a little farther away had once been Perimele, his love. Her father had found out about their affair and thrown her into the sea, so Neptune turned her into an island for Achelous' sake.

Theseus and his men were all impressed by the stories with the exception of one who made light of the power of the gods. An old man told the next story as a warning to the young man who scoffed at divinity.



Book 8: Philemon and Baucis

Mercury and Jove disguised themselves as mortals and roamed the earth. They were turned away by many people until they came to the poor cottage of Philemon and Baucis. They were a poor, old couple, but they offered the strangers the best of all they had not knowing that they were serving gods. Mercury and Jove revealed themselves and took the old couple up a mountain. The gods flooded the valley and purged it of the evil mortals who lived there, but they transformed Philemon and Baucis' home to a temple. The gods offered to give the couple anything they wanted, and the two asked to be temple guards and to die at the same time. When their time came, the two became two trees that shared a trunk.

Book 8: Erysichthon and His Daughter

The great river told another story of transformation. Erysichthon scorned Ceres and cut down a tree that was one of her nymphs. In vengeance, Ceres sent Hunger to punish him. Erysichthon was so desperate that he sold his daughter into slavery for food. She escaped her captor and Neptune gave her the power to transform herself so that her captor could not find her. The girl returned to her father, and he used this new gift of hers to sell her as livestock. She would change her shape and escape to return home and be sold again.



Book 9: Achelous and Hercules

Achelous told Theseus and his men the story of his battle with Hercules. Achelous and Hercules were fighting over Deianira. Achelous had been in human form, but he couldn't outmatch Hercules, so he changed to a snake. From the snake, he transformed himself to a bull, and Hercules pinned him to the ground and broke off one of his horns. The broken horn was made the cornucopia by his water nymphs.

Theseus and his men left Achelous' cave the next morning and Achelous turned back into water.



Book 9: Hercules, Nessus, and Deianira

When Hercules was taking his wife to his home in Tiryns, they came to a swollen river. Nessus, a centaur, offered to help Hercules get Deianira across the river. Hercules swam across and heard Deianira yelling for him. Assuming that the centaur was kidnapping her to rape her, Hercules shot him with an arrow tipped with Hydra's poison. The centaur, seeking vengeance, gave his shirt covered in Hydra's poison to Deianira and told her that it was a talisman that would renew love.

Years later, when Hercules had completed his labors and was still far from home, Deianira heard from "Rumour who talks and loves to tangle true / With false, and from near nothing flourishes / On her own lies" Book 9 -- Hercules, Nessus, and Deianira, line 141-3 that his heart had been captured by another woman. She sent him the shirt not realizing that it was poisoned. Hercules, unaware of its taint, wore the shirt.

Book 9: The Death and Apotheosis of Hercules

The shirt destroyed Hercules' mortal body and he suffered awfully from Hydra's poison. He ran into the woods and built a funeral pyre for himself and climbed atop the flames. Jove allowed the mortal part of his son to burn away and then made him a god and placed him among the stars. Alcmena talked to Iole, Hercules' pregnant mistress, about her son's birth.

Topic Tracking: Revenge 8

Topic Tracking: Violence 9



Book 9: The Birth of Hercules

Alcmena had a difficult time delivering Hercules because Juno wanted to punish her rival for Jove's attention. For seven days and nights, Alcmena suffered in labor. The goddess of birth, Ilithya, had been bribed by Juno to block the birth. When Alcmena's servant, Galanthis, saw the goddess sitting outside Alcmena's room with her legs crossed and her fingers laced to prevent the birth, the servant girl told her to congratulate Alcmena on her new son. Shocked that the woman had given birth when the goddess had been preventing it, Ilithya stood up. When her legs were uncrossed and her fingers unlaced, Alcmena delivered Hercules. Ilithya turned the servant into a weasel for her trickery.

Topic Tracking: Revenge 9

Topic Tracking: Women 8

Book 9: Dryope

Iole told Alcmena the story of her sister, Dryope, who was transformed to a lotus tree for unwittingly picking blossoms from a tree that had once been a nymph.



Book 9: Iolaus and the Sons of Callirhoe

As the women were drying their tears, Iolaus, once Hercules' charioteer, approached much younger than he once was. Hebe had transformed his age and taken the years removed from his life and added them to the years of the sons of Callirhoe so that they'd reach adolescence faster.

The other gods wanted to make their mortal favorites younger, too, but Jove insisted that such things were ruled by the Fates, not the gods. The gods gave in to Jove's argument, and none of the other mortals were restored to youth, including Minos whose great strength had declined with his age. His lands had been threatened by Miletus, but then the younger man had gone to Asia to found a new city. Cyanee, a nymph, gave birth to his twins, Byblis and Caunus in Asia.



Book 9: Byblis

Byblis fell in love with her brother, Caunus, and she tried to fight the feeling because she knew that incest was wrong. But soon her feelings got the better of her and so she wrote him a letter telling him how she felt and hoping that he felt the same. He was revolted by the idea, and when Byblis wouldn't give up her pursuit, he left home. He went to found a new city, and when she tried to follow him, she couldn't find him. She sat down by a stream and cried for so long that a wood nymph turned her into a spring.

Topic Tracking: Women 9



Book 9: Iphis and lanthe

Crete might have been impressed with Byblis' transformation if they hadn't been so caught up in the change wrought in Iphis. Ligdus and his wife, Telethusa, were going to have a child. Ligdus thought that if the child was a girl, he and his wife could not afford to keep it because they were poor. Telethusa could not convince him otherwise. While she slept, Isis appeared in her dream and told Telethusa to keep the child. Telethusa gave birth to a girl, but only she and the nurse knew the child's sex. Her husband named the baby Iphis, and the child was raised as a boy. Iphis was betrothed to lanthe, a girl she loved, but Iphis was sad. She knew that a marriage between two girls would never work. Telethusa and her daughter prayed to Isis to help them, and the girl was turned into a boy. Iphis and lanthe were married and their marriage was blessed by the gods.



Book 10: Orpheus and Eurydice

Orpheus, singing son of Calliope, the Muse of poetry, married Eurydice. On their wedding day, Eurydice was bitten by a snake and died. Orpheus went down to Hades to try to bring her back. He said:

"To you (Pluto) are owed / Ourselves and all creation: a brief while / We linger; then we hasten, late or soon, / To one abode; here one road leads us all; / Here in the end is home; over humankind / Your kingdom keeps the longest sovereignty. / She too, when ripening years reach their due term, / Shall own your rule. The favour that I ask / Is but to enjoy her love" Book 10 -- Orpheus and Eurydice, line 31-9.

Pluto, ruler of the Underworld, agreed to let Eurydice go back to the living as long as Orpheus didn't turn back to look at her until they were completely out of Hades. When the light of the world was beginning to show, Orpheus turned back and looked at his bride and she slipped away back into Hell and he couldn't get her back. For three years Orpheus mourned his wife and would only love small boys. He would play his songs in the forests and charm the trees and animals around him.

Book 10: Cyparissus

Cyparissus, one of Apollo's mortal favorites, accidentally killed a sacred stag one day. His feelings of guilt made him beg for death, and so Apollo made him a cypress tree. He was among the trees that Orpheus charmed.



Book 10: Ganymede

Orpheus sang the story of Ganymede, a mortal boy who'd caught Jove's eye. Jove turned himself into an eagle and kidnapped the boy. Ganymede became Jove's cupbearer despite Juno's jealousy.



Book 10: Hyacinth

Hyacinth was another of Apollo's favorites. One day they were throwing discus, and Hyacinth was struck in the head by Apollo's discus. The wound killed him, so Apollo made hyacinth a flower and named an annual feast in his honor.

As Sparta loved Hyacinth, Cyprus hated the Propoetides and Crestae. They were races who scorned Venus' divinity. She changed the Propoetides to harlots to shame them. She also transformed the Crestae to bulls.

Book 10: Pygmalion

Pygmalion saw the evilness of the women of the Propoetides, and he vowed to remain alone. He carved an ivory statue of a woman and fell in love with her. He asked Venus to make his statue into flesh, and when the wish was granted, Venus herself blessed the union between Pygmalion and his ivory woman. Their daughter, Paphos, has an island named for her.



Book 10: Myrrha

Cinyras, Paphos' son, had a daughter named Myrrha. Cinyras didn't know it, but his daughter was in love with him. She fought her passion for him, but it got the better of her. Knowing that her crime was inexcusable, she tried to hang herself, but her nurse caught her. After the nurse made promises to help the girl with whatever her trouble was, Myrrha admitted her lust for her father, and shocked though the nurse was, she kept her promise. When Myrrha's mother was gone to worship Ceres, the nurse told Cinyras that she knew of a girl who loved him truly. They arranged a meeting between the two and Myrrha went to her father. After several nights of indulging in this sin in complete darkness, Cinyras brought a lamp so that he could see his love. When he recognized his daughter, he chased her with his sword. She fled. Nine months later, nearing the end of her pregnancy, Myrrha prayed for death for her sins. She was made a myrrh tree, and her tears were the fragrant sap exuded from the tree. When her child came to term, Ilithyia, the goddess of childbirth, split the bark of the myrrh tree and delivered the baby boy. He was raised by the Naiads.

Book 10: Venus and Adonis

Adonis, Myrrha's son, was a beautiful mortal, and he won Venus' heart. One day when they were in the woods she told him the story of Atalanta.



Book 10: Atalanta

Atalanta had been warned by the oracle not to marry, and so whenever a suitor came asking for her hand, she challenged him to a race. If he won, they would marry. If he lost, it cost him his life. Hippomenes didn't understand what all the fuss was about, but when he saw Atalanta for himself, he had to have her. Atalanta was impressed with Hippomenes and wasn't sure that she wanted to beat him, but she couldn't forget the words of the oracle. Hippomenes got three golden apples from Venus, and during the race, he would throw one to distract Atalanta. Each time she'd go after an apple, he'd pass her in the race. When they were nearing the finish line, Hippomenes threw the last apple and Venus made Atalanta go after it. The apple was heavier than the others, and it slowed the girl down, so Hippomenes won the race and they were married.

Unfortunately, Hippomenes forgot to properly thank Venus with a sacrifice, and so when he and Atalanta were at an ancient shrine, she put him under the inescapable pull of desire, and he and Atalanta defiled the holy place. For this disregard, the gods of the shrine changed them both into savage lions.

Venus warned Adonis to be careful of the savage animals in the forest when he hunted. She didn't want anything to happen to him. After her warning, she left to go back to the heavens. But she turned around when she heard his cries of pain. He'd been gored by a boar while he was hunting, and Venus couldn't save him. To remember him, she made him an anemone.



Book 11: The Death of Orpheus

While Orpheus had been singing his songs to the forest and its inhabitants, a group of Maenads, Bacchus' followers, found him and attacked. They ripped him to shreds, and his head and lyre (guitar) floated down river to the island of Lesbos, which later became known for its poetry. Bacchus turned the frenzied women into trees for their sins against Orpheus. Once his spirit went to the Underworld, he joined Eurydice.

Bacchus left the region and journeyed to Lydia to see old friends. He met up with his usual group, but Silenus, his old guardian, was missing. The old man had gotten lost, and ended up at Midas' court. Midas brought him back to Lydia.

Topic Tracking: Violence 10

Book 11: Midas

Bacchus was so grateful for Silenus' return that he offered to grant Midas one wish. Midas wished that everything he touched would turn to gold, and so Bacchus made it so. Midas soon repented of his wish because he could not even eat because the bread he tried to put in his mouth became gold. Midas repented his wish, and Bacchus took away the gold touch, but later Midas found himself in trouble again.

In his aversion to wealth, Midas spent time in the woods and got to know Pan. When the half-man, half-goat challenged Apollo to a music contest, Apollo won. Midas, no music expert, disagreed with the decision, and so Apollo made Midas' ears become the ears of an ass. To hide his new ears, Midas wore a turban, so the only one who knew of the disfiguration was his barber. The barber couldn't keep the secret to himself, so he dug a hole in the ground and whispered about Midas' ears into it, then refilled it with dirt. Reeds grew up in that spot, and they constantly whispered the news of Midas' ears.



Book 11: First Foundation and Destruction of Troy

Laomedon, King of Troy, forgot to thank Neptune for his assistance building the walls around the city. In anger, Neptune flooded the city and kidnapped the king's daughter to feed to a sea monster. Hercules rescued the girl before he conquered Troy. Peleus was another hero at Troy, and he won a goddess for his wife.



Book 11: Peleus and Thetis

Jove avoided the bed of the sea-nymph, Thetis, because Proteus foresaw that she would bear a son who would surpass his father's greatness. Jove didn't want to be overthrown. Instead, he encouraged Peleus, his grandson, to take Thetis as a wife, and so Peleus tried to rape her while she lay on the beach. She kept changing shape so that he couldn't quite capture her, and he had to give up. Peleus prayed to the sea gods for help, and Proteus told him to tie Thetis down so that no matter what form she took, she'd not be able to escape. When he tried it the next day, Thetis gave up because she knew he'd gotten help from one of the gods. They were married, and Achilles was the product of their union.



Book 11: Daedalion

Peleus sought refuge after he murdered his brother, and he ended up in King Ceyx's court. Ceyx welcomed the descendant of Jove and shared a story of his brother, Daedalion. Daedalion was a cruel, warlike man, and his daughter was impregnated by both Apollo and Mercury. She gave birth to twins, Apollo and Mercury each fathered one of the sons. When the girl considered herself more beautiful than Diana for attracting the attention of two gods, Diana killed her. In his grief, Daedalion flung himself from a cliff, and Apollo changed him to a hawk.

Book 11: The Cattle of Peleus

While Ceyx told the story, Peleus' herdsmen came in to tell him that a wolf had destroyed half of his herd. Peleus knew that the wolf was punishment for the murder of his brother. Rather than go after the animal, he prayed for forgiveness to Psamathe, the water-nymph mother of his murdered brother. Psamathe forgave him after Thetis did some convincing. To rid the town of the wolf, she turned it to marble. Although she had forgiven Peleus, the Fates would not allow him to find any home in exile.



Book 11: Ceyx and Alcyone

After Daedalion was turned to a hawk, Ceyx departed to visit the oracle of Apollo. Alcyone, his wife, didn't want him to go because she was afraid for his safety. He told her that "'Long to our love seems every waiting hour, / But by my father's radiance I swear, / If only the Fates let me, I'll return / Before the moon twice fills her silver orb'" Book 11 -- Ceyx and Alcyone, line 52-5. After a tearful goodbye, he sailed off to the oracle. A storm (awkward) and wrecked the ship, drowning the crew and Ceyx with the them. He prayed before he died that he would wash up on his native shore so that he could return to his wife as he'd promised.

Meanwhile, Alcyone did not know that her husband was dead, and she kept praying to Juno for his safety. Juno sent her messenger, Iris, to make Sleep break the bad news to Alcyone in a dream. Alcyone was heartbroken, and as she stood on the shore where she'd last seen her husband, she saw his body floating on the waves. She rushed over the water to reach him and found that she'd been transformed to a kingfisher and so had her husband. They became birds that mate for life and live out on the water.



Book 11: Aesacus

Aesacus was a descendant of Laomedon and Priam born to a water nymph. He loved the country and a nymph named Hesperie stole his heart. One day as he chased her through the woods, she was bitten by a snake and died. His sorrow and guilt made Aesacus throw himself from a cliff, but on the way down, Thetis changed him to a bird. Angry that he'd been cheated out of death, he ducked his bird body beneath the water, but he still didn't die. He became a diving bird.



Book 12: The Expedition Against Troy

Priam, Aesacus' father and king of Troy, mourned his son's death. Paris was the only absentee from the funeral because he had not yet returned with Helen, his stolen wife. The Greeks were on their way to Troy at that time, but a storm stalled their progress. Calchas saw a snake eat nine birds and interpreted the omen as a sign that the war would last for nine years and the Greeks would be victorious. The snake turned to stone. Calchas suggested that they sacrifice a virgin to ease Diana's wrath because Agamemnon had angered the goddess. Diana saved the girl and replaced her with a deer. The storm abated and the Greeks were on their way to Troy. Rumour warned the Trojans that the enemy approached. The Trojans tried to prevent the Greeks from landing on their shore and with that, a bloody war began.

Book 12: Achilles and Cycnus

During the battle Achilles killed many Trojans, but when he came to Cycnus, he just couldn't kill the guy. As it turns out, Cycnus was the son of Neptune, and the sea-god was protecting him. When Achilles tried to kill the man with his bare hands, Cycnus was transformed to a swan. Both armies took a few days to rest and during the break Nestor told the Greeks about Caeneus.

Book 12: Caenis

Caenis was a beautiful girl who would marry no one. Neptune raped her and then offered to grant her one wish. She answered: "This wrong you've done me needs an enormous wish -- / Put pain like that beyond my power. Grant me / To cease to be a woman -- everything / That gift will be to me." Book 12 -- Caenis, line 201-4 Neptune granted the wish and then she became Caeneus. He also made her invulnerable to spears and arrows.

Topic Tracking: Women 10

Book 12: The Battle of The Lapiths and Centaurs

Nestor also told the Greek soldiers about the wedding of Pirithous and Hippodame. The Centaurs, half-men, half-horse, were invited to the wedding, but in their drunkenness, they kidnapped the bride and the other Lapith women. A bloody battle ensued, and many of the Centaurs ganged up on Caeneus and buried him under a forest of felled trees. When the Lapiths saw Caeneus leave the pile as a brown bird, they were inspired to fight and destroy the Centaurs who didn't run away in fear.

Topic Tracking: Violence 11

Book 12: Nestor and Hercules

As Nestor told the story, Hercules' son reminded the old man that he'd left Hercules' role in defeating the Centaurs out of the story. Nestor explained that he didn't mention Hercules because it brings up the painful memory of how Hercules killed his eleven brothers including Periclymenus. Periclymenus transformed himself into an eagle and clawed Hercules face and Hercules shot him with an arrow that killed him.

After that story, the Greeks went to bed.

Book 12: The Death of Achilles

Ten years had passed since the Trojan War began and Neptune mourned his dead son, Hector, killed by Achilles. The sea-god asked Apollo to help get rid of Achilles, and so Apollo directed Paris' arrow to Achilles. When Achilles died, he didn't go to the Underworld. Instead, he went to Elysium because he was such a great hero.

After his death, Ajax and Ulysses fought for the hero's armor.

Book 13: Ajax and Ulysses and the Arms of Achilles

Ajax and Ulysses presented their claims to Achilles' armor to the Greek soldiers and generals. Ajax made the mistake of appealing to the soldiers, who had no say in the decision. He was an inexperienced orator, and although his bravery on the battlefield was an attribute, Ulysses was a better speaker. He addressed the generals, among whom he ranked, and he was awarded the armor. Ajax killed himself in defiance to prove that only he could subdue himself. The hyacinth grew to honor his loss.

Book 13: The Fall of Troy

The oracle said that Troy would fall only when the statue of Athene had been removed and when Hydra's arrows rained down on the city. Ulysses retrieved the statues and went back to the island where he'd left Philoctetes, the keeper of the arrows. Once these things were done, Troy fell and the men were all killed. The Greeks burned the city, and captured the women to take back to Greece as slaves. Hecuba, wife of Priam and mother of Hector and Paris, was among the slaves.



Book 13: Hecuba, Polyxena, and Polydorus

Priam had sent his youngest son, Polydorus, to live in Thrace with Polymestor. When Polymestor learned of Troy's fall, he killed Polydorus and kept the gold that Priam had given the boy. He threw the body into the ocean.

Agamemnon and the Greeks stopped in Thrace during a storm and Achilles' ghost appeared to them and demanded that Polyxena, Priam's daughter, be sacrificed in his honor. The girl went to her death bravely, and Hecuba mourned her daughter.

"He who destroyed your many brothers, / He destroyed you, Achilles, doom of Troy / And my bereaver. But when Paris' arrows / And Phoebus' felled him, now for sure, I said, / We need not fear Achilles: now again / I had to fear him: in the sepulchre / His ashes raged against our race; entombed, / We felt him as our foe. For him I bore / My children! Mighty Ilium lies low. / In tragedy our nation's ruin reached / Its end; but end it has. For me alone / Troy lives; my woes stream on." Book 13 -- Hecuba, Polyxena, and Polydorus, line 501-10

Achilles had killed all of her children except Polydorus. His life was her salvation until she found his body on the shore. Plotting her revenge against Polymestor, she tricked him into meeting her under the guise of giving him more gold for Polydorus. When the king of Thrace met with her, she clawed his eyes out. The Thracians attacked her for injuring their king, and she was transformed into a dog.

Book 13: Memnon

While many pitied Hecuba, a lesser-known goddess, Aurora, mourned her son, Memnon. He'd been killed by Hercules, and she asked Jove that Memnon be remembered in some immortal way. So Jove took the smoke from his funeral pyre and created a flock of birds that divided and battled each other until they fell into the ashes from which they'd been born. Each year the birds fight in memory of Memnon and his mother's tears of mourning are dewdrops.



Book 13: The Pilgrimage of Aeneas

Aeneas and a few other Trojan men escaped the city and set sail for a new land where they hoped to build a new Troy. They stopped at Delos and King Anius welcomed them. He told them how his son had gone to found Andros and his daughters had been given a gift that allowed them to turn all they touched to corn, wine, or palm oil. Agamemnon had kidnapped them and they escaped to their brother's island. But when Agamemnon threatened Anius' son with war, he turned his sisters over to the Greek. The girls asked Bacchus for help, and he made them doves.

The next day Aeneas went to Apollo's oracle and was told to "seek / Their ancient mother and ancestral shores." Book 13 -- The Pilgrimage of Aeneas, line 376-77 So Aeneas and his men set out for Italy and their next stop was a land near Scylla, a man-eating monster, and Charybdis, a whirlpool.

Scylla had once been a beautiful girl pursued by many suitors before she was transformed to a monster. She'd been friends with the sea-nymph, Galatea. Galatea had told Scylla all about her problems with Polyphemus, the Cyclops.



Book 13: Acis and Galatea

Galatea loved Acis, the son of a river, and Polyphemus loved Galatea. One day Polyphemus was singing of his love for Galatea and her indifference to him. He sang "Why prefer you Acis' arms to mine? / Acis may please himself and please, alas, / You, Galatea. Give me but the chance, / He'll find my strength no smaller than my size. / I'll gouge his living guts, I'll rend his limbs / And strew them in the fields and in the sea." Book 13 -- Acis and Galatea, line 863-8 When he'd finished his song, he caught his love with Acis. She fled to the sea, and the Cyclops crushed Acis with a huge rock. Galatea changed her dead love to a river god.

After she told Scylla the story, Galatea and the sea-nymphs swam away.

Book 13: Scylla and Glaucus

Scylla walked along the beach and Glaucus came out of the water. He had been a fisherman, but he'd been transformed to a merman and made a sea-god. He was in love with Scylla, but she scorned his advances, so he went to Circe for help.



Book 14: Scylla and Glaucus (continued)

At Circe's palace, Glaucus explained that he wanted Scylla to love him. Circe offered herself to him, but Glaucus wanted only Scylla. So Circe mixed up a potion and crossed the water to the cove where Scylla liked to swim. When Scylla waded into the water, she saw the heads of many fierce dogs beneath the surface. She ran out of the water and saw that from the waist down her body had been transformed to several rings of dogs' heads. She stayed in that cove and became a sea-monster. She picked men from Ulysses' ship and ate them to get back at Circe because she loved Ulysses. Eventually she was transformed from a monster to a rocky crag and she stood across from Charybdis, the whirlpool.

Topic Tracking: Revenge 10



Book 14: The Pilgrimage of Aeneas (continued)

Aeneas and his men sailed past Scylla and Charybdis and on to Libya where Dido killed herself when Aeneas left her. From there, the Trojans made their way to Cumae where the Sibyl led Aeneas to the Underworld to see his father's ghost. From there, Aeneas and his men reached Caieta where they found a Greek who'd sailed with Ulysses. Acheamenides had been left on the island where Cyclops lived after Ulysses had put his one eye out. Acheamenides had hid on the island until another ship came by and took him aboard.

Macareus, another shipmate, had sailed on with Ulysses when his men opened the bag of wind from Aeolus that set their journey back and put them in danger.

Book 14: The Island of Circe

Macareus told how he had been one of the men Circe transformed to a swine with a magic drink while they were on her island. He was only changed back to human form because Ulysses married Circe and asked for his men's recovery as his wedding gift. The crew stayed on the island for a year, and that's how Macareus learned the story of Picus.



Book 14: Picus and Canens

King Picus was the young ruler of Latium, and his heart belonged to his wife, Canens. Circe saw the king hunting one day and desired his love. She created the illusion of a boar running into the thick woods, and he followed the mirage. Then she made the sky dark and presented herself to him. He turned her down because he loved Canens, and Circe turned him into a woodpecker. His wife searched everywhere for him, but finally exhausted, she sat down and wept until she disappeared.

After a year on Circe's island, Macareus said that Ulysses and his men left. Macareus stayed at Caieta because he feared the journey home.

Book 14: The Triumph and Apotheosis of Aeneas

Aeneas and his men left the island and headed for Latium where Aeneas won the throne and a princess bride after defeating Turnus in a war.

Turnus sought help from Diomedes, but couldn't get it, and then he tried to burn Aeneas' fleet. Cybele, however, couldn't let the ships burn because they were made of wood from her forest. She turned the ships to sea-nymphs that steadied ships during storms. The nymphs, however, hated Greeks and refused to hold their ships.

After Aeneas' victory over Turnus, Venus asked Jove to make her son immortal, and so it was. Aeneas' descendants ruled Latium.



Book 14: Pomona and Vertumnus

Pomona was a wood nymph devoted to her garden. She would let no one enter without her permission, and she especially had no interest in men. Vertumnus loved Pomona, and he would disguise himself to enter her garden. As an old woman, he tried to convince Pomona to marry the Vertumnus, the god of the changing seasons, and he warned her that Venus "hates a stony heart." Book 14 -- Pomona and Vertumnus, line 697 To further prove the point he told Pomona a story about a girl who shunned a young man's true love until he killed himself. When she saw the funeral go by, she turned to stone. After his story, Pomona agreed to marry Vertumnus.



Book 14: Legends of Early Rome; The Apotheosis of Romulus

Romulus, son of Mars, restored the throne to his grandfather, Numitor. Then in a battle with the Sabines, Juno unlocked one of the city gates of Rome to let the enemy in. Venus saw the open gate and made water nymphs find a way to close it because she couldn't undo the work of another god. After the battle, rule was given to Tatius and then to Romulus. Mars asked Jove to make his son immortal, and so Romulus and his wife were made immortal.

Book 15: Numa and the Foundation of Crotona

Numa was nominated to take the throne after Romulus died. He had once been to Crotona and had learned of its founding. Myscelus had dreams urging him to leave his homeland, which was treason. When he tried to leave to found a new city, he was put on trial for treason. He appealed to Hercules, the god who had urged him to leave. Hercules changed the pebbles that represented the verdict from black, which meant guilty, to white, which meant innocence. Myscelus then founded Crotona.



Book 15: The Doctrines of Pythagoras

Pythagoras was a Samian living in Rome in a self-imposed exile. He was a great thinker, and he taught that eating meat was wrong because of the principles of transmigration of souls, or reincarnation. He believed that because souls were immortal, they changed form over and over, and by eating meat, men could be eating a relative. He also believed that death should not be feared because it was just a process of change from one life form to another. "There is no death -- no death, but only change / And innovation; what men call birth / Is but a different new beginning; death / Is but to cease to be the same." Book 15--The Doctrines of Pythagoras, line 72-5

Death even sometimes created life, as with the phoenix that rises from the ashes of its father.

Book 15: The Death of Numa

Numa learned these principles and came back to rule the Latium realm until his death. When he died, his wife went into the woods to mourn, and her cries disturbed Diana's shrine. Theseus' son, Hippolytus, tried to ease her suffering by telling her of his troubles.



Book 15: Hippolytus

Hippolytus explains how he was framed for incestuous seduction by his stepmother, and so he was exiled from his home. On his way to a new land he was driving his chariot near the ocean and a horned bull rose from the water. His frightened horses went crazy, and he was tangled in the reins. He was dragged to death, but Aesculapius restored him to life. Apollo changed the young man's name to Virbius so that no one would be jealous that he'd been given a second life. Virbius became a local deity who tends Diana's shrine.

Hippolytus' story didn't quiet Numa's wife any, so Diana made the woman dissolve into a pool of water.

Book 15: Cippus

A prophet sprung from a clod of dirt taught the Etruscans to look into the future. When Cippus discovered horns on his head, he looked into the future and learned that he could be the king of Latium if he hurried. Cippus didn't want the responsibility of the job, so he hid his horns beneath a laurel wreath and spoke to the people. He warned them that the man who would be king, a horned man, would make them all slaves unless he was driven from the city. The people looked around trying to discover whom he meant. He revealed his horns and was debarred from the city. But the senators gave him as much land as he could plow in a day, and he was happy.

Book 15: Aesculapius

A plague infected Rome and so the people turned to Apollo, but he directed them to his son. They went to the shrine of Epidaurus, and the god accompanied them back in the form of a great snake. He arrived in Rome and eased the city's suffering.



Book 15: The Apotheosis of Julius Caesar

Julius Caesar's greatness made him worthy of divinity. Venus saw the plots against Caesar, but she couldn't change his fate. She sent him omens, but he was still assassinated, and Jove let her make his spirit a star so that he'd have immortality. Jove foresaw that Augustus, first of the Roman Emperors, would have a prosperous reign.

Book 15: Epilogue

Ovid states that his lines shall live long after he's gone, and with them, his fame will also live.