

Mythology Book Notes

Mythology by Edith Hamilton

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Author/Context

Edith Hamilton was born in 1867 in Dresden Germany. Her family immigrated to the United States and she was educated both at home and in a private school for girls. She learned Greek, Latin, German and French. While attending Bryn Mawr, she was awarded the European Fellowship. She studied in Europe for several years. When she returned to the United States, her families fortunes had changed. She went into teaching. The Bryn Mawr School offered her their head position and she taught there until her retirement in 1922. It was not until 1930 that she began to write books. Her endeavor began as she translated Aeschylus for friends. Over the next 35 years, she wrote many books and gained much public acclaim. In 1957, after the publishing of her final book, she was made an official citizen of Athens, Greece. She received many honorary awards and degrees in the U.S. She died five years later at the age of 96.

Hamilton was a very popular schoolteacher of the Classics at Bryn Mawr. Her writing began as translation and explanation exercises for friends and escalated into full-scale scholarship. Her interest began in the individuality of the Greek persona in literature and mythology. She found the study of this to be highly relevant to modern Western civilization. This was the focus of her first book *The Greek Way*. *The Roman Way* followed similar themes in Roman literature, culture, religion, and history.

As she continued to write and translate, Hamilton realized that there was a need for an easy to read compendium of Greek Mythology for the every day reader. Readers of her translations and other books had no frame of reference for many of the myths to which she was referring. In her foreward:

"My hope is that those who do not know the classics will gain in this way not only a knowledge of the myths, but some little idea of what the writers were like who told them - who have been proved, by two thousand years and more, to be immortal."

She created her *Mythology* after going to primary sources such as Hesiod, Homer, Ovid, Virgil and Sophocles. Published in 1942, the book was received well in the public but she never expected it to be the success it turned out to become.

Her following books continued to deal with mythology but also branched off into Christian religion. Readers found that her background in the Classics gave them a new and profound insight into Biblical text and interpretation. *Spokesman for God* was one of her more popular books in this genre.

At the age of ninety, Hamilton published her translation of *Prometheus Bound*. Although many modern scholars and critics have qualms with her interpretation, her work has become a mainstay of public education. While her other books have gone out of print, *Mythology* has been reprinted many times. As a woman scholar, she paved the way for more women to work in a traditionally male-dominated field. She was respected, and more important, financially successful. Sixty years after its publishing, it has become, as



Ken Moore says, "the premier book dealing with the ancient myths of Greek Roman and Norse Lore."

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Plot Summary

There are twelve Olympians, of whom Zeus is the most powerful. Besides the twelve Olympians, Demeter and Dionysios, the gods of wheat and wine, have a significant impact on the daily lives of mortals. The world was created from Chaos. The Titans, the first gods, were born from the union of earth and sky. Cronus, the lead Titan, overthrew the sky and was eventually overthrown by his son Zeus. Men were created and given fire to protect themselves from all the dangers of the world. Men and gods had many sordid love affairs between each other. Oedipus went down to the underworld to retrieve his lost wife, only to lose her. Pyramus and Thisbe both killed themselves on the outskirts of their town because of a misunderstanding.

The first great journey of men was the Quest for the Golden Fleece. In order to regain his kingdom, Jason led a band of heroes across the Aegean to claim the fabled fleece. Around this time, another hero named Bellerophon gained the friendship of the winged horse Pegasus and Phaethon died trying to drive the chariot of the sun.

The great heroes before the Trojan War were Perseus, Theseus and Hercules. Perseus was sent away by his grandfather as an infant. With the help of the gods, he killed the terrible gorgon Medusa, but accidentally killed his grandfather. Theseus freed the world from the horrors of the Minotaur with the help of Ariadne, and brought democracy to Athens. Hercules, after killing his family in a fit of rage, was cursed to perform twelve impossible labors. Eventually, he was killed and was deified because of his great feats of strength and courage. In the time of these heroes, there was also Atalanta, a woman who could out hunt and out run any man in the world. She was only finally beaten in a foot race, but only after she had been tricked.

The Trojan War began as a conflict between Hera, Aphrodite, and Athena over who was the most beautiful. It escalated into full war and the armies of Greece set sail for Troy. There they fought and the two opposing heroes, Achilles and Hector died. Odysseus, a Greek King, took ten years to get home from Troy and his journey was as dangerous as it was long. From Troy, a man named Aeneas led refugees to Italy where he laid the foundation of the Roman Empire.

Agamemnon, one of the leaders of the Greek armies at Troy, was a member of the house of Atreus. This royal house was cursed. Family members killed their children and fed them to the gods and other members of the family. The Royal house of Thebes was also blighted. Oedipus killed his father and married his mother. When he realized this, he blinded himself. In Athens, the royal family was not quite as doomed, but their fates were also dismal. The first King was half dragon and half man.

There are many other myths. Midas wanted everything he touched to turn to gold. Leto was the mother of Apollo and Artemis, who was abandoned by her husband. She wandered over the earth until she found an island to settle. Orion was a giant full of lust who was changed into a constellation.



Norse mythology is different than Greek mythology, although they share many common themes. The world of the Norse was dominated by the notion that the world was ultimately going to end and all man and god could do was delay it.



Major Characters

Zeus (Jupiter): Son of Cronus, overthrew his father to free his five siblings and rule the gods. Wielding the thunderbolt, he is the most powerful of all the gods, but he is by no means invincible. On many occasions Zeus must bow to fate. He produces many other gods through his infidelity and causes much conflict with his wife Hera. Mortals hold Zeus in the highest esteem of all the gods. As society developed, Zeus also came to bear attributes of Themis, what is right, and Dike, justice, both of which were once personified as goddesses. He bears the aegis, his bird is the eagle and his tree is the oak.

Hera (Juno): Wife and sister of Jupiter, daughter of Cronus. She is a protector of marriage and often a goddess of childbirth. Her role in mythology is usually that of the jealous wife punishing the women with whom Zeus has sex. Her jealousy of Aphrodite causes her aggressive involvement in the Trojan War. In the tale of the Golden Fleece, she protects men. Cows and peacocks are sacred to her. Her favorite city is Argos.

Poseidon (Neptune): One of the three Olympian brothers, Poseidon drew the lot for control of the ocean. Of the gods, he is second in power to Zeus. He is also known as the Earth shaker. He allegedly helped build the sacred walls of Troy. He gave the first horse to men and horses remained his sacred animal.

Hades (Pluto): The third of the Olympian brothers. He drew the lot to rule the underworld. Although he is allowed on Olympus, he is not truly welcome there. He made Persephone his wife and rules with her as King of the dead.

Athena (Minerva): The daughter of Zeus who sprang from his head fully dressed in arms. She is often depicted as a warrior goddess as well as the goddess of wisdom. She is allowed to use her father's weapons. She is a virgin. Her city is Athens; her tree is the olive tree and her bird is the owl.

Apollo: He is the son of Zeus and Leto. The god of poetry, music, archery and healing. He was born on Delos. He is called Pythonian from a python he killed and Sminthian, the mouse god. The dolphin and the crow are sacred to him. The laurel is his tree.

Artemis (Diana): The twin sister of Apollo. Artemis is a virgin huntress who also possesses aspects of the moon goddess Luna/Selene/Phoebe. Her underworld manifestation is Hecate, a goddess of death. The cypress is her tree and deer are sacred to her although she is a patron of the forest and all things contained within.

Aphrodite (Venus): The goddess of love and beauty. Sometimes said to be a daughter of Zeus, sometimes a sister. In the Iliad she is the daughter of Zeus and Dione. In other places, she was born from the sea near Cythera. Her beauty is often wicked or destructive. She is married to Hephaestus, although she often cheats on him. The myrtle is her tree. The sparrow, dove, and swan are her birds.



Hermes (Mercury): Son of Zeus and Maia, a daughter of Atlas. He is a messenger god who wears winged sandals and carries the Caduceus, a staff with winding snakes, the symbol of modern medicine. He was known also as the god of thieves and commerce. He guides the dead to the underworld.

Ares (Mars): The god of war, son of Zeus and Hera. He is hated for his inhumanity and brutality. He appears little in mythology and was loved more by the Romans than the Greeks. The vulture and the dog are sacred to him.

Hephaestus (Vulcan): The son of Hera; was cast out of heaven either by Zeus or his mother. Although he loves peace, he is the god of the forge and makes the most highly esteemed weapons in the world. He is a patron of craftsmen and an omen of civilization

Hestia (Vesta): Zeus' sister, the virgin goddess of the hearth. Each city possessed a shrine to her in which a fire was always kept burning.

Jason: The hero of the Quest for the Golden Fleece. He went for the fleece to try to regain his kingdom. He endured many hardships in the first voyage described in Mythology and gained the fleece only with the help of Medea. He eventually betrayed her and became engaged to another woman after they had children. Medea killed her own children and Jason's fiancée, then abandoned Jason.

Eros (Cupid): A good god in some Greek tales who later becomes Aphrodite's son. He is mischievous and often doing some sort of deed for his mother.

Leda: The wife of King Tyndareus of Sparta. She was impregnated by Zeus and bore Pollux and Helen. She also bore Castor and Clytemnestra, Agamemnon's wife. Her sons went on the Calydonian boar hunt and the Quest for the Golden Fleece. In one version of her sons' death, the sons are always together and in another they never are.

Cronus (Saturn): The father of the first six Olympians. He ate his children as they were born because he was told that a son would overthrow him and assume power (just as he had overthrown his father Ouranos and ruled with Rhea).

Atlas: A son of Iapetus, forced to bear the weight of the sky and the earth after the war between the Titans and the Olympians.

Prometheus: Son of Iapetus, brother of Atlas. He established sacrificial rites for men and gave them fire.

Demeter (Ceres): The goddess of Grain and wheat. The Eleusinian mysteries were in her honor. She was also the mother of Persephone and was forlorn when Hades took her daughter away.

Dionysius (Bacchus): The god of the vine and wine. He was born by Zeus and Semele. His mother died. He tried to establish his worship in his home city of Thebes and his followers, the Maenads, killed his cousin, Pentheus, ruler of Thebes. He dies every fall and is reborn in the spring.



Teiresias: The blind prophet of Thebes who appears again and again to warn mortals or advise them. He warned Pentheus against Dionysius and the Maenads. He told Oedipus the gruesome truth of his birth and advised Odysseus from the afterlife.

Heracles (Hercules): The Theban born hero and the son of Zeus. He was the strongest and bravest man to ever live. He achieved great feats. Tragically, however, his emotions often got the best of him and he was more than once put into servitude for committing an awful crime. In this way he accomplished his famous twelve labors. He died after a misunderstanding with his wife, but was deified and worshiped for many generations.

Odysseus (Ulysses): The hero of Homer's *Odyssey* and a significant force in the *Iliad*. Odysseus is best known for his adventures (and misfortune) on the sea and his long ill fated journey home. He also designed the horse that brought about the fall of Troy. When he finally made it home after many dangerous stops along the way, he had to contend with suitors who had besieged his house. He killed them all and reasserted his authority over his homeland.

Minor Characters

Hebe: The goddess of youth, a daughter of Zeus and Hera. She was sometimes the cup-bearer to the gods. She is married to the divine Hercules.

Ocean: The Lord of the river that circled all the land of the earth.

Pontus: Father of Nereus.

Nereus: The old man of the sea who married Doris and fathered the Nereids (sea nymphs), the most famous of whom is Thetis, the mother of Achilles. Poseidon married another nymph.

Triton: The trumpeter of the sea; son of Poseidon and Aphrodite.

Proteus: Either a son or attendant of Poseidon. He could change shapes but also tell the future. Often, people must capture him and wait until he stops changing shapes in order to get him to divulge their fate.

Chiron: The boatman who ferries people across the river Styx.

Sleep and Death: Twin brothers who live in the underworld.

Gaia (Earth): The Earth who was born from light and day and gave birth to the Titans with Uranus, the sky.

Pan: A son of Hermes who is part goat and roams the wild places. He is also a wondrous musician.

Silenus: Pan's brother or son who is always drunk and rides an ass.



Castor and Pollux.: Sons of Leda and Zeus. Pollux, is immortal. Castor is mortal. These brothers of Helen spent half of their time in the underworld and half on Olympus after Castor died because they could not bear to be apart.

Aeolus: The King of the winds. Boreas (north, Aquilo), Zephyr (west, Favonius), Notus (south, Auster) and Eurus (east).

Saturn: For Romans, he is the husband of Ops who brought a golden age to Rome.

Janus: God of good beginnings whose doors were kept closed in peaceful times but opened in war. January begins the new year.

Faunus: Grandson of Saturn, a Roman version of Pan and a prophet.

Quirinus: The deified name of Romulus, founder of Rome.

Lucina: Goddess of the moon and childbirth. Her name came to be associated both with Artemis and Hera.

Persephone (Proserpina): Daughter of Demeter, she is the forced wife of Hades and Queen of the underworld. She is the embodiment of spring and is allowed to stay on Earth with her mother only half the year. She must spend the rest of the year in the underworld with Hades.

Rhea: Wife of Cronus and mother of Zeus, Hades, Hestia, Hera, and Poseidon.

Ariadne: The daughter of Minos who helps Theseus escape from the Labyrinth. He leaves her, either on purpose or accidentally, on Naxos where Dionysius rescues her and takes her with him.

Pentheus : The nephew of Dionysius who opposed his worship in Thebes. This opposition resulted in his death at the brutal hands of the Maenads.

Ouranos (Uranus): The heaven, or the sky; the father of the Titans with Gaia.

Epimetheus: The inept brother of Prometheus who created all the animals and left none of the good traits for men.

Pandora: The woman created by Zeus who bore disaster and ruin either by her evil nature or her innocence. In one account, she was pure evil and in another, she released evil by opening a box she was told must remain shut.

Chiron: The Centaur who was benevolent; a teacher of many men and gods.

Deucalion and Pyrrha: The two mortals who survived the great flood of Zeus. Children of Prometheus and Epimetheus.

Io: The heifer who approached Prometheus. Hera turned her into a cow because Zeus desired her.



Europa: The woman after whom Europe is named. Zeus changed himself into a bull to carry her off. She bore Minos and Rhadamanthus on Crete.

Polyphemus: A Cyclops who was the son of Poseidon. He was blinded by Odysseus and thwarted in love by the nymph Galatea.

Hyacinthus: The companion of Apollo who became the hyacinth after he was accidentally killed by a discus.

Adonis: The boy Persephone and Aphrodite loved. He must live half the year alive and half dead (in the underworld). He was killed while alive, and his blood became the anemone.

Psyche: A beautiful but naive girl who drew the enmity of Venus because she was being worshipped by men. Cupid fell in love with her and made her his wife. She wounded him because of her curiosity and Venus forced her to perform arduous tasks until Cupid protected her. Ultimately, she was made a goddess and married Cupid.

Pyramus and Thisbe: Young lovers in Babylon whose parents forbade them to be together. They left the city to meet each other near a mulberry tree. There was a mix up and Pyramus killed himself thinking that Thisbe was dead. Thisbe killed herself when she found Pyramus. Their blood turned mulberries from white to red.

Orpheus and Eurydice: Orpheus was the greatest mortal musician and his wife was Eurydice. She died and he tried to rescue her from the underworld but failed her at the last moment. Maenads eventually killed him.

Ceyx and Alcyone: A devoted couple that were never parted until he went on an ill-fated trip on the sea. When she found his body floating in the surf, she tried to drown herself, but she was turned into a bird and so was he.

Iris: The gods' other messenger besides Hermes. She is most frequently the servant of Hera.

Pygmalion and Galatea: A sculptor who fell in love with his sculpture. It came to life and he named her Galatea.

Baucis and Philemon: An old couple that gave hospitality to Jupiter and Mercury disguised as beggars. In return they were allowed to die together and they became two species of trees that grew from the same stump.

Aeacus: Grandfather of Achilles, father of Peleus; in death he became one of the judges of the dead.

Minos: The ruler of Crete, husband to Pasiphae, who fell in love with a bull and bore the Minotaur. He appears in many tales, usually as a conqueror. He became a judge of the dead in the underworld.



Narcissus: The youth who loved only himself and was interested in none of the nymphs who loved him. As a result, he was turned into a flower.

Endymion: The youth loved so much by the moon that she put him to sleep forever in a sacred grove.

Daphne: Apollo fell in love with her and pursued her but she was turned into a laurel tree. This is the reason why laurel is sacred to Apollo.

Alpheus and Arethusa: Arethusa was a virgin who fled the river god Alpheus. She dived into a stream and became a stream herself. He found his way to her underground.

Phrixus: The relative of Jason who was saved by a golden ram when he was to be sacrificed by his father who took a new wife. He sacrificed the ram to Zeus and gave the fleece to King Aetes.

Pelias: The usurper who took the throne from Jason's family. He told Jason that he would have to get the Golden Fleece to be given the kingdom. When Jason returns with Medea, she convinces his daughters to kill him.

Medea: The daughter of King Aetes who betrayed her father and helped Jason on his quest. Cupid made her mad with love for Jason. She killed her brother, convinced Pelias' daughters to kill their father, and eventually killed her children and Jason's new fiancée.

Phaethon: The son of the Sun who was so bold as to ask his father to drive the chariot of the sun. He ended up dying after losing control of the reins.

Bellerophon: The Corinthian hero who tamed Pegasus and conquered many adversaries in Asia Minor. HE enjoyed the love of the gods until he tried to fly up to Olympus.

Otus and Ephialtes: The two giant sons of Poseidon who captured Ares and tried to rape Artemis.

Daedalus and Icarus : Daedalus was the architect of the Labyrinth and Icarus was his son. They escaped Crete by means of waxen wings, but Icarus flew too close to the sun and fell to his death.

Danae: The mother of Perseus who was expelled from her home because her son was destined to kill her father Acrisius. Polydectes fell in love with her and caused Perseus to go on the quest to kill the Gorgon, Medusa.

Perseus: The son of Danae by Zeus who was destined to kill his grandfather. He eventually kills him, by accident, in a discus throwing competition. He goes on a quest to kill the Gorgon, Medusa, and is helped by Hermes and Aphrodite. He is successful and he kills Polydectes and his court.



Polydectes: The wicked king who sent Perseus on a quest meaning to kill him.

Aegeus: Theseus' father who threw himself off the edge of the cliff when his son did not raise the white flags signifying that he had survived.

Theseus: The son of Aegeus and great Athenian hero. He freed the city from the curse of the Minotaur but unfortunately left Ariadne on an island on the way back and unwittingly caused his father to commit suicide. He established Athens as a democracy and was trapped in the underworld until Hercules freed him. Theseus exiled his son because he thought his son had caused his wife to commit suicide.

Oedipus: He left home because an oracle proclaimed he would one day kill his father. He came to Thebes and solved the riddle of the Sphinx, killing it. He went to the city as a hero and married the King's widow.

Pirithous: Theseus' companion. His lust for Persephone caused them both to get caught in the underworld.

Atalanta: A girl raised by hunters who went on the Calydonian Boar hunt. She would only marry a man who could beat her in a footrace. Melanion distracted her by dropping golden apples and beat her.

Peleus: The father of Achilles. He went on the voyage of the Argo and met his wife, Thetis.. Their marriage banquet set the scene for the beginning of the conflict that led to the Trojan War.

Thetis: The nymph who married Peleus and gave birth to Achilles. She always helped her son and brought him new weapons from Hephaestus after Hector seizes his.

Eris: The goddess of discord who throws out the golden apple that causes the Trojan war.

Paris: The young prince who was asked to choose the most beautiful goddess. He chose Aphrodite in exchange for the prize of the most beautiful woman in the world. His stealing of Helen is the human cause of the war.

Helen: The most beautiful woman in the world. A daughter of Zeus and Leda. She causes strife among men at a young age. Theseus wanted to steal her as an infant.

Menelaus: The brother of Agamemnon who was married to Helen. The war is fought on his behalf.

Agamemnon: The leader of the Greek armies that besiege Troy. He sacrificed his own daughter to make the wind blow in the right direction.

Achilles: The hero of the Iliad. Achilles' rage is the fundamental theme of the epic. His death is directly connected to the conquering of the Trojan city. He kills the Trojan hero Hector, but is later killed by Paris.



Iphigenia: The daughter of Agamemnon who was sacrificed.

Hector: The Trojan hero whose life the city depended upon. When he fell, it sounded the death knell for the city.

Ajax : One of the Greek champions. He kills himself in a fit of rage when he is not given Achilles' arms.

Diomedes : Another Greek hero. He is usually depicted working with Odysseus. He fights with gods and wounds them.

Andromache: The wife of Hector who was forced to watch her young son be executed after the fall of Troy.

Patroclus: Achilles' close friend who goes into battle disguised as the hero to rally the Greeks. His death brings Achilles back into the war and destroys the Trojan hope for victory.

Aeneas : The hero of the Aeneid. He led a group away from Troy and eventually made it to Italy after many hardships. Once there he had to fight a great war before he could found his city that led to the founding of the Roman empire.

Cassandra: The prophet daughter of Priam who is raped on the Altars of Athena.

Penelope : The wife of Odysseus who remains loyal even though her husband is gone for twenty years.

Telemachus: Odysseus' son who awaits his father's return and helps him expel the suitors from their household.

Ino: The nymph who helps Odysseus survive Poseidon's wrath.

Calypso: The nymph who detains Odysseus with magic for many years.

Dido: The Queen of Carthage whose generosity to the Trojans is thanked with a ruinous love that results in her death.

Sibyl: The witch who leads Aeneas to the underworld.

Turnus: The native Italian who opposed Aeneas and is killed by him in the end.

Evander: The Italian King who offers Aeneas help and advice to get other allies.

Pallas : The son of Evander who dies at the hands of Turnus.

Atreus: The son of Pelops and father of Agamemnon and Menelaus. He serves his brother his own children when he finds out that he is in love with his wife.



Tantalus: The father of Pelops. He served his son to the gods and was doomed to torture in the underworld forever.

Pelops: The son of Tantalus who was cut up and served to the gods. When he was restored to life, he killed a charioteer in a race and was cursed.

Niobe: Pelops' sister who rules in Thebes. When she tries to get the townspeople to worship her instead of Leto, Apollo and Artemis turn her to stone.

Thyestes: The brother of Atreus who falls in love with his brother's wife. Atreus feeds him his own children.

Clytemnestra: Agamemnon's wife, and sister to Helen. She kills her husband out of lust for his cousin Aegisthus or rage over the sacrifice of their daughter Iphigenia. She is killed in turn by her son Orestes.

Orestes: The Son of Agamemnon who must commit the sin of killing his mother in order to avenge the murder of his father. The Furies pursue him for many years after. Eventually he is released and the curse over the house of Atreus ends.

Cadmus: The founder of Thebes. A brother of Europa who was told by Apollo to found his own city instead of searching for his sister. He bore four ill-fated daughters.

Laius: Oedipus' father who tries to avoid his fate by sending his infant son to be killed. His son killed him accidentally on a path years later.

Jocasta: Oedipus' wife and mother. She killed herself when she realized that she had borne children with her own son.

Creon: The brother of Jocasta and uncle of Antigone and the warring brothers. He sided with Eteocles against Polyneices even though the latter was older.

Polyneices and Eteocles: The sons of Oedipus who fight over their father's throne. Polyneices secures help from others and Eteocles fights with Creon. They kill each other in a final duel.

Ismene : Antigone's less brave sister who tried to share in her blame but went unpunished.

Antigone: The daughter of Oedipus who accompanies her father in exile and is brave enough to bury her dead brother knowing she will be executed by her uncle Creon.

Procne and Philomela: The sisters of the founder of Athens. Procne's husband abducted her sister and hid her away. Procne found this out and killed her son. He sisters fled and turned into birds

Creusa and Ion: Creusa bore Ion to Apollo and abandoned him in a cave. Years later she was reunited with him at the Oracle at Delphi.



Odin: The king of the gods. He is the father of Balder and the husband of Frigga. He gives men runes and suffers for them on many occasions.

Balder: The son of Odin who is killed ultimately by the deception of Loki.

Thor: The god of thunder after whom Thursday is named.

Freyr: The god of fruits.

Heimdall: The god who watches over the bridge to Asgard.

Tyr: The god of war, after whom Tuesday is named.

Hela: Hela, the goddess of the underworld from whom the English word 'hell' comes.

Loki: A son of a giant who somehow became a sworn friend of Odin. He hates good and causes the death of Balder.

King Aeetes: The king of Colchis, who received the Golden Fleece from Phrixus. He was betrayed by his daughter, Medea, and lost both the fleece and his kingdom.



Objects/Places

Graces: There are three Graces: Aglaia (splendor), Euphrosyme (Mirth), and Thalia (good cheer). They make life better for men and are the children of Zeus and Eurynome.

Muses: There are nine Muses, originally unnamed. They are the daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne (memory). They slowly acquired names and attributes: Clio(history), Urania (astronomy), Melpomene (tragedy), Thalia (comedy), Terpsichore (dance), Calliope (epic poetry), Erato (love poetry), Polyhymnia (god songs), Euterpe(lyric poetry). Helicon is one of their mountains. Often they are companions to Apollo.

Naiads: Water nymphs of rivers and fountains.

Underworld: Lies somewhere beyond the edge of the world. In other stories, it is located beneath the surface of the land. It is sometimes divided into Tartarus and Erebus (a deeper level). Until Virgil, little is known about the underworld..

Styx: The primary river separating the real world from the underworld. It is by the Styx that the gods swear and make an unbreakable oath.

Cerberus: A three headed dog guarding the entrance to the underworld. Beyond him are three judges who determine punishment for the sinners: Rhadamnathus, Minos and Aeacus.

Elysian fields: The sacred place in the underworld where heroes and good people go.

Lethe: The underworld's river of forgetfulness.

Furies (Erinyes): Goddesses who punish evil doers. The Greeks believed that they punished sinners while they were on earth. Their names are Tisiphone, Megaera and Allecto.

Sileni: Part man and part horse creature who is pictured on Greek vases.

Satyrs: Part man and part goat creatures who live in the wild.

Ureads, Dryads and Ham-dryads: Nymphs of mountains, rivers, and trees respectively.

Centaur: Half men half horse known primarily for excessive lust and violence. Chiron is a centaur known for his wisdom and teaching.

Gorgons: Three terrible women, two of whom are immortal. Medusa is not. They are dragon-like, with wings. Their mere sight turns men into stone.



Sirens: Singing beasts in the middle of the sea that cause ships to wreck on their island.

Fates, Moirae, Parcae : There are three: Clotho, spins the thread of life, Laches, dispenses lots and lengths to the thread, and Atropos, cuts the thread.

Lares, Penates: Roman gods of house and hearth. Also associated with ancestor worship.

Titans: The first gods on earth who were overthrown eventually by the Olympians.

Olympus: The heavenly home of the gods.

Maenads (Bacchantes): Bands of women under the control of wine who follow Dionysius around and cut a path of destruction in their wake.

Thebes: Home city of Dionysius and Oedipus. Athens unites with others in the Seven Against Thebes.

Cyclopes: One-eyed children of Gaia and Ouranos. They survived the war between the Titans and the Olympians and became servants of Zeus.

Crete: The island of Minos where the Labyrinth was held. Also the sheltering place of Zeus while he grew strong enough to overcome his father.

Sidon: An ancient city located in modern Lebanon.

Argo: The ship on which Jason and the other champions made their voyage in search of the golden fleece.

Thessaly: A northern region of Greece known for its wildness.

Harpies: Flying beasts who harass Jason and the Argonauts while they are feasting with a prophet. They also attack Aeneas and the Trojans.

Amazons: Warrior women who live on an island in the eastern Aegean.

Colchis: The named of King Aetes' kingdom where the Golden Fleece was held.

Scylla and Charybdis: Always paired together, these are two obstacles that face each other. Scylla is a six-headed dragon-like beast and Charybdis is a whirlpool. Jason, Odysseus and Aeneas must endure these obstacles.

Corinth: A city near Thebes where Medea and Jason settle and Jason decides to take a new wife.

Pegasus: The winged horse Bellerophon desired more than anything else. He got the horse with the help of Athena and used it to defeat many adversaries. He did not lose it until he attempted to fly up to Olympus.



Chimaera: A beast with a lion's head, a goat's body, and a dragon's tail that Bellerophon defeated.

Labyrinth: The intricate maze Daedalus designed to hold the Minotaur.

Argos: The home city of Agamemnon and favored city of Hera.

Delphi: The major oracle of Apollo, the god of prophets. Throughout mythology men are following the advice of the oracle for better or for worse.

Minotaur: The half man and half bull created by Pasiphae's lust for a bull. Minos, Pasiphae's husband, had the Labyrinth built for the creature instead of destroying it.

Calydon: The city that was ravaged by a great boar. Its king called for the Great Calydonian Boar hunt that brought together many of the great heroes. Atalanta was there.

Troy: The city on Asia Minor that was the site of the Trojan war. Paris came from here to steal Helen from the house of Menelaus. It also gave birth to Aeneas who led the remnants of its people to found a city in Italy.

Myrmidons: The soldiers of Achilles. They were formed in the time of his grandfather from ants.

Ithaca: The island nation of Odysseus.

Carthage: The city founded by Queen Dido on North Africa. She came there from Sidon. The Trojans were washed up here after a storm.

Cumae: The site of Italy's passage to the underworld.

Phrygia: A region in Asia Minor.

Asgard: The home of the gods in Norse mythology.

Valhalla: The hall for heroic men in Asgard in Norse Mythology.

Valkyrie: Women who attend on Odin and the rest of the Norse pantheon.

Ragnarok: The final day of the world when good is overcome by evil and everything ends.

Eleusinian Mysteries: The harvest time festival honoring Demeter and Dionysius. The festival was held for nine days once every five years in Greece, but the actual events of the festival are still largely unknown.



Quotes

Quote 1: "Persephone was down in the world beneath the earth" Part 1, Chapter 2, pg. 57

Quote 2: "Pentheus by now was blind to everything except his anger and his scorn. He spoke roughly to Dionysius, who answered him with entire gentleness, seeming to try to reach his real self and open his eyes to see that he was face to face with divinity." Part 1, Chapter 2, pg. 70

Quote 3: "As yet there were no human beings, but the world now cleared of monsters was ready for mankind." Part 1, Chapter 3, pg. 83

Quote 4: "Did you do wrong?
Is this your punishment?
Where am I
Speak to a wretched wanderer.
Enough - I have been tried enough-
My wandering -long wandering,
Yet I have found nowhere
To leave my misery.
I am a girl who speaks to you,
But horns are on my head." Part 1, Chapter 4, pg. 96

Quote 5: "as what is ugly and evil is apt to change and grow milder with time." Part 1, Chapter 4, pg. 109

Quote 6: "'They are coming to the hill where you disappeared to weep for you,...but you must not let them see you or you will bring great sorrow upon me and ruin to yourself.'" Part 2, Chapter 1, pg. 124

Quote 7: "the deep red fruit of the mulberry is the everlasting memorial of these true lovers and one urn holds the ashes of the two whom not even death could part." Part 2, Chapter 2, pg. 138

Quote 8: "In Ortygia, an island which formed part of Syracuse, the greatest city of Sicily, there is a sacred spring called Arethusa. Once, however, Arethusa was not water or even a water nymph but a fair young huntress and a follower of Artemis." Part 2, Chapter 2, pg. 157

Quote 9: "'I have done all this myself and I will give the fleece to no man less brave than I.'" Part 2, Chapter 3, pg. 170

Quote 10: "That light weight in the car, those feeble hands clutching the reins, had told [the horses] their own driver was not there. they were the masters then. No one else



could command them. they left the road and rushed where they chose, up, down, to the right, to the left." Part 2, Chapter 4, pg. 183

Quote 11: "But the two other sisters had awakened and, horrified at the sight of their sister slain, tried to pursue the slayer." Part 3, Chapter 1, pg. 204

Quote 12: "Thus Athens became, of all earth's cities, the only true home of liberty, the one place in the world where the people governed themselves." Part 3, Chapter 2, pg. 216

Quote 13: "Not because he had complete courage based on overwhelming strength, which is merely a matter of course, but because, by his sorrow for wrongdoing and his willingness to do anything to expiate it, he showed greatness of soul." Part 3, Chapter 3, pg. 227

Quote 14: "'His eyes were red..He made me come in...Oh good friend and host!'" Part 3, Chapter 3, pg. 240

Quote 15: "When her suitors assembled in her home to make a formal proposal for her hand they were so many and from such powerful families that her reputed father, King Tyndareus, her mother's husband, was afraid to select one among them, fearing that the others would unite against him. He therefore exacted first a solemn oath that they would champion the cause of Helen's husband, whoever he might be, if any wrong was done to him through his marriage." Part 4, Chapter 1, pg. 259

Quote 16: "Only to wait until morning...I will bring you arms fashioned by the divine armorer, the god Hephaestus himself!" Part 4, Chapter 1, pg. 272

Quote 17: "In the more distant parts of the town the Trojans were able to gather together here and there and then it was the Greeks who suffered." Part 4, Chapter 2, pg. 276

Quote 18: "For the present she would change him into an old beggar so that he could go everywhere unrecognized. That night he must spend with his swineherd, Eumaeus, a man faithful and trustworthy beyond praise." Part 4, Chapter 3, pg. 311

Quote 19: "It was a simple matter for Venus to bring about a meeting between the two." Part 4, Chapter 4, pg. 325

Quote 20: "In their haste, the two friends got separated and Euryalus took the wrong path. Nisus wild with anxiety turned back to find him. Unseen himself he saw him in the hands of troopers. How could he rescue him?" Part 4, Chapter 4, pg. 341

Quote 21: "She knew that every man there except for Agamemnon was aware of her infidelity" Part 5, Chapter 1, pg. 354

Quote 22: "Dearest! You are my dearest, my darling, my dear one. A baby, a little baby, when I left you. More than marvelous is this thing that has come to me!" Part 5, Chapter 1, pg. 369



Quote 23: "The world of blindness was a refuge; better to be there than to see with strange shamed eyes the old world that had been so bright." Part 5, Chapter 2, pg. 382

Quote 24: " She killed [her] child with one stroke of a dagger. She cut the little dead body up, put the limbs in a kettle over the fire, and served them to [her husband] that night for supper. She watched him as he ate; then she told him what he had feasted on." Part 5, Chapter 3, pg. 396

Quote 25: "There was a woman in Thessaly named Coronis, of beauty so surpassing that Apollo loved her." Part 6, Chapter 1, pg. 413

Quote 26: "Now from her couch where she lay beside high-born Tithonus the goddess/ Dawn, rosy-fingered, arose to bring light to the gods and to mortals." Part 6, Chapter 2, pg. 428

Quote 27: "This conception of life which underlies the Norse religion is as somber a conception as the mind of man has ever given birth to." Part 7, Chapter 1, pg. 444

Quote 28: "Loki was punished. The gods seized him and bound him in a deep cavern. Above his head a serpent was placed so that its venom fell upon his face, causing him unutterable pain. But his wife, Sigyn, came to help him. She took her place at his side and caught the venom in a cup." Part 7, Chapter 2, pg. 458

Quote 29: "Along with their truly awe-inspiring heroism, these men of the North had delightful common sense. The combination seems impossible, but the poems are here to prove it. By race we are connected with the Norse; our culture goes back to the Greeks." Part 7, Chapter 2, pg. 465



Topic Tracking: Atrocity

Atrocity 1: The life cycle of Dionysius is parallel to the cycle of the vine, but it is gruesome. Every year he is torn apart to bloody pieces by his own followers. The Maenads perform this deed on their enemies as well as their god. Orpheus suffers this fate too.

Atrocity 2: Cronus savagely defeated his father by castrating him. When Ouranos lost his testicles, he became incapable of breeding and lost his sexual and social power. To avoid being defeated himself, Cronus ate his own children whenever they were born. In this, however, he alienated his wife and made the worst enemy he could.

Atrocity 3: So many objects of beauty in ancient Greece have their roots in something base and violent. Narcissus' flower came not from violence but excessive vanity. The Hyacinth, however, is red because of blood. This theme, beauty emerging from the ugly and destructive, continues throughout mythology.

Atrocity 4: Beautiful things keep coming out of terrible circumstances. Pyramus and Thisbe are the perfect example of this. Their denied love ends up in both of their deaths, turning the mulberries red from white. Often, lovers are turned into birds so that they may be together forever; this is the fate of Ceyx and Alcyone. Orpheus, a musician of great beauty, not only suffers the pain of losing his wife twice, but also suffers the same death as Dionysius.

Atrocity 5: The story of the Quest for the Golden Fleece is filled with brutality. It begins with the attempted sacrifice of a child by a jealous stepmother. Jason must fight many things to get to the fleece. Medea chops up her brother and throws him into the ocean. This is grotesque (merely for the imagery) and savage because they are siblings. Pelias suffers the fate of being killed in a similar way by his own children. When Jason snubs Medea, she kills his fiancée, her own children, and then disappears.

Atrocity 6: Killing one's own child and grandchild is an atrocity that Acrisius cannot commit, but he is not beyond leaving it up to the gods. This sort of murder is common in Greek mythology. If you expose a family member to the elements, you thereby absolve yourself of responsibility for their death: the gods must choose to let the people live or die.

Atrocity 7: Hercules, the greatest hero of Greece, also commits some of the most heinous crimes against family members and others. He is known for his savage anger. He brutally kills his family in a fit of rage. He kills teachers and lashes out at friends who insult him. Nevertheless, because of his incomparable strength, he is able to atone for these sins when others could not.

Atrocity 8: War's atrocity is not just on the battlefield, where the blood flows freely, but it is also in the allied camp and after the battle. Ajax kills himself in a rage after he does not get Achilles' armor. The people of Troy are slaughtered brutally and the city is



emptied of its inhabitants. At the end of the battle, the men are all killed and the women are taken captive. The death of Andromache's son is brutal, but necessary to the invaders. A dead son never tries to avenge his father.

Atrocity 9: Violence is not prevalent in the *Aeneid* until the later books where it becomes the thematic mainstay. The messengers to Aeneas are brutally cut down after they kill many sleeping natives. Aeneas himself cuts down a man as he begs for mercy.

Atrocity 10: The house of Atreus is filled with atrocity. Tantalus feeds his child to the gods. Atreus feed his brother his own children. Agamemnon sacrifices his daughter. Clytemnestra kills her husband. Orestes kills his mother. Even in mythology, the scale of this carnage is unparalleled.

Atrocity 11: Oedipus discovers he has, unknowingly, married his mother and killed his father. Such a realization would be just as repugnant to those living in the ancient world as it is to modern readers of Sophocles. Creon's decree that the bodies of those who opposed Eteocles' claim to the throne not be buried, is truly savage in the ancient world. An unburied body's soul would wander the world forever. Oedipus inflicts his own gory punishment for his crimes and Jocasta does the same.

Atrocity 12: Philomela is raped by her sister's husband. She cannot report this deed to anyone else, because he cuts her tongue out. In response to this brutality, Procne (her sister) kills her child and feeds it to her husband.



Topic Tracking: Fate

Fate 1: In the story of Cronus ingesting of his own children, a long sequence of fathers killing their offspring to avoid fate begins. Cronus knew that one of his children was going to overthrow him, so he tried to eat them all. This does not work, because his wife deceived him and Zeus survived. Later, Zeus overthrows his father and becomes the king of the gods.

Fate 2: Psyche's father is saddened about his daughter's fate so he sends her away. When Psyche hears of this fate from her sisters, she is curious about her lover. Despite warnings about taking her sisters' advice, she listens to them and looks at his form. This hurts Cupid and separates the lovers.

Fate 3: Pelias has been fated to be killed by a relative. When he hears this, he suspects Jason because Jason wants to regain the throne. He sends Jason on a difficult quest and kills his father while he is gone, because he does not expect him to return. When he does return, Pelias dies, not at his hands of Jason, but at the hands of his own daughters, who were led to believe by Medea that they were doing their father good.

Fate 4: In these tales are two important tales about striving beyond one's means. Phaethon attempts to drive the chariot of the sun and dies because this position was meant only for the divine. Otus and Ephialtes try to prove themselves to be stronger than the Olympians and are eventually killed because such a threat unbalances the supremacy of heaven over earth.

Fate 5: Acrisius is not at first a wretched father, but he wishes to avoid his fate by preventing his daughter from bearing a child. When Zeus impregnates her, he casts her and the child into the sea. Nevertheless, many years later, a wild discus, that just happens to be thrown by his grandson, strikes him and kills him.

Fate 6: The Oracle at Delphi instructs Hercules how to atone for his great crime against his family. These twelve labors are his fated recompense for an unholy deed. When he completes them, he makes yet another mistake and must complete more service. His death, though accidental, brings him to his rightful position in the heavens.

Fate 7: Achilles and Hector both have fates that weigh heavily upon them. Achilles knows that Greek victory is dependent upon his death in battle; he must face this every day. In a similar way, Hector, and his wife, know that Troy cannot fall until Hector falls. For both heroes, this is a struggle. Hector must be brave and save his own life, while defending the city. Achilles must be brave and not shy away from giving up his own life.

Fate 8: Fate is a controlling factor in the *Aeneid*. Aeneas is propelled across the Mediterranean because he is supposed to lay the foundations of Rome. Whenever he hesitates, bad things happen. He has no choice but to follow the way of fate and do as his duty requires.



Fate 9: Orestes is thrown into a paradox by the death of his father. He must avenge his death, but this means killing his mother. He cannot reconcile this on his own and must consult the oracle at Delphi, who orders him to kill his mother and her lover. He does this, but not with impunity. He suffers for many years.

Fate 10: Oedipus is the most well known tale of attempts to avoid fate. Both Oedipus and his father, Laius, try to avoid their fate and unknowingly walk right into it. Oedipus kills his father and marries his mother. Not knowing he was an orphaned child, Oedipus was brought up to become a popular King and a good husband. The realization of his tragic fate is gruesome and horrifying.

Fate 11: The Norse fate is truly a dire one. Ragnarok is on its way no matter what, and everyone must prepare for it. The life of the gods and of men focuses around delaying the inevitable. This sweeping and universal fate is not found in Mediterranean mythology.



Topic Tracking: Women

Women 1: The earth is identified as a woman, Gaia. Her food, on which men subsist, is the property of women. Demeter is the personification of this understanding: women are responsible for the vital elements of life, while men are responsible for war and wine, two things human beings could survive without. Spring, the season that brings life, is also feminine. The life-bringing season disappears because of the male gods and their need to abduct and control women. Violence interferes with the necessary dealings of life and all humans suffer.

Women 2: Although Dionysius is a man and a god of wine, he is the most effeminate of the male divinities. Women (the Maenads) follow him but they do not behave like other women in mythology. The Maenads represent violent and senseless destruction. In a sense, they are emasculated by wine, just as Dionysius becomes less of a man because of it.

Women 3: Often, women are not portrayed as willing partners to their husbands; they are often violently compelled subjects. Gaia intrigues against her husband because of this. Her bond with her children is stronger. The first women were either made as a punishment for men or as companions. Their connection with the release of evil into the world is a parallel to the Judeo-Christian belief in Genesis. The story of the Flood to punish men's evils is also in parallel to the Judeo-Christian tale of creation.

Women 4: Many of the most important families or tales in mythology are begun just as those of Io and Europa. Zeus rapes a woman and she bears a son who is fated to be famous or wretched. Always, the wrath of Hera against her unfaithful husband results in harm for the women and their children.

Women 5: The story of Cupid and Psyche illustrates another common theme about women in mythology: They are intensely jealous of each other. Venus is angry that Psyche has earned the praise of so many men and tries to get rid of her. When her own son falls for this mere mortal, Venus only gets more angry. Psyche's sisters are just as bad. They envy their sister's wealthy circumstances and try to trick her into ruining them.

Women 6: In these eight stories of lovers, two types of women are developed. The first is the loyal lover/wife who would do anything for her husband. The second is the virgin who wants nothing to do with men, but is pursued by a lustful divinity. Both these themes endure through mythology. The only other option for a woman is to be a witch like Medea. Hamilton's story of Oedipus and Eurydice has an interesting omission. In some accounts Oedipus looks back because Eurydice begged him to do so and had accused him of not loving her.

Women 7: Medea presents another type of woman in mythology. She is the daughter who betrays her family and city for love. She helps Jason defeat and deceive her father and follows him to his homeland. When he betrays her, however, she becomes another



archetype. She gets the most gruesome revenge, killing her husband's children and Jason's new fiancée.

Women 8: Proetus' wife is the lusting woman who gets revenge when she is denied a lover. Theseus' wife does the same thing when her stepson denies her. In this, she is like Medea, except Medea was actually done wrong. Bellerophon receives a princess as a prize for committing such heroic deeds. This is another common theme: women can be offered as a prize (much like property).

Women 9: Danae's father becomes primarily concerned with her sexuality after the Oracle at Delphi tells him that she will bear a son who will later kill him. Zeus, as usual, finds some way to impregnate the maiden. In a far away land, she becomes the primary interest of the wicked King, Polydectes. Polydectes tries to do away with her son, the only man who stands between him and his lust for Danae.

Women 10: In this section, many different female archetypes are presented. Pasiphae is driven mad with lust for a bull and bears a wretched child. No where in Mythology does such a creature result from a man's lust. Ariadne betrays her father in a way similar to Medea's betrayal. She is also abandoned by her love. Some sources blame Ariadne's curse on Theseus: he killed Aegeus. The Amazons were women who were war-like. They took no lovers and lived only for war. Theseus, however, defeated them. The planned rapes of Helen and Persephone are common in Greek mythology, although it is most common for gods to carry out such endeavors. Fortunately, Theseus and Pirithous are harshly punished for their attempts.

Women 11: Great heroes are always said to be the son of a god with a mortal wife; the women contributes little to the gene pool. Hercules brutally kills his first wife but eventually atones for it with his twelve labors. His last wife, however, is angered when Hercules sends captured maidens home. By a fluke, she kills him. A misunderstanding between Hercules and his wife results in his final demise. She, however, did not plan this; it was a trick from a long dead Centaur.

Women 12: Atalanta was abandoned because she was not a son. This is typical of the ancient world. A daughter had to be cared for and a suitable husband would have to be found. When she shows herself to be on equal ground with men, she is reconciled with her parents, but must still yield to the requests of suitors. They cannot beat her in physical competitions. Melanion, a suitor, beats her in a foot race only after resorting to trickery; she stops to pick up the 'shiny' golden apples he drops deliberately.

Women 13: In many ways, women play an important role in starting the Trojan War. It is the goddesses' vanity that fuels a competition between Athena, Artemis, and Aphrodite. Paris, the mortal judge, picks Aphrodite, who had promised him the most beautiful woman in the world. Helen, the most prized woman in Greece, is the object of an oath to protect her husband's right to her at all times. These two forces bring all of Greece to Troy, and the War begins. The *Iliad* opens with Agamemnon and Achilles fighting over women. In war, women become property, even more so than in peace.



Women 14: The end of the Trojan War highlights the long-term sufferers of war: women and children. The men, though killed, die in battle and the suffering ends quickly. The women are enslaved and become the property of their captors in every way, especially sexually.

Women 15: The *Odyssey* is filled with much stronger women than the *Iliad*. Women like Circe and Calypso have a significant impact on Odysseus' continued journey. When he asks for help on the island, he asks the Queen not the King. Penelope is the interest of many suitors, but she denies them all and waits dutifully for her husband. She is the model of a good wife. When Odysseus finally comes, she hesitates and seeks proof before embracing him.

Women 16: Women are largely absent from the *Aeneid* except in key places. Dido is a great example of a tragic love. She doesn't mean to fall in love with Aeneas, but the gods make her. When he leaves, she kills herself. In the underworld, she will not speak to him. The war in Italy is ostensibly fought over the right to the native king's daughter. The native Turnus does not want her going to a foreigner instead of him.

Women 17: Women factor into the strife of the Atreus line. Atreus hates Thyestes because of an affair he has with his wife. This is enough to make brothers kill their nephews. Menelaus goes to war over his wife. Clytemnestra takes a lover and kills her husband. Orestes must kill his mother to end the family curse.

Women 18: All the women in the House of Thebes meet tragic ends except for Iphigenia. The daughters of Cadmus have terrible fates. Jocasta has one husband die, and later realizes that her second husband is actually her abandoned son. She kills herself. Iphigenia is strong and truly brave. She stands by her father against the unjust ruling of Creon. She is rewarded for her courage by being executed.

Women 19: Women were allegedly once allowed to vote in Athens, but they lost this right after making a bad decision. Procne's husband brutalized Procne and Philomela, so they fought back by killing his child and feeding it to him. Creusa bore a child and abandoned it only to be reunited happily years later.

Women 20: The Danaids killed their husbands because they were married forcibly. This force did not absolve them of their penance in the Underworld. Erysichthon's daughter is yet another example of a woman being used primarily as property. Pomona and Vertumunus is the first example of a man and woman working as partners. This is an early example for a good marriage

Women 21: The shorter myths continue the archetypes begun in the earlier myths. Zeus abandons Leto when she is pregnant. Clytie falls helplessly in love with Apollo and is denied. Scylla betrays her father, but Minos does not want anything to do with her. Tyro abandons the children of Apollo like many other women.



Part 1: The Gods, The Creation...,

Chapter 1: The Titans

The gods of the Greeks and Romans did not create heaven and earth; heaven and earth gave birth to the Titans, the first gods. The most important of these deities were Cronus, Atlas and Prometheus. Ocean was also a Titan. The twelve Olympians were the gods that followed the titans: Zeus, Hera, Poseidon, Hades, Athena, Apollo, Artemis, Aphrodite, Hermes, Ares, Hephaestus, and Hestia. There were many other lesser gods of both generations.



Part 1, Chapter 2: Two Gods of Earth

Two gods important to the day to day lives of men are Demeter and Dionysius. Demeter is the older divinity because corn and wheat are planted before the grape vine, the gods' earthly manifestations. The grain divinity is a woman because the harvest became a woman's job with the increasing frequency of warfare. Fields and the threshing floor became holy. Demeter's chief festival occurs at harvest time and became known as the Eleusinian Mysteries in Greece. These unknown rituals were held every five years for nine days. Dionysius also came to be worshipped in this ritual. Neither of the Earth gods are truly alive in the winter.

Demeter had a daughter, Persephone, who embodied the spring time. When she walked the earth, spring was eternal. The world began to waste away when Hades stole her. Demeter looked for her for nine days but no one would tell her the truth. The Sun admitted to her that "Persephone was down in the world beneath the earth" Chapter 2, pg. 57. She wandered to the earth until she came to Eleusis. Four virgin sisters found her and took her home for shelter. She asked for barley water flavored with mint. She nursed their brother to give him eternal youth. She exposed herself to the mother, Metaneira, and asked for a temple to be built. Demeter returned when the temple was built and pined for her lost daughter. The world was caught in an eternal winter, and Zeus sent Hermes to make Hades release Persephone. Hades made her eat a pomegranate seed before she left. Persephone rejoined her mother, but Demeter knew that her daughter would soon die from the pomegranate seed, and return to the underworld. Zeus sent his mother Rhea to talk to Hades and make him give up Persephone. Demeter accepted the compromise of Persephone spending part of the year in the land of the dead and a part of the year among the living. This story explains the four seasons.

Topic Tracking: Women 1

In the city of Thebes, Zeus fell in love with a woman named Semele. She manipulated him into letting her see his full splendor. The sight killed her. Before she died, Zeus saved their child, Dionysius, and hid him from Hera (his wife). He was cared for by nymphs and nursed by the rain to learn how to culture a vine. Pirates seized him but could not bind him. Only the helmsman guessed that he was a god. The ship filled with wine and dolphins carried Dionysius to safety. He passed through Thrace and went to Crete where he rescued Ariadne from her abandonment on Naxos. He never forgot his mother. He went to the underworld and carried her to Olympus.

Dionysius is known as a kind, but at times, cruel god. He drives Maenads wild with wine. They would rush through towns and forests destroying anything in their way. They have no temples and they worship him in the forest. He went to Thebes to establish his worship officially. Pentheus feared this and told his guards to seize the women. Teiresias warned him, but Pentheus proceeded and Dionysius came before him. All the Maenads escaped.



"Pentheus by now was blind to everything except his anger and his scorn. He spoke roughly to Dionysius, who answered him with entire gentleness, seeming to try to reach his real self and open his eyes to see that he was face to face with divinity." Chapter 2, pg. 70

Dionysius escaped from his chains and asked Pentheus to yield to the divine. Maenads pursued Pentheus into the forest. The Theban women joined them and tore him limb from limb.

Dionysius is simultaneously joyful and brutal. Just as wine can produce joy or sorrow, Dionysius produces ruin and fruit. In his dual nature, he is closer to men than other gods. While Demeter's mysteries were closed, the festival of Dionysius was an open five days of poetry and plays, out of which the most famous of the Greek tragedies and comedies emerged. Just as a grapevine must be cut back and left dead for the winter, Dionysius was believed to be dead in the snow. Every year he submits to the gruesome death of being torn to pieces. His soul, however, lives on and in his resurrection, life overcomes death.

Topic Tracking: Atrocity 1

Topic Tracking: Women 2



Part 1, Chapter 3: How the World and Men were Created

Chaos existed before everything. Night and Erebus are children of this chaos. From this void, love was somehow born and it created light and day. From this, earth emerged. Earth was simultaneously geography and an entity, as was heaven. Earth (Gaia) and Sky (Ouranos) gave birth to monsters that were terrible. First came hundred handed beasts, then the Cyclopes and their last children, the Titans. Ouranos hated the Titans. Gaia appealed to them and Cronus castrated his father. From his blood the Erinyes were born.

Cronus ruled with his sister Rhea. He ate his children as they were born because he had learned that one would overcome him. Rhea rescued the sixth child and hid him on Crete. She had fed her husband a rock wrapped in cloth, instead of a baby. This child, Zeus, forced his father to disengage his siblings and together they fought the Titans. Zeus won by joining with the hundred-handed monsters. He bound many of the Titans. Atlas was condemned to bear the weight of the sky and the earth forever. Zeus was not completely victorious, however. There were many times afterward when he had to struggle with the giants. The gods of Olympus overwhelmed the gods of earth, enforcing the supremacy of heaven over earth. "As yet there were no human beings, but the world now cleared of monsters was ready for mankind." Chapter 3, pg. 83

The earth was a disc of land divided by water and surrounded by the ocean. On the sides of the ocean were mysterious people who lived near the Muses. According to some sources, the dead also lived on this far edge. There is more than one account for the creation of man. This job was given to Prometheus and his brother Epimetheus. Their names mean forethought and afterthought respectively. Epimetheus gave all the good traits to animals first. Neither speed nor strength was left for humans. He gave the botched job to his brother. Prometheus made men in the image of the gods and gave them fire as the best protection against the animals of the world.

In another account, the gods made men together. The first race was a golden race that had neither work nor pain. The next race was an inferior silver race. The following was the brass, who were terrible and followed by a race of heroes that fought glorious wars and went on to blessed lands. The fifth race was that of iron, modern man. This race grows more wretched with each generation, and someday Zeus will have to destroy them.

Both stories agree that there were no women in the early age. Zeus created them as revenge because Prometheus tricked the gods into accepting fat wrapped around bones instead of real meat for sacrifice. Zeus swore by Styx to keep this sacrificial procedure and made women as a punishment. He created Pandora. In one story she was evil but in another she was naive and her curiosity made her open a box that held all the evils that came to men. The only good thing that came out of the box was hope. After punishing men, Zeus had Prometheus bound to a rock because he wanted him to



disclose a secret only he knew. Prometheus knew which woman would bear a son greater than Zeus. He hung in torture for many years. Chiron one day offered himself as a substitute, but Hercules ultimately released the Titan.

Another account is that men descended from a race of stone. They grew so wicked that Zeus sent a flood to drown them all and only one peak was uncovered. A son of Prometheus and a daughter of Epimetheus survived on this peak. Deucalion and Pyrrha were allowed to survive because Zeus thought that they were pious. They returned to the earth and other people formed out of stones. The newer race of men was harder and more enduring.

Topic Tracking: Fate 1

Topic Tracking: Women 3

Topic Tracking: Atrocity 2



Part 1, Chapter 4: The Earliest Heroes

When Prometheus was first bound to the rock, a heifer named Io spoke to him like a woman:

*"Did you do wrong?
Is this your punishment?
Where am I
Speak to a wretched wanderer.
Enough - I have been tried enough-
My wandering -long wandering,
Yet I have found nowhere
To leave my misery.
I am a girl who speaks to you,
But horns are on my head."* Chapter 4, pg. 96

Hera turned her into a heifer because Zeus desired her. Prometheus knew who she was and she knew his story. They exchanged their tales of woe and realized that Zeus was the cause of everything. He is a king of the gods with little wisdom or foresight. He had tried to hide them in a cloud, but Hera saw through this. Hera asked Zeus for the heifer Io as a gift and Zeus could not deny her. Zeus was upset about this and he asked Hermes to free Io from the hundred-eyed creature who was guarding her. Hermes killed the beast and put his eyes on the peacock, which became the beast of Hera. Prometheus assures her that a sea, the Ionian, will be named after her and that she will have a son with Zeus when she is returned to a human being. Her descendant will be Hercules. Bosphorus is named so because of the bovine woman.

Europa was the daughter of the King of Sidon. Zeus watched her wake from a troubled dream about two continents that tried to feed on her. Europa stayed awake and went with her companions to the sea. While gathering flowers, they were watched by Zeus, who fell madly in love with her because of Cupid. Zeus turned himself into a beautiful bull and ran away across the sea with Europa when she climbed on his back. Europa guessed that the bull was divine and pleaded for him to release her. They went to Crete and had a wedding. Her sons were Minos and Rhadamnathus, who were just men on earth and judges in the afterlife.

Polyphemus is one of the Cyclopes, and one of the only creatures born before the Titans, who was not killed by the Olympians. They forge Zeus' thunderbolts. They increased in numbers and became fierce and lawless, not fearing the Olympians. Odysseus came to the island of Polyphemus and he and his men took some of his milk and cheese. The cyclops returned from grazing his flock and became enraged. He killed and ate some of the men. Odysseus found a long timber the next day and sharpened it. With the help of some of his men, he blinded the beast. Polyphemus stood in the way of the doorway but Odysseus and his men got out by hanging under the stomachs of the sheep as they left. Polyphemus cursed the man. He changed through the centuries "as what is ugly and evil is apt to change and grow milder with time." Chapter 4, pg. 109.



The next story of the Cyclops has him pathetically in love with a sea nymph who wants nothing to do with him. She came around and pelted him and his flock with apples. He sang songs to soften her heart. Later, in another tale, she almost became his because he is a favored son of Poseidon. She fell in love with a prince whom Polyphemus kills in jealousy.

In Greece there are a wide array of wild flowers and along with this, a wide array of flower myths. Their narcissus flower was a purple bloom that Zeus created for Hades. It distracted Persephone from the other flowers. When she reached for it, Hades came for her. A boy named Narcissus was so beautiful that all the nymphs of the forest loved him. One of Artemis' favorites, Echo, was especially smitten with him. Her punishment for speaking so much was that she could only repeat what others said. She could not have a conversation with Narcissus. He saw a reflection of himself in a pool and fell in love. He was cursed to love himself and gazed at his reflection until he died. A flower took the place of his body.

Another flower was the hyacinth, shaped like a lily and deep crimson in color. It came from Hyacinthus, Apollo's companion who was accidentally killed by the god's discus. Apollo was grief stricken and he named the flower that bloomed in his blood after him. These flowers are emblematic of Greek mythology: beauty supported by terrible sacrifice. The most wretched of the flower tales is of Adonis. Aphrodite fell in love with the youth when he was born and took him to Persephone, who also fell in love. They fought over him and Zeus decreed that the boy would spend half the year with the dead and the other half with the living. One year, when he was on a hunt with Aphrodite, a boar gored him and his blood became the anemone.

Topic Tracking: Women 4

Topic Tracking: Atrocity 3



Part 2: Stories of Love..., Chapter 1: Cupid and Psyche

There was a king who had three daughters, the most beautiful of whom was Psyche. She was so beautiful that men worshipped her instead of Venus. Venus was enraged by this and sent her son Cupid to make the girl fall in love with a horrible beast. Apollo told her father that his daughter was doomed in a prophecy. He commanded the girl to be left at the edge of a cliff. Psyche waited there for her doom, but a soft wind lifted her and took her to an enormous beautiful house. Spirits spoke within it and told her that they were her servants. At night, her husband came to her and made love. This happened for awhile. One night, he warned her that her sisters were coming to visit her:

"They are coming to the hill where you disappeared to weep for you,...but you must not let them see you or you will bring great sorrow upon me and ruin to yourself." Part 2, Chapter 1, pg. 124

She promised to do as he asked but eventually begs him to allow her to see her sisters. He relents and the next day they are carried to the house by the same wind. They saw her wealth and were immediately jealous. Psyche asked Cupid the next night if she might see her sisters again and he gives in to her but warns her that they are planning evil. When they came, they reveal the oracle of Apollo and convince her that her husband might be a hideous beast. That night, after having hidden a lamp and a razor to kill him if necessary, Psyche looked on the form of her husband and the oil from the lamp burned him. He fled and she wandered around looking for him for many days. Venus allowed none of the gods to hear her prayers. She eventually came to Venus herself and asked for Cupid. Venus gave her the impossible task of sorting an enormous pile of different grains by dawn. Psyche was heart broken and could not start her task, but a group of ants performed the task for her. Her next task was to gather the golden wool from fierce sheep; she accomplished this by pulling the wool from briars. Next, Venus made her get a vial of water from the river Styx. When she was about to kill herself, an eagle performed this task for her. Finally, Venus charged her with going to the underworld and getting a box of beauty from Persephone but not to look in the box. When she came back from the underworld, she opened the box and fell into a deep sleep. Cupid woke her and asked Jupiter to call an assembly of the gods. Zeus made Psyche into a deity and Cupid married her. Psyche's name means soul and Cupid means love; this tale represents the union of love and soul beyond the wishes of Venus, who represents lust.

Topic Tracking: Women 5

Topic Tracking: Fate 2



Part 2, Chapter 2: Eight Brief Tales of Lovers

Mulberries used to be white but turned red because of Pyramus and Thisbe. They were beautiful youths who grew up in neighboring houses in Babylon. They fell in love, but were forbidden to be together by their parents. They spoke to one another through a hole in the wall between their houses. They agreed to meet near a tomb on the outskirts of the city near a mulberry tree. Having sneaked out at night, Thisbe saw a lioness and escaped the creature, but dropped her cloak. The lioness tore it up and dripped blood from something else on it. Pyramus found the cloak and killed himself with a dagger near the tree. Thisbe got to the tree to find her Pyramus dead, and killed herself to be with him. "The deep red fruit of the mulberry is the everlasting memorial of these true lovers and one urn holds the ashes of the two whom not even death could part." Part 2, Chapter 2, pg. 138.

The earliest musicians were gods, but the greatest of mortals was Orpheus, whose mother was a muse. When he sang and played, his power had no limit. Creatures and men would follow him about. He sailed with Jason on the Argo. His tune countered the music of the Sirens. He met and wooed a woman named Eurydice. Soon after they were married, however, a serpent killed her. Bereft, he grieved her loss and traveled to the underworld, using his music to soothe Cerberus. The god of the underworld heeded his pleas to release Eurydice under the conditions that he not look at her until they get to the surface. Just as they approached the surface, he turned and she disappeared. He was not allowed to reenter the underworld and went about the world playing his music until he was ripped to pieces by the Maenads.

Ceyx and Alcyone ruled over Thessaly. They loved each other dearly and were never apart. He had to leave her to go on a trip and even though she didn't want him to go, he left. A great storm hit him on the sea and he died. She counted the days he was gone and prayed for his safe return. Hera sent Iris to have Sleep send her a dream of the truth. Sleep sent his son and he took up the form of drowned Ceyx. Alcyone was grief-stricken and went to the shore. She found his body floating in the surf. She ran into the sea to drown herself but found that she had turned into a seagull. He rose again as a bird. In peaceful seasons they can still be seen together.

Pygmalion was a great sculptor and a misogynist who refused to ever marry. Regardless of this, he labored over a statue of a beautiful woman. He fell in love with it, kissed it, bought it gifts and put it to bed. Venus observed this love, and on the day of her festival, he asked for a woman like his statue. When he went home the statue was alive. He named her Galatea. They were married.

In Asia Minor, there were two trees of different species that grew from the same trunk. Jupiter often went about the world looking for fun with Mercury. He and Mercury went into a town in the form of poor beggars. No house would let them enter. A poor old man and woman, Baucis and Philemon, invited them in and offered their hospitality. When



the wine bowl never emptied, they knew that their guests were divine. They were upset that they did not kill their only goose for the travelers. Jupiter killed the whole town and spared them. Their home was turned into a golden temple. Jupiter offered them anything they wanted and they asked to die together kissing. They became a linden and an oak tree growing from the same trunk.

The youth Endymion possessed surpassing beauty. The moon was in love with him and took him to a glade where he would sleep and be beautiful forever. She returns to him to kiss him as he sleeps. This brings her pleasure but worry because he will never wake.

Daphne was a young and independent huntress who wanted very much to be like Artemis. Apollo was in love with her and she fled him. Apollo wanted to catch her and dress her like a woman instead of a huntress. He chased her but she was changed into a laurel tree and he was thwarted. It is because of this that the laurel is Apollo's tree.

"In Ortygia, an island which formed part of Syracuse, the greatest city of Sicily, there is a sacred spring called Arethusa. Once, however, Arethusa was not water or even a water nymph but a fair young huntress and a follower of Artemis." Part 2, Chapter 2, pg. 157

Arethusa came upon a river and swam in it. The god of the river fell in love with her and pursued her. She wanted nothing to do with him and fled. She plunged into another body of water. The god, Alpheus, turned back into a river and found her underground. She turned into a stream and their waters mingled together.

Topic Tracking: Atrocity 4

Topic Tracking: Women 6



Part 2, Chapter 3: The Quest for the Golden Fleece

The first hero to go on a great journey was Jason, a generation before the *Iliad*. It was thought to be very dangerous to travel outside Greece. All the heroes who went with him ended up suffering greatly. Athamas, a king, got sick of his first wife and gave her up for a woman named Ino. Nephele, the first wife, was afraid that Ino would kill her son. The king permitted this but Hermes rescued the child Phrixus with a golden ram. Phrixus sacrificed the ram to Zeus and gave the pelt to King Aetes. Phrixus' uncle lost his kingdom to a man named Pelias. His nephew, Jason, wanted to regain the kingdom from Pelias. Pelias was afraid that a kinsman was going to kill him so he was very startled when Jason arrived in a leopard skin. He told him that he could have the kingdom if he retrieved the Golden Fleece. He called for heroes to join him. He was joined by Orpheus, Hercules, and Castor and Pollux. They sailed in the argo. They stopped on an island where all the women had killed their husbands. Hercules left the expedition when his cup-bearer was taken by a nymph. They fought beasts called Harpies. They sat at the table of a prophet whom Apollo had gifted with the power of foresight. The harpies descended upon them and tried to take their food. They killed many of them, but Iris stopped the attack. The argonauts had to pass through rocks that smashed together. They sent a dove through first and it went through, losing only its tail feathers. They rowed hard and made it. From here they went to the land of the Amazons but had no battle. They passed Prometheus in the distance and arrived in Colchis. Hera asked Aphrodite to make the journey less dangerous and she had Cupid make the king's daughter, Medea, fall in love with Jason.

The heroes made their way to the city disguised in fog. Medea saw Jason and went mad with love. She hid in her bedchamber. Jason asked Aetes for the fleece in exchange for any service they could perform, and the king became upset. He told them that they should yoke two of his fire-breathing bulls and sow dragon's teeth into the ground. From this seed, fully armed men would sprout and they would have to fight them. The king said "'I have done all this myself and I will give the fleece to no man less brave than I.'" Part 2, Chapter 3, pg. 170.

Medea was upset because she knew that the king meant for Jason to die. One of Aetes' grandsons told Jason to go to Medea and she gave him a magic ointment that would make him and his weapons invincible for one day. The soldiers would turn against each other if they faced him.

The next day he did everything as instructed and all the warriors fell. The king planned treachery, but Medea warned them and lulled the serpent that guarded the fleece to sleep. They stole the fleece and rowed off. Aetes sent Medea's brother after them but somehow she killed him and made it so that Jason could escape. Another account says that the brother was in the ship with them, and Medea cut him up and threw him in the ocean so her father would slow down and pick up the pieces. The Argo slipped through



Scylla and Charybdis, guarded by nymphs. They neared Crete, but did not land at Medea's warning.

The band departed in Greece and Jason took the fleece to Pelias with Medea. Pelias had made Jason's father kill himself. Medea tricked Pelias' daughters into killing their father by cutting up an old goat and making it come out of a cauldron as a young goat. They did this to their father and he died. Another story says that Medea brought Jason's father back to life. Medea and Jason went to Corinth and had children. After a while, Jason was engaged to the princess of Corinth. Medea brooded over Jason's betrayal, after she had done so much for him. He tried to convince her that the marriage was better for her children. Medea rejected all his claims; he said that it was Aphrodite's fault that she did so much for him, not his. Medea got angry and poisoned the princess. Then she killed her own children so that no one else could kill them. She departed on a chariot drawn by dragons and Jason cursed her, rather than himself.

Topic Tracking: Atrocity 5

Topic Tracking: Fate 3

Topic Tracking: Women 7



Part 2, Chapter 4: Four Great Adventures

The palace of the sun was beautiful, filled with light and treasure. Mortals never came to it until one youth, Phaethon, approached and asked the sun if he really was his father. The sun confirmed this rumor and swore by the river Styx to give his son anything he asked. Phaethon asked to drive the chariot of the sun the next dawn. The sun begged him not to ask for such a thing, but he would not remit his request. He warned the boy of all the great dangers along the way but the boy could not be frightened. The sun had to give in because of his oath by the river. Phaethon climbed in the chariot and quickly lost control:

"That light weight in the car, those feeble hands clutching the reins, had told [the horses] their own driver was not there. they were the masters then. No one else could command them. they left the road and rushed where they chose, up, down, to the right, to the left." Part 2, Chapter 4, pg. 183

Soon mountains were singed and rivers dried up. Phaethon was barely aware of what was going on. Zeus used a thunderbolt to stop the rampage and the horses plunged into the sea. Nymphs tended to Phaethon's body. His reckless ride brought the sun low over the earth and scorched the people south of the Nile, the region the Greeks referred to as Ethiopia.

In the city of Corinth, a King named Glaucus was killed. His son was allegedly Bellerophon. Bellerophon's father was also rumored to be Poseidon. Bellerophon wanted the winged horse Pegasus more than anything else in the world. When no one could catch and tame the beast, Bellerophon went to Athena's temple and was given a golden bridle to use on the horse. When he approached the beast with the bridle, he subdued it easily and became a master of the air. He accidentally killed his brother and went to be purified by the King of Argos, named Proetus. Proetus' wife wanted to have sex with Bellerophon but he refused her. She told Proetus that Bellerophon came on to her and Proetus wanted to kill him but could not kill his own guest. He sent the adventurer to his friend in Asia Minor with a message that he should be killed. The King there sent Bellerophon to kill the Chimaera. He killed it and then had to fight a warring tribe followed by the Amazons. Ultimately, Bellerophon succeeded in everything and the king gave him his own daughter as a wife. Years later, Bellerophon insulted the gods by trying to fly up to Olympus. The gods scorned him ever after and Pegasus was kept in a stable on Olympus.

Otus and Ephialtes were twin giants who were sons of Poseidon and a nymph. They wanted to prove that they were superior to the Olympians. They imprisoned Ares and Zeus was going to kill them until Poseidon pleaded for their lives. They went after Artemis because they wanted her and she led them over sea where they saw a white deer. Artemis tricked them into killing each other with spears.

Daedalus was an architect who designed the Labyrinth for King Minos. After he built it and he divulged a way to get out of it to Ariadne, King Minos imprisoned him, along with



his son Icarus. He made two pairs of wax wings for them to use to escape, and warned his son not to fly too close to the sun. His son did, however, and plunged into the sea. Minos contrived a trap years later by announcing a reward for anyone who could move a string through an intricate seashell. Daedalus solved it and Minos went to Sicily to kill him, but died himself.

Topic Tracking: Women 8

Topic Tracking: Fate 4



Part 3: Heroes Before the Trojan War, Chapter 1: Perseus

Argos' King Acrisius had a single daughter named Danae. He went to Apollo's oracle at Delphi. The oracle told him that his daughter would bear a son who would later kill him. Acrisius could not kill his daughter but he shut her up below ground. One day, a shower of gold fell through the opening and Zeus impregnated her with a son who would be named Perseus. Acrisius was indignant when he found out that his daughter was pregnant, and he put her in a chest with her baby and cast it into the sea. They drifted for a day and a night and landed where a fisherman found them and took them in. He and his wife cared for them for many years. When Perseus was full grown, Polydectes, the ruler of the land, wanted to marry Danae and decided to get rid of her son. He told Perseus that all he wanted for a wedding gift was the head of the mortal Gorgon Medusa. He knew that Perseus would go after the beast and die in pursuit. Hermes and Aphrodite took pity on the boy and helped him. He was given winged sandals and a hat that made him invisible. He was also given a sword and a mirrored shield he would use to look at the Gorgons (they could not be seen directly without the onlooker being turned into stone). He was also given a magic wallet that would expand to the size of whatever it needed to carry.

Perseus was guided to the Gorgons and he succeeded in killing Medusa. "But the two other sisters had awakened and, horrified at the sight of their sister slain, tried to pursue the slayer." Part 3, Chapter 1, pg. 204. He escaped them and went through Ethiopia where he rescued a woman named Andromeda from a serpent to which she had been offered. He took her to her parents and asked to be married. When they arrived back at his home, the fisherman and his wife were hiding in a temple because Polydectes was trying to kill them. Perseus entered Polydectes' banquet hall and pulled the Medusa head out of the bag. Everyone in the hall turned to stone. Perseus made the fisherman the king of the island and he headed back to Greece. When he got there, Acrisius was not in his palace. Perseus went to compete in an athletic competition. The discus he threw went awry. It hit and killed an old man in the crowd. The man was Acrisius. Perseus and Andromeda give birth to the grandfather of Hercules.

Topic Tracking: Fate 5

Topic Tracking: Women 9

Topic Tracking: Atrocity 6



Part 3, Chapter 2: Theseus

Theseus was the great Athenian hero and the son of King Aegeus. When Theseus returned to Athens from his mother's city in southern Greece, he went by land instead of ship because it was more dangerous. Along the way, he killed many evil-doers and doled out his own justice. By the time he arrived at Athens, he was already famous, and Aegeus, ignorant that the youth coming to the city was his son, became apprehensive. When he saw him, however, he recognized his son and rejoiced as he proclaimed him heir to the throne of Athens. Years before, Minos of Crete had conquered Athens and demanded that 14 youths and maidens be sacrificed every year to the beast, the Minotaur. He did this because his son died in Athens on an errand for Aegeus. The Minotaur was half man and half bull, born of Minos' wife Pasiphae's lust for a bull. Rather than killing his wife's beastly child, he commissioned Daedalus to build the Labyrinth to contain it. Theseus volunteered to be one of the youths and went to Crete with the goal of slaying the beast. He told his father that on his return, he would raise white sails instead of black if his journey were successful.

When they arrived in Crete, Minos' daughter Ariadne fell in love with Theseus and wanted to help him. Daedalus told her that if Theseus trailed a ball of string behind him, he could find his way out of the maze. Daedalus beat the Minotaur and left with the youths and Ariadne. They stopped on an island, either because Ariadne was seasick, or to rest. She was left behind on the island. Some accounts say this was an accident and some say it was on purpose. When Theseus neared Athens, he forgot to raise the white sails and his father threw himself from a cliff. Theseus did not want to be king but commander-in-chief:

"Thus Athens became, of all earth's cities, the only true home of liberty, the one place in the world where the people governed themselves." Part 3, Chapter 2, pg. 216

Theseus took his army against Thebes to make them bury the dead Athenians. He received Oedipus when everyone else refused him. He stood by Hercules when he went mad and killed his family. Despite all this, he still loved danger for the sake of danger. He went to the country of the Amazons and carried away their leader. She bore a child named Hippolytus to him. The amazons attacked Athens but were defeated. He sailed on the Argo and participated in the Calydonian boar hunt. The king of Calydon asked the warriors of Greece to help him kill a boar that was ravaging his kingdom.

When he caught a man named Pirithous stealing his cattle, Theseus swore an oath of friendship to him because he sang his praise. When Pirithous, king of the Lapiths, got married, the Centaurs came to take his wife away and there was a terrible battle. They expelled the Centaurs from Greece.

Later, Theseus was going to try to kidnap the young Helen and Pirithous decided that he desired Persephone. They made their way to the underworld and were trapped. After, Hercules freed Theseus. He ended up marrying Ariadne's sister and upsetting Hippolytus. Aphrodite caused her to fall in love with Theseus' son and when he did not



want anything to do with her, she planned to kill herself. Theseus found his wife dead with a letter that said Hippolytus had violently tried to have his way with her. Theseus would not listen to his son's defense and he exiled him. He died on his journey. Artemis appeared and told Theseus the truth. Years later another king, for no apparent reason, killed him.

Topic Tracking: Women 10



Part 3, Chapter 3: Hercules

Hercules was the most admired hero in all of Greece, except Athens. His qualities were the most cherished: strength and courage. Hercules often fought with the gods. He fought for them against the giant and against Apollo when the god's oracle would not speak for him. Intelligence was not one of his strengths. His emotions often sent him out of control and caused him harm. Hercules could not have been in command of a kingdom like Theseus. He was great:

"Not because he had complete courage based on overwhelming strength, which is merely a matter of course, but because, by his sorrow for wrongdoing and his willingness to do anything to expiate it, he showed greatness of soul." Part 3, Chapter 3, pg. 227

He was born in Thebes to Alcmena and Zeus (thought to be the son of the King). Hera was jealous when he was an infant and she sent serpents against him. His brother wailed and his parents rushed in the room to find that Hercules had killed the snakes. He went into a rage every time a teacher tried to teach him something he didn't want to know. He killed a lion when he was 18 and ever after, wore its skin as a cloak. He conquered many peoples and was given a Princess to marry. Later, after he had children, Hera made him go crazy and kill his family. He went to Delphi and asked how he could atone for this. He was told to go to the king of Mycenae and do whatever he asked. Hera helped this king devise the hero's twelve labors.

His first labor was to kill the lion of Nemea who was impervious to weapons. He choked it to death. Next, he had to kill a nine-headed hydra whose neck would sprout two new heads whenever he chopped one off. He burned the stumps and buried the beast under a great rock. He had to bring back a live stag belonging to Artemis (the third), and then bring back a great boar (the fourth). On his fifth labor, he had to clean enormous stables in a day. He accomplished this by rerouting two rivers. A plague of innumerable birds had to be driven from a city, and Athena aided him. Next, he stole a great savage bull from Crete and was charged with retrieving the girdle of Hippolyta, the leader of the Amazons. She was going to give it easily, but Hera made the Amazons fight him. Then, he retrieved man-eating mares from Thrace and cattle from far in the west. On the tenth labor, he set up the Pillars of Hercules at the Strait of Gibraltar. His eleventh task was to steal the golden apples from the Hesperides, stars in the sky, daughters of Atlas. He asked Atlas for help and Atlas asked him to bear the earth and sky for him. Atlas wanted to take the apples to Greece himself, intending to leave Hercules where he was. Hercules actually outsmarted him by asking for a brief rest to pad his shoulders. His final labor was to go to the underworld and steal Cerberus alive. Hades assented, as long as Hercules used no weapons and brought him back. It was during this last labor that he freed Theseus.

The completion of his atonement did not make him happy. He continued to go on adventures. He fought with a river god and rescued maidens from serpents. He also freed Prometheus. Accidentally, he killed a serving boy and a friend over an insult. Zeus'



punishment was that he be made a servant to a Queen who dressed him up like a woman. He held this against the King whose son he killed.

On the eleventh labor, he stayed with a friend whose wife had recently died. He approached the house and found it in mourning. Admetus, rather than be a poor host, did not tell Hercules that his wife had died. He hid his mourning and Hercules got drunk and boisterous. When a servant told him that Admetus did not drink with him because his wife had died, Hercules was distraught. He exclaimed "'His eyes were red..He made me come in...Oh good friend and host!'" Part 3, Chapter 3, pg. 240. He went and wrestled death and got Admetus his wife back. After he was freed from his service to the Queen, he collected an army and marched against the King whose son he had killed. After he did this, he sent a band of maidens to his new wife. She thought he was in love with another woman and charmed a robe with the blood of a Centaur (she had been told this was a love potion). Hercules was not killed, but he was tortured for a great time. He was raised up to heaven and married to Hebe.

Topic Tracking: Women 11

Topic Tracking: Fate 6

Topic Tracking: Atrocity 7



Part 3, Chapter 4: Atalanta

There may have been two Atalantas, but the famous one was either a daughter of Iasus or Schoenius. Her father left her in the wilderness because he had wanted a son. A she-bear took her in and eventually hunters adopted her. She became so good at hunting that she killed two Centaurs. The Calydonian Boar Hunt attracted her interest. She went and the King of Calydon's son, Meleager, fell in love with her. Other men resented that there was a woman on the hunt. Her arrow was the first to strike the boar. After it fell, Meleager wished her to have the skin instead of him. He killed his uncles who opposed him and his mother threw the firebrand into the fire that kept him alive. He died. At the funeral games of Pelias, she wrestled and beat Peleus, the father of Achilles.

Eventually she was reconciled with her parents and received many suitors. She told them that she would marry only the man who could beat her in a foot race, hoping to avoid marriage altogether. She beat many. A youth named Melanion came to race her with three golden apples. Each time he neared her, he would drop one and she would stop to pick it up. This is how he beat her. Later they were turned into lions. They had one son.

Topic Tracking: Women 12



Part 4: Heroes of the Trojan War, Chapter 1: The Trojan War

The siege of Troy was caused ultimately by the conflict between the goddesses Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite. At the marriage banquet of Peleus and Thetis, the goddess of discord, Eris appeared and threw an apple engraved with the words "to the fairest". She did this because she was upset that she had not been invited. Zeus sent the three goddesses who claimed the apple to be judges by prince Paris of Troy. Each bribed him: Hera with rule over Asia and Europe, Athena with a crushing defeat of the Greeks and Aphrodite with the most beautiful woman in the world. He chose Aphrodite. The fairest woman in the world was Helen, a daughter of Zeus and Leda, sister of Castor and Pollux. All the greatest men of Greece had courted her:

"When her suitors assembled in her home to make a formal proposal for her hand they were so many and from such powerful families that her reputed father, King Tyndareus, her mother's husband, was afraid to select one among them, fearing that the others would unite against him. He therefore exacted first a solemn oath that they would champion the cause of Helen's husband, whoever he might be, if any wrong was done to him through his marriage." Part 4, Chapter 1, pg. 259

The King chose Menelaus, brother of Agamemnon, to wed his daughter and rule over Sparta. Paris came to their home and was welcomed as a guest. While he was in their house, Menelaus had to go to Crete. While he was gone, Paris broke the bond of guest and host by stealing Helen away. Menelaus returned and called all the chieftains together who had sworn the oath. Two important men, Odysseus and Achilles did not show up. Odysseus pretended he was insane so he would not have to go to war. When someone came to get him, he was sowing salt into the soil; the messenger set his infant son before the plow to prove that Odysseus was sane. Odysseus stopped and went to find Achilles. Achilles was hidden among women. Odysseus entered the court as a peddler and knew which was Achilles when one of the women started to play with a sword.

The fleet converged, but the wind was blowing the wrong way. A prophet told Agamemnon that they would only get a different wind if they sacrificed Agamemnon's daughter, Iphigenia. Agamemnon yielded eventually and sent for his daughter under the pretense that she was to be married. They left with a thousand ships and the first man to step ashore was Protesilaus, who died. There were a thousand ships total, but the Trojans and their allies, led by Hector, were very strong. Hector and Achilles were both aware that they would have to die for Troy to fall.

The war did not change significantly for nine years. After so long, the Greeks suffered from a plague because Agamemnon had kidnapped the daughter of a priest of Apollo. When Achilles exposed to the troops that the girl must be given back for the plague to stop, Agamemnon became enraged and demanded Achilles' girl in exchange. Achilles, having lost the girl unfairly, withdrew from battle and asked his mother, Thetis to appeal



to Zeus and have the Greeks lose ground to the Trojans. In this way, the Greek chieftains would realize the utter importance of Achilles. Zeus, in a dream, prompted Agamemnon to attack the next day. Menelaus and Paris fought in a duel and Menelaus would have won if Aphrodite had not rescued the young prince. The armies clashed in battle and many men died. The greatest of the Greek champions were Ajax and Diomedes. Diomedes wounded Aphrodite and raged through the ranks in slaughter. He also wounded Ares with help from Athena. With Ares out of the battle, the Trojans began to falter.

Hector returned to the battle after talking to his wife Andromache and his son. His son, frightened by the armor and his wife begged him to order the battle from the walls and not enter into the melee. He entered the fray and the Greeks were repulsed to their ships. That night the Greeks sent an embassy to Achilles asking him to return to battle. He refused. In the next day's battle they began to regain lost ground because Hera had distracted Zeus. When Zeus realized what has happened, he raged back into the battle. Apollo rejuvenated Hector who had been wounded, and they pushed the Greeks back against the ships.

Patroclus donned Achilles' armor in order to lead the Myrmidons and rally the Greeks. Despite a brave charge and gallant fighting, Patroclus was struck down by Hector. Achilles was heartbroken and swore to kill Hector. His mother Thetis begged him, "Only to wait until morning...I will bring you arms fashioned by the divine armorer, the god Hephaestus himself!" Part 4, Chapter 1, pg. 272. Thetis brings him marvelous weapons and he reenters the battle to find many wounded captains. Hector knows that he must face Achilles, but runs away from him three times around the walls. Athena tricks him into making a stand and he is killed. Achilles desecrates his body but eventually gives it up to his father, Priam, the King of Troy. The Trojans mourn him for nine days.

Topic Tracking: Women 13

Topic Tracking Fate 7



Part 4, Chapter 2: The Fall of Troy

Achilles was well aware that his death was near. A prince from Ethiopia reinforced the Trojans and the Greeks suffered until Achilles killed him. Achilles only weak spot was near the ankles, where his mother had held him when she dipped him into the river Styx. Paris hit him in this spot and he died. Ajax wanted his arms but Odysseus received them. He went into a fit and tried to kill Menelaus and Agamemnon, but instead slayed a group of cattle and eventually killed himself (Athena made him insane).

The Greeks were dismayed because they could still not defeat Troy. A prophet told them that they would need to use the arms of Hercules to defeat the great city. They look for them and Diomedes and Odysseus come back with them. Then they learned that they would have to steal the image of Athena from a temple in the city before it would fall. Odysseus and Diomedes accomplished this task one night. Finally, they realized that they would have to get the army within the city to be victorious. With the help of Athena, Odysseus devised the plan of the wooden horse. He filled it with armed men and left a single Greek behind to convince the Trojans to admit the horse.

When the Greek fleet left, the Trojans came out to find the wooden horse. Some believed it was a trick, and others wanted to take it into the city. The Greek left behind convinced them that the horse was a peace offering. The priest who opposed the horse being brought into the city was killed on his altar by twin snakes. The people took this as an omen that they should bring it into the city. At night, the men poured out of the horse and let the returning Greek army into the city. Soon Troy was engulfed in flames. "In the more distant parts of the town the Trojans were able to gather together here and there and then it was the Greeks who suffered." Part 4, Chapter 2, pg. 276. The Greeks soon overwhelmed the resistance. Achilles' son killed Priam. Aeneas led his father and son out of the burning city. Aphrodite led Helen to shelter and delivered her to Menelaus.

At dawn, the city was still smoldering and the surviving women and children were rounded up. Hecuba, the wife of Priam and Andromache led them. Andromache held her son close to her but a herald came and announced that the boy must be thrown from a cliff. The soldiers executed him. Troy was finally dead.

Topic Tracking: Atrocity 8

Topic Tracking: Women 14



Part 4, Chapter 3: The Adventures of Odysseus

Many of the Greeks who went to Troy were troubled on the way back to Greece if they made it home at all. Cassandra, a daughter of Priam and a prophetess, was raped in the temple of Athena. Athena asked Poseidon to destroy the man who did this and he obliged. Odysseus was to suffer for another ten years before he got home. Meanwhile, in Ithaca, suitors had besieged the house seeking the hand of his wife Penelope and plotting to kill his son Telemachus. She tried to delay them, using different ruses. For several years she wove a shroud and told them that when she was done, she would choose a new husband. Every night she would unweave what she had accomplished in the day.

Eventually, the gods came to pity Odysseus and they decided that he should be allowed to return home. He was being held by a nymph named Calypso. Hermes came to her and gave her the order of Zeus: Odysseus was to be sent on his way on a raft of his own making. Telemachus goes on a mini-quest to discover the fate of his father. This brings him to the house of Menelaus. Helen recognized Telemachus and Menelaus tells him all he knows of his father. When he was trapped in Egypt, he had to catch Proteus. Proteus told him that Odysseus was held captive on the island of Calypso.

Odysseus didn't trust Calypso when she said that he may leave, but he built the raft anyway. He left after five days and floated for seventeen. Poseidon saw that he was about to make land and sent a storm. The raft was destroyed and Odysseus was saved by the help of Ino who presented him with a veil that allowed him to float for many miles. He came to land and covered his naked body in a thicket beneath leaves. He was on the island of a good king who gave passage to many travelers. The king's daughter went out to wash clothes in the river the next day. She and her friends were playing a game with a ball and they discovered the sleeping wanderer. The princess told him to go to the palace and lay himself at the mercy of her mother. Odysseus did this and was given food and shelter.

The next day, he told the story of his great journey. They wandered through many dangerous islands and ended up on the island of Polyphemus. Polyphemus' prayer to Poseidon resulted in many years of suffering. The king of the winds, Aeolus, bagged up the other winds for them and they almost made it home, but Odysseus' men opened the bag at the last minute thinking that their commander was hiding something from them. Aeolus would not help them again. They landed on the island of Circe, a god who turned many of the men into pigs. Odysseus resisted her magic with the help of Hermes. She turned the men back and told them that they must travel to the end of the world and seek the advice of the dead prophet Teiresias. They made the perilous journey and the prophet warned them not to eat the cattle of the sun, and advised them how to get home. On the way, they were becalmed on the Island of the cattle of the sun and against his command, the men slaughtered the blessed bovines. Odysseus was the only one to survive Zeus' thunderbolt. He floated on the sea and ended up a captive of



Calypso. He ended his story here. In the morning, they guided him to Ithaca and Athena told him of the state of affairs in his house.

"For the present she would change him into an old beggar so that he could go everywhere unrecognized. That night he must spend with his swineherd, Eumaeus, a man faithful and trustworthy beyond praise." Part 4, Chapter 3, pg. 311

Athena guided Telemachus back to the hut of the swineherd and father and son were reunited. Odysseus revealed his identity and they planned to return to the house. Odysseus was to stay in disguise. Telemachus started off first the next day and Odysseus followed. The suitors abused the old beggar. Penelope appeared and the suitors fawned on her. They gave her presents. She spoke privately with the beggar and Odysseus' old nurse recognized a scar from his youth. He told the woman to be quiet.

The next day, Penelope announced that she would marry the suitor who could string Odysseus' bow and shoot the arrow through twelve ax heads. None of them were successful. Odysseus asked for a chance and Telemachus forced the suitors to give him one. He accomplished the task easily, and then with the help of the swineherd, Telemachus, and Athena, he slaughtered all the suitors. He was reunited with his wife, but she hesitated to believe it was true. Eventually they were reconciled and Odysseus was restored as the leader of Ithaca.

Topic Tracking: Women 15



Part 4, Chapter 4: The Adventures of Aeneas

Aeneas was the son of Venus and Prince of Troy. He escaped from the city with a band of Trojans and wandered through the Mediterranean. He landed in Thessaly and on Crete, but was denied either place as a home. His men struggled with the Harpies and one of the beasts foretold a terrible journey ahead of them. They landed on an island ruled by a Trojan prophet, Andromache, who had been released from servitude by the death of her master. They left her and stopped on the island of the Cyclopes, trying to avoid Scylla and Charybdis. They found a Greek man abandoned there by Ulysses. Juno, still seething with hatred for the Trojans, whipped up a great storm, and the ships landed in North Africa, near the city of Carthage. Carthage was ruled by a woman named Dido, who was a refugee from unfavorable circumstances in Sidon. Venus had Cupid make her fall in love with Aeneas and help him. "It was a simple matter for Venus to bring about a meeting between the two." Part 4, Chapter 4, pg. 325. Dido thought that their relationship was like a marriage, but Aeneas did not see it this way. When Mercury came to make Aeneas leave and go to his destined home in Italy, he told his men to prepare in secret. Dido found out and was enraged, accusing him of betraying her. He told her that they were not married and he was compelled by fate to leave. As he pulled away from the city, she killed herself on a pyre.

They sailed to a place in Italy called Cumae, where the Sibyl guided Aeneas to the underworld to seek the advice of his father. His father showed him the future generations of Rome waiting to ascend to the real world. He also met Dido there, but she refused to speak to him. Aeneas saw the most savage parts of the underworld and exited with the Sibyl.

Juno stirred up the anger of the native Italians. Their King knew that his daughter was destined to marry a foreigner, but his wife was opposed to a marriage with the Trojans. She favored a marriage to a native man named Turnus. Turnus, hearing about the proposed marriage, led his people to war. Meanwhile, Juno had one of the furies instigate war between the Trojans and the people of the forest. Aeneas' son was manipulated into killing a pet deer. The resulting conflict quickly erupted into a full-scale war. Aeneas was sent up river to seek allies from King Evander. The King was friendly and hospitable, and told him the history of the surrounding land. He also offered his son Pallas and 500 horsemen. Unfortunately, his was a poor nation and he could not offer more. Instead, he advised Aeneas that there was a warlike tribe upstream that had been cursed; only a foreigner could lead the tribe. They wanted revenge against one of the allies of Turnus.

While Aeneas gathered allies, the enemy surrounded the Trojan camp. They fought bravely around the fortifications. Two Trojans attempted to escape and warn Aeneas, but they were killed brutally:



"In their haste, the two friends got separated and Euryalus took the wrong path. Nisus wild with anxiety turned back to find him. Unseen himself he saw him in the hands of troopers. How could he rescue him?" Part 4, Chapter 4, pg. 341

They perished. Aeneas returned and there were many battles. Pallas was killed and all the Italian champions fell except for Turnus. Turnus and Aeneas fought in a final duel and Aeneas defeated him. Turnus begged for mercy, but Aeneas refused, and killed him.

Topic Tracking: Fate 8

Topic Tracking: Atrocity 9

Topic Tracking: Women 16



Part 5: Great Families..., Chapter 1: The House of Atreus

Agamemnon and his brother Menelaus were members of the ill-fated house of Atreus. Their first unfortunate ancestor was Tantalus, a King in Lydia. He was the son of Zeus and was honored by the gods beyond all other mortals. He was allowed to eat with the gods, and in return for this honor, he killed his son Pelops and fed him to the gods. However, the gods would not eat the flesh of a human. They sent Tantalus to the underworld and he was to be tortured forever. He was placed in a pool that would fill with water until he tried to drink it and beneath fruit that would descend until he reached for it. Tantalus' transgression against the gods was the act that kept the divine and mortal from ever celebrating together again.

Pelops was put back together by the gods; they could not find his shoulder, so they replaced it with ivory. He wooed a dangerous woman. He won her by racing her father's prize horses and eventually killing the charioteer. He used Poseidon's horses. Pelops' sister Niobe was married to a son of Zeus and they ruled Thebes together. She bore fourteen children. She asked the people to worship her instead of Leto, the mother of Apollo and Artemis. The twins turned Niobe and her children into stone. Pelops had two sons, Atreus and Thyestes. Thyestes fell in love with Atreus' wife and Atreus killed his brother's children and fed them to him.

His wife's lover Aegisthus, the son of Thyestes and his cousin, killed Agamemnon. Some think that Clytemnestra killed her husband as revenge for the sacrifice of their daughter Iphigenia. Menelaus and Agamemnon ended their lives differently. Menelaus was lost near the Nile but returned home and died in prosperity. Agamemnon died at the hands of his wife and her lover. When he returned home as a conqueror, the elders of Argos were apprehensive because they knew of his wife's infidelity. Others were worried about the sacrifice of his daughter. Clytemnestra approached her long gone husband and "She knew that every man there except for Agamemnon was aware of her infidelity." Part 5, Chapter 1, pg. 354. She faced him and welcomed him home. The elders of the town grew uneasy as she began to lead him inside. Agamemnon called for Cassandra to come out. The prophetess freaked out because she saw the palace as a house hated by the gods. She knew that she and Agamemnon would die that day. Clytemnestra killed him and felt no sorrow because she was sure she had avenged her daughter. Agamemnon's other children were Electra and Orestes.

When Orestes grew older, he went to the oracle at Delphi and asked what he should do about the murders. The oracle told him to kill both of the murderers. He was grief-stricken because this meant killing his mother. He and his cousin went to the palace pretending to bear news of his death. He killed the lover first while his mother tried to reason with him. Orestes killed her and was immediately pursued by the shadowy figures of the furies. It would be many years before they ceased pursuing him. He pleaded in the temple of Athena, arguing he had atoned for his sins, something a



member of his family had never done. Athena heard his pleas and the furies stopped their pursuit.

There is an alternate tale about the sacrifice of Iphigenia. Her sacrifice was meant to appease the wrath of Artemis over the death of one of her creatures. When she was laid on the altar, Artemis replaced Iphigenia's body with that of a stag and took her to the far away land of the Taurians. She was made a priestess in a temple where they sacrificed Greeks. Her job was to prepare the men before sacrifice. Years later, Orestes and his cousin appeared in the country. They had been charged with the mission of stealing the image of Artemis in the temple and taking it back to Athens so that Orestes could atone for his sins. They were caught and brought to Iphigenia to be prepared for sacrifice. The siblings did not recognize each other until Iphigenia proposed that she release them. In exchange they would carry a letter to her brother in Greece. Orestes introduced himself and she begged that they take her home. "Dearest! You are my dearest, my darling, my dear one. A baby, a little baby, when I left you. More than marvelous is this thing that has come to me!" Part 5, Chapter 1, pg. 369 They tried to decide how to leave. Orestes proposed killing the king, but Iphigenia opposed this plan. She told the king that the men were unclean and needed to be taken to the ocean to be cleansed for sacrifice. He believed them and when they got near the shore, they tried to escape in a ship. The king was about to send a fleet after them, but Athena appeared and told him to let them go.

Topic Tracking: Atrocity 10

Topic Tracking: Women 17

Topic Tracking: Fate 9



Part 5, Chapter 2: The Royal House of Thebes

Europa, carried away by Zeus in the form of a bull, was pursued by her brother Cadmus who went to Delphi to ask where he could find her. Apollo told him to stop looking for her and build his own city. Cadmus founded Thebes. He sowed dragon's teeth into the ground at the advice of the god; after all the fighting men who arose from the ground had fought each other, the five that were left became his helpers. He introduced the alphabet to Greece and married a daughter of Ares and Aphrodite. They had four unfortunate daughters: Semele, who gave birth to Dionysius, Ino, who was an evil stepmother, but became a good goddess after she was turned into a nymph, Agave, who killed her son Pentheus, and Autonome, who watched her own son die. Autonome's son was turned into a deer while hunting and she watched him torn apart by his own dogs. Cadmus and his wife were turned into serpents in their old age for no apparent reason.

King Laius was the great grandson of Cadmus and he married Jocasta. The oracle at Delphi warned him that his own son would kill him. He sent his child away to be abandoned when it was born. Many years later, a terrible Sphinx (who put a riddle to every traveler and killed him when he did not answer correctly) besieged Thebes. Oedipus was believed to be the son of another king and he left home because the oracle said that he would one day kill his father. He came to Thebes and solved the riddle of the Sphinx, killing it. He went to the city as a hero and married the King's widow.

When their sons grew older, a terrible plague ravaged the city. He sent Jocasta's brother Creon to Delphi to seek a solution to the plague. He came back and told them that the murderer of Laius must be found. Oedipus ardently began the search. Thieves had killed Laius on a path many years before. Only one of his servants survived the encounter. Oedipus asked Teiresias who the murderer was and he refused to answer. When he cajoled the blind prophet, he said that it was he, Oedipus that had killed him. He asked to speak to the slave who survived the attack. Jocasta began to panic. A messenger from Oedipus' old home in Thebes arrived and told them that he had gotten Oedipus from a wandering shepherd and the King of Corinth had raised him as his own. The shepherd verified this and Oedipus suddenly realized that he had killed his father and married his mother. Jocasta hanged herself and Oedipus blinded himself in punishment. "The world of blindness was a refuge; better to be there than to see with strange shamed eyes the old world that had been so bright." Part 5, Chapter 2, pg. 382.

Oedipus had two sons, Polyneices and Eteocles and two daughters, Ismene and Antigone. Creon took over the rule of the town and after years, Oedipus was kicked out. Antigone followed her father as a guide. Polyneices and Eteocles fought over the throne. Polyneices was building an army in another town. Oedipus and Antigone went to Colonus where Oedipus died.



Theseus received him and buried him after his death. Ismene came to him before he died. The sisters returned to the city of Thebes and found the war. Six chieftains joined Polyneices. The battle raged on until the two brothers dueled and died together. One of the seven champions survived. Creon decreed that none of those who attacked Thebes would be buried. Antigone was shocked that her brother Polyneices would not be buried. Creon threatened death for anyone who disobeyed him. Despite this, Antigone buried her brother. Ismene wanted to share the blame, but Antigone would not let her. Creon had her killed.

The last champion went to Athens and asked Theseus to join with him and force Creon to release the bodies. Theseus would only do so if it were the will of the people. Athens marched against the city to retrieve the dead bodies. Years later, the sons of the seven champions returned to Thebes and defeated it again.

Topic Tracking: Women 18

Topic Tracking: Atrocity 11

Topic Tracking: Fate 10



Part 5, Chapter 3: The Royal House of Athens

The first King of Athens was Cecrops, who was half man and half dragon. Both Poseidon and Athena wanted the city for their own. Poseidon created a deep well for the city and Athena gave them the olive tree. Cecrops picked Athena, and Poseidon flooded the city in response. In the early days, women voted with men in Athens; this is why Athena was chosen over Poseidon. Athens had more women than men. Cecrops blamed the disastrous flood on them and decreed that women were no longer allowed to vote. In another story, Cecrops was just a man and he had two sisters, Procne and Philomela.

Procne married a man from Thrace and sent him to escort her sister. On the way, he told Philomela that her sister was dead. She had a pretend wedding and he slept with her repeatedly. He cut her tongue out so that she could tell no one what happened. He imprisoned her near his home and told Procne that her sister was dead. Philomela wove an amazing tapestry that she sent to her sister (the Queen) through a servant. It told the story of what had happened. Procne was enraged. She rescued her sister and they made a plan together:

" She killed [her] child with one stroke of a dagger. She cut the little dead body up, put the limbs in a kettle over the fire, and served them to [her husband] that night for supper. She watched him as he ate; then she told him what he had feasted on." Part 5, Chapter 3, pg. 396

The sisters fled and were pursued. They turned into a nightingale and a swallow. The swallow could only twitter because Philomela had no tongue. The husband was also turned into an ugly bird.

Their niece Procris was married to Cephalus, the grandson of Aelous. Cephalus was carried off by the Dawn. He would not recant his love for Procris and the Dawn was enraged. She dismissed him to make sure that his wife had been faithful. He disguised himself and went to his home. He tested his wife for a long time and when she finally hesitated, he brutally accused her of being unfaithful. She ran away into the mountains and he begged her for forgiveness. Eventually she forgave him, but many years later he accidentally killed her while hunting.

The North wind, Boreas, was in love with Procris' sister, Orithya. Although her father was opposed, the wind swept down and stole her away.

Another sister, Creusa, was caught suddenly in the arms of a man while gathering flowers. Apollo swept her into a cave. She gave birth to a son and, ashamed, she abandoned him in the same cave. Later, when guilt drove her back to the cave, there was no sign of the infant she left. Years later, she was married but could bear no children. Her husband made her go to Delphi to seek the reason why she was barren.



There she met a handsome youth named Ion who was an orphan priest of Apollo. Her husband burst in the room and embraced the youth calling him son. The oracle had told him that he was his son. Ion went to Athens bearing the rags he had been wrapped in. Creusa rejoiced that her lost son was found.

Topic Tracking: Women 19

Topic Tracking: Atrocity 12



Part 6: Less Important Myths, Chapter 1: Midas and Others

Midas

Midas was a rich king in Phrygia. He had great rose gardens into which, Silenus wandered, drunk as usual. Midas returned him to Bacchus and the god offered him anything he wanted. Midas asked that everything he touched be turned to gold. He could not eat (everything would turn to gold, including any food) and soon he asked the god to take his wish back. Later, Apollo changed his ears to those of an ass because he chose Pan over him in a music contest.

Aescupulus

"There was a woman in Thessaly named Coronis, of beauty so surpassing that Apollo loved her." Part 6, Chapter 1, pg. 413. The girl decided that she would rather marry a mortal instead. Apollo found this out and went mad, resulting in her death. He saved her unborn child, Aescupulus and had him raised by Chiron. The god taught him about healing and he became the best healer in the world. He healed many men. The gods grew angry when he raised a man from death. Zeus struck him with a thunderbolt and killed him. In revenge, Apollo killed the Cyclopes that forged Zeus' thunderbolts.

Danaids

These were famous women in the underworld destined to carry water in leaky jars forever. They were the fifty daughters of man named Danaus who were forcibly married to fifty cousins. At the wedding, Danaus presented each one of them with a dagger. Only Hypermnestra did not kill her husband. She was thrown into prison, but was united with her husband Lyncaeus later. Theseus descended from them.

Glaucus and Scylla

Glaucus was a fisherman whose fish came back to life and swam into the ocean. He captured one of them and ate it. An intense longing for the sea overwhelmed him. He flung himself into it. A nymph named Scylla found him and he fell in love with her. Circe also fell in love with him and she turned Scylla into the hideous dragon of Scylla and Charybdis.

Erysichthon

One woman was given the power to change shapes like Proteus and she used the power to get food for her father. Erysichthon cut down one of Demeter's oaks and it bled. Demeter found out and cursed him with endless hunger. He soon lost all of his money buying food. He was hungry all the time and nothing could sate his appetite. He sold his daughter for food and Poseidon changed her into a fisherman. Every time her



father sold her, she changed into something else and escaped. Eventually, her father ate his own body and died.

Pomona and Vertumunus

Pomona and Vertumunus were Roman deities. Pomona idolized orchards over any other part of nature. Vertumunus sought her to be his wife. He took the disguise of an old woman and kissed her. Using the example of the orchard trees that would not be so fruitful on their own, he convinced her that she needed a helper. He revealed his true identity and she accepted him as her husband.

Topic Tracking: Women 20



Part 6, Chapter 2: Brief Myths Arranged Alphabetically

Arachne

Minerva was the weaver of the gods and Arachne declared her own work to be superior. Minerva went to the home of the upstart mortal and they had a competition. When they were finished, Arachne's work was of the same quality, and done in the same time. Minerva beat her with the shuttle of the loom. After the girl hanged herself, Minerva turned her into a spider so she could weave forever.

Arion

Arion was poet who went from Corinth to a music contest in Sicily. He won, but on the way back the sailors decided to kill him. They asked him to sing a song and then threw him into the sea when he finished. The dolphins, entranced by his music, carried him to safety.

Aristaeus

Aristaeus was a beekeeper. When all his bees died, he went and seized Proteus to ask him what to do. Proteus told him to sacrifice and leave the animals in whole on the altars. Nine days later, when he returned, bees swarmed all around the altar.

Aurora and Tithonus

"Now from her couch where she lay beside high-born Tithonus the goddess/ Dawn, rosy-fingered, arose to bring light to the gods and to mortals." Part 6, Chapter 2, pg. 428. Tithonus was the father of the king of Ethiopia. Aurora had asked that he be made immortal, but forgot to ask that he be kept forever young. He aged and became senile, but no matter how shrunken his body became, he remained alive. Eventually, Aurora turned him into a grasshopper.

Biton and Cleobus

Biton and Cleobus were sons of Cydippe, a priestess to Hera. Their mother wanted to see an image of Hera that was some distance away. She had no oxen or donkey, so the sons yoked themselves to the cart and pulled her through heat and dust. When they reached the temple, they collapsed in exhaustion. Cydippe asked the goddess for a blessing and her sons died peacefully in the temple while sleeping.

Callisto

Callisto was the daughter of Lycaon and another man who tried to feed human flesh to a god. Zeus fell in love with her, but in jealousy, Hera turned her into a bear. When her



son was fully-grown, he tried to hunt her, and Zeus turned her into the constellation. Her son became the lesser bear.

Chiron

Chiron was a good Centaur who taught many of the heroes. When Hercules fought the Centaurs, he injured him accidentally. Chiron did not die immediately, but suffered for a long time before he perished.

Clytie

Clytie was a maiden who was in love with the Sun. The Sun, however, did not return her affection. She gazed at him always, eventually turning into a sunflower.

Dryope

Dryope went with her sister, Iphigeneia, to a pool and pulled some blossoms from a lotus tree near it. The tree bled and when Dryope tried to run, she found that she had taken root. She turned into a tree and never turned back.

Epimenides

Epimenides went to sleep as a boy and woke up 57 years later. He helped Athens overcome a plague and in return he wanted only friendship for his home city.

Hero and Leander

Leander was a youth and Hero was a priestess of Aphrodite. He swam across a river every night to see her. A light that she would place in a tall tower guided him. One night, the wind blew the light out and he drowned. Hero killed herself when she found out.

Ibycus and the Cranes

Ibycus was a poet who was mortally wounded by thieves. Cranes avenged him by flying over a robber in a mob of people. The thief freaked out and exposed himself to his executors.

Leto

Leto was the daughter of Phoebe. Zeus abandoned her after he made her pregnant and she wandered the world until the floating island Delos accepted her. On the island she gave birth to Apollo and Artemis. Years later, Apollo helped the island and stopped it from moving.

Linus

Linus was the son of Apollo and a woman named Psamathe. She deserted him and he was eventually torn to pieces by dogs. He died before he became ripe and became a



saying for fruit and wine. Another Linus tried to teach Hercules something he did not want to learn and was killed.

Marpessa

Marpessa was a maiden carried off by Ideas from the Calydonian Boar hunt. Apollo fell in love with her and was going to fight Ideas. Zeus stopped the fight and told them to let Marpessa choose. She chose the mortal Ideas because she knew that an immortal would desert her.

Marysas

Athena invented the flute but she threw it away not thinking it important enough for her time; her face became disfigured whenever she blew on it. Marysas, a satyr, picked it up and challenged Apollo. He lost and was killed.

Melanpus

Melanpus raised two snakes as pets. From them, he learned how to speak the language of animals. He saved himself on multiple occasions with this ability. He also became a famous soothsayer because he could understand the language of the birds.

Merope

Merope was married to a son of Hercules who was killed in a revolt. The new king took over and took her as his wife. Her son eventually helped her kill the usurper.

Myrmidons

The myrmidons were men created from ants in the days of Achilles' grandfather, Aeacus. Hera sent a plague to destroy the island of a girl that Zeus loved. Aeacus prayed to Zeus and the next day, the king of the gods had turned a colony of ants into a massive army.

Nisus and Scylla

Nisus had a purple lock of hair that would kill him if it were cut from his head. Minos besieged his town and his daughter Scylla cut the lock from his head and offered it to him. This sickened Minos and he sent the girl away. Eventually, she was turned into a bird.

Orion

Orion was a giant who fell in love with a princess from an island. Her father kept delaying the marriage. One day, Orion insulted the girl when he was drunk. Dionysius put him to sleep and the king blinded him. When he came back later to search for the king, Artemis killed him. After his death, he became a constellation.



Pleiades

The Pleiades were the seven daughters of Atlas who were pursued by Orion before he died. Zeus, pitying them, made them into stars that Orion would pursue forever. One of them gave birth to Hermes and another gave birth to Dardanus, a founder of the Trojan race.

Rhoecus

Rhoecus picked up an oak that fell to the ground and the Dryad of the tree offered him anything he wanted as thanks. He asked for her love. She said she would love him. A bee stung him and unthinking, he slapped it. The dryad was enraged and she blinded him.

Salmoneus

Salmoneus pretended that he was Zeus at the festival of Zeus and tried to get people to worship him. Zeus struck him down with lightning.

Sisyphus

Sisyphus was a king of Corinth who saw a great eagle in the sky. When he returned to find his daughter missing, he suspected Zeus. Zeus got angry for being blamed and punished the King. He sent him to the Underworld where he was to forever roll a stone up a hill. His daughter gave birth to Aeacus, the grandfather of Achilles.

Tyro

Tyro was a daughter of Salmoneus who bore twin sons to Apollo. She abandoned them fearing that her father would be upset. A horse keeper brought them up. Her husband found out about her earlier children years later and locked her away. The twins found her. Jason was her grandson.

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Part 7: Norse Mythology, Chapter 1

In Asgard, the home of the Norse gods, the gods know that even they will perish someday. Evil will eventually prevail over good. The same is true for men. A brave death entitles them a place in Valhalla, a hall in Asgard where they will celebrate and prepare for the final battle. "This conception of life which underlies the Norse religion is as somber a conception as the mind of man has ever given birth to." Part 7, Chapter 1, pg. 444. Good's power is in resisting evil while facing defeat. A heroic death is a triumph over evil rather than a defeat at the hands of the enemy. The poets recognized that victory and courage were to be found not in life but death. Little mythology survived from this period: *Beowulf* in England, *Nibelungenlied* in Germany, and Two Icelandic *Eddas*: the younger and the elder. The *Eddas* provide all the religious material from this era. The translations of this material are often awkward and cumbersome.

Signy was the daughter of Volsung and sister of Sigmund. Her husband killed her father and had his sons devoured by wolves. Her husband did not kill her brother Sigmund. She visited her surviving brother in disguise and bore him a son she raised with her other children. He was named Sinfiotl. Together, her brother and son killed the other children and her husband. She entered the burning house and died with them.

The story of Sigard is a similar tale. Brynhild, a Valkyrie, disobeyed Odin and was put to sleep until she would be woken by a man. Sigard went to the house of the Giukungs to see Gunner the king, whose mother wanted Sigard to marry her daughter. Sigard freed Brynhild for Gunner. He took the form of Gunner and disappeared when they returned. Brynhild wanted Sigard dead. Gunner cannot kill him but his younger brother does. Gudrun, the sister, heard of this and told Brynhild the truth, that Sigard was doing a favor for Gunner. Brynhild killed herself and Gudrun wept. She lamented as she burned the bodies.



Part 7, Chapter 2: The Norse Gods

The gods of Asgard were heroic, always in the process of fighting the Giants of Jotunheim. They knew that someday everything they fought for would be destroyed. Odin was the god of the Sky. He was aloof and held feasts in his hall even though he never ate. Two ravens, memory and thought, were on his shoulders at all times. He was chiefly responsible for postponing Ragnarok, the final day of destruction. He lost an eye in order to drink from the well of wisdom. He learned runes by suffering pain all night hanging in a tree. The Valkyries attend him. Wednesday is named after him.

There were five other important gods: Balder, Thor, Freyr, Heimdall, and Tyr. Balder was a beloved son of Odin and his wife Frigga. He was fated to die young. Odin went to Nilfheim, the land of the dead, and found Hela, the goddess of the dead. She told him that Balder was cursed. The other gods thought that Frigga would always protect him. They would strike him with knives and swords, but nothing would happen. Loki was the son of a giant but had somehow earned a sworn brotherhood with Odin. He hated goodness. Disguised as a woman, he found out from Frigga that Balder was susceptible only to mistletoe. Loki encouraged Hoder, Balder's blind brother, to throw mistletoe at Balder. It killed him. Frigga wanted the gods to rescue him from the realm of the dead. They built a pyre on a great ship and sent it burning into the sea. Hela said that she would return him to life only if the entire world mourned his death. A giantess did not mourn and Balder was never returned.

"Loki was punished. The gods seized him and bound him in a deep cavern. Above his head a serpent was placed so that its venom fell upon his face, causing him unutterable pain. But his wife, Sigyn, came to help him. She took her place at his side and caught the venom in a cup." Part 7, Chapter 2, pg. 458

Thor, the thunder god, was the strongest of the Aesir, the gods. Freyr cared for the fruits of the earth. Heimdall guarded Bifrost, the bridge to Asgard. Tyr was the god of war. Goddesses were less important in this world. Frigga, Odin's wife, was mysterious. She spun threads of gold. Freya was the goddess of love and beauty but she often killed in war. A goddess, Hela, ruled the underworld. Men ruled the earth, and death was a woman's business.

In the beginning, there was a chasm of nothingness bordered by Nilfheim on the north and the land of fire in the south. Ymir was the first giant. He was the grandfather of Odin. Odin and his brothers killed Ymir and made the earth and sky from him. In the middle, they created men and women from trees: men from ash, women from elm. Dwarfs existed under the earth. Elves tended flowers and streams. An ash tree supported the universe. Its roots connected to all the planets. Past, Present, and Future protected it. A serpent and its children perpetually gnawed at its roots. Someday everything would fall. Frost giants and Mountain giants were the enemies of the men and gods. There was a prophecy that in the destruction, the world would be reborn and a god higher than Odin would rule.



A collection of wise sayings also makes up the remnants of Norse religion. They are like Proverbs. There are writings concerning war, money, ale, and life. Some of these are cheerful but others speak of pain and suffering.

"Along with their truly awe-inspiring heroism, these men of the North had delightful common sense. The combination seems impossible, but the poems are here to prove it. By race we are connected with the Norse; our culture goes back to the Greeks." Part 7, Chapter 2, pg. 465