MYTHOLOGY

Atalanta & Her Golden Apple

(at-uh-LAN-tuh)
[Music. Transition. We may see glimpses of various myths: PANDORA and her box, ATALANTA and the golden apple.] (Pg. 25)

INFORMATION BELOW TAKEN FROM THE HELLENIC MUSEUM IN AUSTRALIA.



Origin Story

According to Greek mythology, she was born in **Arcadia**, a region of Greece in the southern part of the Peloponnese peninsula. As an infant, Atalanta was abandoned by her father and left to die in the woods, presumably because he wanted a son. She was saved and suckled by a she-bear who protected her until she was found by a group of hunters. These hunters raised Atalanta. She soon learned to hunt like a bear and became a skilled huntress. She grew up fending for herself, hated the idea of marriage, and didn't really care for men in general. Before long she was full-grown and fully lethal, killing centaurs in the name of Artemis.

The Calydonian Boar Hunt

The first major event in Greek mythology where Atalanta appears is the Calydonian boar hunt. The king of the Greek region Calydon failed to honor Artemis, so the goddess got angry and summoned a demon boar to ravage his lands. The Calydonian Boar was one of the great monsters of Greek mythology, and many great male heroes came together to kill it. There was also a woman there: Atalanta, armed with her trusty bow and arrow, was the first hunter to wound the boar. When it was finally killed, the man who killed it, named Meleager, gave Atalanta the head and skin as a reward. Meleager also did this to profess his love, but unfortunately his jealous uncles tried to steal these trophies from Atalanta. Meleager killed his uncles, causing his own mother to kill him in revenge.

The Footrace

After helping kill the monstrous boar, Atalanta grew in fame. At this time, her father popped back into the picture and demanded she get married. Atalanta reluctantly agreed, but on the condition that the suitor must beat her at a **footrace**. Several footraces were held, but Atalanta was one of the fastest mortals in Greece, so she remained single. Also, she had a habit of spearing the suitors during the race if she caught up to them. Then along came **Hippomenes**, who is sometimes referred to in mythology as Melanion. Hippomenes knew he could not outrun Atalanta, so he went to the goddess of love, **Aphrodite**, for help. Aphrodite gave him three golden apples because she was offended

by Atalanta's dislike of love. During the footrace, Hippomenes dropped the apples in front of Atalanta. Unable to resist, she stopped to pick up the beautiful apples, giving Hippomenes a chance to win the race.



Aphrodite's cheat works, and Hippomenes wins the race. For some reason, Atalanta doesn't seem to hold it against him—perhaps she approves of his cleverness, as well as his athleticism. Further, he seems to appreciate her: rather than trying to turn her into a traditional ancient wife, the two become comrades in hunting together.

Halcyon Days

(HAL-see-uhn)
...*or Aeolus, her father, then keeps the winds short reined and every year gives seven days of calm upon the ocean - the days we call the halcyon days. (Pg. 19)*

"Halcyon Days" refer to calm, peaceful days. The Halcyon is a bird from Greek legends, now more commonly known as the European Kingfisher. Halcyon birds made floating nests in the sea, and ancient Greeks believed it had the power to calm the waves for her eggs. The nesting was believed to be followed by fourteen days of calm weather around the winter solstice, usually December 21st or 22nd. The Halcyon days are generally believed to start on December 14th or 15th.



The myth originated from the myth by Ovid of Ceyx and Alcyone. Over time, the phrase "Halcyon days" lost its association with the nesting bird and had taken only the meaning of "calm days." Shakespeare uses the phrase in the 16th century in *Henry VI:*

Assign'd am I to be the English scourge.
This night the siege assuredly I'll raise:
Expect Saint Martin's summer, halcyon days,
Since I have entered into these wars.

Hunger

CERES: There is a place in far-off Scythia. Nothing grows there, no wheat, no grass, no trees. There you will find, huddling together, Cold Fear, and gaunt Hunger. (Pg. 21)

Hunger in our play refers to Limos, the Greek personification of famine and starvation. She is not a goddess, but rather, a daimon (a lesser deity, or the "energy" or "experience" of divine power). Limos was more than just hunger pains – starvation in ancient Greece would have been a terrifying threat to the stability of the civilization.

Limos was often associated with the offspring of Eris, which was the spirit of chaos and conflict. This association between Limos and Eris reflected the idea that starvation was not an isolated incident – it followed conflict, mismanagement, injustice, and imbalance. In this analysis, we can see that hunger is a consequence of a society that does not operate in harmony.

Incestual Relationships in Greek Mythology

There is an interesting dynamic at play when we begin to examine incestual relationships in the ancient world. Anyone who is familiar with Greek mythology will know that incestual relationships are not uncommon, but it's important that we understand the context around how these stories were written.

First, there was no word for "incest" in ancient Greece. There were words for a man sleeping with his mother (metrokoites), and for the act of sleeping with one's daughter (thugatromixia), but there is no word that translates to "incest." Instead, these types of relationships were referred to as "gamos anosios," or "unholy union."

The Romans are the ones who gave us the modern term, "incest." It comes from the Latin word "incestum," which literally means "not castum," meaning "not pure." It does not refer only to incest, but to any variety of sexual activities that violated a moral, religious, or legal boundary. For example, a priestess losing her virginity would be accused of "incestum" and be punished. In one interesting story, a man named Clodius Pulcher from the 1st century BC snuck into an all-female religious ceremony disguised as a woman and was charged with "incestum."

There is a very different view of incestual relationships in the society and culture of the ancient world, versus literature and mythology. Literature and mythology were filled to the brim with inter-family sexual relationships among the Olympian gods and other mythological figures. It's important to keep in mind that these ancient societies did not view their gods the way we understand the term "God" now. The Olympian gods were not beings to aspire to be like or emulate – the gods were characters with their own strengths, shortcomings, and vices.

Overall, all evidence points to the fact that incestual relationships involving parents and children or aunts/uncles and nieces/nephews were forbidden, and these relationships were used in literature to evoke horror from the audience. But the same was not true of all familial relationships – half-siblings were often legally married, and full-sibling marriages were sometimes recognized when a society was trying to preserve the "ethnic identity" of their small, isolated settlement. They did not yet understand the full extent of health concerns of sibling offspring, although there was an association with the children of married siblings to have "weaknesses."

Although there is evidence that there were some cases of legal incestuous marriages and practices, generally, it was seen as a negative act. Parental/child relations were widely condemned, as we see most obviously in the tragedy of Oedipus (Sophocles) and in the story of Myrrha and Cinyras (Ovid). The ancient societies saw incest as something that separated their civilized, virtuous society from that of unhealthy, barbaric cultures in other areas of the world.

Pandora & Her Box

(pan-DOOR-uh)
[Music. Transition. We may see glimpses of various myths: PANDORA and her box, ATALANTA and the golden apple.] (Pg. 25)



THE FOLLOWING MYTH TAKEN FROM THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART.

According to Greek mythology, in the beginning the earth was free from toil and misery. The land was covered with flowers and the rivers flowed with milk and honey. Earth was inhabited only by men, who had been created by Prometheus. He made them of clay and modeled them after the gods, which angered Zeus, the king of the gods. When Prometheus offended Zeus again by stealing fire from heaven to give to man, Zeus exacted revenge. He ordered Hephaestus, the god of the forge, to create Pandora, the first woman. The gods gave her many traits including beauty, curiosity, charm, and cleverness. Hence her name "Pandora," meaning "all gifted" or, alternately, "a gift to all."

Before he left Pandora on earth, Zeus handed her a beautiful box saying, "This is my own special gift to you. Don't ever open it." As Zeus anticipated, Pandora's curiosity got the best of her, and she opened the box, ending earthly paradise. From the small chest flew troubles and woes—sorrow, disease, vice, violence, greed, madness, old age, death—to plague humankind forever. However, Zeus did not realize that hope had been secretly added to the box by Prometheus. When Pandora opened the box and released trouble and woe into the world, hope was there to help people survive.

The Myth of Sisyphus

(SI-suh-fuhs)
[As he speaks, the Underworld materializes around him. We see PERSEPHONE and HADES; THE FATES, snipping their threads; a SISYPHEAN CHARACTER; and various other DENIZENS of the Underworld.] (Pg. 26)

MYTH TAKEN FROM GREEKMYTHS-GREEKMYTHOLOGY.COM

The **myth of Sisyphus** is one of the most well-known myths in Greek mythology, due to Sisyphus's cunning and the punishment that awaited him. If you could cheat death, would you? Most people would. But few have ever had the cunning of Sisyphus, the legendary rogue who **cheated death** not just once, but twice. Sisyphus ultimately paid a

heavy price for his trickery: the reprieve he gained through his cunning was brief; the torture he suffered in the Underworld was eternal.

How Did Sisyphus Cheat Death



In his time on Earth, Sisyphus killed, raped, and stole. The special place of Sisyphus in the lore of the Underworld, however, comes not from his ill-treatment of his niece or other mortals, but from his application of his cunning in his relations with the gods.

His crimes against the gods began with Zeus. **Asopus**—a river god whose father was Poseidon—was looking for his daughter **Aegina**, who had disappeared. Sisyphus promised to tell Asopus what had happened to Aegina if the river god would create an eternal spring for Sisyphus's kingdom, Corinth. Once Asopus created this endless source of fresh water, Sisyphus named **Zeus** as Aegina's abductor. Enraged, Asopus pursued Zeus until the god's thunderbolts forced him to retreat.

Even though Zeus *had* in fact taken Aegina, to punish Sisyphus for his betrayal, Zeus sent **Thanatos** (Death) after him. This sets the stage for the famous question: **How did Sisyphus cheat death?** Sisyphus managed to outwit Death through exceptional cunning. He may have asked Thanatos to demonstrate how a pair of handcuffs worked and then locked them on Death himself, or he may have used some other trickery to entrap Death in heavy chains.

In any case, Thanatos found himself a prisoner in Sisyphus's house. With Thanatos (Death) locked up, no one could die—no matter how gruesome the injuries suffered. The headless, bloodless, mortally wounded, and disease-torn continued to walk the earth, racked with pain and begging for release. Finally, the war god **Ares set Thanatos free** and delivered Sisyphus to him.

How Sisyphus Cheated Hades

However, clever Sisyphus managed to elude his fate. Before descending to the Underworld, he instructed his wife **Merope** not to bury him, give him a funeral feast,

perform any sacrifices to **Hades** or Persephone, or place a coin under his tongue (which was used to pay Charon, who ferried the dead for passage across the river Styx to the Underworld home of Hades).

Sisyphus thus arrived at the Palace of Hades as an unburied pauper. Appealing to Queen **Persephone**, Sisyphus told her that he had no right to be there. As one of the unburied, who had no fare for **Charon**, he should have been abandoned on the far side of the river Styx. Furthermore, Sisyphus argued, his wife's neglect of funeral ceremonies and sacrifices might set a bad example for other widows in the future.

Sisyphus pleaded for Persephone's permission to return to the surface of the earth for just three days. This brief time would allow him to arrange for his funeral, to punish his wife for neglecting her duties, and to teach her respect for the lords of the Underworld. Persephone fell for his pleas and allowed Sisyphus to go home.

Sisyphus, of course, had no intention of returning to the world of darkness. He reneged on his promise to descend again in three days. Indeed, he lived many more years until old age claimed him at last.

The Eternal Punishment of Sisyphus



For his offenses to both Zeus and Hades, **Sisyphus was condemned to eternal punishment in Tartarus**, the lowest region of the Underworld.

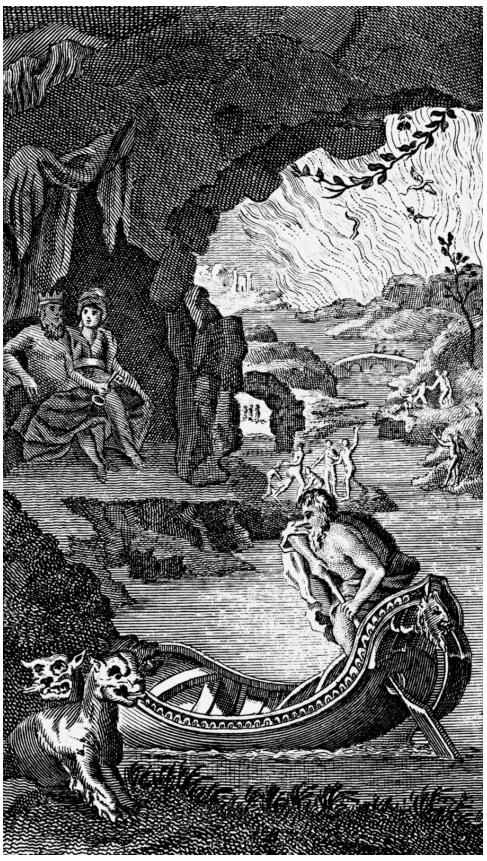
The king of Corinth was condemned to an endless task: **rolling a massive boulder up a steep hill**. With every strained muscle and ragged breath, he pushed the immense weight upward, only to have it slip from his grasp just as he reached the summit.

The boulder would then thunder back down the slope, forcing Sisyphus to begin his futile labor anew, an eternal cycle of exertion and despair. Sisyphus was thus forced to start his labor all over again, the echoes of the falling rock a haunting reminder of his eternal punishment.

The Underworld

NARRATOR: Nothing left but the slow parade led by Hermes to the Underworld. (Pg. 14)

INFORMATION TAKEN FROM THE J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM.



Most ancient Greeks anticipated that the soul left the body after death and continued to exist in some form, but an expectation that good would be rewarded and evil punished in the afterlife was not central to their beliefs. In Homer's Odyssey (750–700 bc) the Underworld—otherwise known as "the house of Hades," or simply "Hades," after the god who ruled over the dead—was bleak and somber for nearly everyone. Only a handful of mythical figures suffered for eternity, and their wrongdoings were beyond those of mere mortals. Similarly exceptional were the rare heroes who enjoyed a happy existence in Elysium or on the Isles of the Blessed. They did so not on account of their virtuous behavior but because of their status and family connections with the gods.

The Greek Underworld was ill-defined as a place, although the approach to it often included a journey over water. The rivers of the realm are mentioned in Homer's Odyssey (750–700 bc), but the poem otherwise presents Hades as a "murky darkness." Centuries later, the comic playwright Aristophanes provided more color, describing wrongdoers lying in mud and dung, while initiates dance in myrtle groves (Frogs, 405 bc). But even at this date, there was little consensus about the Underworld's geography. The philosopher Plato (about 428–347 bc) described four rivers in one account but omitted them from another.

When Hades, king of the Underworld, abducted Persephone, her mother Demeter, goddess of the harvest, traversed the world in search of her missing daughter. The fields became barren, and Hades was compelled to release the girl. But because he had tricked her into eating the seeds of a pomegranate while in the Underworld, she had to descend there for a third of each year.

Denizens of the Underworld

(de-ni-zun)

[As he speaks, the Underworld materializes around him. We see PERSEPHONE and HADES; THE FATES, snipping their threads; a SISYPHEAN CHARACTER; and various other DENIZENS of the Underworld.] (Pg. 26)

A Denizen is an inhabitant, occupant, or frequent visitor of a place. Therefore, a Denizen of the Underworld are the creatures or characters that are associated with the Underworld.

- Cerberus: The Guardian Hound
- Hermes: The Messenger
- Charon: The Ferryman
- The Erinyes: The Goddesses of Vengeance
- Hecate: A Goddess of the Crossroads (Witchcraft, magic, plants/herbs, the moon)
- Thanatos: The God of Gentle Death
- Minos, Rhadamanthus, and Aeacus: The Judges of the Dead

The Fates

[As he speaks, the Underworld materializes around him. We see PERSEPHONE and HADES; THE FATES, snipping their threads; a SISYPHEAN CHARACTER; and various other DENIZENS of the Underworld.] (Pg. 26)

INFORMATION TAKEN FROM THECOLLECTOR.COM



The Fates are Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos. They are divinities who presided over human life, and represent the inescapable destiny of humanity.

Also known as the Moirai. This translates as “allotted portion” or “share.” The idea was that the Fates would deal out humankind’s allotted portions of life. The three Fates each had a different role in the process of handing out fate or “portions.”

THE FIRST FATE: CLOTHO

First of all, there was Clotho, the “Spinner.” When a human was in the womb, Clotho had the duty of weaving the threads of their life. Greek myth often uses textile metaphors to

convey intangible destiny. The metaphor often appears in descriptions as well as in art, as the weaving of threads on a loom, or in some cases spinning fibers into yarn.

Each thread represented one soul's life. This thread would follow the path of a human's life, including their future choices and actions, and the consequences that could be created. Clotho would begin spinning the thread while the human was in the womb, and so she is often referred to during pregnancies or during the birth of human beings.

The choices of mankind were not absolute. Instead, there was freedom in choice, and the fate of a human depended on conditional choices. The Fates would take all decisions and outcomes into account when they wove the thread.

THE SECOND FATE: LACHESIS

Lachesis was the second of the *Moirai,* or Fates, and her role was to measure the thread of a human's life. Her name translates as "the Allotter" which fits her role as the one who allots a portion of mortal life to each soul. Lachesis would determine how long a human would live, and hence how many trials they would face in their life. Within the thread lay the fate of each soul.

THE THIRD FATE: ATROPOS

The third sister was Atropos, whose name translates as *"the un-turnable or she who cannot be turned."* Her name refers to her unshakeable position as the most stubborn of the Fates. Atropos was the one to cut the thread of fate, and at the point of the cut, the mortal life would end. Thus, Atropos resembles the death of a human. After the cut, a soul would then be sent to the Underworld for judgment, after which, it would be sent to Elysium, the Fields of Punishment, or the Fields of Asphodel.

Atropos' role was vital, she chose how each person would die. She decided on the circumstances of their death — whether that was nobly or ignobly, was up to her. The Fates were often depicted as old women and sometimes as young goddesses, so it majorly depends on artistic preference. Many representations show Atropos as an old woman — as she chose when people would die — and Clotho as a young woman — as she was often present when women gave birth.

Their appearance may not have been absolute, but one consistency in their depiction is with the loom or yarn. The thread is always a staple feature to identify the Fates. They are often creating tapestries depicting the life of a human.



The Fates, or Moirai, and their literal translation as the “allotters,” is closely associated with the ancient Greek word: *meros*, meaning “part” or “lot” and *moros* “fate” or “doom.” These terms are commonly used alongside the Fates, as they were seen to give “lots” and assign “doom” or “fate,” often with somber connotations of death. However, these terms in ancient Greek are also used in common, daily activities, such as giving a *meros* or “portion” of food to each participating diner.

Ancient Greek thought was often concerned with the shares allotted to humankind, and how each person would receive their portion; whether this be in such commonalities as food, land, or treasure, or abstracts such as glory or death. To take someone’s share or lot, you would be taking their rightful portion as assigned by fate.

River Styx

(stiks)
NARRATOR: Inconsolable, desperate, he left the warmth
and sweetness of our air, he dared to descend
to the River Styx and crossed it to the Underworld. (Pg. 26)

INFORMATION TAKEN FROM THE HELLENIC MUSEUM IN AUSTRALIA.



In ancient Greek mythology, the Styx was one of the five rivers of the underworld, along with the Phlegethon, Acheron, Lethe and Cocytus, that all merged at the centre of the underworld. The Styx, which was also a female deity, formed the boundary between the world of the living and the world of the dead - Hades. When someone died, the psyche (spirit) of the deceased had to cross the river Styx, carried on a boat by the ferryman Charon, in order to enter the afterlife. It was therefore a very important boundary, and its crossing had to be prepared for to ensure that the deceased would successfully pass into the afterlife, or their soul would roam the shores and haunt the living until granted rest in Hades.

MYTHICAL CHARACTERS

Adonis

(uh-dah-nuhs)
NURSEMAID: Some say she gave birth to a boy called Adonis; (Pg. 38)

INFORMATION TAKEN FROM WORLDHISTORY.ORG

A great king called Cinyras (in some sources known as Theias, the king of Assyria) had a daughter named Myrrha, who was very beautiful. The king used to boast about his daughter being more beautiful than Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty. When Aphrodite heard of this, she became angry and decided to retaliate. She used her son Eros, the god of desire and attraction, to make Myrrha fall in love with her father, and even deceived him into committing incest. When Cinyras discovered the trick, he swore to kill Myrrha, who in turn escaped from her father after realizing she was pregnant. Myrrha was ashamed and regretful of her heinous act, and pleaded to the gods to protect her. They answered her prayers by turning her into a Myrrh tree.



Nine months later, the Myrrh tree split off, and Adonis was born; he had inherited the beauty of his mother. When Aphrodite saw the boy, she was so amazed by his beauty that she decided to hide him from the rest of the goddesses, and entrusted him to Persephone, goddess of the underworld. Persephone began looking after the boy, and when he grew older and became more and more attractive, she fell in love with him.

A conflict then rose between Aphrodite and Persephone, who refused to give Adonis back to Aphrodite. Zeus, the king of the gods, intervened and ruled that Adonis to spend four months of the year with Persephone in Hades, the Underworld, then four months with Aphrodite, and the remaining four months however he wished. Because Adonis was so taken with the charm of Aphrodite, he devoted his free four months to her as well. (SEE ALSO: Cinyras and Myrrha.)

Alcyone

(al-SY-uh-nee)



NARRATOR: There once was a king named Ceyx who had as his queen Alcyone, daughter of Aeolus, master of the winds. (Pg. 11)

The brightest star in the Pleiades. The daughter of Aeolus, the God of the Winds.

Alcyone was the wife of Ceyx, who was a peaceful and just ruler. They were admired for their physical beauty and their love for one another. They enjoyed their marriage so much that they had nicknames for each other; Zeus and Hera. This angered the gods, who did not approve of the two taking on their likeness. Zeus punished the couple by sending a thunderbolt that caused a hurricane, sinking Ceyx's ship. (SEE ALSO: Ceyx)

Baucis

(BAW-sus)
BAUCIS: [Entering] Poor strangers! Philemon, there are guests at our door! (Pg. 48)



The wife of Philemon. Their original story varies slightly from the episode we see in the play, in that originally, Zeus told Baucis and Philemon to pack up their belongings and leave their cottage, because he was going to punish all the other residents of the town who rejected the gods. The couple obeyed, and fled to a nearby mountain. When they looked back, they saw the town had been destroyed in a flood. Where their cottage once was, there was now a glorious temple. Baucis and Philemon then asked Zeus to let them be the guardians of the temple, and Zeus accepted. Then we return to the lore of the play, where they asked to die at the same time, and Zeus granted this wish by transforming them into an intertwining pair of trees; an oak and a linden. (SEE ALSO: Philemon)

Ceyx

(Sē-eks)

NARRATOR: There once was a king named Ceyx who had as his queen Alcyone, daughter of Aeolus, master of the winds. (Pg. 11)



Ceyx was a peaceful and just ruler, and his wife was Alcyone, daughter of Aeolus, the God of the Winds. They were admired for their physical beauty and their love for one another. They enjoyed their marriage so much that they had nicknames for each other; Zeus and Hera. This angered the gods, who did not approve of the two taking on their likeness. Zeus punished the couple by sending a thunderbolt that caused a hurricane, sinking Ceyx's ship. (SEE ALSO: Alcyone)

Cimmerians

(sih-MEER-ee-uhnz)
SECOND NARRATOR: Far off in remotest Campania, beyond where the Cimmerians live in their gloomy caves, is a deeper and even darker grotto, the home of Sleep. (Pg. 15)

The Cimmerians were an early nomadic people that scholars believe wandered the regions north of the Black Sea during the Bronze Age. Homer wrote that these people lived in a land of perpetual darkness. Interestingly, the Cimmerians are credited as one of the first people to domesticate horses, which influenced their lifestyle to center around military tactics. This gave them an advantage in expanding their territory.



Of important note is that their society included “fierce warrior women,” which possibly inspired Greek myths of the Amazons. The Cimmerians were significant in influencing regional conflicts, but eventually disappeared from historical records. It is assumed that they assimilated with the Scythians.

Cinyras

(Sin-i-rus)
VERTUMNUS: The story of Cinyras, his daughter Myrrha, and Aphrodite? (Pg. 33)



Cinyras of Cyprus was a character of a myth recorded by Ovid. In the epic poem, this story occurs as a narration of Orpheus, who sings a series of songs about “forbidden and tragic love.”

The core of the story is that Aphrodite is angered by Cinyras’s daughter, Myrrha, because she was either more beautiful than Aphrodite, or because Myrrha’s rejected her suitors (the story is told a couple of different ways). In other stories, it is said that Myrrha was cursed because Cinyras was the one boasting that her beauty was greater than Aphrodite. Regardless, Aphrodite curses Myrrha with an uncontrollable passion for her own father. Cinyras and Myrrha engage in sexual acts, unbeknownst to Cinyras. When Cinyras finally lights a lamp and discovers it is his daughter, he attempts to kill her, and she flees, pregnant, to the wilderness. (SEE ALSO: Adonis and Myrrha.)

Erysichthon

(Err-i-sik-thon)
NARRATOR: When you see a miracle like that, how can you deny the existence of the gods? Believe it or not, there are some that do. There was a man called Erysichthon,

who scorned the gods and declined to sacrifice on their altars and do them honor. Nothing was sacred to him – he only looked for the usefulness of things. (Pg. 19-20)



We get nearly the entirety of Erysichthon's story in *Metamorphoses*, but there are some changes from the original myth. Erysichthon ordered his men to cut down a huge, sacred tree in Ceres' sacred grove. The myth says that the tree itself bled and cried out for Erysichthon to stop, but he continued and cut the tree down anyway.

Ceres is enraged and calls for Oread, a wood nymph, to go and get Hunger, known as Limos, from far of Scythia. Hunger haunts Erysichthon and causes an insatiable hunger to consume him. He sells everything he has to continue purchasing food, until he has nothing left. Here is where the original myth diverts from the play; originally, Erysichthon sold his daughter into slavery, not his mother.

His daughter is Mestra, and was formerly the lover of the god Poseidon. Poseidon blesses her with the ability to change her shape as a way to escape her masters. She would then return home, only for Erysichthon to see her as a commodity that could always be sold for more money, because she could become whatever the buyer needed or wanted.

This could not last forever; eventually Erysichthon's hunger becomes too severe, and is eventually driven to eating his own limbs, dying slowly as he consumed himself.

Epaphus

(EP-uh-fuss)
PHAETON: And one day we're all on the playground and this one kid, Epaphus, he goes to me, "So Phaeton blah blah who's your father, what does he do? Blah blah blah." (Pg. 39)



Epaphus was the son of Io and Zeus. Io was loved by Zeus, but hated by Hera. To hide his infidelity, Zeus transformed Io into a cow to escape the wrath of Hera. Hera was not tricked by Zeus's disguise, and asked him to give the heifer to her as a gift. She kept Io guarded, and Zeus sent Hermes to free the heifer from her ownership. Now free, Io wandered the ancient world, but not until after Hera had cursed Io

with the continual sting of the gadfly. She traveled across Egypt, eventually finding respite on the banks of the Nile River.

Zeus met her there and with a touch, returned her back to her Naiad form. Pregnant with Zeus's child, she gave birth to a son, Epaphus, which means the "Touch of Zeus." Hera then hated Epaphus and had him taken from Io and hidden away with a foreign people. Zeus killed these people (the Curetes), and Io found Epaphus in Syria. He grew up to be the king of Egypt.

Eurydice

(yu-RI-du-sē)
NARRATOR: You've heard of Orpheus, the greatest musician of all time, and his bride Eurydice? His was the unluckiest of wedding days. (Pg. 25)



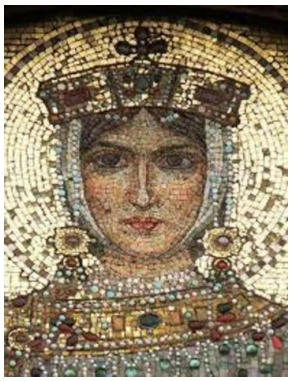
The wife of Orpheus whom he attempts to bring back from Hades. Eurydice was a beautiful nymph that Orpheus discovered while playing the lyre in the woods one day. Eurydice heard the beautiful music and was drawn to it. They fell in love at first sight.

On the same day as their wedding, Eurydice was bitten by a snake and died. Orpheus mourned in song, and it was said to be so haunting and beautiful that the gods sent Hermes to guide Orpheus into the Underworld to retrieve her.

Hades would allow Orpehus to take Eurydice on one condition – that Orpheus walk in front with Eurydice behind, and he could not turn to make sure she was there. As they travelled, her footsteps were so gentle that Orpheus began to doubt that she was there and started to believe that he had been tricked by Hades. Just as Orpheus reached the threshold, he turned to see if she was there, but she had not yet crossed over and immediately sank back into the Underworld. (SEE ALSO: Orpheus)

Helen

VERTUMNUS: A lover is what you need to make you complete as a woman. You'd have many choices, I think. As many as Helen. (Pg. 33)



Helen of Troy, also known as Helen of Sparta, was known as the epitome of beauty. She was a demigod born to Zeus and Leda. She was the goddess of fertility, and legends of love, desire, and conflict surround her history.

Midas

(mī-des)
SECOND LAUNDRESS: There was a certain king, named Midas. Net worth: one hundred billion. (Pg. 7)

A legendary Phrygian king who is given the power of turning everything he touches to gold. (Phrygia: Ancient kingdom, Turkey) While being known for his wealth, he's also mocked for being arrogant and effeminate.



The story we see in our play is the myth of Midas: Silenus, drunk on wine, wanders away from the celebration and is captured by one of Midas's men. Midas is a good host to Silenus, and when Bacchus comes to fetch him, he rewards Midas with a gift of his choosing. Midas chooses the gift of the golden touch. Everything he touches turns to gold, including food.

Desperate, Midas returns to Bacchus and begs for the wish to be reversed. Bacchus takes pity on Midas, knowing from the beginning that it wouldn't end well, and tells Midas to bath in the source of a river on a mountain. King Midas does so, and as the curse was lifted from him, the river was filled with gold. This river is Pactolus, which is known for its golden reserves.

The Midas of Greek mythology should not be confused with the real, historical Midas for also ruled Phrygia in the 8th century.

Myrrha

(Meer-uh)
VERTUMNUS: The story of Cinyras, his daughter Myrrha, and Aphrodite? (Pg. 33)



A great king called Cinyras (in some sources known as Theias, the king of Assyria) had a daughter named Myrrha, who was very beautiful. The king used to boast about his daughter being more beautiful than Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty. When Aphrodite heard of this, she became angry and decided to retaliate. She used her son Eros, the god of desire and attraction, to make Myrrha fall in love with her father, and even deceived him into committing incest. When Cinyras discovered the trick, he swore to kill Myrrha, who in turn escaped from her father after realizing she was pregnant. Myrrha was ashamed and regretful of her heinous act, and pleaded to the gods to protect her. They answered her prayers by turning her into a Myrrh tree. (SEE ALSO: Adonis and Cinyras.)

Narcissus

(naar-SI-suhs)
[But as he starts to exit, he catches sight of his reflection in the pool. It arrests him. He leans down to it. He becomes still.] (Pg. 31)

Narcissus was the son of the river god, Cephissus, and the nymph Liriope. He was known for his unmatched beauty, and many fell hopelessly in love with him. However, their love was met with contempt, and he ignored their advances.

One of the beings who fell in love with him was an Oread nymph, Echo. She was captivated by Narcissus, but he cruelly pushed her away and left her in despair. She was tormented by this rejection and roamed the woods alone for the rest of her life, “finally wilting away until all that remained of her was an echo sound.”

Nemesis was the goddess of retribution and revenge, and she heard about Narcissus’s actions and Echo’s fate. To punish him, she led him to a pool of water. He gazed into it

and immediately fell in love with his own reflection. He continued staring at his reflection until it became clear that his love could not materialize (because it was for himself), he committed suicide. Ovid wrote that even as Narcissus was crossing the River Styx into the Underworld, he was still staring at his reflection.



After he died, a flower sprouted that shared the same name. Narcissus is the origin of the term narcissism – an obsession and fixation with oneself.

Narcissus Plant (Daffodil)





Oread

(Aw-ree-ad)
NARRATOR: Oread flew off to the Caucasus, a bleak and nightmarish region. (Pg. 21)

Oreads, in Greek mythology, are a type of nymph typically found in mountains and grottoes (small cave). Nymphs are female, divine beings, usually depicted as young girls. They are not immortal but live very long lives.



Orpheus

(Or-fyüs)
NARRATOR: You've heard of Orpheus, the greatest musician of all time, and his bride Eurydice? His was the unluckiest of wedding days. (Pg. 25)



A poet and musician in Greek mythology who almost rescues his wife Eurydice from Hades by charming Pluto and Persephone with his lyre. Orpheus and Eurydice are one of the most popular Greek myths, and most frequently depicted in Western art. It is, of course, a tragic love story, but it also appeals to artists since Orpheus is an artist as a musician and songwriter. Many interpret their story as an allegory for artists' turmoil and joy.

Orpheus was the son of the god of music, Apollo, and one of the nine muses (often said to be Calliope). Orpheus's musical talent was so great that wild animals and even stones and trees drew close to listen.
Orpheus and Eurydice fell in love, but on the same day as their wedding, Eurydice was bitten by a snake and died. Orpheus mourned in song, and it was said to be so haunting and beautiful that the gods sent Hermes to guide Orpheus into the Underworld to retrieve her. Hades would allow Orpehus to take Eurydice on one condition – that Orpheus walk in front with Eurydice behind, and he could not turn to make sure she was there. As they travelled, her footsteps were so gentle that Orpheus began to doubt that she was there, and started to believe



that he had been tricked by Hades. Just as Orpheus reached the threshold, he turned to see if she was there, but she had not yet crossed over, and immediately sank back into the Underworld. (SEE ALSO: Eurydice)

Phaeton

(fā-e-ten)

[PHAETON floats on his yellow raft. He does not exactly hear the THERAPIST when she speaks to the audience, or perhaps he just isn't paying attention.] (Pg. 39)



Apollo (also called Helios) was the sun god, and he drove a chariot drawn by four horses across the sky each day, giving earth its hours and seasons. Apollo had a son with a mortal woman, making his son, Phaeton, mortal as well. Phaeton was telling others that Apollo was his father, and was taunted for this claim because no one believed him. Embarrassed and angry, Phaeton asked Apollo for proof that he was his father. Apollo told Phaeton he would give him anything he wanted, and Phaeton's request was to drive Apollo's chariot. Apollo knew that Phaeton didn't have the strength or skill to drive it safely, but couldn't go back on his promise.

Phaeton could not control the horses, and put the existence of earth into danger. Zeus was called to intervene, and threw a firebolt at the chariot, plunging it to the earth. In the end of the myth, Phaeton does not survive the fall.

Philemon

(fi-lē-men)

PHILEMON: *[Entering]* Baucis, why are you standing there! We must bring our guests inside. *(Pg. 48)*



A poor, aged, Phrygian in Greek mythology who with his wife Baucis treats a disguised Zeus hospitably and is rewarded by him with a splendid temple. (Phrygia: Ancient kingdom, Turkey)

The husband of Baucis. Their original story varies slightly from the episode we see in the play, in that originally, Zeus told Baucis and Philemon to pack up their belongings and leave their cottage, because he was going to punish all the other residents of the town who rejected the gods. The couple obeyed, and fled to a nearby mountain. When they looked back, they saw the town had been destroyed in a flood. Where their cottage once was, there was now a glorious temple. Baucis and Philemon then asked Zeus to let them be the guardians of the temple, and Zeus accepted. Then we return to the lore of the play, where they asked to die at the same time, and Zeus granted this wish by transforming them into an intertwining pair of trees; an oak and a linden. (SEE ALSO: Baucis)

Pomona

(Puh-moh-na)
NARRATOR: There lived at one time a wood nymph named Pomona. (Pg. 31)

Pomona was the Roman goddess of the fruit trees and orchards. Pomona was strictly a roman deity with no Greek counterpart. She was depicted as a beautiful, innocent young maiden wearing a fruit crown and holding a pruning knife. Her name was the origin for pomegranate and pomme (French for apple).

Pomona's beauty attracted many suitors, but Pomona preferred to be alone. But there was one suitor who was determined to win her; Vertumnus was the god of seasons, change, plant growth, and gardens. Vertumnus could shape-shift into different people, which he used to win Pomona's heart. He transformed into an old woman and told Pomona a warning story about the dangers of rejecting a suitor. In our play, he tells the story of Myrrha and Cinyras, but in the original myth, he tells the story of Iphis and Anaxarete.



The story worked, and Vertumnus won Pomona's heart. They went on to complement each other and brought abundance and growth. (SEE ALSO: Vertumnus)

Psyche

(sī-kē):
[EROS lies down on the raft to sleep. Throughout the following, PSYCHE enters, carrying a candelabra. She makes her way down the stairs and along the deck, very slowly and quietly.] (Pg. 43)

Greek: Soul, Personality. The totality of elements forming the mind.

A mortal princess with extraordinary beauty. Aphrodite became jealous of Psyche when men began turning away from Aphrodite and towards Psyche. Aphrodite called on Eros (Cupid) to make Psyche fall in love with the most hideous of men. Instead, Eros himself fell in love with Psyche and carried her away to his hidden palace. But Eros hid his identity from Psyche, and told her that she was never allowed to look at him.



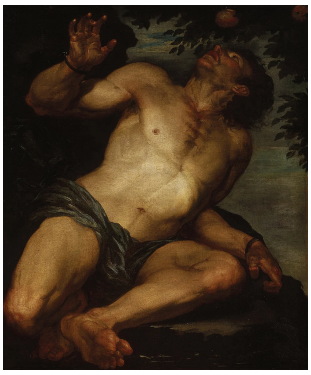
Her sisters, too, became jealous of Psyche, and convinced her to disobey Eros and look upon him. Angered, Eros left her. Psyche searched the world for Eros, and eventually went to Aphrodite for help. Aphrodite made her perform a series of seemingly impossible tasks. Psyche completed these tasks and was reunited with Eros to be married. (SEE ALSO: Eros)

Tantalus

(TAN-tuh-lus)
NARRATOR ONE: As Orephus spoke, the pale phantoms began to weep. Tantalus was no longer thirsty, and Sisyphus sat on his rock to listen. (Pg. 26)

Tantalus was a rich and wicked king, son of Zeus and Pluto. Being in the first generation of mortal children of the gods, he was given the privilege of dining with the gods on Mount Olympus. Tantalus misbehaved, but there are three different versions of this situation. Version 1:
Tantalus gossiped with the fellow mortals about what the gods were planning for

humanity. ??????



Version 2: Tantalus stole divine nectar and ambrosia served at dinner, and gave it to mortals on earth.

Version 3: Tantalus wanted to see if the gods really did know everything, and to test this, he killed, diced, and cooked his own son into a stew, planning to serve this stew to the gods. The gods immediately knew something was wrong, except for Demeter (Ceres). Still missing her lost daughter, Persephone, she was unaware and ate a chunk of the son's shoulder. The trick was revealed, and the gods put the boy back together again and brought him back to life. However, the young man now had a prosthetic shoulder made from ivory.

In punishment, Tantalus' kingdom and dynasty as cursed. In the afterlife, he received one of the few punishments that stand out from the typical melancholy in death. Tantalus was cursed with an insatiable thirst. He was made to stand in a pool of water but was never able to drink from it. Anytime he bends down to drink, the pool drains and becomes empty. From above, an abundant fruit tree hangs over his head, but he can never reach tall enough to grasp the fruit.

Vertumnus

(Ver-TUM-nus)
[VERTUMNUS enters with his suitcase full of his disguises.] (Pg. 31)

Pomona's beauty attracted many suitors, but Pomona preferred to be alone. But there was one suitor who was determined to win her; Vertumnus was the god of seasons, change, plant growth, and gardens. Vertumnus could shape-shift into different people, which he used to win Pomona's heart. He transformed into an old woman and told Pomona a warning story about the dangers of rejecting a suitor. In our play, he tells the story of Myrrha and Cinyras, but in the original myth, he tells the story of Iphis and Anaxarete.



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