



# Greek Mythology

Mrs. Jennifer Pace



## The Primordial Beings

a group of gods from which all others descend; the most notable are: Chaos, Uranus, and Gaia



## The Titans

members of the second order of divine beings, descending from the primordial deities and preceding the Olympian deities; a race of giants



## The Olympians

the principal deities of the Greek pantheon, residing atop a Mt. Olympus; the Olympians gained their supremacy in a war of gods in which Zeus led his siblings to victory over the Titans

# The Titans



The Titans are the primordial race of deities according to ancient Greek beliefs.

The Titans are thought to have been giants, if in “human” form. Several Titans were more or less ephemeral beings – Chaos, Gaea, Uranus. This original race ruled the universe before their children, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews overthrew them. The Olympians, led by Zeus, became the “masters of the universe.”

# CHAOS

- Primordial being (ethereal)
- Nothingness
- Original darkness that covered everything. All things are said to be born out of Chaos. POOF.....

# Gaea

Her name is sometimes spelled Gaia

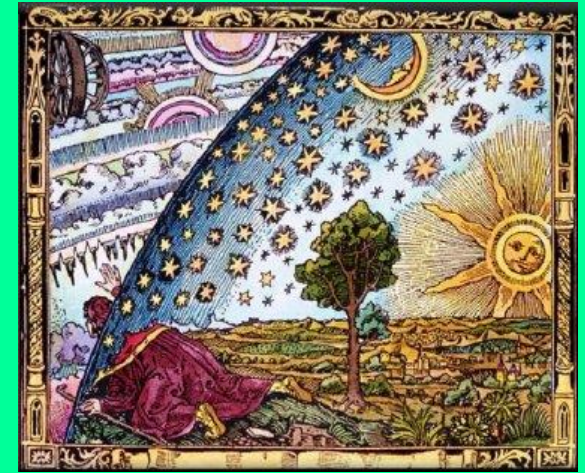
- The first BEING that sprung forth from Chaos
- “An Original,” along with Chaos and Uranus
- Said to be the original mother
- She was spontaneously spawned from Chaos or nothingness
- “The Greek goddess of Earth;” her Roman name is Terra which means earth, soil, dirt
- Said to be the mother of all things, including the Titans
- Her husband is Uranus; together they produced the most powerful Titan, Cronus



# Uranus

“An Original”  
Personifies the sky

- The son and husband of Gaia (YEP...she procreated on her own)
- Epitaph = “Father Sky”



According to Hesiod’s *Theogony*, Uranus came every night to cover the earth and mate with Gaia, but he hated the children she bore him. Their children were:

- the first six sons and six daughters were the Titans
- the three, one-hundred-handed giants the Hekatonkheires
- and the race of one-eyed giants the Cyclopes

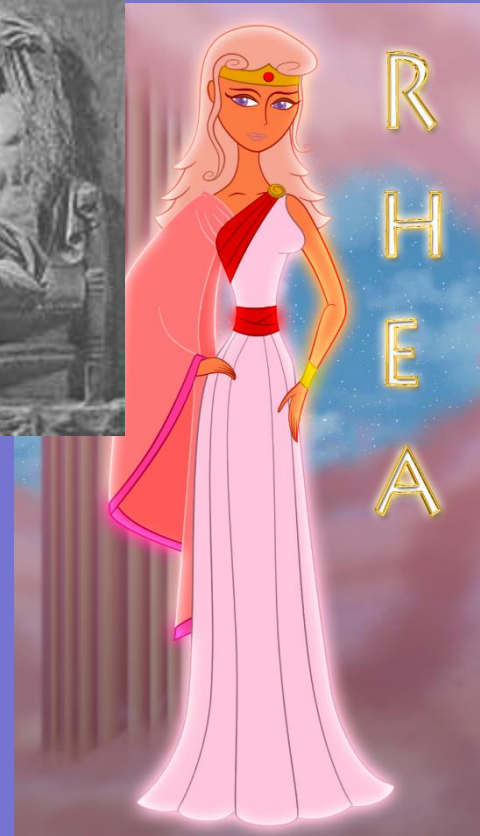
# Cronus a.k.a. – Father Time



- Chief Titan
- Obtained power by castrating his father, Uranus
- Married his sister Rhea and they produced five of the Olympians
- He swallowed his children at birth to prevent them from seizing his throne
- Cronus = Kronos

# Rhea

- Wife of Cronus
- Aggravated with Cronus for his vanity (swallowing children); gave Cronus a rock in a blanket instead of Zeus
- She represented the eternal flow of time; balance





# PROMETHEUS



- Wisest of the Titans; his brothers are Epimetheus and Atlas
- Known as the benefactor to mankind
- Famous for bringing fire to the humans; this angered Zeus and once The Olympians took power, Prometheus was chained to a rock in the Underworld and an eagle would eat his liver every day.

# Epimetheus

- Brother of Prometheus and Atlas
- Known as the stupid Titan; his name means “afterthought”
- Accepted the gift of Pandora, the first mortal woman
- He opened her wooden box (glass jar), which was to remain sealed forever. In doing so, he unleashed all the evils into the world.



# ATLAS

- Brother of Epimetheus and Prometheus
- For leading the Titans in the battle against the Olympians, Zeus punished Atlas and made him bear the weight of the world on his shoulders for eternity.
- His story explains why the sky doesn't fall.



# THEMIS

- Titaness of wisdom, honesty, and justice
- Always depicted with scales which represent justice/fairness
- One of Zeus' many wives (although he is technically her nephew)



# Mnemosyne

- Titaness of Memory
- Known for an affair with Zeus, which produced the nine Muses (goddesses of the arts)



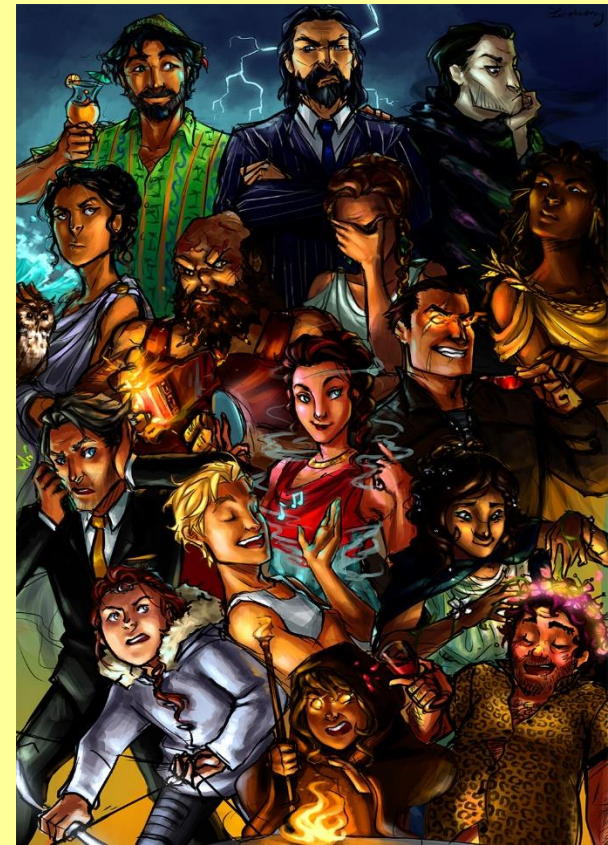
The Muses

# The Olympians

The Olympians are the major deities of the Greek pantheon. Six are offspring of Cronus and Rhea, five are children of Zeus, and one is the child of Hera.



There are 12 Olympians, who live on Mount Olympus: Zeus and Hera (a.k.a. – the King and Queen of the gods), Aphrodite, Hephaestus, Ares, Demeter, Apollo, Artemis, Poseidon, Hermes, and Athena. Hestia is also considered by many to be an Olympian; however, she does not have a throne on Olympus. She gave her throne to Dionysus. Hades is an Olympian, but he does not have a throne on Mt. Olympus; he resides in The Underworld.



# Children Of Cronus And Rhea



Rhea



Cronus



# Zeus



- Supreme Greek god; youngest of Cronus and Rhea's children
- Depicted as a strong man with a flowing beard
- In charge of the weather; seen with his thunderbolts
- Populated Earth and the heavens with his many affairs
- Lived in a grand palace on Mount Olympus
- His animal symbol is the eagle





# Hera



- The jealous wife of Zeus; technically she is Zeus' second wife (Metis was the first); Hera is the most powerful of the female Olympians

- Protector of marriage and childbirth

- Known for being vindictive towards Zeus' many mistresses and their offspring

- Beautiful goddess but known for being unhappy

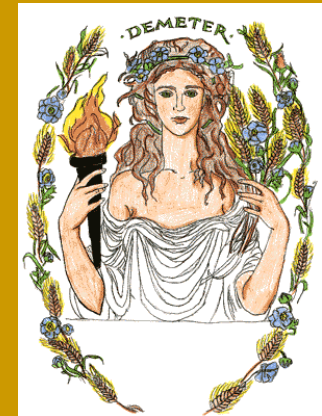
- Known for her beautiful, large eyes — her sacred animal is the peacock (supposedly had eyes on its feathers)

- Sole parent of Hephaestus



# Demeter

- Goddess of fertility and the harvest
- Had many lovers, including Zeus, who fathered her daughter Persephone
- Persephone was kidnapped by Hades and taken to the Underworld. While Persephone was away, Demeter wept and wept. The crops would not grow. Zeus made a deal with his brother to allow Persephone to come back to her mother during the summer and spring. This explains our seasons – during winter and fall the land is barren and during the spring and summer things bloom and reproduce.



# Aphrodite

- The goddess of love and beauty
- Two stories about her birth — one says she was “foam born,” literally meaning born from the sea; another story says she is one of the many daughters of Zeus
- Because she was so beautiful, Zeus feared the male gods would fight over her, so he forced her to marry Hephaestus.
- She had an ongoing love affair with Ares.
- The word aphrodisiac comes from Aphrodite — aphrodisiac means anything that arouses sexual desire



# Poseidon

- Second most powerful god, next to Zeus; brother to Zeus and Hades
- God of the sea, earthquakes, and horses; commonly called “The Earth-shaker”
- Known for being a moody god
- His famous weapon is a trident
- Famous son named Triton
- Neptune=Roman name



- First born of the children of Cronus and Rhea

# Hestia



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- Goddess of the home and domesticity
- Represented by the hearth or “home fires”
- Her main role was to keep watch over the eternal flame that burned in the throne room on Mt. Olympus
- Said to have been the most gentle and peaceful of the gods

# Hades

- God of the Underworld
- Known as the god of the dead, also known as the god of the sleeping and dreaming
- His symbol of power is his helmet of invisibility; often called the Helm of Darkness
- Kidnapped Persephone, a young goddess and daughter of Demeter – made her his queen.
- Tricked her into eating a pomegranate while in the Underworld, meant she was never able to fully leave



# Apollo

- Son of Zeus
- Known for his intelligence, musical abilities, archery skills and healing abilities – He was known as the god who drove the chariot across the sky, pulling the sun up at dawn.
- Twin sister's name is Artemis
- His symbol is the Laurel Tree
- Known for having a bow and arrows with him at all times
- A great athlete – considered to be the first winner of the Olympic games
- Often said to be the most handsome of the Greek gods
- The 9 Muses are his “sidekicks”



# Artemis

- Twin sister of Apollo
- Roman name = Diana; alluded to in Shakespeare's *R&J* – Rosaline has “Dian’s wit.” Swore off men/relationships of the heart after being tricked (by her brother) into killing her one true love, Orion.
- Associated with the wilderness/forests and the moon
- A virgin huntress; known for carrying a bow and arrows
- Presides over childbirth; known as “the protector of women,” and the vulnerable





# Athena

An illustration of the Greek goddess Athena. She has long, wavy brown hair and large, striking blue eyes. She is wearing a blue and white patterned dress. An owl with brown and white speckled feathers is perched on her left hand. The background shows green foliage and a glimpse of a landscape.

- Goddess of wisdom; known for her battle strategy
- Known as a warrior; born from Zeus' head
- She protected the city of Athens in Greece
- She is usually depicted with a shield and an owl. Her shield is called the Aegis; it has a picture of Medusa's head on it.
- Favorite daughter of Zeus; allowed to use his weapons

# Ares



- When Ares went to war, he was followed by his companions, Deimos (terror) and Phobos (fear), who were children of his affair with Aphrodite. Eros, a.k.a. Cupid is another of their offspring.



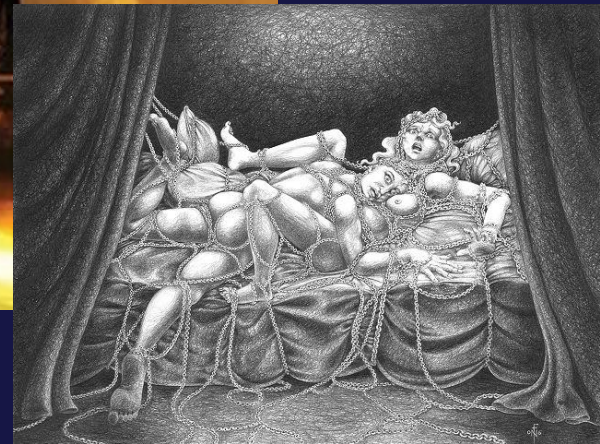
- Bullying god of war
- Son of Zeus and Hera; disliked by both of his parents
- Instigates fights, but seen as a coward; mean, trouble-maker
- Often depicted with his bird, the vulture
- Has an ongoing love affair with Aphrodite
- His sister, Eris, the goddess of discord is often at his side.

# Hephaestus

- Son of Hera ~ (*parthenogenesis* is a natural form of asexual reproduction); disgusted by his disfigurement at birth, Hera throws him from Mt. Olympus
- The god of blacksmiths, fire, metal, and volcanoes; worshipped in the manufacturing and industrial centers of Greece, particularly Athens
- Married to Aphrodite
- Known as the architect of Mt. Olympus
- symbols are a smith's hammer and anvil
- designed Hermes' winged helmet and sandals, the Aegis, Achilles' armor, Helios's chariot, and Eros's bow and arrows
- worked with the help of the Cyclopes as well as his creations, the automatons

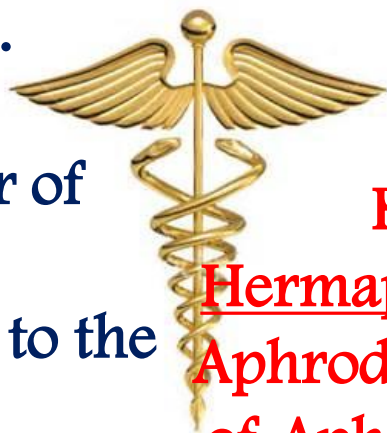


a.k.a. Vulcan  
the god of volcanoes



# Hermes

- Known for being very clever and tricky
- The god of wealth, sleep, luck, thievery, wit and travel
- Easily moves between the worlds: Mt. Olympus, Middle Earth, and Hades
- Most notably known as the messenger of the gods; Zeus' personal messenger
- Also known as the conductor of souls to the Underworld
- Always depicted with a winged helmet and sandals; known for his speed
- His main symbol is the caduceus, which appears in a form of two snakes wrapped around a winged staff; this symbol is now associated with the medical field.
- Often helps mortals
- Epithets include: "the bringer of good luck," "guide and guardian," and "excellent in all the tricks."



Fathered Hermaphroditus with Aphrodite; he was one of Aphrodite's Erotes.



# Dionysus

- God of wine, ecstasy, theater, & feasts
- Son of Zeus
- Always depicted with grapes or a wine goblet; usually pictured with a wreath around his head
- drawn in a chariot, usually by exotic beasts such as lions or tigers, and is attended by Silenus, a companion and tutor to Dionysus; Silenus is often represented as the oldest and most wise of the satyrs; followed by maenads, wild, intoxicated women
- the protector of those who do not belong to conventional society, symbolizes the chaotic, dangerous and unexpected



Dionysus (a.k.a. Bacchus) carries a thyrsus, a wand or staff of giant fennel covered with ivy vines and leaves, wound with ribbon, and always topped with a pine cone.



Hestia gives up her seat on Mt. Olympus for Dionysus.

# Lesser Gods & Goddesses

# Aeolus



- God of the winds (a.k.a. “Keeper of the winds”)
- Known for his hospitality and friendliness
- Said to be funny
- Father to Boreas, god of the north wind & winter, Eurus, god of the unlucky east or southeast wind, Notus, god of the south wind, and Zephyrus, god of the west wind, who is also associated with Spring.



# Proteus

- Attendant to Poseidon;
- Said to know all things: past, present, and future; a shape shifter, he didn't like to predict future events; in order to have Proteus prophesize something a person had to catch him; thus he was always changing shape to avoid this
- From this feature of Proteus comes the adjective **protean**, with the general meaning of **versatile, mutable, capable of assuming many forms.**
- Also referred to as the “old man of the sea”







# Narcissus

- Son of a river god; favored by Apollo's
- A very handsome man; spurned the love of a wood nymph named Echo; the gods punished him for his cruelty; fell in love with his own reflection; died looking at himself in a river
- Narcissus is the origin of the term narcissism, a fixation with oneself and one's physical appearance.

Ancient Greeks believed it was unlucky, possibly even fatal, to see one's own reflection.

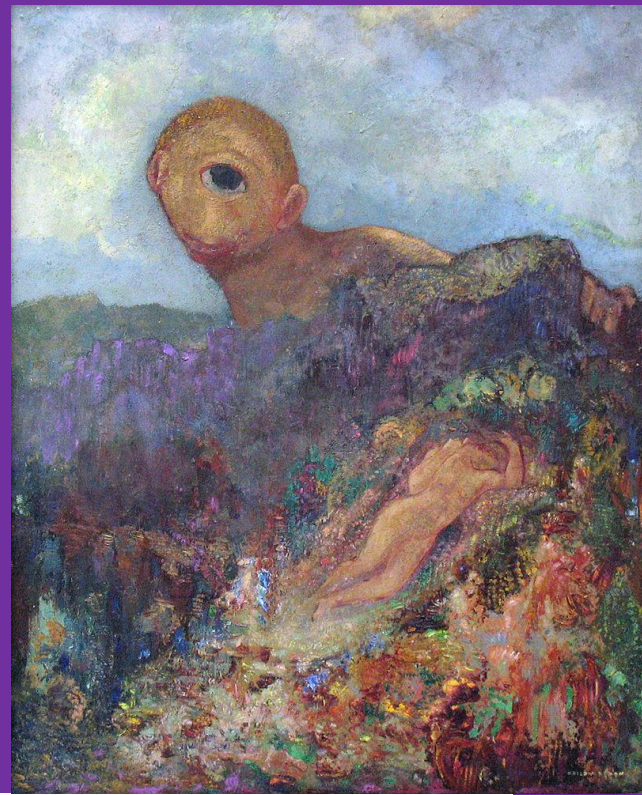
# Pan

- the god of shepherds and flocks, woodland music
- his companions are nymphs
- most famous satyr – half man half goat
- played reed pipes
- known for being mischievous, liked to scare travelers in the woods
- the word *panic* comes from Pan
- like other nature spirits, Pan appears to be older than the Olympians; he gave Artemis her hunting dogs and taught the secret of prophecy to Apollo
- the worship of Pan began in Arcadia; Arcadia was a district of mountain people, culturally separated from other Greeks.

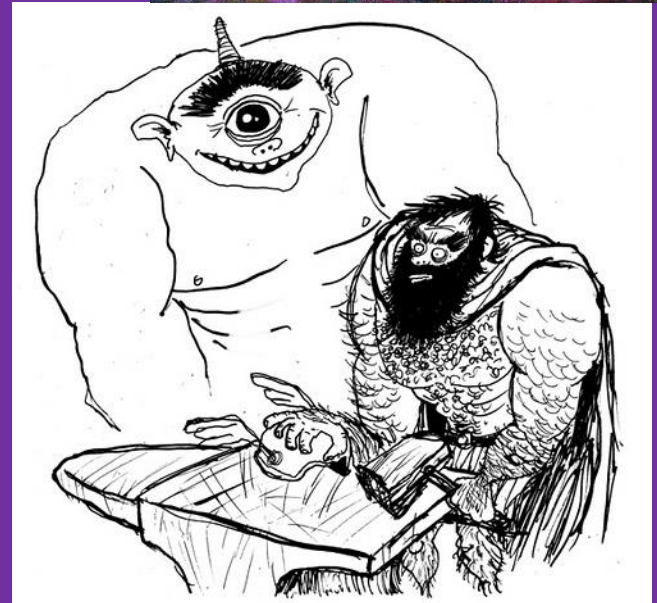


# Creatures

# The Cyclopes



- Children of Uranus and Gaea (primordial creatures)
- Huge monsters with frightening features; one enormous eye in the center of the forehead
- They were known for cannibalism (huge fans of human meat)
- Known for being great craftsmen; came to assist Hephaestus in his forges
- Great blacksmiths
- They provide Zeus' thunderbolt, Hades' helmet of invisibility, and Poseidon's trident; the gods use these weapons to defeat the Titans.



# Medusa

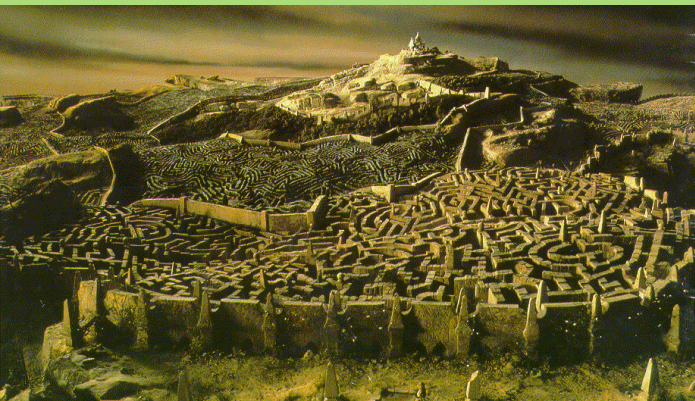
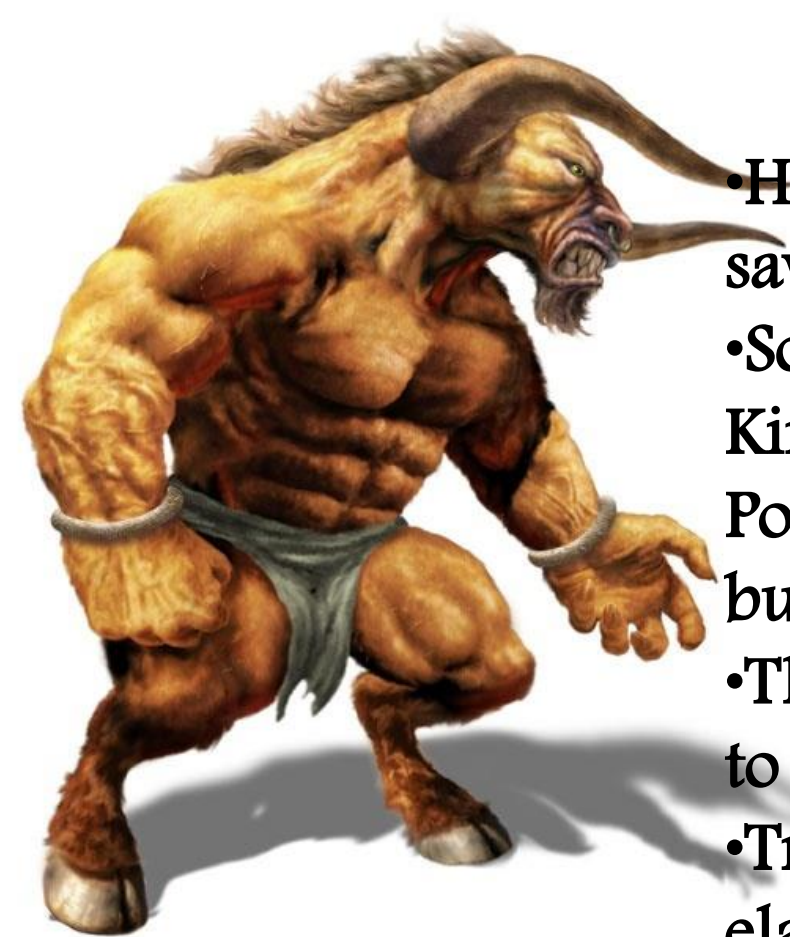
- Originally a beautiful young woman
- Ravished by Posiedon in Athena's temple
- Athena curses her and her sisters, (The Gorgons) turning them in to monsters
- One look at Medusa would turn anyone into stone
- Hair = snakes



- a.k.a. ~ The serpent-goddess
- Perseus kills her by decapitation
- Medusa is a Gorgon, the name derives from the ancient Greek word gorgós, which means "dreadful"
- There were three Gorgon sisters, Stheno, Euryale (both immortal), and Medusa

# The Minotaur

- Half man half bull; hideous monster; savage, untamed
- Son of Pasiphae, who was the wife of King Minos of Crete. She is cursed by Poseidon and falls in love with the bull (moment of bestiality)
- The Minotaur is an embarrassment to King Minos
- Trapped in the Labyrinth, an elaborate maze-like structure designed by the architect Daedalus and his son Icarus, on the command of Minos.
- Killed by the Greek hero, Theseus

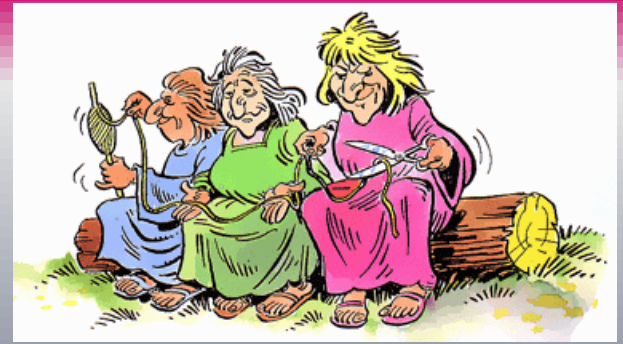


# The Centaurs

- Sons of Ares
- Violent, often overly intoxicated; defiant
- Half man half horse
- Said to be followers of Dionysus; he had the alcohol
- Most famous centaur is Chiron – said to be the only level-headed centaur. He is also said to have been the son of Cronus; known for being wise and compassionate. Chiron is said to have trained heroes like Hercules and Achilles.



# The Fates (the Moirae)



- sometimes called the Wyrd Sisters (Norse Mythology)
- Determine when life begins, when it ends, and what happens in between.
- They were made up of three women:
  - CLOTHO, who appeared as a maiden and spun the thread of life. Her name meant *The Spinner*
  - LACHESIS, who appeared as a matron and measured the thread of life. She was the *Caster of lots*
  - ATROPOS, who cut the thread of life, and appeared as a crone. Her name meant, *Unbending*. Though the smallest of the three, she is the most terrible.
- Usually depicted in white-robos
- personifications of destiny



## Other creatures:

- The Hydra – many headed water snake; central head is immortal; one head cut off, two more would grow in its place (ETYMOLOGY - the term *hydra* is sometimes used to describe a complex problem where each possible solution only leads to more difficulties)
- Scylla – has six heads, long snake-like necks, waist was a belt of ferocious dog heads, a flesh-eater
- Charybdis – massive whirlpool with teeth, eats sailors and entire ships (a maelstrom)
- Sirens – half bird half woman, lure sailors to their death with singing and beauty (from the waist up)





- Cerberus – three headed guard dog of the Underworld
- The Sphinx – challenged travelers to solve her riddles, when they couldn't she ate them
- Harpies – ghastly females with the body and head of a screeching hag (witch-like) and the wings and tail of a scavenging vulture; leave a horrible stench; always starving
- Chimaera – three beasts rolled into one, part lion, part goat, and part snake, vomits fire, the child of Typhon and Echidna



**Places in Greek**

**Mythology**

# Mount Olympus

\*Home of the Olympian gods

\*Zeus ruled Mt. Olympus

\*Hephaestus is credited with having built all the buildings.

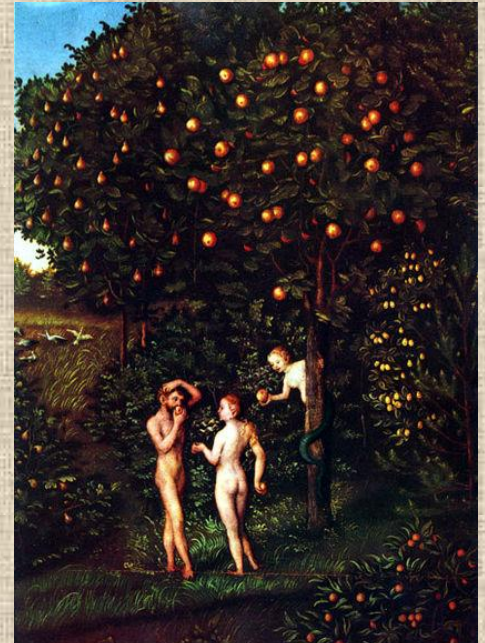


# Hesperia and the Hesperides

- The Hesperides were the nymphs who guarded the Tree of the Golden Apples. This grove of trees was given to Hera as a wedding gift from Gaea.
- Ladon, the dragon, was also believed to guard the apples of Hesperia.
- Hera's golden apples, besides being precious, were reputedly a source of immortality
- These trees of golden apples supposedly made ambrosia = the juice of the gods



Hesperia =the land of the  
golden apples



# Hades – a.k.a. The Underworld



- To reach Hades, a person had to pay the ferryman, Charon, to transport them across the Acheron River into the Underworld.

- The land of the dead
- ALL souls went to Hades.
- There are different realms: the Elysian Fields, the Asphodel Meadows, Limbo, and Tartarus.



There were **five main rivers** that appear both in the real world and the underworld. Their names were meant to reflect the emotions associated with death.

1. **The Styx** is generally considered to be one of the most prominent and central rivers of the Underworld; known as the river of hatred; circles the underworld seven times.
2. **The Acheron** is the river of pain.
3. **The Lethe** is the river of oblivion; associated with forgetfulness
4. **The Phlegethon** is the river of fire. According to Plato, this river led to the depths of Tartarus.
5. **The Cocytus** is the river of wailing.





Heroes in

VS  
Greek

Mythology

GIANTS

WASHINGTON



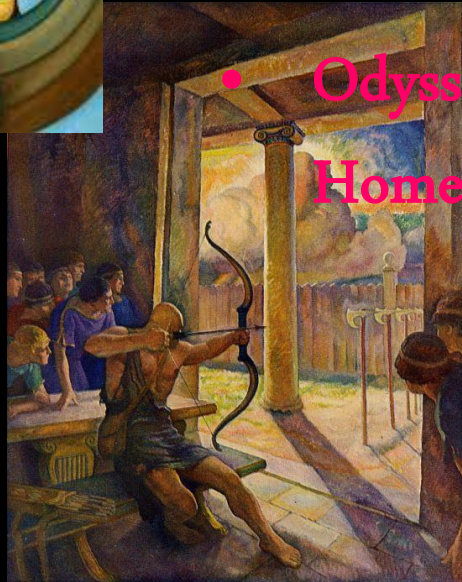
# Achilles



- Most formidable Greek warrior; known as the leader of the Myrmidon, the most intimidating “squadron” of soldiers to ever fight

- Fought in Trojan War
- Remembered for his weakness – his “Achilles heel;” half mortal-half god
- Fought in famous battle with Hector; was eventually killed by Paris

# Odysseus



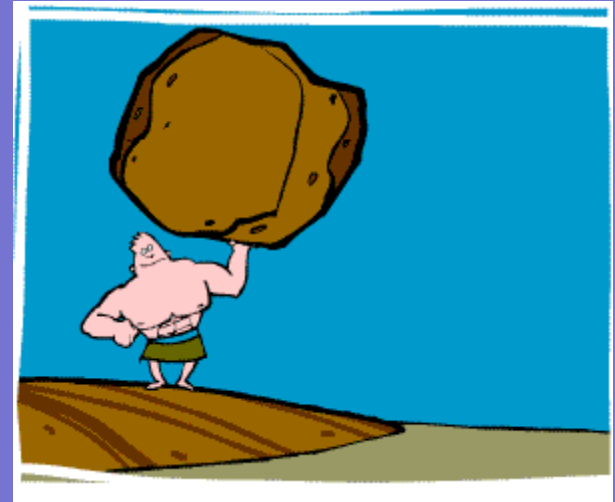
- Greek warrior, remembered for his intelligence/innovative thinking
- credited with having thought of the Trojan Horse
- Guided/protected by Athena
- Remembered for his giant bow
- Wife = the steadfast and loyal Penelope
- son = Telemachus

- Odysseus' famous story is told through Homer's epic poem, *The Odyssey*



# Hercules

- Hercules is both, the most famous hero of ancient times and the most beloved.
- More stories are told about him than any other hero.
- He is known for his amazing strength.
- He is best remembered for successfully performing the Twelve Labors.



- Unfortunately, he is also remembered for going insane and killing his wife and children

# Perseus



- Son of Zeus
- half mortal half god = demi-god
- Perseus was the Greek hero who killed the Gorgon known as Medusa.
- He married Andromeda, having rescued her from a sea monster sent by Poseidon, in retribution for her mother, Queen Cassiopeia declaring herself more beautiful than any goddess on Mount Olympus.

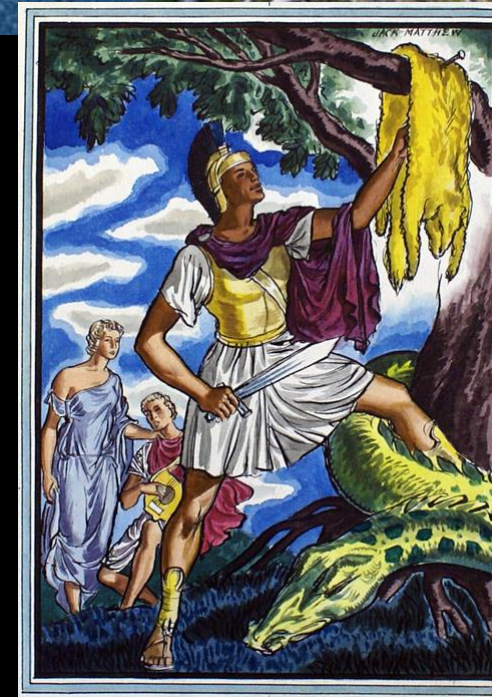
**THESEUS** – Greek hero best remembered for slaying the Minotaur of Crete. His story incorporates other famous characters: King Minos, Daedalus, Icarus, and Ariadne.



# JASON

is best known for:

- capturing the Golden Fleece
- having a twisted love affair with Medea
- crewing the most famous ship of ancient times, the Argo, with his



**The End**