

**GRAPHIC
UNIVERSE**

ATALANTA

THE RACE AGAINST DESTINY

**A
GREEK
MYTH**

JUSTINE & RON FONTES • THOMAS YEATES

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ATALANTA

THE RACE AGAINST DESTINY

A
GREEK
MYTH



**GRAPHIC
UNIVERSE™**

**STORY BY
JUSTINE & RON FONTES**

**PENCILS AND INKS BY
THOMAS YEATES**

EUROPE



MEDITERRANEAN
SEA

NORTH AFRICA

ATALANTA

THE RACE AGAINST DESTINY

A
GREEK
MYTH



GRAPHIC UNIVERSE™ • MINNEAPOLIS

THE ANCIENT GREEK MYTHS THAT TELL OF ATALANTA AND OTHER HEROIC FIGURES DATE BACK MORE THAN TWO THOUSAND YEARS. THE IMAGERY USUALLY ASSOCIATED WITH GREEK MYTHOLOGY IS THAT OF GREECE'S CLASSICAL PERIOD (FROM ABOUT 500 TO 323 B.C.), COMPLETE WITH GRAND TEMPLES, FLOWING GARMENTS, AND MAGNIFICENT STATUES. *ATALANTA: THE RACE AGAINST DESTINY* FOLLOWS THAT TRADITION.

AUTHORS JUSTINE AND RON FONTES RELIED UPON MANY SOURCES, INCLUDING EDITH HAMILTON'S *MYTHOLOGY* AND MICHAEL GRANT'S *MYTHS OF THE GREEKS AND ROMANS*. ARTIST THOMAS YEATES USED HISTORICAL AND TRADITIONAL SOURCES FOR VISUAL DETAILS—FROM IMAGES ON ANCIENT GREEK VASES TO SCULPTURE AND OTHER ARTWORK. DAVID MULROY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN—MILWAUKEE ENSURED HISTORICAL AND VISUAL ACCURACY.

STORY BY JUSTINE AND RON FONTES

PENCILS AND INKS BY THOMAS YEATES,

WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO TOD SMITH,
KEN HOOPER, AND CHRIS MARRINAN

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Graphic Universe™
An imprint of Lerner Publishing Group
241 First Avenue North
Minneapolis, MN 55401 U.S.A.

Website address: www.lernerbooks.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Fontes, Justine.

Atalanta : the race against destiny : a Greek myth / story by Justine & Ron Fontes ; pencils and inks by Thomas Yeates ; coloring by Hi-Fi Design ; lettering by Bill Hauser.

p. cm. — (Graphic myths and legends)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN-13: 978-0-8225-5965-8 (lib. bdg. : alk. paper)

ISBN-10: 0-8225-5965-X (lib. bdg. : alk. paper)

I. Atalanta (Greek mythology)—Juvenile literature.

I. Fontes, Ron. II. Yeates, Thomas. III. Title.

IV. Series.

BL820.A835F66 2007

398.20938°02—dc22

2006004661

Manufactured in the United States of America
1 2 3 4 5 6 - JR - 12 11 10 09 08 07

eISBN-13: 978-0-8225-8790-3

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ABANDONED

LONG AGO, THE ANCIENT GREEKS BELIEVED IN GODS WHO LIVED ON LOFTY MOUNT OLYMPUS. FROM THEIR CLOUDY PALACE, THESE OLYMPIANS WATCHED MORTAL LIVES UNFOLD LIKE STORIES—AND SOMETIMES THEY INTERFERED IN THESE STORIES. THIS EXPLAINED WHY SOME LIVES RAN STRANGE COURSES.

AND NONE WAS STRANGER THAN THAT OF THE FASTEST WOMAN IN THE WORLD, ATALANTA.





LEGENDS DISAGREE ABOUT EXACTLY WHERE ATALANTA WAS BORN AND WHO HER FATHER WAS, EXCEPT THAT HE WAS A POWERFUL GREEK KING. BUT FROM THE MOMENT SHE WAS BORN, ATALANTA HAD A VERY SERIOUS PROBLEM....

Waaah!!

IT'S A GIRL!



DO NOT HAND
ME THIS *GIRL*. BRING
ME A *SON* OR NO
CHILD AT ALL!

HUSBAND,
PLEASE. HER NAME IS
ATALANTA AND SHE'S
BEAUTIFUL. SURELY
YOU CAN SEE—

ALL I SEE
IS A USELESS
GIRL—WHEN WHAT
I *NEED* IS A SON
AND HEIR.

GUARDS!
TAKE THIS *GIRL* TO
THE MOUNTAINTOP—
AND COME BACK
ALONE.

No!



DO YOU
QUESTION MY
COMMAND OR MY
RIGHTS UNDER LAW
AND CUSTOM?

NO, MY
LORD.



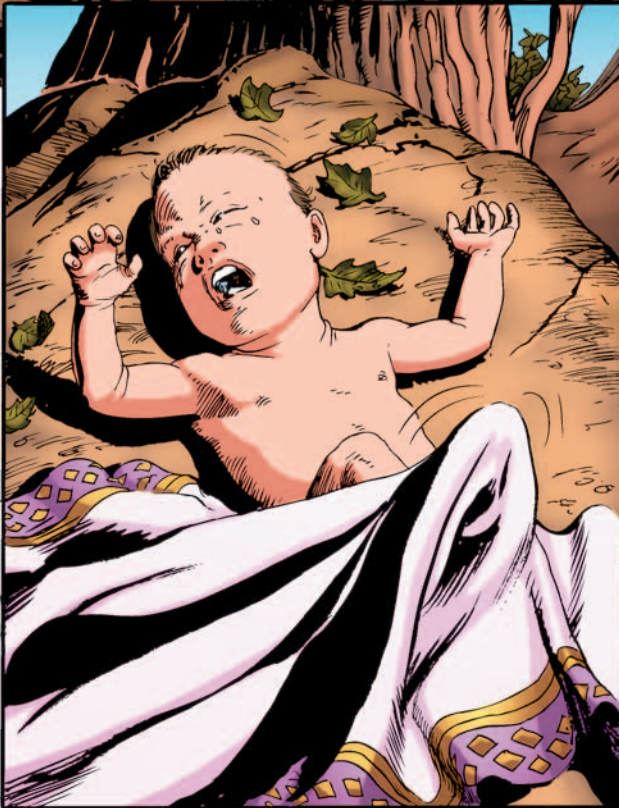
COME, LITTLE
ONE. WE'RE GOING
ON A LONG
TRIP ...



SHE'S
SUCH A
LOVELY
CHILD.

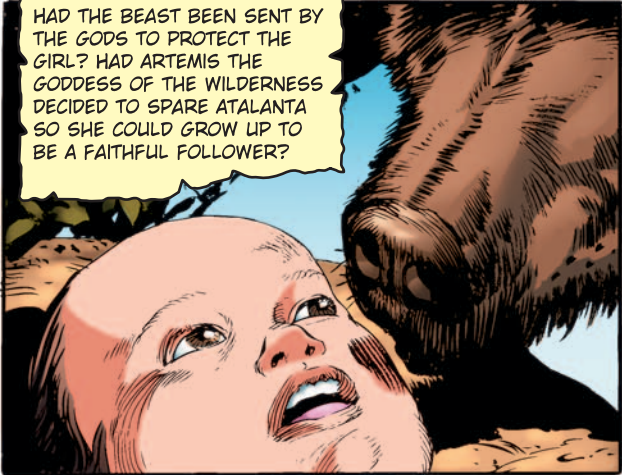
DO WE REALLY
HAVE TO LEAVE HER
ALL ALONE, DOOMED
TO FREEZE OR STARVE
OR GET EATEN BY
WILD ANIMALS?

YOU HEARD
THE KING'S
COMMAND.
BETTER HER
THAN US!

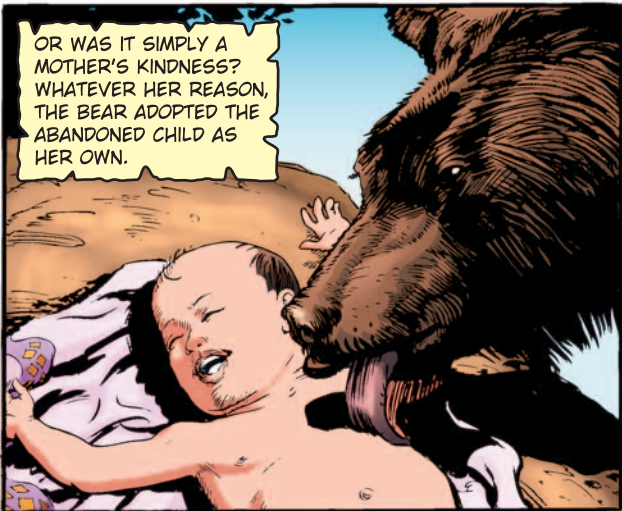




WOULD THE SHE-BEAR TEAR ATALANTA TO PIECES?



HAD THE BEAST BEEN SENT BY THE GODS TO PROTECT THE GIRL? HAD ARTEMIS THE GODDESS OF THE WILDERNESS DECIDED TO SPARE ATALANTA SO SHE COULD GROW UP TO BE A FAITHFUL FOLLOWER?



OR WAS IT SIMPLY A MOTHER'S KINDNESS? WHATEVER HER REASON, THE BEAR ADOPTED THE ABANDONED CHILD AS HER OWN.



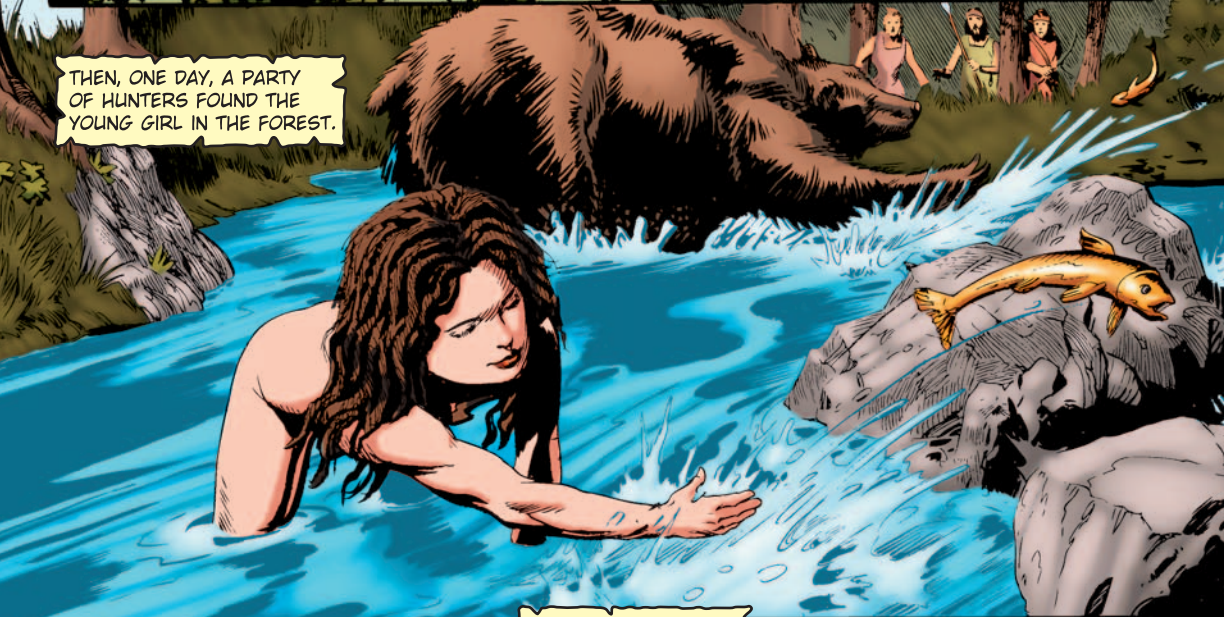
SHE KEPT THE BABY SAFE AND WARM.

FOUND

ATALANTA SPENT THE NEXT FEW YEARS LIVING LIKE A BEAR CUB.

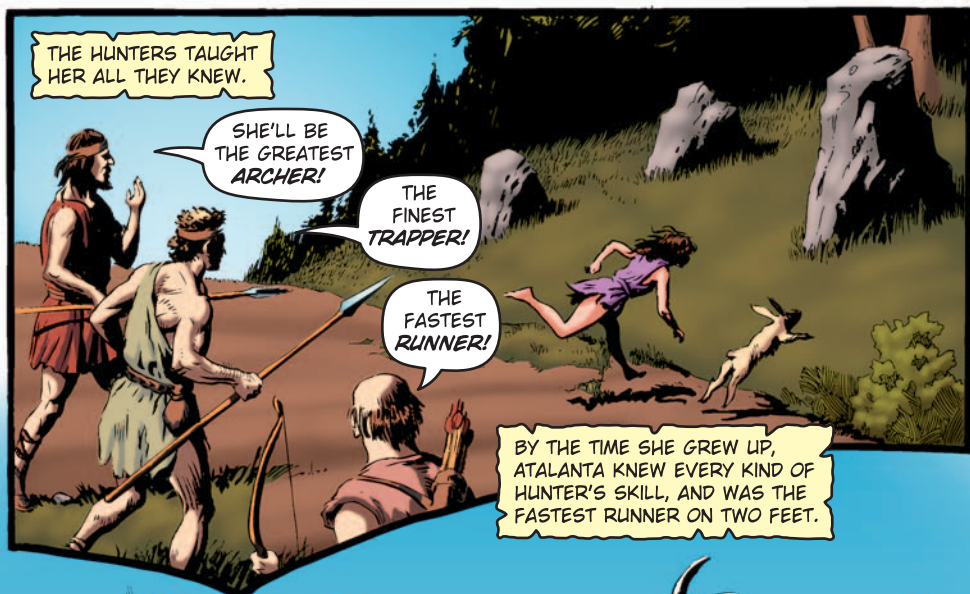


THEN, ONE DAY, A PARTY OF HUNTERS FOUND THE YOUNG GIRL IN THE FOREST.

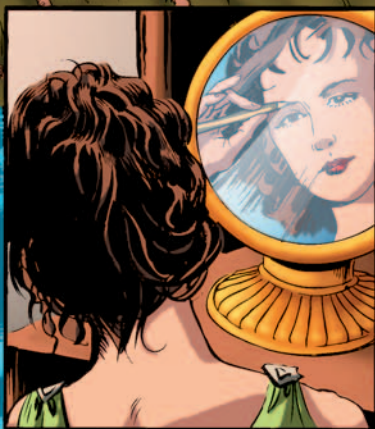


THEY TOOK ATALANTA TO LIVE WITH THEM.

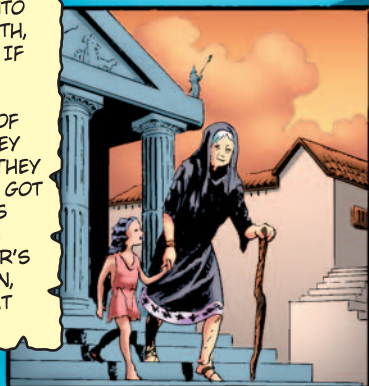




MOST OF THE TIME, ATALANTA WAS TOO BUSY HUNTING OR FISHING TO THINK ABOUT THE FUTURE. BUT SOMETIMES SHE WONDERED IF HER LIFE HAD SOME OTHER PURPOSE ...



OTHER GREEK GIRLS KNEW EXACTLY WHAT THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO DO. THEY LEARNED TO SPIN WOOL INTO THREAD, WEAVE WOOL INTO CLOTH, AND SEW CLOTH INTO CLOTHES. IF THEY WERE FORTUNATE, GIRLS LEARNED HOW TO INSTRUCT SERVANTS IN ALL THE CHORES OF HOUSEKEEPING. OTHERWISE, THEY LEARNED TO COOK AND CLEAN. THEY MADE THEIR HAIR LOOK PRETTY, GOT MARRIED, AND BECAME MOTHERS AND GRANDMOTHERS. AS GIRLS, THEY RARELY LEFT THEIR FATHER'S HOUSE. AND AS MARRIED WOMEN, THEY NEARLY ALWAYS STAYED AT HOME, TOO.



BUT ATALANTA KNEW NOTHING OF SUCH A LIFE. SHE COULD NOT IMAGINE HERSELF WITH A HUSBAND AND HOUSE.

WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO?

WHY ASK US? WE'RE NOT ORACLES.



ANSWERS AND ADVENTURES

THERE WERE MANY ORACLES ALL OVER ANCIENT GREECE. OF THESE, THE MOST FAMOUS WAS THE ORACLE OF APOLLO AT DELPHI. AT DELPHI, PRIESTS AND PRIESTESSES ACCEPTED OFFERINGS FROM THOSE WHO SOUGHT ANSWERS FROM THE ORACLE.



APOLLO'S ORACLE AT DELPHI WAS A PRIESTESS KNOWN AS THE PYTHIA. SHE DRANK SACRED WATER OR BREATHED SPECIAL VAPORS TO GO INTO A TRANCE TO SPEAK WITH THE GOD. BUT THE ORACLE'S REPLIES WERE OFTEN RIDDLES. PEOPLE HAD TO GUESS AT THE MEANING--AND SO THEY OFTEN HEARD WHAT THEY EXPECTED TO HEAR, OR WHAT THEY WANTED TO HEAR.

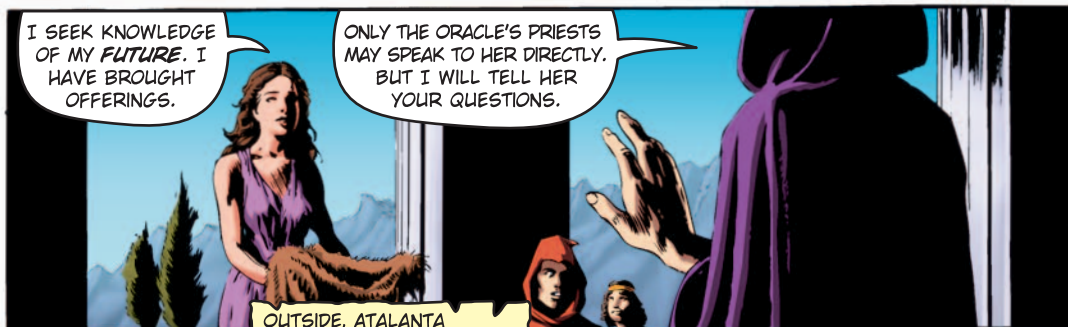
WHAT A BEAUTIFUL PLACE!
NO WONDER PEOPLE
THINK IT'S *HOLY*.

I HOPE
THESE ANIMAL
HIDES WILL DO FOR
AN OFFERING.

MAYBE THE
ORACLE WILL TELL ME
I'M THE CHILD OF A GOD,
LIKE HERCULES! I MIGHT
EVEN HAVE DIVINE
POWERS OR ...

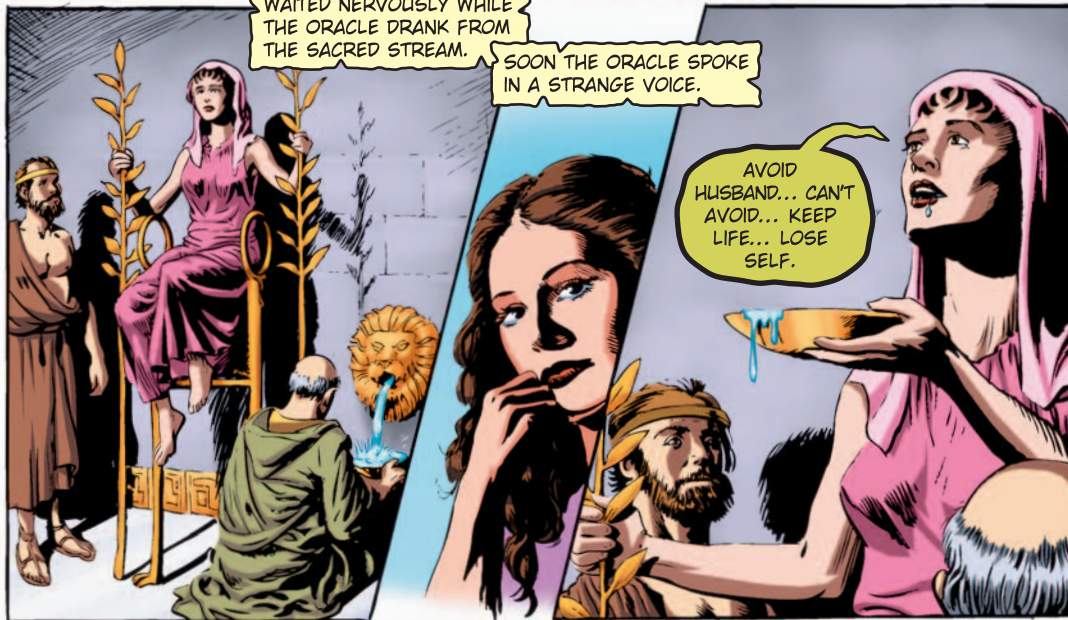
WHAT'S
SHE DOING
HERE?

TSK, TSK!
WOMEN TODAY
JUST DON'T KNOW
THEIR *PLACE*.



I SEEK KNOWLEDGE OF MY **FUTURE**. I HAVE BROUGHT OFFERINGS.

ONLY THE ORACLE'S PRIESTS MAY SPEAK TO HER DIRECTLY. BUT I WILL TELL HER YOUR QUESTIONS.



OUTSIDE, ATALANTA WAITED NERVOUSLY WHILE THE ORACLE DRANK FROM THE SACRED STREAM.

SOON THE ORACLE SPOKE IN A STRANGE VOICE.

AVOID HUSBAND... CAN'T AVOID... KEEP LIFE... LOSE SELF.



WE BELIEVE THE ORACLE WAS TRYING TO WARN YOU NOT TO MARRY.

THE ORACLE SAYS THAT IN **MARRIAGE** YOU WILL **LOSE YOURSELF**.

WHAT DOES **THAT** MEAN?

THAT IS ALL WE CAN TELL YOU.



WELL, THAT WAS CLEAR AS **MUD**. BUT IT CERTAINLY SEEMS THAT AS LONG AS I **DON'T GET MARRIED**, I'LL BE FINE.



SO ATALANTA RETURNED TO THE WOODS TO HUNT AND FISH AS SHE ALWAYS HAD.

WHO NEEDS ROMANCE ANYWAY? I HAVE MY BOW AND ARROWS, MY FAST FEET, AND THE WIND IN MY HAIR!



THEN ONE DAY, ATALANTA RECEIVED AN INVITATION.



TO ALL THE HEROES OF GREECE

PLEASE COME TO CALYDON TO HELP US DEFEAT A WILD BOAR LAYING WASTE TO OUR COUNTRYSIDE. YOUR PRESENCE WILL EARN RICH REWARDS.

MELEAGER
SON OF KING OENEUS



HOW WONDERFUL! A CHANCE TO PROVE MYSELF AS GOOD A HUNTER AS ANY MAN—MAYBE EVEN THE GREATEST IN ALL OF GREECE!



PLEASE TELL PRINCE MELEAGER THAT HE CAN COUNT ON ATALANTA.



ON THE WAY TO CALYDON, ATALANTA WAS IN GOOD COMPANY. MANY OF THOSE WHO FOUGHT THE BOAR WERE FAMOUS HEROES OF LEGEND AND SONG.



JASON LED THE QUEST FOR THE GOLDEN FLEECE ON A GREAT SHIP CALLED THE ARGO.

HIS CREW, CALLED THE ARGONAUTS, INCLUDED SONS OF THE GOD ZEUS HIMSELF: **CASTOR** THE HORSETAMER AND **POLLUX** THE BOXING MASTER ...



THESEUS, WHO SLEW THE MONSTER MINOTAUR ...



NESTOR, WHO LIVED TO BE THE OLDEST HERO OF THE TROJAN WAR ...

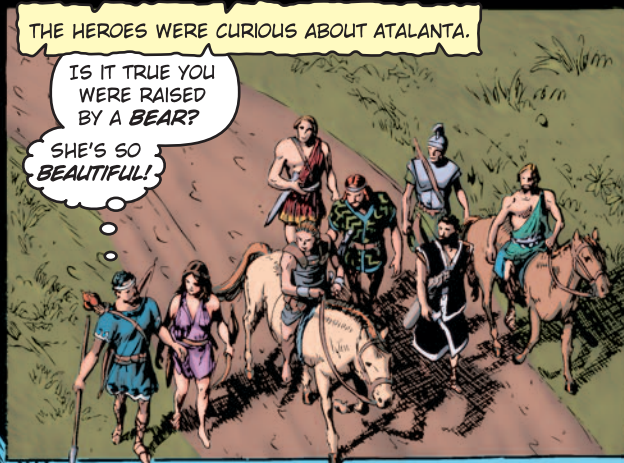


AND TELAMON, WHO FOUGHT BESIDE THE GREATEST OF ALL GREEK HEROES, HERCULES.

THE HEROES WERE CURIOUS ABOUT ATALANTA.

IS IT TRUE YOU WERE RAISED BY A BEAR?

SHE'S SO BEAUTIFUL!



SOME OF THE HEROES DID NOT THINK ATALANTA BELONGED WITH THEM.

YOU CAN'T TELL ME A GIRL CAN HUNT AS WELL AS A MAN!

CAN'T YOU SEE ATALANTA IS DIFFERENT?

Uh oh. THAT LOVESTRUCK LOOK COULD GET ME IN TROUBLE.

SO...LET'S TALK ABOUT THE HUNT. WHAT DO WE KNOW OF THIS BEAST?



THIS IS NO ORDINARY WILD PIG!

THE BOAR IS AS BIG AS A BULL!

WITH BRISTLES AS STIFF AS SPEARS!

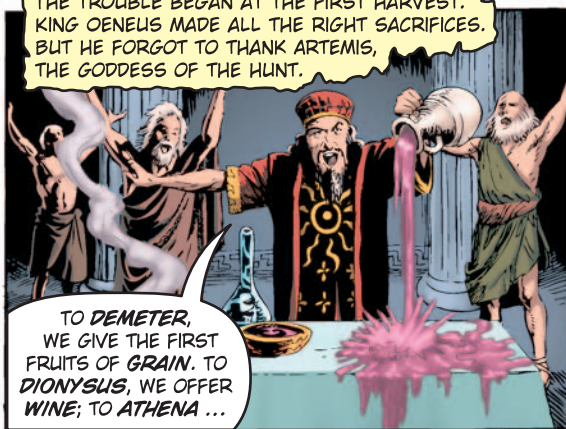
AND TUSKS AS LONG AS AN ELEPHANT'S!

THEY SAY IT WAS SENT BY AN ANGRY GODDESS.

THE TROUBLE BEGAN AT THE FIRST HARVEST. KING OENEUS MADE ALL THE RIGHT SACRIFICES. BUT HE FORGOT TO THANK ARTEMIS, THE GODDESS OF THE HUNT.

INSULT ME AT YOUR PERIL, MORTAL FOOL!

TO DEMETER, WE GIVE THE FIRST FRUITS OF GRAIN. TO DIONYSUS, WE OFFER WINE; TO ATHENA ...



PRINCE MELEAGER FELL IN LOVE
WITH ATALANTA AT FIRST SIGHT.

ATALANTA, HUNTRESS,
AT YOUR SERVICE.

SO THAT'S
THE GIRL WHO
HUNTS LIKE A
MAN. HA!

WE'LL SEE. SHE CERTAINLY
SEEMS TO HAVE STRUCK OUR NEPHEW
WITH EROS'S ARROW OF LOVE!

THE HUNT BEGAN.

SPREAD THE
NETS! RELEASE
THE HOUNDS!

THAT ATALANTA
IS WORSE THAN
USELESS.

HAVING A
GIRL ALONG
PUTS US ALL
IN DANGER.

JUST GIVE
ME A CHANCE
TO SHOW THEM
WHAT I CAN
DO!

SUDDENLY, THE BOAR BURST OUT OF
COVER AND CHARGED THE HUNTERS!

SEVERAL HEROES TRIED TO SPEAR
THE BEAST. BUT THANKS TO ARTEMIS OR
BAD LUCK, THEY MISSED THEIR MARK.

BY ZEUS, I
THOUGHT I
HAD HIM!

THE HUNTERS
QUICKLY BECAME
THE HUNTED.

NESTOR!

LOOK
OUT!

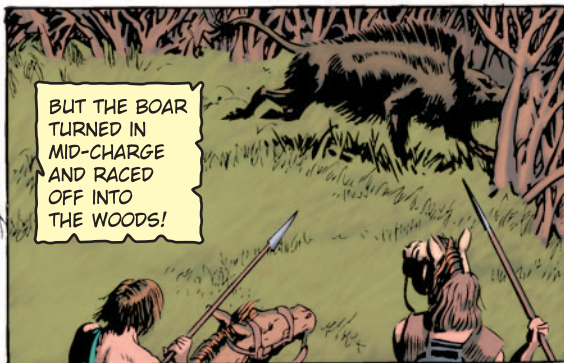
IT'S A
MONSTER!

NESTOR USED HIS SPEAR
TO DODGE THE CHARGING
BEAST.

BUT OTHER HEROES WERE
WOUNDED—AND ONE DIED.



LOOKS LIKE **CASTOR**
AND **POLLUX** ARE GOING
TO END THIS HUNT
RIGHT NOW!



BUT THE BOAR
TURNED IN
MID-CHARGE
AND RACED
OFF INTO
THE WOODS!



THIS
BEAST IS NO
MATCH FOR
MY SPEED!

WHEN ATALANTA HAD
CAUGHT UP TO THE BOAR,
SHE RAISED HER BOW
AND SHOT!



SHE
LOOKS LIKE
A STATUE OF
ARTEMIS!

Ow!
WHO PUT
THAT ROOT
THERE?



THE
CREATURE IS
FAST, TOO!

BUT NOT
AS SWIFT AS
ATALANTA, I'LL
WAGER!



AT LAST, THE CALYDONIAN BOAR WAS DEAD!

HURRAH FOR MELEAGER!

MELEAGER!

WHAT A HUNTER!

WHAT A MAN!



NO-I CAN'T THINK THAT WAY!
I MUST REMEMBER THE ORACLE'S WARNING.



I SHARE MY PRIZE AND MY GLORY WITH YOU, ATALANTA!

WHAT?!?

THE LOVESICK FOOL!

CAN HE DO THAT?

FIRST BLOOD SHOULDN'T GET THE SAME REWARD AS THE KILL.



MELEAGER'S UNCLÉS COULD NOT BEAR TO SEE ATALANTA PROUDLY CARRYING THE TROPHIES OF THE HUNT.

GIVE ME THAT SKIN!

YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO THAT BOAR!

LEAVE HER ALONE! HOW DARE YOU DEFY MY WILL?

I DON'T CARE IF THEY ARE MY MOTHER'S BROTHERS. THEY SHALL NOT INSULT ATALANTA!



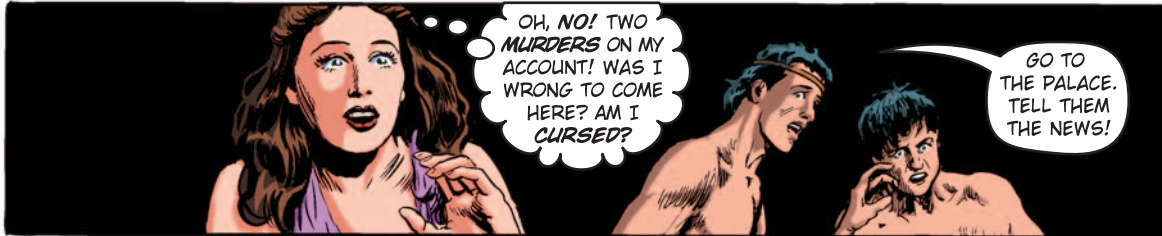


MELEAGER'S RAGE WAS SO QUICK AND SO FIERY THAT HIS UNCLCS WERE DEAD BEFORE HE KNEW WHAT HAD HAPPENED.



BY THE GODS, MELEAGER—WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

I... I DON'T KNOW WHAT CAME OVER ME.

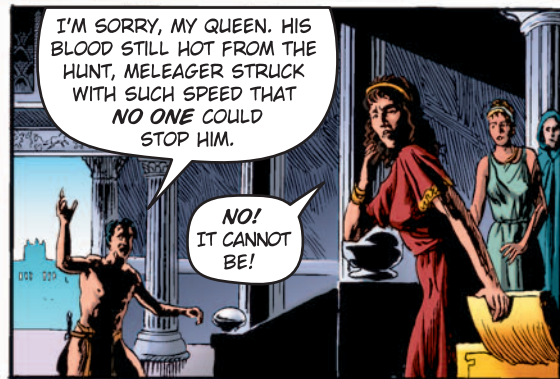


OH, NO! TWO MURDERS ON MY ACCOUNT! WAS I WRONG TO COME HERE? AM I CURSED?

GO TO THE PALACE. TELL THEM THE NEWS!

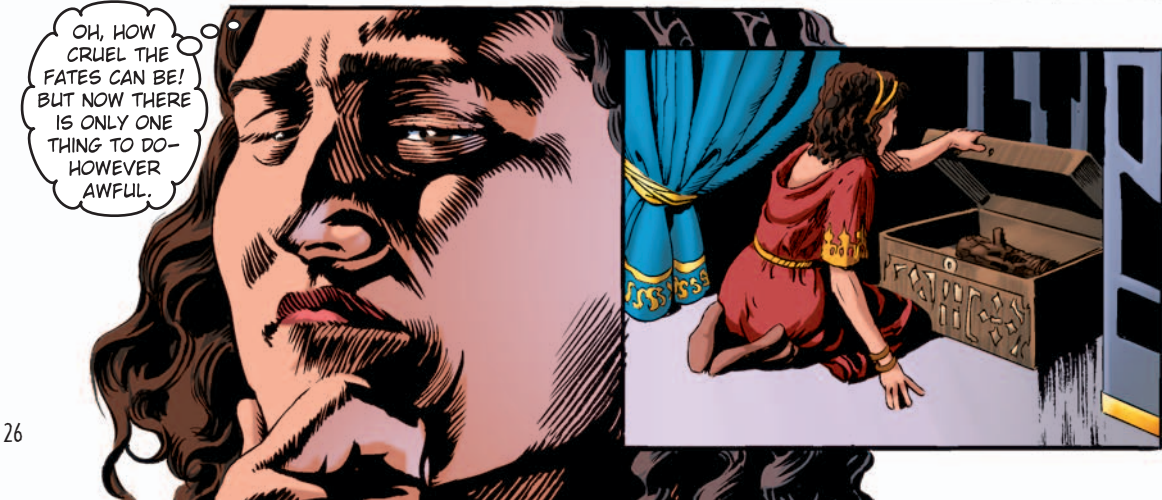


QUEEN ALTHEA, SOMETHING HORRIBLE HAS HAPPENED!



I'M SORRY, MY QUEEN. HIS BLOOD STILL HOT FROM THE HUNT, MELEAGER STRUCK WITH SUCH SPEED THAT NO ONE COULD STOP HIM.

NO! IT CANNOT BE!



OH, HOW CRUEL THE FATES CAN BE! BUT NOW THERE IS ONLY ONE THING TO DO—HOWEVER AWFUL.



YEARS AGO, WHEN HER SON WAS JUST ONE WEEK OLD, ALTHEA HAD SEEN THE THREE FATES SPINNING THE THREAD OF MELEAGER'S LIFE. THE FATES DETERMINED EVERY MORTAL'S DESTINY.

WHEN THIS LOG BURNS OUT, THE SPAN OF HIS LIFE WILL BE ENDED.

POOR, UNFORTUNATE BABE.

SO IT WILL BE. WE DO NOT DECIDE.

WE ONLY SERVE THE NATURAL ORDER. ONCE A MORTAL'S COURSE IS SET, IT CANNOT BE CHANGED.

MELEAGER! I CANNOT LET OUR SON DIE SO YOUNG!

IF THIS LOG NEVER BURNS OUT, MY CHILD WILL LIVE!

ALTHEA HAD KEPT THE LOG HIDDEN FOR YEARS. BUT NOW THAT HER SON WAS A MURDERER ...

CAN I CHEAT DESTINY SO EASILY?

TO AVENGE MY BROTHERS, I MUST KILL MY SON!

AT THAT VERY MOMENT ON THE HUNTING GROUNDS, HORRIBLE PAINS BURNED THROUGH MELEAGER'S BODY.

ARRRGH!!

IN MOMENTS, THE LOG HAD BURNED TO ASH-AND MELEAGER WAS DEAD...

...AND ATALANTA WAS LEFT TO PONDER THE CRUEL MYSTERIES OF THE GODS.

THE RACE OF HER LIFE

THE STORY OF THE CALYDONIAN BOAR HUNT SPREAD ACROSS THE LAND.

A STUNNING MAID, QUICK AS A DEER ... SHE STRUCK THE BOAR BEHIND THE EAR ...

SO DID STORIES ABOUT ATALANTA'S SPEED AND SKILL.

WHEN A DISTANT KING HEARD THE TALE OF A GIRL FOUND ON A MOUNTAINTOP, RAISED BY A BEAR, THEN BY HUNTERS, HE KNEW THE HEROINE MUST BE HIS DAUGHTER.

I MUST MEET THIS ATALANTA.

AS AN INFANT, THE GIRL WAS USELESS. BUT NOW THAT ATALANTA IS BEAUTIFUL AND FAMOUS...



THE TALES ARE TRUE. ATALANTA IS LOVELY TO LOOK AT-YET STRONG AND SWIFT AS A MAN!

THANK YOU FOR RESPONDING TO MY INVITATION.

SO THIS IS THE MAN WHO LEFT ME TO DIE.



I WONDER WHAT HE WANTS NOW?



WELCOME, ATALANTA!

A DAUGHTER LIKE THIS WILL BRING A POWERFUL SON-IN-LAW TO ENRICH MY KINGDOM.

WE HOPE YOU WILL BE HAPPY HERE.



ADJUSTING TO PALACE LIFE WASN'T EASY FOR ATALANTA.



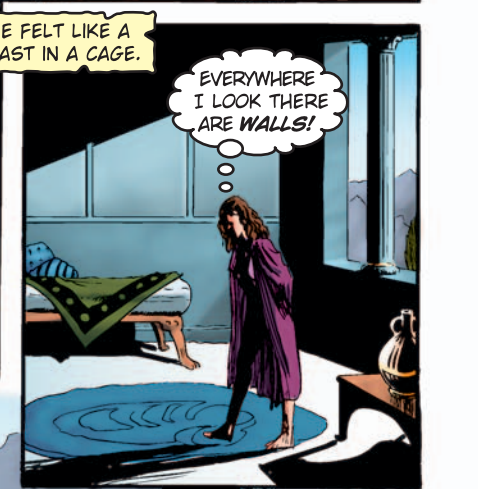
BLURRRP!



SHE MISSED THE FREEDOM OF RUNNING THROUGH THE WOODS AND DRINKING COLD WATER FRESH FROM A SPRING.

OOPS! SORRY!

I DON'T THINK I'LL EVER GET USED TO HAVING SERVANTS.



SHE FELT LIKE A BEAST IN A CAGE.

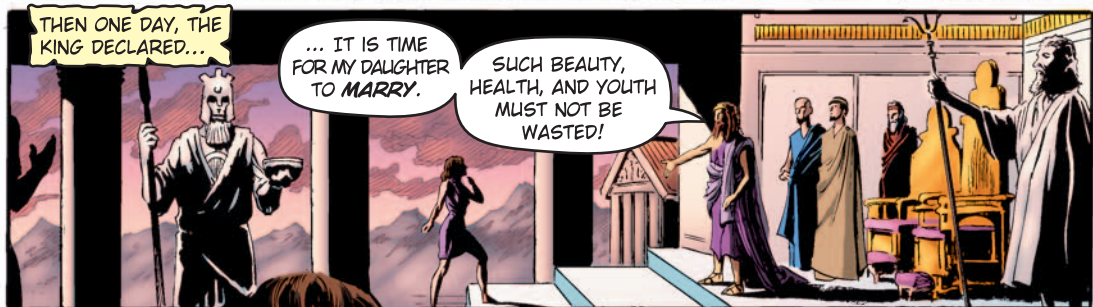
EVERYWHERE I LOOK THERE ARE WALLS!



I MISS THE TREES, THE SKY, THE STARS!



BUT SHE ALWAYS FELT AT HOME ON THE ATHLETIC FIELD.



THEN ONE DAY, THE KING DECLARED...

... IT IS TIME FOR MY DAUGHTER TO MARRY.

SUCH BEAUTY, HEALTH, AND YOUTH MUST NOT BE WASTED!



OH, NO! WHAT ABOUT THE ORACLE'S WARNING?



BUT YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! I CAN'T!

IT IS YOUR DUTY! AND THE SOONER YOU DO IT, THE BETTER. WE'LL START SEEING SUITORS RIGHT AWAY.



I WISH I COULD JUST OULTRUN MY PROBLEMS.



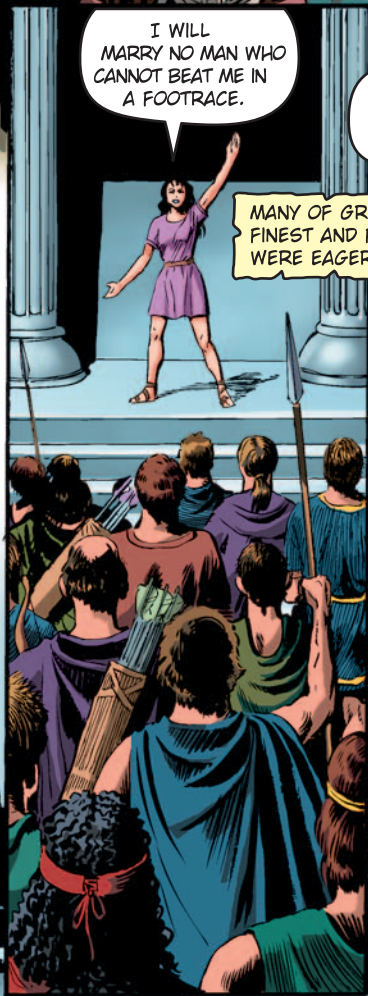
SAY-THAT JUST MIGHT WORK!

AS A PRINCESS, I HAVE THE RIGHT TO REQUIRE A **TEST** OF MY SUITORS.

NOW YOU'RE BEING REASONABLE. NAME YOUR CONTEST.



A CALL WENT OUT ACROSS THE LAND, ANNOUNCING AN UNUSUAL CHANCE TO WIN THE HAND OF ATALANTA. MANY SUITORS, EAGER TO HAVE SUCH A LOVELY AND FAMOUS BRIDE, FLOCKED TO THE KING'S PALACE. BUT THEY HAD LITTLE IDEA WHAT THEY WERE GETTING INTO.



I WILL MARRY NO MAN WHO CANNOT BEAT ME IN A FOOTRACE.

I'D RUN AROUND THE WORLD FOR HER HAND!

WITH ATALANTA THE PRIZE, I'LL RUN FASTER THAN THE WIND!

NOW I WISH I HAD CHOSEN SPRINTING INSTEAD OF WRESTLING.

MANY OF GREECE'S FINEST AND FASTEST WERE EAGER TO TRY.

THIS OUGHT TO DISCOURAGE THEM-AND SPARE MY FEET.

EVERYONE KNEW HOW FAST ATALANTA WAS. BUT SOME STILL CHOSE TO RUN THE DEADLY RACE.

WIN THE RACE AND I WILL BE YOUR WIFE. LOSE IT-AND YOU WILL LOSE YOUR LIFE!

MY LIFE IS NOTHING WITHOUT ATALANTA!

TO LOSE ATALANTA WOULD BE BAD ENOUGH. BUT...

I'D RATHER DIE THAN NOT MARRY ATALANTA!

I GUESS I CAN FIND A SLOWER WIFE.

A HANDSOME YOUNG MAN NAMED *HIPPOMENES* COULD NOT BELIEVE HIS EARS.

THESE MEN
ARE RISKING THEIR
LIVES FOR A CHANCE
TO MARRY SOME
GIRL?

NOT JUST
ANY GIRL-ATALANTA,
THE FASTEST RUNNER
IN THE WORLD!

IS ANY
WOMAN WORTH
SUCH RISK? THAT'S
JUST *SILLY!*

SINCE YOU'RE SO IMPARTIAL, WHY DON'T YOU **JUDGE** THE RACE?

YES,
HIPPOMENES
WILL JUDGE!

AS YOU
WISH. BUT I
STILL THINK THIS
IS THE CRAZIEST
THING I'VE EVER
HEARD.



WHEN HIPPOMENES FINALLY GOT HIS FIRST GLIMPSE OF ATALANTA, HE COULD HARDLY BELIEVE HIS EYES.

SO THAT'S ATALANTA! NOW I SEE WHY THOSE FOOLS ARE RISKING THEIR VERY LIVES FOR LOVE! HER HAIR, HER CHEEKS, HER EYES-I MUST MARRY ATALANTA!



AS SOON AS THE RACE BEGAN, ATALANTA TOOK THE LEAD.



ATALANTA DID NOT DARE LOOK BACK. IF SHE DID, WOULD PITY MAKE HER STUMBLE?

ATALANTA HAD WON. BUT FOR ONCE, THERE WAS NO JOY IN HER VICTORY- ONLY RELIEF THAT SHE WOULD NOT BE FORCED TO MARRY. HER UNLUCKY SUITORS WERE TAKEN TO THEIR DOOM.

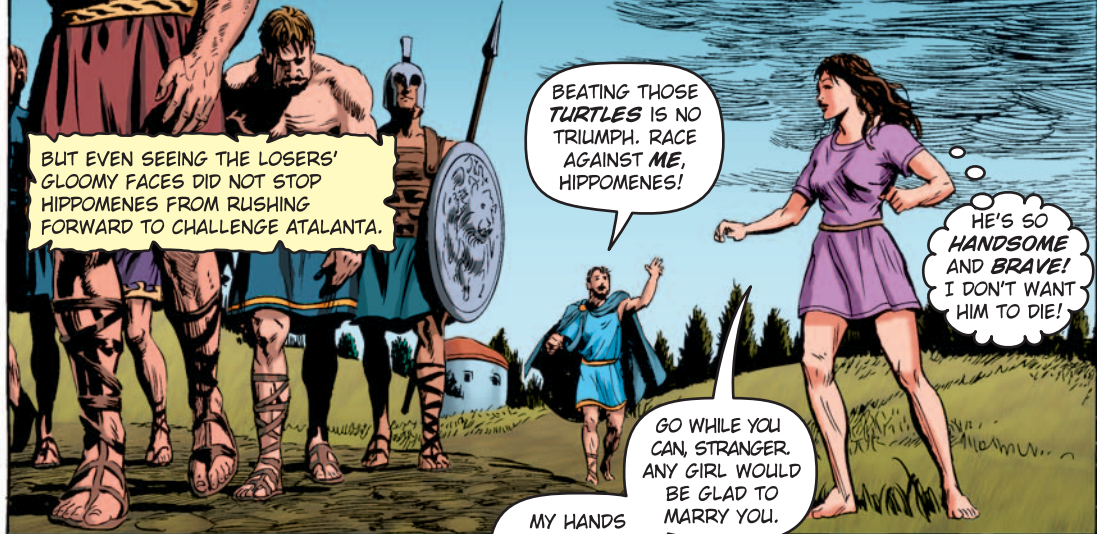


FASTER, FASTER, FASTER!

IT SEEMS MY RACE IS RUN.

ATALANTA!





BUT EVEN SEEING THE LOSERS' GLOOMY FACES DID NOT STOP HIPPOMENES FROM RUSHING FORWARD TO CHALLENGE ATALANTA.

BEATING THOSE **TURTLES** IS NO TRIUMPH. RACE AGAINST **ME**, HIPPOMENES!

HE'S SO **HANDSOME** AND **BRAVE**! I DON'T WANT HIM TO DIE!

GO WHILE YOU CAN, STRANGER. ANY GIRL WOULD BE GLAD TO MARRY YOU.

MY HANDS HAVE TOO MUCH BLOOD ON THEM ALREADY.

BUT HIPPOMENES WOULD NOT BE DISCOURAGED. THOUGH RELUCTANT TO RUN ANOTHER FATAL RACE, ATALANTA AGREED.

TO LOSE TO **ME** WOULD BE NO DISGRACE, PRINCESS. I'M A GREAT-GRANDSON OF THE GOD OF THE SEA HIMSELF. AND IF YOU BEAT ME, YOU'LL **REALLY** HAVE SOMETHING TO **BRAG** ABOUT!

A DESCENDANT OF **POSEIDON**! NO WONDER HE'S SO **GREAT**. WOULD LOSING TO HIM REALLY BE WINNING-OR WOULD WINNING BE LOSING? IF **ONLY** THE FATES WOULD ALLOW ME TO WED!

IF YOU WISH. I ACCEPT YOUR CHALLENGE!

BEFORE THE RACE, HIPPOMENES WENT TO A TEMPLE OF APHRODITE.

O, APHRODITE!
FAVOR ME WITH
VICTORY-AND WITH
ATALANTA'S
LOVE!

LOOK, **EROS**,
MY SON! LOVE BRINGS
ANOTHER PROUD MAN
BEGGING FOR
FAVORS.

THEY ALL
FALL IN THE END.
WHAT IS THIS
ONE'S NAME?

HIPPOMENES.
HE PRAYS FOR
HELP IN COURTING
ATALANTA.

THE WORLD'S
FASTEST WOMAN?
SHE'S QUITE THE
BEAUTY!

YES, SO I'VE HEARD. BUT
THAT DOESN'T PUT HER
ABOVE LOVE.

SHALL I NOTCH
AN ARROW TO WIN
HER HEART FOR
HIM?

THAT MAY NOT BE NECESSARY.
I'LL VISIT HANDSOME HIPPOMENES
AND SEE WHAT I CAN DO.

"AT THE WEST OF THE WORLD, WHERE THE SUN SETS, IS THE GARDEN OF HESPERIDES, PLANTED BY THE ANCIENTS. IN IT GROWS A **GOLDEN APPLE TREE**, GUARDED BY A SLEEPLESS DRAGON. THESE APPLES COME FROM THAT TREE. TOSS THEM DURING THE RACE, AND ATALANTA WILL NOT BE ABLE TO RESIST THEIR BEAUTY. SHE WILL **HAVE** TO STOP TO PICK THEM UP."

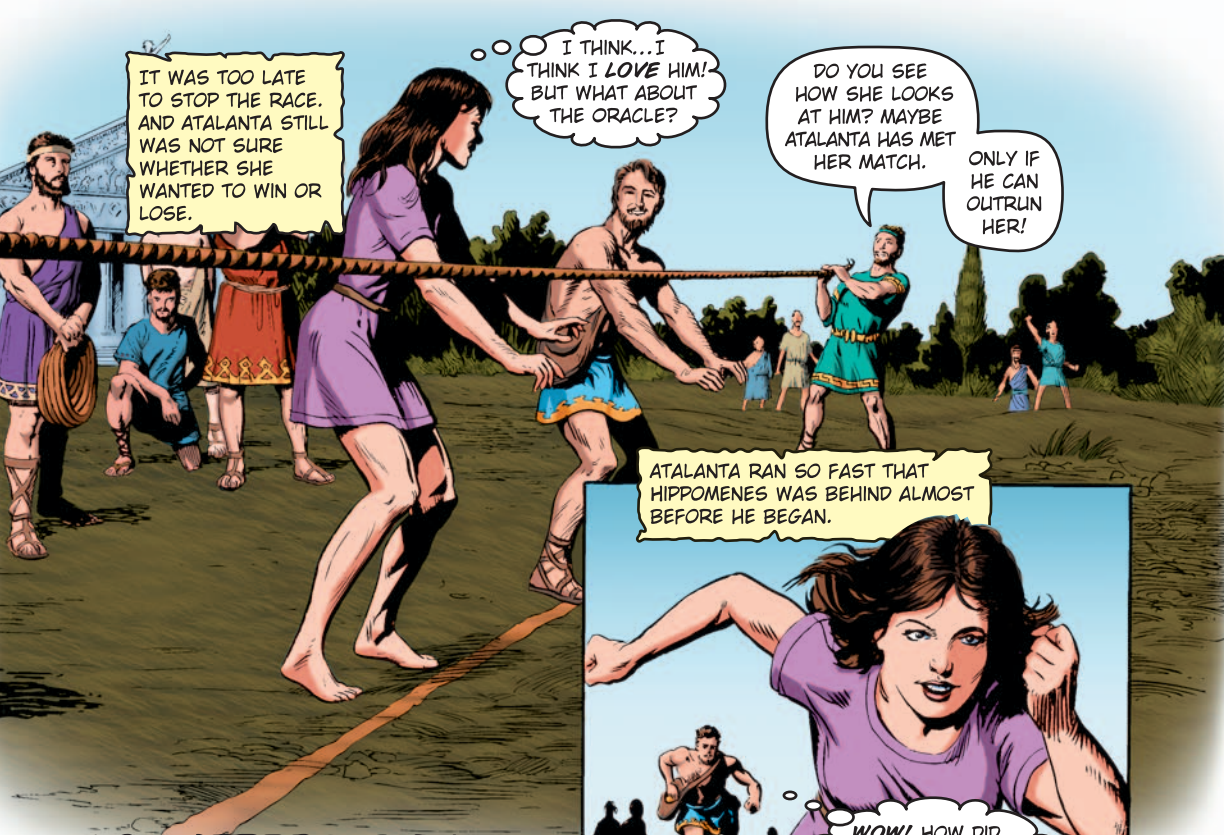
APHRODITE!!

THE GODDESS SOON UNDERSTOOD THE YOUNG LOVER'S PROBLEM. FORTUNATELY, SHE KNEW JUST WHAT TO DO.

DESIRE WILL DISTRACT
YOUR QUICK PREY. NO
MORTAL CAN RESIST
THESE APPLES.

NO WONDER!
THEY'RE SO DIVINELY
BEAUTIFUL!

"THANK YOU,
GODDESS!"



IT WAS TOO LATE TO STOP THE RACE, AND ATALANTA STILL WAS NOT SURE WHETHER SHE WANTED TO WIN OR LOSE.

I THINK... I THINK I LOVE HIM! BUT WHAT ABOUT THE ORACLE?

DO YOU SEE HOW SHE LOOKS AT HIM? MAYBE ATALANTA HAS MET HER MATCH.

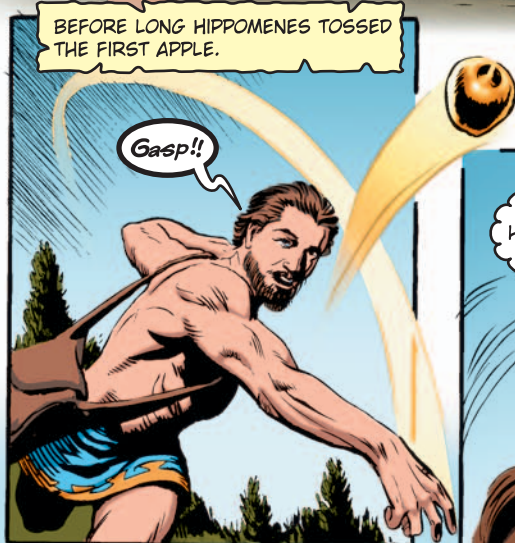
ONLY IF HE CAN OUTRUN HER!

ATALANTA RAN SO FAST THAT HIPPOMENES WAS BEHIND ALMOST BEFORE HE BEGAN.



WOW! HOW DID SHE GET SO FAR AHEAD ALREADY? I ONLY HOPE APHRODITE'S TRICK WILL WORK...

BEFORE LONG HIPPOMENES TOSSED THE FIRST APPLE.



Gasp!!



I MUST HAVE THAT APPLE!

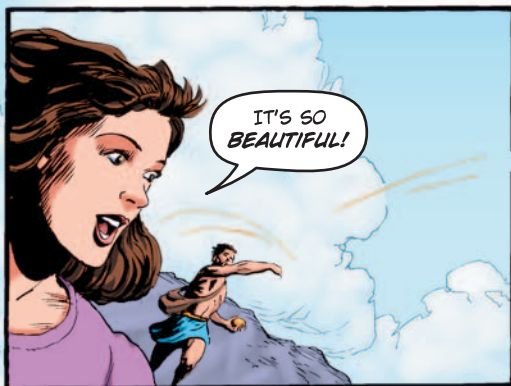
AS ATALANTA STOPPED TO PICK UP THE APPLE, HIPPOMENES RACED AHEAD.



BUT THE BETTER RUNNER
SOON REGAINED HER LEAD.

GASP!
WHEEZE!

TIME TO TOSS
APPLE NUMBER TWO.
I'D BETTER THROW
THIS ONE A LITTLE
FARTHER.



IT'S SO
BEAUTIFUL!



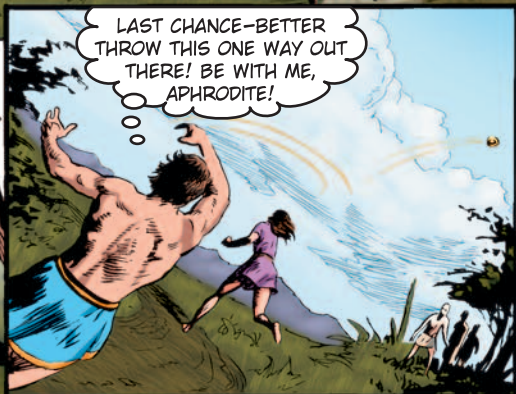
OH, NO!
HE'S GETTING
AHEAD.



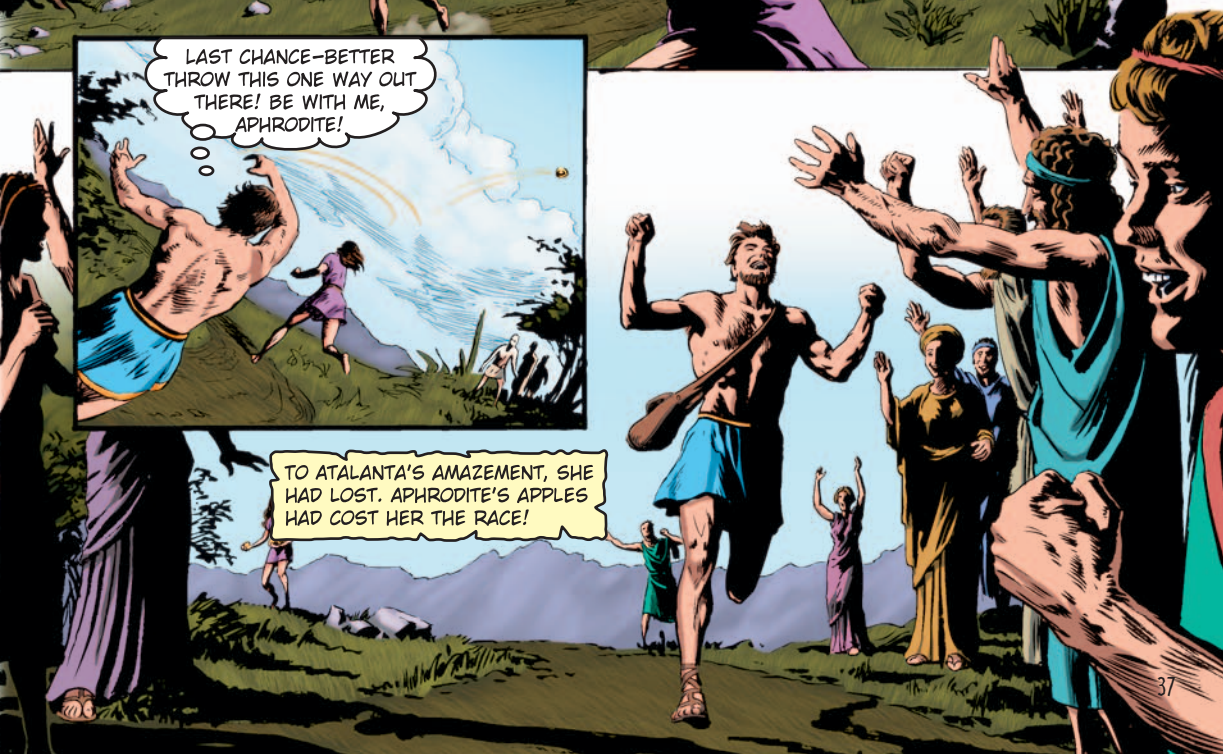
ATALANTA RAN HER HARDEST,
FINALLY SEIZING THE LEAD AGAIN.

FASTER,
FASTER,
FASTER!

HOW
DOES SHE
DO IT?



LAST CHANCE-BETTER
THROW THIS ONE WAY OUT
THERE! BE WITH ME,
APHRODITE!



TO ATALANTA'S AMAZEMENT, SHE
HAD LOST. APHRODITE'S APPLES
HAD COST HER THE RACE!

A BRIDE AFTER ALL

AFTER THE PROPER RITES AND SACRIFICES, ATALANTA AND HIPPOMENES WERE MARRIED.

MAYBE THE ORACLE WAS **WRONG**. OR THE PRIESTS MIXED UP WHAT SHE SAID. MAYBE I CAN BE **HAPPILY MARRIED** AFTER ALL!

I'M SO LUCKY TO HAVE ATALANTA! THE GODS HAVE TRULY SMILED ON ME. BUT I CAN'T SHAKE THE FEELING THAT I'VE **FORGOTTEN** SOMETHING...

AS THE BRIDE'S FATHER, THE KING HOSTED A LARGE, LAVISH BANQUET. ON SPECIAL OCCASIONS LIKE WEDDINGS, GREEK WOMEN LEFT THE SAFETY OF THEIR HOMES. BUT THEY SAT AT SEPARATE TABLES FROM THE MEN.

TO MY BOLD AND BEAUTIFUL **DAUGHTER**, AND MY HANDSOME AND CLEVER SON-IN-LAW.

MAY **HERA** BLESS THEM WITH A HAPPY UNION AND MANY HEALTHY **SONS!**

TO MY NEW FATHER-IN-LAW AND THE FINE TABLE HE SETS!

BUT HIGH ABOVE ON MOUNT OLYMPUS, A CERTAIN GODDESS WAITED FOR SOME WORDS SHE DID NOT HEAR.

UNGRATEFUL MORTAL!
I GO TO THE TROUBLE OF
HELPING, AND WHAT DO I
GET? **NOTHING!** NOT A
PRAYER, NOT A STICK OF
INCENSE, NOT EVEN A
FLOWER FROM EITHER OF
THESE LOVEBIRDS.

I WILL TEACH
HIPPOMENES AND
HIS BRIDE NEVER TO
FORGET THE GODDESS
OF LOVE AGAIN!

OH, BUT THEY
MAKE SUCH A
HANDSOME COUPLE.
AND IT'S NOT REALLY
ATALANTA'S FAULT.
YOU ONLY APPEARED
TO **HIPPOMENES**.

DON'T LET HER
PRETTY FACE FOOL
YOU. THE GIRL MUST
BE **PUNISHED**, TOO.
BUT HOW?

WE COULD
ASK THE OTHER
GODS FOR HELP,
BUT...

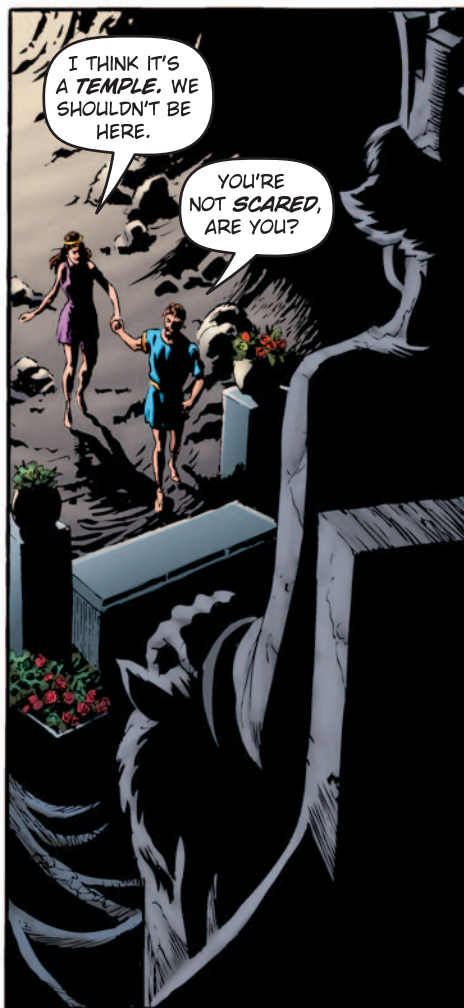
INSTEAD I THINK
I'LL MAKE THE HAPPY
COUPLE COMMIT A CRIME
AGAINST SOMEONE
ZEUS LOVES.

WHO?

I'LL GIVE
YOU A HINT:
SHE WEARS A
HAT LIKE A
TOWER.

ZEUS'S
MOTHER,
RHEA!

NOW THE
QUESTION IS...
HOW TO MAKE
HIPPOMENES AND
HIS BRIDE OFFEND
HER?



THE MIGHTY MOTHER OF ZEUS WAS
NOT PLEASED TO HAVE HER TEMPLE
TREATED LIKE A LOVER'S LANE!

CRUDE
MORTALS! HAVE
YOU NO RESPECT
FOR A SACRED
PLACE?





RHEA CURSED THE UNFORTUNATE COUPLE. SUDDENLY...

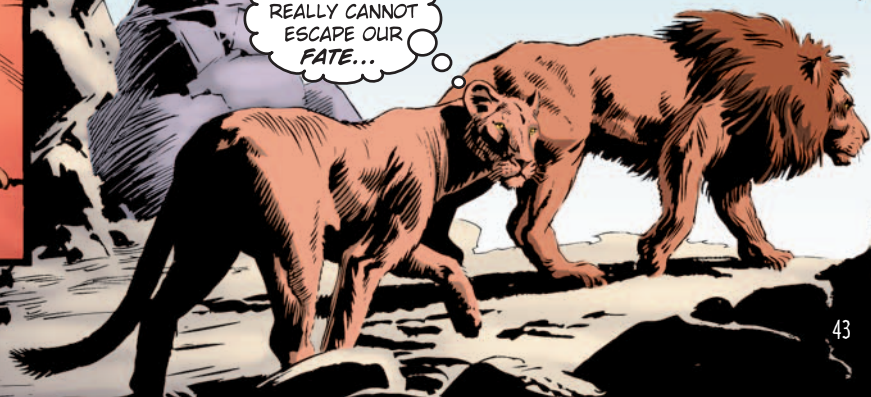




AS THE LAST HUMAN THOUGHTS FADED FROM ATALANTA'S MIND, A TAIL SPROUTED FROM HER SPINE.



PERHAPS WE REALLY CANNOT ESCAPE OUR FATE...



BUT FOR THE RUNNER AND HUNTRESS
RAISED BY A BEAR, PERHAPS BOUNDING
BESIDE HER BELOVED MATE WAS NOT
THE WORST FATE AFTER ALL.

ROARRRR!!



REMEMBER:
NO MATTER HOW
FAST YOU RUN,
YOU CAN'T BEAT
LOVE!

ROARRRR!!

GLOSSARY AND PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

APHRODITE (a-fruh-dye-tee): the Greek goddess of love

APOLLO (uh-pahl-oh): the Greek god of music, poetry, prophecy, and light. Apollo is the twin brother of Artemis.

ARTEMIS (ar-tuh-mis): the Greek goddess of hunting and the wilderness, as well as of childbirth. She is Apollo's twin sister.

ATALANTA (at-uh-lan-tuh): the great huntress of ancient Greece. Atalanta was also a great athlete.

ATHENA (uh-thee-nuh): the Greek goddess of wisdom

CALYDON (ka-luh-dahn): a city in central Greece where Atalanta and many Greek heroes fought the Calydonian boar

DELPHI (del-fy): a city in central Greece where the oracle of the god Apollo is located

EROS (air-ahs): Aphrodite's son and the god of love

FATES: the three goddesses who oversee human fate. Clotho spins the thread that represents a person's life, Lachesis measures it, and Atropos cuts it with her scissors.

HERA (behr-uh): the Greek goddess of marriage and childbirth who is married to Zeus

HIPPOMENES (hih-pahm-uh-nee-z): Atalanta's suitor. During the race for her hand, he tricks her with the golden apples and wins the race against her, after which they are married.

MELEAGER (meh-lee-ay-jur): the son of King Oeneus of Calydon

MOUNT OLYMPUS (oh-lim-pus): the home of the Greek gods and goddesses

ORACLE (obr-uh-kul): in ancient Greece, a priestess or other person through whom the gods were believed to communicate

RHEA (ree-uh): the mother of Zeus and other major gods

ZEUS (zoos): the highest Greek god and the ruler of Mount Olympus

FURTHER READING, WEBSITES, AND MOVIES

Clash of the Titans. DVD. Directed by Desmond Davis. Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 1981. Rereleased 2004. Although this movie does not tell Atalanta's story, it does feature Aphrodite, Zeus, and other gods who affected her fate. It describes the hero Perseus and his quest to kill the Gorgon Medusa.

Day, Nancy. *Tour Travel Guide to Ancient Greece*. Minneapolis: Twenty-First Century Books, 2001. Day prepares readers for a trip back to classical Greece, including which cities to visit, how to get around, what to wear, and how to fit in with the locals.

Encyclopedia of Greek Mythology: Atalanta.

<http://www.mythweb.com/encyc/entries/atalanta.html>

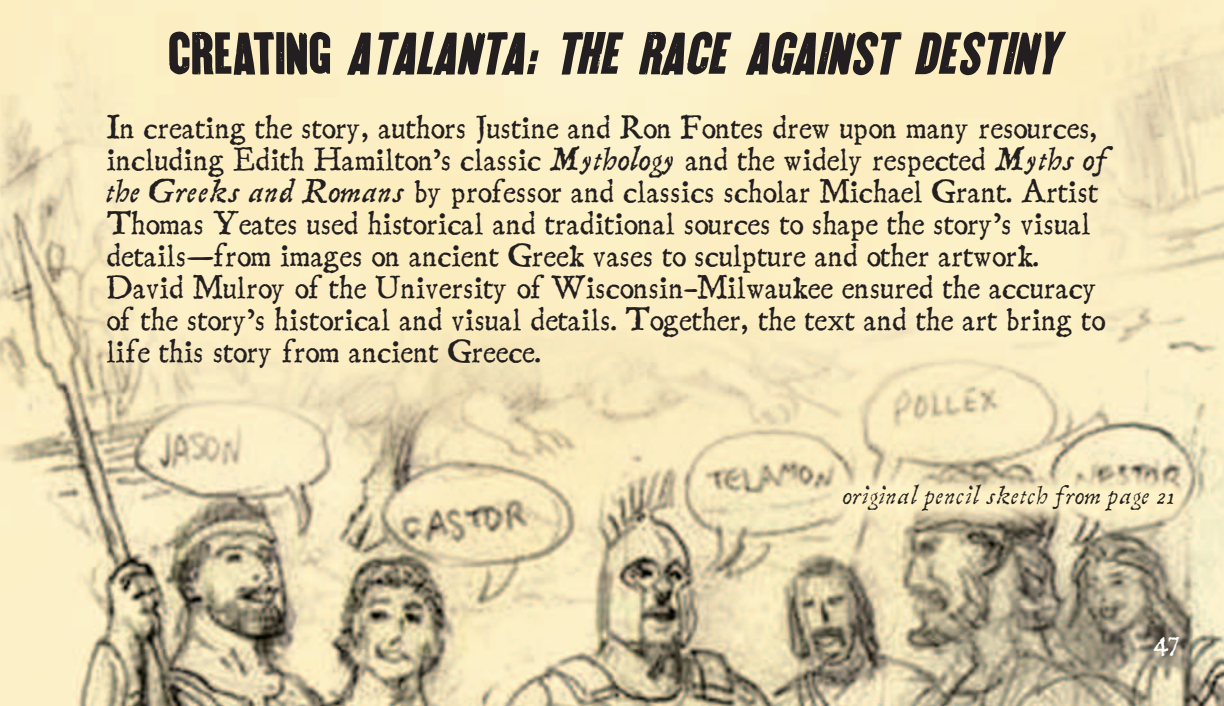
With engaging cartoons and easy-to-read text, this kid-friendly site explores the story of Atalanta and also of many other Greek heroes and heroines.

Macdonald, Fiona. *Gods and Goddesses in the Daily Life of the Ancient Greeks*. New York: Peter Bedrick Books, 2001. Macdonald provides an introduction to the traditions and religious beliefs of the ancient Greeks. Using photographs, illustrations, and detailed diagrams, the book looks at how these beliefs affected daily routines, entertainment and literature, and events such as birth and death.

Spinner, Stephanie. *Quiver*. New York: Knopf, 2002. This short novel is a retelling of the Atalanta myth for young readers.

CREATING ATALANTA: THE RACE AGAINST DESTINY

In creating the story, authors Justine and Ron Fontes drew upon many resources, including Edith Hamilton's classic *Mythology* and the widely respected *Myths of the Greeks and Romans* by professor and classics scholar Michael Grant. Artist Thomas Yeates used historical and traditional sources to shape the story's visual details—from images on ancient Greek vases to sculpture and other artwork. David Mulroy of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee ensured the accuracy of the story's historical and visual details. Together, the text and the art bring to life this story from ancient Greece.



original pencil sketch from page 21

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS AND THE ARTIST

RON AND JUSTINE FONTES met at a publishing house in New York City. Ron worked for the comic book department, and Justine was an editorial assistant in children's books. Together they have written nearly 500 children's books, in every format from board books to historical novels. From their home in Maine, the Fonteses publish *critter news*, a strictly-for-fun newsletter. They also launched Sonic Comics with their first graphic novel *Tales of the Terminal Diner*, a unique anthology with continuing characters. Other published projects include *The Trojan Horse: The Fall of Troy*, *Demeter & Persephone: Spring Held Hostage*, and *The Wooden Sword*. Life-long library lovers, the Fonteses long to write 1,001 books before retiring to read.

THOMAS YEATES began his art training in high school and continued at Utah State University and Sacramento State. Subsequently, he was a member of the first class at Joe Kubert's School, a trade program for aspiring comic book artists in New Jersey. Yeates has worked as an illustrator for DC Comics, Marvel, Dark Horse, and many other companies, drawing Tarzan, Zorro, the Swamp Thing, Timespirits, Captain America, and Conan. For the Graphic Myths and Legends series, he illustrated *King Arthur: Excalibur Unsbeathed* and *Robin Hood: Outlaw of Sherwood Forest*. Yeates lives in northern California with his wife and daughter.