

The Birth and Death of Hercules: What You Don't Know...

There are things in the myth of Hercules that Disney doesn't tell you in their production of "Hercules". If you've seen the movie, you probably think that Hercules had a god for a dad, and in order for Hercules to get back to Mount Olympus, he had to defeat the Titans. Well, Zeus *was* Hercules' dad, and Hercules *did* have to complete a number of tasks to get back to Mount Olympus, although they weren't to defeat the Titans. But you probably don't know that Hercules was driven crazy by Hera during his life on Earth, killing his family, and later being poisoned by his wife, Deianira ("Heracles"). No, he didn't marry Meg from the movie. The real myth of Hercules explains all the details from his birth to his death. The birth and death of Hercules shows many similarities to the births and deaths of other heroes.

For one, Perseus can be related in some ways to Hercules. Although the myth of Perseus isn't exactly like the myth of Hercules, some similarities can be found between the stories. Hercules was born of a mortal woman, Alcmene, and the god, Zeus (Pontikis). That explains why Hera disliked Hercules so much. But Perseus was also the son of Zeus and a mortal woman ("Perseus"). In this way, Hercules and Perseus have similar characteristics. Polydeuces, Castor, and Dionysus are also children of Zeus and various mortal women. All of these figures can be related to Hercules' birth. But there are others that can be compared to his death, also.

The death of Hercules can be compared to other heroes' deaths. Hercules' death wasn't on purpose. Hercules was accidentally poisoned by his wife, Deianira. After rescuing her from Nessus by shooting him with a poisoned arrow, the dying creature told Deianira that its blood would preserve Hercules' love for her. When she feared he was losing interest, she sent him a garment soaked in the blood. When he tried it on, it killed him ("Heracles"). Like Hercules, Theseus was killed by someone that he thought was his friend. For a reason unknown, King Lycomedes threw him off a cliff (Pontikis). Both Hercules and Theseus died similarly, and both were very unexpected deaths. But it wasn't over for Hercules.

The afterlife of Hercules can be compared to other heroes. Hercules, after his death, was endowed with immortality and was able to live on Mount Olympus. Zeus named a constellation after him because of his hard work on Earth (Pontikis). Chiron, like Hercules, became a constellation because of Zeus. He was an immortal Centaur who was wounded badly, and Zeus mercifully ended his misery let him die, keeping a place for him in the stars ("Chiron"). There are other characters that became constellations also. Andromeda, Perseus, and even Pegasus are constellations, along with Hercules.

In Conclusion, Hercules was very much like other gods and heroes. His birth from Zeus and Alcmene can be compared to many of Zeus' children. The death of Hercules is similar to the deaths of other characters in Greek Mythology. Even his life after his death is a lot alike to more heroes. So, many heroes had lives similar to Hercules.

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