

### **Atalanta: The Huntress**

Ahh it's a lion! Wait is that Atalanta? That is how the story of Atalanta ends, but it begins on the side of a mountain. Atalanta was born to an ungrateful father who only wanted a son, so he left Atalanta on the side of a mountain to die. Luckily for her, a mother bear took her in as one of her own. Later she was raised by some hunters. She went on to become a great hunter, and ended up shooting the calydonian boar. She was very fast, and she said she would only marry the man who beat her in a race. Melanion asked Aphrodite for help, and she came up with a plan. Melanion dropped golden apples as he ran, and she stopped to pick them up, so Melanion won the race. They were married, and later offended Zeus, who turned them into lions (Mia Gibson). Atalanta's story is similar to other myths because she is a great hunter, she shoots a monster, and she is punished by the gods for displeasing them.

Atalanta is a great hunter, especially for a woman (or at least that's what all the men thought). They didn't think that women belonged on a hunt, but they had no reason to believe that after seeing her hunt, since she was better than most of them. Another great hunter of Greek mythology is Artemis (also a woman) (Pontikis). Both Artemis and Atalanta love to hunt. Artemis is the goddess of the hunt. Artemis and Atalanta both hunt with a bow and arrows. Artemis also has a twin brother, Apollo, who is yet another great hunter, as you can see there are many great hunters in Greek mythology. Because she was such a great hunter, she hunted many animals. The one that she is most famous for shooting is the calydonian boar.

Like many other Greek heroes, Atalanta shot a great monster. Atalanta shot the calydonian boar, and because of this she is known by some as a hero. She can be compared to many other heroes, because they also killed some pretty impressive monsters. Some of those heroes are Bellerophon (who killed the chimaera), Hercules (who killed a lion, hydra, boar, and many other things), and Perseus (who killed the gorgon Medusa) (Pontikis). There are definite differences in their stories, but the basic idea is the same; there is a hero who defeats the monster. Ironically, at the end of Atalanta's story she becomes a kind of creature that earlier she would have hunted.

Atalanta's story is similar to many others because she displeased the gods, more specifically Zeus, and was punished for it. Zeus didn't like what she and Melanion were doing in his temple, so he turned them into lions (Pontikis "Atalanta"). Another person who was punished by the gods was Prometheus, who stole fire from Zeus and had to get his liver eaten every day by an eagle (Pontikis "Prometheus")! Sisyphus was also punished by Zeus because he told river god Asopus that Zeus had fallen in love with his daughter and carried her away. Asopus was very angry and attacked Zeus. Zeus later

punished Sisyphus for having a big mouth. Sisyphus had to roll a boulder up a hill for all eternity, and it just kept rolling back down again (Pontikis "Sisyphus")!

Overall Atalanta is just your everyday hero who is a great hunter, shoots a monster, and is punished by Zeus. Although her story differs in many ways from other Greek stories, it shows typical ideas of Greek mythology. In my opinion Atalanta is one of the best characters in Greek mythology.

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