



MYTHICAL HEROES

Mythical heroes often come up as tossups and, sometimes, as bonus parts. Here are a few of the most commonly asked heroes with brief descriptions of each.

(Study Guide by Donald Taylor)

Heracles:

- Opposed by Hera through life, in his crib he strangled two serpents she sent after him
- Completed Twelve Labors as penance for murdering **Megara, his first wife**, and their children
- For murdering Iphitus, he served under **Queen Omphale**, during which he dressed as a woman
- Before ascending to Olympus to fight in the Gigantomachy, he **gave Philoctetes his bow and arrows**

Atalanta:

- Landed the initial wound in the **Calydonian Boar hunt**, thus Meleager gave her the pelt
- During the Hunt, killed Hylaeus and Rhaecus for attempting to rape her
- Melanion used the **Golden Apples** to beat her in a footrace, thus winning her hand in marriage
- After having sex in a Temple of **Zeus**, she and Melanion were **turned into lions**

Rama:

- His father's **third wife, Kaikeyi**, utilized a boon to force his exile from Ayodhya
- Through the use of a **golden deer**, his wife **Sita was kidnapped by Ravana** and taken to Lanka
- Bowing to the wishes of his people, he chose to exile Sita, despite her faithfulness
- He fought his **two sons, Kusa and Lava**, until Hanuman in the form of a horse revealed the truth

Jason:

- Sent after the Golden Fleece due to an Oracle warning Pelias to **beware a man wearing one sandal**
- While traveling on the *Argo*, he and his crew **saved Phineas from the Harpies**
- After betraying Medea, she murdered his new fiancée Glauce (sometimes called Creusa), and her father



- Killed by a **fallen timber from the *Argo***, which struck him on the head

Theseus:

- His father Aegeus set a **pair of sandals and a sword under a rock**, to be claimed by his son via Aethra
- **On his journey to Athens**, he turned the tables on six adversaries: Periphetes, Sinis, the Cromyonian Sow, Sciron, Cercyon, and Procrustes
- After sending him after the Marathonian Bull, Medea, the husband of Aegeus, tried to poison him
- On a journey to Hades to capture Persephone, he and his friend Pirithous are **trapped on a magic bench**

Achilles:

- Would be fully immortal, save for his mother Thetis **holding his heel as she bathed him in the Styx**
- **Refused to fight** after Agamemnon took Briseis, but changed his mind after Hector killed Patroclus
- After dragging Hector's body around the walls of Troy, he **allowed Priam to claim the body**
- Paris fired the lucky **shot that hit him in his heel**, Odysseus was given Achilles' divine armor afterwards

Krishna:

- At birth, was **swapped with a daughter of Nanda and Yasoda** in order to escape Kamsa
- As a child, he killed/freed several demons: Putana (killer of infants), Bakasura (crane), Kaliya (serpent, **Krishna is often depicted dancing on its many hoods**)
- Established his superiority over the rain deity Indra by **lifting the Govardhana hill to protect the herders**
- Appears in the *Mahabharata* as Arjuna's charioteer, and in the *Bhagavad Gita* offers advice concerning fighting his own kin

Sir Galahad:

- The only man **allowed to sit in the Siege Perilous**, as he captured the Holy Grail
- Through his father Lancelot, a **descendant of Joseph of Arimathea**. Conceived when Elaine appeared to Lancelot as Guinevere
- Proven to be the destined Grail-capturer by pulling Balin's sword from a block of marble
- After obtaining the grail, healed Pellam, whom Balin wounded with the Lance of Longinus



Roland:

- According to the *Chanson de Roland*, upon sounding his horn Olifant at Roncesvalles, his **head exploded**
- His sword, Durendal, has in its hilt a thread from the Virgin Mary's cloak, a tooth of St. Peter, a hair of St. Denys, and a drop of blood from St. Basil
- Attempting to break Durendal at Roncesvalles **caused the creation of a deep cleft** in the Pyrenees now called the Breche de Roland
- He was betrayed by his stepfather Ganelon, who was **executed for treason by being pulled apart by his limbs**

Cadmus:

- Following Zeus' kidnapping of their sister Europa, he and his brothers Phoenix and Cilix were **ordered by Agenor to not return to Tyros without her.**
- After consulting the Oracle, he was told to **follow a cow**, and found a city (eventually Thebes) where it sat down.
- He killed the serpent that killed his men, and **buried the teeth.** Up sprang soldiers, who attacked each other until five stood.
- After he and his wife Harmonia traveled to Illyria, they were **transformed into serpents.**

