

Atlanta and Hippomenes
By Ada Muffoletto

Characters

Atalanta - The Woman Argonaut

Hippomenes - A Himbo

Schoeneus - King of Boeotia

Aphrodite - Goddess of Love and Beauty

Meleager and Amphiaraus - Two Argonauts Who Drink Their Respect Women Juice

Narrator - The Voice in the Clouds

Scene 1

Narrator: Let us, dear audience, begin by setting the scene. The Argonauts, those famed sailors of the oldest legends, have been called to Calydon because the king royally fucked up. As it goes, King Oeneus got his calendar dates confused and missed an important festival day to Artemis. In retribution for his oversight, she released the fearsome Calydonian Boar upon the land. A massive, terrible beast that ravaged the country and destroyed everything it touched. A company of hunters, the famed Atalanta in their midst, were dispatched into the forest and ended the monster's reign of terror. But, unbeknownst to our heroine, a threat both old and new lurks in the crowd...

Meleager: Make way! Make way! This boar is huge and we need space to lay it down!

Amphiaraus: I'm sure you're all wondering how we accomplished such a feat. Well, let us tell you.

Atalanta: We tracked the terrible beast through the wilderness, keeping keen eyes and ears out for its traces.

Meleager: Though, it wasn't the most difficult of tasks. Destruction is... kinda this boar's thing.

Amphiaraus: Hey, don't downplay our badassery!

Atalanta: Anyway, we were able to corner the beast in a clearing, though killing it was a much more difficult task than tracking it.

Meleager: The Boar proved a most fearsome foe! No spear nor arrow could penetrate its hide. Our chances of victory seemed to diminish by the moment.

Amphiaraus: Until Atalanta, Huntress of Artemis, drew first blood with an arrow straight into the boar's throat!

Atalanta: As the boar screamed in pain and rage, Amphiaraus took swift advantage of its distraction, drew his bow, and struck the beast through the eye!

Meleager: Myself and our other companions, armed with our long spears, took positions in front of the boar, waiting for its inevitable charge.

Amphiaraus: And Meleager, with great strength and resolve, landed the killing blow, impaling the mighty beast on the head of his spear!

Narrator: The gathered crowd begins to cheer for the brave heroes, until one man breaks through the throng and throws off his cloak. He is Schoeneus, King of Boeotia, and he is here on business.

Schoeneus: Yes, yes, we're all very impressed. BUT there are more important matters to attend to.

Atalanta: Dad, really?

Schoeneus: What, you think you could go on a highly publicized boar hunt and think I *wouldn't* track you down?

Atalanta: *sighs* I assume you aren't here to congratulate me on my victory.

Schoeneus: Why in Hades would I do that? No, I'm here on much more important business. It's time for you to get married! Come along now.

Meleager: Hang on. Atalanta, this is your dad? The one that abandoned you on top of a mountain because you weren't a boy?

Atalanta: The very one.

Amphiaraus: Sir, you must not know your daughter very well if you think she'll just obey you.

Schoeneus: Of course she will; she's just a woman.

Meleager: Ew. Just, ew. Do you have any idea what she's accomplished?

Amphiaraus: After you abandoned her, she was nursed by a she-bear and raised by a group of hunters.

Meleager: She killed two asshole centaurs at what, twelve?

Atalanta: Eleven.

Amphiaraus: Even cooler. She proved such a skilled huntress that even Jason the Argonaut couldn't deny her prowess and granted her a place on the Argo.

Meleager: She took wounds during the Battle of Colchis defending the ship, and helped protect the Golden Fleece on the voyage home.

Amphiaraus: We're man enough to say she's outclassed us more times than not.

Meleager: Yeah, so screw your weird patriarchal nonsense. If you want her to go with you, you'll have to go through us, and more importantly you'll have to go through *her*.

Atalanta: Boys, I appreciate it. But I got this. Father, I will return home with you. I will even marry. But only on one condition.

Schoeneus: Are you really in a position to be making demands?

Meleager AND Amphiaraus: YES. SHE IS.

Schoeneus: Ugh, fine. What is it?

Atalanta: Whoever wishes to marry me must first beat me in a footrace.

Schoeneus: HA! What a silly demand. There's no way you can outrun any man I might choose for you. You'll be married before the new moon. Deal!

Narrator: And so, the Argonauts parted ways back to their homelands, with Meleager and Amphiaraus spending the entire trip home debating how long it would take for Schoeneus to deeply regret his sexism.

Scene 2

Narrator: Months later, Schoeneus was deeply regretting his sexism.

Schoeneus: What am I to do?! My rebellious daughter has outrun every eligible bachelor from Ithaca to Ionia! I'm running out of willing lads to challenge her! It's getting harder and harder to convince them to even try. Who *wants* to be emasculated like this?!

Hippomenes: King Schoeneus? I beg an audience.

Schoeneus: Ugh, what is it?

Hippomenes: My name is Hippomenes, son of King Megareus. I'm sorry I haven't come sooner, I was tied up in government business for my father for a long time. Sir, I was with your daughter on the hunt for the Calydonian Boar, and I must say she was most impressive. I found her determination and battle prowess very alluring, and we had such a nice conversation at the feast before. I'd like to race for her hand.

Schoeneus: Oh thank Hera, a willing participant. Yes yes, you can race Atalanta in the morning. Best go rest up and drink lots of water.

Hippomenes: Oh, thank you sir! I won't disappoint you.

Schoeneus: I am *begging* you not to.

Narrator: Hippomenes exits the room. As he walks through the halls of the palace, he hears a strange, alluring music coming from a side hallway. He follows it, finding an old woman playing the Ancient Greek version of a xylophone.

Aphrodite: Come closer, young man. I have a boon to offer.

Hippomenes: A boon? Are... are you a goddess?

Aphrodite: You have good eyes. You won't beat Atalanta on your racing skills alone. She is very competitive and has too much to lose. You must give her a *reason* to let you win.

Narrator: The old woman lays down the xylophone and produces three golden apples from her robes. In the space of a heartbeat, the old woman transforms into a beautiful, eight-foot tall woman: the goddess Aphrodite. Despite her almost overwhelming beauty, this is but a taste of her true form.

Hippomenes: What... what am I to do with these, great goddess?

Aphrodite: Lucky for you, Atalanta likes you too. I'm never wrong about these sorts of things, you know. It's my whole job. But Atalanta is a special case. I can't guide along her love match the way I can for other young women. Her rebelliousness makes her powerful, but also vulnerable. Her physical skill can never be put in doubt. But we *can* play a trick or two to take advantage of her father's sexist attitudes. When you race her tomorrow, throw one of these apples onto the track any time she gets ahead of you. Atalanta will do the rest.

Hippomenes: This seems like a rather strange plan but... you're the goddess here, and it sounds like you and Atalanta have this all figured out. I'll do my part.

Aphrodite: And *that's* why you're one of the good ones. Now I have to run and start bugging Cousin Hera about wedding plans!

Narrator: Aphrodite vanishes in a spray of golden glitter and rose petals.

Hippomenes: Oh thank the gods that's all she asked of me. When she took out those apples, I thought for sure I was gonna be the next Paris!

Narrator: The next day, a crowd gathered along the racetrack to watch the latest race. Men in their tunics, and a surprising number of veiled women who absolutely insisted that they were *not* staying home today. One old lady sat in the shade of a fruit tree.

Schoeneus: Good people of Boeotia! Today we have *sigh* another race between my daughter and a suitor. Today's fresh meat comes all the way from the kingdom of Thebes! The one, the only, Hippomenes!

Narrator: *using 1920s sports announcer voice* The crowd gives a smattering of cheers. The king gives a quick countdown, and the two racers leap from the starting line. They are neck in neck for a few moments before Atalanta begins to make the lead.

Hippomenes: Gotta do it now! Apple, GO!

Narrator: Hippomenes takes one of the golden apples from his tunic and chucks it as hard as he can. It lands a few meters in front of Atalanta. She slows and stops to examine the apple.

Atalanta: *loud and sarcastically* Oh my gods, what a gorgeous apple! My feminine instinct to want shiny things is completely distracting me from whatever I was doing. I'll just have to stand here for a few moments and admire its twinkly beauty.

Narrator: Hippomenes passes Atalanta, and takes advantage of her "distraction" to put on a lead. However, Atalanta breaks her "stupor" and starts running again. They're about halfway down the track when she catches up and begins to pass him.

Hippomenes: Apple Number 2, GO!

Narrator: Hippomenes chucks the second of his apples into the path of Atalanta. Once again, she slows and stops.

Atalanta: Oh, wow, *another* shiny apple! How do these things keep showing up? I don't care, they're *suuuuuuuuuuper* pretty and I just gotta look at them.

Narrator: Once again, Hippomenes passes the stopped huntress. She lets him get just a little bit more of a lead this time before she picks up the pace. They run neck in neck for the last part of the race, until the finish line looms large ahead of them. Atalanta begins to outpace Hippomenes once again. Right before she reaches the finish line, Hippomenes throws the last of his apples. Atalanta does not even bother to be sarcastic this time and cheerfully waves to her suitor as he passes her one last time and crosses the finish line. She goes to meet him.

Atalanta: Nice job, sweetie. You played your part perfectly.

Hippomenes: Whew! That means a lot, honey. For a moment there I thought you were gonna beat me anyway.

Atalanta: And pass up on the chance to marry you? Absolutely not.

Schoeneus: AHA! I knew your silly feminine brain would get the best of you one day! You have to get married now!

Atalanta: Yes, dad, you got me. My silly feminine brain totally fell for Hippomenes' trick. Now I have to go live in his kingdom with their nice wide-open hunting lands and a kind, understanding husband to come home to at night. What a terrible fate. By the way, we're honeymooning in Santorini and you are NOT getting a postcard.

Narrator: And so the happy couple enjoyed their honeymoon and lived a long, happy life together far, far away from King Schoeneus and his chauvinist bullshit.