

## Metamorphosis

Metamorphosis is a key element in Greek mythology. This ability to change shape or form is a major development in the stories of Arachne, Zeus, and Daphne. Almost all of the gods had the power of metamorphosis.

The first story was the one of Arachne. Arachne was a mortal, who was a great weaver. She was the best of all the mortals. She even thought she was as good as one of the gods. Nobody was as good as the gods at anything. She thought she was as good as the god Athene. Athene was the god of arts. When Athene heard Arachne say she was better than her, Athene challenged Arachne to a contest. The winner would choose the loser's punishment. Arachne accepted and went first in the competition. Hers was very beautiful, but she was no match for Athene. Athene was weaving about things that happened to the gods. While the crowd watched Athene, Arachne knew that she had lost, so she went and hung herself. She soon shriveled up and had eight legs. That is how the Greeks explained the way spiders came to be.

Another example of metamorphosis is Zeus. Zeus was the king of all gods. He had probably the most changes in Greek mythology. He was always changing to get a girl to marry him. The most important change was when he got his first wife Hera. Zeus had asked Hera to marry him every year for three hundred years. One stormy night Zeus changed into a pigeon, and flew onto a window seal near Hera. She let what she thought was a helpless little pigeon in through the window. She did not know it was Zeus at the time. Hera petted the bird and told it she loved it. At that time Zeus changed into himself and Hera had to marry him. That made her the queen of all gods. The Greeks believed in having many wives. And the sneaky god Zeus was he had over one hundred wives, none of them were as important as Hera.

Daphne was another example of metamorphosis. Daphne was not one of the gods of the Pantheon. One of the gods from the Pantheon loved her, his name was Apollo. Apollo liked chasing Daphne. Daphne did not like to run, so one day she cried out "please turn me into a tree". Her wish was granted. She was turned into what we know today as the laurel tree. The Greek people wear laurel wreaths as head ornaments even today. This myth had something to do with the naming of our town Daphne.

There are a whole lot more myths that involve metamorphosis. I think Zeus made more changes in shape or form, than any other god. The gods could not appear as themselves in front of mortals. Their beauty would kill the mortals if they saw a god. If somebody poor comes to your door and asks you for food you should give it to them, because it might be a god in disguise.

