



PELOPS

A war started and the gods cast Pelops's father into the deepest abyss of the Underworld and threw Pelops himself out of Olympus. The young man settled in Greece, and even though he was still very young, he decided to get married, choosing the beautiful daughter of king Oenomaus, Hippodamia. But many young men from all over the country desired her hand, and so her father announced that he would give his daughter only to a man that could defeat him in a chariot race. Those who would lose, though, would pay with their lives.

These were the rules of the race: right after the start, the king would first sacrifice a ram to Zeus and only then he would begin pursuing the suitor. If he managed to catch up despite the suitor's head start, he could pierce him with a spear.

The suitors viewed the rules as too easy given the head start and the fact that the king himself was already very weak and very old. One by one, they arrived at the palace, bowed to Hippodamia and asked her father for her hand. The king politely received each one of them, gave them rest and refreshment and had a beautiful chariot with four horses called quadriga readied. After the starting signal with a suitor already on the track, the king would first make for the altar and set off on the race only after sacrificing a ram. But every single time, his

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horses, faster than the wind, caught up with the suitors long before reaching the finish line.

By the time it was Pelops's turn, twelve suitors had already lost their lives. Knowing the fate of his predecessors, Pelops set off for the seashore on the eve of the race where he called on Poseidon, the ruler of all seas: "Oh, mighty god! Please help me beat the king. Give me strength, so that he can never catch up with my chariot and pierce me with his spear. Show me the fastest route and grant me victory."

The water started boiling, a thunder roared and a beautiful golden chariot drawn by four winged horses emerged from the waves. Pelops expressed his thanks and got into the chariot. The divine horses were faster than the wind.

Even though king Oenomaus saw that the new suitor arrived in a golden chariot pulled by divine horses, he did not take fright and gave Pelops a head start just like the other suitors. When he sacrificed a ram to Zeus, he got into his chariot and set off in pursuit after Pelops. The young man was only a stone's throw away from the finish line when Oenomaus finally caught up with him and drew his spear, swinging it to deliver a mortal blow to his opponent. But in that moment, Poseidon, who kept a protective eye over Pelops, appeared out of thin air and intervened. The wheels on the king's chariot tore off at full speed and the quadriga broke into a thousand pieces. Oenomaus could not survive such a terrible fall.

A second later, Pelops crossed the finish line and won his desired bride.