**Sirens**

**What is a siren?**

•A siren is a dangerous creature who lured nearby sailors with enchanting music/singing voices to shipwreck on the rocky coast of their island.

•The origin of the term is contested by scholars. Some think the name comes from a pre-Greek tradition, while others think it ties into Greek words that mean rope/cord and to tie/join/fasten, which would result in a meaning of binder/entangler.

**Appearance**

•They are believed to combine women and birds in various ways.

•Early Greek art depicted them as birds with women’s heads. Later they were depicted as female figures with the legs of birds with or without wings and playing an instrument.

•They were initially depicted as birds because of their beautiful voices, but later their bodies were depicted as beautiful as well.

•Originally they were male and female, but by the 5th century BCE they were only depicted as female..

**Relationships**

•They are related to the primordial sea god, Phorcys, but are sometimes also connect to the river god, Achelous.

•They were also companions to Demeter’s daughter, Persephone.

•In the myths, they competed with the muses.

•Almost no one who heard them sing survived. However, two major mythological figures did: Orpheus (who played his lyre so beautifully that he drowned out their singing), and Odysseus (who tied himself to the mast of his ship, while his crew plugged their ears with wax, so that he couldn’t go to the sound of the sirens).