

Artemis: the Indomitable Spirit in Everywoman

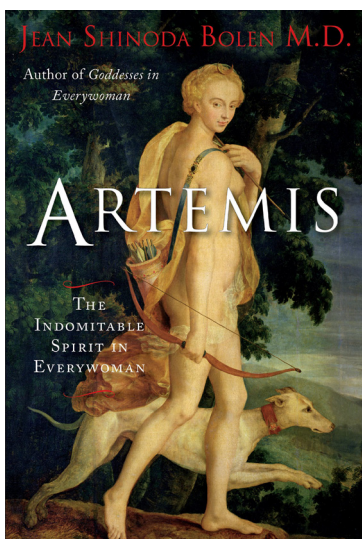
JEAN SHINODA BOLEN, CONARI, 2014

First, historical context — thirty years ago, when the author wrote *Goddesses in Everywoman*, spiritual feminism (feminist spirituality) was on a steep upward flight. Whether we saw Artemis, Athena, Hestia, Hera, Demeter, Persephone, and Aphrodite as goddesses or as archetypes, we wanted to identify with them and live more divine lives. As our high priestess Gloria Steinem wrote in the foreword, “The highest value of [*Goddesses in Everywoman*] lies in the moments of recognition it provides ... moments of ‘Aha!’: that insightful second when we understand and internalize ... [and take] one step further to an understanding of, ‘Yes, that’s why’” (*Goddesses in Everywoman*, p. xi).

So many Goddess books were being published back then; it was the beginning of a great movement. Today we’re seeing fewer such books. This may be because our daughters know more than we did at their age. Bolen opens this new book by defining “indomitable.” It comes from the Latin *in + domitare*: “to tame; incapable of being subdued or tamed” (p. ix). She refers to strong young female heras like Katniss Everdeen in *The Hunger Games* trilogy, or Lisbeth Salander in *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, even — Goddess help us! — Anastasia Steele of *Fifty Shades of Grey*. Back in the olden days, Bolen reminds us, our primary heras was Jo March in *Little Women*, beloved by generations of girls who wanted something more than sappy novels about modest maidens.

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Who is our new *hera*? Bolen says it’s Atalanta, a figure from Greek mythology. She is the newborn daughter of a king who wants a son and orders her to be abandoned in the wilderness to die. The baby is rescued (possibly by Artemis) and brought up by a mother bear. She



grows up strong and beautiful, joins the hunt for the fearsome Calydonian Boar and shoots it in the eye. Prince Meleager then kills it, and they go off into the wilderness to live together, until he is killed. Now Atlanta goes home to her father and says she’ll marry the man who can

beat her in a foot race, which Prince Hipponemenes does by throwing golden apples on the road to distract her. They fall in love. The story of Atalanta is Chapter 1 of Bolen’s new book. Myths like Atalanta’s, she says, “have the power of collective dreams and fascinate us because the themes in them are ours to inhabit or to observe” (p. 12).

Although Conari needs to hire more competent editors (who can, for example spell Boeotia correctly and understand that a *tabula raza* is not a *tabula rasa*), Bolen’s new book is nonetheless worth reading as she relates every aspect of the Atlanta myth and its context to the inner and outer lives of modern women (and some men).

In Chapter 2, she writes about her nights as a Girl Scout camping under the stars. She also writes about the unfortunate habits of patriarchy, one of which is fathers who sell their daughters into marriage. Throughout the book, she tells stories about real women, some of them her patients, others authors like Cheryl Strayed who hiked the Pacific Crest Trail (Bolen wrote the book before Reese Witherspoon made the movie.)

In Chapter 4, “The Hunt for the Calydon Boar,” Bolen describes this famous hunt in the wilderness. Just as Zeus hurled thunderbolts and Poseidon unleashed earthquakes and floods to express their anger, Artemis felt insulted enough to send the huge, ferocious boar to ravage the Greek kingdom. The anger of Artemis happens in modern life, too:

When a woman with a cause becomes so outraged that she is out of control and can’t see that this is damaging both her cause and herself ... she has been taken over by the Calydon boar. She doesn’t care who or what her words or actions hurt. ... [S]he acts as an avenger of injustice. ... She will get even! Her Calydon boar anger grows out of all proportion (p.54).

Scary stuff! Bolen also sees the Boar (metaphorically and Jungially) as a destructive force of nature, which can include deforestation and death and drying. Yes, destruction happens. Like Atalanta after Meleager’s death, we end up in our own private, usually inner, wilderness after disasters crash into our lives. The wilderness is also the opening topic of Chapter 5. It’s the

... metaphoric landscape ... where you are in your life when you are in between one major phase or identity and the next. It’s a time when you make your own way, when you do not know what will come next or how you will change. (p. 69).

Art by
Sid Reger



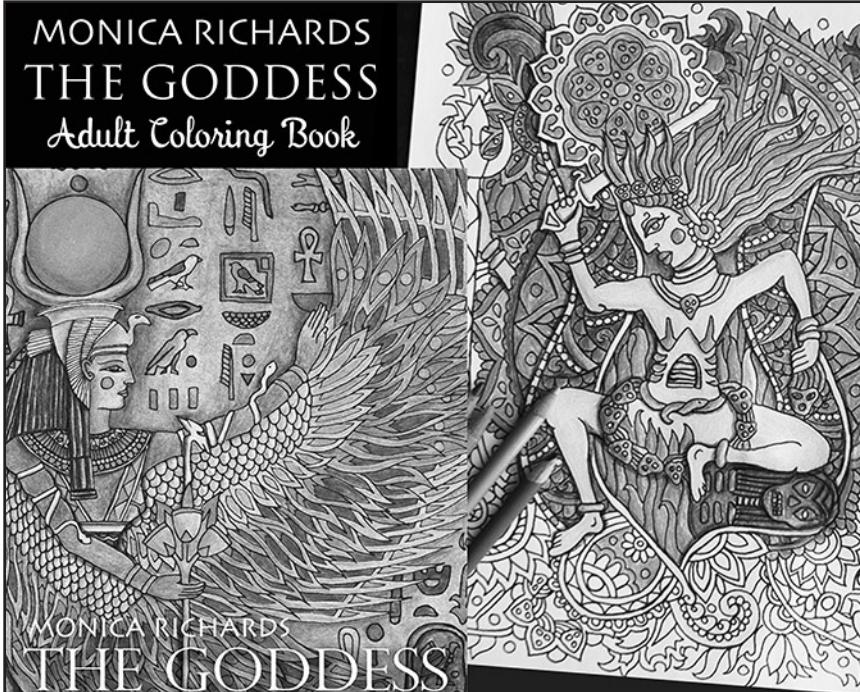
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Bolen uses Chapter 6 and the foot-
race in which Hippomenes throws the
golden apples on the road to distract
Atalanta to write about Artemis-iden-
tified women, and assigns meanings
to each of the three apples. Apple #1
represents “awareness of time passing.”
Apple #2 represents the “awareness
of the importance of love.” Apple #3
represents the “awareness of the urge to
create.” There are psychological les-
sons in all of this, of course, as there are
in the remaining chapters. Chapter 9,
“Free to Be You and Me,” she writes,
“fits the intention of this book. Myths
and stories come most alive when there
is a corresponding active archetype in
us” (p. 183). As in the earlier chapters,
Bolen refers to present-day girls and
women as well as Greek myths to show
how we can indeed find our inner god-
dess and be free to be our best selves.
These are good lessons. **REVIEW BY
BARBARA ARDINGER, PH.D. (WWW.
BARBARAARDINGER.COM)**

*Wild Women, Wild Voices:
Writing from Your Authentic
Wildness*

JUDY REEVES, NEW WORLD, 2015

Judy Reeves is a writer and writ-
ing teacher who has recognized “twin
urges” in women: to reclaim their
authentic nature, and to give it voice. In
*Wild Women, Wild Voices: Writing from
Your Authentic Wildness*, Reeves presents
her most popular writing workshop in
book form. The book is a thoughtful
and inspiring read full of tools to help
women celebrate, heal, and free the wild
woman within. As the author notes:

*Creativity flows through us like blood
in our veins. In our natural state we are
writers, dancers, singers, poets, and makers
of art, even though in our daily lives we
may not practice our art or even acknowl-
edge this part of ourselves... Try as culture,
politics, religion, or families might to
eradicate it, this knowledge of our inner-
most Self— intuitive and rich and wild
— is always with us.*