

THE FURIES

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The Furies

In Greek mythology the Furies are the three goddesses of vengeance:

- 1) **Tisiphone** - the avenger of murder
- 2) **Megaera** - the jealous
- 3) **Alecto** - constant anger

The furies were the daughters of Uranus and Gaea, and were also called the Daughters of the Night. The Erinyes is also another name for the Furies.

The Furies mandate was to punish ALL crime without mercy - this included the breaking of the accepted rules of society. Consequently, the Furies would never stop following criminals and would strike them down with madness.

The crimes that were considered the most serious were patricide or matricide, and the Furies would immediately respond to and punish the perpetrators of this kind of crime.

The Furies were also the guardians of the law when the state had not yet intervened, or when the crime was related to ethics and not to actual law . Consequently, the Furies would protect strangers and beggars, and would punish those who "stole the birds' young". They would even watch over "the birds of the air and the animals of the earth".

The Furies were hideous to behold - they had snakes for hair and blood dripped from their eyes.

Later, the Goddess Athena changed the Furies into the "Eumenides" - protectors of the suppliant - when the Furies had mercifully spared Orestes, who had murdered his mother and his mother's lover.

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