



# Melusine the Serpent Goddess in A. S. Byatt's Possession and Mythology

*Gillian Alban*

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## Melusine the Serpent Goddess in A. S. Byatt's *Possession* and Mythology Gillian Alban

**Gillian Alban** meticulously pursues the Fairy Melusine snake-woman image through the plot and the poetry of A. S. Byatt's novel *Possession*, into medieval legend, and beyond into her antecedents in ancient myth. The book describes the erotically inspiring force of Melusine's love story and draws parallels with goddesses such as Lamia, Ishtar or Inanna, Isis, and Asherah. Mother, creator, and leader, the figure of Melusine was ultimately vilified and tellingly converted into the demon of patriarchal accounts, as seen in the examples of Lilith, Medusa, Scylla, and the serpent in the Garden. Alban deconstructs part of Genesis, including the roles of Adam and Eve and Cain's crime, and illuminates the Old Testament worship of the goddess Asherah alongside the male Yahweh. A forceful exploration of literature, history, and myth, this study sweeps away limiting assumptions about the female sex. *Melusine the Serpent Goddess* restores the dignity acknowledged to women of old, making a forceful statement about the power and creativity of women.

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