

# Greek and Roman Mythology

## Ch4 Cupid and Psyche

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- There was once a king who had three daughters. However, the youngest daughter, **Psyche**, excelled all her sisters.
- As people learned about Psyche's beauty, they all flocked to see her.
- The worship of the actual goddess of beauty was overlooked and **Venus** got mighty pissed.



*Psyche* by William-Adolphe Bouguereau, 1892.



Venus called her winged son [Cupid] and implored him to make Psyche fall in love with “the vilest and most despicable creature.”



Source: Mythology: Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes (p.96)

Author: Edith Hamilton / Publisher: 書林出版有限公司 (Bookman Books Co.)





Unfortunately for Aphrodite, Cupid found Psyche so lovely that himself fell in love with her.

*Cupid and Psyche by Alphonse Legros*



*Psyche's Parents Offering Sacrifice to Apollo* by Luca Giordano, 1692-1702.

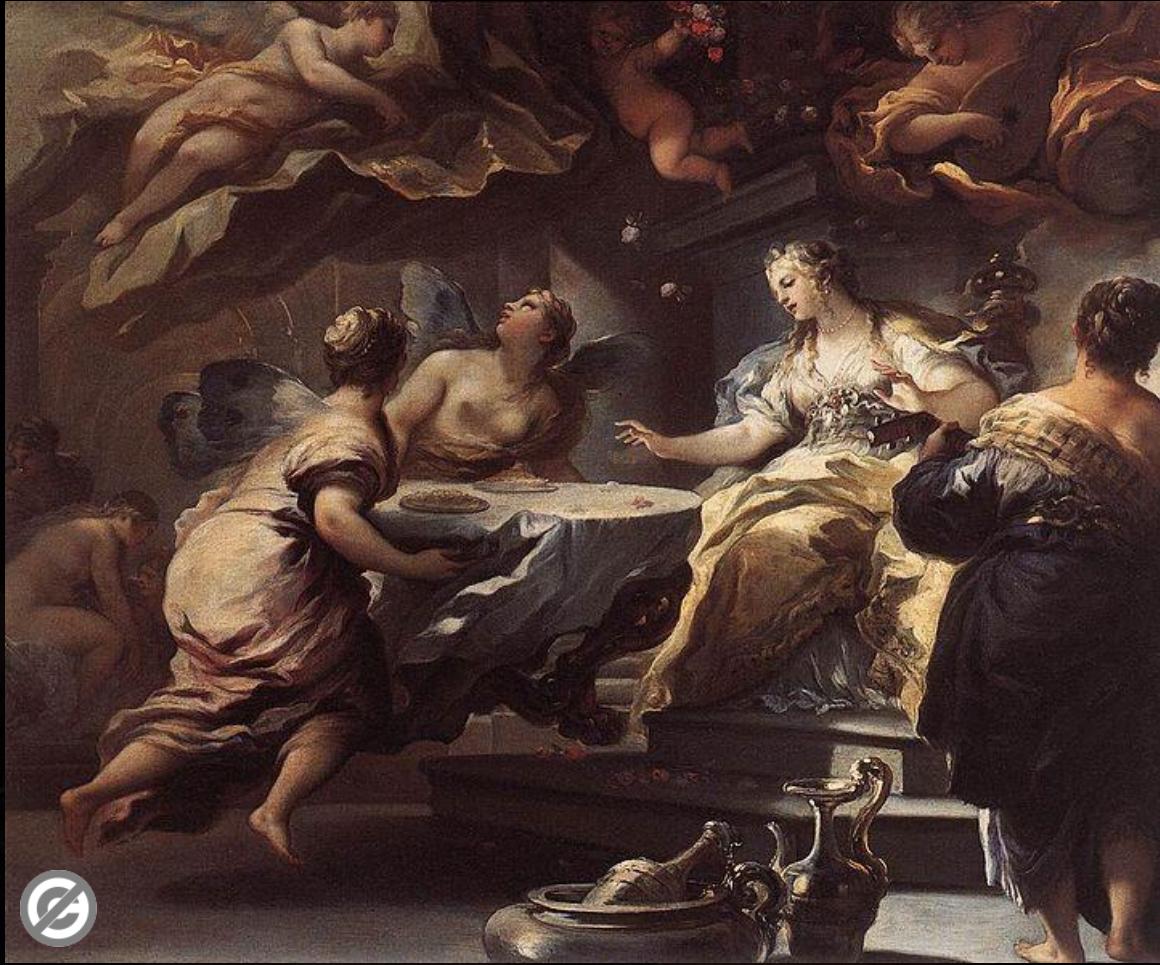
Cupid begged Apollo to help him. The scheme was to give an oracle to let Psyche's family bring her to the summit of a rocky hill by saying that "her destined husband, a fearful winged serpent, stronger than the gods themselves, would come to her and make her his wife."



Source: Mythology: Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes (p.97)

Author: Edith Hamilton / Publisher: 書林出版有限公司 (Bookman Books Co.)

Up on the mountain, Cupid gave Psyche servants, a mansion to live in, and all the gifts; however, he bid Psyche not to steal a glance at him.



Cupid himself always appeared at night and left before sunrise.

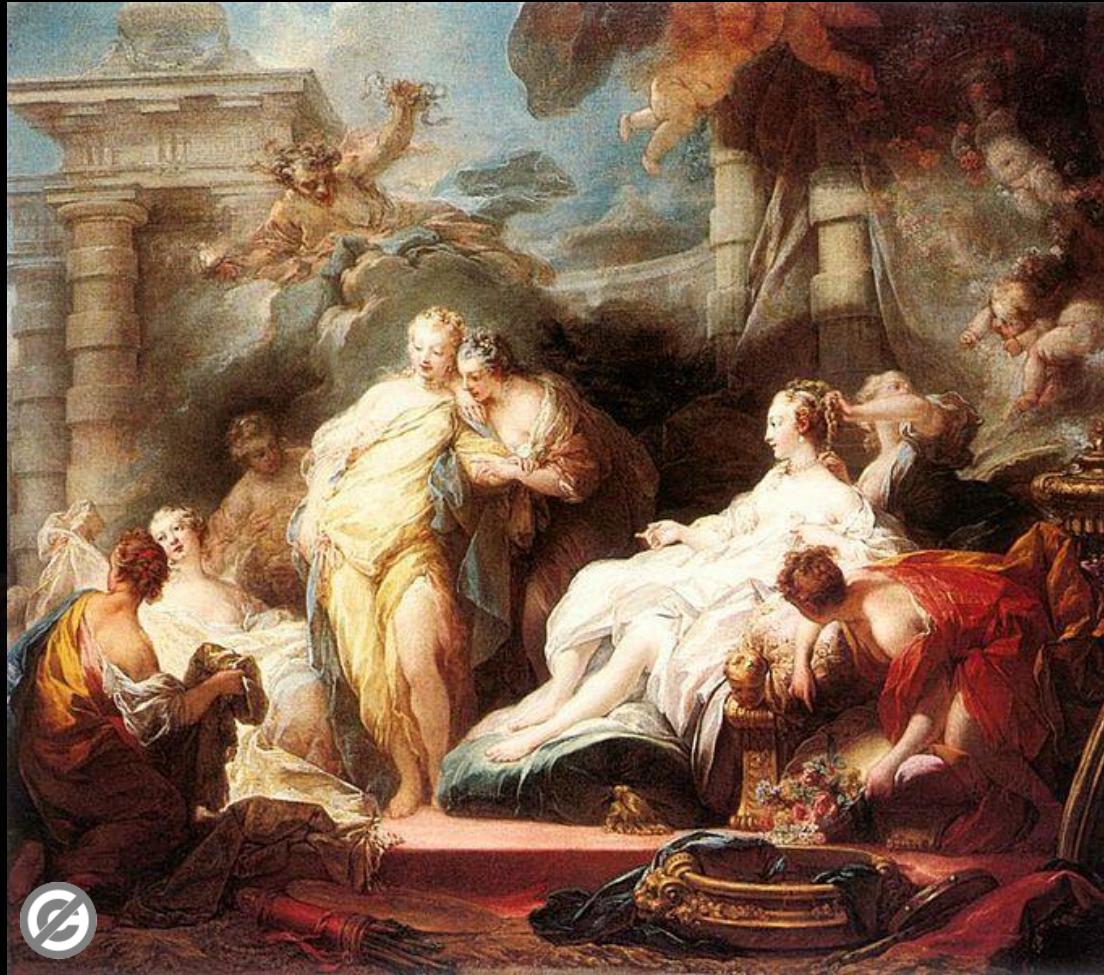
Without seeing her husband, Psyche knew that he was not a monster but a lover she longed for.



*Cupid and Psyche*  
by Jaques-Louis David, 1817.



It was not until Psyche's sisters visited that she was persuaded her to take a look of Cupid.



*Psyche Showing Her Sisters Her Gifts From Eros*  
by Jean-Honoré Fragonard, 1753.



Psyche gazed at the sleeping Cupid.  
Astound at seeing Cupid's pretty  
face Psyche's unsteady hands made  
“some hot oil fall from the lamp  
upon Cupid’s shoulder,” making him  
awake.

Cupid got angry and left as he said  
“love cannot live where there is no  
trust.”



Source: Mythology: Timeless Tales of Gods  
and Heroes (p.100)

Author: Edith Hamilton

Publisher: 書林出版有限公司  
(Bookman Books Co.)



Cupid and Psyche  
Jean-Baptiste Regnault

Psyche found Cupid no where so she had no choice but to go to Venus for help.

Venus hated Psyche, thereby she gave Psyche difficult tasks.



Venus:

“You are so plain and ill-favored a girl that you will never be able to get you a lover except by the most diligent and painful service. I will therefore show my good will to you by training you in such ways.”



Source: Mythology: Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes (p.102)

Author: Edith Hamilton / Publisher: 書林出版有限公司 (Bookman Books Co.)



*Venus Punishing Psyche with a Task*  
by Luca Giordano, 1692-1702.



# Tasks for Psyche

Task 1:

sorted seeds, wheat and poppy and millet and so on.

Task 2:

fetched some shinning wool from sheep with fleeces of gold.

Task 3:

get the black water from the waterfall of river Styx.



# Task 1

Psyche was pitied by the tiniest creature of the world, the little ants.  
The ants helped Psyche to complete her sorting task.





## Task 2

A green reed suggested Psyche that she wait until the fierce sheep rest beside the river. Then, she could gather the shinning wool Venus asked for without risking her life.



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## Task 3

This time her savior was an eagle, who poised on his great wings beside her, seized the flask from her with his beak and brought it back to her full of the black water.

# The last task

Venus asked Psyche to go down to the world of the dead, putting some of Proserpine's beauty into a box and then bringing it back to her.



- But curiosity drove Psyche to open the box...



However, there was nothing in the box but “a deadly languor.”  
The languor took possession of her and Psyche fell into a heavy sleep.



Source: Mythology: Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes (p.104)

Author: Edith Hamilton / Publisher: 書林出版有限公司 (Bookman Books Co.)



# It is a difficult matter to keep LOVE imprisoned...

Venus had locked the door. But Cupid flied out from the windows and started to look for his wife.





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by Karl Hammer

“Cupid was healed of his wound” and found Psyche sleeping in the underworld. (P. 104)

Cupid woke Psyche with a prick from one of his arrows.



Source: Mythology: Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes (p.104)

Author: Edith Hamilton / Publisher: 書林出版有限公司 (Bookman Books Co.)

Cupid pleaded and requested Jupiter earnestly to make Psyche his wife and immortal.

Jupiter: “Even though you have done me great harm in the past – seriously injured my good name and my dignity by making me change myself into a bull and a swan and so on.... However, I cannot refuse you.”



Source: Mythology: Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes (p.104)

Author: Edith Hamilton / Publisher: 書林出版有限公司 (Bookman Books Co.)



*Cupid Pleads with Jupiter* by Raphael,  
1517-18.



The gods gathered on Olympus and consent Cupid and Psyche's marriage. Venus found it "acceptable" as well since Psyche "could not be much on the earth to turn men's heads and interfere with her own worship"



Source: Mythology: Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes (p.104)  
Author: Edith Hamilton  
Publisher: 書林出版有限公司 (Bookman Books Co.)

“So all came to a most happy end. Love and soul (for this is what Psyche means) had sought and, after some trials, found each other; and that union could never be broken.”



Source: Mythology: Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes (p.104)

Author: Edith Hamilton

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The Marriage of Cupid and Psyche by Pompeo Batoni, 1756

# Q&A

- ① Cupid and Psyche's story is a very romantic one. From the story we learn that it is a difficult matter to keep "Love" imprisoned. Please describe the moment you find the most romantic
- ② Compare and contrast stories of love from western and eastern culture, what do you find? Is there any specific feature in love story for either culture?



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