



# Greek and Roman Mythology

## Ch5

### Eight Brief Tales of Lovers

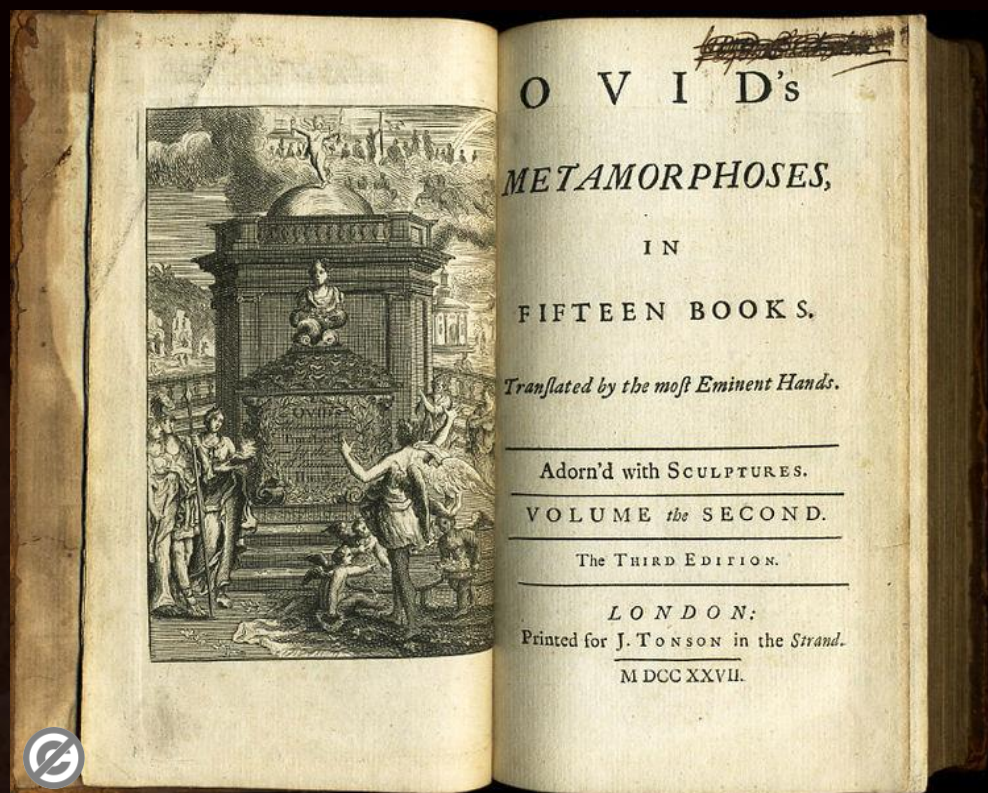
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# Pyramus and Thisbē



They are two ill-fated lovers whose story become also a sentimental romance. The tale is told by Ovid in his *Metamorphoses*.

# Pyramus and Thisbe

They lived in the city of Babylon.  
Their families occupied connected  
houses/walls.

Because of their parents' animosity  
toward each other, they were  
forbidden by their parents to be wed.

Through a crack in one of the  
connected walls, they expressed their  
love for each other.







They arranged to meet near at Ninus' tomb under a **mulberry** tree and stated their feelings for each other.

Thisbe arrived first. However she spotted a lion with a mouth bloody from a recent kill; she flees, leaving behind her veils.

Both Thisbe and Cinderella dropped something on their way fleeing, but the endings for them are totally different.





However, Pyramus mistook Thisbe's death by a lion and committed suicide. When Thisbe found Pyramus died, she killed herself, too.

The gods listen to Thisbe's lament, and forever change the color of the mulberry fruits into the stained color of blood to honor the forbidden love.



# Adaptations of Pyramus and Thisbe



The story of *Pyramus and Thisbe* appears in Giovanni Boccaccio's *On Famous Women* and in his *Decameron* (十日談), in the fifth story on the seventh day, where a desperate housewife falls in love with her neighbor, and communicates with him through a crack on the wall. To attract his neighbor's attention, she drops pieces of stone and straw through the crack.



# Adaptations of Pyramus and Thisbe

## Shakespeare Romeo and Juliet

The "Pyramus and Thisbe" plot appears **twice** in Shakespeare's works. Most famously, the plot of *Romeo and Juliet*, in which the characters, Romeo Montague and Juliet Capulet, fall in love at a party the Capulet family hosts, but they cannot be together because the two families hold “an ancient grudge,” and because Juliet has been engaged by her parents to a man named Paris.





## A Midsummer Night's Dream

The theme of forbidden love is also presented in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (albeit a less tragic and dark representation) in that a girl, Hermia, is not able to marry the man she loves, Lysander, because her father Egeus despises him and wishes for her to marry Demetrius, and meanwhile Hermia and Lysander are confident, Helena, is in love with Demetrius.



# Orpheus and Eurydice



Orpheus was a legendary musician.

He had the ability to charm all things and even stones with his music.





Orpheus' wife, Eurydice, died of a poisonous bite from a snake. In order to bring Eurydice back, Orpheus went down to the Underworld.

His music moved Persephone and Hades and they made a deal to let Orpheus lead Eurydice back.

Overwhelmed by happiness, Orpheus broke the rule with Hades unintentionally. He turned to see Eurydice while she was still in the cavern. Eurydice, thereby, slipped back to the darkness.







In the end, Orpheus' died at the hands of those who could not hear his divine music, the Maenads (followers of Dionysus).

Although dead, Orpheus's head and lyre, still singing mournful songs, floated down the swift Hebrus to the Mediterranean shore.

The lyre was carried to heaven by the Muses, and was placed among the stars. The Muses also gathered up the fragments of his body and buried them below Mount Olympus, where the nightingales sang over his grave.

*Nymphs Finding the Head of Orpheus* by John William Waterhouse





# Ceyx and Alcyone

Ceyx, the son of the morning star was the king of the Greek city, Trachis. He was married to Alcyone, whose father Aeolus was the winds keeper. The two were very much in love.



One day, Ceyx decided to travel across the sea to consult the Delphic Oracle. However, he had only traveled a short distance before a huge storm suddenly erupted over the water.

Not knowing that any harm had befallen upon her husband, Alcyone prayed to Hera to protect Ceyx and to provide him with a quick and safe return home.



# Alcyone



Hera's servant sent Sleep to give Alcyone a vision revealing the sad truth about Ceyx's death at sea.

When Alcyone woke up, she spotted and found Ceyx's body in the sea. She rushed to the water but didn't get drown. Instead, she became a bird.





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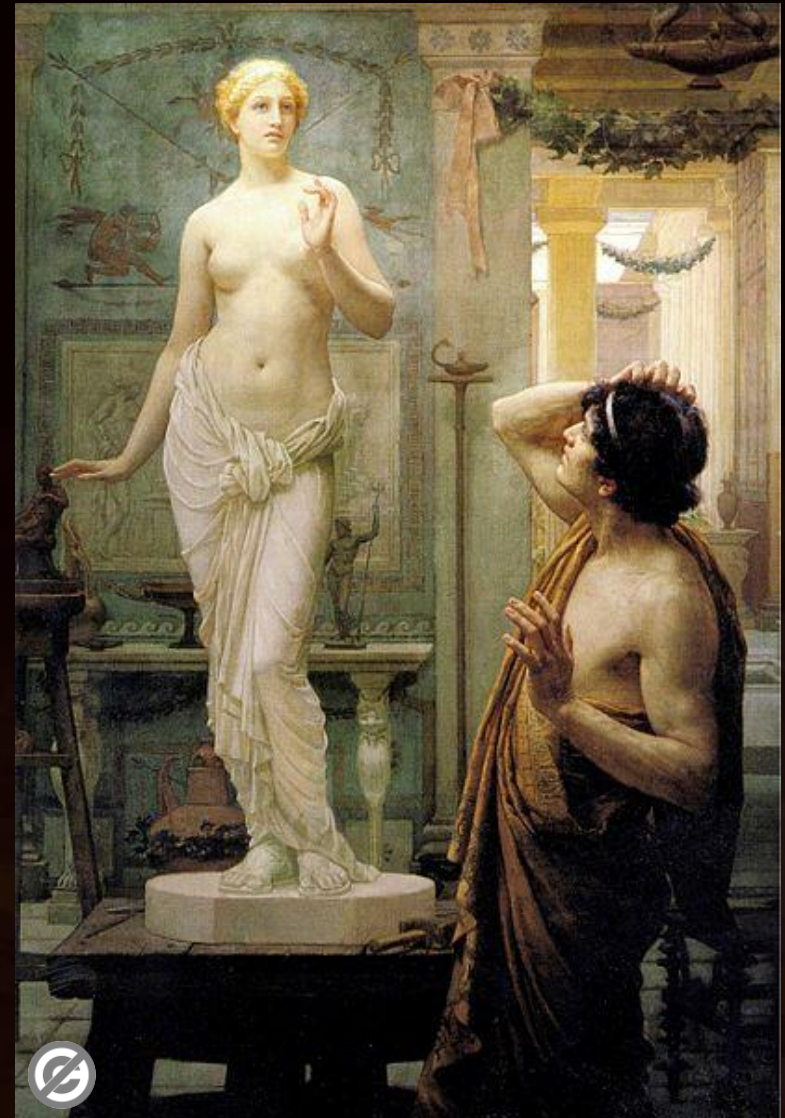
Magically, Ceyx also took on the shape of a bird and united with Alcyone.

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# Pygmalion and Galatea

Pygmalion was a sculptor who fell in love with a statue he had made.

In time, Venus' festival day came, and Pygmalion provided offerings at the altar of Venus. There, too scared to admit his desire, **he quietly wished for a bride who would be "the living likeness of the ivory girl"**.



Source: Mythology: Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes

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



# Pygmalion and Galatea

When he returned home, he kissed his ivory statue and found that its lips warm. He kissed it again, touched its breasts with his hand and found that the ivory had lost its hardness.

It was **Venus** that granted his wish and made Galatea came alive.



# Re-interpretations of Pygmalion and Galatea



A variant of this theme can also be seen in the story of *Pinocchio*, in which a wooden puppet is transformed into a real boy, though in this case the puppet possesses sentience (feelings) prior to its transformation; and it is the puppet and not its creator, the woodcarver Mister Geppetto, who beseeches the miracle.

In the final scene of William Shakespeare's *A Winter's Tale*, a statue of Queen Hermione which comes to life is revealed as Hermione herself, bringing the play to a conclusion of reconciliations.



# Baucis and Philemon



They were an old kind couple who served and helped Zeus and Mercury when they disguised as poor travelers.

When Jupiter was tired of eating ambrosia and drinking nectar up in Olympus and even a little weary of listening to Apollo's lyre and watching the Grace dance, he would come down to earth, disguise himself as a mortal, and his companion was often Mercury.



The two gods, accordingly, took on the appearance of poor travelers and wandered through the land of Phrygia. However, no one accepted and admitted them. Only Baucis and Philemon let them in and take care of the two guests.



“You have been hosts to the gods, and you shall have your reward.  
This wicked country which despises poor stranger swill be bitterly  
punished, but not you.”



Source: Mythology: Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes

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

They then escorted the two out of the hut and told them to look  
around them. All they saw was water.



Surrounded by water, their home had been turned into a pillared temple of whitest marble with a golden roof. And then the gods assented to let Baucis and Philemon be the priests.

When they got very old, they became a linden and a oak respectively grow but entwined.





By making Baucis and Philemon two trees entwined together, Zeus granted their wish to be together forever.





# Endymion

Endymion was a beautiful shepherd who was kissed by the Moon, Selene, and forever in deep sleep.



It is said that this magic slumber the Moon's doing. She lulled him to sleep so that she might always find him and caress him whenever she pleased.





# Daphne

Daphne was an independent young female hunter. River-god Peneus' daughter.



At the first sight, Apollo fell in love with her. While Daphne knew that girls loved by gods would confront misfortune, she turned to her father for help as Apollo pursued her. The River-god, Peneus, turned her into a laurel.

After Daphne's being turned into a laurel, Apollo mourned:

“O fairest of maidens, you are lost to me. But at least you shall be my tree. Wish your leaves my victors shall wreath their brows. You shall have your part in all my triumphs. Apollo and his laurel shall be joined together wherever songs are sung and stories told.”



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# Alpheus and Arethusa



Arethusa was a beautiful young hunter, one of Artemis' followers. She was loved by the god of river, Alpheus.



However, she didn't want to accept Alpheus. She turned to Artemis for help and she changed her into a spring of water in the end.



But the god of river changed back to a river and followed her through the tunnel and now his water mingles with hers in the fountain.



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# Q & A













- ① By what kind of plant does Apollo wear on him in memory of his first love, Daphne?
- ② Which love story introduced in this class appealed to you the most and why? Please share your ideas with your classmates.



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