

## Myth of the Week #1-Pygmalion

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**READ CLOSELY AND SHOW EVIDENCE OF THINKING BY ANNOTATING.** Annotate all readings by highlighting the main idea in **yellow**; the best evidence supporting in **blue**, and any interesting phrases in **green**.

# PYGMALION

by Ovid, translated by Anthony S. Kline<sup>1</sup> A.D.

Pygmalion had seen them, spending their lives in wickedness, and, offended by the failings that nature gave the female heart, he lived as a bachelor, without a wife or partner for his bed. But, with wonderful skill, he carved a figure, brilliantly, out of snow-white ivory, no mortal woman, and fell in love with his own creation. The features are those of a real girl, who, you might think, lived, and wished to move, if modesty did not forbid it. Indeed, art hides his art. He marvels: and passion, for this bodily image, consumes his heart. Often, he runs his hands over the work, tempted as to whether it is flesh or ivory, not admitting it to be ivory. He kisses it and thinks his kisses are returned; and speaks to it; and holds it, and imagines that his fingers press into the limbs, and is afraid lest bruises appear from the pressure. Now he addresses it with compliments, now brings gifts that please girls, shells and polished pebbles, little birds, and many-colored flowers, lilies and tinted beads, and the Heliades's <sup>1</sup>amber tears that drip from the trees. He dresses the body, also, in clothing; places rings on the fingers; places a long necklace round its neck; pearls hang from the ears, and cinctures <sup>2</sup>round the breasts. All are fitting: but it appears no less lovely, naked. He arranges the statue on a bed on which cloths dyed with Tyrian murex <sup>3</sup>are spread, and calls it his bedfellow, and rests its neck against soft down, as if it could feel.

The day of Venus's <sup>4</sup>festival came, celebrated throughout Cyprus, <sup>5</sup>and heifers, their curved horns gilded, fell, to the blow on their snowy neck. The incense was smoking, when Pygmalion, having made his offering, stood by the altar, and said, shyly: "If you can grant all things, you gods, I wish as a bride to have..." and not daring to say "the girl of ivory" he said "one like my ivory girl." Golden Venus, for she herself was present at the festival, knew what the prayer meant, and as a sign of the gods' fondness for him, the flame flared three times, and shook its crown in the air. When he returned, he sought out the image of his girl, and leaning over the couch, kissed her. She felt warm: he pressed his lips to her again. The ivory yielded to his touch, and lost its hardness, altering under his fingers, as the bees' wax of Hymettus <sup>6</sup>softens in the sun, and is molded, under the thumb, into

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many forms, made usable by use. The lover is stupefied,<sup>7</sup> and joyful, but uncertain, and afraid he is wrong, reaffirms the fulfillment of his wishes, with his hand, again, and again.

It was flesh! The pulse throbbed under his thumb. Then the hero of Paphos,<sup>8</sup> was indeed overfull of words with which to thank Venus, and still pressed his mouth against a mouth that was not merely a likeness. The girl felt the kisses he gave, blushed, and, raising her bashful eyes to the light, saw both her lover and the sky. The goddess attended the marriage that she had brought about, and when the moon's horns had nine times met at full, the woman bore a son, Paphos, from whom the island takes its name..

## Notes

1. The daughters of Helios and the Oceanid Clymene, the Heliades were turned into poplar trees and their tears into amber after the death of their brother.
2. a belt or a sash of cloth
3. a luxurious purple dye harvested from sea snails
4. the Roman name for the Goddess of Love
5. an eastern Mediterranean island
6. a mountain range in Greece
7. Stupefied (*adjective*) : shocked or astonished
8. a coastal city in Cyprus

**WRITE A REFLECTION (3 paragraphs)-This needs to be submitted through google classroom.**

**One paragraph that reflects on what the writer said**

- **Here's where you summarize the main points of the story**

**One paragraph that reflects on the writer's style**

- **How does the author use rhetorical devices (similes, metaphors, symbols etc.)**
- **What is the theme/author's message**

**One paragraph that reflects the reader's thoughts on the content of the Story**

- **Here's where you can discuss your reaction to the story, did it speak to you? Did you like it, why or why not?**