

## Myth #11 Trials of Psyche

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.**

### The Trials of Psyche

#### First Task: Sorting Out a Heap of Grains

Aphrodite took a great quantity of “wheat, barley, millet, poppy seed, peas, lentils, and beans, and mingled them all together in a heap.” Psyche’s task was to sort out the seeds into separate heaps within a single day. Not knowing even where to begin, Psyche started crying. Fortunately, an ant heard her and felt sorry for her; so, she quickly rounded up all the ants of the country, and they all came, helping Psyche finish the job just in time.

#### Second Task: Gathering Golden Wool

Next, Aphrodite tasked Psyche with gathering the golden wool from a nearby flock of murderous sheep with sharp horns. This time, a divinely inspired green reed advised her, through the sounds of a gracious melody, to wait until the sheep fall asleep in the heat of the afternoon, and only then gather the locks of their golden fleeces hanging upon the nearby briar bushes. Psyche followed the advice and brought Aphrodite a lapful of golden wool, but the goddess was still not impressed.

#### Third Task: Fetching a Jar of Stygian Water

Aphrodite’s third task was even more complicated: Psyche had to fill a jar with the waters from the black and deadly river Styx, parts of which flowed on the top of a distant mountain. Psyche went to much trouble to merely get to the place, only to find that on each side of the river, there lay a great never-sleeping dragon, appointed to keep the waters safe. Psyche froze with fear and was so out of her mind that she wasn’t even able to cry anymore. Seeing her there, and remembering that he owed a favor to Eros, Zeus’ eagle suddenly flew down from the clouds and snatched Psyche’s jar out of her hands; then he filled it to the top with the waters of Styx and brought it back to the maiden. Psyche joyfully returned to Aphrodite and ecstatically presented her with the jar; Aphrodite, however, had something else on her mind: the fourth and final task.

#### Fourth Task: The Underworld

Appropriately, this one surpassed by far all the others in the degree of difficulty. Namely, this time Psyche was supposed to go to the Underworld and ask from Persephone a day’s worth of her beauty, pack it in a box and quickly bring the box back to Aphrodite. Reasoning that the only way for her to visit Hades was by dying, the despairing Psyche went up one high tower with the intention of throwing herself headlong into hell. However, inspired by divine providence, the tower revealed to her a better way. And, more or less, Psyche did everything the tower told her to.

First, she went to the hill Taenarus in the Peloponnese, where she found a hole leading to Hades. However, she didn’t go there with empty hands, taking with her two coins and two pieces of bread soaked in barley and honey. She used the first coin to pay Charon for her fare across the Styx, and

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the first bread to mellow Cerberus and be allowed entry to the palace of Hades. There she found Persephone and, following the tower's advice, rejected all of her fine meals, asking instead for a crust of brown bread and a favor. After being granted the latter one, Psyche fetched a little of Persephone's beauty and returned to the land of the living, bribing Cerberus with her second bread and paying off Charon with her last coin.

### The Reunion of Eros and Psyche

#### The Curse of the Box

However, as it usually happens, she disobeyed the very last instruction: just like Pandora had done once with her jar, Psyche too opened the box of Persephone. This time, though, the act was neither out of curiosity nor out of spite: Psyche had merely hoped that a dash of divine beauty should help her win back the love of Eros. However, "she could perceive no beauty nor anything else save only an infernal and deadly sleep, which immediately invaded all her members as soon as the box was uncovered, in such sort that she fell down on the ground, and lay there as a sleeping corpse."

#### The Arrival of Eros

Eros – who could bear neither the sight nor the absence of Psyche anymore – secretly flew out through a window of his chamber and, upon reaching Psyche, wiped away the cloud of sleep from her face, and put its essence back in the box. Then, he lifted his beloved wife into the air, and Psyche was able to bring her present to Aphrodite just in time. Not wishing to see her tortured anymore, Eros immediately went to Zeus and begged him for approval. Zeus consented and made Psyche immortal by giving her ambrosia, not only so that she and Eros may be united in marriage as equals, but also so that Aphrodite may finally be appeased.

**WRITE A REFLECTION (3 paragraphs-5 sentences each)-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?**