Ayelet Peer, "Entry on: The Story of Cupid and Psyche by Sarah Coghill", peer-reviewed by Lisa Maurice and Susan Deacy. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2020). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/938. Entry version as of November 07, 2026.

Sarah Coghill

The Story of Cupid and Psyche

United States of America (2011)

TAGS: Cupid Jupiter Proserpina Psyche Venus





We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	The Story of Cupid and Psyche
Country of the First Edition	United States of America
Country/countries of popularity	United States of America, United Kingdom, Canada
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2011
First Edition Details	Sarah Coghill, *The Story of Cupid and Psyche*. Self-published, Kindle edition, 2011, 6 pp.
ISBN	ASIN: B005QE9YSY
Genre	Adaptations, Myths
Target Audience	Children (Older children)
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Creators



Sarah Coghill (Author)

Sarah Coghill is author of *The Twelve Labors of Hercules*. She has also written another internet available book called *The Story of Cupid and Psyche*.

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Additional information

Summary

This is a short story which narrates the love story between Cupid and Psyche. The story is adapted for a young readership, and contains no sexual references. In this tale, Cupid is wounded by his own arrow while visiting Psyche at his mother's command. The story recounts Psyche's life in Cupid's enchanted palace, the visits from her evil sisters and her attempts to discover who her husband was. Then the author introduces the various chores Psyche had to complete in order to appease Venus, until Jupiter allows her to remain with Cupid on Olympus.

Analysis

While this story is depicted as a "short story" it does not fail to present a rounded narrative of Psyche and Cupid's turbulent relations. The plot begins similarly to a fairy tale: "There was once a king, who had three daughters. Two of his daughters were very average looking, however his third and youngest daughter, Psyche was so beautiful that no words could describe her beauty." (Kindle location 4).

There is no geographical reference indication, keeping with the original myth as told by Apuleius.

The author notes that Psyche received the honours which were originally conferred on Venus by many people from the area hence the furious Venues retaliated: "Seeking retribution." Venus only seeks revenge on Psyche.

While the author keeps relatively close to ancient versions of the myth, she mentions that while on his mission, Cupid is accidentally wounded by his own arrow; as Lisa Maurice notes, this part of probably adapted from Bulfinch. Such occurrence does not appear in the Golden Ass. (for a translated version of the myth from Apuleius see: theoi.com, accessed: November 28, 2019.).

Psyche is described as an innocent beautiful girl, pious in her reverence for the gods and especially her care for her family. Her wrongdoing in trying to reveal Cupid's identity is not the act of a Pandora-like curiosity, but a genuine fear which ceased her after her sisters' visit.

Since the story is aimed at young readers, the author has adapted

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certain elements of the myth, in particular the sexual references and Psyche's attempt suicide. In this story, she falls out of a window in her attempt to watch Cupid when he leaves her, whereas in the original story she falls after clinging to him trying to prevent his flight and later tries to throw herself into a river.

Another deviation from the original narration occurs in Psyche's sisters' ending. The author of our story wished to maintain Psyche's innocent image. Therefore Psyche confides in her sisters about her recent misfortunes and they, on their own initiative, try to reach her hidden palace and fall to their death. The original myth, however, makes Psyche the schemer and perpetrator of her sister's violent death, as deserving as it was (they are referred to as evils). This omission by our author recalls the adjustments of many fairy tales especially those collected by the brothers Grimm. The heroines are kept innocent in children's adaptations and are not harbouring any feelings of resentment or revenge. They suffer nobly, even passively, without trying to punish those who hurt them. In her paper, "Fertility Control and the Birth of the Modern European Fairy-Tale Heroine" from 2000, Ruth B. Bottigheimer says that the female heroine went from bold to passive between 1500–1700. While Psyche is of course a much earlier heroine, she appears more resolute in the original myth. She does receive help from several divinities due to her connection with Cupid. Yet she also plans her sisters' downfall. In the adaptation of the story as presented in Sarah Coghill's book, Psyche appears more passive, although she does try to seek Venus' forgiveness. Therefore we could surmise that Psyche incorporates the passivity yet also the resolution of fairy tale heroines, depending which aspect of her character the modern adaptations choose to illustrate. Regarding the sexuality element which Bottigheimer emphasizes in her paper, the original myth emphasized the traumatic first night of Psyche and Cupid and her violate virginity. The rather unsettling description is also part of the erotic context of the Golden Ass. Such description is missing almost entirely from modern adaptations of the story, especially in adaptations for children. In contrast, Jendela Tryst's trilogy of the Cupid and Psyche story offers more erotic descriptions (yet loving, not traumatized) as it is aimed for older readers.

In the end, Psyche fulfills the tasks handed to her by Venus, with the help of Cupid and other deities, who remain nameless in the story (Proserpina is also wrongly written as Prosperne) and Venus agrees, following Jupiter's intervention, to let her remain on Olympus. Thus, the story celebrates a love story, in which the heroine is willing to

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	grow and learn from her mistakes, and in the end, the optimistic message remains with a happy ending, since the couple remained forever "for all eternity", giving the myth a legendary ending of happiness ever after.
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Cupid Jupiter Proserpina Psyche Venus
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Adventure Conflict Death Family Journeys Love
Further Reading	Bottigheimer, Ruth B., "Fertility Control and the Birth of the Modern European Fairy-Tale Heroine", *Marvels & Tales* 14.1, Fairy Tale Liberation—Thirty Years Later, 2000.

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