

‘Cupid and Psyche’: Apul. *Met.* 4.27-6.24 [Discussion]

Read the story (Apul. *Met.* 4.27-6.24) and answer the following questions:

1. Who tells this tale and for whom? Are we aware of any other narrative voice behind the supposed narrator?
2. ‘Cupid’ means ‘Desire’, ‘Psyche’ means ‘Soul’ in Greek. What does this suggest about the nature of the story and how it might be interpreted?
3. Are there any elements of metamorphosis in the story? If so, what are they?
4. What bearing does this embedded story have on the main, outer narrative of the *Metamorphoses*? What are the connecting themes?
5. Are there any differences in style and tone between the tale of Cupid and Psyche and the novel as a whole?
6. Show some of the ways in which a) earlier literature, b) philosophy, and c) art have influenced Apuleius’ telling of this story.
 - For literature, think about Homer, Aristophanes, Hellenistic poets, Virgil, Ovid;
 - For art, if possible, bring in photocopies of relevant artwork and be prepared to talk about them? See the intro to Kenney’s commentary, p.21 n.90.
7. What do you see as the literary strengths/qualities of this story? Any literary weaknesses?
8. What Roman references can be found in the story? What, if anything, do they add? (see index to Kenney comm. under ‘Roman references’.)

Further reading

Many items on the Module Bibliography on Apuleius will have discussions of the story.

Introductions and notes to the translations of Kenney and/or Walsh.

The commentary of Kenney, E. J. *Apuleius: Cupid and Psyche* (Cambridge 1990)

Walsh, P. G. *The Roman Novel* (London 1995)

See Walsh, *Roman Novel*, pp. 198-9 for division of story into five ‘acts’.

Kenney divides in his commentary as follows:

Innocent Psyche:	4.28-35
Guilty Psyche:	5.1-24
Wandering Psyche:	5.25-6.7
Suffering Psyche:	6.8-21.2
Happy Psyche:	6.21.3-24.4