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Amaryllis

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Amaryllis

Abstract

In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"Greek mythology explains the origins of the Amaryllis flower through a story of love. A beautiful maiden named Amaryllis falls in love with a shepherd named Alteo, on a mountainside. Alteo had the strength of Hercules and the beauty of Apollo with a passion for flowers. He claimed he would only fall in love with a girl who could bring to him a new type of a flower that he had never seen before. Determined to win his love, Amaryllis traveled to the Oracle of Delphi for guidance. The oracle instructed her that in order to win Alteo's heart she must sacrifice her blood for him. So Amaryllis stood in front of his house for thirty nights piercing her own heart with a golden arrow. On the thirtieth day a crimson flower grew from the blood of her heart, thus resulting in her winning Alteo's love in return. The flower Amaryllis is now a representation of love, its red color symbolizing the sacrifice young Amaryllis was willing to make to win the heart of Alteo."



Emily Barbero

*** Amaryllis – *amaryllis*

Fair Amaryllis sat on a mountainside
When she fell in love with Alteo in a blink of an eye,
To win his love she needed advice
So with a wound she gave a sacrifice
To declare her love, a flow of red fell to the ground
And with her blood the larks of love made a sound.
-Emily Barbero

There was a very beautiful girl
Who saw a man that made her want to twirl
She has to win him over
Needed to find a flower better than just a plain old clover
With some advice and sacrifice she found the best one
And now she impressed the man she loves a ton
-Katie Burgstrom

Amaryllis fell in love at the very first sight
But he, Alteo, did not feel right.
A new flower need be
Which the oracle did foresee.
An arrow to the heart
Will bleed twice a work of art.
-Gabby Dattellas

Her beauty is dark and lovely
She wears her colors compassionately
She does not like the sold
And she is often told
To wait until August
To show her true thrust
-Caity Droste

The Amaryllis flower can be found all over the world.
According to myth it was named after a girl.
This is why its nickname is the “naked lady” I suppose,
It also grows in all colors but especially red, pink, and rose.
The girl used the flower to win the heart of the Sheppard,
But if you ask me this story sounds rather absurd.
-Peter Gigliotti

A striking crimson flower bled from the heart
Determined to gain Alteo’s affection from the start
Amaryllis committed herself, presented in maidens white
Appeared at his door, doing the same for thirty nights
Piercing her heart with a golden arrow for hers truly
Produced the Amaryllis full of love and radiant beauty
-Brandan Jason

Sometimes beauty starts from the beginning,
The love between these two was not a fling.
Amaryllis had so much glory,
That she always told a story.
This stunning flower had too much pride,
The Alteo asked her to be his bride.
-Christina LiPani

With petals so colorful, with a stem so green,
The most unique flower that I have ever seen.
The story so tragic, the death of a lover.
The emotions that the flower seems to uncover.
So red was the flower, even from the start.
The Amaryllis so striking, right from the heart.
-Kevin Lute

The Amaryllis flower is elegant without doubt;
It is always a sight to see when it finally sprouts.
The redness of the flower is never a sign to start,
But it can always be seen as a symbol to the heart.
It will calm even the most irritable wife;
Knowledge of it will allow you to embrace life.
-Tim McMaster

A handsome young Sheppard looking for love,
Attracted many young beautiful maidens.
Sadly for them he shared his love with flowers and nature instead.
While other maidens gave up, Amaryllis stayed true, for true love overtook her.
She decided to do whatever she could, by piercing her heart for twenty-nine days.
Day thirty the blood turned to flowers, and the Sheppard found love and healed her heart.
-Chelsea Neaverth

If you're looking for a date
Or finding your soul mate
This beautiful flower
Will give you the power
To get the girl
So give it a whirl
-Peter Valade



Photo by MC

Greek mythology explains the origins of the *Amaryllis flower* through a story of love. A beautiful maiden named Amaryllis falls in love with a shepherd named Alteo, on a mountainside. Alteo had the strength of Hercules and the beauty of Apollo with a passion for flowers. He claimed he would only fall in love with a girl who could bring to him a new type of a flower that he had never seen before. Determined to win his love, Amaryllis traveled to the Oracle of Delphi for guidance. The oracle instructed her that in order to win Alteo's heart she must sacrifice her blood for him. So Amaryllis stood in front of his house for thirty nights piercing her own heart with a golden arrow. On the thirtieth day a crimson flower grew from the blood of her heart, thus resulting in her winning Alteo's love in return. The flower Amaryllis is now a representation of love, its red color symbolizing the sacrifice young Amaryllis was willing to make to win the heart of Alteo.

In a class I took last semester (*What Is Religion?*) we were instructed to find the origin of the myth of the Amaryllis flower. We were to look up and write a brief background of the myth and then write a 6 line poem describing it. Each line of the poem had to rhyme with another line; for example, line one rhymed with two, three with four and five with six. It was an extra credit assignment which eleven students chose to participate in. For the purpose of this brief writing I will be quoting only two verses from each poem and make a couple of remarks about the lines and the entire poems.

Sometimes beauty starts from the beginning,
The love between these two was not a fling.
(Christina)

In this particular poem **Christina** focused more on the love aspect of the myth. She emphasized love at first sight that Amaryllis felt for Alteo. She made the sacrifice of her blood for him because she knew it was no fling. She was more interested in the romantic ideas that this flower carried with it in the myth.

So red was the flower, even from the start..
Amaryllis so striking, right from the heart.
(Kevin)

In his poem **Kevin** is more focused on the image of the flower itself. He connected the fact that the flower was red with the power to love. At the beginning of the poem Kevin says that the flower was very unique and different, and hints at the tragic story of sacrifice.

Her beauty is dark and lovely
She wears her colors compassionately.
(Caity)

In her poem **Caity** talks about the actual plant Amaryllis and where it is native to. She discovers that the name of Amaryllis is found in Virgil's pastoral "Eclogues" and that in Latin it means "to sparkle." She also emphasizes the color red of the flower. The compassion of the heart is symbolized by red. The whole story of the myth is dark: sacrifice and blood produce the beauty of the flower and of love. Caity's poem also mentions how this flower is delicate and only blooms in late August.

The girl used the flower to win the heart of the shepherd,
But if you ask me this story sounds rather absurd.
(Peter G.)

Peter wrote about the myth as well and tied it in with the actual flower. In his poem he talks about the background of the flower and its nickname, "naked lady." The lines above describe the myth itself and again, he emphasizes how the flower wins Alteo's heart. Peter also adds the fact that this story sounds rather ridiculous and far-fetched: this probably runs through many people's minds since the story is called a myth and is not based on actual fact.

It will calm even the most irritable wife;
Knowledge of it will allow you to embrace life.
(Tim)

Tim concentrated more on what the flower represents. How the flower represents beauty and love. As well as how unique the flower is and how interesting and different the story behind it is. Tim says that an Amaryllis flower represents feelings from the heart and the love one has for another; it will make an angry wife forgive her husband since the flower represents the feelings and love he has for her. He goes on to explain that the knowledge of this ancient Greek myth about this particular flower will help a person embrace life. If one can open his or her mind to what was taught through the myth, the person might even gain a new outlook on life and find a deeper meaning even in the smallest things, such as flowers.

This beautiful flower
Will give you the power.
(Peter V.)

Peter embraced the humorous aspect of the myth in his poem. He describes how the flower will impress girls on dates and how it helps one to find their soul mate. The *Amaryllis* will give the youth the power to make a girl fall in love with him, just as in the myth it will supposedly bring two people together.

With some advice and sacrifice she found the best one
And now she impressed the man she loves a ton.
(Katie)

Katie emphasizes the idea of sacrifice which is the theme in the Greek story of the *Amaryllis* flower. She found that it was a high priestess, rather than an oracle, that gave Amaryllis the advice to stab her heart repeatedly to win Alteo's love. The myth always ends in the same way regardless of different details or versions of the story: from Amaryllis' blood a new type of flower grows and impresses Alteo and wins his love.

Sadly for them he shared his love with flowers and nature instead.
While other maidens gave up, Amaryllis stayed true, for true love overtook her.
(*Chelsea*)

Chelsea seems to focus more on the dedication and true love Amaryllis had for Alteo. She discusses how, even though other maidens might have given up on winning his love, Amaryllis knew he was her true love. The power of her love and dedication to winning his heart made him fall in love with her. Her love was strong enough to do whatever it took, even stabbing her own heart. Alteo's acceptance of her love - through the enjoyment of the beauty of the new flower - healed Amaryllis' heart and helped her find his love in return.

An arrow to the heart
Will bleed twice a work of art.
(*Gabby*)

I found these two lines of **Gabby's** poem particularly strong. Again, she is discussing the self-sacrifice Amaryllis performs for Alteo. She seems to say that even though her heart may bleed, it will bring twice the work of art - the true love that they now share together.

To declare her love, a flood of red fell to the ground
And with her blood the larks of love made a sound.
(*Emily*)

I also participated in this assignment and I found the myth of this flower very interesting. It has such a detailed and involved love story full of happiness and despair seemingly only to explain one type of flower. I chose these two particular lines out of my poem because I thought this part of the myth was the most romantic and heart breaking. Amaryllis literally made the biggest sacrifice, literally with her heart. I found it so romantic that she fell in love with Alteo at first sight and knew it was worth giving up everything to win his love in return. With the blood-red flower that grew from her pain and suffering came the love she longed for.

Piercing her heart with a golden arrow for hers truly
Produced the amaryllis full of love and radiant beauty.
(*Brandan*)

Brandan found similar things to what we all found in our research. I particularly liked these two lines from his poem because I thought it explained the myth best. The flower itself brought love into their lives, and the radiant beauty radiates from both the flower and Amaryllis.

Through the research all eleven students found similar results when explaining the Greek myth of the amaryllis flower. It is a story about two individuals' journey to find each other. One girl's sacrifice and suffering resulted in true happiness for both. In all of our poems we emphasized the power that this flower has over the heart or explained the power of true love that this flower supposedly brought to Amaryllis and Alteo. A myth, in a sense, is a way of explaining events with no real facts or certain understanding. It is based on a belief and the passing on of the story from person to person. The flower now is not only beautiful but it represents a story of the heart. Its red radiance represents the beauty of love and the sorrow of sacrifice. A young maiden's grieving and bleeding heart produced the ultimate goal of happiness and true love. Myths can reflect the religious mind of humans. This particular myth seems to give an explanation for the origins of a flower. Even though a flower seems like a tiny and insignificant item in our lives, it's the details of the myth that make it so interesting. These bring about certain beliefs and ways of viewing the world that make human life interesting and suffused with an aura of religiosity. People who are not religious often look at life similar as to a myth understood as a sequence of tales with no grounding in facts and reality. Like myths, religion itself gives an explanation of life and the world as we know it. It can explain the creation of the world, our existence, where we came from and why, what is right and wrong, why we think the way we do, the purpose of our actions, and even how the world will end. It gives people a different way of seeing the world, of looking at each individual person through a filtered light, and to appreciate each individual aspect of nature. Religion itself gives a deeper meaning to life, an explanation and guidance, and a rock to hold on to. It is a consistently present thread in the history of humanity - and so are myths. Myths developed new religions and civilizations; they built entire ways of life and new systems of worship and conduct for entire groups of people and whole nations. Then and now, myths provide people with reasons to live their lives the way they do and find happiness in them.