

KRIS WALDHERR

THE STORY OF  
**Cupid &  
Psyche**

A RETELLING OF THE MYTH



A LOVER'S PATH

E-BOOK

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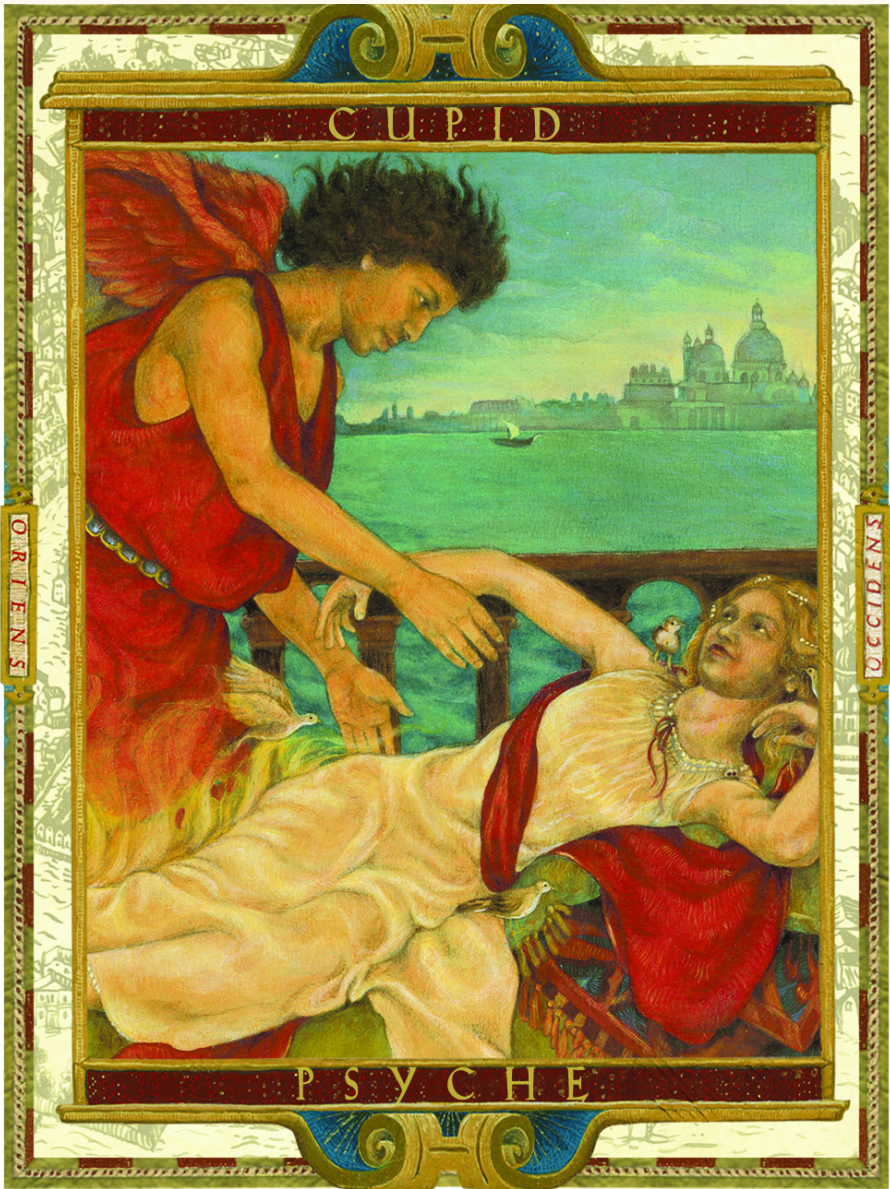
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*Finally Cupid and Psyche were joined together once more, wiser and more patient for the testing of their love's bonds.*



Psyche the perfect, Psyche the pure—Cupid had heard the praises of Psyche's beauty, but as soon as he saw her asleep in her bed, the god of love's hands shook, and the arrow poised in his bow fell, grazing his thigh. From that moment, Cupid loved Psyche and wanted her above all others, human or divine. Cupid and Psyche, Psyche and Cupid . . . it was so simple an equation, yet so complex, for Psyche was unwittingly his mother's most hated enemy.

Since Psyche's birth, men and women had hailed her as a new goddess because of her beauty, bringing the mortal girl much embarrassment and distress. The once-popular temples of Venus, Cupid's mother, were neglected by those who now venerated Psyche instead; neither boughs of soft-petaled roses nor precious oils or gems were offered to the goddess's shrines any longer. Naturally, Venus was jealous of this lavish worship paid to another. It was for this insult that the goddess sought revenge, asking her son to visit Psyche that night and pierce the usurper with

his arrow, so to burn with a foolish, promiscuous love for any beast entering her vision's path.

As he watched Psyche sleep, Cupid was all too aware how furious Venus would be if she knew his feelings. But passion, as red and fiery as the feathers upon his arrows, snaked through his body entwining his will to Psyche's whether he would or not. More troubled than ever, Cupid fled when the first light of dawn arrived before his beloved could stir and see him.



Weeks passed, and though Cupid came to Psyche each night as she slumbered, Psyche knew nothing of his visits nor of his love. Months passed and her parents decided it was time Psyche wed, but no suitor asked for her hand, and any who might have were too intimidated by her beauty.

In desperation, Psyche's parents consulted the oracle of Apollo. Animals were sacrificed, their bones thrown and read by the priests. All the signs led to one message: no mortal man would be Psyche's husband—instead, she must be abandoned upon a cliff where a sea serpent would claim her as his bride. Everyone wept at the news, for surely this meant

Psyche's death, but Apollo had spoken and must be obeyed.

Psyche led the procession to her wedding and funeral, sad but resolute. When they arrived at the cliff where she was to wait, the sun had sunk to the edge of the ocean, turning both water and sky bloody-red. Viewing this as an omen of the blood to be offered to the sea by Psyche's marriage, everyone quickly left before the monster could arrive.

But before the first star quivered in the night sky, soft winds had cradled the unfortunate girl as carefully as a new mother, lifting her far above the jagged rocks of the cliff and the waters rushing between them. The winds took her to an island far away where lay a palace unlit by moon or candle.

In its darkest, innermost chamber, there awaited one who took Psyche as his lover and wife. Whether he was beast or man, Psyche gave herself up to him in in her innocent confusion, as he whispered of his love for her and how long he had waited for her, longer than she knew.





hen Psyche awoke the next morning, he was gone. In that strange but opulent palace, the winds took care of Psyche's every needs, bringing her food and wine, jewels to adorn her neck, and silken robes to wrap around her awakened body. That night, her mysterious husband returned to make love to her again in the darkness. But first, Psyche remembered the oracle's words, and begged him to let her view his face so she might know who he was.

His answer was breathed into her ear as he embraced her. "Do you not know me by my touch? My voice?"

"But I must see you!" she cried.

"It is best you do not," he answered firmly. "Never ask me again, dearest Psyche, or I shall have to leave you." And the next morning, he slipped away again before the brilliant sun could reveal his identity to her.

Because he was kind, loving and generous, Psyche soon accepted her husband's strange demand. She even felt a response to his ardor that she had not expected. Her days were spent yearning for the too short, sleepless nights when her husband would eagerly teach her the arts of love and desire. Psyche

forgot about any other life but the one she shared with her lover.

In time, though, Psyche carried a child within her, but this awareness brought back her doubts. Whose child was she carrying? What if it *had* been a serpent she had bedded—and how could she know since she had never seen her husband? What if she had been wooed only to spawn a beast who would slay her upon his coming into the world? Psyche decided that no matter what the cost, *she must know who her husband was*—even if to gaze upon him would destroy her and her unborn child.



When her husband came to her that night, Psyche cried as she kissed her husband, but he thought they were tears of love. As soon as Psyche heard him breathing deeply with sleep, she lit a lamp and held it high above their bed. No beast, no serpent greeted her eyes—only a man as radiant as a god. Golden curls, gentle face, feathered wings . . . at his bare feet rested bow and scarlet-plumed arrows . . . as Psyche tested their sharpness, she was startled to see a bead of blood upon her thumb.

Quickly the poison of love flowed into her body



as it had Cupid's thigh, and passion burned within her hotter and brighter than the lamp she held. Unable to control herself, Psyche threw herself upon her husband, her kisses a hundredfold more amorous than before . . . the lamp clattered upon the tiled floor, spilling its hot oil and burning Cupid just above his heart.

In love with Love himself, Psyche's eager lips kissed her husband's wound. "Oh forgive me, Cupid," she cried, "ah love, do forgive me!"

And in time he did, though when Venus learned of the marriage of Cupid and Psyche, the girl had to suffer many trials to prove her honor and worthiness to the goddess. But finally Cupid and Psyche were joined together once more, wiser and more patient for the testing of their love's bonds; and, in time, their child—a little daughter they named Pleasure—was born in the sunlit, brilliant presence of all the gods and goddesses.



## ABOUT THIS E-BOOK

The story of Cupid and Psyche is featured in Kris Waldherr's *The Lover's Path*. The myth of Cupid and Psyche has been interpreted as an allegory representing the emotional awakening of a woman as she learns to love. In ancient Greece, where this myth originated, the word for butterfly was *psyche*, which also meant soul. As a caterpillar is transformed into a butterfly, Psyche is transformed by love.

This e-book was typeset in Centaur. It was designed, written and illustrated by *Kris Waldherr*, the author of *Sacred Animals*, *The Goddess Tarot* and many other illustrated books.

If you enjoyed this e-book, we hope you will visit [www.loverspath.com](http://www.loverspath.com) to learn more about The Lover's Path and the work of Kris Waldherr.

