

***LONGUS***



***DAPHNIS  
AND CHLOE***

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# **Daphnis and Chloe**

**The 1896 Athenian Society Translation**

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### Proëm

While hunting in a grove sacred to the Nymphs, in the island of Lesbos, I saw the most beautiful sight that I have ever seen: a picture representing a history of love. The grove itself was pleasant to the eye, covered with trees, full of flowers, and well-watered: a single spring fed both trees and flowers. But the picture itself was even more delightful: its subject was the fortunes of love, and the art displayed in it was marvellous: so that many, even strangers, who had heard it spoken of, visited the island, to pay their devotion to the Nymphs and examine the picture, on which were portrayed women in childbirth or wrapping children in swaddling clothes, poor babes exposed to the mercy of Fortune, beasts of the flock nurturing them, shepherds taking them up in token of adoption, young people binding one another by mutual vows, pirates over-running the seas, and enemies invading the land.

Many other subjects, all of an amatory nature, were depicted, which I gazed upon with such admiration that I was seized with the desire to describe them in writing. Accordingly, I diligently sought for someone to give me an explanation of the details: and, when I had thoroughly mastered them, I composed the four following books, as an offering to Love, the Nymphs, and Pan, and also as a work that will afford pleasure to many, in the hope that it may heal the sick, console the sorrowful, refresh the memory of

him who once has loved, and instruct him who has never yet felt its flame. For no one has yet escaped, or ever will escape, the attack of Love, as long as beauty exists and eyes can see. May God grant that, unharmed ourselves, we may be able to describe the lot of others!

## Book One

1.1 There is in Lesbos a flourishing and beautiful city, named Mitylene. It is intersected by numerous canals, formed by the waters of the sea, which flows in upon it, and adorned with several bridges of white polished stone: to look at it, you would say that it was not a single city, but a number of islands. About two hundred stades distant from the city, a wealthy man possessed a very fine estate: mountains abounding in game, fruitful cornfields, hillocks covered with vine shoots, and ample pasturage for cattle; the sea washed a long stretch of soft sandy beach. (3>)

1.2 On this estate a goatherd named Lamon, while feeding his flock, found a child being suckled by a goat. There was a thicket of shrubs and briars, over which the ivy straggled, and beneath, a couch of soft grass, whereon the infant lay. Hither the goat often ran and wandered out of sight, and abandoning its own kid, remained by the side of the child. Lamon, pitying the neglected kid, observed the direction in which the goat went: and, one day at noon, when the sun was at its height, he followed and saw it cautiously entering the thicket and walking round the child, so as not to tread on and hurt it, while the latter sucked vigorously at its teat as if it had been its mother's breast.

Astonished, as was natural, he approached closer, and found that it was a little boy, beautiful and well-grown, and wrapped in handsomer swaddling clothes than suited a child thus exposed: it had on a little purple tunic fastened with a golden clasp, and by its side was a little dagger with an ivory hilt.

1.3 At first he was minded to take up the tokens, without troubling about the child: but afterwards, feeling ashamed at the idea of being outdone by the goat in humanity, he waited till night, and took everything to his wife Myrtale, the tokens, the child, and the goat. When she expressed her astonishment that goats should bring forth little children, he told her everything: how he had found the child lying exposed, and being suckled by the goat, and how he had felt ashamed to leave it to die. His wife agreed with him, and they resolved to hide the tokens, to bring up the child as their own, and to let the goat suckle him. Further, they decided to call him Daphnis, that the name might have a more pastoral sound.

1.4 When two years had passed, a shepherd belonging to the neighbourhood, named Dryas, while feeding his flocks, made a similar discovery and saw a similar sight. In his district there was a cave sacred to the Nymphs: a large rock hollowed out within, and circular without. Inside were statues of the Nymphs, carved in stone, with feet unshod, arms bared up to the shoulders, hair falling down over the neck, a girdle around the waist, and a smile on the face: to judge from their attitude, you would have said they were dancing. The dome of the grotto was the centre of this mighty rock. Water, gushing from a fountain, formed a

running stream; a beautiful meadow extended in front of the cave, the soft and abundant herbage of which was nourished by the moisture of the stream. Within were to be seen hanging up milk-pails, flutes, pipes, and reeds, the offerings of the older shepherds.

1.5 A sheep, which had recently lambed, went so often to this grotto, that more than once she was thought to be lost. Dryas, wishing to punish her and make her stay with the flock to feed, as before, twisted a bough of pliant osier into a (4>) collar in the form of a running noose, and went up to the rock, in order to snare her. But when he drew near he beheld quite a different sight from what he had expected: he saw the sheep giving her teat, just like a human being, for a copious draught of milk, to a child, which, without a cry, eagerly shifted its clean and pretty mouth from one teat to the other, while the sheep licked its face, after it had had enough. It was a female child, and by its side also lay swaddling clothes and tokens, a cap interwoven with gold, gilded shoes, and gold-embroidered anklets.

1.6 Thinking that what he had found was sent from Heaven, and being moved to pity by the example of the sheep, he took the child up in his arms, put the tokens in his wallet, and prayed to the Nymphs that he might be permitted to bring up their suppliant happily. Then when it was time to drive back his flock, he returned home, told his wife what he had seen, showed her what he had found, and bade her adopt and bring up the child as her own, without telling anyone what had happened. Nape - that was his wife's name - immediately took up the child and caressed her, as if afraid of being outdone in kindness by the sheep:

and, that it might be more readily believed that the child was her own, she gave it the pastoral name of Chloe.

1.7 The two children soon grew up, more beautiful than ordinary rustics. When the boy was fifteen years of age, and the girl thirteen, Lamon and Dryas both dreamed the following dream on the same night. They dreamed that the Nymphs of the grotto with the fountain, in which Dryas had found the little girl, delivered Daphnis and Chloe into the hands of a saucy and beautiful boy, who had wings on his shoulders and carried a little bow and arrow: and that this boy touched them both with the same arrow, and bade them tend, the one goats, the other sheep.

1.8 When they saw this vision, they grieved to think that Daphnis and Chloe were destined to tend sheep and goats, since their swaddling clothes seemed to give promise of better fortune: for which reason they had brought them up more delicately than shepherds' children, had taught them to read, and given them all the instruction possible in a country place. They resolved, however, to obey the gods in regard to those who had been saved by their providence. Having communicated their dreams to each other, and offered sacrifice, in the cave of the Nymphs, to the winged boy (whose name they did not know), they sent the maiden and the lad into the fields, having instructed them in all that they had to do: how they ought to feed their flocks before midday, and when the heat had abated: when they should drive them to drink, and when drive them back to the fold: when they should use the shepherd's crook and when (5>) the voice alone. They undertook this duty as joyfully as if they had been entrusted with some important office, and



were fonder of their goats and sheep than shepherds usually are: for Chloe felt she owed her life to a ewe, while Daphnis remembered that when exposed, he had been nurtured by a goat.

1.9 It was the beginning of spring, and all the flowers were blooming in the woods and meadows, and on the mountains. The humming of bees, and the twittering of tuneful birds were already heard, and the new-born young were skipping through the fields: the lambs were gambolling on the mountains, the bees were buzzing through the meadows, the birds were singing in the bushes. Under the influence of this beautiful season, Daphnis and Chloe, themselves tender and youthful, imitated what they saw and heard. When they heard the birds sing, they sang: when they saw the lambs gambol, they nimbly skipped in rivalry: and, like the bees, they gathered flowers, some of which they placed in their bosoms, while they wove garlands of others, which they offered to the Nymphs.

1.10 They did everything in common, and tended their flocks side by side. Daphnis frequently gathered together Chloe's wandering sheep: while she often drove back his too venturesome goats from the precipices. Sometimes one of them tended the two flocks alone, while the other was intent upon some amusement. Their amusements were those of children or shepherds. Chloe would pluck some stalks of asphodel from the marsh, to weave a locust-trap, without any thought for her flock: while Daphnis, having cut some slender reeds, and perforated the intervals between joints, joined them with soft wax, and practised himself in playing upon them until nightfall. Sometimes they shared