

The Man Who LOVED Himself

by Jack Krichbaum



- 1 Long ago there lived a young hunter by the name of Narcissus. Narcissus was as handsome as the day was long, and many beautiful maidens loved him. He wanted no part of these young women for he thought that none of them were worthy of him or his affection.
- 2 One day Narcissus was hunting with a group of acquaintances when he became lost in the forest. Thinking he'd be better off without the others, Narcissus smiled to himself. "I need no one when I have me," Narcissus said.
- 3 Narcissus spent the day roaming the woodlands. He was a skilled hunter, and more than once, his arrow pierced the heart of a deer or fox. Thoughts of grandeur filled his mind for he was sure none of the other hunters had been as successful as he. The morning passed slowly.
- 4 Narcissus listened to the birds singing in the treetops. *I can sing as beautifully as any of those birds*, thought Narcissus as he began to whistle. The birds stopped singing. *They're listening to me, and they know I'm the best*, Narcissus smiled.
- 5 Narcissus moved even deeper into the forest. Now the sun was high in the sky, and he was hungry. Narcissus sat down on a flat rock near a berry bush and began to eat. He used a leaf to wipe the blue juice that was dribbling down his chin for he didn't want to spoil his handsome good looks. After a while he became bored with sitting and eating and decided to move on. He went even deeper into the woods.
- 6 Narcissus began to give thought to where he was as he watched a squirrel scamper up a twisted old oak tree. *That squirrel is stupid*, he thought. *All he does is sit in his nest and sleep*. As Narcissus began to climb the tree the squirrel moved away.
- 7 When Narcissus reached the top of the tree he began to look around. The sun was a pinkish yellow now, and Narcissus knew that it would soon fall to the earth. Using the tree as a lookout stand, Narcissus was sure he would find his way out of the woods. He looked for a clearing in the thicket but found none. He searched for other hunters, but they had vanished into the denseness of the forest. Narcissus angrily kicked the squirrel's nest and sent it toppling to the ground.
- 8 From his perch in the tree, Narcissus spotted a stream not too far away and decided he needed to quench his thirst. He climbed down the gnarled tree trunk paying no mind to a hatching cocoon from where now no butterfly would spread its wings. "The world has me, so it needs no butterflies," muttered Narcissus.
- 9 Narcissus made his way through a carpet of vines and twigs to the place where he had spotted the stream. The blue water was clear and inviting. Narcissus moved closer to the stream and caught sight of his reflection.
- 10 He looked at his long-lashed eyes. *People would die to have my eyes*, thought Narcissus. He stared at his reflection and felt a wave of excitement and pride move through his body. He moved closer to the water's edge.
- 11 *What beautiful hair I have*, he thought. Narcissus lay down beside the stream and stared at his long blond locks. He was certain that no one else on Earth could possibly have such a glistening mane.
- 12 Narcissus was so in love with his reflection that he never left the stream. He did not leave to eat, to drink, or to love anyone else. Narcissus did not dare disturb his beautiful image. There he died at the edge of the stream.
- 13 Fish jumped, the frogs croaked, and the birds sang, but no one missed Narcissus, not even himself.

COMPREHENSION

- A** Choose the best ending for each sentence. Write *a*, *b*, or *c*.
- This story was about a man who
 - loved himself more than anything else.
 - loved to hunt.
 - fell in the water.
 - When Narcissus moved deeper into the forest he
 - shot his bow and arrow.
 - became lost.
 - was happy.
 - Narcissus's main problem was that he
 - thought he was better than anyone else.
 - was too handsome.
 - didn't care about animals.
 - When Narcissus got close to the stream he
 - couldn't take his eyes off his reflection.
 - fell in.
 - got cold.
 - The butterfly couldn't spread its wings because
 - Narcissus destroyed the cocoon and the butterfly died.
 - Butterflies don't hatch until spring.
 - Neither **a** or **b**

LEARN ABOUT WORDS

- B** Often you can find out the meaning of a word by seeing how it is used in a story. The other words in the story give you clues.

Find the word in the story that best fits each meaning. (A paragraph number tells you where to look.) Write the word.

- person who kills animals for food (1)
- people you know who are not close friends (2)
- flowing lightly or falling in drops (5)
- ignorant (6)
- dense growth of shrubs or underbrush (7)
- to satisfy or fill a need (8)
- image formed as in a mirror (9)

- C** **too** = also

two = the number after *one*

Words that sound alike but have different spellings are called homophones.

Too and *two* are homophones.

Look at each word in **bold type** below. Note the paragraph number. Look at the paragraph and find the homophone. Which of the two words fits in the blank in the sentence? Write the word.

- 8** **their** (1)

Long ago _____ lived a young hunter.

- 9** **knead** (2)

Do you _____ to take your bow and arrow?

- 10** **son** (5)

The _____ was high in the sky.

THINK ABOUT IT

D Narcissus fell into a *deep* stream.

When you describe something, you use an adjective. *Deep* is an adjective.

The river is *deeper* than the stream.

When you compare two things, you usually add *-er* to an adjective. *Deeper* compares two bodies of water.

The ocean is the *deepest* of all.

When you compare three or more things you usually add *-est* to an adjective. *Deepest* compares three or more bodies of water.

Read the sentences. Which word in parentheses () fits each sentence? Write the word.

- 1 Narcissus had the (longest, longer) hair of all the hunters.
- 2 Two frogs were sitting on a log. The (smaller, smallest) frog jumped into the water.
- 3 Narcissus thought his skin was (smoothest, smoother) than silk.
- 4 The squirrel was a (fastest, faster) climber than Narcissus.
- 5 Narcissus thought he was the (smartest, smarter) man in the world.

E A word that has the opposite, or nearly the opposite, meaning of another word is called an antonym. *Little* is an antonym of *big*.

Read each sentence. Which word in parentheses () is an antonym of the word in **bold type**? Write the word.

- 6 Narcissus was a handsome, **young** hunter. (new, old)
- 7 He was not **nice**. (mean, kind)
- 8 Narcissus probably got **tired** after he became lost. (exhausted, rested)
- 9 The path was **narrow**. (wide, thin)
- 10 Narcissus moved **slowly** through the forest. (quickly, calmly)

F kindly = kind + **ly** kindness = kind + **ness**

The letters *-ly* and *-ness* are suffixes. A suffix is added to the end of a word. It changes the word's meaning. Adding the suffix *-ly* to a word makes the new word tell *how*. Adding the suffix *-ness* to a word makes the new word tell *what*.

Read each sentence. Which word in parentheses () makes sense? Write the word.

- 11 Narcissus never acted (friendly, friendliness).
- 12 The hunters (gladly, gladness) left Narcissus behind.
- 13 Narcissus felt (happily, happiness) when he saw his reflection.
- 14 Narcissus acted (boldness, boldly) all the time.
- 15 The (brightly, brightness) of the sun hurt his eyes.