

Glaucus and Scylla: Ancient Love Triangle

Have you ever had a “crush” on someone, but it pains you to know that it will never work out? If you have, you aren’t alone. Here is a tragic story you could easily relate to. Glaucus, a fisherman, laid out his catch on the bank. He was most curious when he noticed that they were reviving and flopping back into the water, so he decided to taste the grass that was under the fish’s bodies. He grew a longing for the sea, jumped in, and was turned to a sea god. Not much time had gone by before he noticed Scylla and fell deeply in love (Glaucus). No matter how hard he tried, Scylla wouldn’t love him back, so he went to a jealous Circe who turned Scylla in to an awful monster. Glaucus kept pursuing her, but to no avail (Scylla). The characters in this story share similar characteristics to those in modern times.

They share the trait of curiosity. When someone says “never mind” or “whatever you do, do NOT look in that bag” doesn’t it make you want to do just that? Most of the time when find out what they were hiding, you are disappointed because it was pointless or dangerous. When Glaucus saw the fish reviving, going against his better judgment and relying on curiosity he tasted the grass to see what was making the fish behave in that way. He was changed into an immortal because his curiosity got the better of him (Glaucus). Curiosity wasn’t the only emotion he was overcome by.

Glaucus spied Scylla and now he couldn’t love anybody else. After her rejections he confided in Circe, who loved him and was angered toward Scylla (Glaucus). In the modern day T.V. series Family Matters Steve Urkel sees his neighbor Laura and falls madly in love with her. Steve declares his love to Laura on a regular basis, but she rejects him every time. Steve is completely oblivious that Myra loves him, so Myra is jealous and decides to hate Laura for it. (Family Matters) Both situations are hopeless and one’s true heart’s desires will never come true. Other hopes and desires were crushed also.

Scylla was embarrassed by the monster she had become, and hid herself away (Scylla). Hermione Granger does the exact same thing when she was turned into a cat by mistake. While trying to transform into another human, Hermione made a slight mistake in the potion and hid herself in the bathroom stalls (Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets). It is a natural human quality to feel embarrassed by your looks, especially when you are having a bad hair day, have a zit in the middle of your forehead, or spilt food on your clothes and hadn’t noticed the stain until the days end. Everybody in modern times has felt this way.

The characters in this story are curious, jealous, embarrassed and in love, which are all characteristics of us people in these modern times. We are so used to seeing love triangles that will never work out: the powerful sorceress falling in love with the newly immortal sea god, who loves someone who will never give that love in return (Glaucus). How many times have we felt such attraction to a person who will never care for us the same way? Don’t we compare ourselves to someone else and become envious and have hatred towards a person who really hasn’t done any harm to us? Only too often do these things happen in our daily lives. The immortal people in ancient Greece are like people in modern times in more ways than we would have thought.

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