

The Disciple

Oscar Wilde (1888)

When Narcissus died the pool of his pleasure changed from a cup of sweet waters into a cup of salt tears, and the Oreads° came weeping through the woodland that they might sing to the pool and give it comfort°.

And when they saw that the pool had changed from a cup of sweet waters into a cup of salt tears, they loosened the green tresses° of their hair and cried to the pool and said, “We do not wonder that you should mourn° in this manner for Narcissus, so beautiful was he.”

“But was Narcissus beautiful?” said the pool.

“Who should know that better than you?” answered the Oreads. “Us did he ever pass by, but you he sought for, and would lie on your banks° and look down at you, and in the mirror of your waters he would mirror his own beauty.”

And the pool answered, “But I loved Narcissus because, as he lay on my banks and looked down at me, in the mirror of his eyes I saw ever my own beauty mirrored.”

Wilde, Oscar. *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*. London: Collins, 1991, p. 864.

disciple [di'saɪpl]	<i>a person who believes in and follows the teachings of a religious or political leader (for example one of the twelve apostles)</i>
oread ['ɔːrɪ.æd]	<i>mountain nymphs in Greek mythology (Greek oros, “mountain”)</i>
comfort	<i>a feeling of being less unhappy</i>
tresses	<i>the locks of a woman's long hair</i>
to mourn	<i>to feel and show sadness because sb has died</i>
bank	<i>the side of a river, lake, etc. and the land near it</i>



Write two paragraphs about the following two topics

(at least one page overall):

1. Comment on the text in general (rhetorical devices, language, setting, origin of the theme, etc.)
2. Explain Oscar Wilde's point in the story.