

beauty. Even here she almost fails, when her human curiosity gets the better of her. She tries to peep at the beauty inside the box but on opening it is overcome with sleep. Cupid, however, comes to her aid, and all ends happily. Zeus regularizes their marriage and makes Psyche immortal.

So ends the story told by the hag (another form of the goddess) to the captive Charitë. Like Psyche, Charitë seeks the help of lower creatures and begs help from the ass. He, although he is lame (a parallel with the lameness of Oedipus and the supreme lame god, Asclepius) gallops off with her on his back—beauty and the beast. In this scene is embodied the relationship between higher self and lower self as taught in esoteric psychology. As so often happens, rider and ridden have a difference of opinion as to which way to go. Charitë wants to ride straight home; Lucius the ass knows that this is the way the robbers have gone. They are still disputing at the parting of the ways when the robbers return and recapture them.

Further rescue comes in a most unexpected way. The robbers elect a new chief who seems to be a very superior kind of robber. In fact it is Charitë's bridegroom in disguise. He overcomes the robbers, delivers them to justice, and marries his bride. Thus we have the drama of a savior god coming among men to restore things to rights.

For his attempt to save Charitë, the ass is rewarded in a fashion thought most likely to please an ass. He is sent to a stud farm. However, all does not go well for him there. His further adventures parallel the Mystery drama that has been enacted by Charitë (the stolen and ransomed virgin bride) and Tlepolemus (the savior-bridegroom descending to a lower condition to effect her rescue and redemption).

The couple do not live happily ever after. Tlepolemus is betrayed by a former rival for her hand. He is invited on a hunting expedition, and although he has vowed never to hunt horned or tusked beasts (sacred to Isis), things are so arranged that he is cornered and gored by a ferocious boar. The rival, Thrasyllus, finishes him off and then, feigning innocence, proceeds to woo the widowed Charitë.

She, however, is informed of the facts by the ghost of her murdered husband. She pretends to welcome the murderer's advances, and even to agree to a secret love affair before their marriage. However, on the night that she promised to come to his bed she drugs him and blinds him with a bronze pin from her hair. She then flies to her husband's grave and kills herself with his sword, plunging it under the right breast—where Jesus also received the lance thrust from Longinus.

There are interesting parallels in all of this story with Christian and