

surreal magic in the poem so far. Hermes is still searching for his nymph and promises Lamia whatever she wants in exchange for a piece of information about his lost nymph. Lamia is a clever creature, ~~making~~ making Hermes swear to his promise. She then goes on to tell the nymphs condition which is off of pure spirit, a disembodied spirit that again through Lamia's description we are compelled to feel pity for. Lamia tells Hermes she wants to be a woman as she once was, and says she will produce the nymph if she can be changed back to that form. She breathes on Hermes brow and the nymph appears, and ~~as she appears Lamia swoons and eventually vanishes~~. The reuniting of Hermes and the nymph ~~is~~ is a touching and sensual scene. Meanwhile Lamia is fading and changing in a horrifying manner; she burns, convulses, and foams at the mouth. This sort of a transformation warps and possibly destroys the dreamlike qualities of the poem to this point, with its brutality. Twenty two lines of torment seem quite a bit for a poem concerned with love, even a destroying one, but Keats is showing evil in the serpent-woman for the first time, the obvious moral being that nature or the gods recognize the granting of her wishes will result in nothing but pain, despair, and further trouble. As good a writer as Keats was for his age precludes the possibility of his including so many lines for no reason at all. Another possibility suggested by so much lineage on the transformation, would be that Lamia, in order to realize her love with Lycius, has to suffer. This idea seems more substantial in light of the suffering and fear she does encounter in Corinth. Clearly, now we have left the world of gods and minor deities, but the dream of an ideal mating between a mortal and a minor deity is still a possibility, aside from possible morals that can be drawn from the unexplained transformation passage.

Things between Lycius and Lamia can now start happening. Lamia leaves the woods and heads towards Corinth and stops near its outskirts, at least in its rural vicinity. Keats anticipates joyfully Lycius' meeting with the newly transformed goddess, in the stanza 185-199, and describes her as an ideal lover as well as beautiful,

Ah, happy Lycius! - for she was a maid
More beautiful than ever twisted braid,
...A virgin purest lipp'd, yet in the lore
Of love deep learned to the red heart's core:
Not one hour old, yet of scintial brain
To unperplex bliss from its neighbor pain
...As though in Cupid's college she had spent
Sweet days a lovely graduate, still unshent
And kept his rosy terms in idle languishment.

In this passage we see a woman not reliant on supernatural charms so much, but made desirable in her devotion and learning in Cupid's art as well as by physical description. Although a ~~goddess~~ goddess turned woman, all Lamia's celestial possibilities do not satisfy her soul. She needs a human love, and Keats tell us she leaves her solitary dream world to find a mortal partner. Lamia, who operates as an abstraction equal to fantasy or dreams, apparently feels a need to extend her visionary and sensual gifts with mankind. She chooses Lycius ~~for~~ to receive some of her unperplexing bliss, mostly because she is taken by his spirit and heroic qualities. Lycius is in "charioting foremost" (217), and an adventurer, as well as a pious and staid young man. Keats anticipates their meeting to clarify the nobility ~~of the meeting~~ and removed superiority of the love that is to develop. Keats is working in the Medieval courtly love tradition in his glorification of the two participants who will shortly meet, and is reminiscent of Chaucer's Criseyde in his depiction of Lamia being taken by Lycius' competitive ability and natural nobility. It is more or less a love at first sight when they meet, and Lamia's words inspire