

# **The Erotic Poems Study Guide**

## **The Erotic Poems by Ovid**

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# **Book 1, Prefaces & Introduction :**

## **Chapter 1, Prefaces and Introductions**

### **Book 1, Prefaces & Introduction : Chapter 1, Prefaces and Introductions Summary**

The introductory materials were provided by a modern scholar named Peter Green. The author of this particular work, Ovid, had a well-documented life. Thanks to this, scholars have been able to reassemble the facts into a coherent narrative. He was born outside of the city of Rome, in Italy a few years before Christ. His parents moved him to Rome in order to secure a superior education.

It was very obvious by the time he was 13 years old that he had poetic talent. His father viewed this as a problem strictly because there was very little money in poetry in Rome in those days. Due to this he encouraged his son to use the advantages of their social position and be a Senator of Rome.

At this time, Rome had grown into an Empire, and had a Caesar at its head. This meant that the political and military head of government were the same. The Caesar was apt to in fact go to war with the troops, leaving the Senators to manage during his absence. The city of Rome was founded on combined military and political leadership and the city had a strong tradition of only supporting strong military men in the role of city head.

Ovid was groomed for one of the political roles that did not require soldiering. This was actually a problem for him, and Green refers to the matter, saying that it was not clearly explained but it was implied that there was some medical reason why he was not able to serve. This did influence how he was perceived by other men, however.

Ovid obeyed his father's wish for him to study law. Later, Ovid went traveling with a man named Macer, who was his Master (in the sense of educator). Ovid endeavored to take his father's advice regarding preparations for a better paying profession but also continued to nurture his poetic powers. This allowed him to be a poet without causing him to suffer from poverty.

The poet married three times. His first marriage occurred when he was very young; both he and his wife were teenagers at the time. They were divorced two or three years later. It was after this first wife but before the second one that he completed his education and went traveling around with Macer.

Ovid became a respectable speech maker. Others observed that his poetic abilities showed markedly in his political speeches. This prepared his community for the publication of his first book of poetry. He achieved a healthy reputation as an excellent poet and perfectly decent statesman.



However, under Augustus, the reputation and behavior of the poet was excessively scandalous. Not only could the behavior not be ignored, the poetry that he succeeded in publishing and the personal history that went along with it was sufficient for him to be banished from the city of Rome and from his seat in Roman politics.

Ovid was ejected from Rome during his third marriage. He is reported to have not ever divorced his wife, and she campaigned for his return to Rome. However, when he was banished, she did not leave with him.

During his second marriage Ovid became father of a daughter. After she became an adult, this daughter Julia also "caused trouble" in Rome by developing a reputation for promiscuity. She was also forced to relocate away from the city of Rome.

The poet, his father and daughter are all reported to have lived reasonably long lives—his father to the age of 90. The reason the poet's works met with such resistance and strife was because they directly related to a specific cultural problem faced by the Romans during the time the books were written and published. Adultery, especially amongst the highest social classes, had grown to outrageous proportions. The city's and Empire's leaders determined to change this by applying a "crackdown" through the use of public policies that strongly opposed this. Ovid's works strongly support toleration of marital infidelity, and describes love almost as if it were mere sport, thereby undermining a standard of committed and enduring love. For this reason, along with his medium-high social standing, he was considered "second class" by the city's standards, which meant he was an equestrian and by the common people's view he was a prestigious man. The poor folk were fifth class by the city's standardized order of classes.

## **Book 1, Prefaces & Introduction : Chapter 1, Prefaces and Introductions Analysis**

Here the scholar Peter Green prepares readers for the approaching text. He gives a meaningful and factual account of the author's life. Readers will do well to read this information. It will provide them with some perspective and a sense of context that will help them to make correct interpretations of the poetry.

Readers are strongly encouraged to read more about the politics of the first millenium of the city of Rome. This, along with books on the ancient poetic traditions, will surely bolster the readers for the works that follow.

These factual introductions may make it easier for the inexperienced reader to develop a sense for the Ovid's "voice" in the written works. Finally, this material also enables readers to feel a more personal connection with the poet.



# Book 2, The Amores : Chapter 1, Book 1

## Book 2, The Amores : Chapter 1, Book 1 Summary

Here readers are introduced to the text proper. There are 15 poems in this book, all translated into English. What follows is very brief commentary on many of them, one at a time.

1. The author begins to write about warfare but is rapidly diverted to a discussion of his Muse.
2. This one compares warfare to love. He is overwhelmed by the little god Cupid and his match-making powers that seem at times "unfair at best." He concludes the poem by observing that Augustus Caesar's Roman conquests lead to protectorates for the conquered.
3. He claims and describes his passion for a woman. He calls himself chaste and genuine and refers to the marital vow of "till death do us part." Peter Green denies that this is a reference to his first wife.
4. This poem is from the perspective of a man who desires a married woman. The sense of jealousy and of rivalry has intensified as this man simultaneously longs for the touch of this woman and hopes that she will reject her husband sexually—if only for today. The man hopes, above all else, that the woman will turn frigid towards her husband and harbor the fires of romantic passion for him instead.
5. This poem is about Ovid or his character disrobing a woman named Corinna. This is the woman Peter Green explains was probably his first lover and his first wife.
6. Here, the author cries out to Cupid and the god's sexually attractive mother. He complains that they are pestering and teasing him.
7. In this poem, there is a man who has been violent to his girlfriend. His feelings of shame, remorse and his willingness to accept her retribution are all included in the poem.
8. Men do better as lovers when they are subjected to the constant threat of competition from other men. The author also discusses a woman called Dipsas who is a talented witch. This poem is more than twice as long as previous ones.
9. Here he cheerfully explains that every lover is constantly on "active service." Men are their best as lovers during the same years that they also make the best soldiers.
10. Ovid writes that lovers should give their all, but that the females need to tailor their demands or requests to the resources available to the man. The man in the poem explains that when she stops wanting from him, then he will give to her.



11. The goddess Venus takes over, or is given, this poem. Venus is the subject at the beginning and the end.

12. This poem is all about finances and their relevance.

13. This poem covers three topics: girls getting up early in the morning and what a bad thing it is to make them; work is also a topic for discussion; and finally, Ovid touches on "black heartedness" at the end of this poem.

14. This poem is entirely devoted to a "lady's hair disaster."

15. The final poem in the book surveys some prominent classical poets and notes how their work has a sense of timelessness and immortality about it.

The first poem comes as a bit of a surprise. Readers will rapidly develop a natural sense for the author's "voice." The timelessness is quite striking. The first book ends with readers having had a chance to develop a sense for what Ovid's works are like.

## **Book 2, The Amores : Chapter 1, Book 1 Analysis**

As just pointed out, the first batch of poems in this book by the poet Ovid are a surprise at first. They soon make themselves clear. It does not take long for readers to attain a sense for what Ovid's poetry and once it is familiar you will probably recognize other works as his.

Roman religion plays a strong hand in this first book, the Amores. More than one deity is mentioned, most especially those who govern matters of love. Cupid stars here, along with Venus. She is the goddess of beauty, and he is the god of love, often shown in his immature state.

The author introduces readers to various aspects of Roman life. These poems are a great start for readers. Those not versed in the deities of Rome may feel at a significant disadvantage.



# Book 2, The Amores : Chapter 2, Book 2

## Book 2, The Amores : Chapter 2, Book 2 Summary

This is the second book of the Amores and in the text it is labeled as such. Each poem is marked by a number at its start. There are no individual titles. As with the preceding book, the poems will be given brief descriptions below.

1. Here the poet has a pseudonym, "Naso." Embedded in the poem is the sense that this is "the naughty provincial poet" (p. 111). He clearly states that he wants the readers to feel as if their privacy has been invaded.
2. He writes of marital infidelity and advises that a husband tolerate his wife's affairs. The Mistress (the wife) has her freedom. He reports that the husband is better off believing whatever she tells him about this, regardless of the truth of it.
3. He makes a strange reference to eunuchs and simply declares that anyone who has ever fallen in love would understand in ways that the "uninitiated" will not.
4. A joyful survey of a heterosexual man's passionate desire for a wide variety of women.
5. Wistful respect for fidelity, but joyful surrender into the arms of a lover, great kisses, and a poignancy intermingled with jealousy.
6. This poem is a radical departure. This is about the funeral of a talking parrot.
7. This one is dedicated to defensiveness associated with being wrongly accused of infidelity...the Mistress is jealous and suspicious that he is after the maid. He claims this is false.
8. This poem is about the real romance between the maid servant and the man: the relationship that was denied in the previous poem.
- 9A. This poem relays strange, intense emotions about Cupid. Here the author is crying out resentfully, "Why did you do this to me?!" to Cupid, the matchmaking god. The poem ends with the man reporting that as a lover, he should quit the field after the manner that some soldiers, once past a certain point, determine that they are better off doing.
- 9B. More cries to the deity of love and his mother the goddess of beauty. The other topic here is "fickleness," the changeable quality of a lover.
10. Here, the author is torn between two women lovers. He protests that he was taught that it is impossible to love two women and therefore this cannot be happening. Even when he does set them against one another as competitors they are coming out as an even match in his own mind.



11. Here Corinna reappears, and the author writes about married love and contrasts it to being single. He writes of indulging the desires and may have been referring as much to masturbation within marriage rather than to any other lover.

12. There is joy at being with Corinna, and then readers learn that this poem is written from the perspective of her other lover, the man who is not her husband.

13. This is about Corinna & Ovid's marriage—Ovid's first. It is about how Corinna became pregnant, attempted an abortion and is now ill. The poet is praying for her welfare and then hopes to prevent any repetitions of such an event.

This book is slightly longer than the one that preceded it. There are 19 poems rather than 15.

14. This poem is entirely against abortion and what it would do the human race if practiced completely. He touches upon the ferocity of vanity and the cruelty of a looks-based culture when he notes that a young woman might have an abortion to preserve her physical appearance.

15. This is about a married man. It is mainly descriptive and the subjects are his wedding ring and his attraction to his wife's cleavage.

16. This one is broader in its implications, and in the range of its topics. The key words are themselves a puzzling amalgam. Social commentary, horses and devotion are all relevant parts of this poem.

17. Here the author informs readers that he is enslaved to females due to his heterosexuality.

18. Unlike some sad poems, this one espouses the reality of requitted love, rather than the one sided kind.

19. This final poem is a testimony to and a validation of his rival in romantic love. He admits that he wants his rival to pose a genuine challenge rather than be the type who makes it too easy or who is friendly to him. This clearly represents a variance in the so-called "schools of thought" being practiced in Rome.

## **Book 2, The Amores : Chapter 2, Book 2 Analysis**

This book adds to what came before. As the title clearly indicates this entire work is devoted to poetry about sexual and romantic love. There is a great deal of married love poetry in this book. Included are poems that focus upon the love shared within a marriage and on those liaisons that defy the boundaries of the marriage.

The work is intense. Readers will perceive it according to their own experiences and frame of mind. The author does not seem to take sexual love seriously, except perhaps



when he does refer to the gods and to how much it is like war in its intensity, passion, the need for it and the level of effort that is involved.



# Book 2, The Amores : Chapter 3, Book 3

## Book 2, The Amores : Chapter 3, Book 3 Summary

This book has 15 poems. The style in which they are written is the same as the other ones. As in the previous sections, each of these will be concisely described. Readers should be aware that these guides are meant to supplement the actual works, not to supplant or substitute for them.

1. The theme here is double: the author writes of the gods and of his Muse. Both he has found in the ancient forest. The deity Elegy questions Ovid about his writing about love all the the time. He is forgiven for this.
2. This one is about meeting people by going out to the horse races. He is referring to it mainly as a location that is ideal for practicing flirtation and seduction.
3. Here the ladies are the subject matter. Their transgressions and blasphemies are the topic. The author tells readers that such errors must always be forgiven.
4. This poem deals with the topic of discipline, including sexual discipline. A theory is espoused; this is that repression is produced when there is restraint through compulsion. The author claims that repression worsens the vice it is meant to control. He recommends permissiveness, arguing that once the desire has been freely acted upon, the behavior will freely change of its own accord. This poem is quite lengthy and includes more on this topic. The poet asserts that indulgence and tolerance should be the attitude towards the wife by the husband insisting that if he tolerates her infidelities that this will ensure that she will tolerate his nights out with friends.

While these occur in clear order within the book, it seems superior to separate them during the summary so as to prevent overwhelming the reader.

5. Here more images are used. A dream is interpreted as being about infidelity.
6. This poem is about a river and a woman who was thrown into it. This was done as a punishment, but the woman is taken up by the river and she is in fact turned into a Queen.
7. This is an astounding poem on the incredibly sensitive issue of male impotence. In this case the condition is temporary and is caused by some other kind of awareness.
8. This one is more general, and offers comments on several aspects of Roman culture.
9. The death of a man named Tibullus is the subject of this poem.
10. This poem is dedicated to the goddess Ceres and one of her festivals.



11A. This one is simpler; it is all about a lover.

11B. This is dedicated to the emotions of a lover who would like to have his woman lover to himself rather more. He does love her.

12. Ovid writes of Mistress Corinna and then describes the trouble that he has conjured by speaking sincerely and highly of her. He has encouraged rivals by doing this.

13. This poem is a description of a ritual.

14. Ovid devotes this poem to discretion rather than to fidelity. He simply expresses that if she is discrete he will have a sufficient, pleasurable sensation of fidelity.

15. The last poem of this book is very focused upon the book itself; the poet writes that he is tiring of this work—the work of writing this book.

## **Book 2, The Amores : Chapter 3, Book 3 Analysis**

Through this book readers get a sharper picture of the author's beliefs. It is possible that the values espoused are not entirely autobiographical. The scholar Peter Green has given the impression that they probably are.

The author writes in a way that does not limit the topic to only one matter, but at the same time what is covered begins to have an overarching theme. Marriage is discussed but mainly in terms of infidelity. Infidelity is openly addressed as an issue and how to handle it or prevent or control it is a matter that is disclosed. For anyone who has considered marriage or has been married, this is a matter of some significance.

The society of Rome and her gods are both features of this set of poems. Readers do well to bear in mind that these deities formed the pantheon and genuine religion of the empire.

This completes the entire set of books known as the Amores. The mores of Rome and the gods of the city and empire play a noteworthy role. Passion, seduction and love all have many parts to play in these poems. The variety of scenarios provoke readers to feel their own emotions about many of the nuances of relationship.



# Book 3, The Art of Love : Chapter 1, Book 1

## Book 3, The Art of Love : Chapter 1, Book 1 Summary

The style of these poems is clearly connected with those of the previous work, Amores. This makes the combination a truly natural one. Readers have become familiar with Ovid's "voice." It is worth noting that Ovid's first batch of published writings was ten years in the making.

The author begins by assuring writers that he has written from personal experience. He also claims that he desires to master love, rather than feeling at the mercy of Cupid, the god of love. Ovid clearly addresses Cupid from both a positive and negative emotional view point.

This book is also very different from the other in that the entire work is one poem that runs 27 pages in length. The general pattern of summarizing it will be similar to what was done before, but without the convenient numerical breaks.

After declaring his wish to master love, the author explains that the public theater is quite possibly the best location for a man to find women.

There is a story in the next poem that refers to an actual event in the early history of Rome, when it was still under Romulus. The Romans took women from another town; these women are called the Sabines. Ovid provides a corrupted version of the same story.

Ovid moves graciously from discussions of flirting at the Circus to extolling the virtues of the Roman military. Then he shifts rapidly back to his interest in love and points out to readers that they should be aware that if it were socially acceptable for women to pursue men overtly, they would. He informs readers that awareness of this comes in handy for seducing women. He goes further to say that his perception is that the lust of women is greater than that of men.

After this, the author moves on to make a comment that many women will find to be painfully true: men are more inclined to want what they do not have, or to take what they do have for granted. Then he states clearly that any man who wants a long lasting love needs to cast out pride.

Another worthy admonition Ovid makes, is regarding his same gender friends. A man needs to be careful about mixing his wife and his closest friends as the risk for passion between the wife and one or more of the other men is rather high.

This book concludes with a few remarks against gold digging and the manner in which Ovid believes it proper for men to groom themselves. His last remark in this batch of



poems is to see that technique is vital and needs to be as diverse as the individuals with whom one is dealing.

Later on the author provides an account of what happened to Icarus. Readers may have heard of this tragedy. Icarus was lost at sea when makeshift wings melted in the heat of the Sun. Here Ovid explains that Icarus was actually with his father, and the two were making an incredible escape from Minos. The father refused to die with his son in Minos. Their only route for escape was skyward. The older man applied ingenuity and resourcefulness and through these means was able to create personal flying machines. He warned his son about going too high or too low. Icarus was lost not because he had not been warned but because he was lost first to the joy of his flying and that led to his making a fatal error.

## **Book 3, The Art of Love : Chapter 1, Book 1 Analysis**

In this set of poems the themes of romantic love and recitations of traditional Roman religious and civic legends are mutually inclusive.

The author writes about women, men, sex and the use of force. He fails to make the distinction between types of rape, and qualities of energy. The author, it seems, is referring more to a more delicate area of interpersonal dynamic wherein the only thing stopping two people from partnering is hesitation about consequences and who will take responsibility for the event.

This serious matter only comes up during the book and is not a major theme. The gods and the throes of love are the primary topics of interest. Male grooming and admonitions against gold-digging are the rest.



# Book 3, The Art of Love : Chapter 2, Book 2

## Book 3, The Art of Love : Chapter 2, Book 2 Summary

This chapter comes as a bit of a relief, in that the author discusses the matter of keeping a lover rather than finding and conquering them. Included in the poetry devoted to this purpose are affirmations and declarations made to the god of love, Cupid.

Then his pattern changes from romance to the path of culture and love, when he switches to the familial love of father and son. Here he relays the legend of how a man rescued himself and his son from Minos. Given no option but to fly, the father in fact finds the means to enable he and his boy to do this, however impossible others may have thought it to be. His solution is to mimic nature, and he resourcefully creates individual flying machines with wings built to fit himself and his son. He warns the boy about their weaknesses, indicating that flying too high or too low will bring him down and all will be lost. The son, Icarus, obeys until he is caught by the rapture of flying itself. Too caught up in his joy, he flies too high and his device is destroyed by the heat of the sun which causes him to crash into the sea. At that point, his father is unable to save him and he is tragically lost.

This metaphor turns useful when the following section of poetry is Ovid acting as the guiding father to younger men. He warns them away from relying solely upon their looks as these will fade.

He educates men that if they do not have much money, then they will have to find other ways to be giving and generous to female lovers. He admits that he uses his poetic abilities. He also expresses that the poorer a man is, the more tolerant of a lover he is apt to need to be.

For a love that lasts, the poet explains, there is one thing to do. The lover must cast out his pride, or rein it in, or abandon it or whatever it takes to get it out of the way. Otherwise, he implies through omission, the pride may well devour the love, thereby destroying the relationship.

He further claims that men do well to spend time apart from their lovers, but he makes a comment about the timing. It is imperative to avoid spending too much time apart. Enough separation will encourage the love and give freedom and space, but too much will cause the love to wither. In another part of the book there is a matching comment about this: he writes much later in "Cures for Love" that one means by which a man can release himself from loving a woman is to indulge completely in togetherness and sex.



He recounts the marriage of Agamemnon and Clymenestra, in which he simply states the women practiced fidelity as long as the man did, but once he did not, neither did she. Ovid tells readers that once he committed infidelity his wife "went bad."

Ovid advises men to include their woman when she is upset rather than leaving her all alone. After this he reverts to the gods, and writes of how the god Apollo appeared to him at the beginning of this writing project. He states that Apollo told him that Know Thyself is vital in love; a man needs to know what he can do and what he cannot do and then he needs to really work at what it is that he can do.

Upon conclusion, the author explains that he will provide lessons in love for the ladies through the next book. With that he has completed this book of The Art of Love.

## **Book 3, The Art of Love : Chapter 2, Book 2 Analysis**

This portion of the The Art of Love is like the one before it in that the entire book is one long poem. The meter continues to be rather steady. The style is constant and has not changed greatly. The writer's voice is easily recognizable.

Here, he uses some subtlety. Until this is understood there are a few sections of the poem that do not make much sense. He recounts a legend but follows it up by offering advice just as the father did in the preceding section.

Ovid describes for readers a number of ways to find a match and he has even braved the waters of beginning to find out how to keep one. This covers a variety of attitudes. He gives raw information and also advice to best address this situation.

The whole work holds together just fine. Even so, the poems themselves seem like broad strokes. The way that he connects legendary history, religion and pure urban passion is unique and very successful.

As a work of history, it jars modern readers into the awareness that the modern sexual revolutions were a particularly new evolution of culture. It does not appear that Rome in 2AD was anymore sexually conservative than America in 1965.



# Book 3, The Art of Love : Chapter 3, Book 3

## Book 3, The Art of Love : Chapter 3, Book 3 Summary

This is another book wherein the entire contents consist of one poem. This entire work is devoted to giving romantic advice to women by Ovid the poet. There is at least one point during the work where he behaves as though he is giving away trade secrets simply by acknowledging that it is possible that not all of this information has been shared before. He is sensitive to the fact that this make it seem to some as if he is a traitor.

The first force the author calls upon here is that of the goddess Venus, the goddess of beauty, often closely associated with love, since it is so easy to love beauty, and that which one loves is often beautiful in one's eyes. Again, this goddess was part of the official religion of the empire of Rome.

Next, the author gives guidelines to women, that they need to avoid promiscuity, at least when compared to the need for restraint amongst men. Ovid advances what may be read as a moderate view, that it is certainly okay for a woman to have a lover, even as he warns against too much promiscuity. The consequence fits a sociological norm of then and of today.

His next bit of advice for females, is about keeping a lover. This makes sexual behavior safer, and may permit a more robust level of sexual activity—this is ideally found in marriage but may require some variation. He encourages this. This often makes the best sense for a variety of reasons.

Along with this come recommendations regarding attire. He encourages the practice of women spending energy in making themselves attractive. He goes into some detail about this. Too little make up is a bad thing, but too much of it is a terrible error. He remarks that it is a severe problem when a woman's make up has an offensive odor.

The effort that ladies put into their hair, whether for their own pleasure, or one another's or for the joy of men, Ovid assures women, is well worth it. The effect that it has upon himself and other men is magnificent.

He then explores for women how to find a lover, whether for marriage or for sport. One piece of advice he uses is to assure them to be alert, that opportunities may be found in unusual places, whether the theater or at a public park, at the Circus or through a matchmaker.

He takes that advice to another level during the next section. At that time he points out to women that the funeral of a widow is an excellent opportunity to meet potential suitors.





The advice that he provides after this is more subtle. He recommends the use of go-betweens to shuttle messages back and forth from hopeful to possible love interest and back again. This emphasizes the emotional and psychodramatic portion of the relationship. It also helps to protect young, or otherwise naive women from seducers or bad selections by the interfering force of another. Such a person may temper the circumstances. For readers this is apt to be charming yet archaic.

The rest of his advice for the ladies revolves around competing with rivals. His most fundamental suggestion is for a woman to endure rivals and continue to accept her mate in the face of his other partners. The purpose for this is not for her to soak up insults but, on the contrary, to keep him through the simple actions of continuance. There are many cases where when a man acts first from lust, he will in fact grow to love the woman. A woman does well to keep him long enough for this natural transformation to take place. She should be alert to the fact that some men are best held off until and unless they have grown to love her. Others will not come to love her even if they acquire experience as her lover. As such, this technique, like so many of the others is dependent upon whom it is being worked upon. Women ought to harbor some caution regarding other women. He does not say that women should not trust one another, but urges them to safeguard themselves against excessive trust, as one of a lady's friends might in fact pursue a man of hers, especially if there is much to gain with little to prevent it. Ovid says that thwarting the efforts of rivals is in fact a wise maneuver.

Ovid tells women who have a lover to be sure to keep him going through the combined use of fear and hope. For many women, their own moods and responses to the man's behavior will cause this to occur quite naturally.

Next, the poet relays a mythical tale about a woman's own fears, especially with respect to sexual possessiveness. Here, Helen hears her husband refer to Aura. She is disturbed to learn of this rival. She pursues the matter until she discovers what is really happening. To find out once and for all, she goes to where her husband has gone, but trails him in secret. It is there that she discovers to her immense relief that he is in fact not having an affair or even trying to; he had spoken the name of a breeze, but in her jealous anxieties she had jumped to conclusions.

The last words of advice that Ovid gives to women is the same as some that he gave to men—the wisdom of Apollo to know thyself and to make the most of how one truly is. Do not trouble to pretend to be otherwise and use actively the gifts the gods have bestowed upon you. This is the best way to achieve success in love.

## **Book 3, The Art of Love : Chapter 3, Book 3 Analysis**

This entire book of The Art of Love is advice for women.

The author covers the subject. One wonders whether the translator has done his work correctly. The reason being that once again, more than half of this information is entirely



applicable to contemporary readers. The revival in popularity of Ovid may well be in part caused by the relative libertine nature of the present culture.

The poet, Peter Green has explained, has become much more popular again as the successful fruits of an advocacy plot run by scholars and publishers or owners of manuscripts and people who just love the poet's work.

Much of Ovid's advice to women is the same kind that both mothers and fathers give to growing girls, with their best interests at heart. How to find a lover mainly involves dressing nicely and putting oneself out in public and being open to the possibilities. Learn to thwart rivals and to keep a man interested through fear and hope; this gives a man the feeling that his lover has once again become someone he does not have.

This book is the end of The Art of Love.



# Book 4, The Cures for Love : Chapter 1, The Cures for Love

## Book 4, The Cures for Love : Chapter 1, The Cures for Love Summary

This last section of summary actually contains two books of the entire work on erotic poetry. The quality of the subject matter is altered here. This book is dedicated to those who are feeling themselves to be afflicted by love rather than basking in the good fortune of love. As earlier in the Erotic Poems, Ovid himself at times smiled upon and felt blessed by Cupid but on other occasions resentfully pressed the matchmaking, love-causing entity into giving some justification for causing Ovid to be in love the way that he was. The poet was feeling his love for others as something cruel and unfair.

This entire book is designed to address those sorts of emotions. There are readers who will find this offensive. Others will feel that the poet is offering means for mitigating otherwise difficult circumstances. Many will find relief in the messages between these pages.

At the outset he claims to favor the god of love. Then he goes on to observe that there are those who are plotting wars against this very deity due to dissatisfaction with his actions. Ovid declares that the god of love is innocent in all the chaos and turmoil that has ensued.

He then goes on to assert that he is "arming both sides." By that he means simply that both the women and the men are being equipped, not for war, but for love.

The poet moves on, instructing the "love lorn" that the cure for love often grows close to the cause of it, just as roses have thorns, and herbs are found growing near to nettles. He then assures readers that everyone needs his education in love, and that the world is fortunate that he is providing this public service through the writing and publication of these poems.

There are two main approaches to love sicknesses, he informs readers. The first is to catch the proverbial fire quickly and douse the emotional flames. The other essential means is more like the strategy for handling certain wildfires. Just let it burn until everything that is going to be consumed by it is. Eventually, it will just stop.

Love requires leisure time, the poet claims. A way to stave it off, to prevent it, he tells readers, is to keep the mind turned to business. Whether farming or warfare, or how to create the best coiffure, these other foci will help turn the mind to other matters.

Then the poet begins to offer self-help to expunge love. Think of every single flaw that the loved one has. The more critical or worse the person, the easier it will be to do this.



The poet explains that hate is not the true goal of these exercises, but rather indifference is the result aimed at. The whole purpose is to free oneself from accursed bondage caused by the love connection.

The author's next action is to set forth love precepts. He says that it is habit that makes love. Love can be brought or sent through the force of habit. This is but one precept. It is directed mainly for the purpose of attempting to control love. The whole force of this is to address the question—can man or woman come to control love? Ovid has confessed that he feels he does not, but that he would like to be love's master rather than caught forever in the role of its subordinate.

To focus on recovery for the love lorn the poet makes a very basic suggestion. Avoid being alone, he tells people. This of course makes plenty of sense. It may be more or less easy to do, depending upon the individual and the situation. It may be difficult to accept the comfort of being surrounded by strangers when facing the loss of a loved one, but it is liable to be more helpful than isolation. However, admittedly it is a far cry from the level of love and intimacy that might be truly deserved and desired.

After this, there is one more portion of the body of works. This last book is devoted to women. It is entitled "On Facial Treatment for Ladies," and consists of what would presently be well suited to a magazine article in many of women's lifestyle journals. This item, although fairly short, is incredible. It includes recipes for how to mix an excellent facial cleanser. This is followed by recipes devised so that women can produce their own make up, with the result being a well made up woman.

Beyond these ways of cultivating an attractive appearance, the author then pursues intangible forms of beauty—the soul and character of the entity. Just as one might exercise to be fit, but enjoy the fact that it will often make one more attractive, one hopes people will build character to be a better person. However, cultivating personal virtues because it makes one more desirable to "the best people and god" can also work. The author Ovid, has completed his treatise when he assures everyone that women of good character are the greatest, and their virtues shine like gemstones regardless of the state of their physical beauty and the gems in their jewelry.

## **Book 4, The Cures for Love : Chapter 1, The Cures for Love Analysis**

The author delivers more to readers. His work is consistent with all that came before it. These final two books address two questions: what to do about love when it seems out of control?; and what to do about circumstances in which loving another or being in love has become a form of suffering rather than something enjoyable? This is the trouble that the book Cures for Love is meant as a response to.

When the lover feels struck down and wounded by Cupid's arrows then he wants healing to address this problem. Staying in love is no better than having to live with some kind of battle injury.



Cures are needed. Ovid educates readers in one of the most prominently used kind. It is designed to destroy one's love for another until there is nothing remaining but indifference. The method is to emphasize all that one dislikes about another. This is precisely what one cannot avoid doing with anyone one does not like. It is the method recommended to reduce a feeling of love to a lack of caring. The opposite can in a way be done to nurture love and to cause hatred to dissolve into indifference or a neutral sense.

Following that exposition, the author shares wisdom and insight into women's facial care. This makes a funny yet practical end to the work. Thanks to these and other parts of the piece, the book contains material directed at both women and men.



# Characters

## Ovid & his Persona appears in Throughout the works

This is the poet. There is a great deal of discussion during the introductory material about Ovid and the theory of the persona. The persona is a peculiar reality. It would be false to say that an individual's persona is not their real self, except that there can be times when this is the case. In general the persona is like an artifice but of one's true self. To use costumes as an example, one might make a mask or a caricature of someone. When the persona is used, one dresses up in a costume and mask or expresses through caricature oneself instead of someone else.

In literary, prosaic terms there is also the "narrative voice." In poetry, there is something like this. The persona or the narrative voice, which exists in many poetic forms, can be truthful, fictional or some blend thereof. The orientation of The Erotic Poems of Ovid is heterosexual. The scholars are fairly certain that the persona is actually autobiographical. In other words, if it were the stage, the poet is wearing a mask designed to look like who he really is. This is rather funny, by theater standards but makes perfect sense according to literary practices.

In this role, Ovid is a largely invisible main character. Many of his poems spring from different perspectives. The identity is not so much what changes, in these cases, but the perspective. The poet does toy with point of view during the works, and therefore is not always quite the same person. This seems puzzling but within the literary realm it is not difficult to accomplish.

There is one poem in which Ovid announces himself as "Naso, that naughty provincial poet," (p. 111). Here is one of the many moments within the body of poetry wherein he is self-referential, but seems to be indicating something more along the order of an objective third person perspective. This is a literary and psychological device.

## Venus appears in multiple locations

Venus is the goddess of beauty. The poet calls out to her in diverse poems. Often he is simply thanking her, or asking for her divine presence to oversee his work. She comes up in the very first poem. The author is declaring that everyone has their role, based upon their identity, and that this is just as true of the goddesses as it is for the ordinary mortals.

Ovid warns, many times over, that assigning any goddess the wrong task is simply begging for trouble. It simply will not work nearly so well. In this case he refers to the mere idea of trying to have the goddess Venus performing the work of the goddess Minerva. Who would want to take away the expert and force someone who has no talent in the area to do the work? Perhaps a jester, or someone trying to teach humility and respect, but other than that, no one would do that without malicious intentions.



Later, during a poem about sending messages to potential lovers, the author writes of Venus again. Here he writes of hanging writing tablets at her shrine. Here we see religious practice: veneration and the use of offerings.

There are many more instances of Venus turning up in the books. The poet also namelessly refers to her as "the sexy mother of Cupid." Perhaps, he reports in another poem, Cupid's mother will help him. This oblique manner is the only way in which Ovid addresses the fact that Venus the goddess of beauty is a mother.

## **Corinna appears in multiple poems, especially in The Amores**

This is a main character in a number of poems. The scholar Peter Green explores who she really is. The final guess is that she is based largely on Ovid's first wife. The speculation is that she is a work of fiction, but that there is some real basis for her in the poet's life.

Ovid knew this and directly writes about it. This exemplifies the social nature of the poetry. He is in working dialogue with the public. He writes that he knows of at least one flesh and blood woman who believes that she is the inspiration for his character Corinna. This occurs in book 2 of The Amores.

Earlier and again later, Corinna occurs simply as a reference. She is a character. Early on, she is a hopeful "target" of his affections. Someone to have a go between send letters to. Later, she is a woman who is actually in his arms. Still further on, Corinna is with her rejoicing lover—and readers discover that this man is not her husband, but there is a man who is her husband.

This is an important recurring character in the entire set of poetic works, but she figures more prominently during The Amores.

Some would argue that her role in the poetry is far more significant than that of the goddess due to her being a genuine literary figure of the poet's creation. However true this is as an example of human creativity, the goddess represents another significant line of these poems, and that is the way Ovid is working with the state religion. The role of religion in society and of the gods in art and society is of great significance. When the city of Rome was founded, it was believed that gods were behind it, and as soon as the physical aspect of it was reasonably secure, religion was brought into to the city as the next most important feature of life. Rome was founded by a demi-god, son of a vestal virgin who was raped by the god of war. Her children thwarted efforts to eliminate an aristocratic lineage, and founded one of the most powerful cities and empires the world has ever known.

Corinna, much more demure, is a literary model for real live women in mortal love relations. She is of great importance within the realm of the poetry and tickled the fancies of many Roman people who read the works of Ovid. In this sense she is more



like a means of promotion and marketing for Ovid: she is a lovable and attractive popular fictional character—well known, and known to not be real.

## **Cupid appears in many times in the book**

This is the god of love. He is referred to at numerous locations about the book. He is not ever depicted entirely clearly.

There are certain attributes of the god Cupid that are provided during the poems. Readers must trust that the translator did his work correctly. First and foremost it is made clear that the Roman god is the god of love. Next, the author tells readers that he is armed with a bow.

The poet Ovid cries out to this deity, both in gratitude and in supplication, seeking mercy. He is thankful that this god has made him fall in love, and to be able to love.

At other times, the poet is resentful towards Cupid and asks, perhaps rhetorically, why has the god done this to Ovid, why has he caused him to love this way?

Cupid is seen as a son. His mother is highly attractive. He is youthful, perhaps even a boy rather than a man. His actions, his ability to cause love, is more inferred than directly stated. Here is a case where the better one knows the ancient religion the easier it would be to understand this poem. He is at times called Love.

## **Husband appears in Various locations**

This is not only a man, but it is only one man in each case. He appears in many poems as the man to whom the poet's narrative voice is speaking. Often they are directly broaching the subject of the wife's infidelity. Ovid gives the husband advice for handling this.

The husband is to do this in more than one way. The general recommendation is tolerance. The poet describes ways for coping and provides the husband with reassurance that there will even be gains for him by this rather than losses if he will only heed the advice.

In some cases, Ovid explains, the woman needs only to lie and to deny this, thereby practicing what is known as discretion. The poet is not opposed to this, and suggests that the husband's role is to indulge his own wish to believe any lies and denials that his wife gives so that her infidelity will not disrupt his false, but cheerful belief in her fidelity.

Further, Ovid explains that due to this toleration on his part, the wife will be able to endure his nights out with his friends. Otherwise, she would not be able to endure being left out to this extent. Some form of personal indulgence strongly associated with pleasure is called for.





The poet also tells the husband that his wife will be more popular and therefore he too will have greater social standing when his wife takes lovers. This will also enhance his social connections and he will be apt to receive at least some gifts, and be able to share presents that she receives from other men.

There are other poems in which the husband is the one practicing infidelity. A poem about him denying this to his wife, is followed by one in which he discusses the affair his wife was referring to with the maid, only in this poem he is guilty.

There are poems within this work, thankfully, where the husband's main concern is his actual wife in a mutual way.

The passion of a married couple amongst themselves is also valued. Lastly, the husband is shown "as rival" to some other man who is so interested in his wife. The other man is longing for kisses and hoping that the woman he desires will spurn her husband to his private satisfaction.

## **Icarus appears in The Art of Love, Book 2**

This is the name of the son of a famous father-son pair. The father and son needed to escape Minos and did so through the use of flying devices the father made. The son was lost during the flight because he became carried away with the ecstasy of the flight itself and in his excitement failed to abide his father's warnings.

## **'Girl' appears in The Art of Love, Book 3**

Here is a female character. The author is attempting to explain about the risks of distress in love. He refers to men who have developed bad reputations from dumping mistresses, and women who have suffered through them. He warns readers about falling into distress.

In this context, there is a young woman he calls a girl. Of her he has written, "That girl could snuff the undying Vestal fire, could loot Isis' temple of its sacred gear, or slip her lover a mixture of aconite and hemlock—who denies her favours after taking gifts!" (p. 228).

## **Muse, specifically Ovid's Muse appears in multiple locations**

This is a mysterious yet famous entity. It is a type of mystical being. The Muses are considered some type of presence that greatly inspires artists in their work.

Each artist has his or her own Muse. This is also true in the case of Ovid. He refers to his own Muse in a small number of special locations throughout the Erotic Poems.



## **Macer appears in The Amores, Book 2**

This is a direct reference to one of the author's teachers. Macer was an experienced poet and teacher who traveled with Ovid when the latter was young and needing to learn more about how to be a high quality poet. He was an actual historical figure, rather than a fictional model.

## **Mistress appears in throughout**

This is actually a reference to a number of women. Much like "husband," each is an individual and is addressed as such during the entire body of poetic works. Here mistress is almost another word for "lover." This title is used irrespective of the marital status of the woman. Mistress is also used regardless of the relation between the man and the woman. This means that the woman is Mistress whether referring to her husband, or to servants, or to some lover who is not her husband, but is liable to have also been called this by other women, just as men often called superiors Master. It is important to note that this was term of respect and that it did not have the negative connotations associated with distrust or bitterness against Master and Mistress. It was used amongst free people, citizens, and slaves.

## **Lover appears in throughout**

Here is another general but meaningful term referring to someone who is either sexually involved or people who are pursuing each other. That is, two who are passing letters and building up towards either disunion or to sexual involvement; two who may be said to be engaging in romance, may be called "lovers."

This is important since it can include those who use "proper decorum" and great restraint and refrain from sexual activity with others for reasons. Youths having a romance who never go further than to sigh and hold hands can still be called lovers, but in the context of this poetry, lovers are often sexually involved.

## **Vulcan appears in various locations**

This is the god of metal working, especially the smithing rather than the mining and refining processes. He is the husband of Venus. He is reputed to be the father of Cupid, but there is some suspicion that Cupid may be the result of his wife's affair with the god of war, Mars. He is told of more under his wife's listing. He is Master of one of the most vital crafts known to humanity, and a symbol of technological advancement, skill and culture.



## **Julia appears in Introductory material and notes at the end**

Julia is Ovid's daughter. She was exiled due to her promiscuity. She was known to have five lovers.



## Objects/Places

### **Coiffure** appears in various locations

This is a special word for a hair arrangement for ladies. These are referred to at a variety of points during the text and can also be witnessed immortalized in Roman sculptures.

### **Bed** appears in multiple listings

This is the same item during the Erotic Poems as it is in real life today. It is important as a site of sleeping and love making.

### **Kisses** appears in infrequent but more than once

These are an enjoyable means of expressing affection. There are both nonsexual and sexual kinds of kisses.

In the poetry, there are a few instances of kissing and they typically exist either on their own or as a form of stimulating foreplay. The Art of Love, Book 1 on page 179 showcases one example of this.

### **Minos** appears in The Amores, Book 3

This is the location from which Icarus and his father escaped.

### **Crete** appears in The Amores, Book 3

This is an island of the Grecian peninsula along the Mediterranean Sea. It is mentioned in reference to Minos. It is infamous for having been the home to an archaic creature called a minotaur, which was some kind of warrior with the head of a bull. There was a labyrinthine maze that is referred to as an acute means of punishment on the island. Whilst Romans had a time when they fed the state's enemies to lions, on Crete legends tells that they would release people into a maze, to be hunted down by the minotaur.

### **Ox** appears in The Art of Love, Book 3

The ox relied upon pervasively as a farm animal prior to the centuries when mechanical combustion engines were created. There are other farm animals strong enough for heavy work, but the ox has been a precious help to mankind, and is used here in



reference to the yoke that binds it, and to the farm work that it performs. It is also used as a symbol of great strength, extensively throughout world literature.

## **Bow and Arrow appears in The Amores & elsewhere**

Prior to the invention and proliferation of the firearm, bows and arrows were some of the greatest weapons ever devised by mankind. Great for hunting, sporting and warfare, the bow and arrow permits attacks to be made from safe distances. It appears here in reference to Cupid and love, but is also mentioned in reference to the goddess Minerva.

## **Our Lady of Wheatfields appears in The Amores & elsewhere**

This is another way of referring to a goddess. As such, the title and the entity are not objects in the usual sense. The goddess Ceres rules the wheat fields and all those processes directly relate to them. The poet is somehow both reverent and irreverent about the gods. He refers to them very frequently during the love poems, but on one occasion dares to mention disbelief in them. Most of the deities are understood to be real forces, powers and principles of nature and/or of society but they have lost personification and are no longer called gods. This is true of Love, the Sun and Moon, and the combined forces of nature that govern farm crops and even human fertility.

## **Torch appears in The Amores**

This is a device used to hold fire, and thus light, in a way that can be controlled and manipulated by humans. A torch was typically a long pole, arm's length or longer, with burning fire located at one end.

## **Sugar Daddy appears in The Amores, Book 1**

In this case, the translator has chosen to use this term to best reflect what the original poem said in Latin. In modern terms a Sugar Daddy is an envy-ridden way of describing a man of means who spends freely on a woman—most often his lover. In some cases the "sugar" is another form of affection, but often enough it means money.

Ovid admitted that he often did not have much money, and elsewhere the problem of poets not having much money is discussed. This may be why the translator chose this way of referring to a man. The financial provider, whether husband or unmarried lover, has control. "Sugar Daddy still calls the shots," (p. 154).



## **Baby Doll appears in The Amores, Book 2**

This is also not an object in any usual sense. Baby Doll is an colloquialism which the translator has selected in an effort to either sincerely transfer the original Latin, or to update the text, or to preserve poetic meter while having a little fun. Baby Doll here means "the wife." The poem is about the dynamics of married love.

## **Temple appears in The Art of Love, Book 3**

This is a place of religious worship. There are many of these in Rome. Unlike many modern locations, the very idea of monotheism was either suppressed or in fact foreign or nonexistent within their culture. Offerings were given at temples. There were diverse rites, given to particular deities, conducted at home or in temples dedicated to specific deities.

## **Rome appears in Throughout**

This is the name of both the city and the empire. The author was educated in Rome and lived there until he was forcibly exiled. Unlike some others, he accepted banishment over death or imprisonment. Rome had existed for a few hundred years at the time Ovid wrote the poetry. While it is not directly mentioned much during the poetic works, it is quite clear that the location of the works is understood to be Rome. This is made explicit when the author refers to having written the poems based upon personal experience.



# Themes

## Sexual passion

These are love poems, and they have been labeled erotic for a reason. The poet describes aspects of passion and how it manifests in the world as he finds it. He tells readers about how it manifests in relating with others.

There is a set of relationships that turn on the basis of sexual passion during the poems. One is the marital relationship. He writes a bit of the love between husband and wife but he writes just as much about marital infidelities and how to cope with them.

The women are consistently referred to as Mistresses, unless they are servants. This is the case whether the woman is married or not to the lover or hopeful in question.

The poetry is also called erotic because it is not sexually graphic and explicit in general, but does contain these elements. The author is able to describe for readers: husbands loving their wives faithfully; husbands having affairs with another woman but denying it; men who are lusting after a married woman and resenting her husband because they are so jealous and covetous of his wife.

Ovid also writes from the perspective of anxiously jealous married women.

Over all, sexual passion is the crux upon which much of this poetry turns. Ovid knows this and delights in it.

## Roman Deities

The religion of Rome appears many times throughout this work. The poet mentions Apollo. Apollo was a major god, and is associated with the Sun. He had a personified set of stories and myths if only to enable people to relate with him. He was a kind god. He was a musician and a healer. It was also thanks to him that oracles were established to provide answers to humans for the questions they posed.

The goddess Venus is also prominent in these works. She was the goddess of beauty, and due to beauty's connection with attraction, it is not surprising that she is often called upon by the poet in the context of the Erotic Poems.

The god Cupid is immensely important in this work. He is known to have been the child of the married deities Venus and Vulcan. Vulcan was the god of smiths and possibly of the fiery works of the Earth herself—meaning volcanoes and other mountain building processes. Smiths were so important in the ancient world that they were sometimes crippled quite literally in order to prevent them from fleeing or even relocating. Cupid is the god of love. The difficulties of love are perhaps fully expressed when he is described

as a toddler armed with a bow and arrows that instead of injuring people in any usual sense cause them to fall in love with another.

Elegy is a goddess who is of great importance in these works. She is actually the goddess of the very form of poetic verse that the books consist of.

There are other mentions of Roman deities within the poems, but these are the most important, and each has a place of notable relevance.



# Style

## Point of View

This work is a set of books by a Roman poet. Ovid was a prestigious man from a high class family, but not from the first class. The citizens had been divided into classes according to a schematic centuries earlier. The author came from a family of equestrians, which was a respectable middle class position.

The author grew up in Rome when it had an empire and still in a strong and growing position. The expansions of the city had simply continued from the time of its first foundations and did not cease until times when the city and/or empire was fended off and pushed back. This was typically a sign of having over-extended itself. As such, Ovid was justifiably proud to be a Roman at the height of her glory.

The culture of the time was entering into a reaction to excessive liberality. The social class that was most notorious for rash infidelity was actually the highest class. This had become a bone of contention. The author actually advocates tolerance of infidelity. His set of values and attitude clashed with the recent political changes.

That being the case, the poet was at risk. He received much popular support and his published works were warmly received by the people. However, he was thrown out by the government. He spent much of his life in exile.

The author writes from two perspectives. The introduction refers to the confusion regarding whether this was his personal perspective or whether it was a literary device known as a persona. The persona may have been autobiographical, or it may have been more like a character from a theatrical show.

## Setting

As previously mentioned, the home of the author was the city of Rome. This is the location for the majority of the poems. While this is true, the timelessness of the works creates a special effect.

The best way to describe the way the setting comes across would be if people woke up and found themselves as if in a dream, living in Rome at the time that these poems were written. The catch is that they would be living the same lives they live in the New Millenium, only with changes in language, technology, and attire. Everything is so different and yet, it has not changed at all—it is real life, now. That is the nature of the setting of these poems.



## Language and Meaning

The language of the Erotic Poems is a bit of a controversial subject. The works have been translated. As mentioned at the top of the summary, the art of translation is challenging enough, to do so with poetry is even more of a feat.

The words that the translator has chosen are neither overly plain nor exceedingly complex. There are a few choice words that will make it a good idea to keep a dictionary handy, but these are the exception rather than the rule.

The translator has also used a small number of choice phrases that suggest contemporary vernacular. It is not clear whether this was done to preserve poetic meter, or to please young high school and undergraduate audiences. It may have even been the most precise way of translating—which indicates that Ovid wrote using a little idiomatic language.

## Structure

The structure of the entire work is that it encompasses three books of poetry. Within each, the poems are numbered but not titled. Their form is a bit of an illusion because they have been translated. The translation of poetry, because of the rules of verse, is different from translating prose. If an author writes in a certain meter, then the translator has double the challenge of the prose writer. There are many questions about how to change over the meaning and the structure from one language to another. This is not always possible, and even when it is, it makes the translation effort relatively arduous by comparison.

In this case, the work appears in English with a regularly ordered meter. However, there is no rhyme to speak of anywhere throughout the entire body of works.

The first work, the Amores, is divided into three books. On the first page it is explained that the author produced five of these, but only three are included. These contained numbered poems. Each poem is self contained. There is a rhythmic regularity to the meter that is reminiscent of song lyrics but there is nothing resembling actual rhyme. It is highly likely that this has been caused by the translation process but it is not clear based solely upon this text.

The remaining works consist of books. Each book, however, is made of one poem that runs on for pages at a time.



## Quotes

"No one would deny Ovid's bookishness," p. 63.

"Every lover's on active service, my friend, active service, believe me and Cupid has his headquarters in the field. Fighting and love-making belong to the same age-group—in bed as in war, old men are out of place. A commander looks to his troops for gallant conduct, a mistress expects no less," p. 100.

"...naughty provincial poet," p. 111.

"It's what Baby Doll says that counts," p. 113.

"...when you're trying to extinguish a fire/ either catch it quick or let it burn out," p. 242.

"Love was better than doing nothing. That's how Cupid slips in; that's how he stays," p. 244.

"In their opinion, my Muse is a scandalous wanton," p. 249.

"Now could anyone call my precepts too tough? Why I even at times play the peacemaker's role," p. 254.

Which son will the mother most love of her offspring? The soldier who may never (she fears) return from the war," p. 255.

"Venus has often shamefully been forced to quit the field by Diana," p. 245.

"Another young man, though cured, had a neighbourhood problem—running into his mistress got him down; he couldn't take it," p. 257.

"Some fabricate stories...claim there's no / Woman they haven't slept with," p. 210.

"Take care not to criticize girls for their shortcomings," p. 210.



## Topics for Discussion

Discuss matters of timelessness in contrast to timeliness with respect to the work. Where is the work timely, with respect to Rome when it was first published? Where is it timeless, meaning as relevant today as it was 2000 years ago?

What is the relationship between Cupid and Venus?

Who is Romulus?

Why did Caesar Augustus banish Ovid the poetic politician?

Why was Ovid's father concerned by his talent for and affection for poetry? Describe the solution and specify whether or not you agree with it.

What is the Elegiac Tradition?

Do you like these poems? Why or why not?

Which was your favorite of these books? Which the least? Provide one reason for each.

Who is Elegy and why does she matter?

Do you think Ovid is religious or spiritual based upon these poems? Explain your answer.