

# Yellow Narcissus

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*...when Narcissus died, the goddesses of the forest appeared and found the lake, which had been fresh water, transformed into a lake of salty tears.*

*"Why do you weep?" the goddesses asked.*

*"I weep for Narcissus," the lake replied.*

*"Ah, it is no surprise that you weep for Narcissus," they said, "for though we always pursued him in the forest, you alone could contemplate his beauty close at hand."*

*"But . . . was Narcissus beautiful?" The lake asked.*

*"Who better than you to know that?" the goddesses said in wonder. "After all, it was by your banks that he knelt each day to contemplate himself!"*

*The lake was silent for some time. Finally, it said:*

*"I weep for Narcissus, but I never noticed that Narcissus was beautiful. I weep because, each time he knelt beside my banks, I could see, in the depths of his eyes, my own beauty reflected."*

*"What a lovely story," the alchemist thought.*

When Paulo Coelho wrote that well-known prologue, he likely didn't intend it to land in a newsletter that celebrates the preservation of family data and examines the intersection between nature and nurture. But yet, here it is.

Why? Well, the fact of the matter is that when studying genealogy, one must look closely at themselves and what they reflect to the world. For many, discovering your roots is an incomprehensible task that can feel overwhelming when you begin. For others, it is exhilarating and the source of many sleepless nights and frequent discussions about long lost family and historical context. But the beauty of genealogy is that, much like the lake and Narcissus, your quest for answers to understand where you come from breeds a greater appreciation for who you already are. Just when you think that it is their beauty that defines you, you come to discover that you are beautiful. Approaching a search, no matter what the initial intention; finding a biological parent, discovering your ethnicity, or reuniting with a long lost relative, begins with some very simple steps to determine if you are ready to sit at the banks of your vast family lake and see your reflection therein.