Once, there lived a man with the name of Teiresias. He was a prophet with the capability to look into the future. One day he was approached by a fair woman who had given birth to a child. This baby was to be named Narcissus, but the mother worried for the boy's safety. His stunning beauty was something that the immortal ones would be envious of. The woman questioned him and was comforted with his words: "The boy will grow up safe and sound, with a long life ahead of him, unless he learns to love." The woman walked away, content that her son would be safe. At least for now.

Close by, in the ancient woods of Arcadia, where whispers of the gods floated on the breeze, there lived a nymph named Echo. Her voice was as melodious as a nightingale's song, but a curse had befallen her. Zeus had been having secret affairs with other women behind Hera's back. When she found out about this, she punished all that was involved. This included the unfortunate Echo. The curse that Hera bestowed upon her would assure that Echo would only be able to speak the echo of the person before her for all eternity.

One day, Echo crossed paths with Narcissus, now grown into a young and handsome hunter known for his unparalleled beauty. Narcissus was proud and arrogant, dismissing all who admired him. Echo, hidden behind the trees, watched him from afar, captivated by his enchanting presence. Although this was a mistake. She wanted to make herself known, to tell him that she loved him with all her being, but she could not. Not after the curse that the queen of Gods placed on her.

Poor Echo had run out of patience to withhold herself from the handsome hunter. She hid behind a bush, determined that this would be the time she told him she loved him. As she concealed herself, she rustled some leaves to get his attention. Narcissus spun wildly around to where the noise had come from.

“Who is there? Show yourself!” Narcissus cried out.

“Yourself.” repeated Echo, finally leaving her hiding spot.

“What are you talking about? You are just one of those other admirers of me!” Narcissus spat arrogantly, “Leave me alone, you filthy creature!”

“Filthy creature.”

Echo walked away, filled with sorrow, and tears in her eyes.

Close by, Narcissus stumbled across a clear pool of water. He saw an extremely attractive man in the water, staring back at him. Their hair was fine strands of gold, their eyes were as blue as a summer sky. He instantly fell in love. As the days passed, Narcissus's arrogance grew. He became consumed by his own reflection, gazing at himself in the clear waters of a pond. Entranced by his own beauty, he could not tear himself away. Echo, who had been silently watching, felt her heart ache for him. She wished he could see beyond his own image and feel the love she held for him.

The gods, witnessing this tragic tale, took pity on Echo. They transformed her into the very essence of her existence—a mere echo, a voice that would forever linger in the mountains and valleys. As for Narcissus, he remained by the pond, captivated by his reflection until his final breath.

And so, the woods of Arcadia whispered the tale of Echo and Narcissus, a story of unrequited love and the consequences of vanity, reminding all who heard it of the power of the Gods.

By Katie Gaarn-Larsen and Matilda Applegate 1W