

### Abducting Europa: Literary and Artistic Devices

*Coast View with the Abduction of Europa*,  
Claude Lorrain, about 1645



*The Abduction of Europa*, Rembrandt  
Harmensz. Van Rijn, 1632



In literature, foreshadowing is used when a writer provides written cues or clues to indicate what will happen next in the story. Artists do a similar thing by providing visual clues. Look closely at the two paintings, describe what you think is going to happen next. What visual clues led you to your response? Write your answer for each painting below.

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In literature, the climax is the pivotal, most intense point in the story. Look closely at the two paintings which show two different scenes of the same mythological story about the abduction of Europa. Which of the two paintings best illustrates the climax? What visual clues led you to your response? Write your answer below.

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Read the excerpt from the Roman poet Ovid's *Metamorphoses* below. Circle the passages where Ovid used foreshadowing and the passage that is the climax of the story. Discuss which part of the story each artist (Lorraine and Rembrandt) chose to illustrate in his painting. Was one artist more "faithful" to Ovid's story?

Quickly the cattle were driven from the mountain and headed for the shore, as Jupiter had directed, to spot where the great king's daughter [Europa] was accustomed to play in company with her Tyrian maidens. Majesty and love do not go well together, nor tarry long in the same dwelling place. And so the father and ruler of the gods, who wields in his right hand the three-forked lightning, whose nod shakes the world, laid aside his royal majesty along with his scepter, and took upon him the form of a bull. In this form, he mingled with the cattle, lowed like the rest, and wandered around, beautiful to behold, on the young grass. His color was white as the untrodden snow, which has not yet been melted by the rainy south wind. The muscles stood rounded upon his neck, a long dewlap hung down in front; his horns were twisted but perfect in shape as if carved by an artist's hand, cleaner and more clear than pearls. His brow and eyes would inspire no fear, and his whole expression was peaceful.

Agenor's daughter [Europa] looked at him in wondering admiration because he was so beautiful and friendly. But, although he seemed so gentle, she was afraid at first to touch

him. Presently, she drew near and held out flowers to his snow-white lips. The disguised lover rejoiced and, as a foretaste of future joy, kissed her hands. Hardly any longer could he restrain his passion. And now he jumps sportively about on the grass, now lays his snowy body down on the yellow sands; and, when her fear has little by little been allayed, he yields his breast for her maiden hands to pat and his horns to entwine with garlands of fresh flowers. The princess even dares to sit upon his back, little knowing upon whom she rests. The god little by little edges away from the dry land and sets his borrowed hoofs in the shallow water; then he goes further out and, soon, is in full flight with his prize on the open ocean. She trembles in fear and looks back at the receding shore, holding fast a horn with one hand and resting the other on the creature's back. And her fluttering garments stream behind her in the wind.

Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 2:833-875  
Translated by Frank Justus Miller. Loeb Classical Library, 42  
Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1977, vol. 1, pp