

Best Buds

Flowers carry different meanings across cultures and over time. Work with your partner to match flowers from artworks with their corresponding symbolic function.

Chastity

Romantic Love

Fertility

Enlightenment

Impermanence

Fidelity

A.



B.



C.



D.



E.



F.



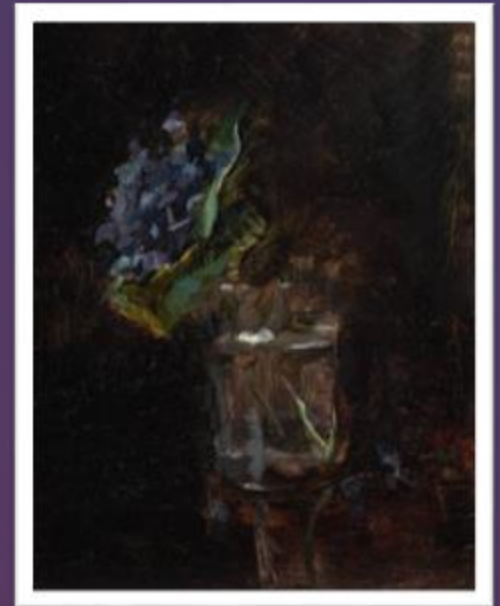
A. Enlightenment

Blooming from muddy waters, the lotus flower represents the potential for humans to overcome challenges and reach higher planes of spirituality according to Buddhist practitioners. Here, the bodhisattva of wisdom, Manjushri, sits atop a lotus throne, indicating that he has transcended the cycle of birth and death and achieved enlightenment.



B. Fidelity

In the late 19th century, when Toulouse-Lautrec painted this work, violets were associated with loyalty in France as men often bought violets from street vendors as gifts for women. The painting could therefore be interpreted as a pictorial offering to a loved one or friend, except for the lack of an inscription and the fact that its first owner was a prominent collector.



C. Chastity

This scene includes many hallmark symbols of the Virgin Mary, such as the crescent moon and, most notably, the lilies that grow out of the heads of the putti, or angels. Religious writers from the early medieval period through the Renaissance often used botanical imagery to symbolize ecclesiastical beliefs. Lilies became synonymous with the purity of the Virgin Mary and are almost always found in depictions of the Annunciation.



D. Fertility

The large flowers along the base of this vessel rest beneath images of an ox plowing a field; a male and female planting seeds; two figures holding up a pair of cups, or *quero*; and another figure with a large storage vessel in front of a building. Supporting these agricultural activities, these flowers represent an abundant harvest.



E. Romantic Love

Much like in the Western world today, roses in Victorian-era England conveyed feelings of love and passion. In this painting based loosely on Chaucer's allegorical poem *Roumant de la Rose*, the Pilgrim meets Idleness, who disguises herself as a maiden by donning a rose head wreath.



F. Impermanence

For centuries people across Japan have ushered in spring with *hanami*, or flower-viewing festivals, which celebrate the arrival of one of the country's national flowers, the cherry blossom. Only lasting a week or two before going dormant, cherry blossoms signify the ephemeral nature of life. During this brief period, groups of friends and family gather beneath cherry blossoms to marvel at their resplendent yet fleeting beauty.



VIRTUAL DATE NIGHT