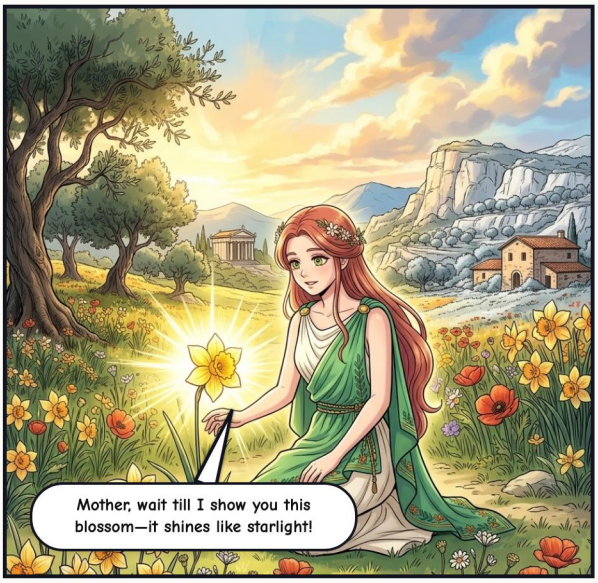
DEMETER



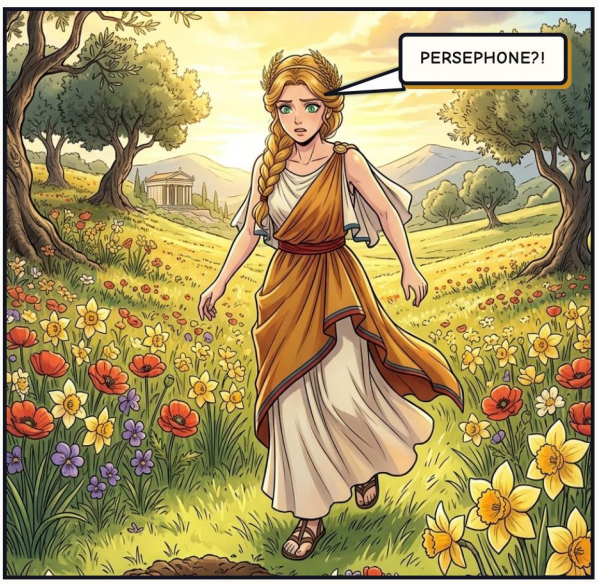
Book VI · The Winter of the World

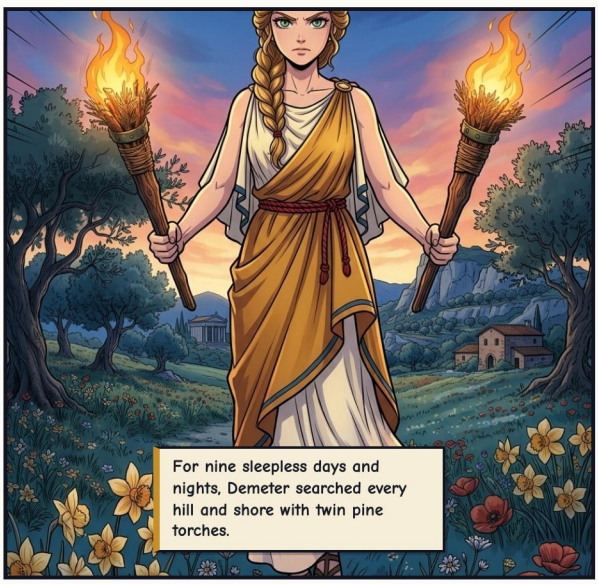
ACT I — THE LAST MORNING












She tore the veil from her hair, and set out across the whole earth.


A girl with flowers in her hair—did you see her?
No one would tell her the truth.


Nine days. Nine nights. Every hill, every shore.


She would not taste ambrosia or sweet nectar. She did not wash. She did not rest.

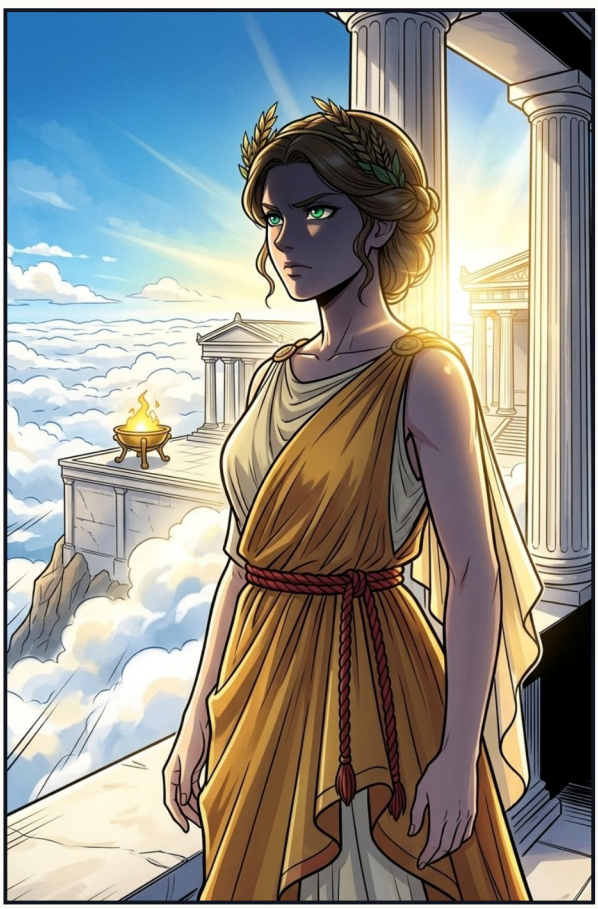


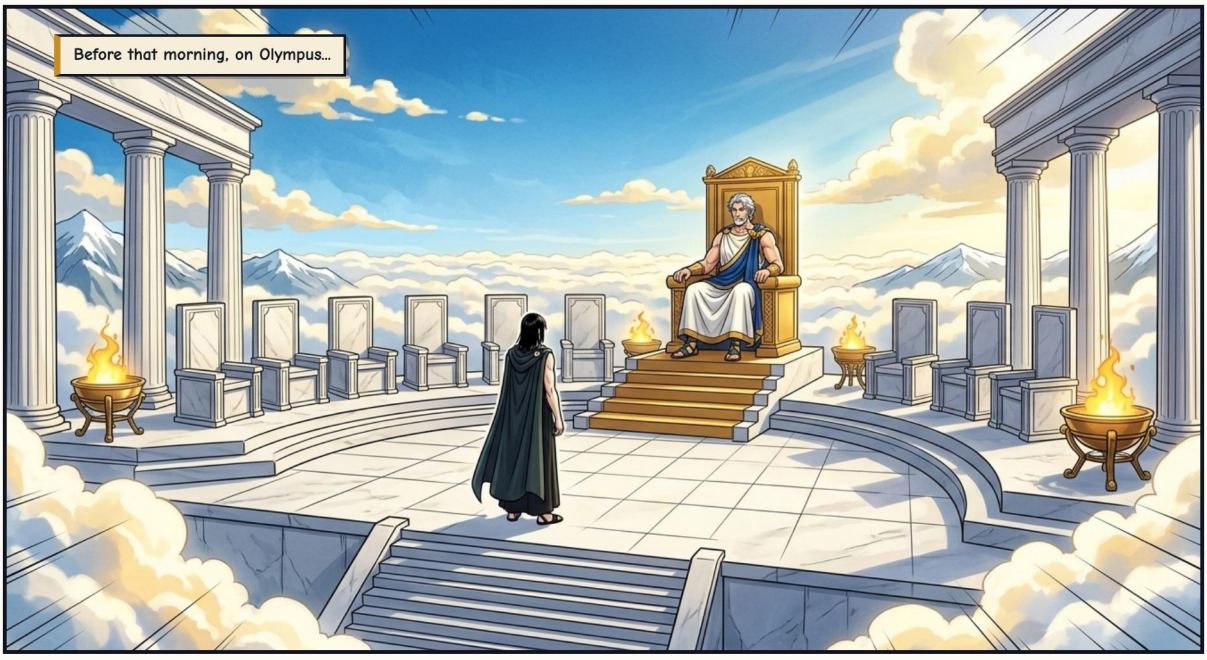
ACT II – WITNESSES OF THE SKY

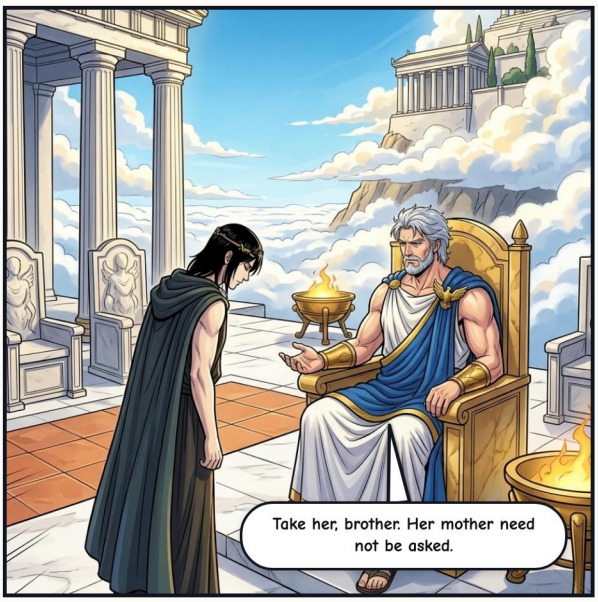








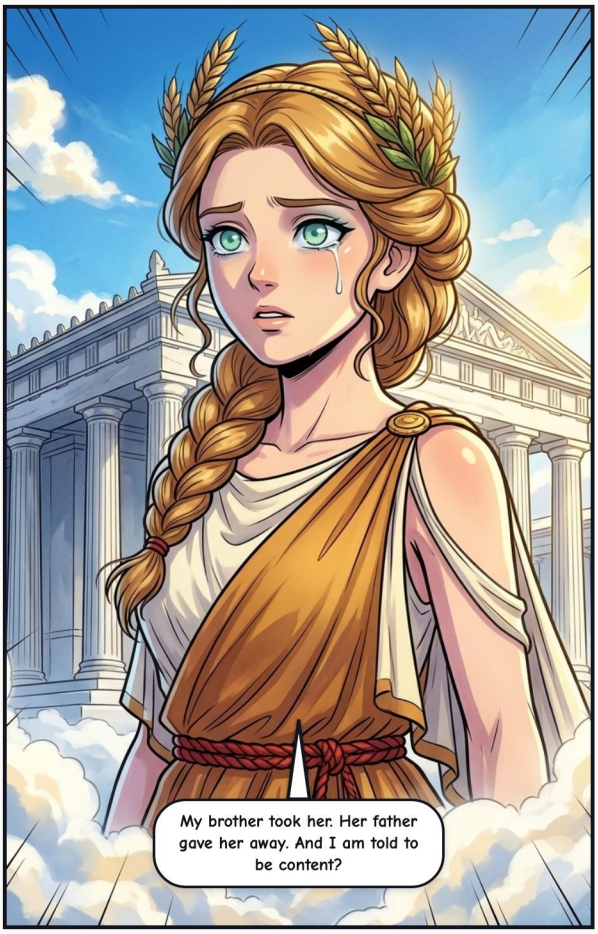

Before that morning, on Olympus...

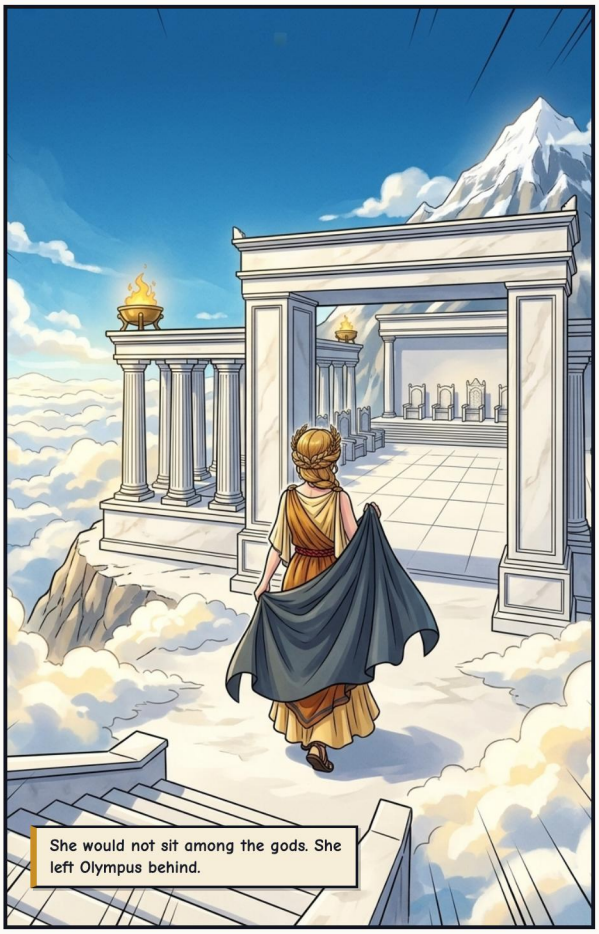

Take her, brother. Her mother need not be asked.


And the Earth grew a flower to please him.

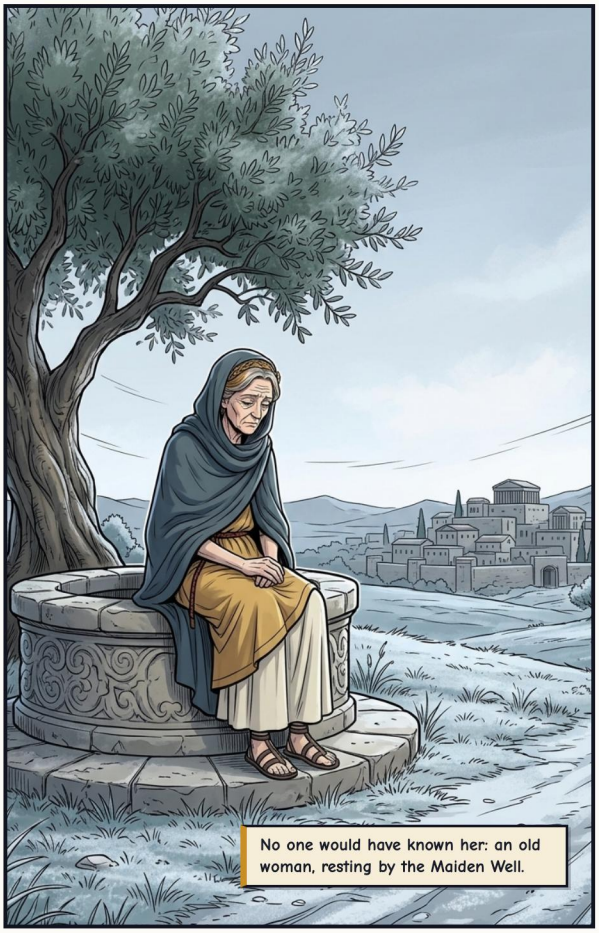

"From my chariot in the sky, I saw everything."



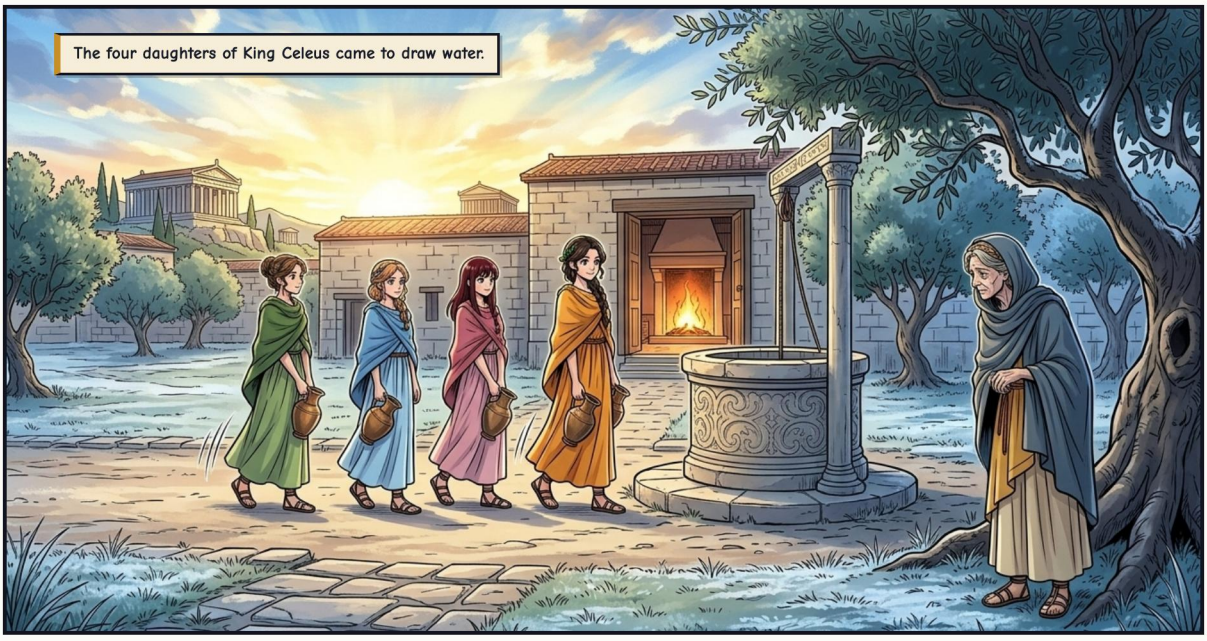

My brother took her. Her father gave her away. And I am told to be content?

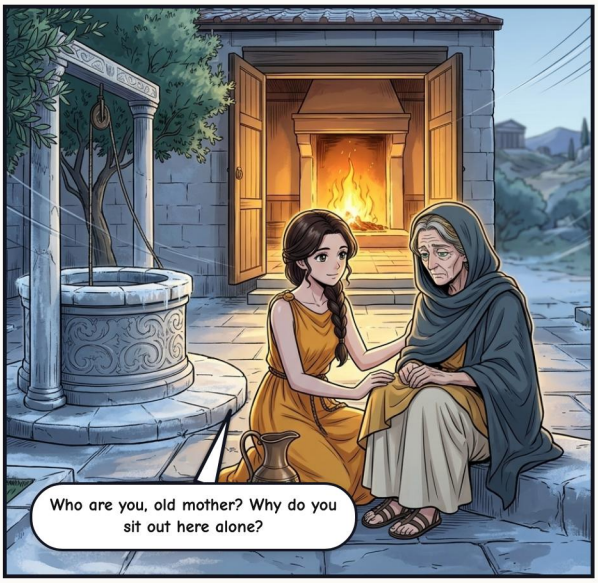

She would not sit among the gods. She left Olympus behind.


She wandered among mortal towns until the first frosts, and came to Eleusis.


No one would have known her: an old woman, resting by the Maiden Well.

ACT III – THE STRANGER AT THE WELL



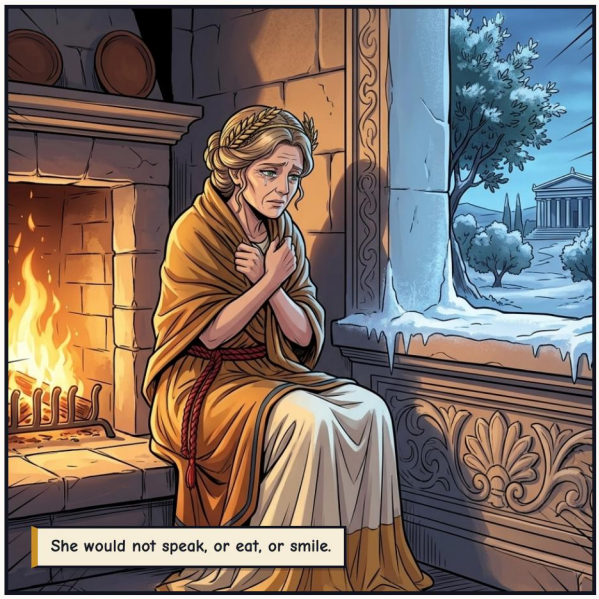









At the threshold her head touched the beam, and light filled the doorway.

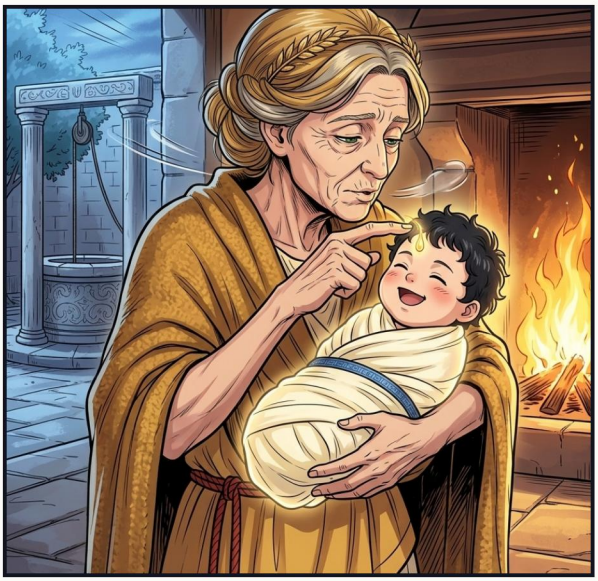

She would not speak, or eat, or smile.


Until old Iambe, a servant of the house, joked and clowned, and made her smile at last.

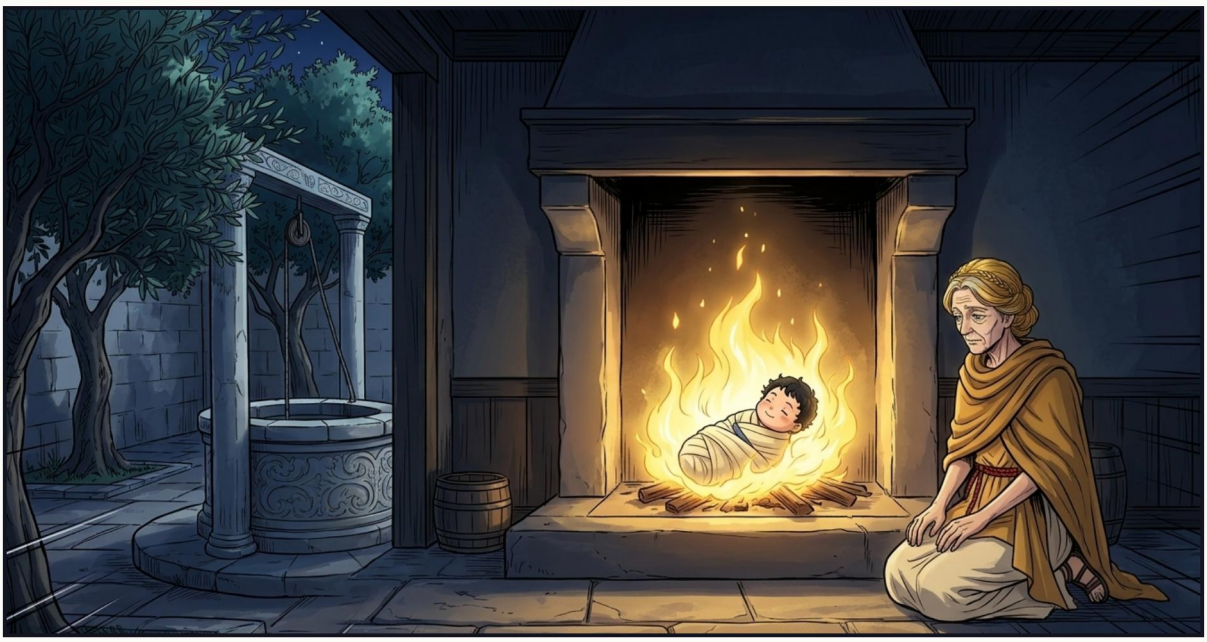

No wine for me. Barley, water and mint, mixed together.


Raise my son for me, and you will be rewarded beyond all envy.

ACT IV – CHILD OF FIRE





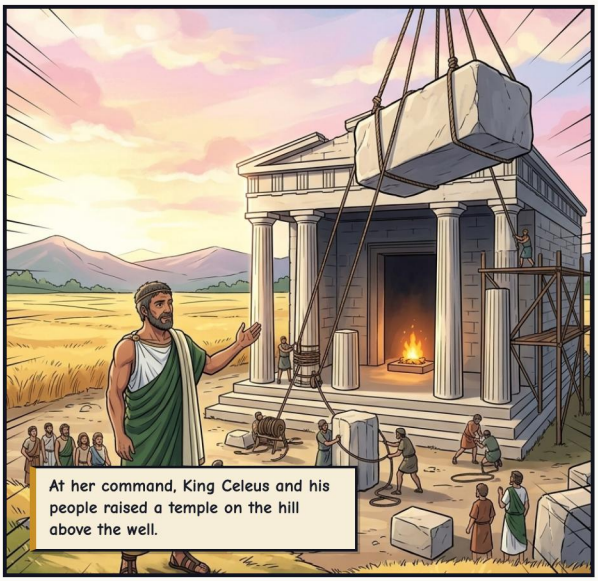




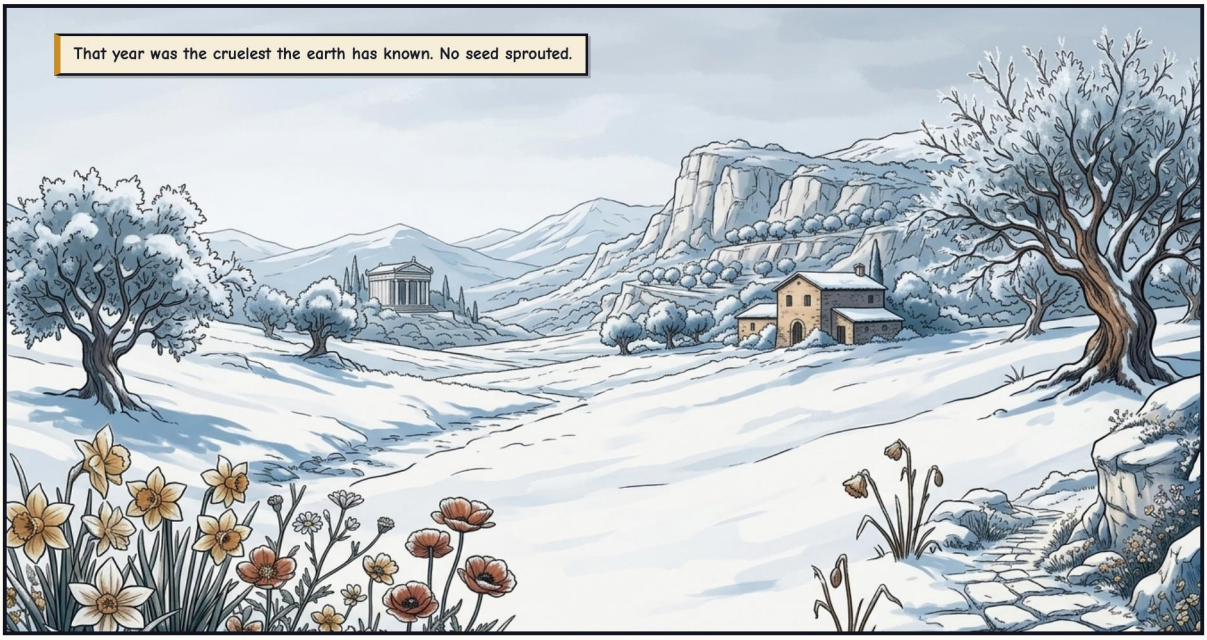


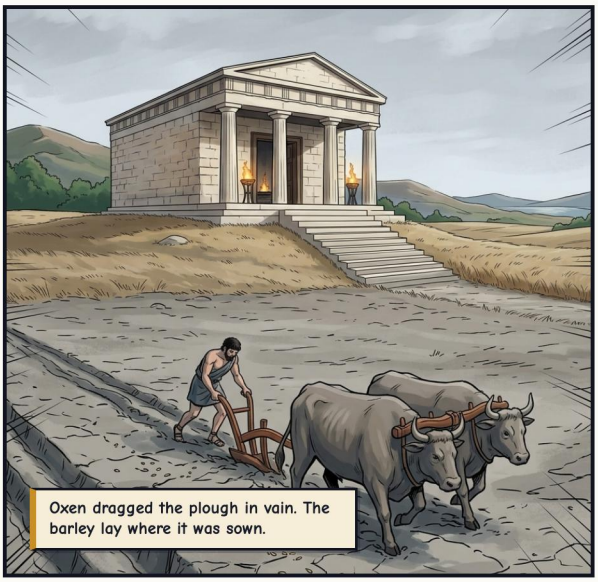

Foolish mortals, blind to good and ill alike! I would have made your son deathless. Now he must die like any man.
I am Demeter, the joy of gods and mortals.

ACT V — THE CRUELEST YEAR












Zeus sent golden-winged Iris to call her back to Olympus. Demeter did not turn around.

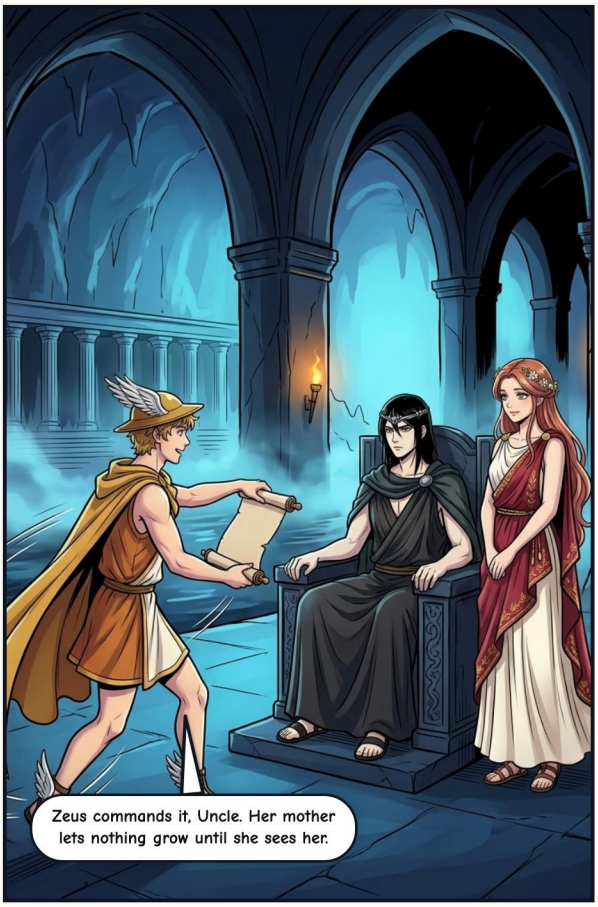

Then the gods came one by one, with gifts, and any honour she might choose.

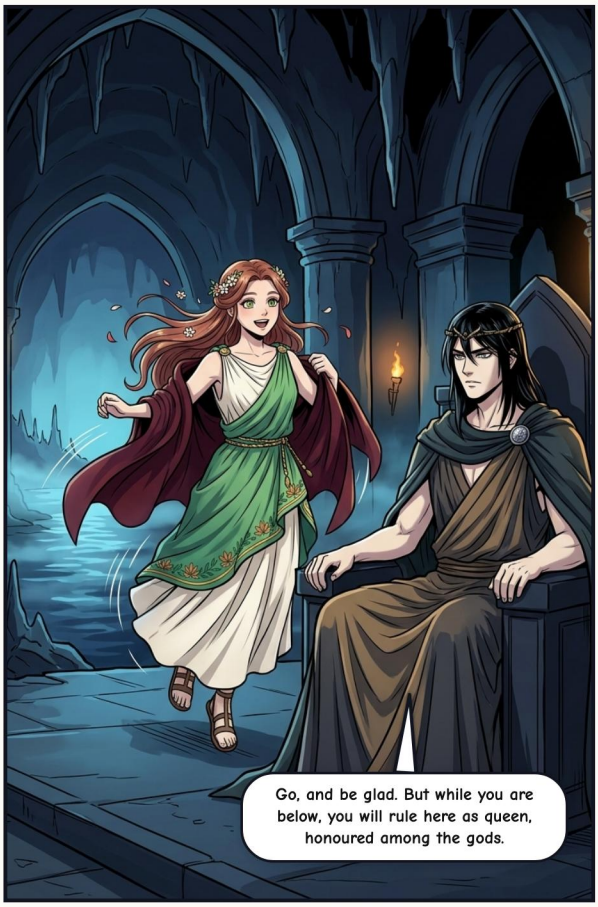

Not one seed will sprout until I see my daughter with my own eyes.

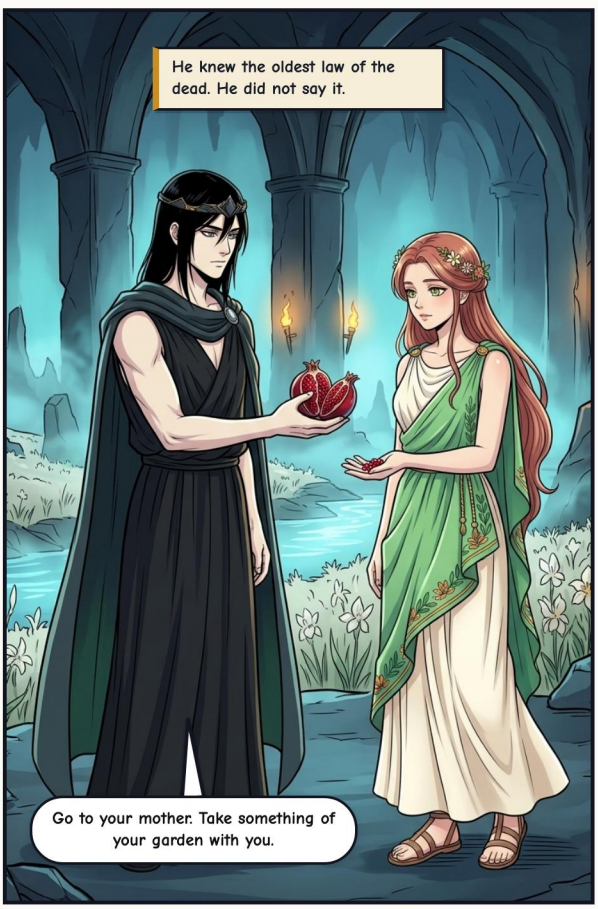

Go down to Erebus, Hermes. Bring her back to her mother.


WHOOOSH!!

ACT VI — THE SEEDS OF RETURN



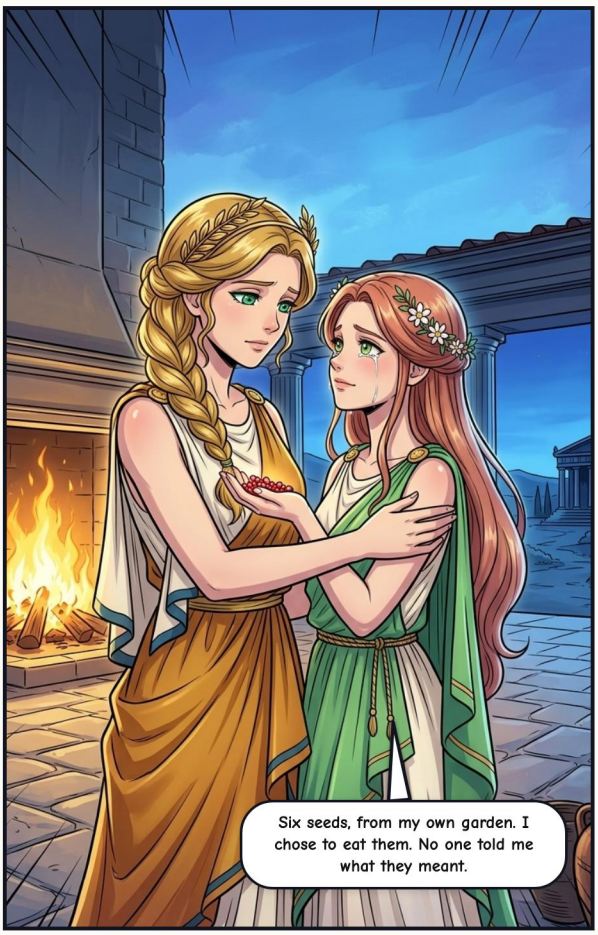


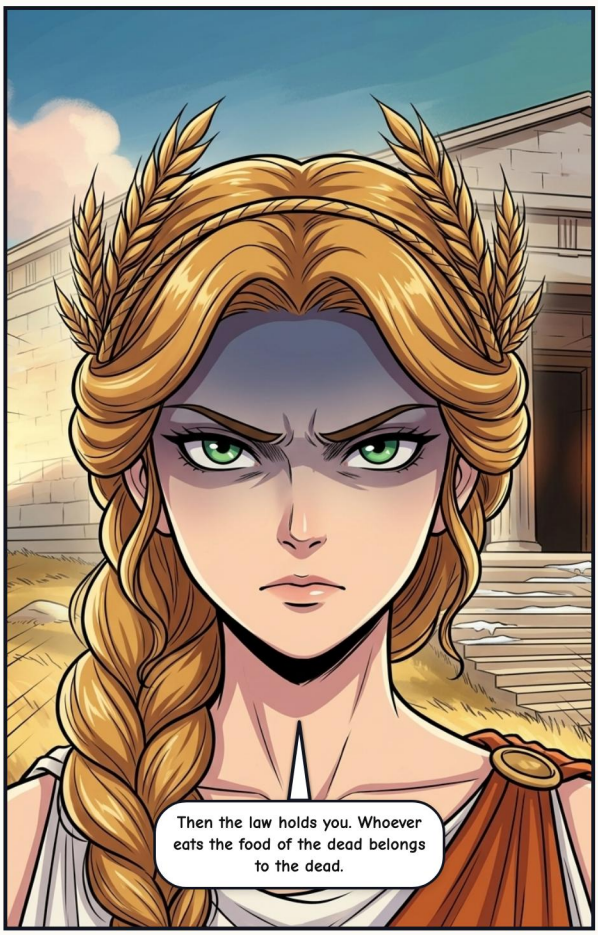


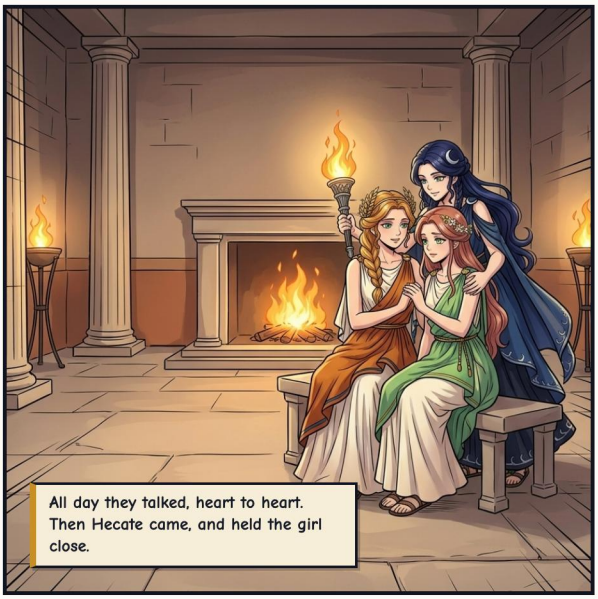



MY DAUGHTER! YOU'RE HOME!


Child, tell me. Did you eat anything down there?


Six seeds, from my own garden. I chose to eat them. No one told me what they meant.


Then the law holds you. Whoever eats the food of the dead belongs to the dead.


All day they talked, heart to heart. Then Hecate came, and held the girl close.


Zeus sent his own mother, Rhea, down to the barren Rarian plain.

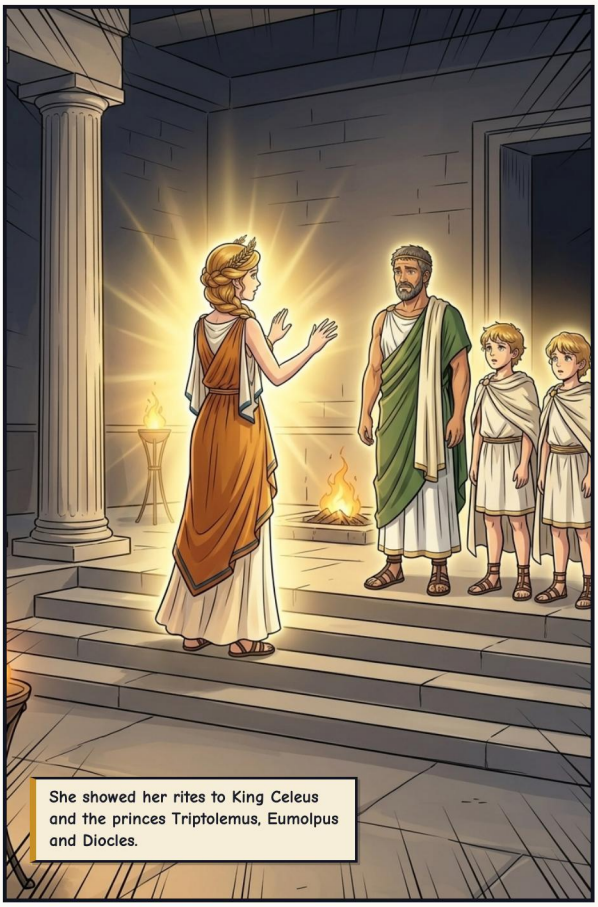

Half of every year below, one month for each seed. Half above, with you. And honours for you among the gods.


I will go down on my own feet, Mother. And no law below will be hidden from me again.




Every time you return to the sun, my child, the whole world will bloom to welcome you.
And so the year was divided: spring and summer together, autumn and winter apart.

ACT VII — THE TWO GIFTS

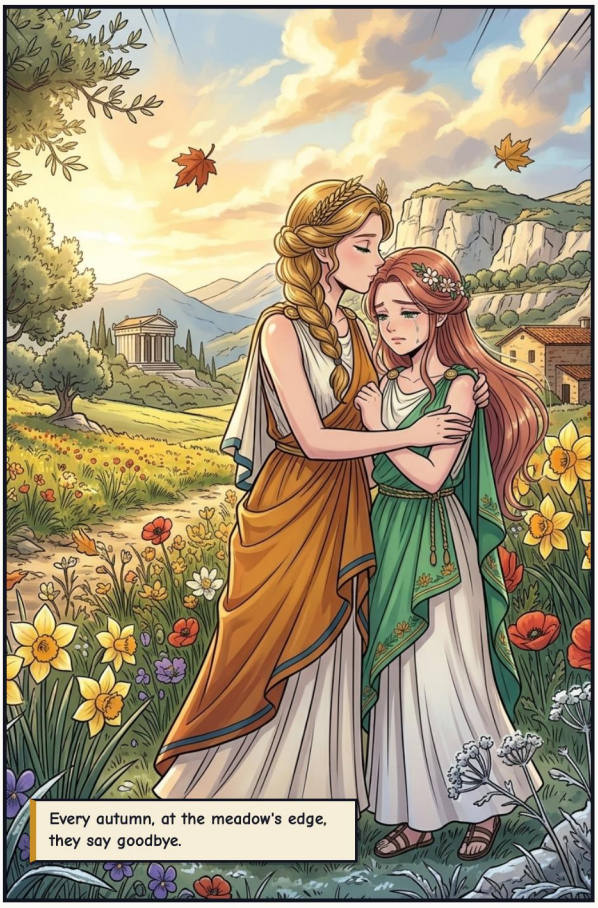


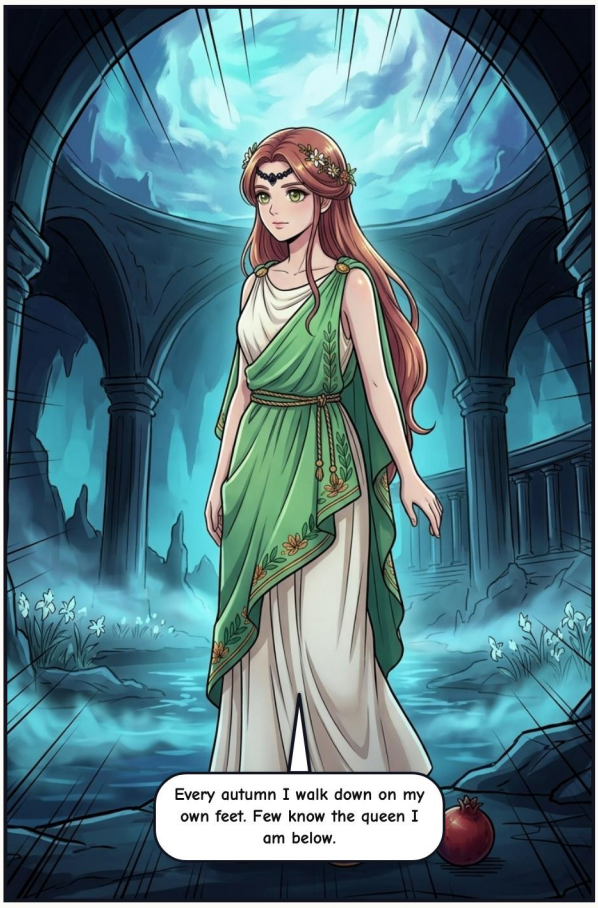






EPILOGUE — THE OTHER SIDE OF THE GATE









COLOPHON

Demeter: The Winter of the World

Gods of Olympus: Greek Mythology

CLASSICAL SOURCES

Homeric Hymn to Demeter (7th–6th c. BCE); Ovid, Metamorphoses 5 (division of the year)

Freely adapted from classical Greek and Roman mythological sources in the public domain.

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WORK IN PROGRESS & FEEDBACK

This comic is part of a work-in-progress collection. If you spot a mistake or want to share feedback, please mention the version stamp below.

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06-demeter_en.pdf