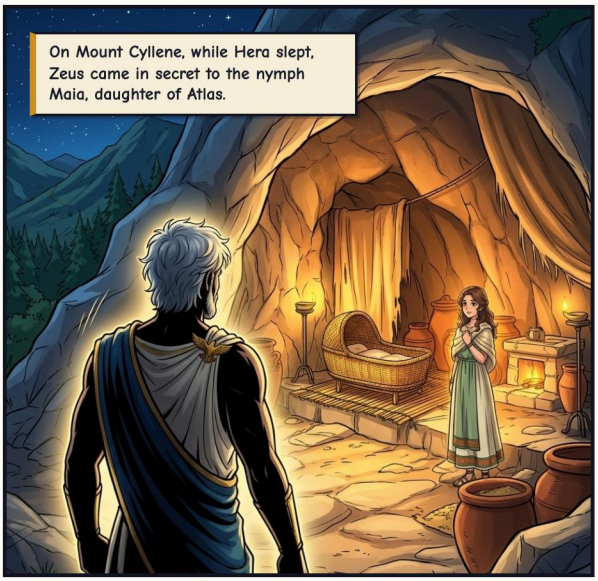
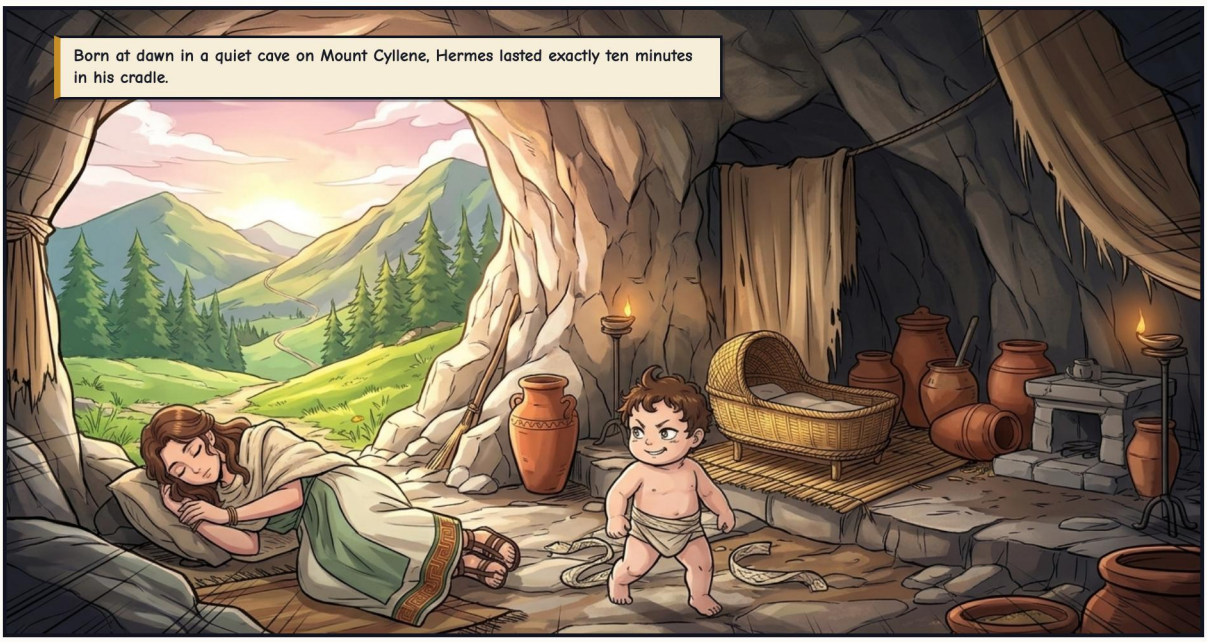

HERMES
Book XII · The Winged Trickster

ACT I — THE FIRST DAY









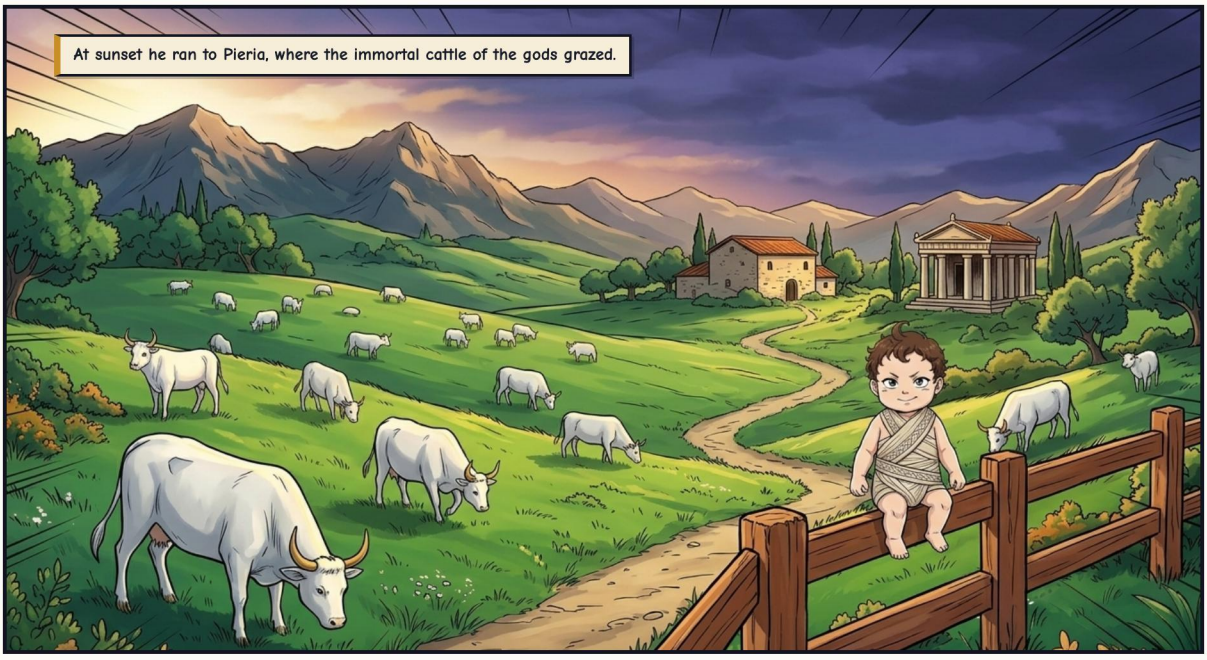



Shell, reeds, oxhide, two arms, a crossbar, seven strings.


Seven strings across a hollow shell... hey! I just invented music before lunch!


Sing of Zeus and lovely Maia... and their brilliant baby!


Music is nice. But I'm hungry for something bigger.


At sunset he ran to Pieria, where the immortal cattle of the gods grazed.


Footprints? What footprints?


Fifty of Apollo's cows, driven backward: every hoofprint pointing home, toward the meadow they had left.

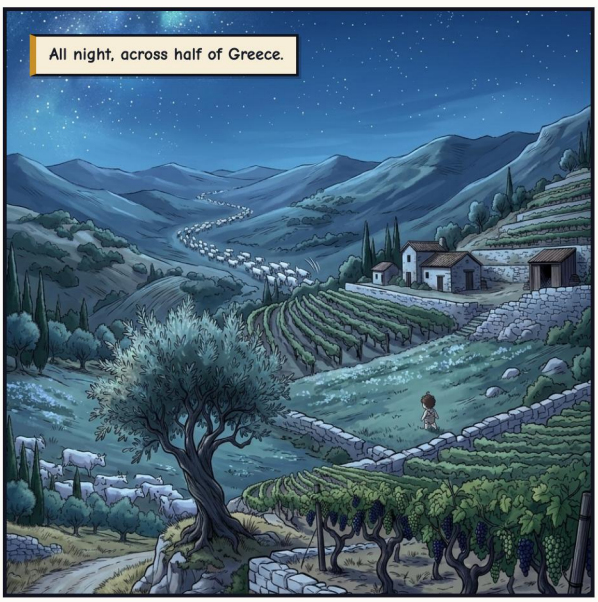



Shh.






Old man, your vines will give plenty of wine... if you saw nothing, heard nothing, and keep quiet.


All night, across half of Greece.


The ford of the river Alpheus, near sandy Pylos.


Hermes was the first to make fire with sticks.


Two cows for a feast.
...ten, eleven, twelve. One for each god of Olympus. Including me.


Gods don't eat. We only... smell. Ugh. Fine.


Evidence? What evidence?


He came home like an autumn breeze... through the keyhole.


Hermes! Apollo will tear this mountain apart when he finds his cattle missing!


Relax, Mother! If we stay hidden in a cave forever, Olympus will never invite us to dinner.


Your father made you to be a great worry, to gods and mortals alike.


I'll have the same honours as Apollo. And if Father won't give them... I'll be the Prince of Thieves.

ACT II – THE DETECTIVE GOD



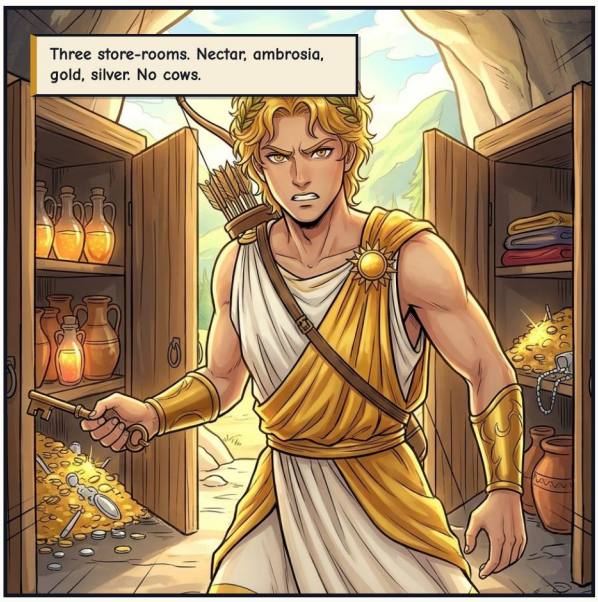






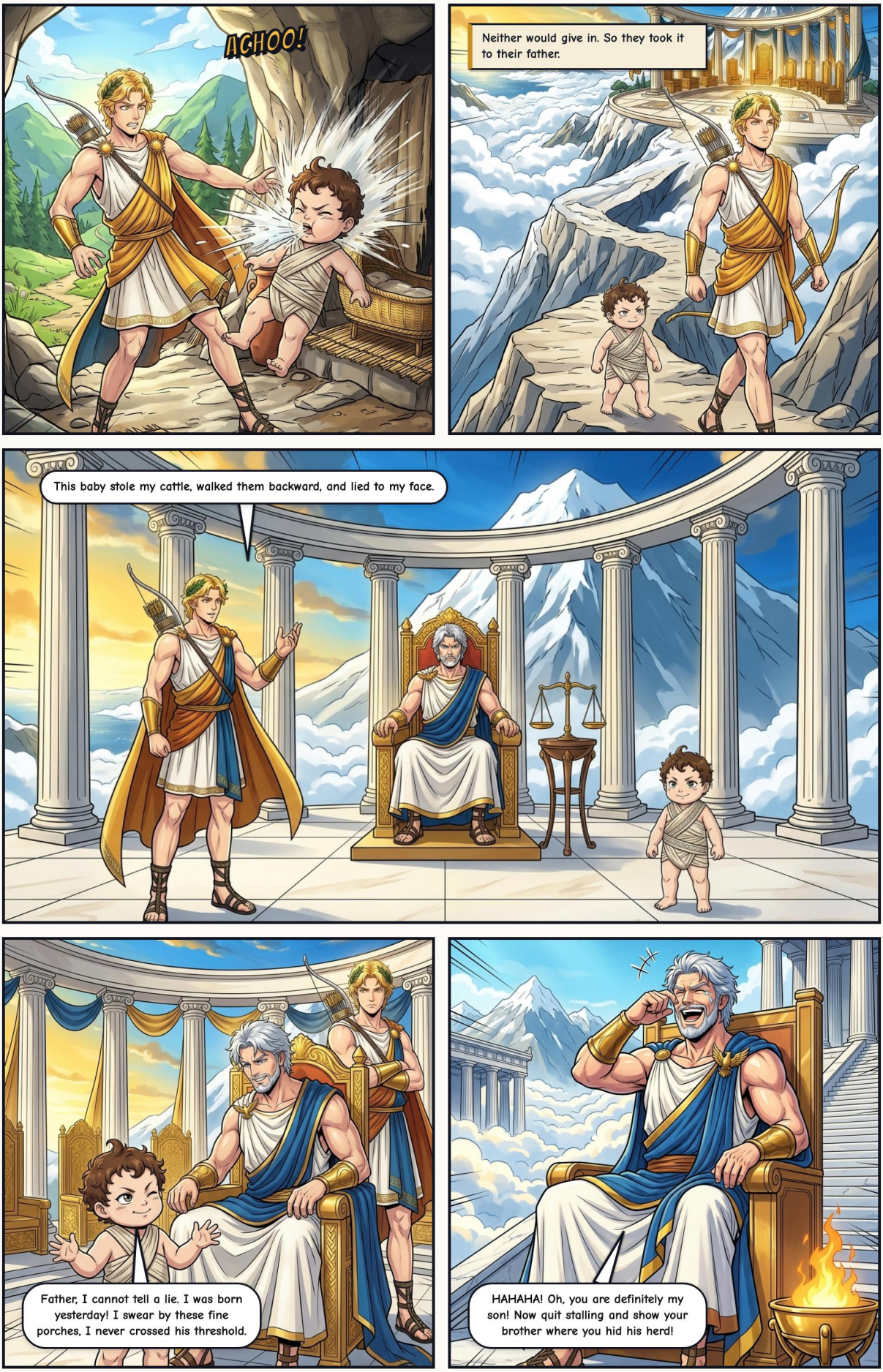

The trail ended at a cave on Mount Cyllene.


WHERE ARE MY CATTLE, YOU LITTLE THIEF?!

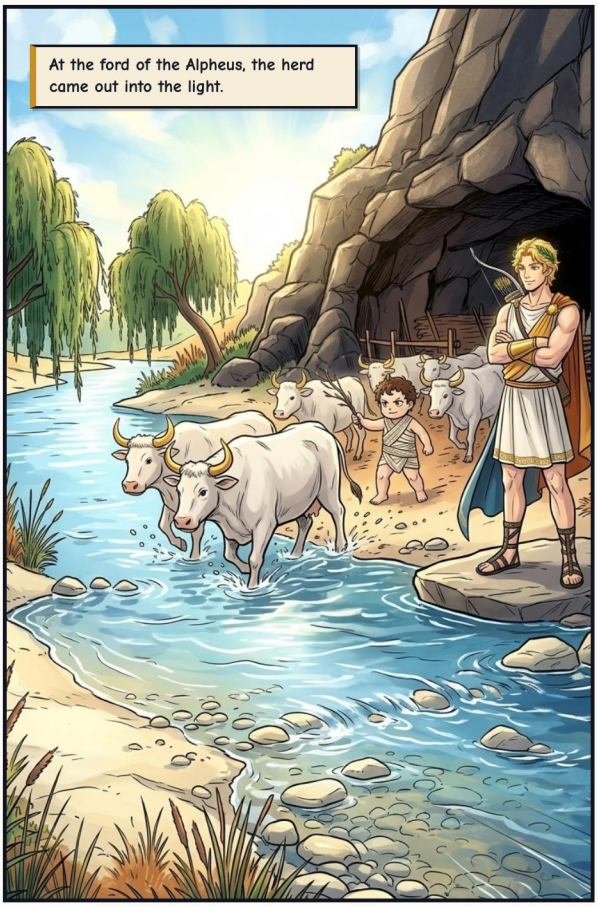

Three store-rooms. Nectar, ambrosia, gold, silver. No cows.

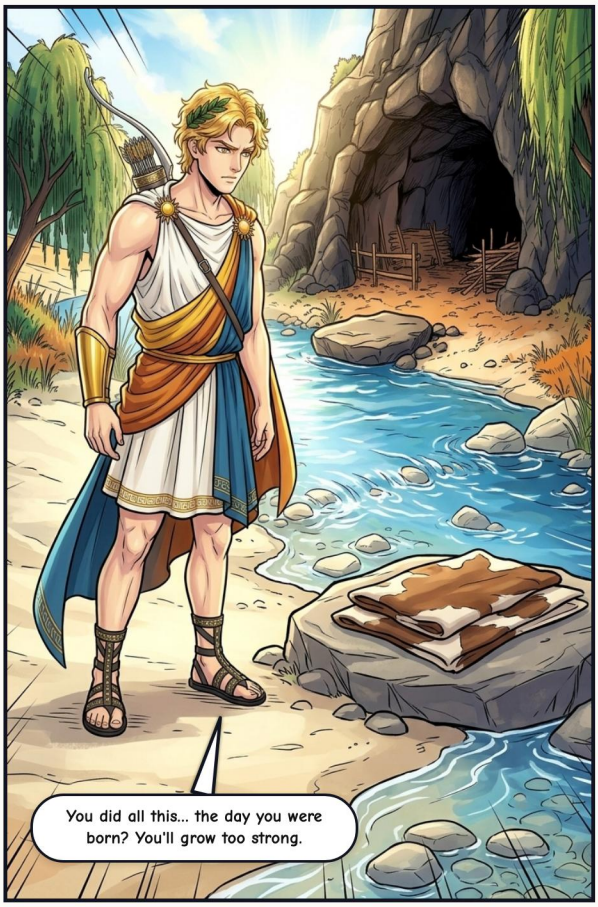

Tell me where they are, or I'll throw you into Tartarus. You can be prince of the little ghosts down there.


Me? I was born yesterday. I care about sleep, milk and warm blankets. What even is a cow?


AGHOO!
Neither would give in. So they took it to their father.
This baby stole my cattle, walked them backward, and lied to my face.
Father, I cannot tell a lie. I was born yesterday! I swear by these fine porches, I never crossed his threshold.
HAHAHA! Oh, you are definitely my son! Now quit stalling and show your brother where you hid his herd!

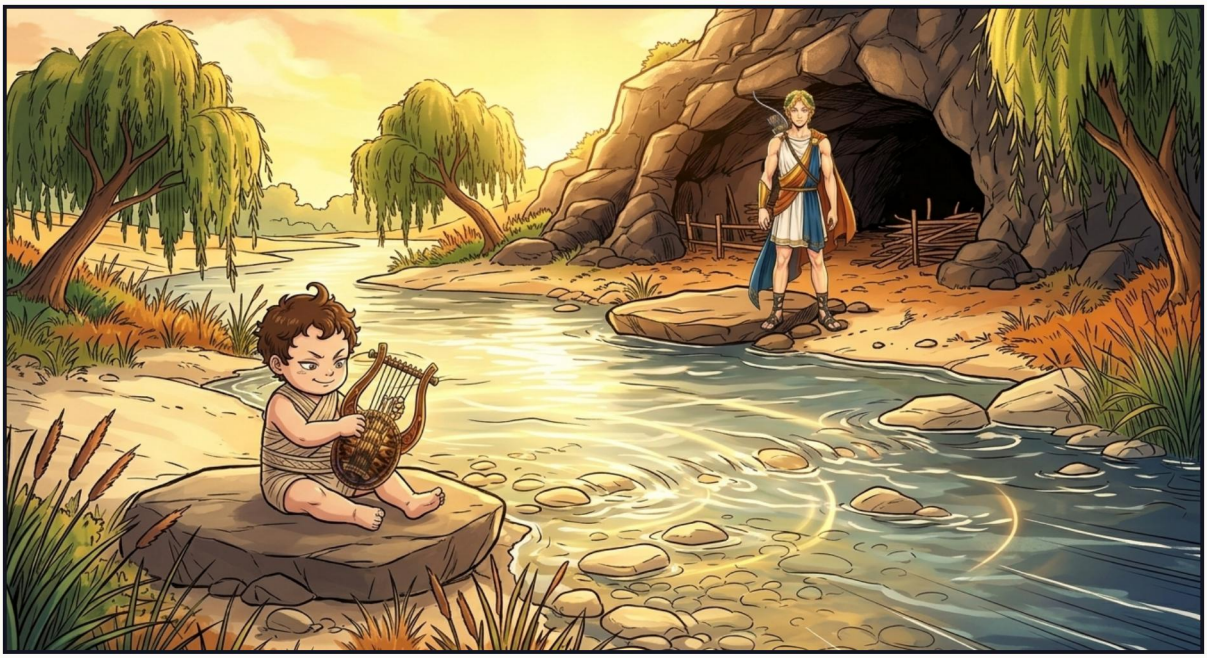
ACT III — THE SONG AT PYLOS




















Wait, don't stop! What is that heavenly sound?!

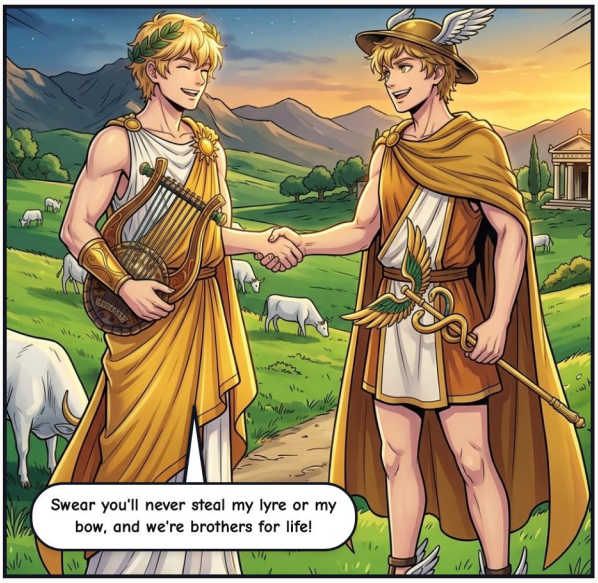

I came for fifty cows. That song is worth fifty cows.
Then take it, brother. And let me keep the herd.


The herd for the lyre, and Apollo's shining whip besides. The rest, they would settle in Pieria.


So the god of music found his music... with a thief.

ACT IV — HERALD OF THREE WORLDS









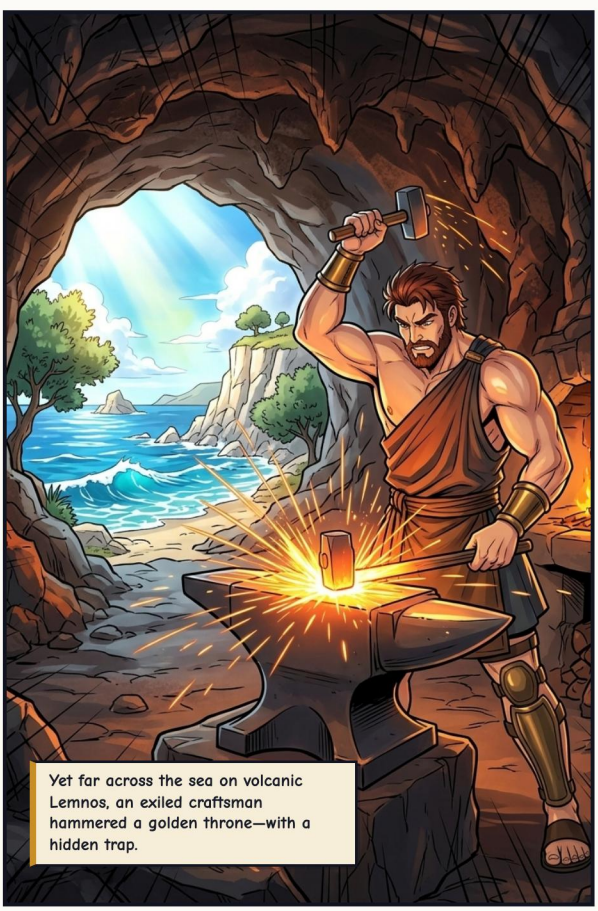


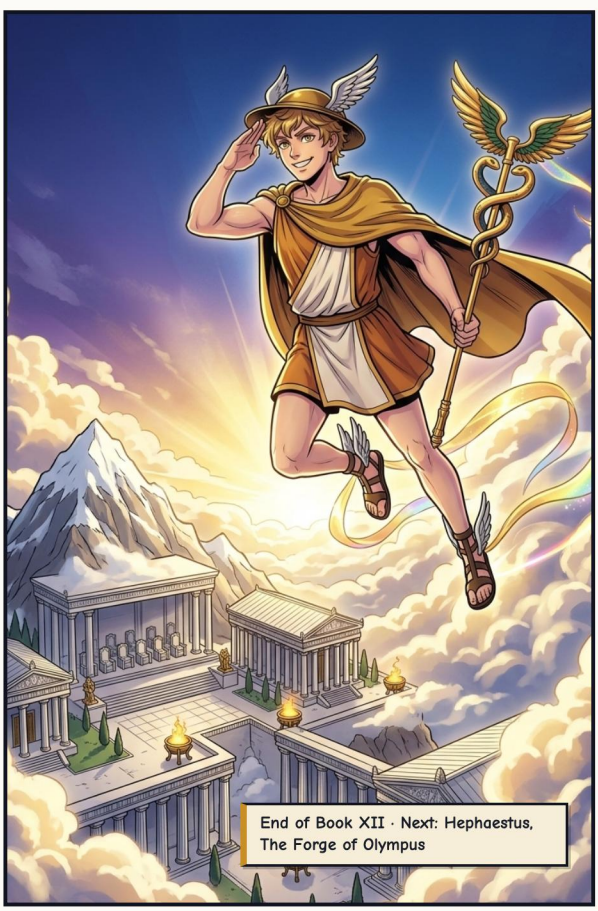

No door was ever locked to Hermes—for wit and kindness open more gates than thunderbolts.
Got a message for heaven, earth, or Hades? Hang on—I'll be back before you blink!

EPILOGUE — SPARKS BENEATH THE MOUNTAIN









COLOPHON

Hermes: The Winged Trickster

Gods of Olympus: Greek Mythology

CLASSICAL SOURCES

Homeric Hymn 4 (to Hermes); Apollodorus, Library 3.10.2; Homer, Odyssey 24. The hat ceremony and the epilogue are our invention.

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