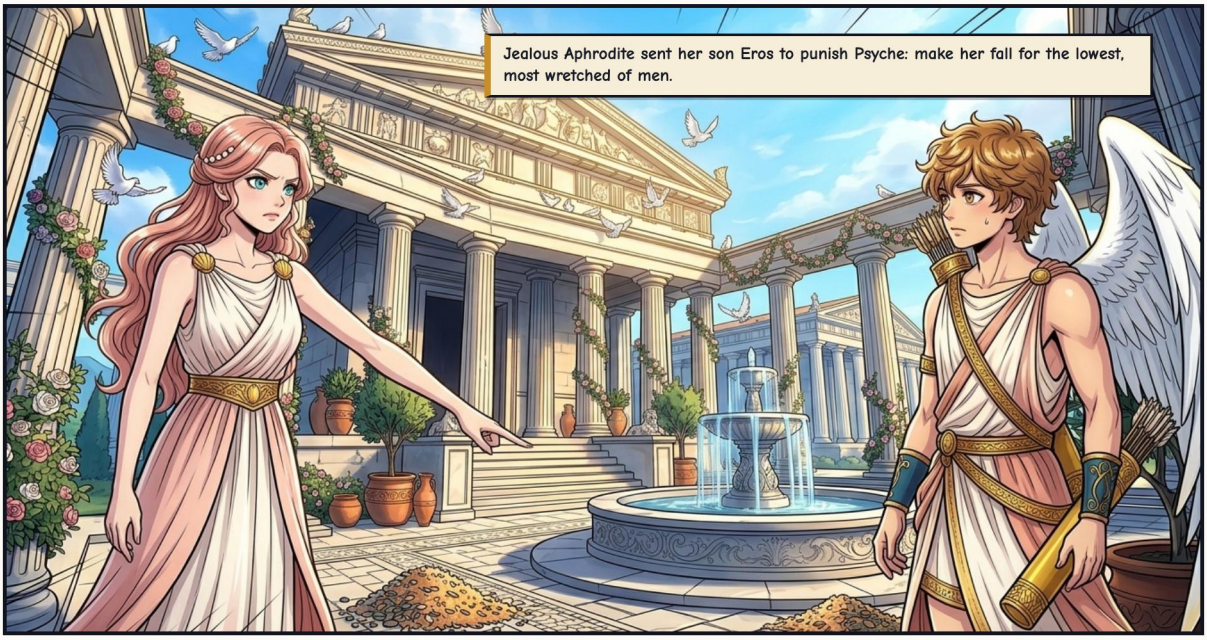
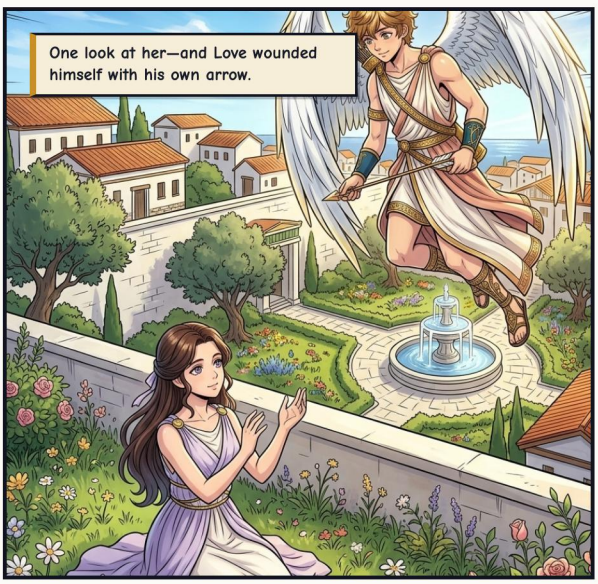

EROS &
PSYCHE
Book XVII · The Lamp in the Dark

ACT I — THE UNSEEN HUSBAND

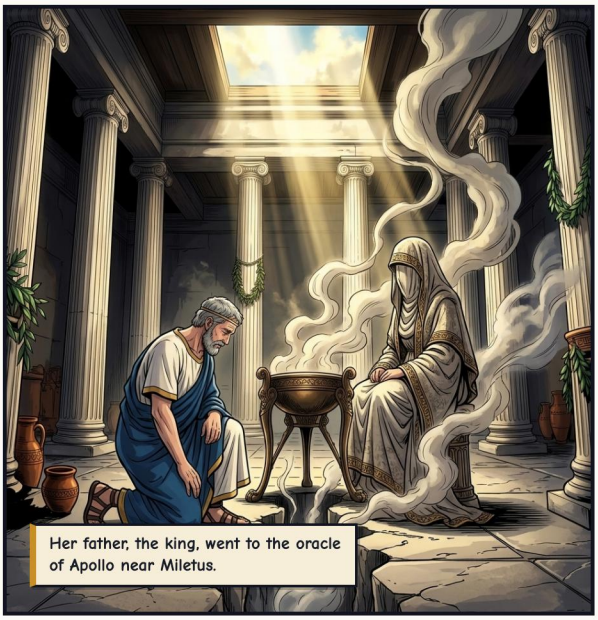


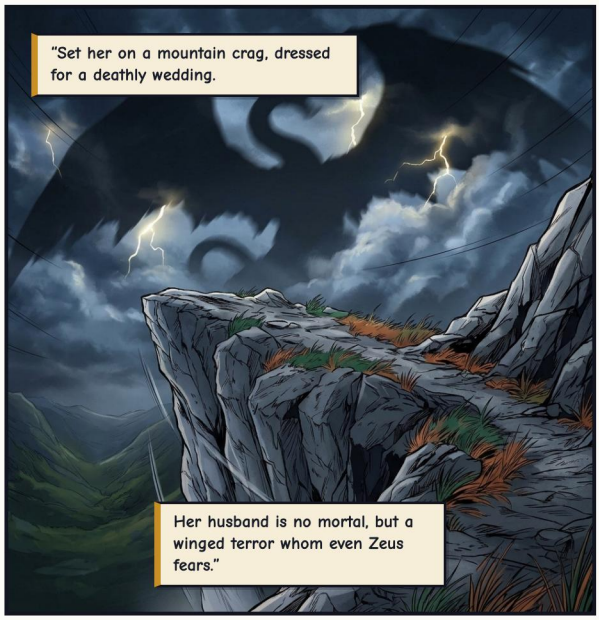


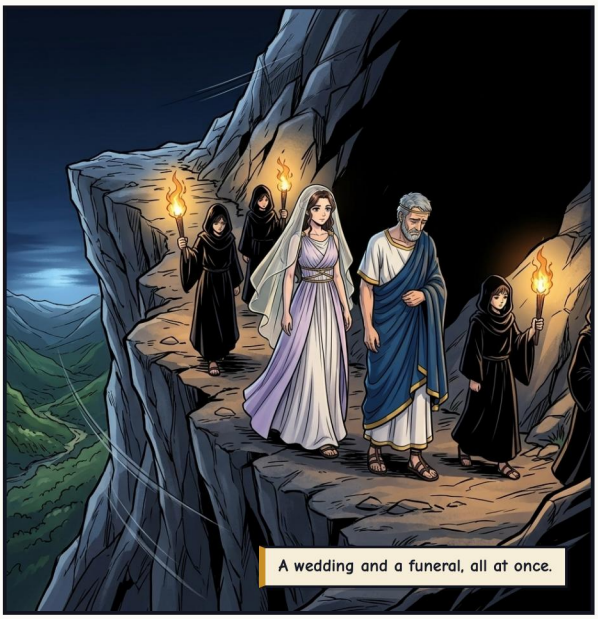


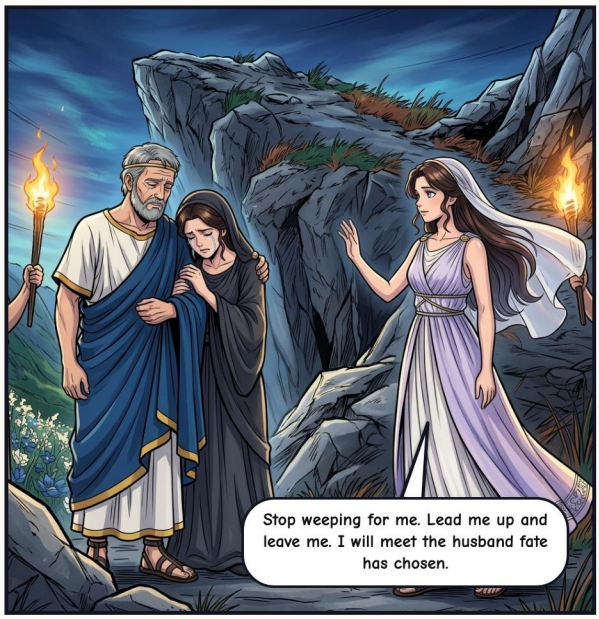


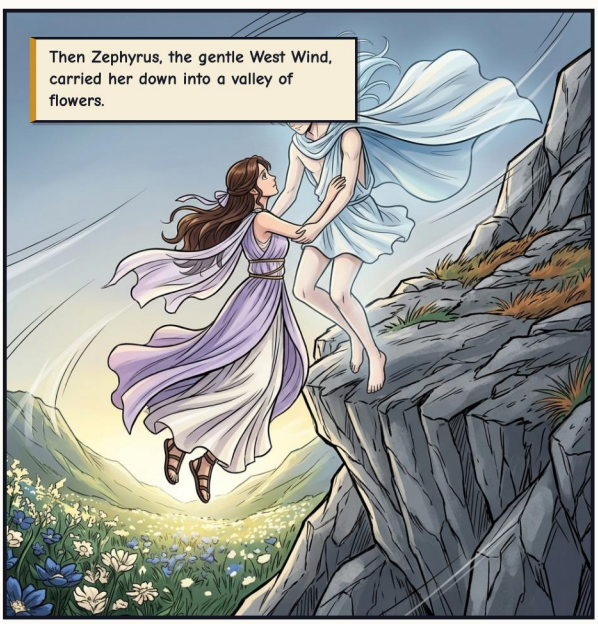



Her father, the king, went to the oracle of Apollo near Miletus.

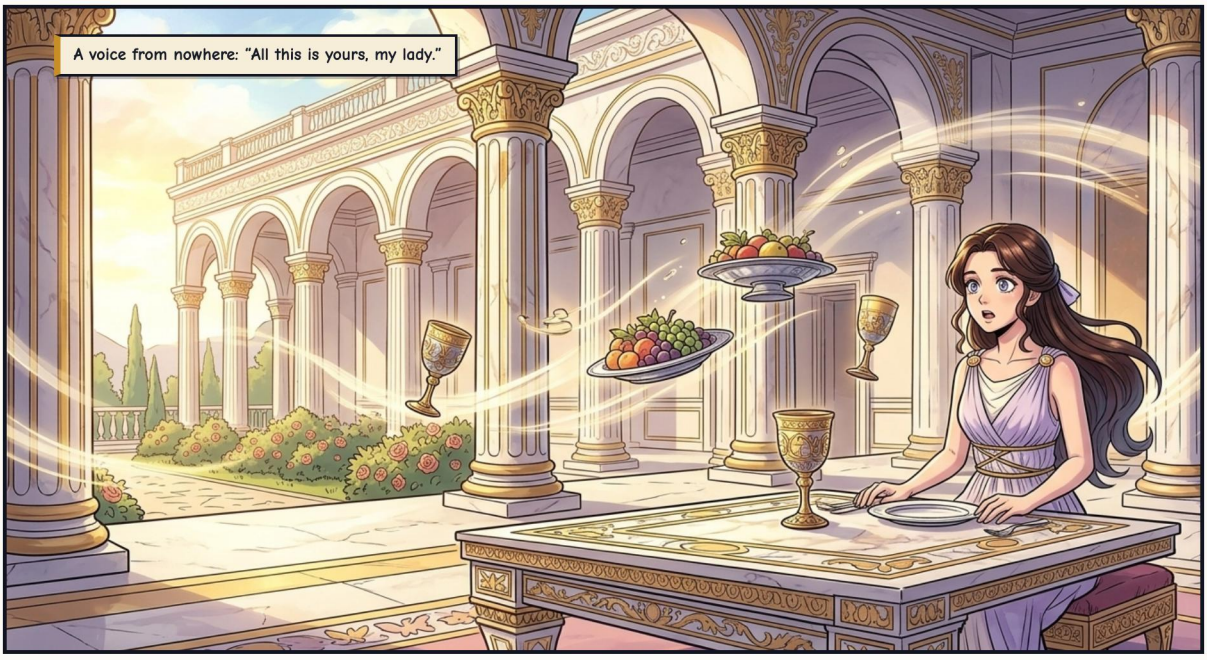

"Set her on a mountain crag, dressed for a deathly wedding.
Her husband is no mortal, but a winged terror whom even Zeus fears."


A wedding and a funeral, all at once.

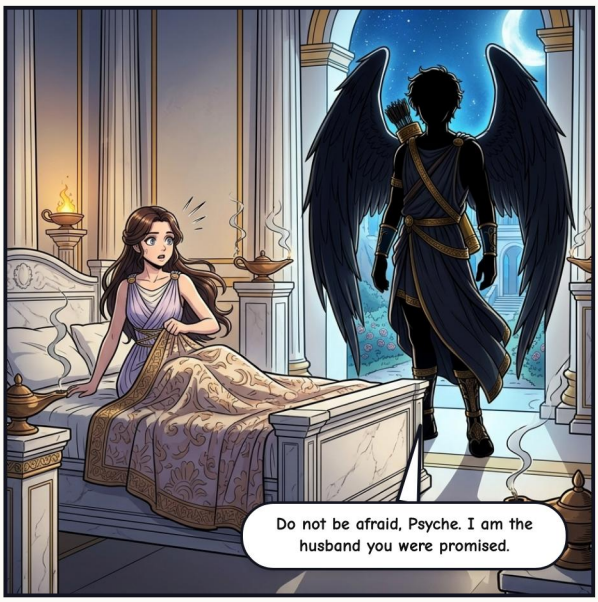

Stop weeping for me. Lead me up and leave me. I will meet the husband fate has chosen.


Then Zephyrus, the gentle West Wind, carried her down into a valley of flowers.



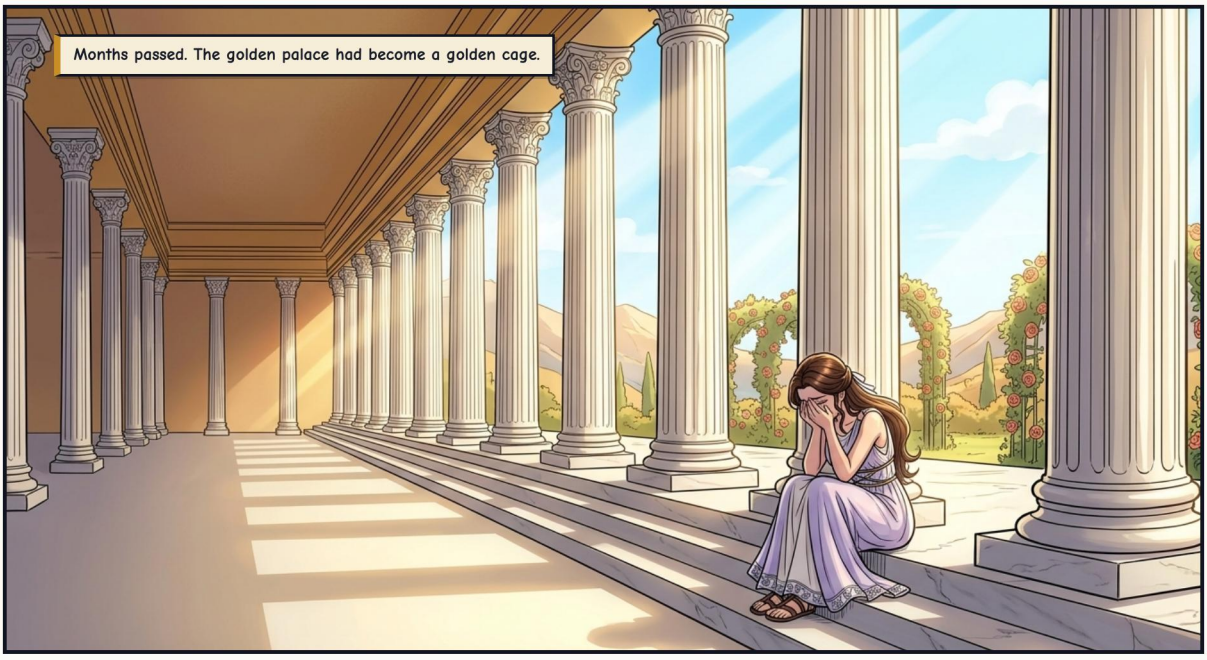

A voice from nowhere: "All this is yours, my lady."


TRRRIIING

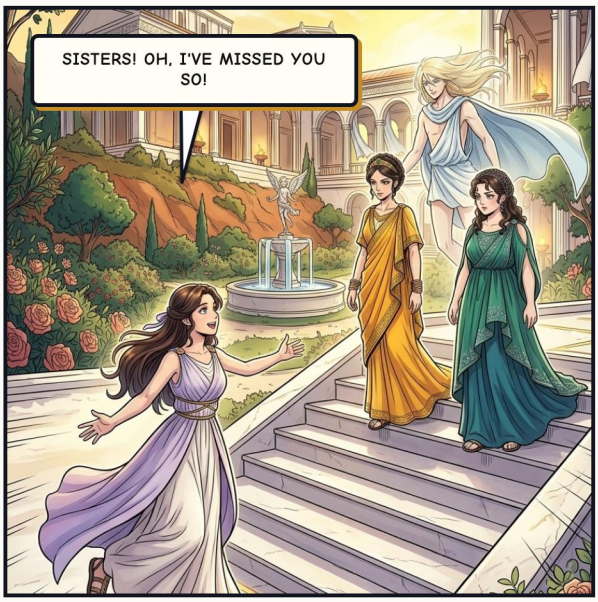

Do not be afraid, Psyche. I am the husband you were promised.

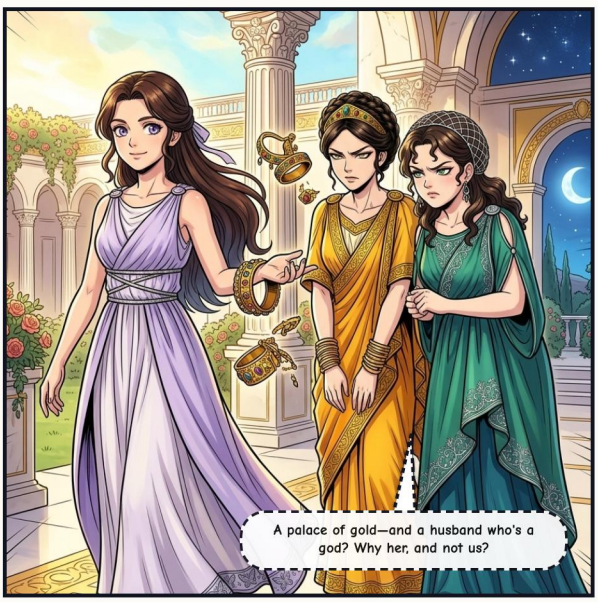

Ask me for anything—but never try to see my face. If you do, you will lose me.


He came each night, and was gone before dawn.


Months passed. The golden palace had become a golden cage.

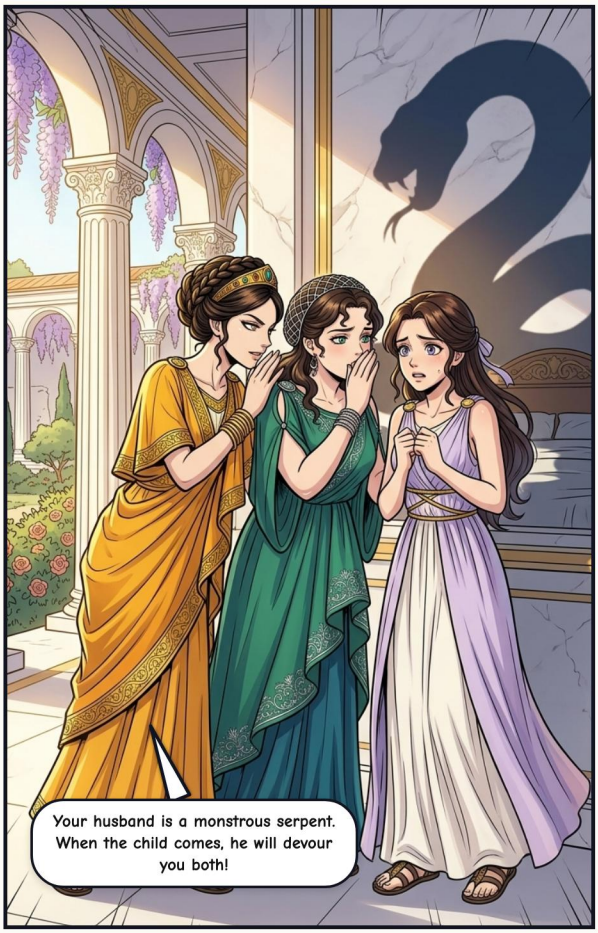

Your sisters are coming to ruin you. Do not listen to them.
You carry our child: a god if you keep our secret, a mortal if you don't.

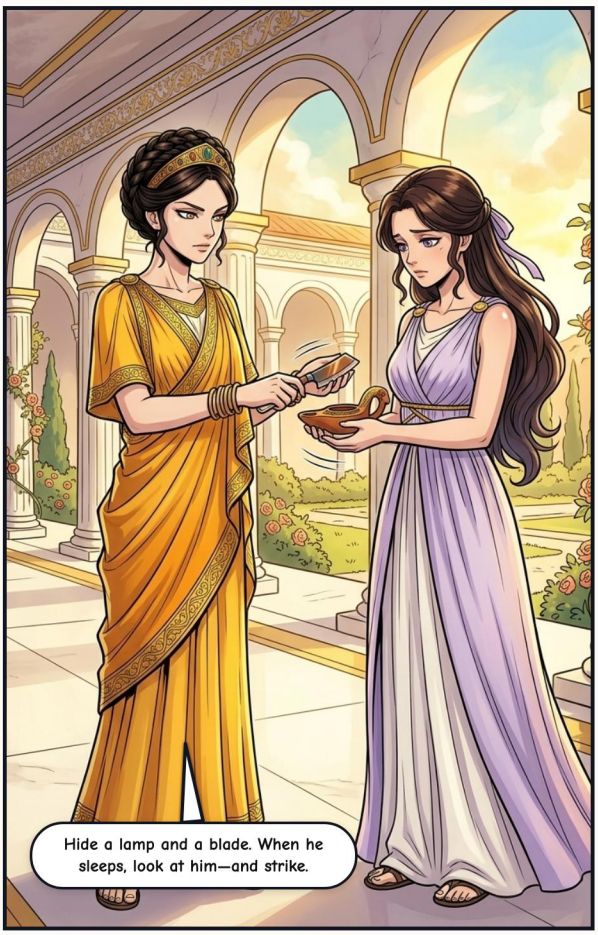

SISTERS! OH, I'VE MISSED YOU SO!

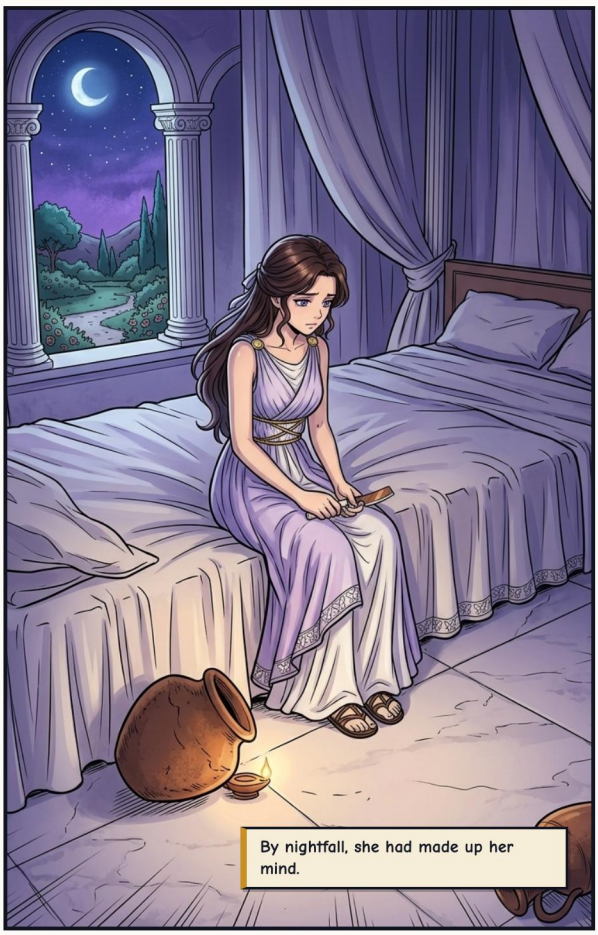

A palace of gold—and a husband who's a god? Why her, and not us?

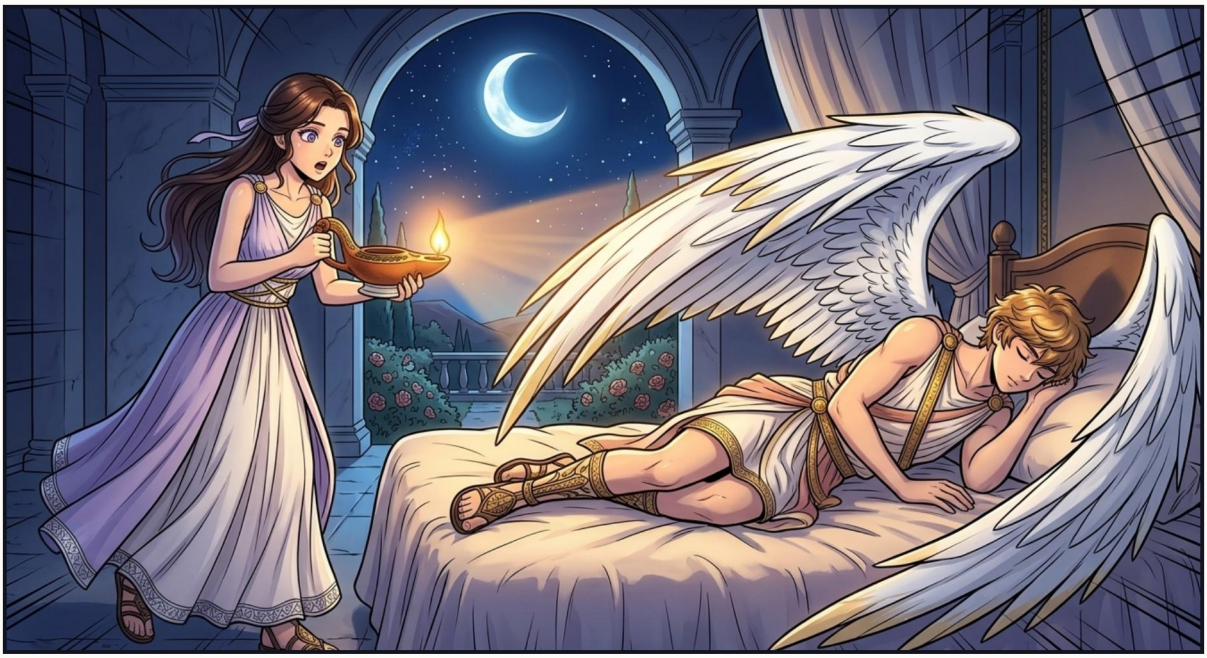

My husband? He's young... he hunts in the hills. Here, take these with you!


On their second visit...
My husband? A merchant... middle-aged, a little grey in his hair.

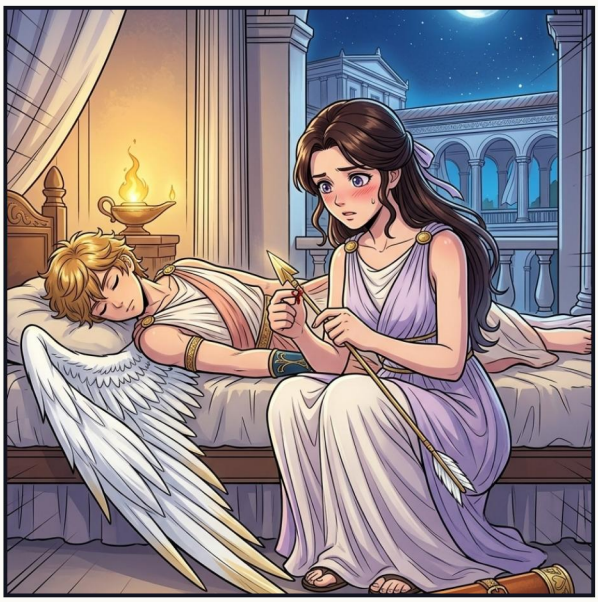

Your husband is a monstrous serpent. When the child comes, he will devour you both!


Hide a lamp and a blade. When he sleeps, look at him—and strike.

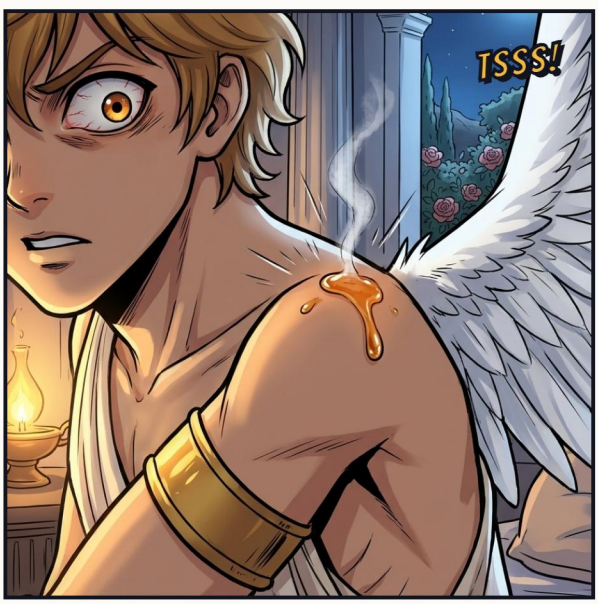

By nightfall, she had made up her mind.

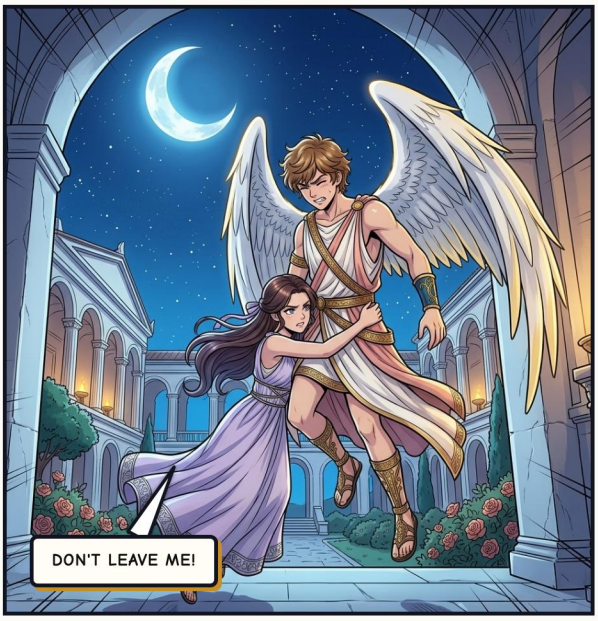






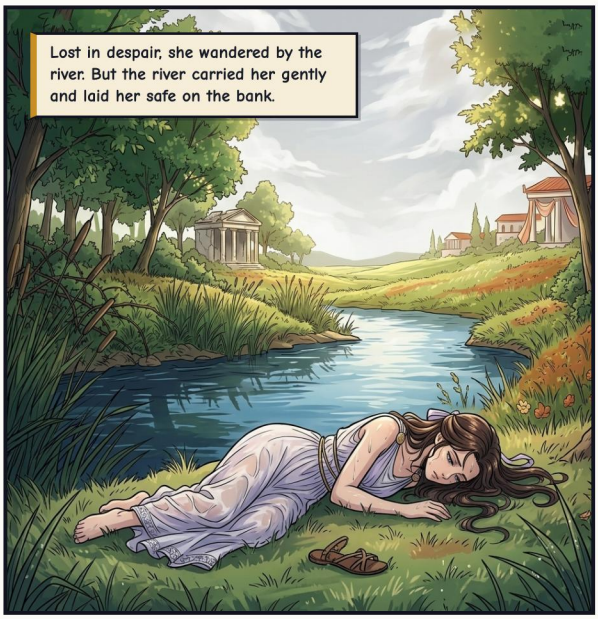


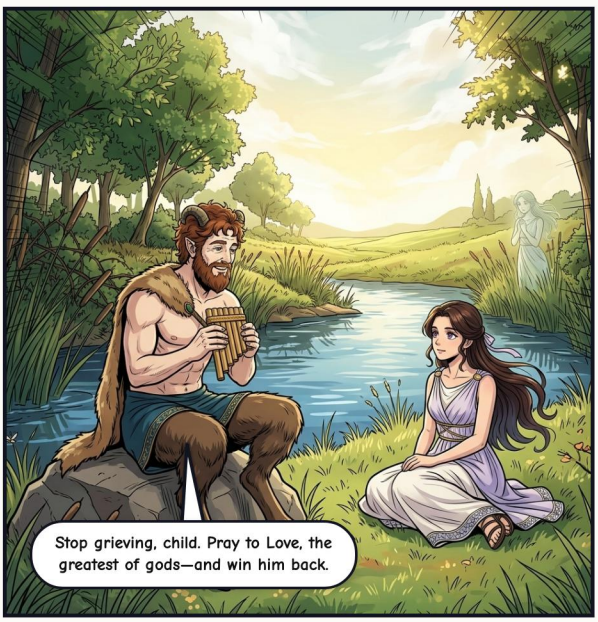

TSSS!

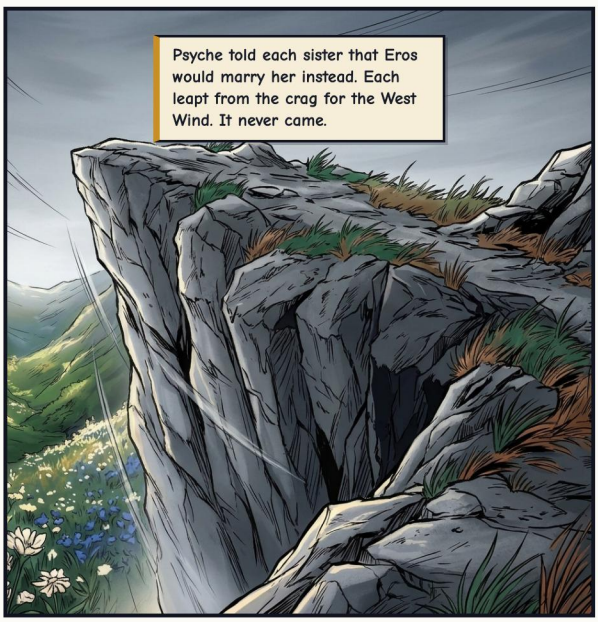

DON'T LEAVE ME!


She held on until her strength gave out. She fell—and he did not turn back.

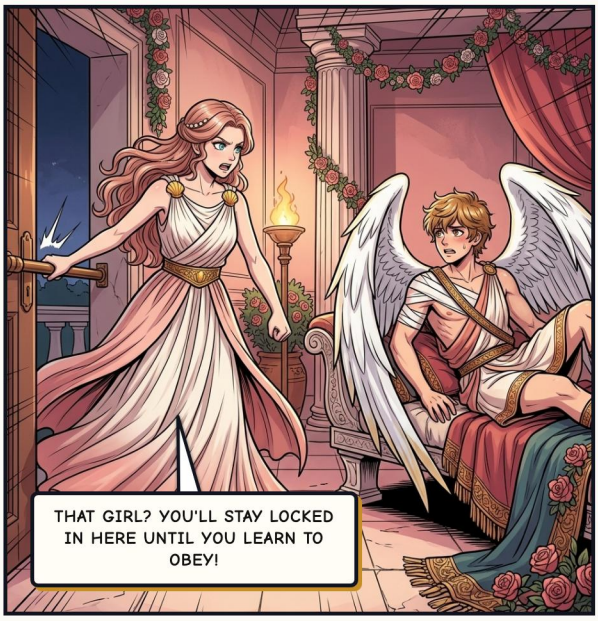

I disobeyed my mother for you. I wounded myself with my own arrow—and you thought me a monster.
Your sisters will pay. And you—my absence is your punishment.

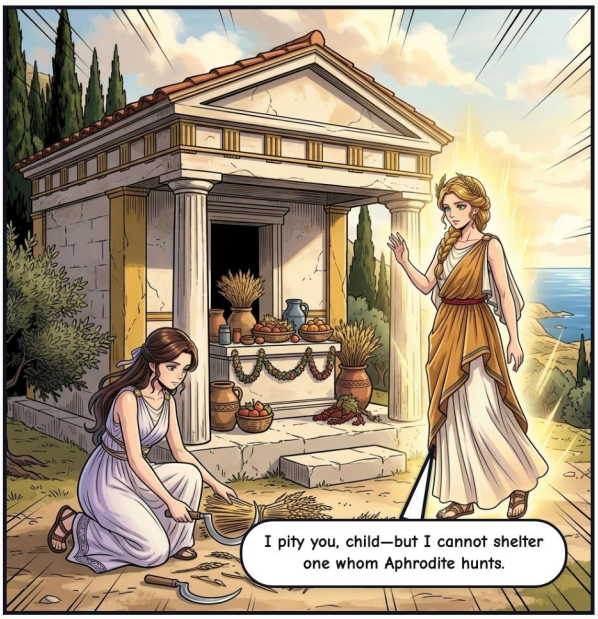

Lost in despair, she wandered by the river. But the river carried her gently and laid her safe on the bank.

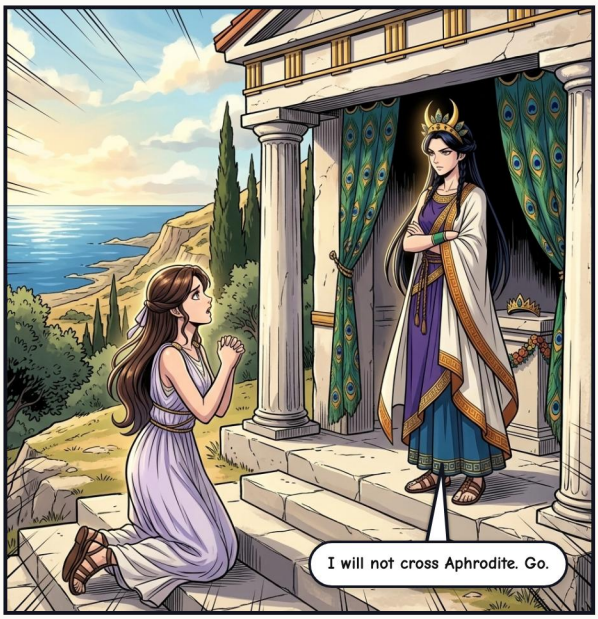

Stop grieving, child. Pray to Love, the greatest of gods—and win him back.


Psyche told each sister that Eros would marry her instead. Each leapt from the crag for the West Wind. It never came.


A gull brought the gossip: "Your son lies wounded—for love of a mortal girl!"


THAT GIRL? YOU'LL STAY LOCKED IN HERE UNTIL YOU LEARN TO OBEY!

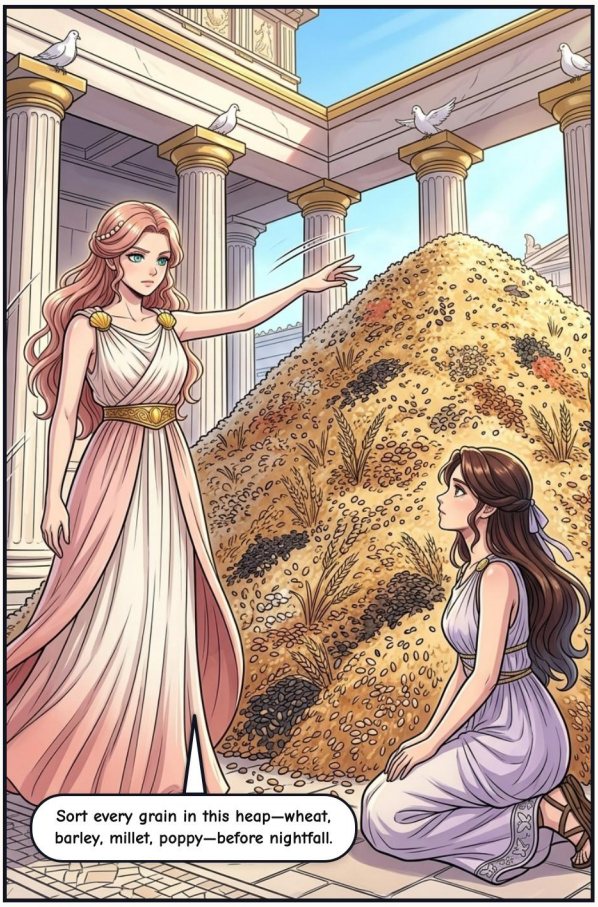

I pity you, child—but I cannot shelter one whom Aphrodite hunts.

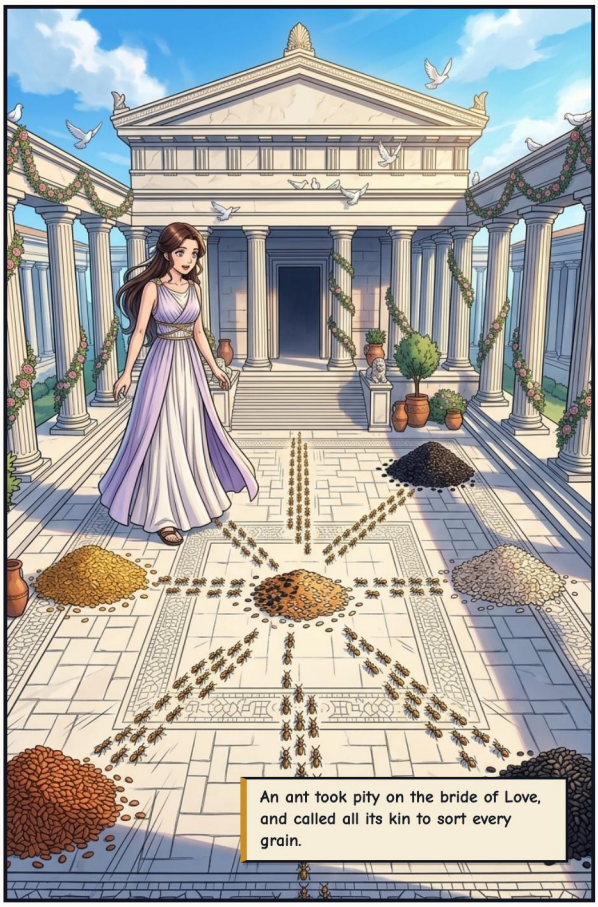

I will not cross Aphrodite. Go.

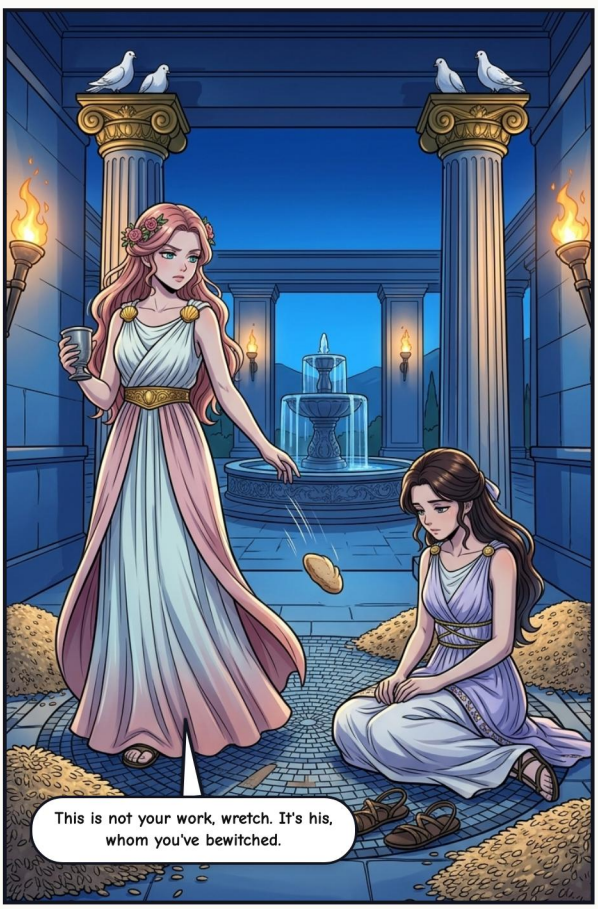

HEAR, ALL! WHOEVER FINDS PSYCHE, RUNAWAY SERVANT OF APHRODITE, WILL BE REWARDED BY THE GODDESS HERSELF!


So—come to visit your mother-in-law at last?

ACT II — THE IMPOSSIBLE TRIALS









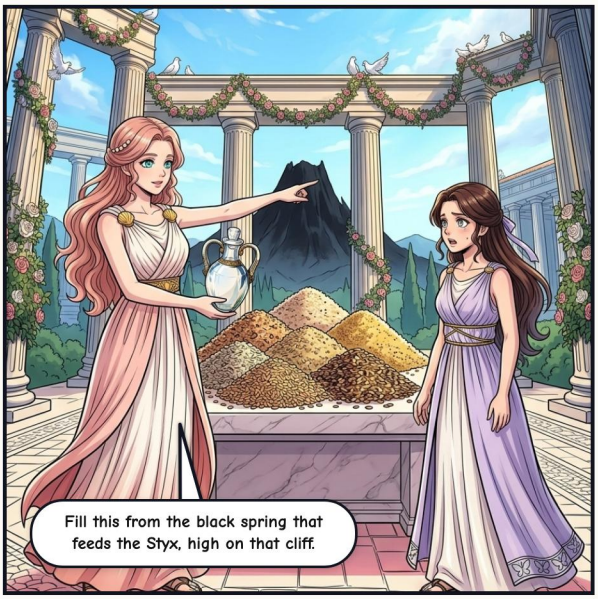

At dawn, a new task: "Bring me wool from the golden sheep by the river."


A green reed whispered: "Not now—the sun maddens them. Wait until it cools."




By nightfall, her arms were full of gold.


I know who helps you. Let's see you manage the next one.


Fill this from the black spring that feeds the Styx, high on that cliff.

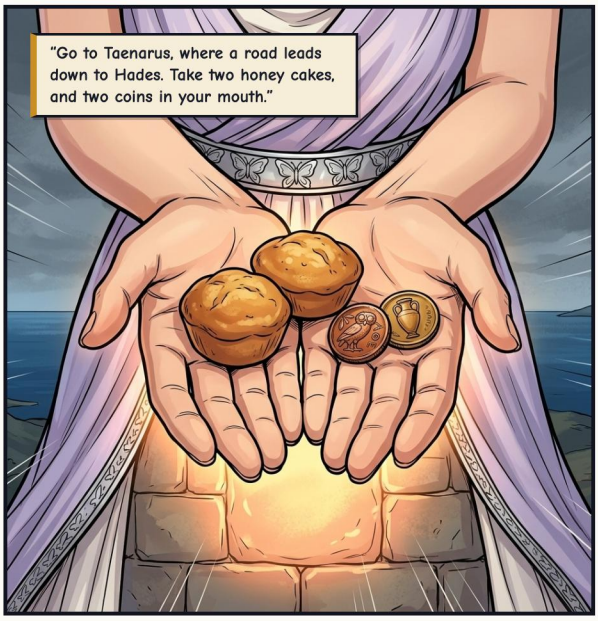

The waters themselves cried out: "Go back! Beware! You will die!"

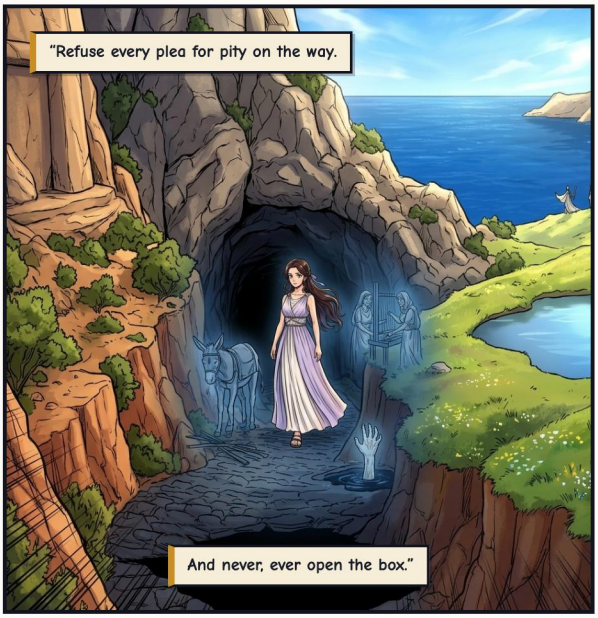

Zeus's eagle remembered an old debt to Eros, and flew to her aid.



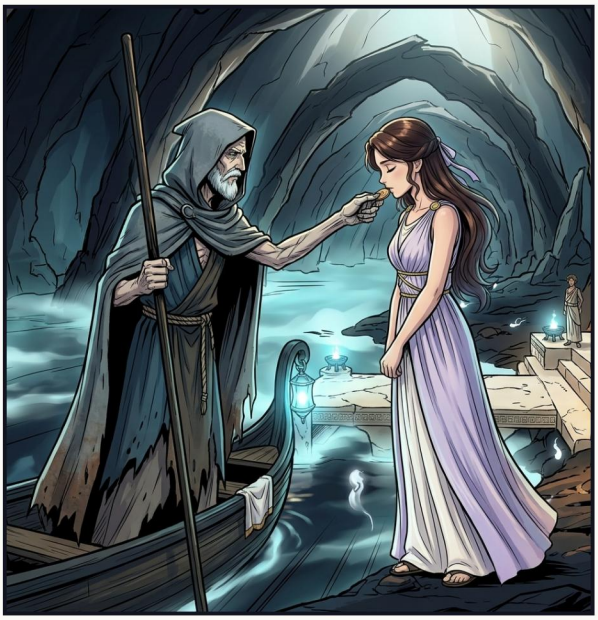

One last errand. Take this box to Persephone, and ask for a little of her beauty.

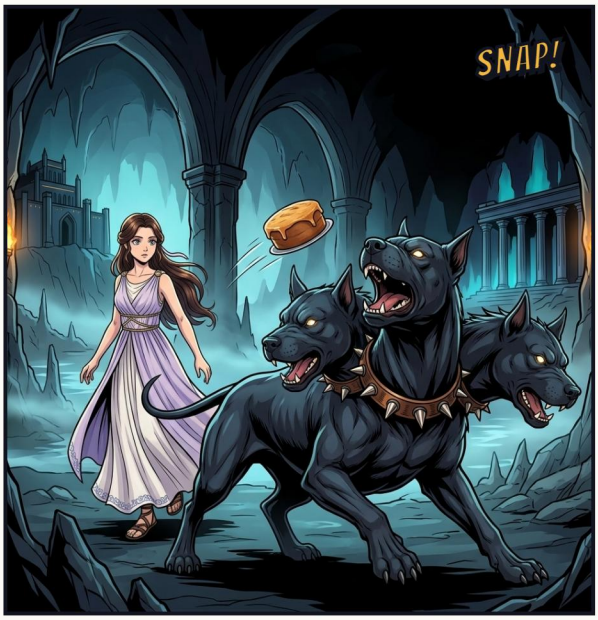

In despair, she climbed a high tower. Then the tower itself spoke: "Stop, poor girl. There is another way."


"Go to Taenarus, where a road leads down to Hades. Take two honey cakes, and two coins in your mouth."


"Refuse every plea for pity on the way.
And never, ever open the box."


At Taenarus, the road went down into the dark.




SNAP!


Sit, rest, and eat, child.
Thank you, my queen—but the floor and plain bread are enough for me.


Here is what she asked for. Carry it carefully.


The second cake for the hound, the second coin for the ferryman—and up, toward the light.


I look so worn… A little divine beauty might make him love me again.


But the box held no beauty—only the sleep of the dead.

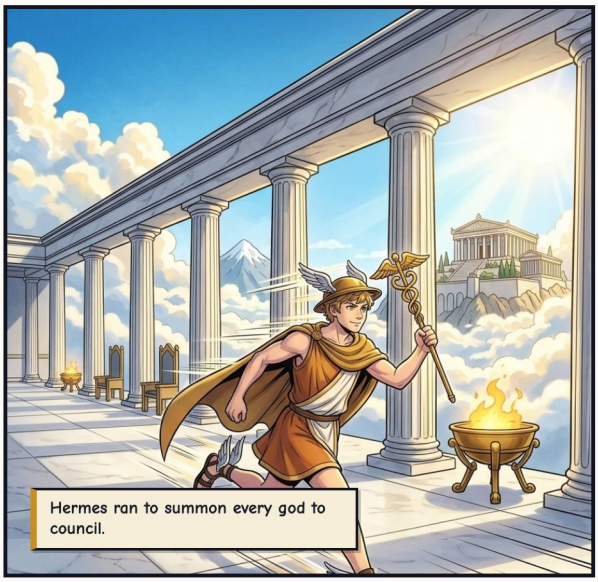
ACT III – WINGS OF THE SOUL





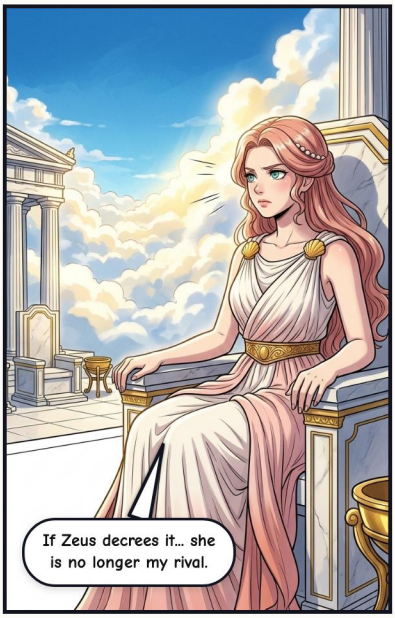




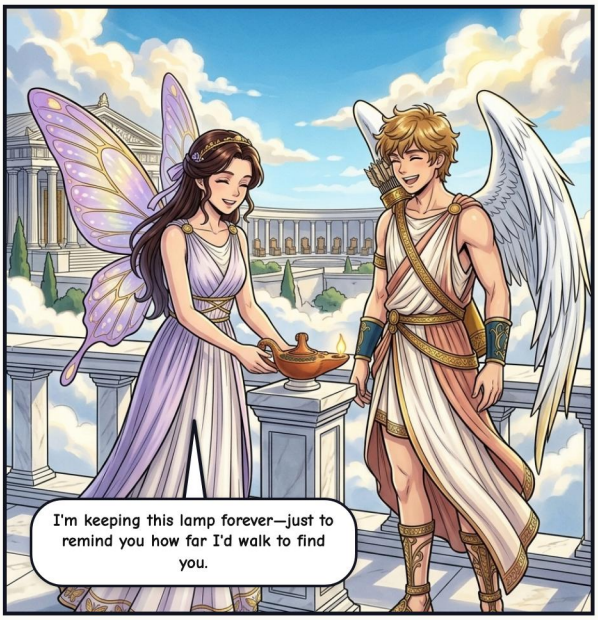



Eros has chosen his bride. Let the marriage stand, lawful and lasting. Daughter, no shame will touch you.


Drink, Psyche, and be immortal.


If Zeus decrees it... she is no longer my rival.

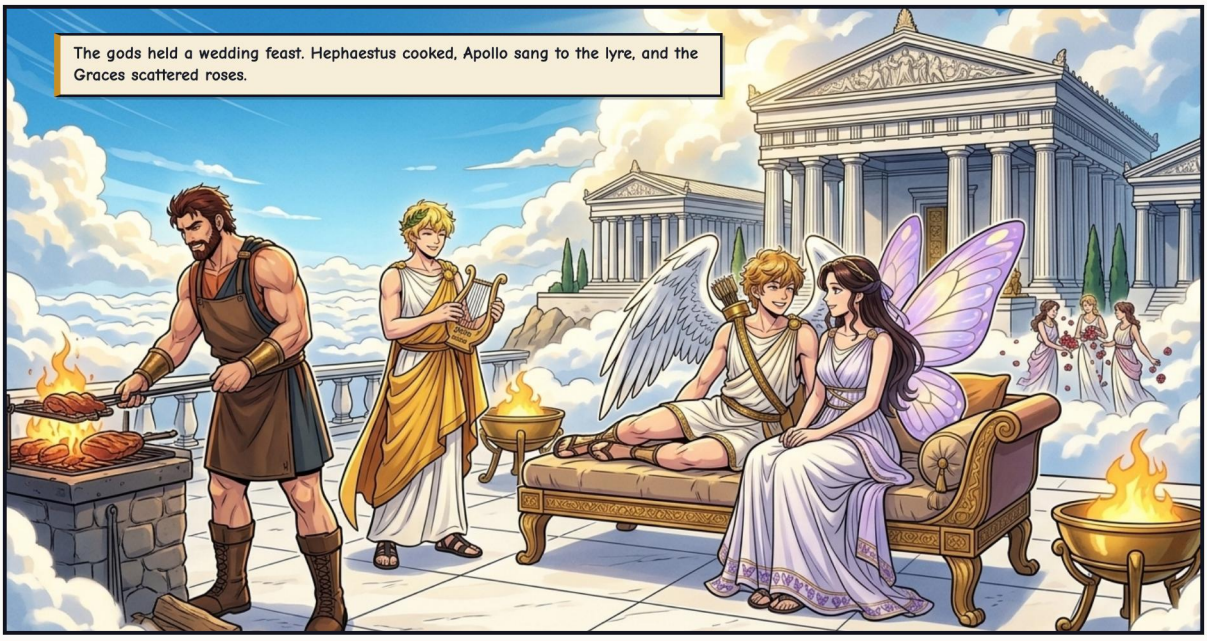

Psyche gained shimmering butterfly wings—becoming the immortal Goddess of the Soul.

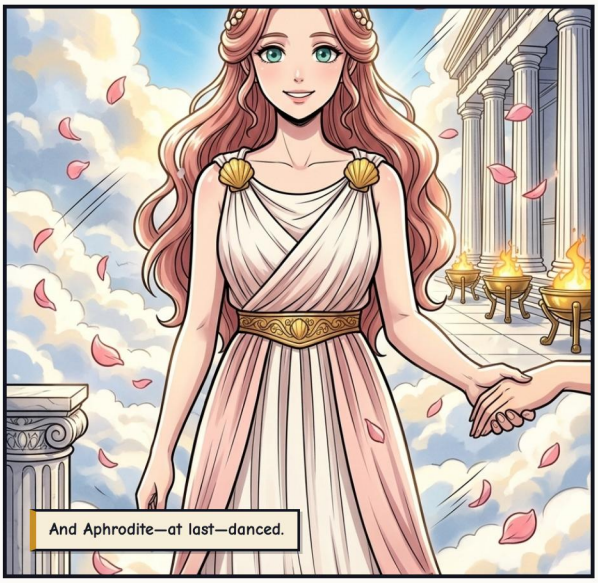

I'm keeping this lamp forever—just to remind you how far I'd walk to find you.


Deal—just promise not to tip it over this time!

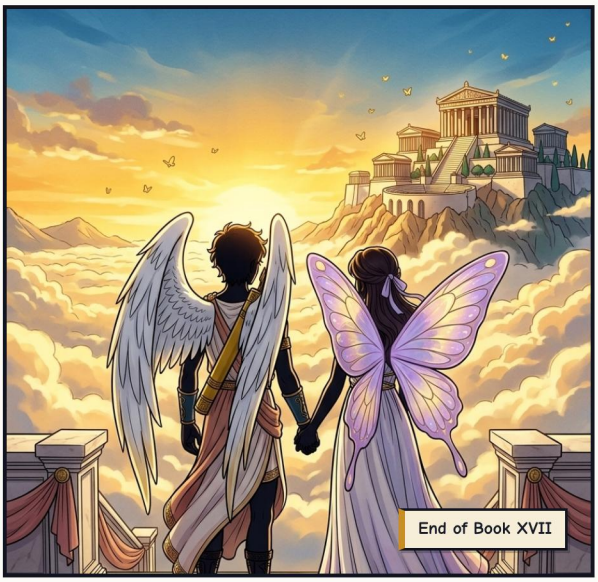

No longer hidden in darkness, Love and the Soul flew side by side in the open light of day.
True love isn't afraid of the lamp—it shines brighter when you truly see each other.

EPILOGUE — THE WEDDING FEAST











COLOPHON

Eros & Psyche: The Lamp in the Dark

Gods of Olympus: Greek Mythology

CLASSICAL SOURCES

Apuleius (Metamorphoses / The Golden Ass)

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WORK IN PROGRESS & FEEDBACK

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