

STINKYBINKY BOOKS

THE SMILE OF A CHILD!

THE SUPREME BODGEYMAN



Welcome to the second Stinkybinky book!  
And this one does have monsters, but not like the  
boogeyman beater club...

Hello, I am from Almelo Hello....  
Welcome to your third book, an exciting one this  
time, well, book, book!?

This is a legend, a myth, about a Greek goddess...

Do you already know who!?  
I don't think so! But I think you'll understand  
what I understand now...

Yeah, let that brainstem crunch, and crunch, and  
crunch, and more crunch, let the gears turn and  
turn and turn and turn and turn and turn and turn  
and turn...

Okay, I'm turning around the gears. No, ladies  
and gentlemen, let's just be serious. This is a book  
that interests me about Greek mythology, because  
I'm half Greek myself, and I really want to teach  
you something with this little book! At least, I'm  
going to try!

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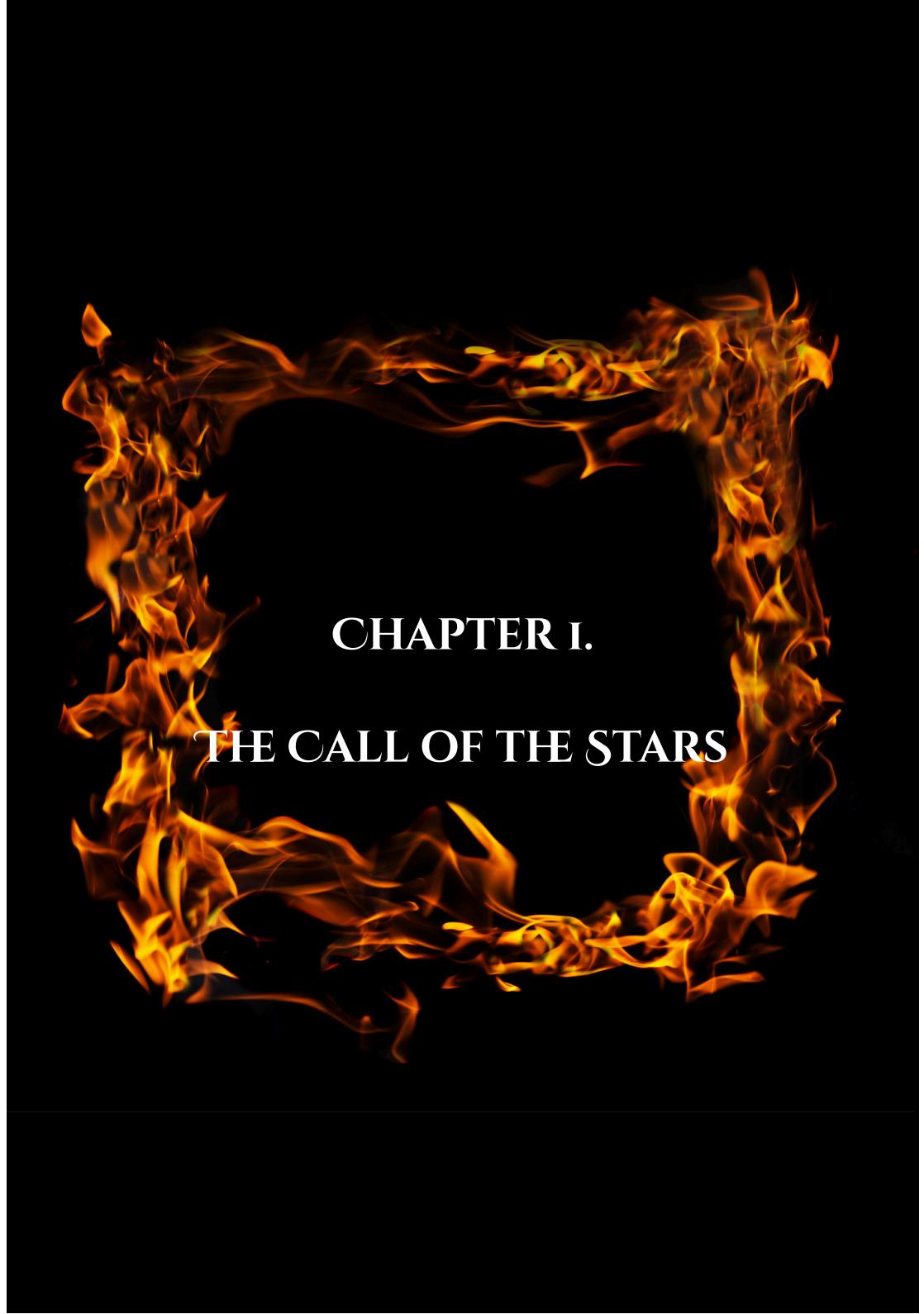
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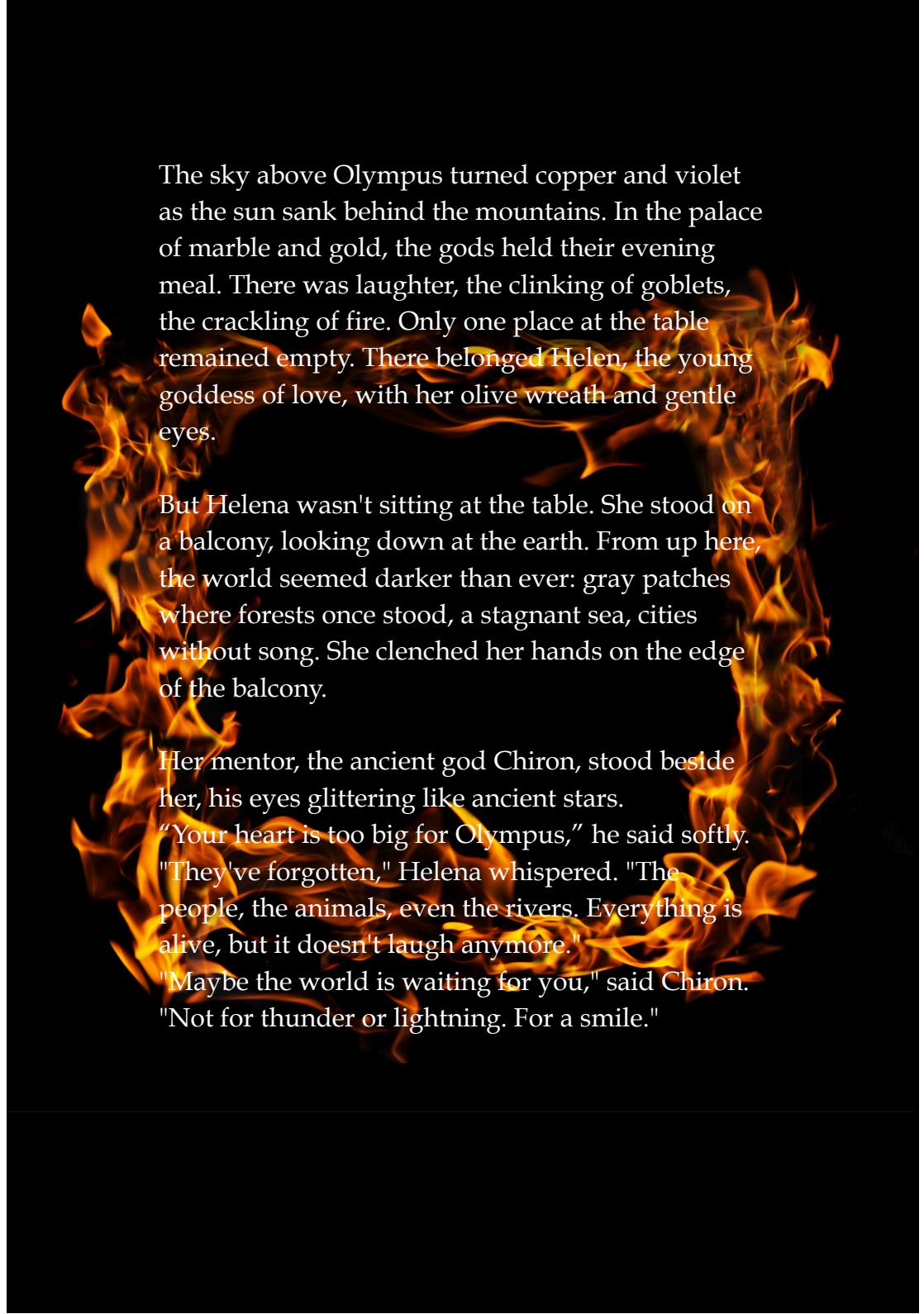


THE SMILE OF A  
CHILD!



## CHAPTER I.

# THE CALL OF THE STARS



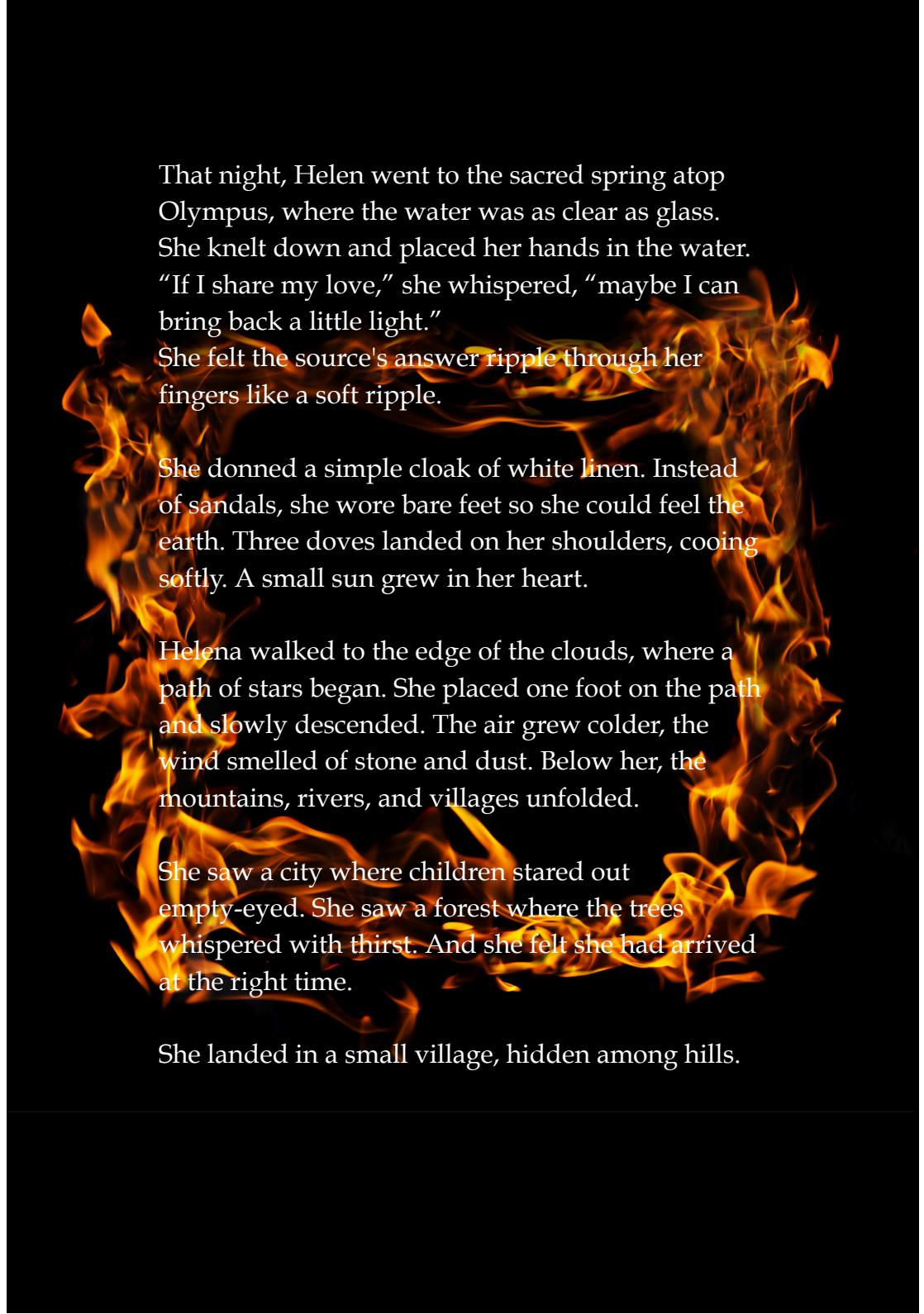
The sky above Olympus turned copper and violet as the sun sank behind the mountains. In the palace of marble and gold, the gods held their evening meal. There was laughter, the clinking of goblets, the crackling of fire. Only one place at the table remained empty. There belonged Helen, the young goddess of love, with her olive wreath and gentle eyes.

But Helena wasn't sitting at the table. She stood on a balcony, looking down at the earth. From up here, the world seemed darker than ever: gray patches where forests once stood, a stagnant sea, cities without song. She clenched her hands on the edge of the balcony.

Her mentor, the ancient god Chiron, stood beside her, his eyes glittering like ancient stars.

"Your heart is too big for Olympus," he said softly. "They've forgotten," Helena whispered. "The people, the animals, even the rivers. Everything is alive, but it doesn't laugh anymore."

"Maybe the world is waiting for you," said Chiron. "Not for thunder or lightning. For a smile."



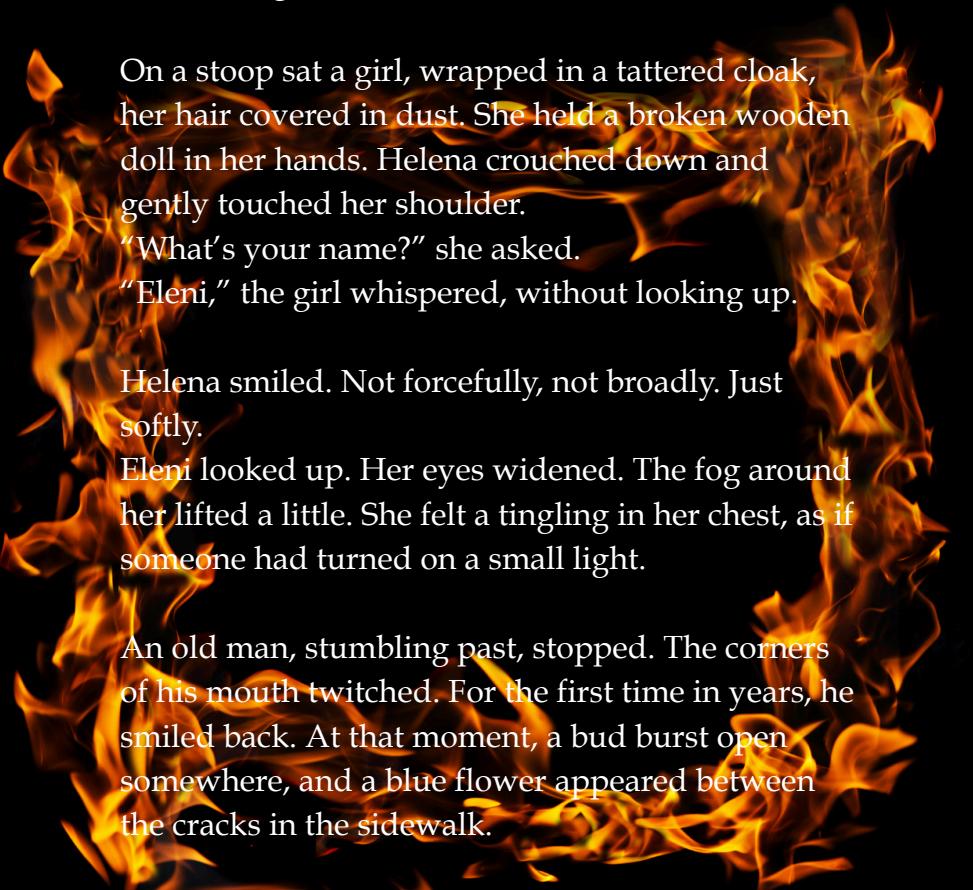
That night, Helen went to the sacred spring atop Olympus, where the water was as clear as glass. She knelt down and placed her hands in the water. "If I share my love," she whispered, "maybe I can bring back a little light." She felt the source's answer ripple through her fingers like a soft ripple.

She donned a simple cloak of white linen. Instead of sandals, she wore bare feet so she could feel the earth. Three doves landed on her shoulders, cooing softly. A small sun grew in her heart.

Helena walked to the edge of the clouds, where a path of stars began. She placed one foot on the path and slowly descended. The air grew colder, the wind smelled of stone and dust. Below her, the mountains, rivers, and villages unfolded.

She saw a city where children stared out empty-eyed. She saw a forest where the trees whispered with thirst. And she felt she had arrived at the right time.

She landed in a small village, hidden among hills.



Houses of gray stone, windows closed, doors bolted. The air hung heavy as fog. No one spoke, no one sang.

On a stoop sat a girl, wrapped in a tattered cloak, her hair covered in dust. She held a broken wooden doll in her hands. Helena crouched down and gently touched her shoulder.

“What’s your name?” she asked.

“Eleni,” the girl whispered, without looking up.

Helena smiled. Not forcefully, not broadly. Just softly.

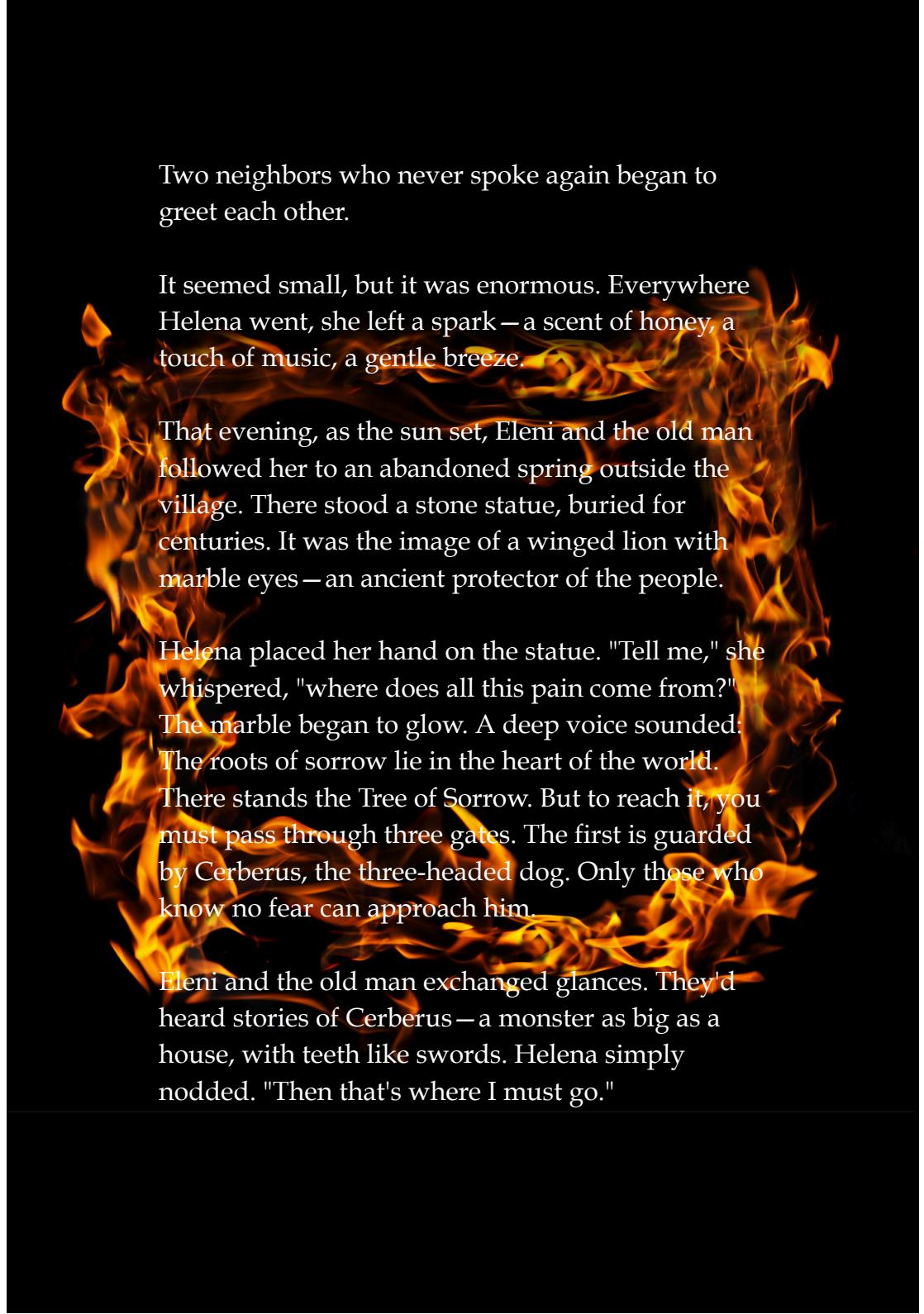
Eleni looked up. Her eyes widened. The fog around her lifted a little. She felt a tingling in her chest, as if someone had turned on a small light.

An old man, stumbling past, stopped. The corners of his mouth twitched. For the first time in years, he smiled back. At that moment, a bud burst open somewhere, and a blue flower appeared between the cracks in the sidewalk.

Helena walked through the village.

A dog, bent over with age, straightened up.

A mother who thought no one heard her saw a blossom on her windowsill.



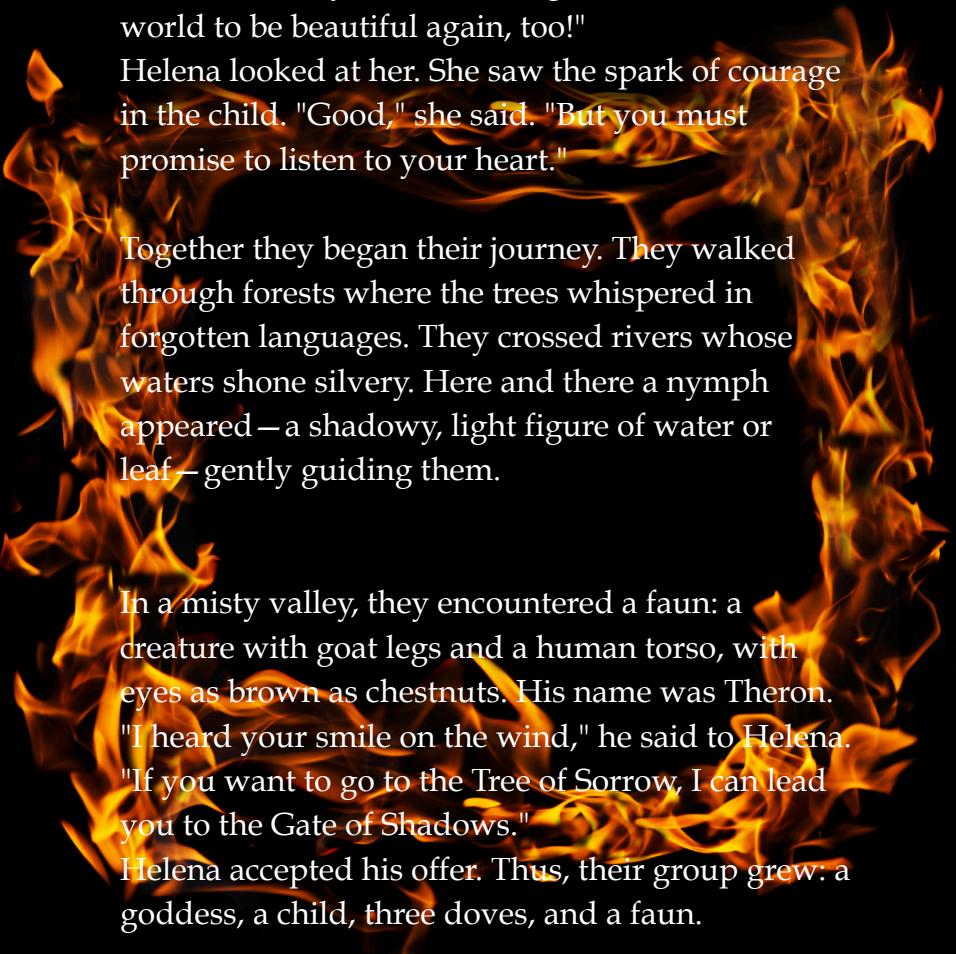
Two neighbors who never spoke again began to greet each other.

It seemed small, but it was enormous. Everywhere Helena went, she left a spark—a scent of honey, a touch of music, a gentle breeze.

That evening, as the sun set, Eleni and the old man followed her to an abandoned spring outside the village. There stood a stone statue, buried for centuries. It was the image of a winged lion with marble eyes—an ancient protector of the people.

Helena placed her hand on the statue. "Tell me," she whispered, "where does all this pain come from?" The marble began to glow. A deep voice sounded: The roots of sorrow lie in the heart of the world. There stands the Tree of Sorrow. But to reach it, you must pass through three gates. The first is guarded by Cerberus, the three-headed dog. Only those who know no fear can approach him.

Eleni and the old man exchanged glances. They'd heard stories of Cerberus—a monster as big as a house, with teeth like swords. Helena simply nodded. "Then that's where I must go."



The next morning, Helena left, accompanied by her three pigeons. Eleni ran after her.

"Take me with you!" cried the girl. "I want the world to be beautiful again, too!"

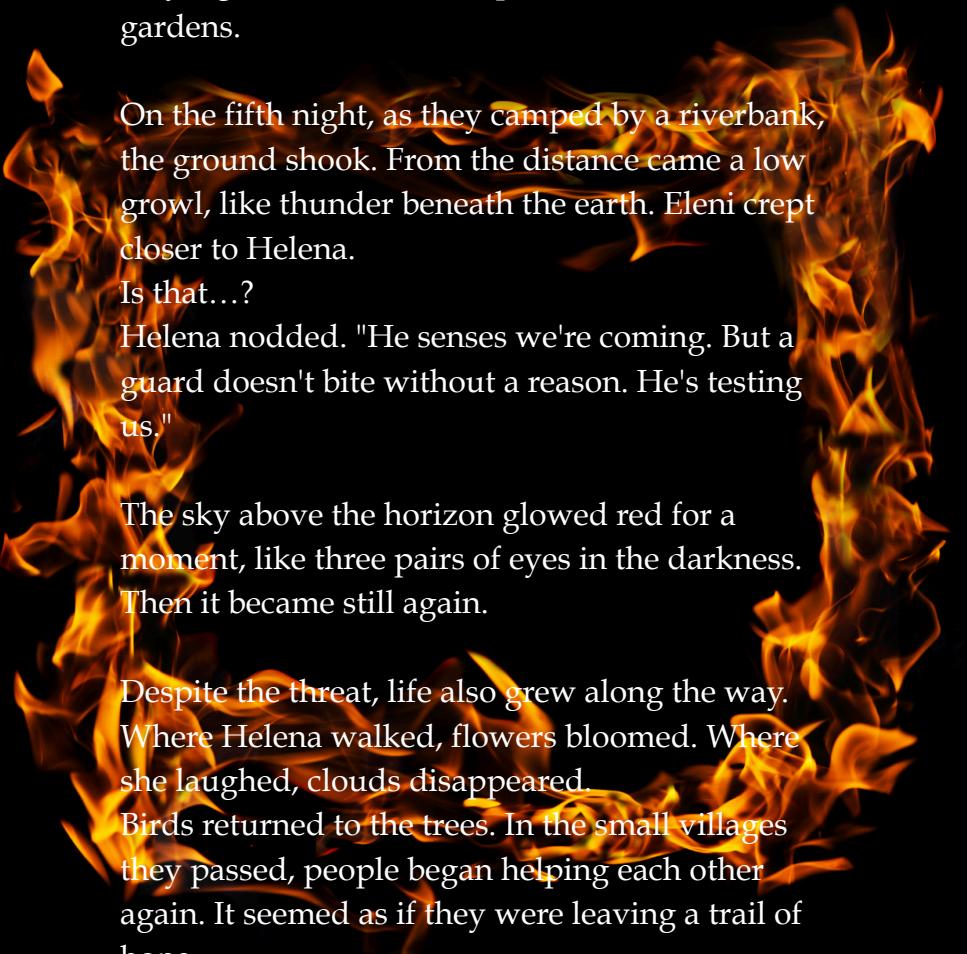
Helena looked at her. She saw the spark of courage in the child. "Good," she said. "But you must promise to listen to your heart."

Together they began their journey. They walked through forests where the trees whispered in forgotten languages. They crossed rivers whose waters shone silvery. Here and there a nymph appeared—a shadowy, light figure of water or leaf—gently guiding them.

In a misty valley, they encountered a faun: a creature with goat legs and a human torso, with eyes as brown as chestnuts. His name was Theron. "I heard your smile on the wind," he said to Helena. "If you want to go to the Tree of Sorrow, I can lead you to the Gate of Shadows."

Helena accepted his offer. Thus, their group grew: a goddess, a child, three doves, and a faun.

Along the way, they learned songs that purified the air. Eleni practiced smiling every evening, first



hesitantly, then more confidently. Theron told stories of ancient times when Cerberus was not only a guardian but also a protector of secret gardens.

On the fifth night, as they camped by a riverbank, the ground shook. From the distance came a low growl, like thunder beneath the earth. Eleni crept closer to Helena.

Is that...?

Helena nodded. "He senses we're coming. But a guard doesn't bite without a reason. He's testing us."

The sky above the horizon glowed red for a moment, like three pairs of eyes in the darkness. Then it became still again.

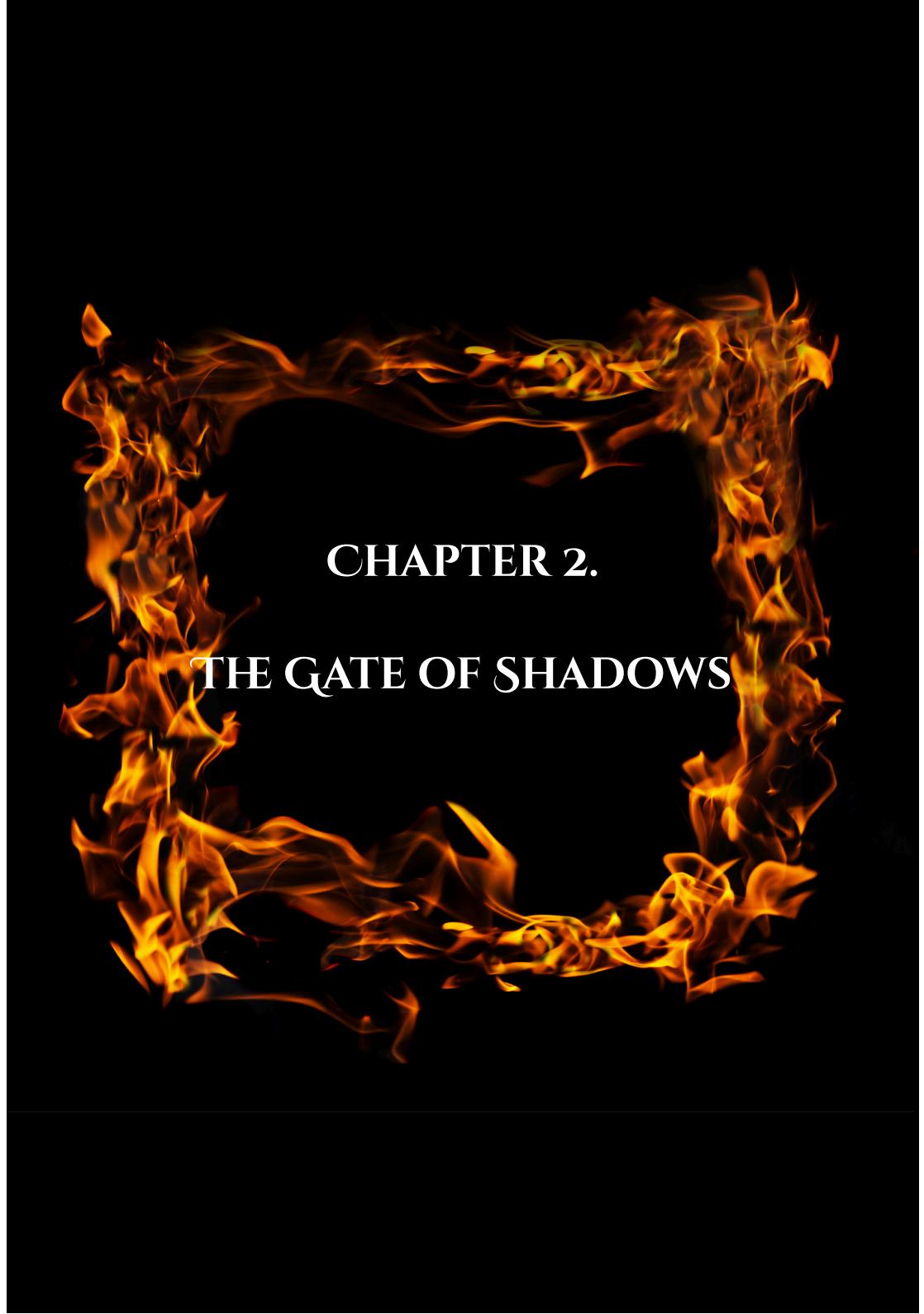
Despite the threat, life also grew along the way. Where Helena walked, flowers bloomed. Where she laughed, clouds disappeared.

Birds returned to the trees. In the small villages they passed, people began helping each other again. It seemed as if they were leaving a trail of hope.

Theron turned and whispered to Eleni, "She's changing the world as she walks."

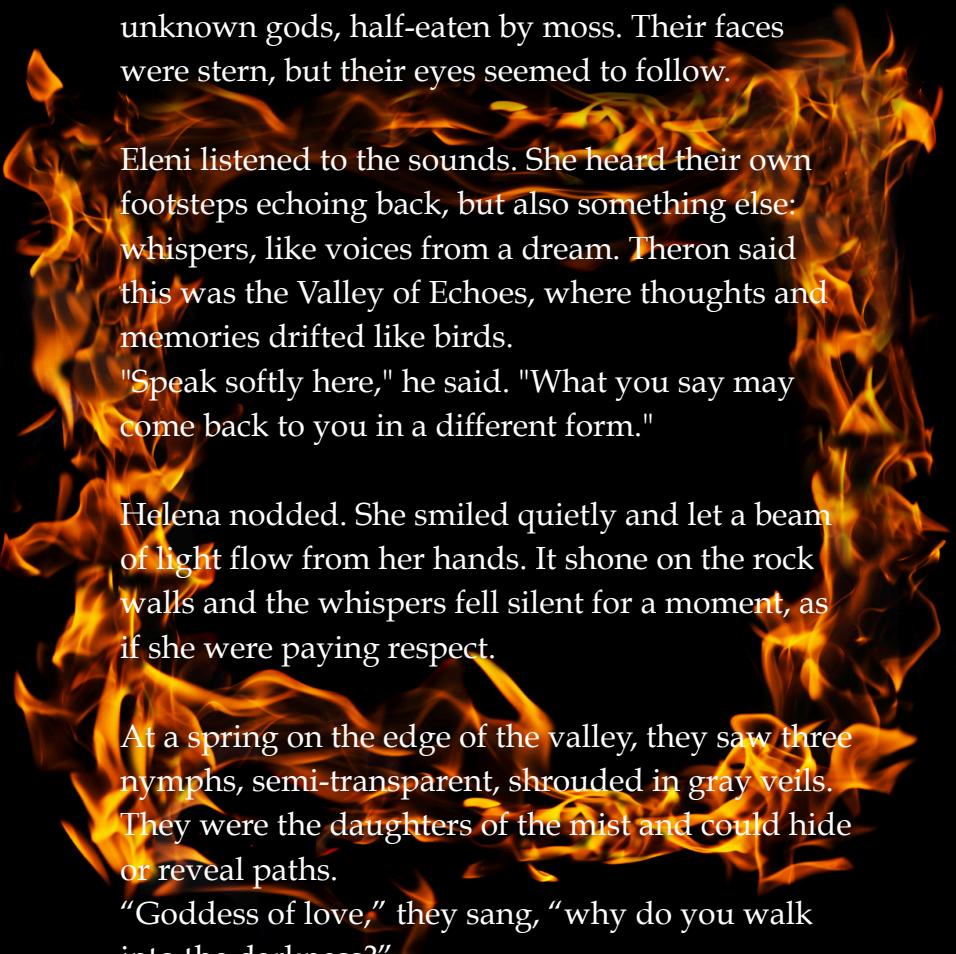
Eleni smiled back. "Maybe she'll change me, too."





CHAPTER 2.

THE GATE OF SHADOWS



The group continued along a path that wound between high rocks. The sky grew grayer, the light more muted. On either side stood stone statues of unknown gods, half-eaten by moss. Their faces were stern, but their eyes seemed to follow.

Eleni listened to the sounds. She heard their own footsteps echoing back, but also something else: whispers, like voices from a dream. Theron said this was the Valley of Echoes, where thoughts and memories drifted like birds.

"Speak softly here," he said. "What you say may come back to you in a different form."

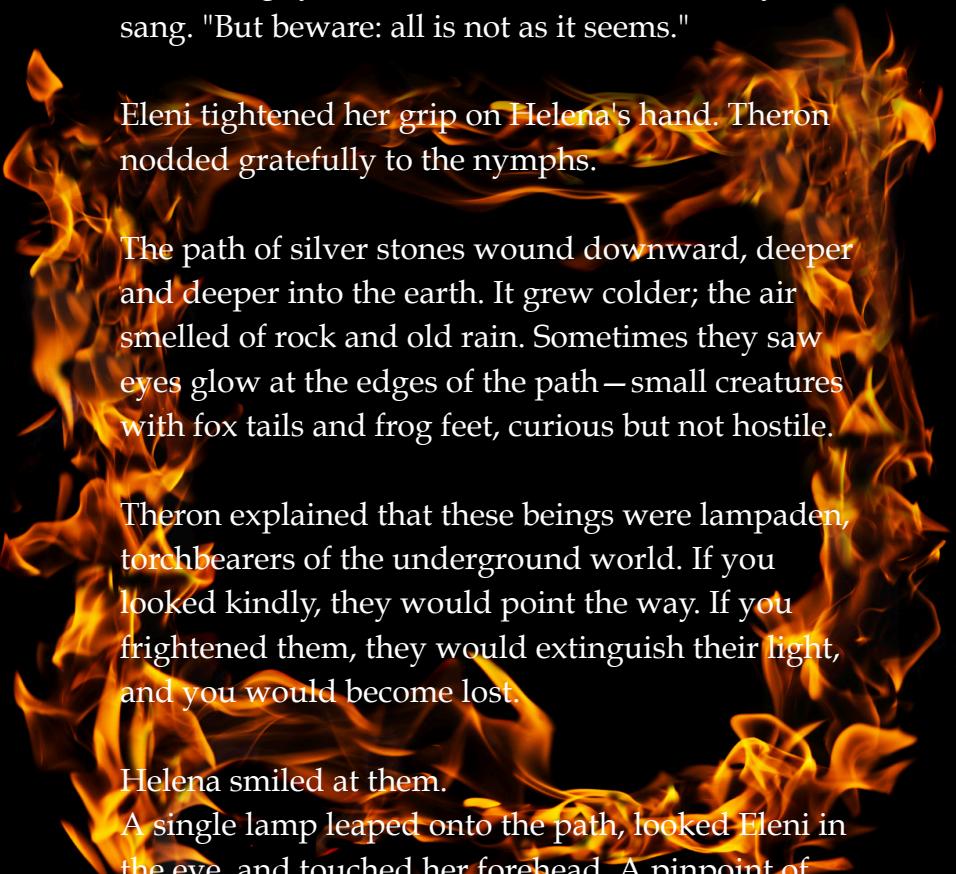
Helena nodded. She smiled quietly and let a beam of light flow from her hands. It shone on the rock walls and the whispers fell silent for a moment, as if she were paying respect.

At a spring on the edge of the valley, they saw three nymphs, semi-transparent, shrouded in gray veils. They were the daughters of the mist and could hide or reveal paths.

"Goddess of love," they sang, "why do you walk into the darkness?"

"Because the darkness calls for light," Helena answered softly.

The nymphs glided closer and touched the water. A path of silver stones appeared, leading east. "This brings you to the Gate of Shadows," they sang. "But beware: all is not as it seems."



Eleni tightened her grip on Helena's hand. Theron nodded gratefully to the nymphs.

The path of silver stones wound downward, deeper and deeper into the earth. It grew colder; the air smelled of rock and old rain. Sometimes they saw eyes glow at the edges of the path – small creatures with fox tails and frog feet, curious but not hostile.

Theron explained that these beings were lampaden, torchbearers of the underground world. If you looked kindly, they would point the way. If you frightened them, they would extinguish their light, and you would become lost.

Helena smiled at them.

A single lamp leaped onto the path, looked Eleni in the eye, and touched her forehead. A pinpoint of light appeared there, like a tiny star.

"For courage," whispered the creature, and disappeared back into the darkness.

At a bend in the path, a stone gate loomed, half-collapsed and overgrown with roots. On either side were enormous dog heads carved into the rock. Their eyes glowed a soft red.

"The Gate of Shadows," Theron said, his voice less certain than usual.

Eleni swallowed. "Is he back there?"

Helena nodded. "He senses we're coming."

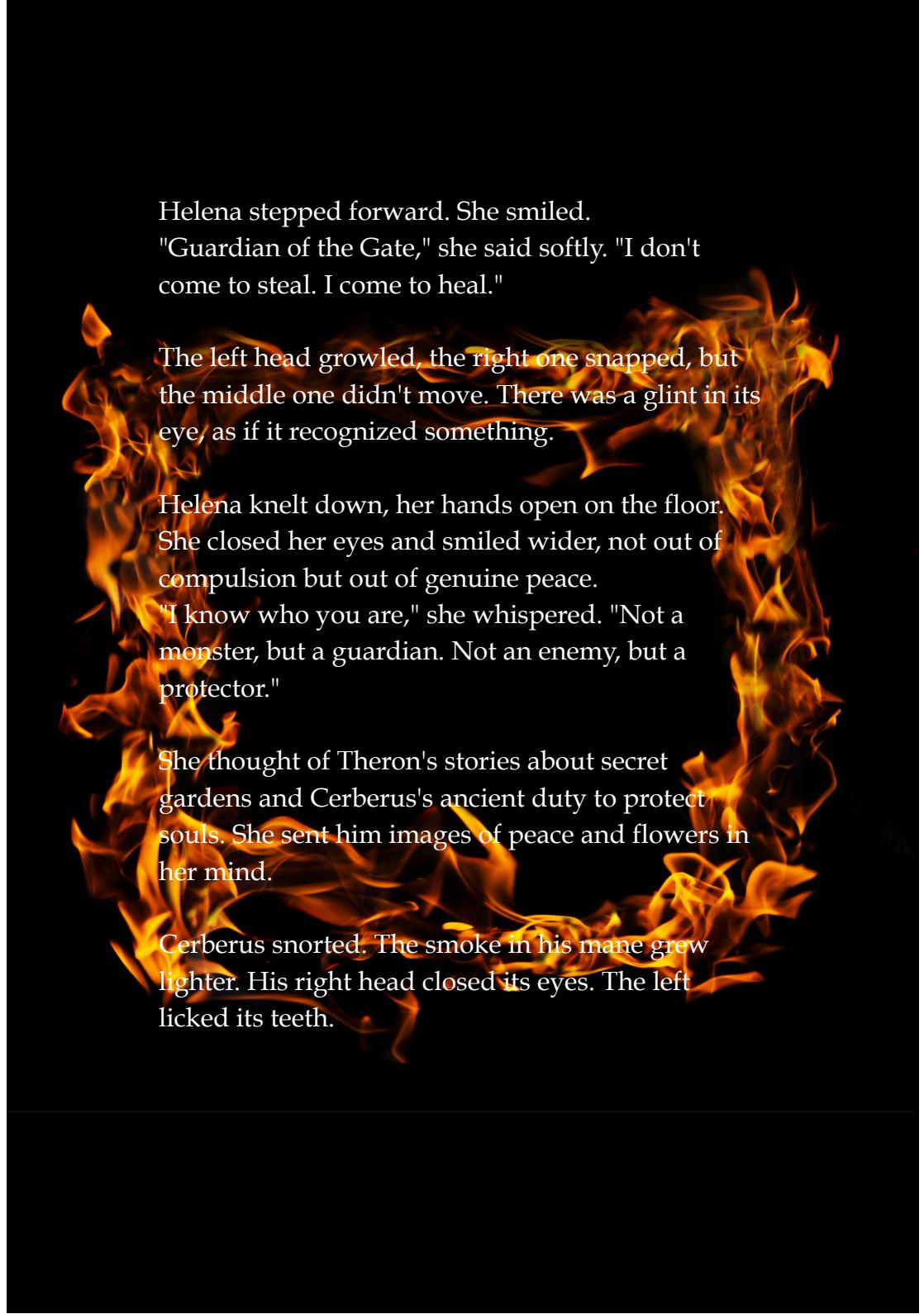
She placed a hand on the cold stone. She felt a vibration, like a heartbeat beneath the rock. The air began to growl.

From the darkness beyond the gate came the sound of heavy paws. The ground shook. Three growls blended into a single thunderous sound. Then Cerberus stepped forward: a dog as tall as a tower, three heads, eyes like molten lava, a mane of smoke. His teeth gleamed like sickles.

But instead of attacking immediately, it remained standing. Its middle head tilted slightly to the left, as if it smelled them.

The doves on Helena's shoulders cooed softly but didn't fly away. Eleni felt her knees trembling.

Theron held his flute as if he were playing a spell.



Helena stepped forward. She smiled. "Guardian of the Gate," she said softly. "I don't come to steal. I come to heal."

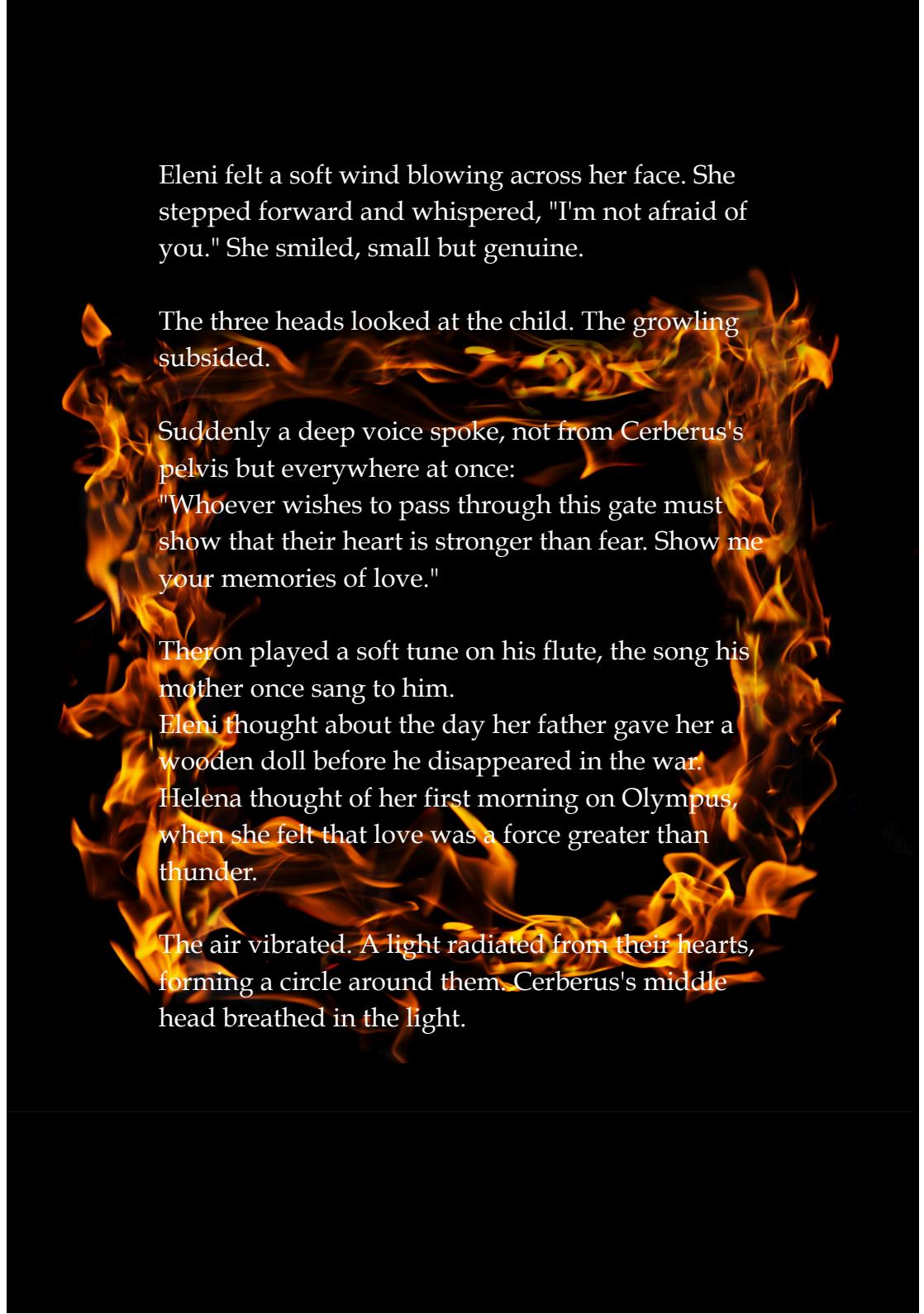
The left head growled, the right one snapped, but the middle one didn't move. There was a glint in its eye, as if it recognized something.

Helena knelt down, her hands open on the floor. She closed her eyes and smiled wider, not out of compulsion but out of genuine peace.

"I know who you are," she whispered. "Not a monster, but a guardian. Not an enemy, but a protector."

She thought of Theron's stories about secret gardens and Cerberus's ancient duty to protect souls. She sent him images of peace and flowers in her mind.

Cerberus snorted. The smoke in his mane grew lighter. His right head closed its eyes. The left licked its teeth.



Eleni felt a soft wind blowing across her face. She stepped forward and whispered, "I'm not afraid of you." She smiled, small but genuine.

The three heads looked at the child. The growling subsided.

Suddenly a deep voice spoke, not from Cerberus's pelvis but everywhere at once:

"Whoever wishes to pass through this gate must show that their heart is stronger than fear. Show me your memories of love."

Theron played a soft tune on his flute, the song his mother once sang to him.

Eleni thought about the day her father gave her a wooden doll before he disappeared in the war.

Helena thought of her first morning on Olympus, when she felt that love was a force greater than thunder.

The air vibrated. A light radiated from their hearts, forming a circle around them. Cerberus's middle head breathed in the light.

Slowly, the smoke cleared. Cerberus's three heads rose and emitted a sound somewhere between a growl and a sigh. He stepped aside.

The stone gate tore open, as if unseen hands were pushing it out. Beyond the gate lay an obsidian path leading down into a forest of black trees.

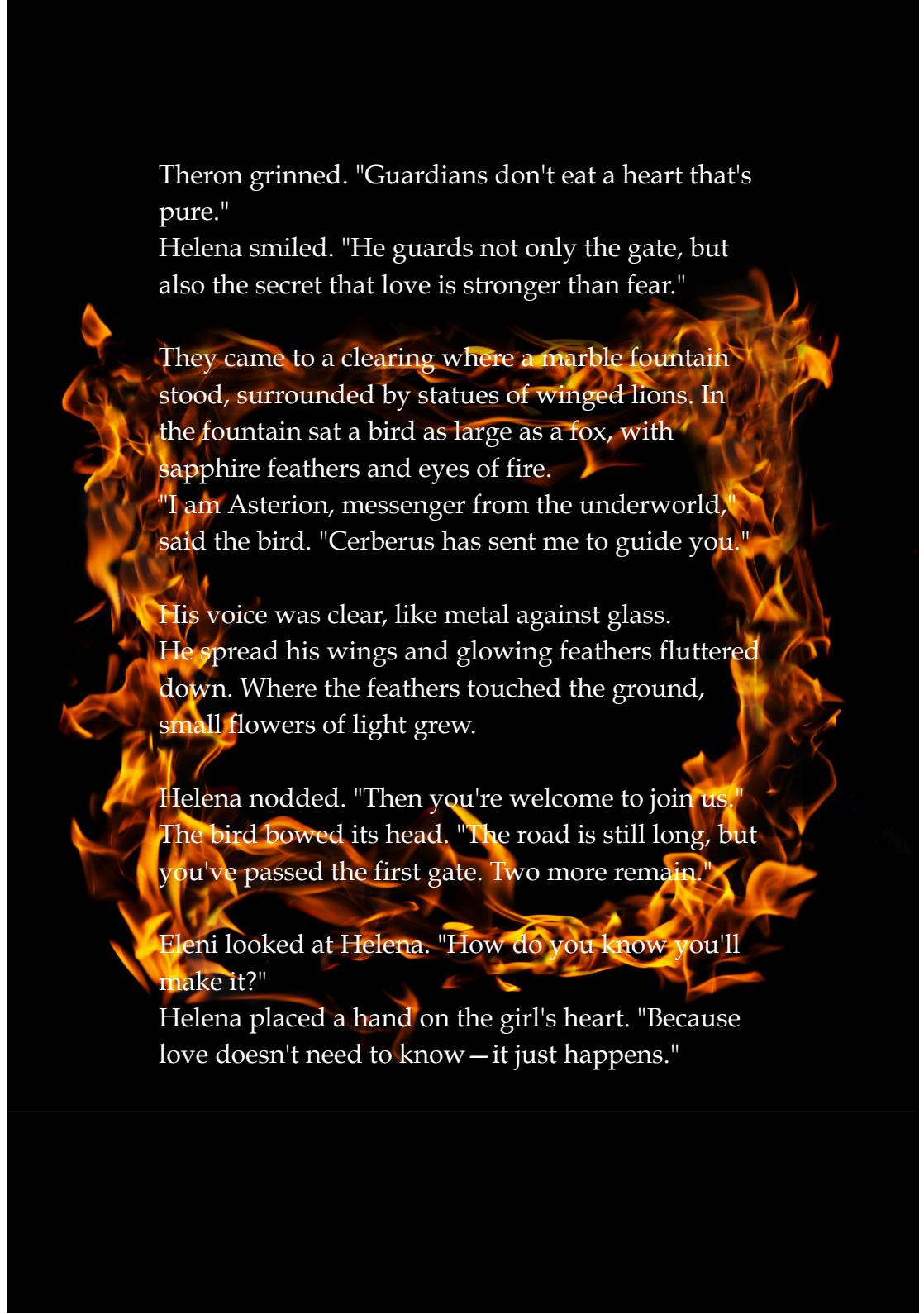
Cerberus bowed his middle head toward Helen. His eyes no longer shone red, but gold. He spoke in a voice like distant thunder:  
"Go. But remember: the Tree of Sorrow feeds on doubt. Only those who keep smiling can heal it."

Helena gently touched the snout of the middle head. "Thank you, Guardian."

Cerberus closed his eyes and disappeared back into the shadows.

The group walked up the path. Behind them, the stones closed again. Before them lay a dreamlike landscape: trees with silver leaves, rivers of softly glowing water, and in the distance, a light pulsating.

Eleni looked back. "I thought he was going to eat us."



Theron grinned. "Guardians don't eat a heart that's pure."

Helena smiled. "He guards not only the gate, but also the secret that love is stronger than fear."

They came to a clearing where a marble fountain stood, surrounded by statues of winged lions. In the fountain sat a bird as large as a fox, with sapphire feathers and eyes of fire.

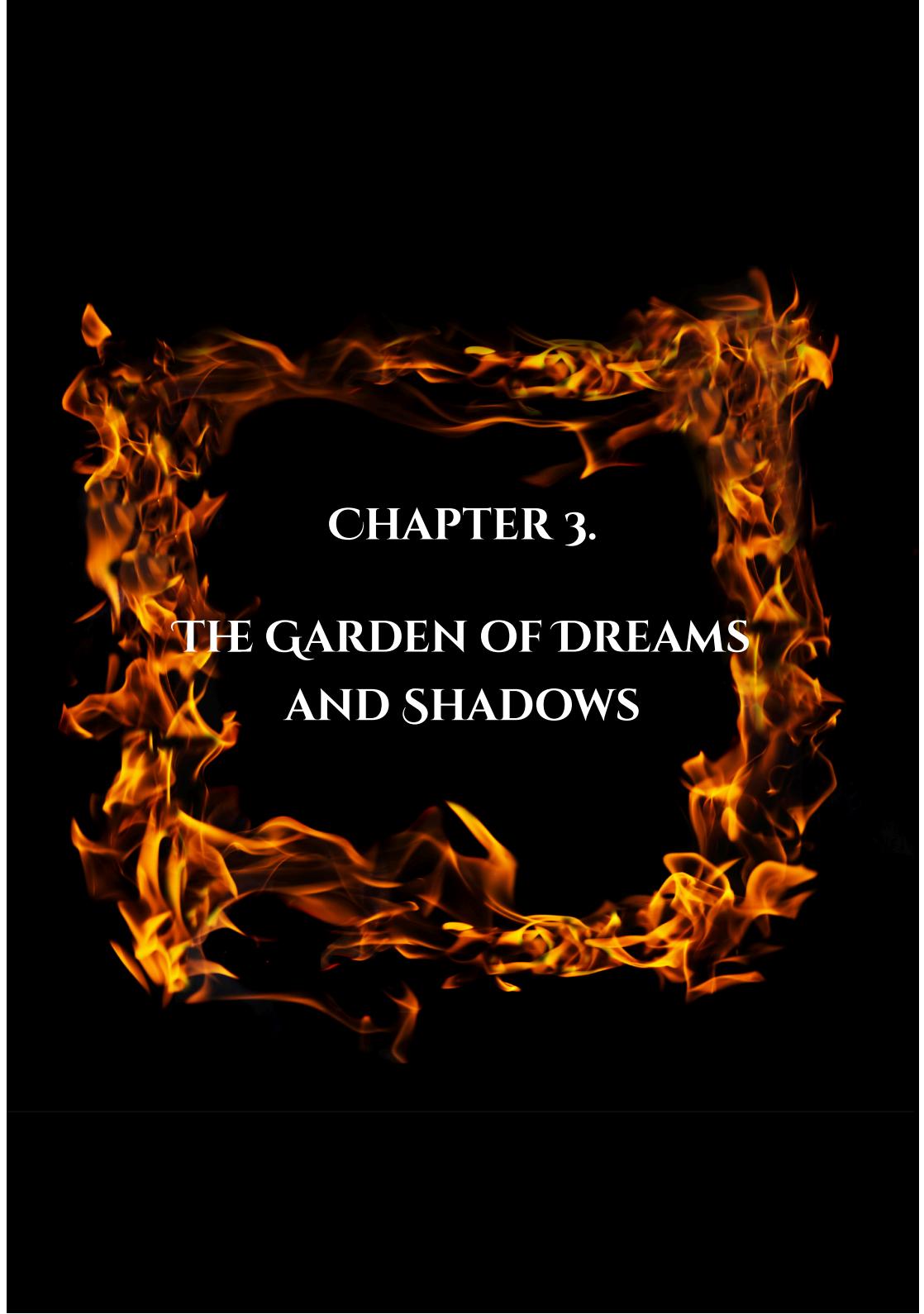
"I am Asterion, messenger from the underworld," said the bird. "Cerberus has sent me to guide you."

His voice was clear, like metal against glass. He spread his wings and glowing feathers fluttered down. Where the feathers touched the ground, small flowers of light grew.

Helena nodded. "Then you're welcome to join us." The bird bowed its head. "The road is still long, but you've passed the first gate. Two more remain."

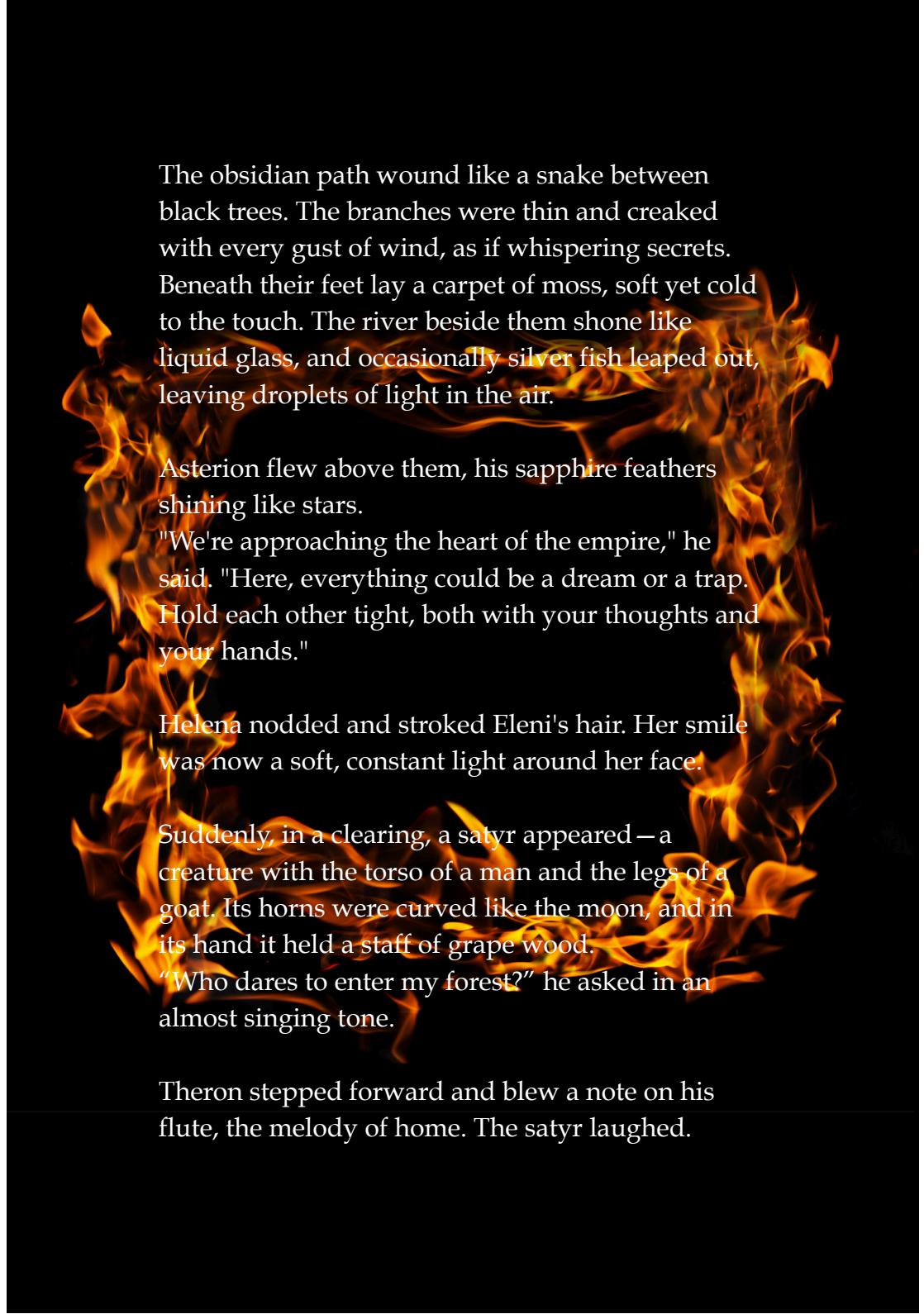
Eleni looked at Helena. "How do you know you'll make it?"

Helena placed a hand on the girl's heart. "Because love doesn't need to know – it just happens."



## CHAPTER 3.

# THE GARDEN OF DREAMS AND SHADOWS



The obsidian path wound like a snake between black trees. The branches were thin and creaked with every gust of wind, as if whispering secrets. Beneath their feet lay a carpet of moss, soft yet cold to the touch. The river beside them shone like liquid glass, and occasionally silver fish leaped out, leaving droplets of light in the air.

Asterion flew above them, his sapphire feathers shining like stars.

"We're approaching the heart of the empire," he said. "Here, everything could be a dream or a trap. Hold each other tight, both with your thoughts and your hands."

Helena nodded and stroked Eleni's hair. Her smile was now a soft, constant light around her face.

Suddenly, in a clearing, a satyr appeared – a creature with the torso of a man and the legs of a goat. Its horns were curved like the moon, and in its hand it held a staff of grape wood.

"Who dares to enter my forest?" he asked in an almost singing tone.

Theron stepped forward and blew a note on his flute, the melody of home. The satyr laughed.

"Music! That's better than fear."

Helena smiled. "We come to heal the sorrow."

The satyr nodded slowly. "Then you may proceed, but I'll give you a riddle: What grows when you give it away and dies when you lock it away?"

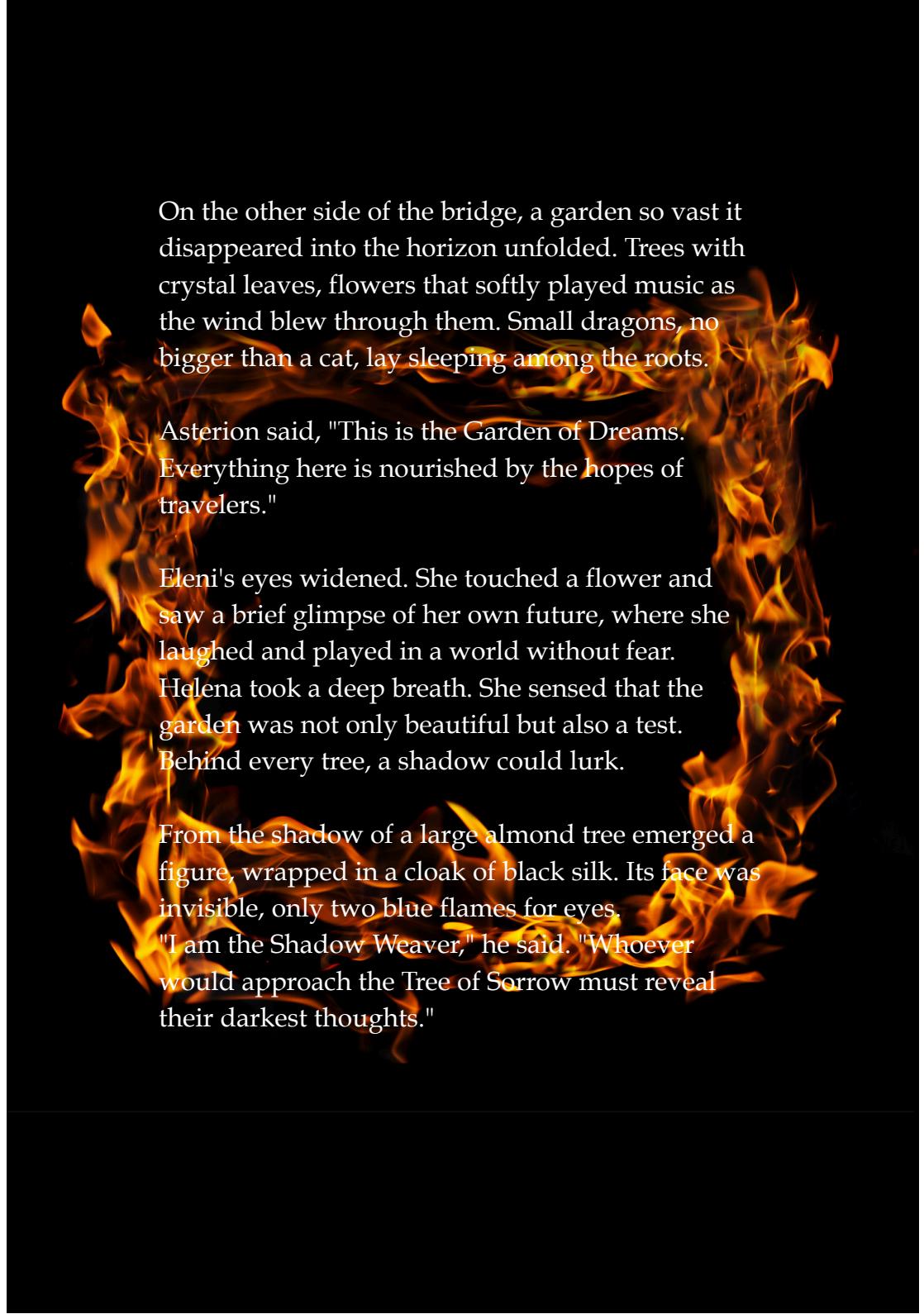
Eleni thought for a moment. "Love," she said.

The satyr bowed deeply and disappeared in a cloud of green smoke. Small seeds of light remained suspended in the smoke, forming a protective circle around the group.

They reached a bridge spanning a seemingly endless ravine. Thousands of names were etched on the stones. Some glowed, others faded. Asterion explained: "These are the names of those who lost their hope. Anyone crossing must speak a name that gives them strength."

Theron whispered his grandmother's name, Eleni that of her lost doll, Helena the name of an unknown child who once cried in the streets of Thebes. With each name spoken, the stones lit up, and they could continue on their way.

The bridge creaked but held. Below them, shadows with wings floated, but the light of their words held them at bay.

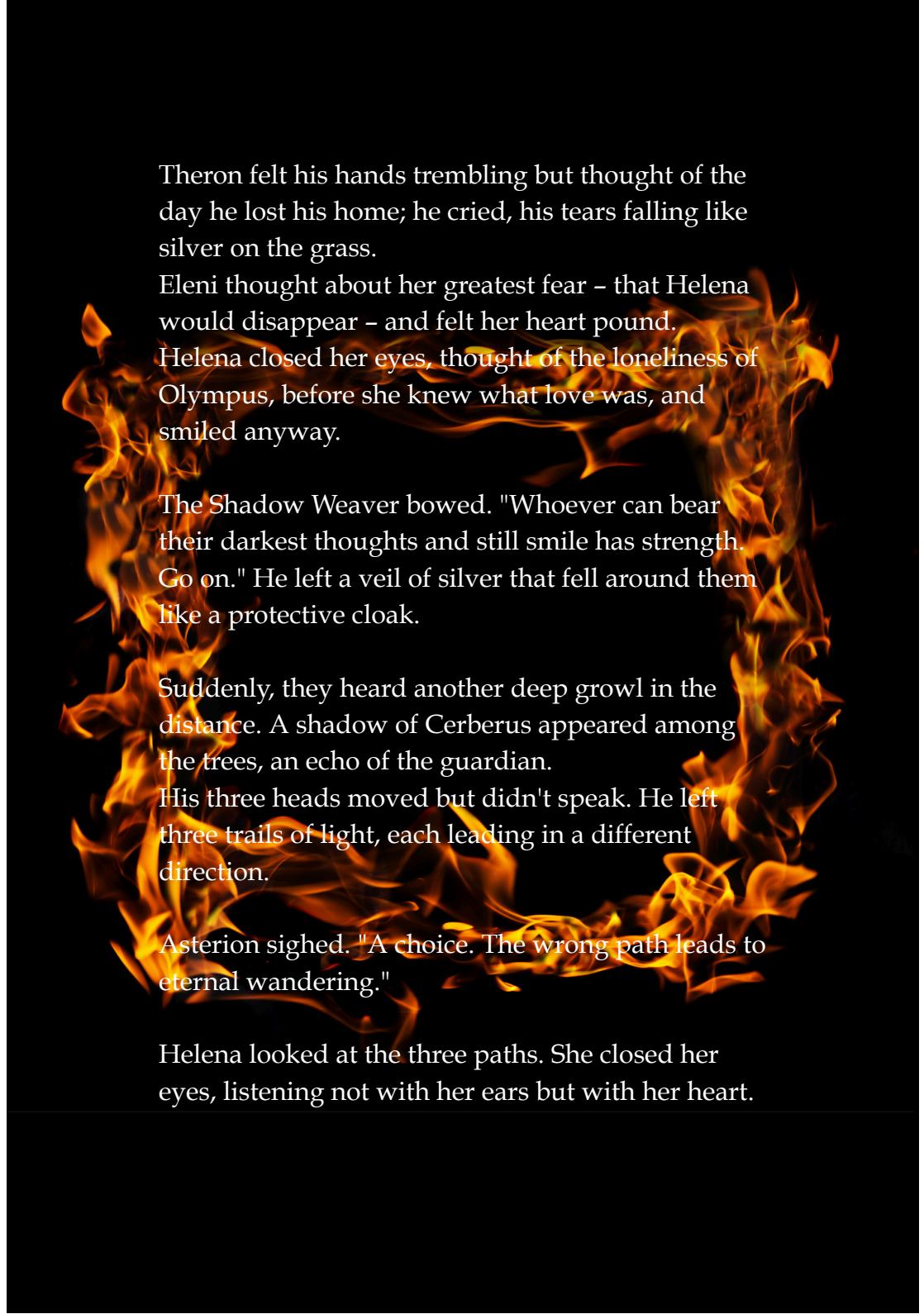


On the other side of the bridge, a garden so vast it disappeared into the horizon unfolded. Trees with crystal leaves, flowers that softly played music as the wind blew through them. Small dragons, no bigger than a cat, lay sleeping among the roots.

Asterion said, "This is the Garden of Dreams. Everything here is nourished by the hopes of travelers."

Eleni's eyes widened. She touched a flower and saw a brief glimpse of her own future, where she laughed and played in a world without fear. Helena took a deep breath. She sensed that the garden was not only beautiful but also a test. Behind every tree, a shadow could lurk.

From the shadow of a large almond tree emerged a figure, wrapped in a cloak of black silk. Its face was invisible, only two blue flames for eyes. "I am the Shadow Weaver," he said. "Whoever would approach the Tree of Sorrow must reveal their darkest thoughts."



Theron felt his hands trembling but thought of the day he lost his home; he cried, his tears falling like silver on the grass.

Eleni thought about her greatest fear – that Helena would disappear – and felt her heart pound.

Helena closed her eyes, thought of the loneliness of Olympus, before she knew what love was, and smiled anyway.

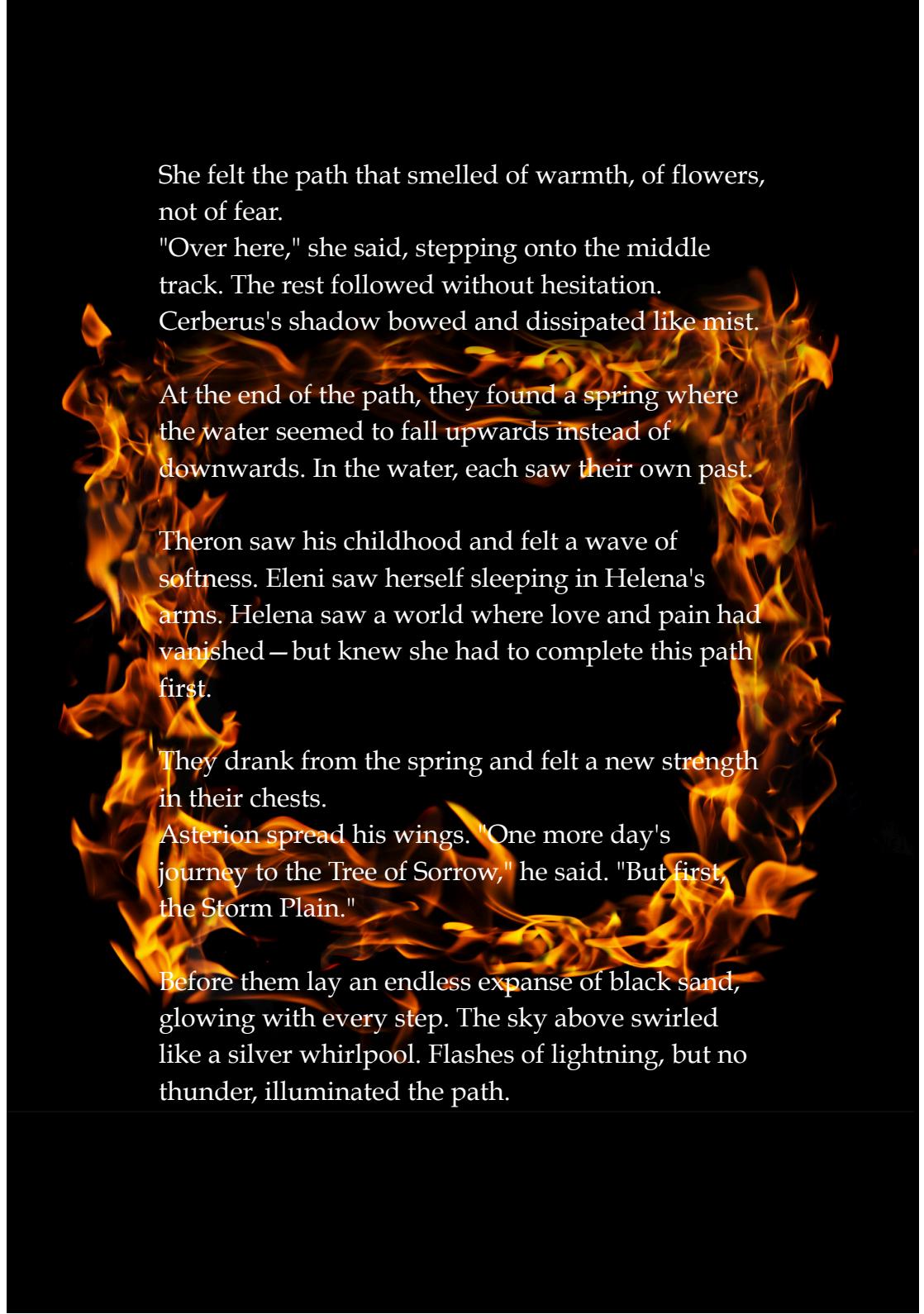
The Shadow Weaver bowed. "Whoever can bear their darkest thoughts and still smile has strength. Go on." He left a veil of silver that fell around them like a protective cloak.

Suddenly, they heard another deep growl in the distance. A shadow of Cerberus appeared among the trees, an echo of the guardian.

His three heads moved but didn't speak. He left three trails of light, each leading in a different direction.

Asterion sighed. "A choice. The wrong path leads to eternal wandering."

Helena looked at the three paths. She closed her eyes, listening not with her ears but with her heart.



She felt the path that smelled of warmth, of flowers, not of fear.

"Over here," she said, stepping onto the middle track. The rest followed without hesitation.

Cerberus's shadow bowed and dissipated like mist.

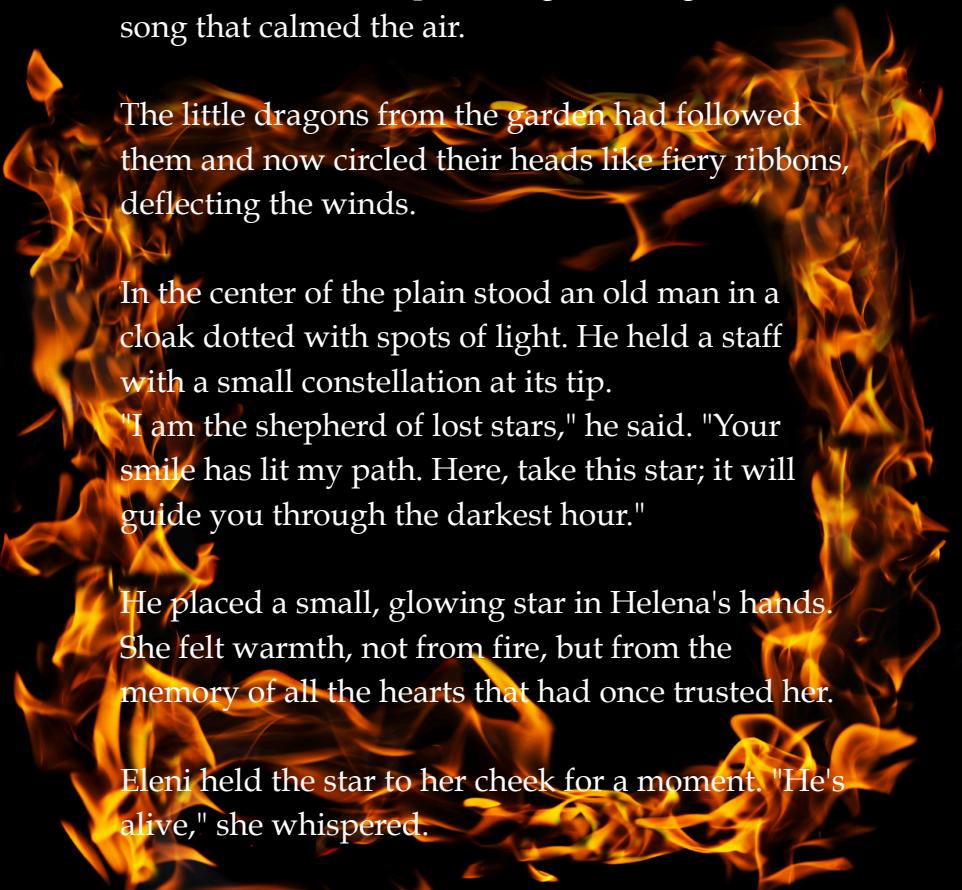
At the end of the path, they found a spring where the water seemed to fall upwards instead of downwards. In the water, each saw their own past.

Theron saw his childhood and felt a wave of softness. Eleni saw herself sleeping in Helena's arms. Helena saw a world where love and pain had vanished – but knew she had to complete this path first.

They drank from the spring and felt a new strength in their chests.

Asterion spread his wings. "One more day's journey to the Tree of Sorrow," he said. "But first, the Storm Plain."

Before them lay an endless expanse of black sand, glowing with every step. The sky above swirled like a silver whirlpool. Flashes of lightning, but no thunder, illuminated the path.



They had to hold each other tightly. Winds tried to blow their thoughts away, whispering to them to turn back. Helena kept smiling. She sang a soft song that calmed the air.

The little dragons from the garden had followed them and now circled their heads like fiery ribbons, deflecting the winds.

In the center of the plain stood an old man in a cloak dotted with spots of light. He held a staff with a small constellation at its tip.

"I am the shepherd of lost stars," he said. "Your smile has lit my path. Here, take this star; it will guide you through the darkest hour."

He placed a small, glowing star in Helena's hands. She felt warmth, not from fire, but from the memory of all the hearts that had once trusted her.

Eleni held the star to her cheek for a moment. "He's alive," she whispered.

They set up camp beneath a rock arch that hung above them like a crescent moon. Asterion slept with one eye open.

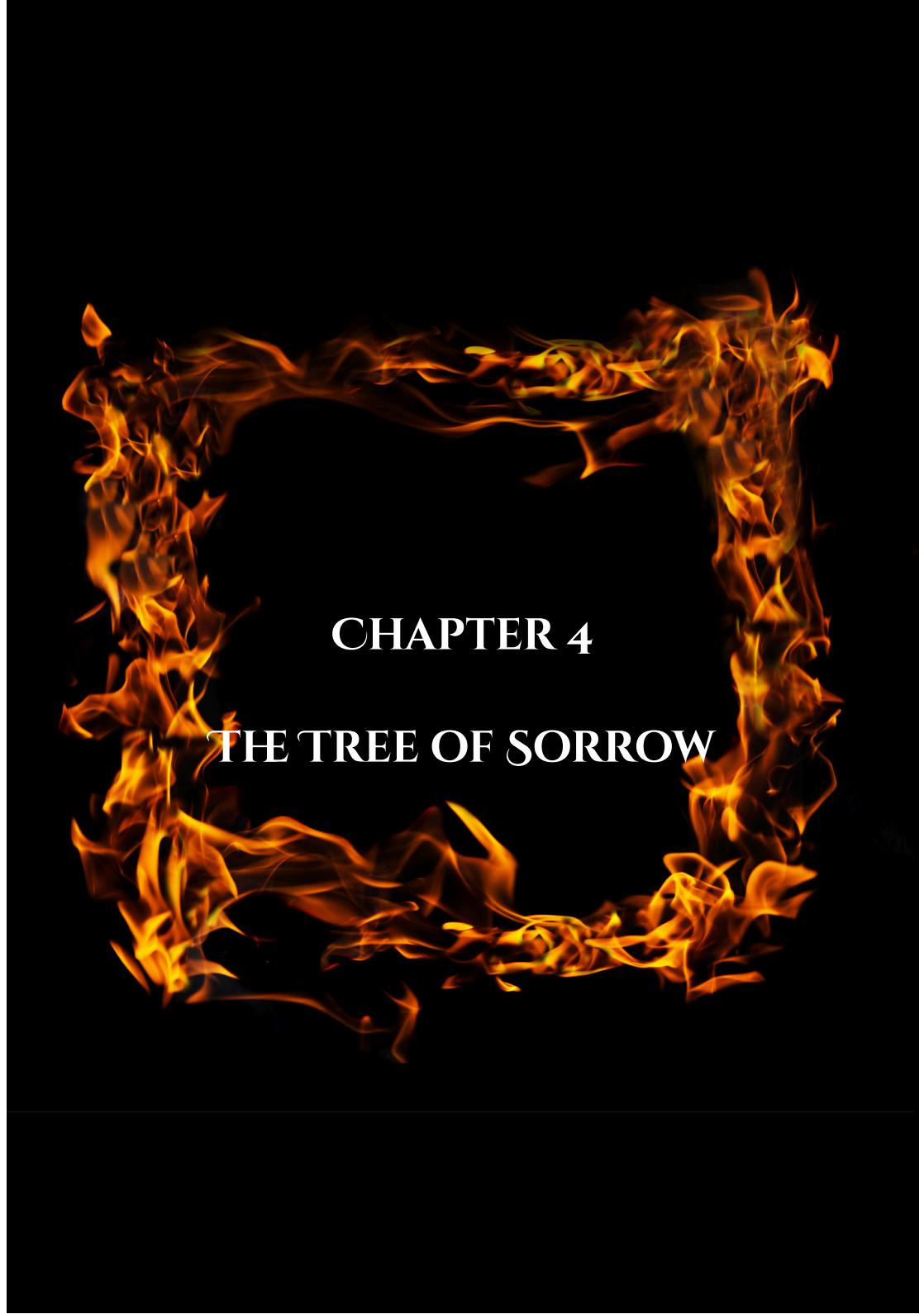
Theron played softly on his flute. Eleni leaned against Helena and looked up at the sky filled with dancing lights.

Helena smiled at the child. "We're almost at the Tree of Sorrow. I'll try to take the pain away there."

"And what if it doesn't work?" asked Eleni.

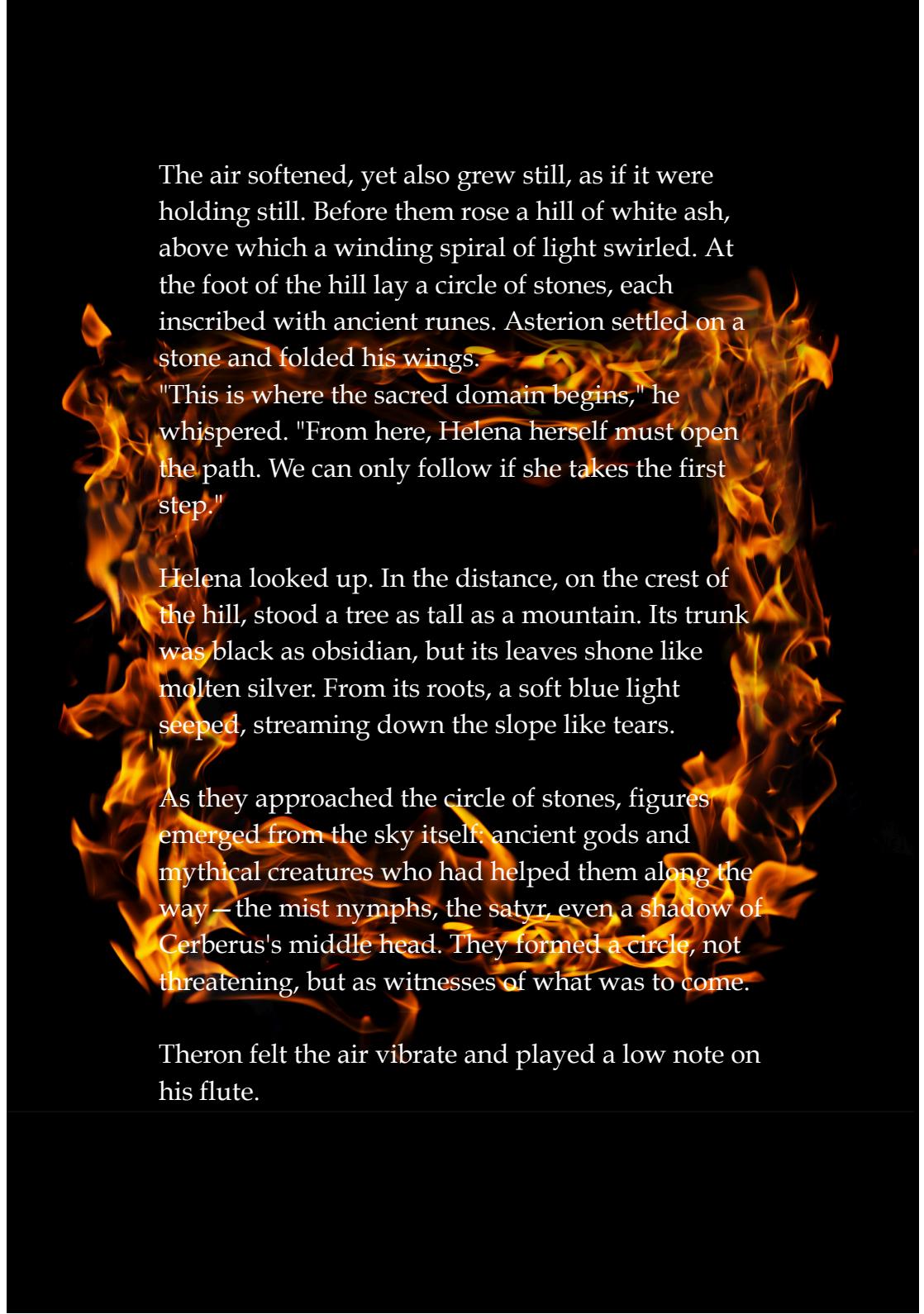
Helena brushed a lock of hair from her face. "Then we'll keep trying. Love doesn't fail; it only teaches."

The star in their hands pulsed softly, like a heartbeat. In the distance, something seemed to sing – perhaps the tree itself, perhaps the wind. But the song didn't sound angry, but rather longing.



CHAPTER 4

THE TREE OF SORROW



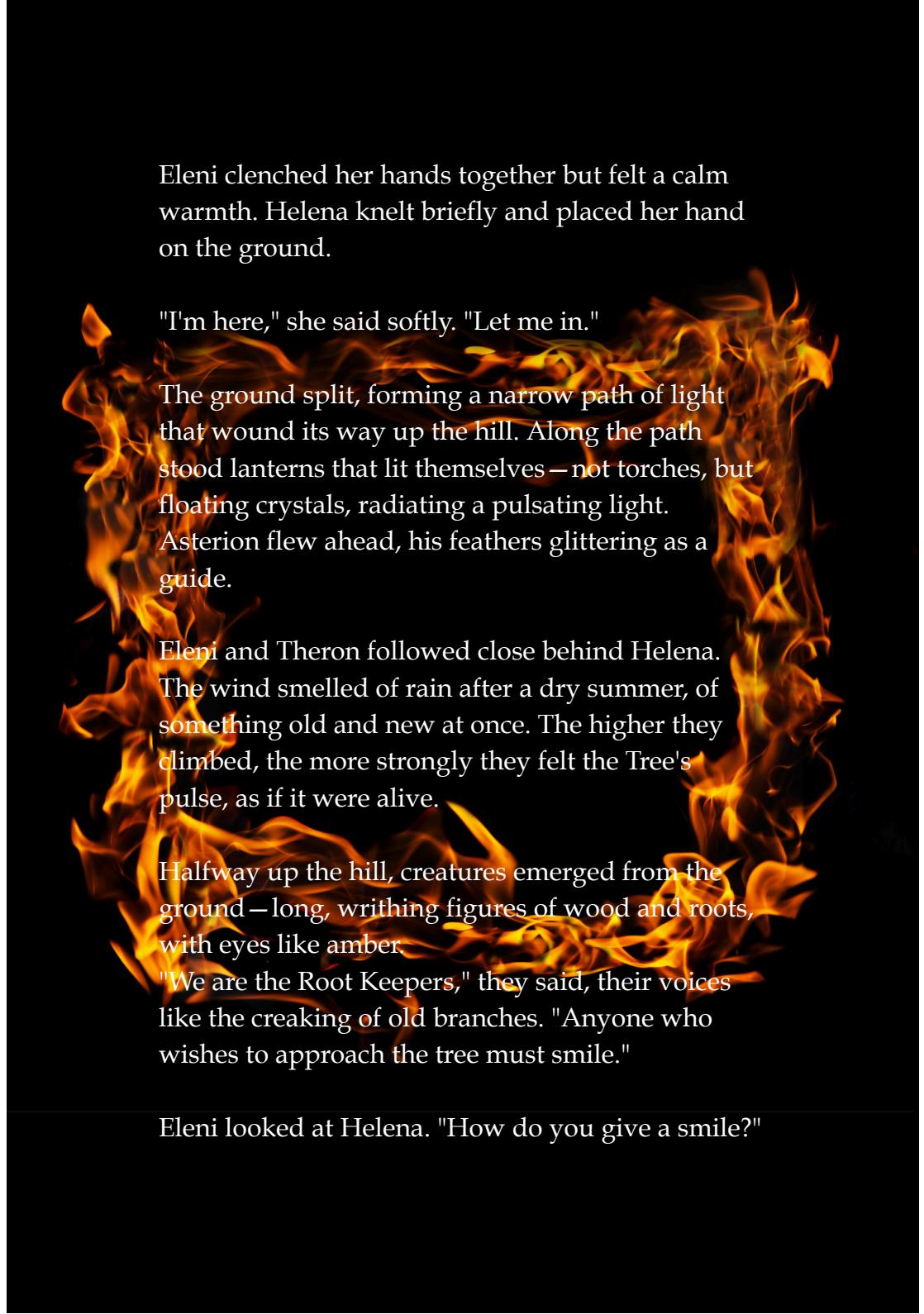
The air softened, yet also grew still, as if it were holding still. Before them rose a hill of white ash, above which a winding spiral of light swirled. At the foot of the hill lay a circle of stones, each inscribed with ancient runes. Asterion settled on a stone and folded his wings.

"This is where the sacred domain begins," he whispered. "From here, Helena herself must open the path. We can only follow if she takes the first step."

Helena looked up. In the distance, on the crest of the hill, stood a tree as tall as a mountain. Its trunk was black as obsidian, but its leaves shone like molten silver. From its roots, a soft blue light seeped, streaming down the slope like tears.

As they approached the circle of stones, figures emerged from the sky itself: ancient gods and mythical creatures who had helped them along the way—the mist nymphs, the satyr, even a shadow of Cerberus's middle head. They formed a circle, not threatening, but as witnesses of what was to come.

Theron felt the air vibrate and played a low note on his flute.



Eleni clenched her hands together but felt a calm warmth. Helena knelt briefly and placed her hand on the ground.

"I'm here," she said softly. "Let me in."

The ground split, forming a narrow path of light that wound its way up the hill. Along the path stood lanterns that lit themselves – not torches, but floating crystals, radiating a pulsating light. Asterion flew ahead, his feathers glittering as a guide.

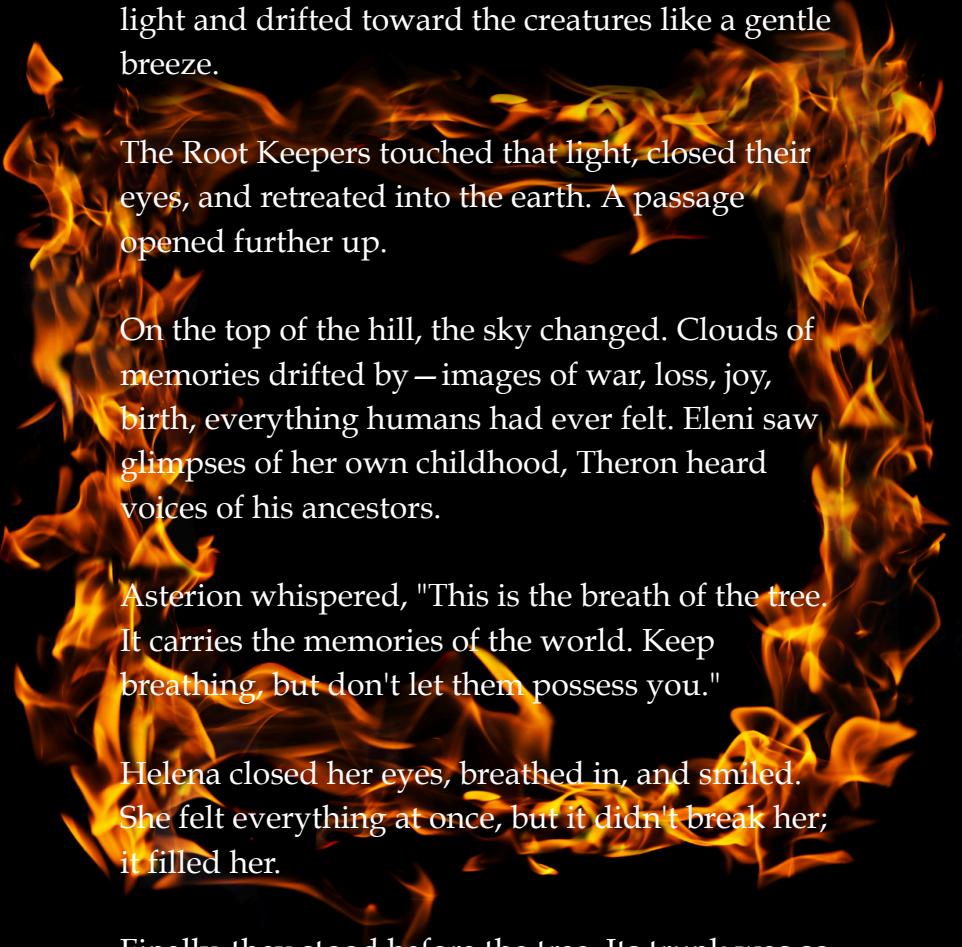
Eleni and Theron followed close behind Helena. The wind smelled of rain after a dry summer, of something old and new at once. The higher they climbed, the more strongly they felt the Tree's pulse, as if it were alive.

Halfway up the hill, creatures emerged from the ground – long, writhing figures of wood and roots, with eyes like amber.

"We are the Root Keepers," they said, their voices like the creaking of old branches. "Anyone who wishes to approach the tree must smile."

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Eleni looked at Helena. "How do you give a smile?"



Helena knelt down, looked at the Root Keepers, and smiled sincerely. She thought of the journey, of Eleni's courage, of Theron's music. The smile grew light and drifted toward the creatures like a gentle breeze.

The Root Keepers touched that light, closed their eyes, and retreated into the earth. A passage opened further up.

On the top of the hill, the sky changed. Clouds of memories drifted by—images of war, loss, joy, birth, everything humans had ever felt. Eleni saw glimpses of her own childhood, Theron heard voices of his ancestors.

Asterion whispered, "This is the breath of the tree. It carries the memories of the world. Keep breathing, but don't let them possess you."

Helena closed her eyes, breathed in, and smiled. She felt everything at once, but it didn't break her; it filled her.

Finally, they stood before the tree. Its trunk was so wide that ten people holding hands couldn't encircle it.

The leaves shone, but from every vein dripped a blue tear. The ground around it was moist with that light.

Eleni looked up and whispered, "He's crying." Theron nodded. "He's carrying us all."

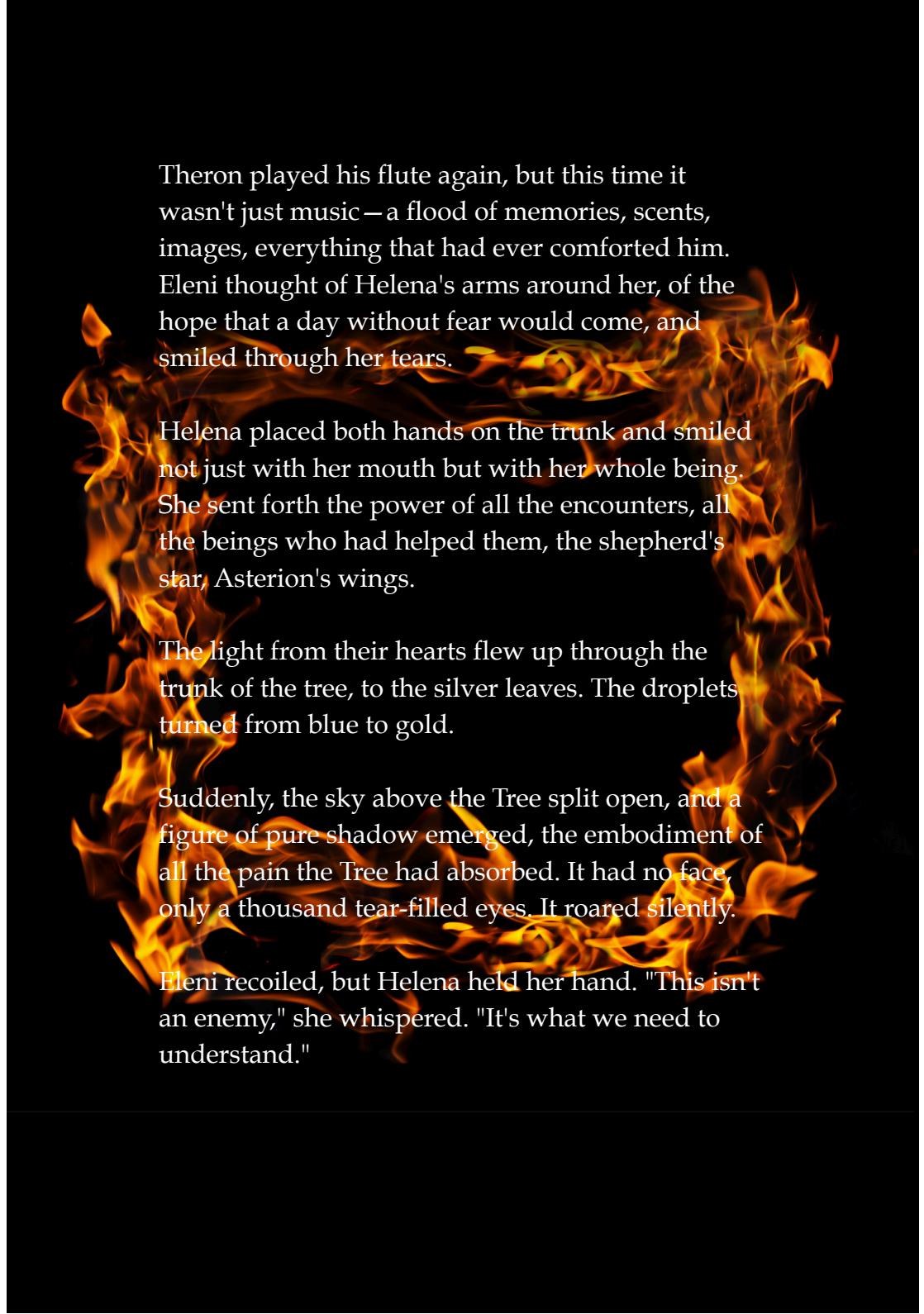
Helena stepped closer. She placed her hand on the bark. It felt cold, but beneath that cold lay a beating heart.

"I am here to heal," she said softly. "I am Helena."

A deep voice, like the echo of mountains and seas together, filled the air:

I am the Tree of Sorrow. I drink the world's pain so you can live. But my roots are heavy, my leaves weary. Whoever would heal me must show me that pain is not the end.

Helena knelt. "Let me give you a smile." The tree trembled. "One smile isn't enough. You have to show that love lives in those you bring."



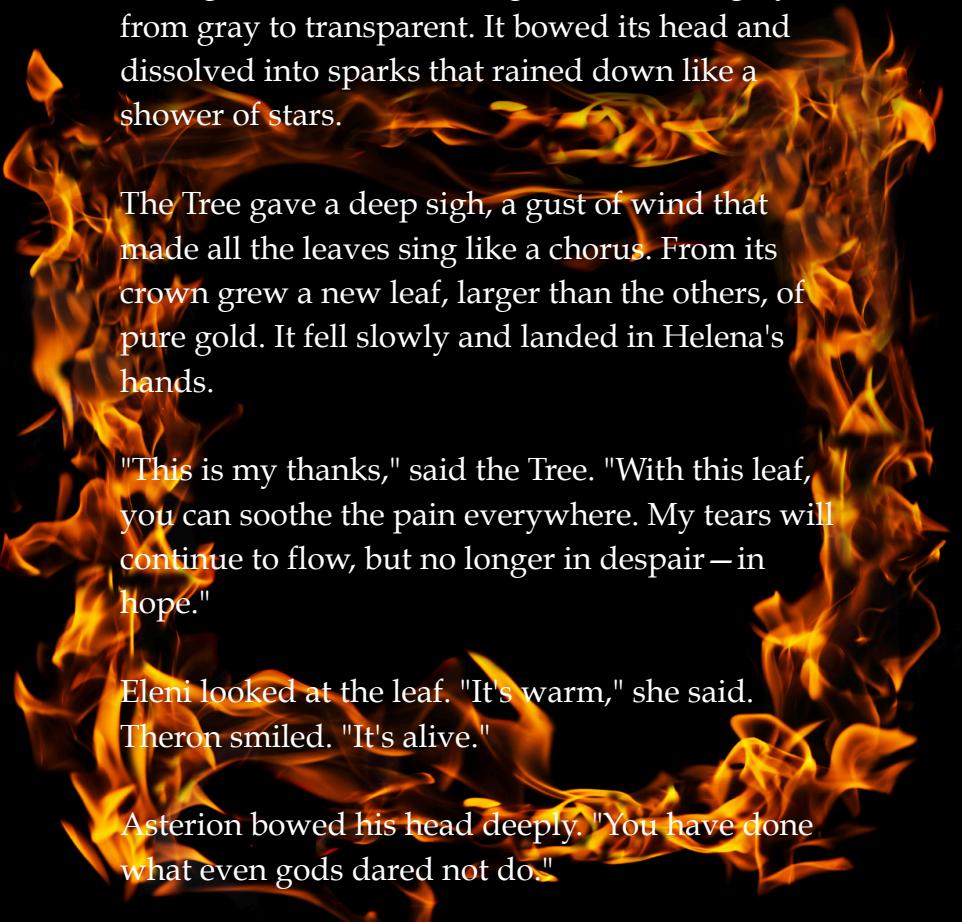
Theron played his flute again, but this time it wasn't just music—a flood of memories, scents, images, everything that had ever comforted him. Eleni thought of Helena's arms around her, of the hope that a day without fear would come, and smiled through her tears.

Helena placed both hands on the trunk and smiled not just with her mouth but with her whole being. She sent forth the power of all the encounters, all the beings who had helped them, the shepherd's star, Asterion's wings.

The light from their hearts flew up through the trunk of the tree, to the silver leaves. The droplets turned from blue to gold.

Suddenly, the sky above the Tree split open, and a figure of pure shadow emerged, the embodiment of all the pain the Tree had absorbed. It had no face, only a thousand tear-filled eyes. It roared silently.

Eleni recoiled, but Helena held her hand. "This isn't an enemy," she whispered. "It's what we need to understand."



Helena stepped forward. She smiled at the shadow.  
"You've been seen."

The figure trembled, turning from black to gray, from gray to transparent. It bowed its head and dissolved into sparks that rained down like a shower of stars.

The Tree gave a deep sigh, a gust of wind that made all the leaves sing like a chorus. From its crown grew a new leaf, larger than the others, of pure gold. It fell slowly and landed in Helena's hands.

"This is my thanks," said the Tree. "With this leaf, you can soothe the pain everywhere. My tears will continue to flow, but no longer in despair—in hope."

Eleni looked at the leaf. "It's warm," she said. Theron smiled. "It's alive."

Asterion bowed his head deeply. "You have done what even gods dared not do."

The witnesses nodded and vanished one by one, like mist in the sun. Cerberus's shadow roared softly, but it sounded like a song.

The Root Keepers raised their branches and closed the passage behind them.

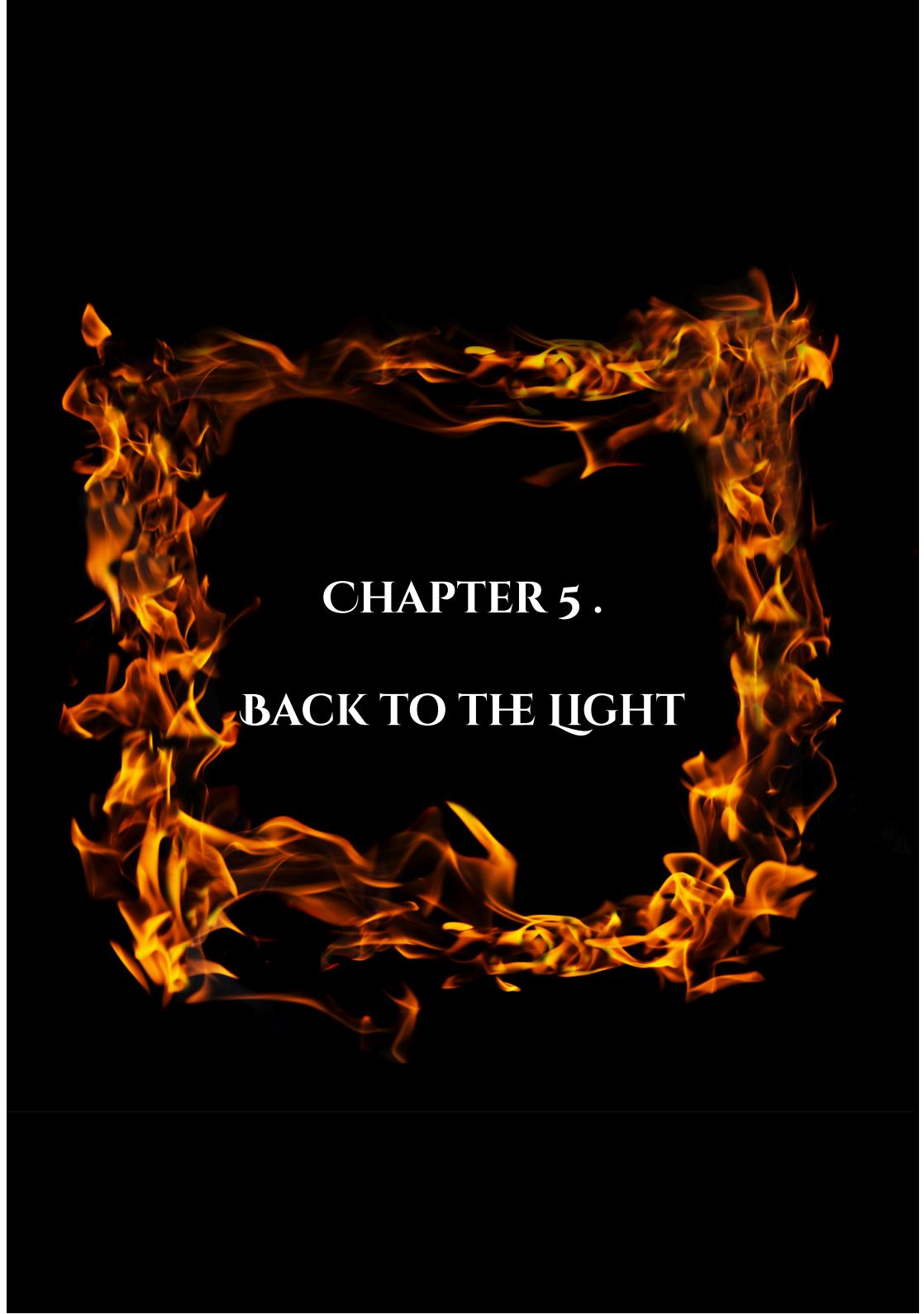
Helena held up the leaf. Its light spread across the hill, through the garden, across the Storm Plain, and even back to the villages. People who cried felt a gentle warmth. Children who were afraid dreamed of doves and smiles.

Helena turned to Eleni and Theron. "We did it. But it's not finished yet. We have to bring the magazine to the world."

Eleni laughed through her tears. "I thought I'd be scared, but it feels light."

Theron put his whistle away. "Light is heavier than you think; it must be carried."

Asterion spread his wings. "I'll guide you to the surface. The world awaits."



CHAPTER 5 .

BACK TO THE LIGHT

With the golden leaf in her hands, Helena began to descend the hill. The air, once so heavy and full of memories, grew lighter and more transparent.

Asterion flew in wide circles above her head, like a waiting star.

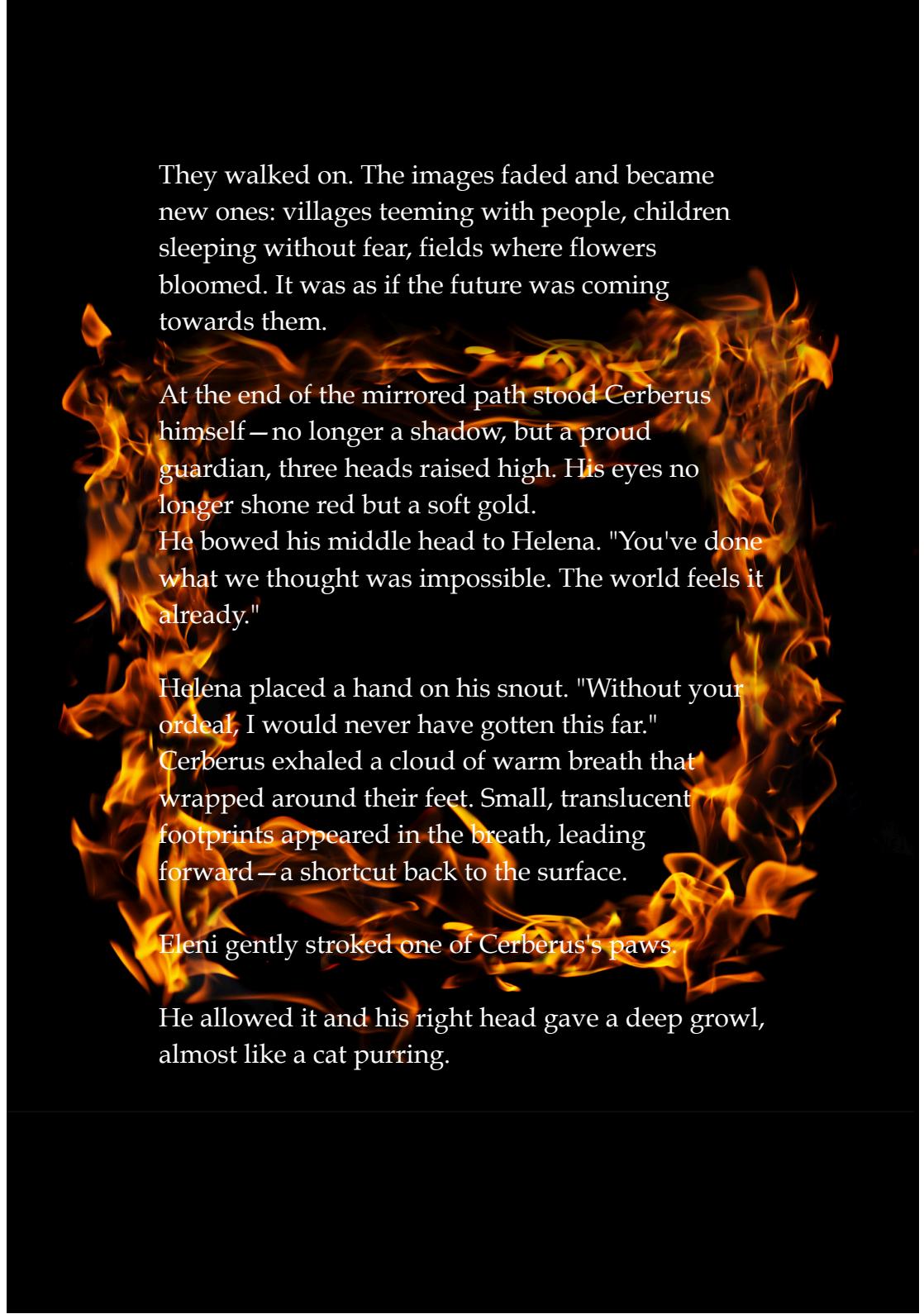
Eleni hopped cautiously beside her. She kept glancing back at the tree, which now swayed softly in silver-gold leaves. Theron walked behind them, his flute tucked under his arm, his eyes filled with awe.

"We changed something," he whispered. Helena nodded. "But the work is only just beginning. Love must return to where it came from."

They came upon a path that glittered like glass. It seemed to reflect the sky itself; with every step they saw images of their journey: the Valley of Echoes, the Gate of Shadows, Cerberus's eyes, the little dragons.

Eleni pointed, "Look, there we are!"

Helena smiled. "The path shows us who we were, so we can choose who we become."



They walked on. The images faded and became new ones: villages teeming with people, children sleeping without fear, fields where flowers bloomed. It was as if the future was coming towards them.

At the end of the mirrored path stood Cerberus himself – no longer a shadow, but a proud guardian, three heads raised high. His eyes no longer shone red but a soft gold.

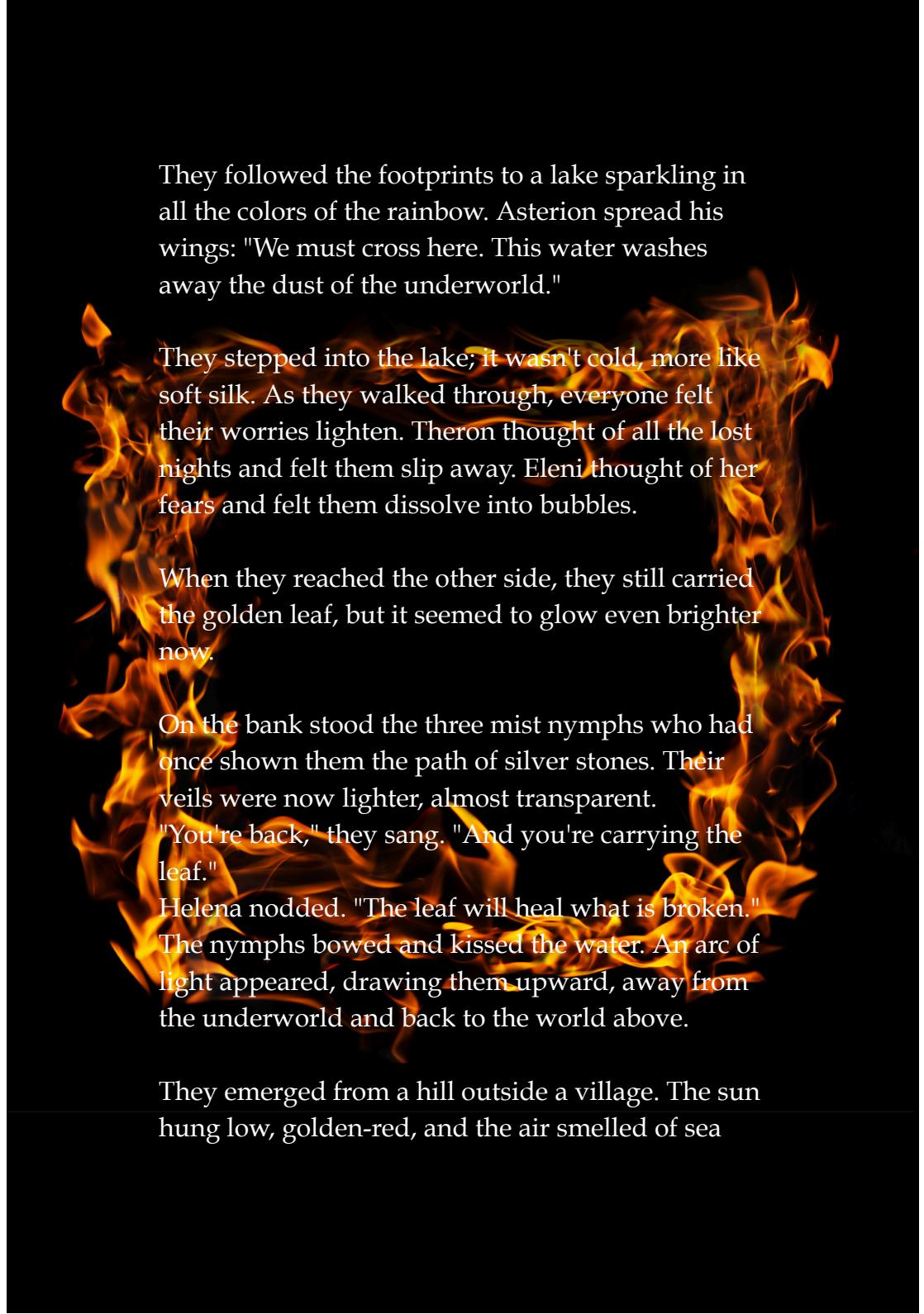
He bowed his middle head to Helena. "You've done what we thought was impossible. The world feels it already."

Helena placed a hand on his snout. "Without your ordeal, I would never have gotten this far."

Cerberus exhaled a cloud of warm breath that wrapped around their feet. Small, translucent footprints appeared in the breath, leading forward – a shortcut back to the surface.

Eleni gently stroked one of Cerberus's paws.

He allowed it and his right head gave a deep growl, almost like a cat purring.



They followed the footprints to a lake sparkling in all the colors of the rainbow. Asterion spread his wings: "We must cross here. This water washes away the dust of the underworld."

They stepped into the lake; it wasn't cold, more like soft silk. As they walked through, everyone felt their worries lighten. Theron thought of all the lost nights and felt them slip away. Eleni thought of her fears and felt them dissolve into bubbles.

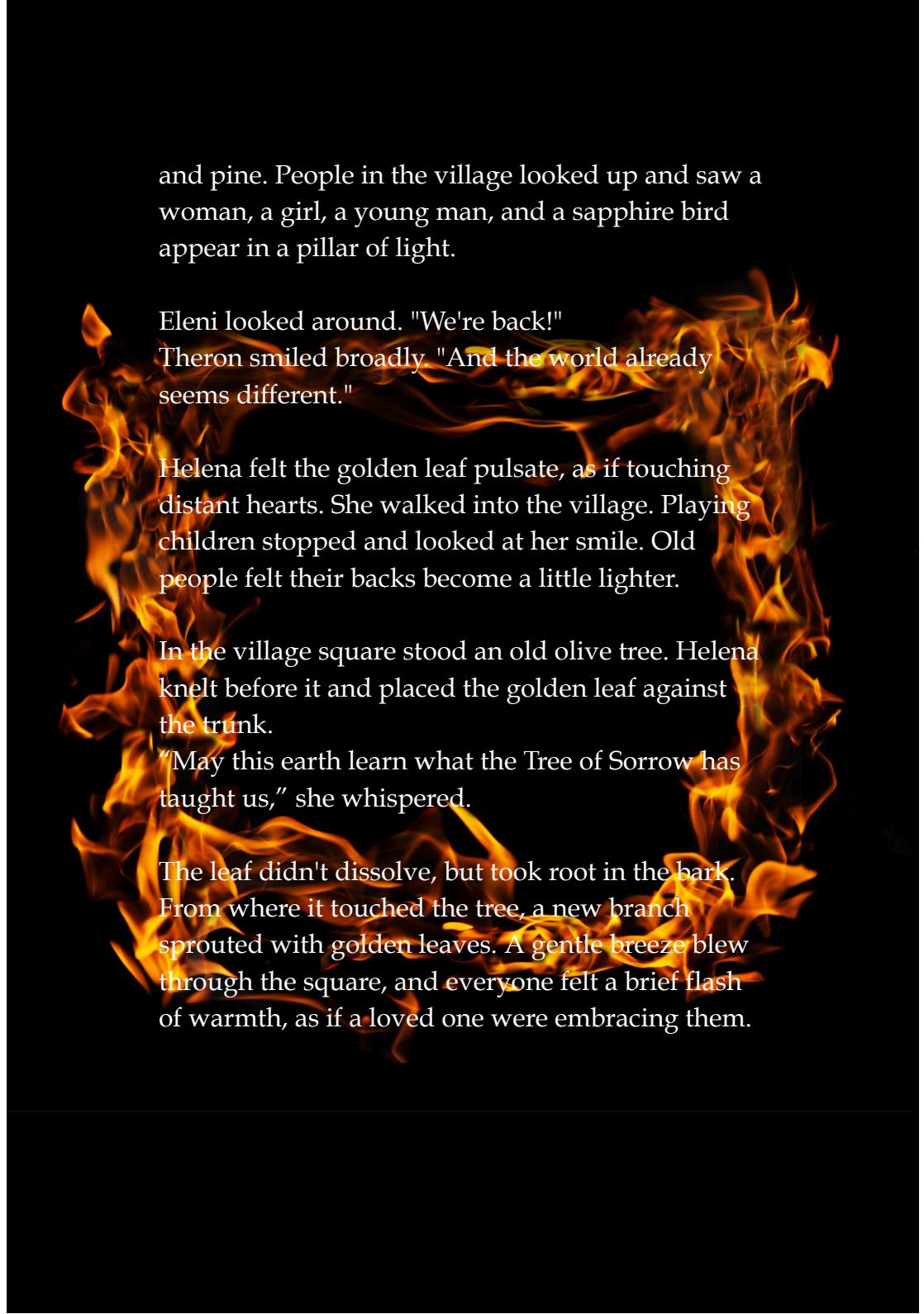
When they reached the other side, they still carried the golden leaf, but it seemed to glow even brighter now.

On the bank stood the three mist nymphs who had once shown them the path of silver stones. Their veils were now lighter, almost transparent.

"You're back," they sang. "And you're carrying the leaf."

Helena nodded. "The leaf will heal what is broken." The nymphs bowed and kissed the water. An arc of light appeared, drawing them upward, away from the underworld and back to the world above.

They emerged from a hill outside a village. The sun hung low, golden-red, and the air smelled of sea



and pine. People in the village looked up and saw a woman, a girl, a young man, and a sapphire bird appear in a pillar of light.

Eleni looked around. "We're back!"

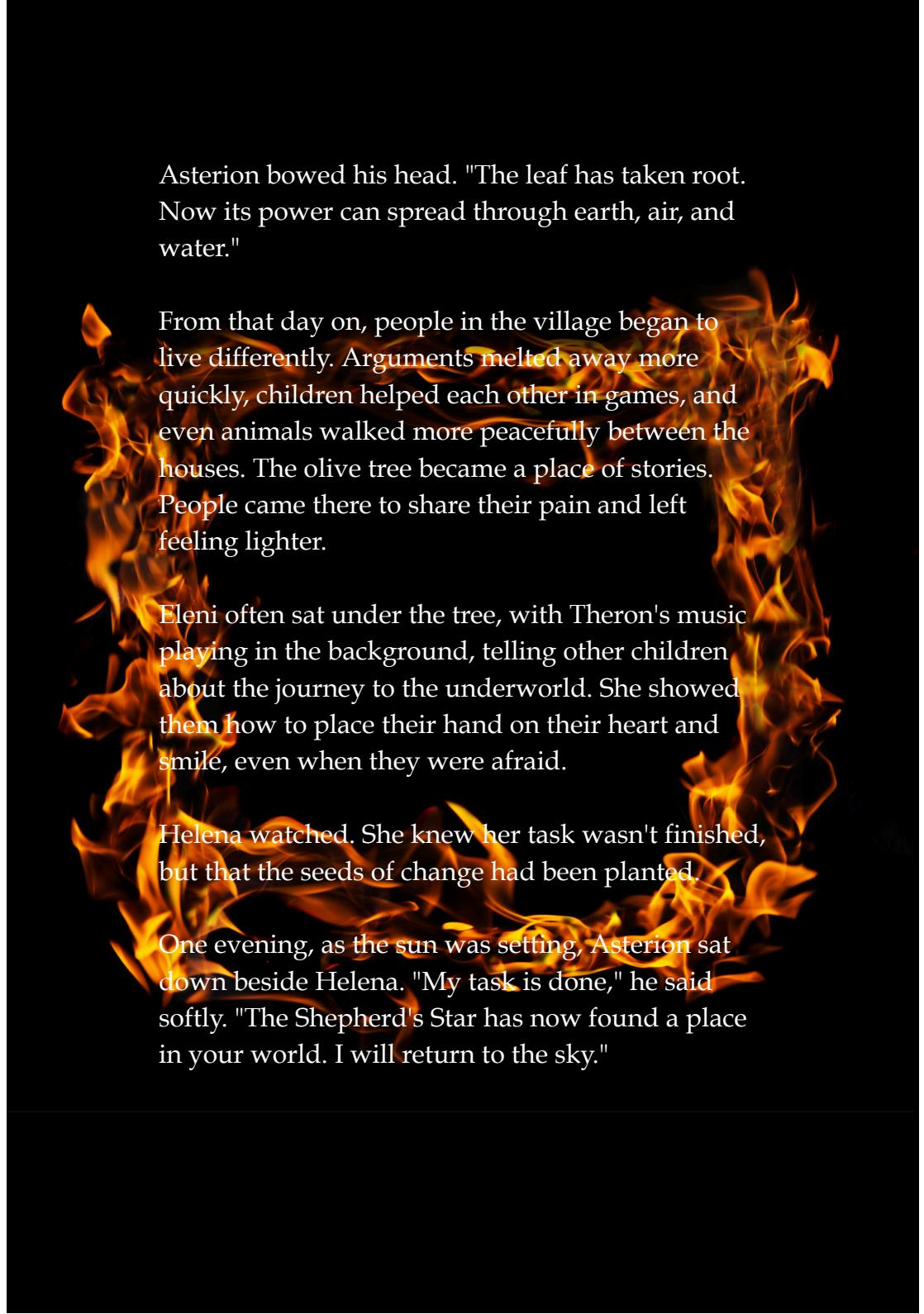
Theron smiled broadly. "And the world already seems different."

Helena felt the golden leaf pulsate, ~~as~~ if touching distant hearts. She walked into the village. Playing children stopped and looked at her smile. Old people felt their backs become a little lighter.

In the village square stood an old olive tree. Helena knelt before it and placed the golden leaf against the trunk.

"May this earth learn what the Tree of Sorrow has taught us," she whispered.

The leaf didn't dissolve, but took root in the bark. From where it touched the tree, a new branch sprouted with golden leaves. A gentle breeze blew through the square, and everyone felt a brief flash of warmth, as if a loved one were embracing them.



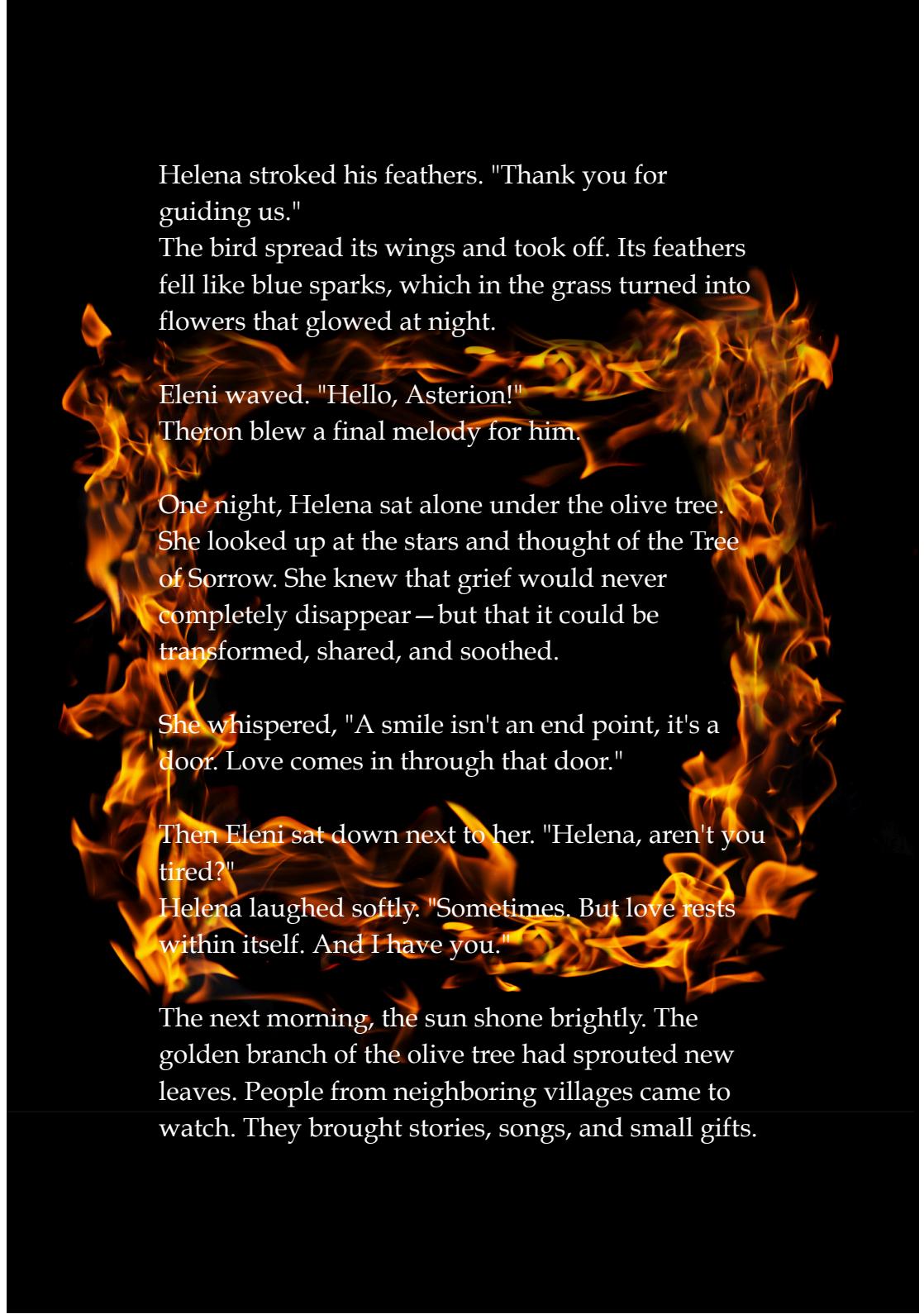
Asterion bowed his head. "The leaf has taken root. Now its power can spread through earth, air, and water."

From that day on, people in the village began to live differently. Arguments melted away more quickly, children helped each other in games, and even animals walked more peacefully between the houses. The olive tree became a place of stories. People came there to share their pain and left feeling lighter.

Eleni often sat under the tree, with Theron's music playing in the background, telling other children about the journey to the underworld. She showed them how to place their hand on their heart and smile, even when they were afraid.

Helena watched. She knew her task wasn't finished, but that the seeds of change had been planted.

One evening, as the sun was setting, Asterion sat down beside Helena. "My task is done," he said softly. "The Shepherd's Star has now found a place in your world. I will return to the sky."



Helena stroked his feathers. "Thank you for guiding us."

The bird spread its wings and took off. Its feathers fell like blue sparks, which in the grass turned into flowers that glowed at night.

Eleni waved. "Hello, Asterion!"

Theron blew a final melody for him.

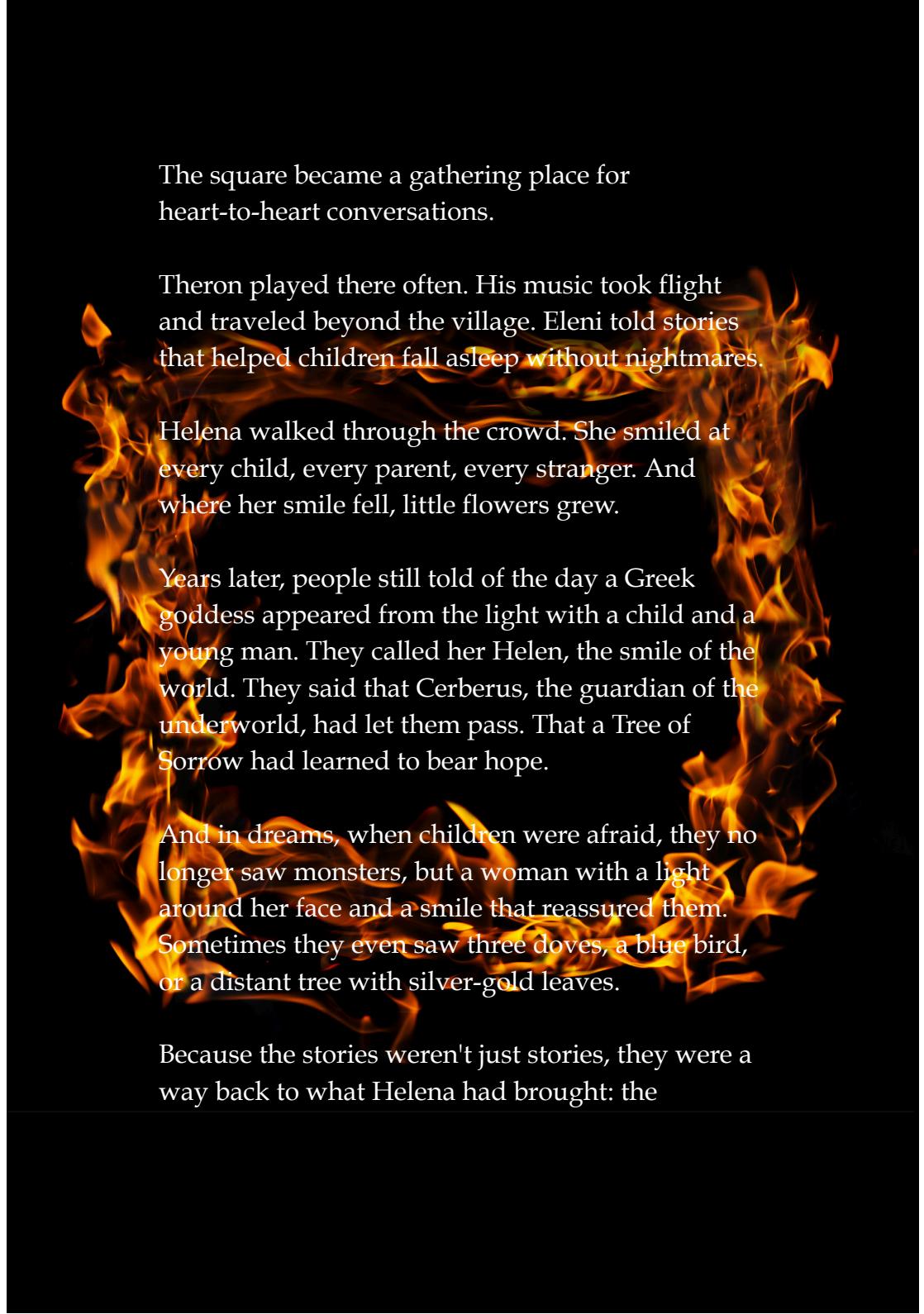
One night, Helena sat alone under the olive tree. She looked up at the stars and thought of the Tree of Sorrow. She knew that grief would never completely disappear—but that it could be transformed, shared, and soothed.

She whispered, "A smile isn't an end point, it's a door. Love comes in through that door."

Then Eleni sat down next to her. "Helena, aren't you tired?"

Helena laughed softly. "Sometimes. But love rests within itself. And I have you."

The next morning, the sun shone brightly. The golden branch of the olive tree had sprouted new leaves. People from neighboring villages came to watch. They brought stories, songs, and small gifts.



The square became a gathering place for heart-to-heart conversations.

Theron played there often. His music took flight and traveled beyond the village. Eleni told stories that helped children fall asleep without nightmares.

Helena walked through the crowd. She smiled at every child, every parent, every stranger. And where her smile fell, little flowers grew.

Years later, people still told of the day a Greek goddess appeared from the light with a child and a young man. They called her Helen, the smile of the world. They said that Cerberus, the guardian of the underworld, had let them pass. That a Tree of Sorrow had learned to bear hope.

And in dreams, when children were afraid, they no longer saw monsters, but a woman with a light around her face and a smile that reassured them. Sometimes they even saw three doves, a blue bird, or a distant tree with silver-gold leaves.

Because the stories weren't just stories, they were a way back to what Helena had brought: the

realization that in every smile lies a power greater than fear, greater than pain.



# THE MORAL

Are you still awake!?

Still focused on the moral? And do you understand the story even a little bit?

Helena, like you, was ignorant, but she has traveled a very, very long journey, and I can tell you that Helena is indeed one of the greatest Greek goddesses in Greek mythology. Helena's story has remained unwritten for thousands of years, until now. Because Helena has been reborn in you...

The goddess who can make the worst of the worst suffering disappear with nothing but a smile, a simple smile! So very normal for the whole world, but for me, for people who have suffered for thousands of years, and for the whole world unhappy, your smile can mean heaven on earth or a new beginning... And that's the moral of this story, because you too will encounter the bad people who have lived their lives in a hopeless hell, but you can change that by being yourself and simply smiling!

That's the moral of the story, sleep well!

This was the second Stinkybinkybook and I wish you a very loving and good night!