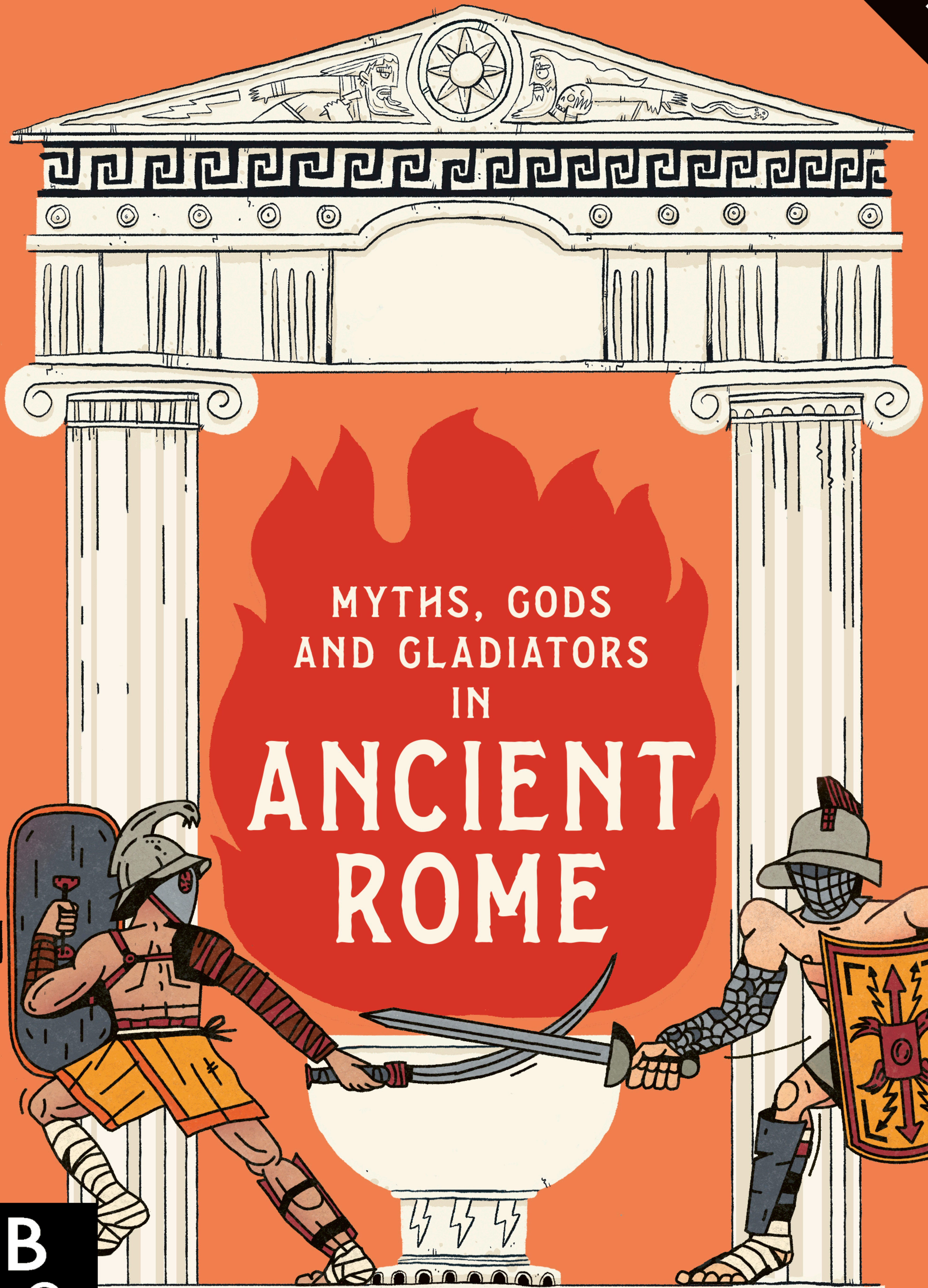


COVER
NOT FINAL



MYTHS, GODS
AND GLADIATORS
IN

ANCIENT ROME

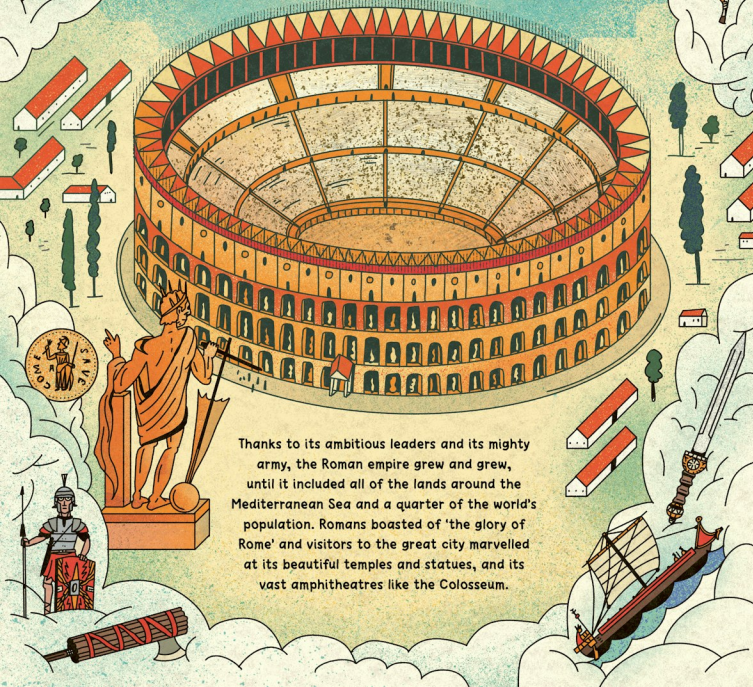
STEPHEN DAVIES
LAURIE AVON

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WHO WERE THE ANCIENT ROMANS?

Rome was founded in the year 753 BC. It began as a kingdom, with its founder Romulus as king. Then in 509BC Rome became a republic, a state without a king. Finally, in 27BC Rome became an empire, ruled by an all-powerful emperor.



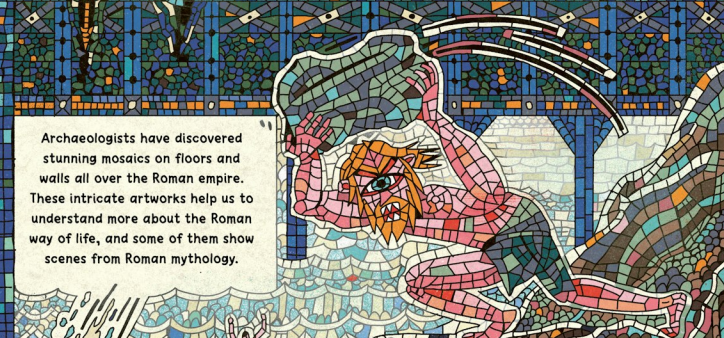
Thanks to its ambitious leaders and its mighty army, the Roman empire grew and grew, until it included all of the lands around the Mediterranean Sea and a quarter of the world's population. Romans boasted of 'the glory of Rome' and visitors to the great city marvelled at its beautiful temples and statues, and its vast amphitheatres like the Colosseum.



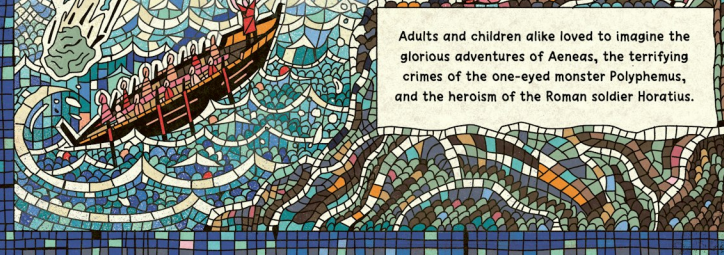
SO WHAT ARE THE ROMAN MYTHS?

Even though the ancient Romans were very proud of their culture, they owed much of it to ancient Greece. The Romans were completely obsessed with Greece. They copied Greek architecture, Greek philosophy, Greek theatre and Greek poetry.

Even their mythology (ancient beliefs about gods and goddesses) was heavily influenced by Greece. Roman writers, such as Ovid and Virgil, wrote in their own language, Latin, but their characters and plots were often inspired by the works of earlier Greek writers, such as Homer and Hesiod.



Archaeologists have discovered stunning mosaics on floors and walls all over the Roman empire. These intricate artworks help us to understand more about the Roman way of life, and some of them show scenes from Roman mythology.



Adults and children alike loved to imagine the glorious adventures of Aeneas, the terrifying crimes of the one-eyed monster Polyphemus, and the heroism of the Roman soldier Horatius.

MEET THE ROMAN GODS

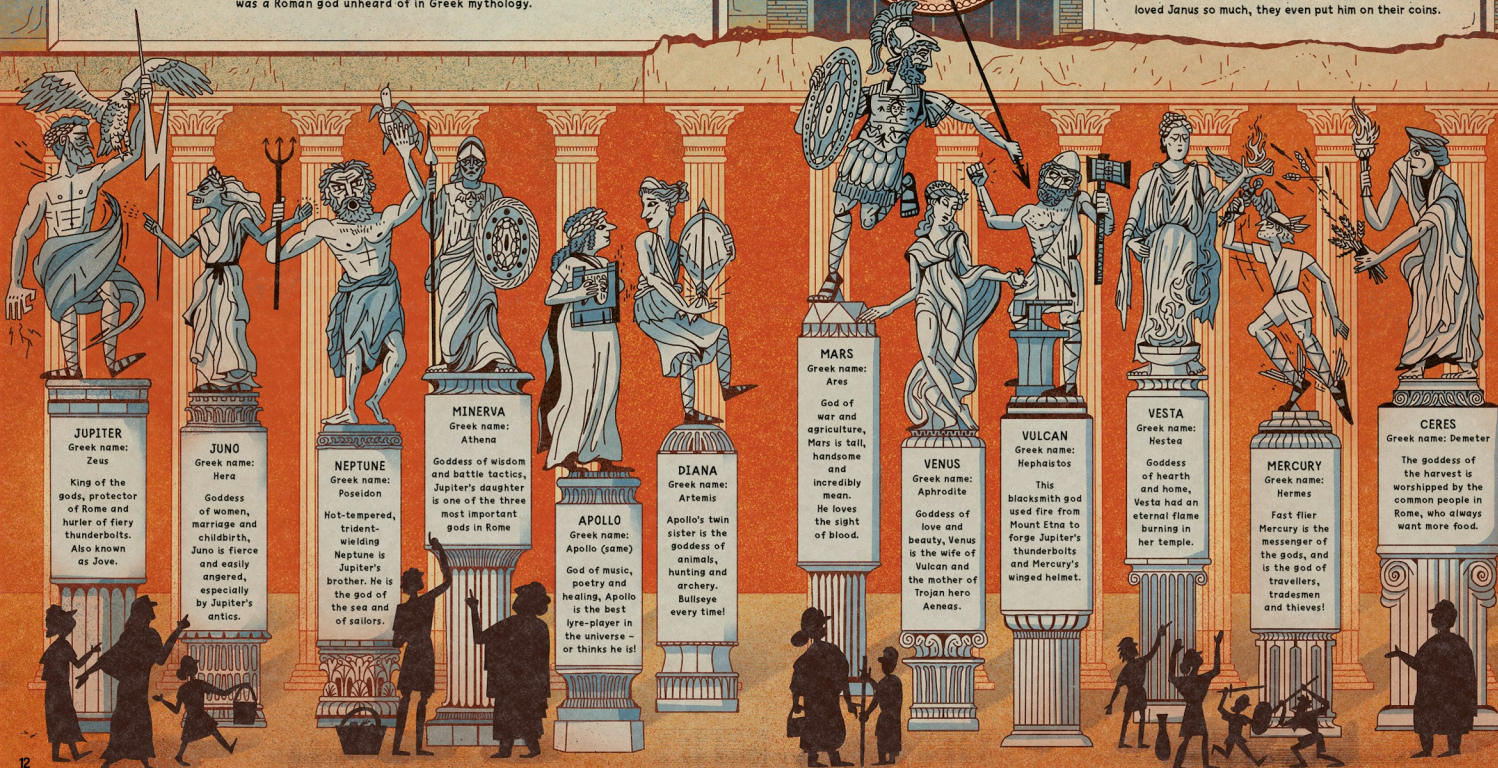
At one end of the Forum in ancient Rome stood the Porch of the Harmonious Gods, where a row of gold and bronze statues portrayed the twelve most important gods of Ancient Rome. These gods played a huge part in everyday life. If you offered them your prayers and sacrifices, they would be kind to you and bring you success.

The Romans were heavily influenced by the ancient Greeks, and each of the Romans gods had a Greek equivalent...except for one. Janus, the god with two faces, was a Roman god unheard of in Greek mythology.

JANUS

Long before the city of Rome was built, Janus was a human king of Latium (Italy). When Jupiter overthrew Saturn, Janus welcomed Saturn into his home. In return, Saturn taught Janus how to plough, sow and harvest. Janus's farming skills caused his whole kingdom to prosper.

After his death, Janus became a god of beginnings and endings. He has two faces, one looking back to the past, the other looking forward to the future. Ancient Romans loved Janus so much, they even put him on their coins.



JUPITER

Greek name: Zeus

King of the gods, protector of Rome and hurler of fiery thunderbolts. Also known as Jove.

JUNO

Greek name: Hera

Goddess of women, marriage and childbirth, Juno is fierce and easily angered, especially by Jupiter's antics.

NEPTUNE

Greek name: Poseidon

Hot-tempered, trident-wielding Neptune is Jupiter's brother. He is the god of the sea and of sailors.

MINERVA

Greek name: Athena

Goddess of wisdom and battle tactics, Jupiter's daughter is one of the three most important gods in Rome

APOLLO

Greek name: Apollo (same)

God of music, poetry and healing, Apollo is the best lyre-player in the universe - or thinks he is!

DIANA

Greek name: Artemis

Apollo's twin sister is the goddess of animals, hunting and archery. Bulls-eye every time!

MARS

Greek name: Ares

God of war and agriculture, Mars is tall, handsome and incredibly mean. He loves the sight of blood.

VENUS

Greek name: Aphrodite

Goddess of love and beauty, Venus is the wife of Vulcan and the mother of Trojan hero Aeneas.

VULCAN

Greek name: Hephaistos

This blacksmith god used fire from Mount Etna to forge Jupiter's thunderbolts and Mercury's winged helmet.

VESTA

Greek name: Hestia

Goddess of hearth and home, Vesta had an eternal flame burning in her temple.

MERCURY

Greek name: Hermes

Fast flier Mercury is the messenger of the gods, and is the god of travellers, tradesmen and thieves!

CERES

Greek name: Demeter

The goddess of the harvest is worshipped by the common people in Rome, who always want more food.

BAUCIS AND PHILEMON

Winter in Phrygia was harsh and cold, with biting frost and swirling snow. One evening, an old man was hobbling down a mountainside, bent low beneath a bundle of oak.



Brrrr...we call our land Phrygia. You'd call it like a fridge here!

On reaching his village, the old man shuffled past posh villas and tables.



DON'T PAY! THE HORSES!

Missed you!

Missed you more!

At the edge of the village stood a humble log cabin where the old man lived.



Philemon laid down the firewood, took off his cloak and greeted his wife Baucis.



Hi honey. I'm home!

After fifty years of marriage, Philemon and Baucis were as much in love as when they first met. More so, in fact. Their love for each other had grown and deepened over the decades like the roots of an ancient tree.



Philemon peered beneath the kitchen table to greet the other love of his life.



Looking good, Roxana!

HONK!

You're daft about that goose.

There was a sudden knock at the door. Philemon hurried to open it.



COMING!

Two strangers stood on the doorstep. They told Philemon that they were weary travellers seeking shelter from the wind and snow.



Sorry to trouble you.

No trouble at all. Come in!

When the goose saw the visitors, she began to behave in a very peculiar manner.



HONK-HONK!

RULE 1

The first rule of Phrygian hospitality was this: Make sure your guests are toasty warm.

Baucis piled dry twigs from the roof thatch, to start a fire.



The firewood is wet with snow! How can we make a fire?

Good idea, Roxana!

HONK-HONK!

The roof would need fixing tomorrow, but that was fine. The main thing was to honour their guests.



Cheer, lovely!

RULE 2

The second rule of Phrygian hospitality was just as important: Make sure your guests are well fed.

Baucis fetched the last of the figs and olives from the outhouse.



HONK!

She found honeycomb in the bee hive and two white eggs in Roxana's nesting box.

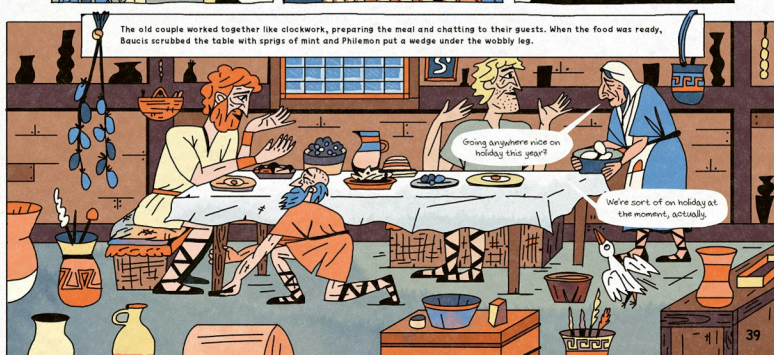


HONK!



HONK!

The old couple worked together like clockwork, preparing the meal and chatting to their guests. When the food was ready, Baucis scrubbed the table with sprigs of mint and Philemon put a wedge under the wobbly leg.



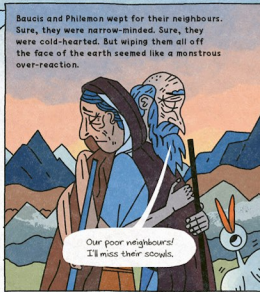
Going anywhere nice on holiday this year?

We're sort of on holiday at the moment, actually.

A horrifying wall of water rose up in the east and crashed over the village. Everything was swept away—houses, stables, everything.

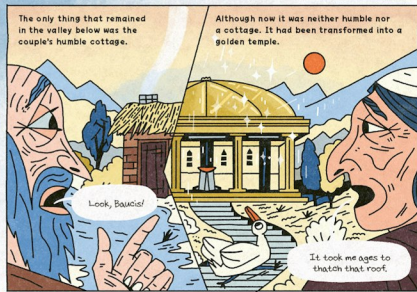


Baucis and Philemon wept for their neighbours. Sure, they were narrow-minded. Sure, they were cold-hearted. But wiping them all off the face of the earth seemed like a monstrous over-reaction.



Our poor neighbours! I'll miss their souls.

The only thing that remained in the valley below was the couple's humble cottage. It had been transformed into a golden temple.

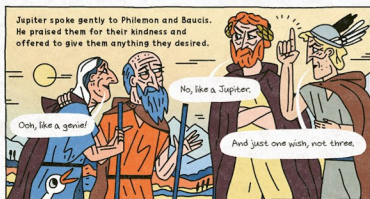


Look, Baucis!

Although now it was neither humble nor a cottage. It had been transformed into a golden temple.

It took me ages to thatch that roof.

Jupiter spoke gently to Philemon and Baucis. He praised them for their kindness and offered to give them anything they desired.



No, like a Jupiter.

Ooh, like a genie!

And just one wish, not three.

Philemon and Baucis knelt before the gods.



We'd like a sparky collar for our goose, please.

Wah! No! He didn't mean that. Give us a minute.

Philemon and Baucis asked to become priests, serving the gods in that newly-appeared temple. They also asked to die at the same time, so that neither of them would grieve the other.



It's fine, Mercury. I'll do them both.

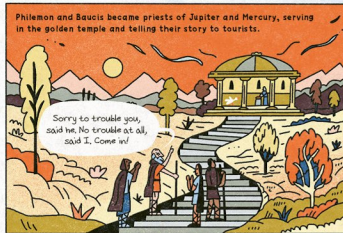
Sigh. That's two separate wishes.

And so their prayer was granted.



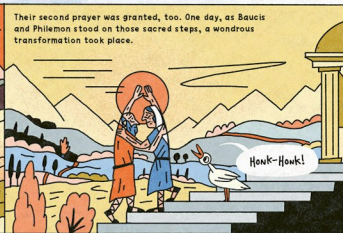
To do!

Philemon and Baucis became priests of Jupiter and Mercury, serving in the golden temple and telling their story to tourists.



Sorry to trouble you, said he. No trouble at all, said I. Come on!

Their second prayer was granted, too. One day, as Baucis and Philemon stood on those sacred steps, a wondrous transformation took place.



Hoak-Hoak!

Together forever, their final words were brief and well-rehearsed.



Love you

Love you more

An oak tree and a lime tree intertwined still stand before that temple, reminding us to keep our ears and hearts wide open for the knock of visitors...or gods.



PLEASE FEED THE HORSES
WELCOME
ESPECIALLY IF YOU'RE POOR!