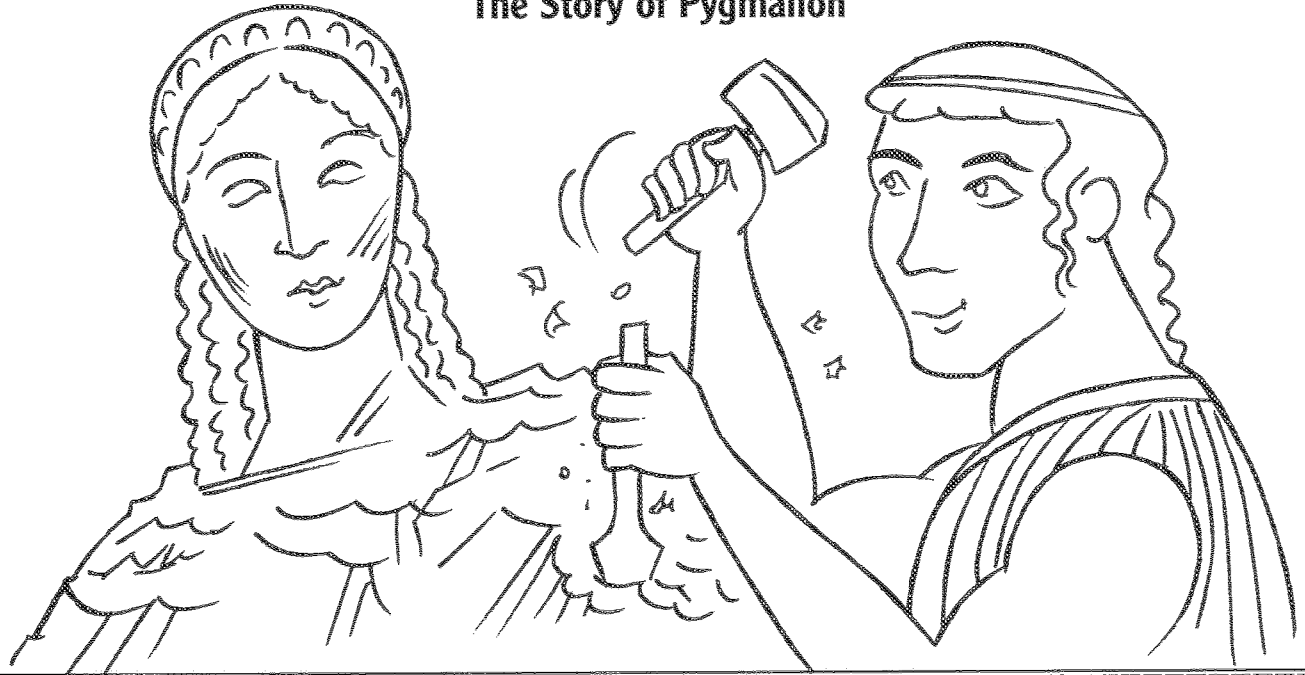


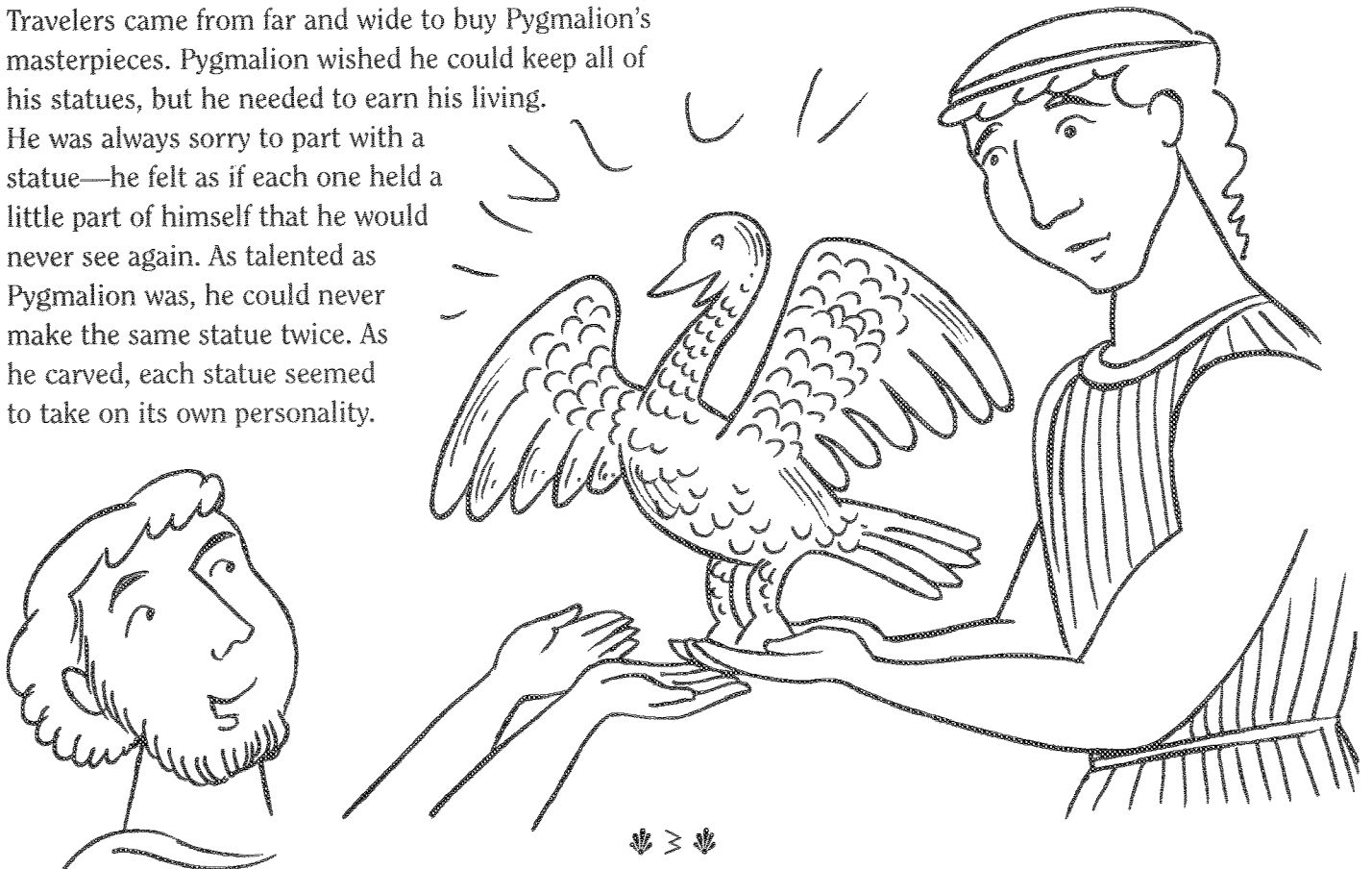
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The Story of Pygmalion



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Travelers came from far and wide to buy Pygmalion's masterpieces. Pygmalion wished he could keep all of his statues, but he needed to earn his living. He was always sorry to part with a statue—he felt as if each one held a little part of himself that he would never see again. As talented as Pygmalion was, he could never make the same statue twice. As he carved, each statue seemed to take on its own personality.

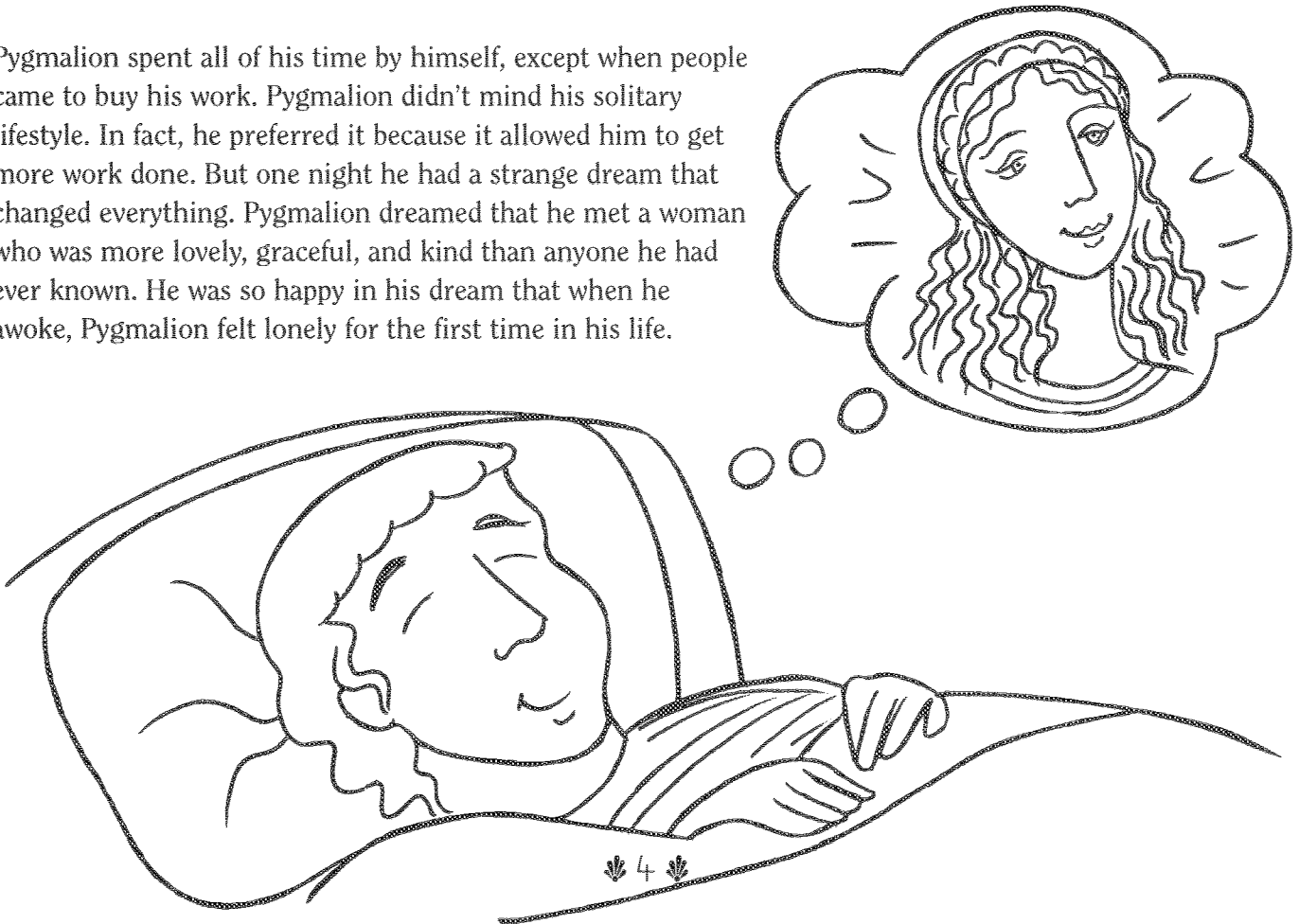


On the island of Cyprus lived a sculptor named Pygmalion. Every day, Pygmalion awoke before sunrise and carved statues until late in the evening. He chiseled and polished until the marble forms looked so lifelike that they seemed ready to spring from his hands.



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Pygmalion spent all of his time by himself, except when people came to buy his work. Pygmalion didn't mind his solitary lifestyle. In fact, he preferred it because it allowed him to get more work done. But one night he had a strange dream that changed everything. Pygmalion dreamed that he met a woman who was more lovely, graceful, and kind than anyone he had ever known. He was so happy in his dream that when he awoke, Pygmalion felt lonely for the first time in his life.



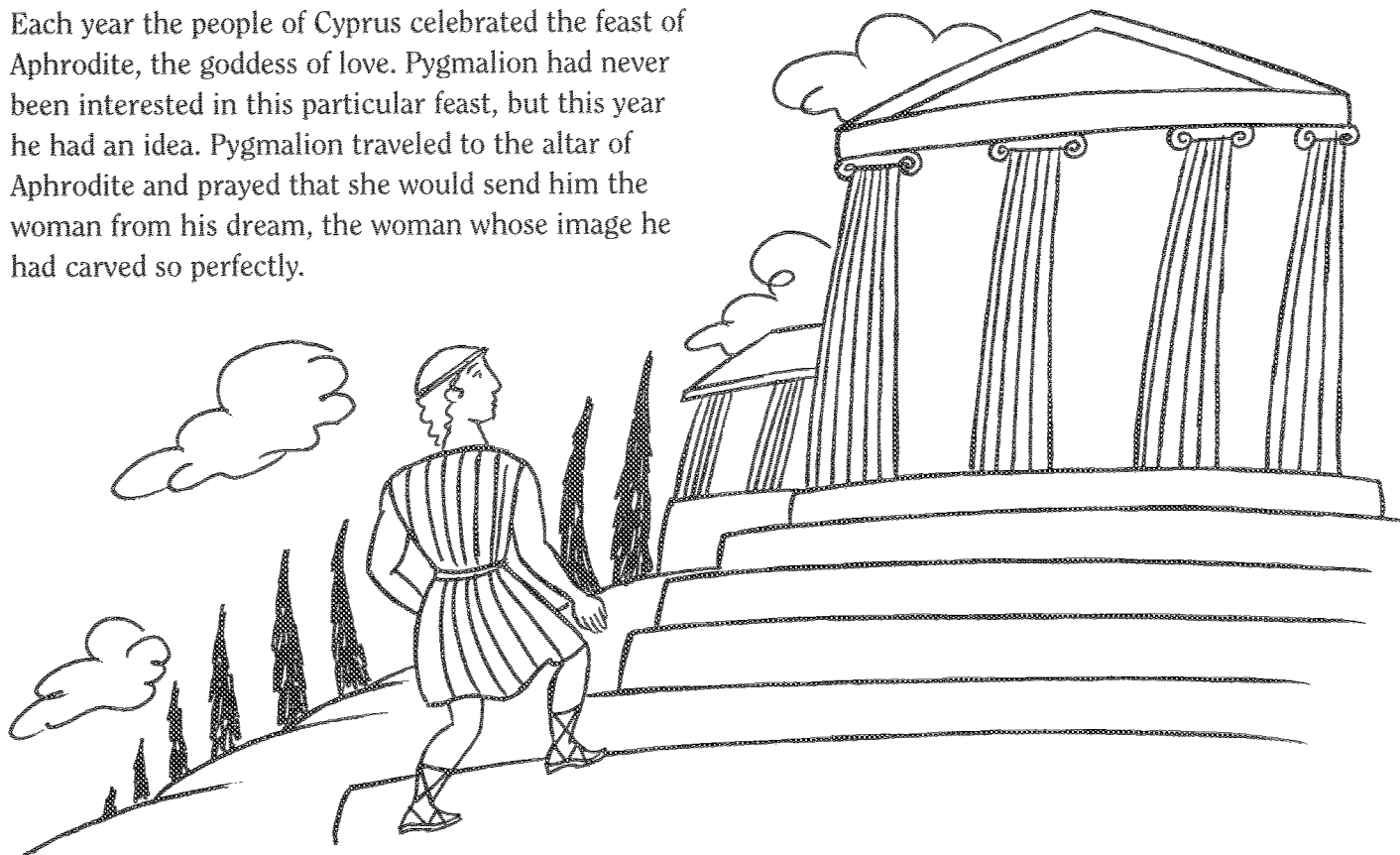
He wondered about the woman in his dream. Did she exist? Would he ever meet her? Sadly, Pygmalion realized that even if she did exist, the chances were small that he would ever find her. When Pygmalion picked up his tools and began to carve, the image of the woman was still in his mind. As his hands chiseled, the face from his dream began to emerge from the marble.



✿ 5 ✿

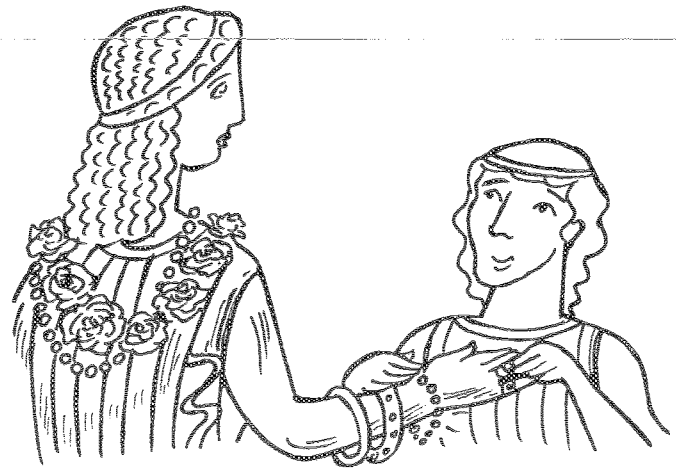
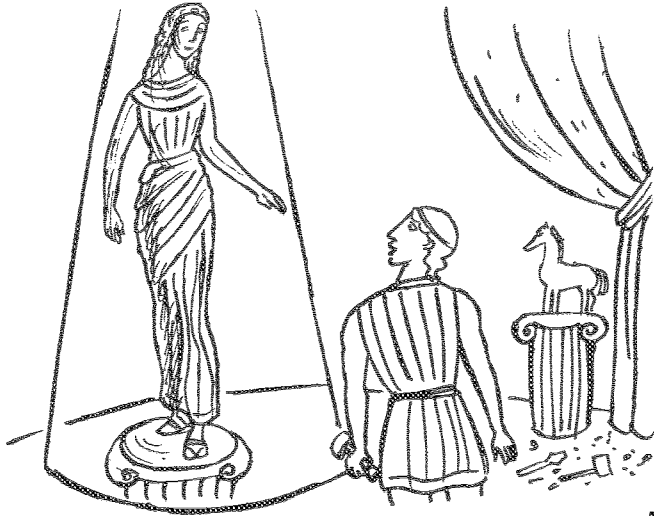
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Each year the people of Cyprus celebrated the feast of Aphrodite, the goddess of love. Pygmalion had never been interested in this particular feast, but this year he had an idea. Pygmalion traveled to the altar of Aphrodite and prayed that she would send him the woman from his dream, the woman whose image he had carved so perfectly.



✿ 7 ✿

Pygmalion carved for days on end, stopping only for a quick drink of water or a bite of food. When he finished, he collapsed with exhaustion and admired his work. There, standing before him, was the woman of his dreams. As Pygmalion gazed at the statue, he felt that she was gazing right back at him. So lifelike was the statue, it looked as though it would step off the pedestal at any moment.



Pygmalion named the statue Galatea and brought her presents. He slipped golden rings upon her fingers and draped pearls around her neck, but she did not smile as she had in his dream. He told her witty jokes, but she did not laugh. He played music for her, but she stood as still as ever. He sadly realized that he could love this statue with all his heart, but the statue could bring him no happiness. It would never love him in return.

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When Pygmalion returned from the feast, he held his breath and entered his home. The statue stood exactly where he had left it, as still and lifeless as ever. With a heavy heart, Pygmalion approached the statue and took her cold hand in his. He decided it would be best to part with the statue and leaned to kiss her hand good-bye.

At that moment, the marble hand became as soft and warm as his own. Pygmalion looked up and saw her cheeks flush with color, her lips curve into a smile, and her eyes shine with happiness—she was alive! Still holding her hand, Pygmalion helped Galatea step down from the pedestal. Aphrodite had heard his prayers and blessed the joyful couple as they embraced.

