

The Quest of Artemis

High up on Mount Olympus, 11 gods stood in a terrified ring around the king of gods. Next to him stood a mighty golden eagle-less pole. Zeus's eagle was gone! That only meant one thing- someone was to blame. . .

"Artemis," spoke Zeus, "I know you're jealous of my eagle. All you've got is a deer! I can relate to you. But thievery must be punished.

"But I didn't-" protested Artemis.

"Silence! I banish you to the mortal world." BOOM!

I woke up on the paving in front of Zeus's temple. A man with curly blonde hair wearing a purple cape loomed over me. It was Adonis, god of desire. "Artemis!" he said with no enthusiasm whatsoever, "We need to talk about business."

Uh oh! I thought. "You've lost all your powers and immortality." Adonis explained. "I can reason with Zeus and make him bring you back to Mount Olympus." he produced a massive eagle from his cape.

"The eagle!" I exclaimed.

"Yes, I stole the eagle." said Adonis wearily, as if it were obvious. "Now, your side of the deal..."

"Why would I do something for you after what you've done?"

"If you stay a mortal, what would your hunters do? What would all those animals do? You'd do more bad than good."

I sighed. "What do you want me to do?"

I walked through a desolate wood of which gave me the creepy-crawlies. Even the trees seemed to be against me- let alone life right now. Deer used to be my symbol, but now they were the eyes that glowered at me as I walked by.

Ahead of me, between two crooked oaks, a cobweb woven from fine silks was suspended. Only, it was the size of an elephant and it was home to a giant spider.

I raised my bow that Adonis had given me. Unfortunately, the spider locked its jaws on it and tossed it aside. It bared its fangs and came face to face with me so I could see my terrified face in its spider canine. In blind panic, I flailed my arms and punched it in the face. The arachnid froze and collapsed. "Weakling." I muttered and carefully stepped over its fragile legs.

I needed to get The Dagger of Achilles. Easier said than done, it was heavily guarded by monsters and that was all Adonis had said. In the trees, a flock of golden pigeons with red eyes perched ominously in the branches. At first, I didn't take any notice- then they started firing their deadly feathers at me that were solid gold.

The feathers rained down on me as I dived into a bush. Desperately, I rummaged through my tiny rucksack. Adonis had given me a giant platter full of nothing without me realising. Apart from that, there was some tinder and that was it. That gave me an idea. I slid the platter, wood and my head out the bush. I raised the mirror above the wood at an angle. Feathery golden goons started to close in. "Hurry up!" I whispered. Their beaks opened as if picturing the feast they'd soon have.

Then, finally, a golden beam of light shone from the plate. A flame sparked on the tinder. I peeled some bark off a tree and put it on the platter where I then put the log. As the fire grew higher, I brandished my pigeon scarer and ran from the shiny birds. The birds (which I identified as stymphalian birds) flocked around me but kept a wide berth from the scary flames.

By the time the fire died out, the symphalians had become bored and turned back. I finally breathed. Did Adonis *want* me to die? More than likely. To be honest, I knew there was little chance of me surviving since I agreed to this suicide mission- but what ya gonna do?

My next stop was the desert. Sure enough, the trees became sparser and the twigs and leaves turned to sand. I gripped my bow tighter. I wondered what challenges I would face. A swarm of sand flies? Man-eating cacti? As if on cue, a large, marble block appeared in front of me. On top was a lady with ginger ringlets and lion arms. She gazed proudly through me. I realised that she was a sphinx. She had the head and shoulders of a human and the body of a lion.

"Answer me this riddle correctly and you may continue. Answer me this riddle incorrectly and you shall perish."

"What is the riddle?" I asked.

"What is large yet never grows, has roots that cannot be seen and is taller than trees?"

I thought hard. "A temple?" I guessed.

"WRONG!" The sphinx boomed, delight gleaming in her evil eyes. She blew fire in my direction. I dived to the right. Her claw came down and snagged my clothes.

I pulled out my bow and aimed it at her face. The arrow harmlessly pinged off her nose and landed in two at my feet. I looked at the mountains in the distance- what if her pelt wasn't like armour in the mountains? "The mountains!" I cried aloud.

The sphinx stopped trying to kill me and questioned, "What did you just say?"

I swallowed. "The mountain"

She scowled. "I don't like doing this, but because you *did* answer the riddle right . . . I'm letting you go"

"Thank you." I said and fled before she could change her mind.

I ran through the desert, running through cacti and over rocks. I came to a cluster of boulders that circled the base of the first mountain. The temperature was the same here as it was in the desert, but as I clambered over the rocks that separated the mountains, the climate dropped, bit by bit.

The biggest mountain yet loomed in front of me. A moat so big it almost looked like a mountain coming out of a lake wrapped around its base rippled. A fallen tree made a bridge to the mountain. Sighing, I climbed onto the end of the pine tree. I edged along the rotting bark, pushing my way through the needles as I crawled to the uprooted heart of the tree. I jumped off the end and landed on a rock. I hiked further and further up the mountain until my legs ached. When would I find that wretched dagger?

When the sun was well out of sight and I was falling asleep on my legs, I found a cave. I marched up to the opening. I hunched over and crawled into the darkness. Wearily, I folded my arms and rested my head on them. I was so tired, I fell into unconsciousness on the solid rock floor.

I woke as the sun was beginning to rise. I stretched my aching legs and dusted myself down as I drowsily wandered to the mouth of the cave. I gazed down at the view and sighed, how much longer will this take? Slinging my rucksack on my shoulders, I continued my ascent, climbing over boulders and rocks whilst trying not to slip.

Eventually, I came to a large area of flat rock. A furry lump was curled up in front of me. It was a mountain goat. By the looks of it, it was another monster as it was the size of a bear at full height whilst it was still lying down. Carefully, I edged around the goat, keeping to the side of the perimeter.

The mountain goat's nose twitched. I waited with baited breath as both eyes flickered open. It raised its hairy head and glared straight through me. He got up and walked over to me. He was bigger than two grizzly bears stacked on top of each other; I dreaded how tall he would be if he reared up.

The ram lowered his head and charged, his pointy horns ready to spear me. Panicked, I grabbed hold of the horn closest to me and I was thrown onto its head. I slid down the neck and seized a tuft of fur. The goat shook itself and

I was flung about on its back. I managed to regain balance and retrieve a hunting knife out of my bag and drove it into its spine. He bucked and kicked, but eventually his knees buckled and he collapsed.

A dagger appeared in front of me, levitating in mid-air. Delighted, I snatched the Dagger of Achilles. Adonis materialised from nowhere. "You completed the challenge!" Adonis took the blade from my hands and studied it. Adonis slashed with his new weapon. I side stepped. Furiously, I clenched my hands around my bow and at the speed of lightning I aimed and fired at his face. The arrow knocked him off the edge and into the moat where a shark gnawed at him.

Claws latched onto either of my arms. The magically grown eagle took me back to Olympus where Adonis suffered a terrible, terrible fate.

THE END