

A TWINKL ORIGINAL



ATTICUS

AND THE

ANCIENT GREEKS

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Naberos Storms:

-1902 ← 60 YEARS? → 1962

2022

NEXT STORM!

||||| ||| || ?

STORM EXPECTED TONIGHT BETWEEN 8pm AND 4am!

- To Do:**
- Check e
 - Fill gaso
 - Buy suppl
 - Fill water
 - Clean sol
 - Charge t cameras



North Macedonia
Albania

North Macedonia

Albania

Greece

Aegean Sea

Ionian Sea

Turkey

Rhodes

Dodecan

Chania

Heraklion

Alexandroupoli

Kavala

Thessaloniki

Katerini

MOUNT OLYMPUS

Sporades

Patras

Zakynthos

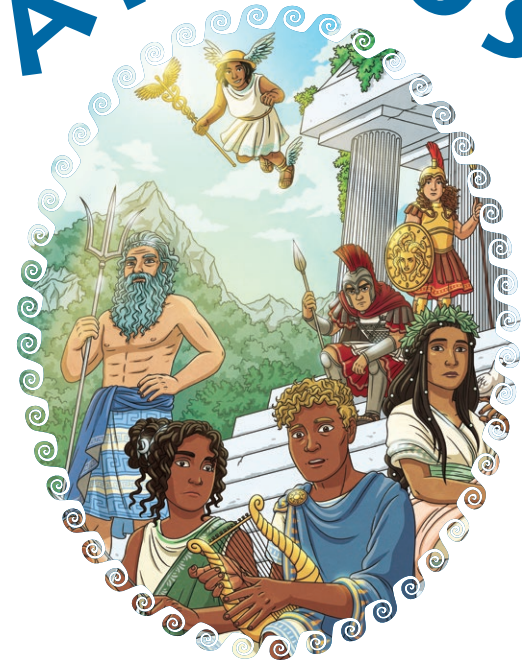
Kalamata

Athens

Thera

A TWINKL ORIGINAL

ATTICUS



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AND THE ANCIENT GREEKS



Twinkl Educational Publishing

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Chapter One

Storm in the Ionian Sea



The storm isn't *completely* treacherous. Not yet anyway.

The boat rolls and sways in the frothing water as the sea pounds against us. Mum guides the bow expertly through the waves. Her feet are planted in a wide stance as she wrestles with the steering wheel. She's got this connection with the boat like a skilled surfer with their board, feeling every pitch and lurch of the craft.

Standing next to her in the small wheelhouse

section at the front of the boat, I steady myself against the dashboard. Mum adjusts her grip on the wheel at the helm. Rain pelts the roof, cranking up in volume. It sounds like tonnes of tiny pebbles being relentlessly dumped on us from the dark grey clouds above. We're being thrashed by the sea and the sky: welted and weighed into by the two opposing forces.

The light from the evening sun is bleeding away across the horizon. Looking out through the glass, I squint into the distance. An aching feeling lurks, telling me this will all feel much worse in the descending darkness.

"Grab that chart for me, please, Atticus," Mum says. She's not shouting or panicking but a definite urgency is attached to her words. With her thumb and forefinger, she pulls gently at the crimson headscarf that she wears bandana-style across her forehead. I've noticed her doing this before. It barely adjusts the garment. It's more like a nervous tic – only Mum's not nervous. I've *never* seen her nervous. She's the most confident and determined person I've ever met. I want to be as confident as her one day.

"Do you think it's going to get worse out there?" I ask her as I hand over the scroll of paper. I know in the pit of my stomach what the answer will be. We've talked about it enough. Mum and Dad have planned for what they think it'll be like.

"It's just a storm, Att," she says coolly. One corner of her mouth turns up and she winks. We know it's not *just* a storm. "Zeus and Poseidon must be giving us their warning shots."

What she actually means is it could be the start of the legendary 'sixty-year storm'. If the legend is true, there's a massive storm like this every six decades. The last one was in nineteen sixty-two and before that, it was nineteen hundred and two. But there's more. The legend also says that, in the heart of the storm, a gateway is opened up to an island known as Naberos. It's an island that has survived from ancient Greece, like it's been untouched by time: buildings, crop fields, artefacts. It's even said that the ancient people *still* live there going about their normal business, but I don't believe that part. No one has ever proved that it's even there. It's all just a legend, really. The gateway

is supposed to provide the only way to reach the island and the storm provides the only time anyone can do it.

“Where are we now?” I ask. No storm is fun when you’re on a boat but we’re planning on heading directly into the eye of this one... on purpose. Never mind fun – it’s not even safe.

“Right in the middle of the Ionian Sea,” Mum replies. Her concentration doesn’t waver.

“Do you really think we’ll find the secret island?” I ask her.

We’ve studied the legend as a project for months but Mum and Dad have talked about it for years and years. I’m Home Educated and home for us is the boat. We’re usually at sea and not in the same place for long. Sometimes, we’ll moor in places like Italy or France or Spain but mostly we’ll moor in Greece, which is where Mum was born. We live on the boat so I learn on the boat, too. Mum and Dad both study with me and we get to do lots of exciting projects, like the one about the Naberos legend.

Dad helps me with writing and drawing and computers. He’s brilliant at all of them because they’re part of his job. Even though we’re on the boat, he works from his computer. We have a great laugh together. We play games against each other on our phones and have fun with any new apps we can find.

There’s this one where you can play animal noises or speak and it changes your voice to sound like an animal. Dad tried asking what I wanted for tea using the voice of a barking dog. I couldn’t understand a word of it. We fell about laughing while Mum raised her eyebrows at us and shook her head.

With another app, two people can look into the camera together and it swaps your face with the other person’s. I looked like I’d got Dad’s thick moustache and beard; he had my smooth cheeks instead of his usual face full of hair. We play chess online, too, and he usually beats me but I always get my revenge with nine-ball pool.

Mum’s a great photographer and artist. She painted all the designs on our boat. Her photos of our travels – Barcelona, Rome, Athens – are

in frames wherever there's room to hang them inside the boat. She teaches me about places, countries and oceans. I know all about the Greek islands: I know there are thousands of separate islands, mostly in the Aegean Sea but some in the Ionian Sea, where we are now, too. We've sailed in and out of them loads of times, our passage plans guiding us through calm waters.

Mum also teaches me about history. Of course, that includes ancient Greece because she's obsessed with it. You only have to look around the boat to know what I mean: the bust of Apollo stares out from a shelf; a painting of Poseidon hangs on one wall. We even have a fruit bowl made to look like ancient Greek pottery. Just this week, we were exploring Greek art after we'd read a news story online. It was about a two-thousand-year-old statue that was found not far from Thessaloniki, which is where Grandma lives.

We also study the legend of the secret island – but you won't find any pictures of that online or anything in any library or school book. It's all in Mum's handwritten family notes: tales passed on from Grandma and Great-Grandma;

years of research and rumours; and pages of drawings, diagrams and descriptions. It's the main reason why Mum and Dad gave up life on land – they've both dedicated so much time and effort to finding this island over the years.

“Need another pair of hands?” Dad asks as he appears behind us. He's almost a foot taller than Mum and two feet taller than me. He towers over us both. His rolled-up shirt sleeves hold tight around his muscly arms, each one decorated with tattoos.

“All hands on deck, Gabe,” Mum says to him. Dad has huge hands. They're not just big but smooth – unlike Mum's. Hers are covered in nicks and scratches from working on the boat; her fingernails have oil and grease underneath the tips, even after she's scrubbed them. If I'm holding one of Dad's smooth hands and one of Mum's rough hands, that's when I feel safest. Together, they make the perfect team.

I wonder if my hands will ever be as big as Dad's or my arms as strong as Mum's. It doesn't matter if it's genetic because Dad isn't my birth-dad. Mum isn't my birth-mum, either. My

birth-mum gave me up when I was a baby. That's OK, though. In fact, it's better than OK because Mum and Dad chose me when they adopted me. They say that's one of the things that makes me special. My hands are not smooth and strong like Dad's, though. They're not nimble worker-hands like Mum's, either. Mine are skinny. Maybe, my hands will never be like either of theirs. I'm lost in the thoughts of everyone's hands for a moment before Dad's voice brings me back to the present.

"How much farther do you think till the eye of the storm?" he asks Mum. She passes him the scroll, featuring her hand-drawn map, which he unrolls. It has a collection of scattered islands with lines, crosses and notes scribbled all around.

"I reckon at least another couple of hours. What do you think?" she says.

"Hmm. Could be right. Are you going to try and get some sleep, Att?" Dad asks me. As if I can sleep now or even any time soon. "Could be a big day tomorrow, little guy."



I don't remember the sea ever being as rough as this – apart from maybe that one time we tried crossing through the strait of Gibraltar. We're never usually in the open ocean. It's much calmer in the seas of the Aegean or the Adriatic. I'm nervous that the boat won't hold up. Still, I decide to keep out of the way and go to sit in the living quarters. I gather up our cat on the way and nestle my face into his soft, straggly fur. He's called Catticus. A few years ago, when I was only seven, we were staying in the port of Heraklion for a couple of weeks. Every day we were there, this cat would stroll onto the boat like it was already his home. I said we should adopt him and Mum said it seemed like he'd already adopted us.

"So, Atticus, what are we going to call him?" Dad had asked when we'd all agreed he could stay. I didn't even need to think about the answer. It just came to me.

"I'm Atticus so he can be Catticus," I grinned and gave Catticus a rub on the back of his neck. He's never left the boat since.

Now, Catticus always wears his Cretan scarf

around his neck. I give him a rub in that same spot as I snuggle with him on the sofa.

"We'll be all right, won't we, Kitty-Catticus?" I say to him in my soppy, cat-snuggling voice. With each wave that I feel battering against us, I really hope that's true. The sound on the roof and the rocking of the boat suggest the storm conditions are getting worse – as Mum said they would. I imagine every nail and every screw vibrating in their positions. Every patched-up panel, every nut and bolt that she has tightened and checked needs to brace itself, now, and stay firm. I close my eyes and imagine that we're on calmer waters.



Chapter Two

Revelations and Explanations



Rubbing the sleep from my eyes, I peer out into the dawn mist. I don't even remember climbing into bed but here I am with Catticus stretched out with his tail across my face.

Before I've moved, I can tell that the waters are calm, now. The boat rocks gently on the waves like a cradle. As daylight reality sets in, the thought of a cradle brings back the fuzzy memory of a dream. More of a nightmare than a dream, actually. It's not the first time, either. It's one that I often have. I dream that I'm

alone on a boat with no sign of Mum or Dad or anyone, just the hot sun beating down on me with no shade. It's not our boat, though – it's a tiny rowing boat. Sometimes, Catticus is with me; sometimes, I'm completely on my own. I'm in the middle of the ocean with nothing around. Then, the sun gets switched off and everything goes completely dark. I hate the dark so I'm screaming. Sometimes, I wake up, pulling my knees in towards my chest. I'm shouting for Mum, sweating and hoping that they've not really left me.

Out of the porthole, there is only sea and sky. The morning sun isn't visible yet but it's announcing itself with an orange glow filtering up from the horizon. There's no sign of any land, not even a small island. Mum and Dad's cabin is right next to mine, separated by a cardboard-thin wall. There's no sound coming from there. I wonder if they made it to bed at all.

Thankfully, at least the storm appears to be over. It was crazy to think that if we weathered it, we'd somehow find an island that could never normally be found. It's just a story, passed down to my mum from her mum and from her

mum before that. That's the thing with myths and legends. Mum was convinced about Naberos, though. She was absolutely certain. The more time she'd spent researching, the more convinced she became. She'll be so disappointed, now. If it was the only chance for sixty years, then it was the only hope she had in her lifetime of finding it.

Dad's tried to rein in her hopes. He's been saying encouraging things. 'We'll give it our best shot.' Or 'No matter how slim the chance, we'll do what we can.' Or 'It'll be an adventure, if nothing else.' I could tell he had his doubts, though, compared with Mum. I suppose I always agreed with him. I yawn and stretch my arms above my head, moving Catticus without disturbing him.

"Atticus, are you awake, little guy?" Dad calls. His voice is drifting from the study quarters rather than their sleeping cabin. Either he's up early or he didn't sleep at all. I hope the boat has survived intact. Maybe that's why I can't hear the engine – maybe it's damaged. It's not a new boat. Most of the main deck is one big, open space: wheelhouse at the front and then the living quarters; study quarters beyond

that with our kitchen along one side; and our sleeping cabins at the very back.

"Uh-huh," I grunt back in reply. Then, I whisper to Catticus, "Time to get up, Kitty-Cat."

I open my cabin door and push a curly straggle of hair from my eyes. Dad has a huge map spread out. It's a different map from any that I've seen before. It's too unwieldy to handle so its folded edges are draped over each side of the desk. This is where we do my studies and where Dad usually works at his computer. Mum is standing at the helm, looking out through binoculars.

"Still nothing from any of the navigation controls, Gabe," she shouts, glancing down and then back through the binoculars again. That's a weird thing for her to say. Her voice is weird, too – like there's a faint tremble hidden among the words. Mum never trembles.

"It doesn't tally with this map," Dad replies. I'm not sure he's even noticed my appearance. He adjusts the rotation of a compass that's sitting on the enormous, beige paper. That's also weird.

We hardly ever use an old-fashioned compass like that. It's all normally done on the dashboard at the front. Everything's digital. "Any luck with the radio signal?"

"Nope. Nothing," Mum fires back. I rub one bleary eye again and stare at them both. There's *definitely* something weird – I can just sense it. "We've lost all other contact and radar. We've got no signals coming through at all."

"Did the storm cause us some damage?" I ask. I pull up the legs of my pyjama trousers because they're too long. Barefoot, I traipse to the cupboards and open a door, searching for cereal.

"Not the storm, Att," Dad answers. I turn and look at him, feeling that he's hinting at something. He runs one finger from point to point on the map. My hand still holds on to the cupboard door but I feel like my mind is beginning to wake up and switch on. I glance from Dad across to Mum and back again. My eyebrows wriggle like caterpillars as my brain begins to work things out.

"What's going on?" I direct my question to Mum. She turns round. Her face glows with possibility.

"I think this is it, Att. I think we've found Naberos."



My mouth might have dropped open. My eyes definitely turn the size of footballs. For a moment, no words will come out and then I babble.

“But we can’t have. How do you know? What about that force thing from the stories? Have we got through it?”

The legend says that when you reach the eye of the storm, there’s some kind of repelling force. I didn’t believe that, either, but I didn’t really know what to believe.

“It just shows – you can sleep through absolutely anything, Atticus Grammaticus,” Mum says. “When we were through the rain, the skies cleared. It looked like we could see for miles. Then, it was like we sailed right into an invisible wall. The fruit bowl hit the floor and smashed.”

I look at where she’s motioning to and see the ceramic pieces piled up on the side next to the oranges and bananas.

“It looks even more like an ancient Greek relic, now,” I joke.

“Well, anyway, we tried all sorts. We tried sailing straight into it again but the same happened. We tried sailing parallel, riding the swells and easing against the unseeable barrier. Couldn’t penetrate it. Then, your dad had an idea.”

I look at Dad. Caticus wanders through from the cabin and sits at my side, his neck scarf a bit wonky. He looks at Dad, too.

“Well, I was just looking at all the numbers and the time was just after midnight. From the map, I figured that if we headed just a little farther along this invisible barrier, we’d hit a spot at exactly thirty-six degrees north, twenty-four degrees east. The latitude and longitude would be the multiples we need and we’d hit those perfect coordinates at precisely twelve minutes past midnight.”

“And...?” I wait.

“And, well, it’s the number twelve, isn’t it? There are twelve Olympian gods; twelve is superior, a sacred number. Plus, it’s the sixty-year storm so that’s another multiple –”

“No, I mean *and* as in *and* what happened next?” I say, wanting him to get to the point.

“And he was right,” Mum replies. “Precisely that time: twelve minutes past midnight. Precisely those coordinates: thirty-six degrees north, twenty-four degrees east. We just seemed to get sucked through. No power from the boat, no steering – we just went. Then, this island came into view and we started drifting towards it. It’s only now that we’re getting daylight that we have a chance of trying to see where we are.”

“Holy Odyssey,” I say.



Chapter Three

Ancient Island Arrival



The island shore peeks out at us from under a misty cloak. An empty beach arches round turquoise water. Beyond the sand, lush, green slopes disappear up into the low cloud. The only sounds are the lapping of the waves and the occasional call of birds. If anyone really lives there, they’ll probably be still asleep. It’s barely dawn and, in the summer, that basically means the middle of the night.

We have an inflatable dinghy that we need to use to get to shore. It’s too risky to take the boat



into the shallow waters. Dad climbs down the ladder first with a bag of recording equipment and supplies thrown over his shoulder. In the dinghy, he stands and holds on to the main boat's ladder while I climb down, followed by Mum. I've stashed my phone in my pocket; Mum's put her fancy camera, in its protective bag, on the seat next to her. Catticus sits on the bow of the boat, giving us an inquisitive look.

"We'll be back soon, Kitty-Cat, I promise. You're on guard duty!" I call up to him. He shuffles his front paws and gives us a whiny meow in reply. I watch him watching us. As we get farther and farther from the boat, the little figure of Catticus perched on the bow gets smaller and smaller until I can barely make him out.

"We have to face it – this place is probably not inhabited," Dad says as we row gently to shore. "It's still a remarkable discovery just to find the island, though. Incredible that it's not on any of the published maps. I don't understand how it can't be spotted with all the satellite images and aircraft we have nowadays."

"Exactly. There must be more to it," Mum replies.

“There’s something special about it here. I just know it. Everything about the legend so far has fitted together – the storm, that weird force repelling us and then there’s the synchronicity of the coordinates and the time. There must be people here – I’m telling you.”

Mum has her hopes up again. She is more adamant than ever as the dinghy reaches the shore. Mum and Dad both jump out, wading in the clear, shallow water to pull the boat up to the sand. I stay inside with my hands steadying the camera bags and our supplies for the day.

Once the boat is safely on land, I climb out and gaze up at the hills and olive trees. The peak of a mountain rises up behind them, cloaked in greens and browns. Beneath our feet, the sand is soft and pale. It’s a beach straight out of a holiday brochure but without a single tourist.

“Look,” Dad points. “There’s a clearing and that looks like a well-trodden path between those bushes. In fact, it looks like something’s been dragged along there, leaving a trail, so there must be people here.”

“And there’s a boat,” says Mum. She’s striding towards a really ancient-looking fishing boat. Its wooden bow and stern curve up at opposite ends. Other than that, it’s a simple design with a battered pair of oars leaning over its sides. Mum’s camera strap is slung over her shoulder but the camera is against her eye and the shutter is already clicking away. One of these will probably take pride of place on the wall in our study quarters. She’s photographing the rowing boat as she bounds over the sand towards it. In-between snaps, she’s glancing up and around, taking in the quiet island surroundings.

We eventually make our way from the beach upwards, through to the other side of a thick, green batch of trees. It leads us to a clearing that stretches out beneath us. Mum and Dad both stop abruptly. Mum puts her hand on Dad’s arm. I push my head between them and share the sight of what’s just stopped them in their tracks.

It’s incredible.

It’s like a scene straight out of a picture book on ancient Greece. Not one of city life in somewhere

like ancient Athens. More like a rural farm community.

“Gabe, where are we?” Mum whispers.

We peer out from the partial shade of some olive trees. Mum’s snapping photos again. We’re far enough away to stay hidden but close enough to observe a little of what’s going on.

“Never mind ‘Where are we?’ *When* are we?” Dad answers in an equally hushed tone. “It’s like we’ve stepped back in time.”

There aren’t many people in the scene ahead of us – maybe twenty or thirty, at the most. In the middle of the clearing is a main collection of buildings, surrounding a central courtyard. The walls have only a few small windows, positioned high up the sides, with wooden shutters. It’s certainly in no way modern. Instead, it seems to be made from a combination of mud bricks and wood. Some people are busy inside the courtyard; others appear to be going about their normal business around it.

No one’s wearing a T-shirt and shorts like me.

Their clothes are no more modern than the buildings are. A woman crosses the courtyard wearing a loose, flowing, white tunic from her shoulders to her ankles.

“What *is* this place?” Dad whispers. His head shakes as he speaks and his mouth hangs open after he’s finished.

“It’s just like the legend said,” breathes Mum. “It’s everything we could have dreamed it would be... and more. It’s an ancient island, untouched by time. Those buildings, those people – they’re all just like they would be if we’d gone back three thousand years.”

“Who do you think they are? Could they be re-enacting the historical period?” Dad asks. I’m not sure if he’s expecting an answer or just talking to himself. He begins taking out the video camera from its protective bag.

“I don’t think they’re re-enacting the past. I think they *are* the past. And if everything about the legend is true, then we only have the time between sunrise and sunset to be here. That’s when the gateway supposedly closes. We will

have to be away by sunset, otherwise...”

For a second, Mum looks at Dad; Dad looks at me. None of us speak. The obvious conclusion hangs between us. If we’re not off the island by sunset and the gateway closes, then we’re all stuck here for sixty years – that’s if we could even survive past sixty days. I’d be an old man in sixty years’ time. Mum and Dad would be... Well, I’m not even going to think about it. This is our only chance to see what’s here.

“Can I explore a bit?” I ask instead.

“Don’t wander out of our sight,” Mum says, “and don’t let anyone see you yet. We don’t want to alarm anyone. We don’t know how they’ll feel about us being here.”

I walk a little way from them both, trying to get a better view of the foothills on the other side of the clearing. Beyond the land with the buildings, there’s more land that is being farmed. The soil looks rocky and dry but there are crops growing. Farther along, there are goats and sheep grazing contentedly.

A man walks with a donkey tied to a rope. Strapped across the animal’s back are a pair of baskets, which are loaded with vegetables. Crossing his path is a girl who looks about my age. I squint to focus as I scan up the side of the mountain from the foothills towards the disappearing cloudy peaks.

On the hillside, I see a group of men together. One is sitting high up in an olive tree, shaking the branches. Two more stand on either side with long sticks, knocking the olives to the floor. Another man is on his knees collecting the fallen olives in a basket. These people aren’t visitors or tourists: they seem like ordinary people going about their ordinary lives. The extraordinary thing is that they seem to be the lives of the ancient Greeks.



Chapter Four

Lost and Alone



In the distance, I can just make out the girl again. I'm less sure of her age now – it's hard to tell. She's walking away towards the foothills when she turns her head. Even from such a distance, she seems to look straight at me. I wouldn't have thought she could even see me among the trees, yet she does the weirdest thing. Still with her eyes on me, she flicks her head as if to beckon me to follow. Perhaps I could go after her to see what she's doing. Maybe I could even speak to her. That would be a good way to introduce us all – just the two of us meeting and

then Mum and Dad could follow.

“Mum,” I turn and call. Mum doesn't hear me, though. I can see her but she's moved in the opposite direction to me, through the trees from where I left her and, now, she's a bit farther away. She's still got her eye pressed up against the camera, which is now perched on a tripod. Dad's even farther away. His lips are moving so I think he's narrating as he walks, with the video camera held out in front of him.

I don't want to let the girl get out of my sight. A part of me now questions what I saw. Did she see me? Did she really give me a sign to follow or did I imagine it? If I manage to catch her up, I could find out who she is and more about this place. Mum will be impressed. I look from the girl to Mum and to Dad and then back again. She's about to disappear completely from view among the cypress trees.

“Mum!” I call one more time. I'm trying to be loud enough for her to hear but not so loud that anyone else might hear. It's no use. If I stay here or run back to get Mum's attention, the girl will be gone.

If I follow now, I might just be able to keep up with her.

I'll be back here before they even know I'm gone.

What harm can it do? Decision made, I turn and sprint along a path that runs higher up through the thicker foliage of the slopes. I'm soon out of sight of the people below, circling the edge of the wide clearing. I feel like an investigative reporter. I should be able to keep up with the girl in the lower foothills farther along. Then, if I catch up with her, I can find the right moment to speak to her.

She's hard to keep in sight, though. I catch a glimpse here and there but too many trees keep getting in the way. The path twists and turns until it's not much of a path at all. I weave through tall trees, over dusty rocks and around wild shrubs. I remind myself that I'm not alone. I can always stop and head back any time and find where I left Mum. She's not far away. The girl can't be far, either.

Suddenly, I spot her. Again, she turns her head to look back. Again, she seems to look straight

at me. This time, she smiles and then she stops. What I see next brings me to a stop, too. There's not one girl, now, but three. She's met up with two others. The two new girls are dressed similarly to the first – in some kind of robes from their shoulders to their feet. Each robe is plain but a slightly different colour. All the girls have long, straggly hair. The three of them look at me, now – definitely look *straight* at me – before setting off again.

For a moment, I think again whether I should follow or not. It feels different now that there's a group of them. Maybe they have somewhere to show me – perhaps something on the island they want to point out. Maybe they do get more visitors here after all. If I spend any longer deciding whether or not to carry on, it'll be too late – they'll be gone. Despite the knot building in my stomach, I feel a magnetic urge to keep going after them. I'm drawn to them. I follow again.

My route seems to wind gradually farther from the clearing. The flashes and glimpses of the distant buildings below get fewer. I thought this way would lead me up to where they were

heading but it's curving the wrong way. Sloping hills and rocky ground have made me take a detour. The trees are much more dense here and it's hard to see very far at all.

A fluttering feeling begins to creep up from my stomach to my chest. I recognise the feeling. It's just like when I wake up, soaked in sweat after that same old nightmare. I'm OK though – I can always turn back. I look for the girls. I think I see movement but it could be an animal or even just my imagination. I'm starting to wonder whether it was *all* my imagination. All kinds of thoughts are swimming through my mind.

I look behind me to reassure myself. All I see are haphazard rows of trees. There's no obvious route through them even though that's where I've come from. The fluttering inside becomes more like a flock of flapping wings in my stomach.

I have to go back.

Giving up on the girls, I turn and walk in the direction from where I came but, now, I'm not so sure about this, either. It looks different from

this angle. The trees slope down and away to one side and up into the mountains to the other. Hesitating, I follow the slope up for a few steps but that doesn't feel right. I carry on and weave back downwards a bit instead but, now, it all seems unfamiliar. I can't see the lower foothills... or the buildings... or the girls. I'm not even sure which way I came from and which way I was going. It's just trees and rocks everywhere.

I think I might be lost.

My heart is racing. The nightmare of being alone out at sea flashes through my mind. Now, I'm alone in the forest instead. That fluttering feeling inside flaps its way through my entire body and I begin to shake. I can feel the sweat on my forehead even though I'm in the shade of the trees. I push the damp curls of my hair back out of my eyes. Why did I try to keep following?

I need to think.

My palms are pressed over my face and my eyes scrunch closed. A solution strikes me and I let the light back into my eyes. My phone, of course. This isn't a dream and I'm not a



baby. I have a phone. I can just call Mum or Dad. I grab it from my pocket and check the display. The screen comes to life with a picture of me smiling back, holding Catticus, squished in-between Mum and Dad.

No signal.

I hold it up towards the branches above me, turning round, looking up at the screen, hoping to see one of the bars appear.

Nothing. Just the bright sun poking through a gap in the trees like a spotlight on me from the skies.

I try tapping out a message instead:

Help. I'm in the forest. Not sure which way to get back. 10:32

I tap 'send' but I just see a whirring circle and then a notification pops up under my message:

Failed to Deliver. 

Tap to retry

10:33

My shoulders sag as I try to figure out another

plan. I could just start walking back, hoping it's the right direction towards the shore where we arrived. I'm more confused than ever about which way to even set off, now. I might end up wandering farther away instead of nearer to Mum and Dad. I could try to look for the clearing with those buildings – but what if the people aren't friendly? What if they see me and don't like us being here, like Mum warned? An even worse thought hits me – what if this was some kind of trick? Maybe those girls meant for me to get lost. If I were as smart as Mum, I'd be able to come up with something.

Hang on – another thought dawns.

I don't need to call or text. I can use the map on the phone to retrace my route and find the way back. I tap the icon to open up the app. All I get is a grey screen with grid lines. Nothing is loading. No phone signal, no data signal, no Internet.

Oh no.

I feel dizzy and try to blink away the blurry haze that's closing around my vision. I wish

I had a drink of water with me. Unsteadily, I sit down on the rocky soil. My chest tightens with the fluttering from deep inside. Then, I find myself pulling my knees into my chest. I shouldn't have followed; I should have waited for Mum. What am I going to do?



Chapter Five

A Forest Fright



My eyes are still squeezed shut with my head pressing against my knees when I hear the sound. I daren't move or open my eyes but I hold my breath to listen carefully. I'm wishing for the noise to be inside my head, just my imagination. I'm listening so hard that I can hear my heart pounding and feel the blood pumping in my temples – but I can also still hear the sound. It's a dull thud-thud, the sound of hooves.

I peel open my eyelids and raise my head just

enough to peek in the direction where the sound is coming from. Still, I pray for it to be only in my head and that there's nothing there.

But there is.

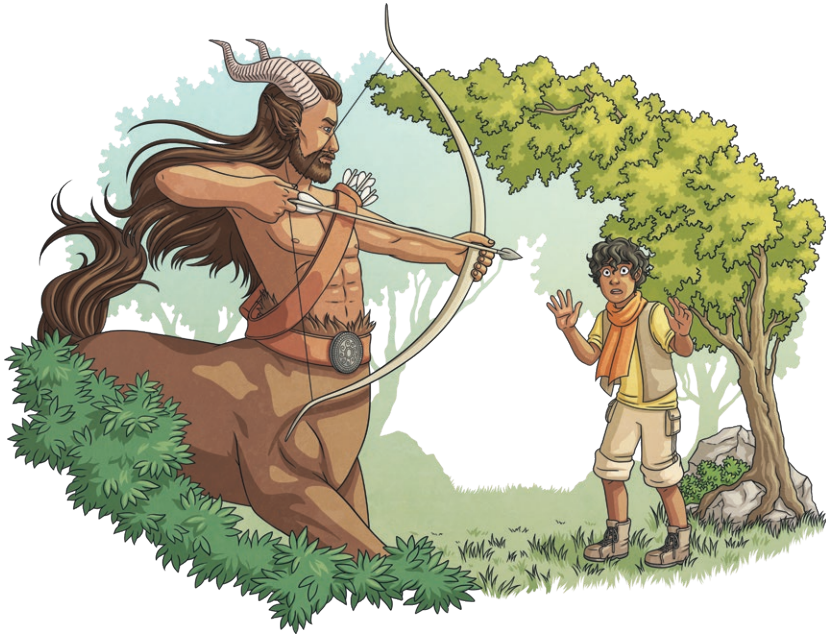
My eyes land upon four brown hooves and then four furry legs. I daren't look up any farther. If it's a deer, it might be more startled by me than I am of it. If it's a goat, then I could try to coax it with a branch from a tree. If it's a bull, then I dread to think what will happen. It could be preparing to charge at me right now and there's no way I'll outrun it.

The four hooves are not moving. The creature has come to a standstill just a few metres away from me. I daren't look but I must. I swallow hard and lift my head to take in the rest of the body and then...

"Holy Odyssey!" I gasp for the second time today.

"Who are you? How did you arrive here?" The voice comes from the creature. It's not a deer. It's not a goat or a bull. Instead, rising from a

horse-like body are the torso, arms and head of a human. A man. This man isn't sitting on a horse: the creature is half man, half horse. It looks like something from the ancient Greek myths Mum and I have studied – but surely it can't be? They're just myths. Seeing mud-brick buildings and people dressed in flowing tunics is one thing but, even in ancient times, these creatures were supposed to be just stories. Yet, here he is, seeming very real and holding a very real-looking bow and arrow, poised and pointed straight at me.



"You can't be real," I say, clinging to my logical thoughts.

"How dare you!" His eyes narrow. His elbow tucks slightly closer to his body as he tightens his grip on the weapon.

"I mean... You look like you're... like a centaur." I manage to eke out the words from my addled brain. It feels like I've drifted into another universe.

"Indeed, but you do not answer my question. Who are you?" the creature repeats with a gruff, rasping voice.

"I'm sorry. I'm lost. I didn't mean to be here – but I thought you only existed in myths," I manage to babble.

"You *still* do not answer my question," the centaur says. His arrow remains aimed straight at me; the string of his bow is stretched and ready to be released. He wears a broad belt with a huge crest on the front, like a boxer gets for winning a title fight. Above this, his chest is bare. The muscles in his arms are tensed and

bulging. Even more fearsome are a pair of long, twisted horns growing from either side of his head.

“It’s just... I didn’t think centaurs were real. I remember reading about Chiron but –”

“You know of the mighty Chiron?” he interrupts. Suddenly, the creature’s stance seems to soften. He blinks and turns his head slightly sideways without taking his gaze off me. Slowly, he lowers his arms and the arrow is no longer trained on me. I let out a breath of relief from my nostrils.

“I’ve read stories. Didn’t he help some of the famous heroes like Theseus and Achilles?”

“You can read? And you know these tales? You must be one of the prophesied arrivals. Unless... you could be some kind of intruder. You could be here for malevolent purposes. I should detain you or better still...”

Like a switch of suspicion has been flicked back on, the centaur pulls the bow and points the arrow once more straight at my chest. I hold out my hands – as if they’d make any difference

to a flying arrow – and I scrunch my eyes closed again. Of all the ways to die, I never expected it would be at the hands of a centaur.

“Wait!” a new voice bellows.

It’s not from the centaur. It’s deep and powerful and commanding. I’m not sure I even want to look but, right now, I’m just relieved that there’s not an arrow piercing through my heart.

“Stand down, centaur,” the voice continues.

When I open my eyes, I see a tall, bearded man. He’s even more muscly than the centaur. He stands with his feet wide apart, hands on his hips.

“As you wish, Zeus,” says the centaur, bowing his head. I try to take in the name. He called the man ‘Zeus’. I must have misheard. He does look very much like pictures of Zeus, though.

A moment passes and the centaur gallops away into the trees. I’m left looking up at this impossibly tall man. His face is full of wisdom. His shoulders are full of power. I

thought the centaur's chest was muscly but this man is like a bodybuilder. A pretty old, grey-haired bodybuilder. The silvery hair on his head matches the colour of his beard and both are long and straggly. He stares at me with a confidence that suggests nothing else can happen until he speaks. Only someone with that kind of confidence can be wearing a toga in daylight in the forest. Not to mention some kind of wreath on his head and some *very* elaborate sandals on his feet.

"You're not really him, are you?" I ask. My mouth is dry and everything feels unfamiliar. The words trickle out much quieter than I intended, barely audible. His reply, in contrast, booms at me as if he has a built-in amplifier to his deep voice.

"Not really who, boy?"

"You're not really Zeus, are you?" I venture, trying but failing to increase my volume.

"Well, of course, boy! The question is – who are you?"

"I'm Atticus. Atticus Grammaticus," I say. Then, I add, "I'm no one really. I'm just... visiting. You *can't* be Zeus."

"Visiting!" he laughs. "We haven't had a visitor here for centuries. Now, why exactly can't I be who I am?"

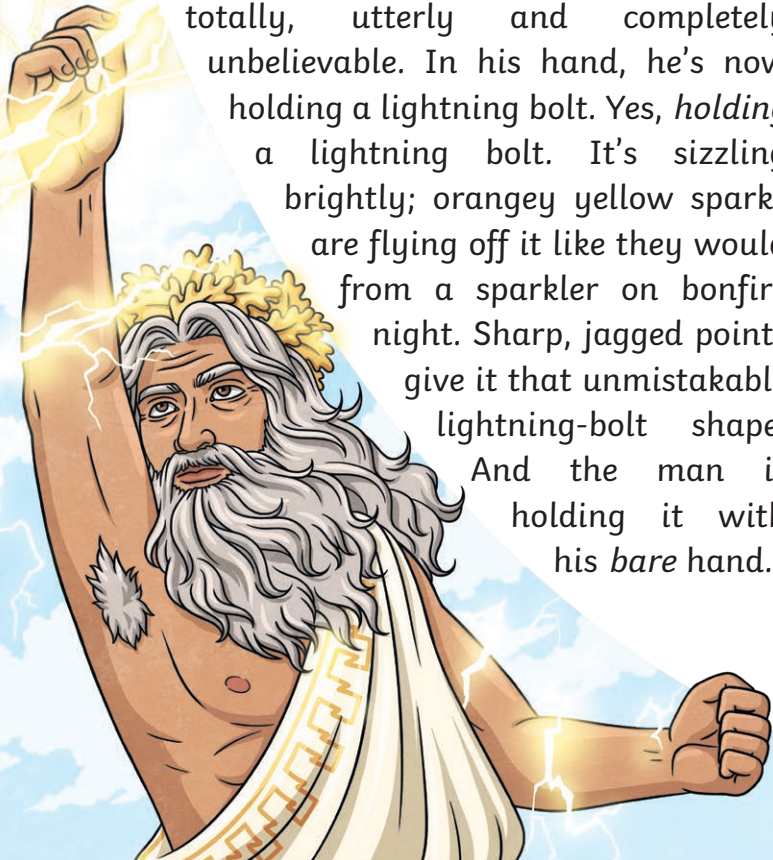
I think about this for a moment, not wanting to offend him. Neither do I want him to harm me. What would Mum or Dad say? I choose my words carefully, hoping to show that I'm clever and also honest.

"Well, first, the real Zeus is from ancient Greece. That was thousands of years ago. We're in modern Greece, now, if this is even Greece at all. Second – and I don't mean this in a bad way – wasn't Zeus just in myths?"

He strokes his long beard and raises one grey eyebrow into a pointy angle. I'm waiting for him to respond but, instead, he raises his left fist slowly into the air. I might have made him angry. My instinct is to flinch, cowering behind my own arm as if that would provide even the slightest bit of protection. I'm expecting a blow

to rain down on me but, instead, the strangest thing happens.

Even though there's nothing but clear, blue sky visible through the gaps in the trees, there's this crackle from above. A sudden streak of lightning zaps down. For a moment, I think it has struck either me or the towering, toga-wearing man. The light is blinding and I shield my eyes behind my arm. As I blink away the flashes, I see something totally, utterly and completely unbelievable. In his hand, he's now holding a lightning bolt. Yes, *holding* a lightning bolt. It's sizzling brightly; orangey yellow sparks are flying off it like they would from a sparkler on bonfire night. Sharp, jagged points give it that unmistakable lightning-bolt shape. And the man is holding it with his *bare* hand.



I've had dreams that are more believable than what I'm currently seeing in front of me. I give my eyes a rub. It makes no sense, obviously. Half of my brain is telling me that people cannot hold lightning bolts. Yet, standing over me is a man with his arm aloft and, in his hand, he is clutching this long, glowing object that looks exactly like a lightning bolt. Except, it's not actually a man. I'm beginning to accept it is, instead, an ancient Greek god.

"You really *are* Zeus," I say, with my mouth gaping.

"Aha! It seems I have managed to convince you, boy!" booms Zeus in his cavernous voice.

"Isn't that burning your hand?" I mutter.

"Not at all," he laughs. He pulls back his arm and launches the lightning bolt like a javelin, up and over the treetops into the distance. I wonder where it's likely to land and feel sorry for anyone who happens to be walking by as it hurtles back down to earth. "Now, come. Follow me. There is a great celebration going on – but I have a feeling you probably know about that

already. You must join us.”

“Celebration? Um, thanks but I really need to find my mum and dad and I can’t get in touch with them,” I say. As if it would help convey my attempts to contact them, I take out my phone, waving it about as I speak. The sight of it makes Zeus stiffen and take a step back.

“Stop! Show your weapon, boy! Are you a prophesied descendant or an intruder after all?” he demands, his voice echoing around the forest.

“Weapon?” I mumble, looking at the phone in my hand. “Oh, you mean this? No, it’s not.... It’s just... You do know what this is, right?”

Zeus clearly does not know what it is – which kind of makes sense if he’s an ancient Greek god. Yet, how can he be here talking to me? That’s what I still have to ask myself. My brain is trying to wrap itself around what’s happening but I have so many questions.

I show him my phone and try to demonstrate what it can do. He looks at the messages but screws up his face and shakes his head. I can’t

call anyone so I put it to my ear and show him what it would look like to make a call. He raises one eyebrow and shrugs. I don’t think he really understands the purpose of a phone, given that I still have no call signal, no data signal and *definitely* no wireless network.

I take a selfie of us together and then show him the result. His face lights up at seeing us both pictured on the small screen.

“Incredible! That’s me in the little box! You believe you can communicate with this tool, too?” he asks. “Communicate with people who are not here? That is quite some power.”

“Hmm, I wouldn’t really say ‘power’. It’s quite normal where I’m from,” I say.

“Ah, where you’re from. I see. This is extremely exciting.”

I want to say that it’s just a phone and not really that exciting. I’ve been asking for a newer one for my last two birthdays. At least, thankfully, he seems reassured that it’s not a weapon. Instead, I get the feeling he’s starting

to think I'm someone much more important than I really am.

"Never mind this – the gods will be impatient. Come now. The celebration awaits!" he says with a wink. I try another quick message to Dad's phone but still no luck.



Chapter Six

To the Temple



Walking quickly, I try to keep up with the enormous strides of not just any ancient Greek god – as if that wouldn't be strange enough on its own – but the most powerful, the king of all ancient Greek gods. Occasionally, I look over my shoulder, knowing that this is almost certainly taking me farther from Mum and Dad. Zeus has promised that he'll help me reach them again after this celebration that he keeps going on about. I was already lost so I figured I didn't have much to lose by trusting him. At least, that's what a big part of my brain was telling

me. There was also this little part screaming 'Stranger danger!'

I've been looking down at the ground, watching out for rocks that keep tripping me up among the dust. Lifting my head, I see the hulking body of Zeus in front of me but then I'm distracted by movement to the side. As I glance across, there they are again – those three girls: two of them carrying baskets and one of them with a ball of something like string or yarn. At least, I think it was them. As soon as I spot them, they seem to vanish. I don't know if my mind is playing tricks on me.

I'm just considering whether to ask about them when I see something else come into view ahead. Glimpses of tall, stone pillars nestle among the greenery of the mountains in front of us. Our entire walk feels like it's been uphill. The muscles in my legs are burning. I've lost all sense of which way the boat is, now, and I can't see the sea in any direction. Also, from up ahead, I hear voices. They are laughing, chatting and joking. Could that be the girls? It sounds like more than just three people.

"What's going on?" I ask Zeus.

"It's the start of the celebration, of course. Everyone will be heading into the temple. Are you still saying you don't know about it?" he asks me again.

"I definitely don't know anything about any celebration," I insist. This is the truth but Zeus raises that eyebrow again and I feel like he still doesn't believe me. He sighs and begins to explain.

"Every six decades, we reunite. Poseidon surfaces from the seas, Hades rises from the underworld and even Ares ceases his relentless warmongering. After all those years ruling on Mount Olympus, it is our chance to reflect on the past in our immortal existence. It is an opportunity to awaken our powers on this sleepy retirement island, which we inhabit for ever and which, need I remind you, is a gateway for the descendants of our heroes to return!"

I probably stare at Zeus for several seconds. If his god-like powers can see into my brain, he'll see my neurons firing like crazy trying

to process everything he's just said. All of it leads to many more questions but there were a few words towards the end that are giving me warning signals.

"Who is 'we'?" I muster.

"The gods!"

"The Greek gods?"

"Yes, of course!"

"The ancient Greek gods?"

"Oh, must we continue this charade, boy? Yes, but less of the ancient. *We are* the Greek gods!" Zeus crosses his arms and frowns at me. His long beard points down the middle of his chest as the muscles there flex and tense.

"Why do you keep thinking that I already know this stuff or that you're reminding me as if I should have heard it all before?" I ask.

Zeus doesn't reply. He unfolds his arms, bellows out this hearty laugh and slaps me on the back.

He's still chuckling for some reason as he turns and beckons me on again.

Within moments, we are clear of the closely packed trees. Despite the island shrubs all around, we are in a space that contains a beautiful building, the size of a city library or cathedral. Rows of stone steps lead up to a symmetrical array of exquisite marble columns, topped by a sloping roof that peaks in the centre. Beautiful carvings adorn the stonework. It all looks totally out of place. Yet, it isn't the most amazing thing that's currently before my eyes.

A group of figures congregate around the front of the building – some sitting, some standing. It reminds me of waiting outside the church for Aunt Florence to arrive to get married to grumpy Uncle Theo. I had a bow tie that was too tight and braces that pulled my trousers too high. Aunt Florence was so late that we all thought she wasn't coming and we just stood there, chatting to cousins that I'd never even seen before while the bow tie strangled me and my trousers squeezed me where it hurt.

The group in front of me are not dressed for

a wedding. Definitely no one in a bow tie or braces. However, I have a similar uncomfortable feeling from the pit of my stomach to the back of my throat. Am I really about to be introduced to the ancient Greek gods that I've read about in stories?

There's an old guy – old but strong-looking – wearing nothing above his waist and holding on to a gleaming, silver pitchfork that's taller than he is. His feet are bare and a length of fabric, which has patterns like waves, is wrapped around his waist. I recognise the pitchfork as being something Poseidon is always holding. It's what Mum painted on the side of our boat. There's no doubt about it: this man either wants to be – or thinks he actually is – Poseidon.

A brown-haired woman has some kind of armour clamped over her shoulders and chest. She has a matching helmet and more armoured plates over her legs. She's brought a spear and a shield with her for some reason. Another woman with kind eyes and soft skin could probably fit in at a wedding with the glamorous, white robe she's wearing. But she's switched up the look with an olive wreath around her head and, oddly, she



has a dove sitting on her shoulder. If these two women are goddesses, I can't remember which ones they are. A voice at the back of my mind says one of them might be Aphrodite. Wasn't she the goddess of love and beauty? She might be the one with the dove. Symbol of love or not, if Catticus were here, he'd chase that dove off in a flash. He loves sitting on deck, watching the birds fly overhead and trying to pounce if they swoop too low. He's never caught one yet.

There's another guy, sitting on the steps farther back, who looks more like a pro wrestler. I daren't even look directly at him because he has a face more sour than Uncle Theo's. It feels like he's staring straight back at me from under his silver warrior's helmet. What an odd bunch they appear to be, all gathered here up in the mountains. I kind of hope they actually are the Greek gods because at least that explains their look. Otherwise, they're probably taking a love of fancy dress a bit too far. And that one with the warrior's helmet is *still* staring at me.

That little part of my brain that was earlier telling me not to follow is, now, flashing a bright red light and sounding a siren telling me to run

like the clappers. I feel Zeus's hand on my back and, for a moment, I close my eyes and imagine it's Dad's hand instead. It makes me wish I had Dad's bravery. Once, I saw him dive into the sea to rescue a loggerhead sea turtle that was trapped in a fishing net. He pulled off his boots and jacket and then was over the side of the boat without a second thought. Catticus and I watched helplessly from the deck as Dad picked apart the net with his penknife while trying to stay afloat and, at the same time, stop the turtle from snapping at him. The scene in my memory is shattered by Zeus's booming voice.

"My dear family, we have ourselves an esteemed visitor and guest. This could be one of the prophesied descendants we have long awaited."

A hush falls upon the assembled group of at least twelve or more, their chatter fading as they all train their eyes on me. If it is really Zeus that has led me here, then maybe I do need to believe that this bunch are the gods that he says they are. More concerning still is who they think I am.

"Where is he from?" asks someone.

“What’s his story?” enquires another.

“Ah, he is giving little away,” declares Zeus on my behalf. “He was marauding through the forest. He talks of Chiron, Theseus and Achilles. He did not bow down to one of the centaurs but conversed with it. I think you’ll agree that the timing of the boy’s arrival with our celebration is not merely coincidental.”

They all look at me, waiting for me to say something. I don’t know what they expect from me.

“I wasn’t marauding. I was lost,” I say.



Chapter Seven

Heroes and Gods



A moment of silence is followed by a rumble of whispers as several of the figures speak to each other. They all look human – but kind of superhuman; they have this aura that feels other-worldly. It’s hard to explain. My eyes dart from one to another as I try to take them all in. Many of them look like they train hard in the gym – yet I doubt this island even has a gym. Almost every one of them holds a weapon of some kind. They are all clothed as I recognise from books and pictures of ancient Greece. I’m really beginning to think they actually are the

ancient Greek gods.

A fierce, young woman steps forwards. She is holding an enormous bow and arrow. More arrows are stowed away in a carrier, strapped across her back. Her robes, which are more modest than some of the others, are tied with a fabric belt around her waist. She smiles at me, softening her aggressive features.

“Father, do you really think he could be one of the prophesied descendants? Of Heracles, perhaps. There is a similarity in his nose.”

“Heracles? Didn’t he do those twelve labours? He was really brave and strong. I think you’ve got the wrong kid,” I say. They do all look like they are gods. They are talking to each other as if they are gods. It all kind of fits. Yet, none of it fits. What am I even thinking?

“A likeness to Heracles is a good spot but look, sis, another idea I have got.” A light-haired man has piped up with an unusual way of speaking. He steps towards the young woman. Unlike most of the others, he is not carrying a weapon. I think it’s a musical instrument, a bit like a

shrunk harp. “Perhaps Jason is the great hero, to whom the resemblance is so.”

“No, really, I don’t think –” I begin to tell them I’m not related to anyone called Jason, although Mum has a cousin called Janice. Or is it Janet? Before I can get the words out, I’m interrupted.

“Apollo, Artemis, give the boy a chance. He has a weapon that will interest you,” Zeus states. He raises his arms like a teacher trying to quieten a rowdy class. The sour-faced wrestler guy in the helmet suddenly stands up. I now notice that he’s gripping a blood-soaked spear, which gives me the chills.

“A weapon?” he says, menacingly.

“Calm down, Ares,” commands Zeus. “Not that kind of weapon. More of a tool, an instrument of some kind. He has shown me. It has powers. I am sure if he is one of the prophesied descendants, he will be proud to explain his arrival to us.”

Three things simultaneously occur to me. One, Zeus is *still* referring to my phone as a ‘weapon’. Two, there seems to be this belief that I am some

kind of descendant of someone or other. Three, most crucially, these folks he is addressing are, indeed – as he claimed – the actual ancient Greek gods. Apollo and Artemis – I remember their names. Aren't they twins? The bust that we have on the boat is Apollo – there's definitely a resemblance; the female one – Artemis – she called Zeus 'Father'. I'm trying to recall all of the things we learnt on the boat during lessons. I wish I'd paid more attention to Mum, now. She knows so much about this stuff. Needless to say, Ares looks like bad news, still clutching that spear of his and staring me down. I have a terrible feeling that he is the god of war.

"Show us, then," the brown-haired woman with all the armour says. She's not talking to Zeus but to me. Her eyes bore into me. She's not mean about it. She seems genuinely interested as she leans forwards on her shield. It takes another moment to regain my senses and realise she means the phone. I don't really want to take the phone out of my pocket. It's expensive and I don't want anything to happen to it or any of this lot to get hold of it. Maybe this whole thing is just a big plot for them to steal my phone. But if that was their plan, Ares could just point his

blood-soaked spear at me and I wouldn't have much choice.

I wonder if a photo will help to pacify their curiosity. I could *show* them that on my phone, without actually giving it to them. Reluctantly, I slip it from my pocket and feel everyone's eyes follow my hand.

"I can't get any signal here so I can't use it to speak to anyone or send a message," I explain.

"From whom do you seek a signal? Who else is here?" Poseidon demands, pounding the handle of his pitchfork into the stone step.

"No, not that kind of signal," I say but I don't know how to explain what I mean. I try to move swiftly on. "It does other stuff, like photos: here's one of me with my mum and dad. I don't think I'm who you think I am. I don't know anyone called Jason and I'm pretty sure we don't have a Heracles in the family. Look – this is us."

I hold out the phone and show it around. A couple of the gods move in for a closer look. I feel them towering over me.



“The poor people are tiny. Are they trapped in the little box?” asks the lady with the dove.

“No,” I reply. “It’s a photo. I mean a picture. Like the carvings on the buildings.”

“They look like very proud, kind people,” one voice mutters.

“You are all wearing a lot of clothes. No robes but many garments,” says another.

“You don’t look alike,” remarks a woman who has yet to speak.

“A good, strong beard there,” says Zeus, pointing to my dad. He flashes me a broad smile with his bright, white teeth. “A lovely family, I’m sure! Well, whether or not you are one of the prophesied descendants, you are still our guest. We shall discuss it later. Here, meet my own family. These are some of my children. The twins: Apollo and Artemis.” He points to the fierce, young woman with the bow and arrow and the light-haired man with the strange musical instrument. So, they are twins – I remembered correctly. “Then, there’s young Hermes up there and the lovely Athena – born from my own head she was, you know.”

“Um... hello,” I say. I’m wondering how to respond to Zeus’s oddly proud introduction to the armour-clad Athena but I’m too startled by Hermes who literally *flies* up above the group and then lands by my side.

“Cool shoes.” He points at my feet. I notice his sandals are way cooler than my boots, however, with little wings on each of them. Zeus is not done with the introductions yet.

“You’ve seen Ares over at the end there. Don’t

mind him. He's always as grumpy as that. I think he takes after his mother."

"That's quite a big family you've got," I remark, thinking of the fact that I don't have any brothers or sisters, at least not that I know of. I bet Ares's mother isn't too impressed with the comment about him taking after her because he's so grumpy. At least he knows who he takes after for something, I suppose.

"Oh, nonsense. These are just a few. I have dozens more children," Zeus says in reply. "Oh and there's my brother, Poseidon, up there with his trusty trident. He never seems to put that thing down. Our brother, Hades, should be around but he's always late, coming from the underworld as he does. Probably having trouble with that dog of his, too. Then, last but not least, there's my lovely wife and sister, Hera."

Poseidon raises his trident and tips it slightly in my direction with a subtle smile. I look for the two women Zeus introduced last of all but realise that he's pointing out only one. Wife *and* sister. Hera looks at me as if I'm something Catticus once brought in. I try to force a smile

and raise one hand as high as my shoulder to give a feeble wave. Something about this woman gives me the flutters in my stomach.



Chapter Eight

Mission Suspicion



The woman that Zeus has introduced appears totally unimpressed, standing separately, a few steps up from the others. Her eyes are narrowed and her mouth curls at one edge as she gives me an unpleasant leer. With one hand, she manages to make the swishing of her robe look like an aggressive act. In her other hand, she is holding on to a long, golden rod. Resting on the ground, it's almost as long as she is tall, with what looks like a flower design on top. The decorative feature does nothing to stop me from imagining the damage she could do with the big stick if

she wanted. She narrows her eyes even further and looks away from me back to Zeus.

“Typical as always. Leave my introduction until last. Always the forgotten one, aren't I? The goddess no one remembers, no one cares about. How will history ever mark my presence, I wonder?”

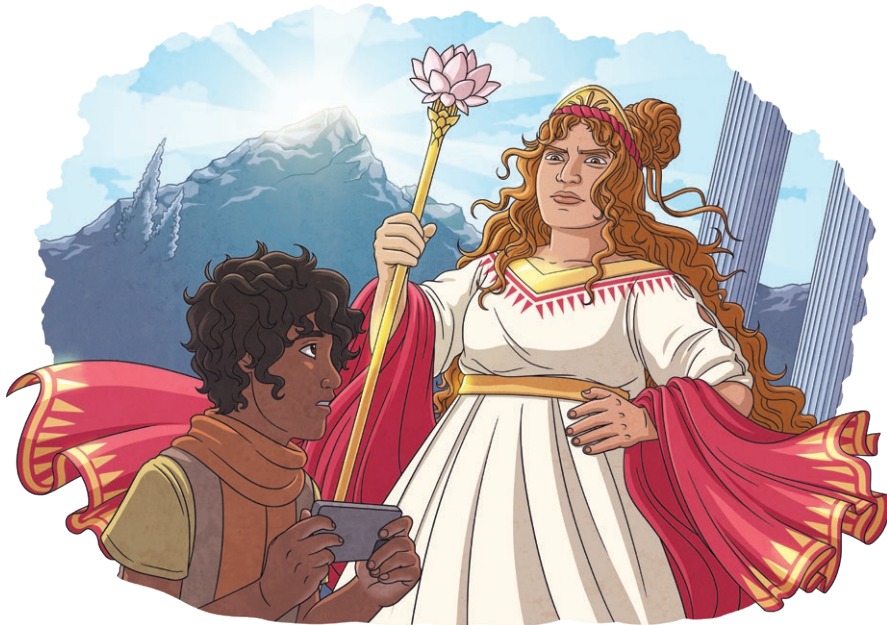
“Oh, not this again, Hera, my dear. That's not true. You are not forgotten. You will be remembered favourably – your wisdom, your grace, your beautiful face.” There's a snigger from one of the others but I don't catch which one. Hera shoots a look over her shoulder and then back to Zeus.

“If he's not a descendant of one of the heroes as you first suggested, then who is he?” she asks her husband. Her tone is stern. She puts one hand on her hip and lifts her chin. I see her jaw clench as she waits for an answer.

“Well, perhaps he's just a visitor as he says. If so, then we should treat him as our respected guest. Let's join the others inside the temple for the feast.”

I realise that the family members Zeus has introduced are, now, looking on expectantly. They give me the feeling that they know something is about to happen and I'm guessing it's not going to be good.

Hera moves purposefully down the steps. She bangs the end of the ornamental rod down onto every slab of stone as she descends. Her eyes flick back and forth from me to Zeus. Something tells me she's not heading down to give me a friendly welcome hug.



“Hold on just a moment! Something’s not right here. He claims to know little about our sacred heroes. He arrives here – the first visitor we’ve had in centuries – and *you* just happen to find him in the forest?” She raises a flattened palm in the direction of her husband and then jabs a finger towards him. She’d make a good job of stopping traffic – not just with the hand signal but with that grouchy, cantankerous face she’s sporting. I see what Zeus means, now, about grumpy-looking Ares taking after her. She turns her attention to address me. “Is that your mother *and* your father in that picture?”

“Yes,” I reply.

“Your *real* mother and father?”

“Yes,” I say again, pausing for a moment before forming the words that are about to follow. The options of how much more to add all flash through my mind. I’ve had this kind of question before but not in the way she’s asking. ‘Real mum’; ‘proper dad’; ‘actual parents’.

“Just because they’re not my birth-mum and birth-dad doesn’t mean they’re not my *real*

mum and dad. They are my parents and they have been since I was a baby.”

“I knew it! He’s another of yours, isn’t he?” Hera screeches to Zeus. For the first time since I’ve met Zeus, he looks flustered and not in control. Despite his height, Hera stands two steps higher and is looking slightly down at him. Behind her, Apollo, Artemis and Athena are all looking sheepish. Ares has a smug, lopsided grin peeking from beneath his helmet.

“My dear, I do not know what you are implying,” insists Zeus.

“Another child. Another offspring that I didn’t know about. What’s your excuse this time? Sprang from your own head again? A likely story. This is just like with those twins and that old shrew, Leto. Remember what I did to her?”

“I can only reiterate that Leto was a mild and gentle being. It was very unfortunate that she had to suffer the indignity of being turned into a quail just to survive your wrath – but she has nothing to do with this, I swear to you!” Zeus pleads. He’s beginning to look quite afraid

of his wife.

“Well, it’s not like she was the only one. It’s the same old tale, again and again, isn’t it? There was Persephone and then there was Dionysus and who knows how many other children. If I find out you’ve been gallivanting around with another mortal woman, she’ll be burnt to a crisp like the last one!”

“Hera, you have my word. I came upon this boy in the forest. He brings news of the world beyond the island. He is wise and innocent. Even if he is not a descendant of one of our past heroes, he could be a hero of the present – or even the future. We should treat him with dignity.”

I realise I’m biting on my bottom lip. I glance at Zeus, silently urging him to stop making me out as some kind of hero. I wonder whether or not I should speak and tell her that she’s got me all wrong and that she has no reason to be mad at her husband. I’m not a descendant or a hero – I’m just a normal kid. Instead, my mouth dries up and I cast my eyes down and twist the toe of my boot into the dusty ground. I just want to get out of here, back to Mum and Dad.

“Fine,” says Hera eventually. I breathe a sigh of relief but it’s premature. “If he’s a modern hero of the present or the future, he can prove it. Send him to the North Labyrinth. If he makes it back to the temple before sunset, then he proves he is worthy and is free to leave. If not, then let his fate be his punishment and a reminder to you, my dear husband.”

“What? No!” I beg. My heart races at the thought of what she means by ‘fate’ and ‘punishment’. I haven’t done anything wrong. I certainly can’t prove myself to be a hero. I’m not a hero and I never said I was. “I need to be off the island by sunset, not back here at the temple. What if I can’t find my way? I’ll be stuck!”

“That’s terribly unfair on the boy,” Zeus adds.

“I’ll escort him to the labyrinth,” says Ares, the sunlight glinting off his golden helmet.



Chapter Nine

Lurking in the Labyrinth



A small circle of tightly packed hedges surrounds me, no wider than a playground roundabout. The hedges reach up to about twice my height. I spin round and see that a narrow opening in front of me is the only way out. I don’t know how I even got here. One minute, I was in front of the temple; the next, everything had gone black. I felt dizzy, like I was spinning in the dark. As soon as I could see anything again, I was here.

I try to remember the last thing that was said.

Hera obviously doesn't like me. My arrival was like a fly landing in her favourite soup. Zeus was pretty rubbish at sticking up for me, too. I remember Hera saying something about a labyrinth...

Wait! I know a story about a labyrinth!

We found out all about it when we visited the Palace of Knossos, the same week that we found Catticus.

Oh no! There was a Minotaur in the labyrinth that Theseus had to slay!

That's all I need – some half-man, half-bull creature lurking round one of these hedges. At least Theseus had a ball of thread to find his way back out, if I remember it right. I don't even have that. The thought of Catticus makes me miss him and I wonder what he'll do on the boat if we don't make it back. The sun would set and he might still be there sitting on the side, waiting for our dinghy to return until it got dark and he ended up all alone again.

"Help!" I yell, tears pricking the corners of my

eyes. The sound just fades upwards, swallowed by the empty sky. No response. No other sound. I've either just wasted my breath or woken a Minotaur.

I need to think. I take out my phone in the vain hope that there's somehow a better signal in this place. No chance. No bars on the display and no little symbol showing any kind of connection. I do notice that the battery is down to just over fifty per cent. That went down quickly. I hold the screen in front of my face to unlock it and then I swipe through the icons. Not everything relies on a data signal. I can access my photos (but they just make me miss Mum and Dad even more). I can open the calculator (no real use for that right now but I would even be happy if I were back on the boat doing maths lessons). I can even look or listen to anything already downloaded, like music and videos. There must be something to help.

What would Mum and Dad do? Mum would roll up her sleeves, flex her muscles and find a way out. How far will my skinny arms and legs get me? Dad would have a clever plan by now. His moustache would twitch and he'd stroke his

beard and then he'd announce exactly what to do.

As I keep swiping through the phone apps, I see the compass icon. I never normally use that for anything but I know how it works. We use compass directions all the time on the boat when we're making our passage plans. It triggers something in my mind. What was it Hera said? 'Send him to the North Labyrinth.' If this is the North Labyrinth, then maybe the way out is to the south. I open the compass app and lay the phone flat on my upturned palm. As I rotate it round, I point it towards the one gap in this tiny circle surrounding me. The gap lines up directly with the south. It's worth a try.

I step forwards, boosted by some newfound confidence. As soon as I'm through the gap, I have a path that leads to my right or my left but in front of me is just a wall of green hedge growth. I push my shoulder against it and try to wriggle through the hedge. It's a tight weave of branches and thorns with absolutely no way through. I only succeed in scratching my arms and ear.

I stand on my tiptoes and then jump up high to try to see over the top but I'm nowhere near tall enough.

Pulling apart the leaves as much as possible, I try to peer through. All I can see is another bunch of hedges on the other side plus a few relics of stone pillars among them. My choice is left or right. I go right but look for another opening as soon as I can that will take me to the south. Keeping my phone on the palm of my hand with the compass app open, I follow this theory, turn after turn. Every time I find myself heading east or west, I take the next available opening that leads me south again.

I'm not totally sure whether it's working or not but it feels right. The paths are getting wider, the hedges farther apart and I have the sense that I'm nearer the edge of this odd maze. I turn again: right and then left to take me facing south and then... uh-oh!

I look up from my phone. The path stretches out in front of me, similarly tall hedges on either side. As they appear to angle in towards each other, a hulking figure looms between them.



Not for the first time today, it's a creature with hooves but also human features. Freakishly, it has a long tail swishing around, like that of a cow. Unlike the centaur that I met in the forest – which seems like so long ago – this beast only has two legs, not four. It also looks much bigger, much stronger and much angrier than the centaur.

Why do all these creatures and gods like showing off their bare, muscled chests? Probably to demonstrate how strong and powerful they are, I guess. If so, it's working because this thing has me trembling like a twig in a tornado. As well as the hooves, the chest and the tail, it has – most incredibly of all – the enormous head of a bull. A very angry bull. A bull with horns and a flaring snout and eyes that are glowing red. It's exactly as I feared when my mind connected 'Theseus' and 'labyrinth'. It's a Minotaur.

Taking one slow step backwards, I daren't take my eyes off the creature. I take another careful, drawn-out step. And then a third. The creature goes from not moving at all to taking one easy stride forwards, which closes the gap between us again, more than matching my three steps

backwards. It growls, drools and strikes one hoof into the dusty ground. It smells like it's just crawled out of the sewer.

I swallow hard and scramble to engage my brain. The only thing I have in my possession is my phone. Zeus kept calling it a weapon. If only it was. I try so hard to think clearly but my mind is fog. Theseus was the one to slay a Minotaur but he was also clever and used the ball of thread to find his way out of the labyrinth. I need to be clever. I need a plan. Dad is brave but he's also smart. What would Dad do now? My mind recalls the apps I was scrolling through on the phone. I've got music but, somehow, I doubt this thing wants to sing karaoke with me. I've got photos but it's probably not too bothered about my family album. We're still in a standoff. Then, an idea strikes.

It might be a ridiculous idea that's entered my mind. Then again, it might be the only idea I can come up with, right now. There's that app Dad and I were playing with on our phones. Could it possibly work on me and the Minotaur? It worked when I tried it on me and Catticus. I hold my phone out low in front of me. The

creature sees my movement and I'm sure steam blows from the nostrils of its snout. My eyes dart from the creature to the screen – I don't want to take my eyes off the beast but I'm trying to find and open up the app that I want. I see it and tap it. The Minotaur loses patience. It makes this horrible, wailing sound and charges towards me, clouds of dust flying up from its hooves.

I turn and run, my back to the creature that is quickly closing in. Straight ahead of me is a dead end. Just an empty cul-de-sac of tall hedges. A glance at my phone shows the app has loaded. Now what?



Chapter Ten

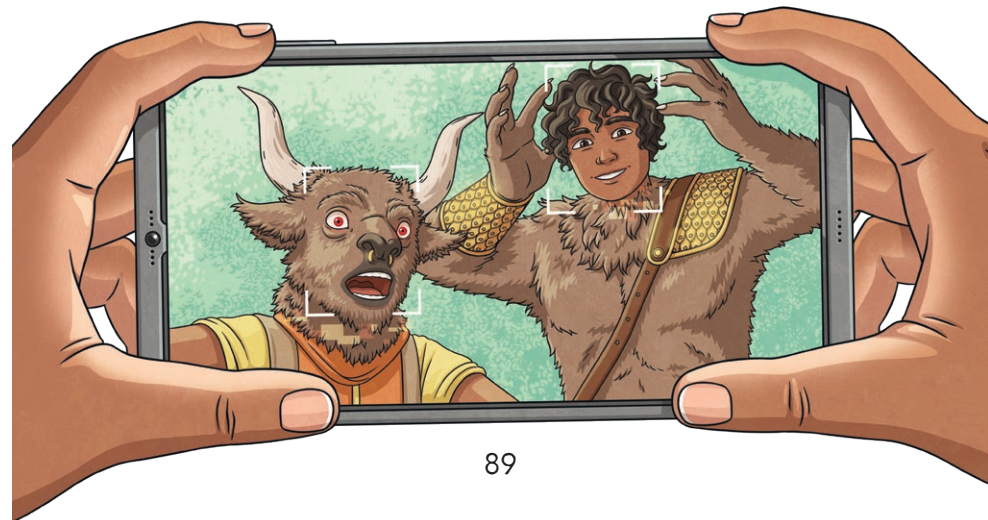
Minotaur Muddle



I summon up all my courage to stop running. With a dusty skid, it's like I've slammed on some brakes. I plant my feet, digging my heels into the ground and, at the same time, holding the phone up in front of me like I'm taking a selfie. The creature is probably not used to its victims stopping mid-chase and it also skids to a confused halt right behind me. It's so close that I can feel its warm breath on the back of my neck. Not only does it have the features of a bull but it has the stink of one, too.

For a split second, my eyes squeeze shut. Part of me expects the beast to crash into the back of me or pounce right on top of me. Yet, as I squint through almost-closed eyelids into my phone camera, I see the weirdest sight. The 'Switch Your Faces' app is open. On my selfie screen, I see me with the Minotaur looking over my shoulder, except that I have the curved horns and hairy snout of the creature and the creature has the facial features of a human boy – me!

Even though I kind of knew what was coming with the plan, the sight still freaks me out. The Minotaur, on the other hand, peers in complete confusion at my screen. It raises both hands to its head, searching for the features that it can see but not feel.



I start to move round, slowly. The Minotaur shuffles about behind me, trying to keep sight of the screen over my shoulder. I smile and the smile appears on his face on the screen. He snorts but the blast of air comes from the snout superimposed on me. Gradually, I keep turning until we've both gone one hundred and eighty degrees and the creature is, now, backed into the dead end.

My options are still limited but it feels like this is my only chance to escape. Silently, I count down.

Three... Two... One... *Run!*

Again, I sprint as fast as I can, straight past the turning I came from, taking the only other direction available. I manage a quick glance over my shoulder to check if the Minotaur is in pursuit. What I see is the confused beast down on its knees, still feeling its own face, trying to work out what it just saw. I keep going with no time to check compass directions: I'm taking each gap in the hedge on instinct alone.

Finally, I see it. There's a gateway through the

next hedge that does not lead to more paths and more hedges. I'm brimming with relief and excitement as I burst through. No sight nor sound of being chased by the Minotaur. I'm out.

Even without Mum's muscles and Dad's clever plans, I outsmarted and outran the Minotaur! A grin breaks out across my face. The view ahead unveils the tops of more trees. For a moment, I think I see something among the leaves but I can't be sure. First, my eyes are drawn to a branch, springing up and down like the weight of something has just left it. Then, a different movement lower down – a swish of robes and the quick disappearance of three familiar figures.

Beyond the treetops in the distance, my attention is drawn to the roof of the temple where Zeus led me. Should I go back there to prove that I was able to escape? Or get as far away as possible? My mind whirrs. All I really want, now, is to get off this island, back with Mum and Dad and tell them all about what I did.

I doubt that I could find my way alone back

to the shore where our boat came in. I must be miles away. Zeus promised he'd help me get there by sunset. He might still be my best hope – my *only* hope. The time displayed on my phone tells me it's the middle of the afternoon already. The trek from the forest to the temple and the time in that labyrinth have taken so many hours. Mum and Dad must be worried sick.

"Congratulations, visitor. You reached the perimeter," says a voice from one side of me. I hadn't noticed anyone there when I first came through the hedge. I recognise the friendly figure of Apollo, mostly from his unusual instrument – that shrunken harp.

"Where did you appear from?" I ask. He strokes his chin as he looks back at me.

"Just keeping an eye on what shall unfold. What is that device you hold?" Apollo nods towards the phone in my hand.

"Well, I tried to explain it to your father but I guess no one around here has one. It's a phone. It's for calling or messaging people or playing

games or looking things up. You can do all sorts with it. It's really not a weapon, though, if that's what you're thinking. What's that instrument you have?"

"Ah, the golden lyre is what I play. Music and poetry to brighten the day."

"I've never heard of one of those," I reply. "Is it me or do you keep speaking in rhymes? If it's music you like, I can play that on the phone, too. My battery is running a bit low but here, listen."

I open up my music app and tap on a song to play. As the sound comes from my phone, Apollo steps back. His face lights up as if I'd just told him he'd won the lottery. Slowly, he steps forwards again, reaching out towards my phone. I pull it closer to me, happy for him to listen but not touch.

"That is incredible – but incomprehensible!" he exclaims. I feel like a magician who's just wowed a crowd with their greatest trick.

"Well, it's pretty normal where I'm from but

glad you like it," I say.

"With this melody, you bring me such pleasure. You possess a wonder that I cannot measure."

"I'm glad. Now, listen – maybe you can help me. I don't know why Hera dislikes me so much. I really need to get back to the shore where we arrived and find my mum and dad. I only have until sunset to make it there. Please, will you help?"

"Your challenge is to return to the temple, you know. That is where you should aim to go."

"Please!" My palms are pressed together in front of me. I hope Apollo sees in my face how desperate I am. He looks straight past me as if consulting with someone behind but I glance back and can't see anyone there. There's a long, drawn-out pause before his head shakes from side to side. Hope drains out of me.

"Very well, as it is you," he says, still shaking his head. "I will see what I can do."

My heart swells and hope floods back.

"Thank you, thank you," I respond.

"Come – wait in the sacred caves here. I will check first that the path ahead is clear," Apollo offers. He points me towards an opening in the side of a huge rock. It's surrounded by tufts of green. Inside, there appears to be nothing but dark, damp, stinking nothingness. That's not quite what I had in mind.

"I really don't want to go in there," I tell him. Having just escaped from the labyrinth, the last place I want to go is into a cave.

"For now, you must hide out of sight. If Hera sees you, it will worsen your plight. You'll have but the shortest wait. Then, I'll return to assure your fate."

"You're going to come back and help me find my parents?" I ask.

Apollo nods, "Do not worry; rest and sit. I'll be back before you know it."

With a sigh, I step warily inside the blackness of the cave. The entrance is so low that I have

to duck my head under the jagged roof. The light from outside allows me to see a little but beyond is a vast emptiness. Normal caves are scary enough with bats and rats and spiders but having seen what other creatures inhabit this island, I don't even want to think about what else could be inside. At least, I'm close to the entrance. If I need, I can always dash back out and take my chances.

Peering into the darkness ahead, I weigh up whether there is movement or sound or if it's only my imagination. Thank goodness I'm not any farther inside. I can still see and feel the sunlight shining down outside the entrance a few steps away. I'm listening carefully and staring to make sense of the black, shadowy abyss when a heavy scraping noise from behind makes me jump. I spin round just in time to catch sight of the grumpy Ares smirking at me as he drags a giant rock across the opening.

"Noooo!" I scream but my voice only echoes all around me as the last glint of light is extinguished. Everything is immediately black. I can't see my hand in front of my face. As I scream, I beat my fists against the inside of the

enormous lump of stone that has just imprisoned me. No way could an adult the size of Dad move a rock that big, let alone me. I collapse against the cold stone and slide down until I'm slumped, defeated, with my back against it.



Chapter Eleven

Cave Danger



This island has become a nightmare.

First, I was lost on my own, thinking that was bad enough. But at least it was better than facing up to beastly creatures or gods with their brutal ‘fates’ and ‘punishments’. Worse than both is being in the dark. I think of the dream that has me waking up sweating and screaming – alone and in the dark, just like now.

I can’t see my fingers in front of my face but it feels like all of my other senses have taken over.

For the first time on the island, I’m quite cold. Goosebumps prickle my arms. Fluttering sounds echo from the roof of the cave; the damp stench has crept all the way up my nostrils and to the back of my throat. My stomach is fluttering again, too.

Gradually, my eyes begin to adjust to the darkness. What I thought was completely black and empty now seems to have a soft glow somewhere in the distance. I realise how quickly I’m breathing and try to slow down the breaths. There’s no way of moving the huge stone behind me so, if I’ve any chance of getting out of here, I’ll have to explore ahead. I take one long, deep breath in through my nose – and then another. The corners of my eyes are tingling and my bottom lip trembles but I shake away the feelings. I need to do this.

As I stand up, I have the feeling that the cave roof is much closer than it really is. I’m hunched over, stooping to avoid a bump on the head. I reach my hand up, expecting to feel the roof there but it’s not. Slowly, I stand completely upright, still not able to touch the rock above with my outstretched arms. The entrance must

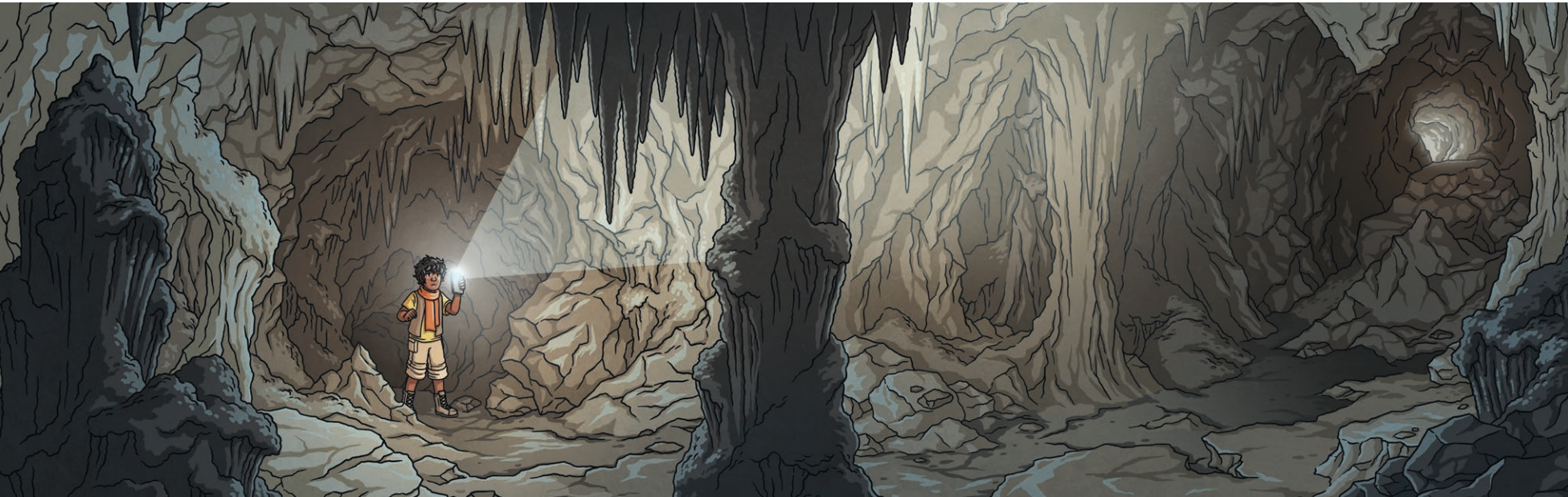
be much smaller than the space inside. I take one tentative step forwards and then another. Suddenly, I remember – I have an easy way to see where I'm going in here.

Once again, I take out my phone from my pocket. The glow of the screen is enough to cast a little light and there, I see the photo of me with Mum and Dad again. I bring it close to my face to study. For the first time, I notice that all three of us smile in the same way: none of us are showing our teeth but we have wide grins that stretch high into our cheeks. We may not have the same genes but we all happen to be wearing jeans – and we've all done the same thing with one hand: just tucked our fingers

into the edge of one pocket. For a moment, I just gaze at the photo on the screen. My family. I've never missed them more.

My screen fades to black. For a moment, I think the battery has died. A quick tap brings it back to life, though. It was just saving power and going to standby. I swipe to open up the flashlight tool and, with one more tap, the path ahead of me is illuminated.

Step by step, I weave through the long, narrow passageway of the cave. Unlike in the labyrinth, there are no turnings or options. Cracks and potholes trip me up. Each time I stumble, echoes of my faltering footsteps rise up the walls that



arch over my head. A whisper of flapping follows me. I don't see any bats but I sense them lurking in the shadows, momentarily disturbed by my light and presence. A shiver spreads across the back of my neck just thinking of them up above.

As my toe catches on the uneven floor, I stumble again. For a moment, my finger accidentally blocks the light from my phone. It almost slips completely from my hand but I clutch it tightly. Darkness wraps me up in its heavy cloak and all the air feels like it's sucked out of me. Just as quickly, the light floods back and my breath returns again in rapid bursts. My palms are cold but sweaty. Darkness surrounds me but I fend it off with my little ring of light. It's extremely unlikely that I could have found my way along here without this flashlight. I'd have probably had to crawl along or take every step at a tortoise's pace, not knowing what was right in front of me. More likely, I'd have curled up in a ball and stayed still.

I must have walked for fifteen minutes or more before the faint glow starts to become a bright, clear, welcoming circle. I'm breathing faster again but this time through excitement instead

of fear. The circle gets bigger and bigger as the size and speed of my steps increase. Sunlight, at last. As I get close enough, the brightness makes me squint and I shield my eyes with my arm. My flashlight no longer needed, I switch it off, noticing the battery is now down to twenty-nine per cent.

As soon as I'm out, my legs feel weak. My eyes fill with moisture and my breath comes in short, sharp gasps. Blinking away the tears, I reach out my hand to lean against an olive tree and then allow myself to crumple to the ground. I'm happy to be out of the cave but my emotions have spilt out like an overflowing bubble bath.

An image returns to me of Mum from that time when we passed through the strait of Gibraltar as it got dark. We hoped to make it round to the port of Cadiz. As we sailed through, with the land masses of Europe on our right and Africa on our left, we were funnelled into the North Atlantic Ocean swells that battered our boat. Before last night's storm, they'd been the scariest sailing conditions I'd ever known.

"You're doing an incredible job. Do you need me

to do anything?" I remember Dad asking Mum as she clung to the steering wheel at the helm. She had such a focused, concentrated look on her face.

"I got this. Make sure Att is OK," Mum replied with her usual reassurance. And I was OK because I never doubted her. She guided us round the coast as the wind whipped up huge, frothy waves, the open ocean snapping away until we reached Cadiz. As soon as we were moored, Mum staggered from the helm and collapsed into a chair.

I couldn't understand why she was sobbing when she should have been happy that she'd done such an amazing job. Now, that thought makes more sense in my mind as I sit outside the exit of the cave. She was happy, she was relieved and, with that relief, she was overwhelmed. It's like she'd been concentrating so much that her emotions popped like a cork when the concentration stopped.

Getting through the cave wasn't as dangerous as Mum guiding us through the Atlantic Ocean, but I did it. The cork just popped on my feelings.

Not only have I escaped the labyrinth and the cave, but I've also done the things that Mum and Dad would do. I've been brave and smart, like Dad. I got on with it and beat the challenges, like Mum would. That's what they've taught me and I couldn't be who I am without them.

"You made it!" says a voice from above me. I didn't hear anyone approach. Looking up and back, I see Hermes sitting above the cave's exit.

"Where did you come from?" I ask. Hermes has done nothing to cause me any difficulty but I don't know whether his appearance should fill me with hope or dread. The last of the gods I trusted was Apollo and soon afterwards, I had Ares barricading me in the other end of the cave.

"Just watching over you," says the boy with the winged sandals. "You have done very well. I watched from the trees as you escaped the labyrinth and defeated the Minotaur. I saw you enter the sacred cave and Ares arrived just after Apollo left you. Be glad it was not the cave of Hades – that would have been worse! It is still a cave of hard access, just like where Zeus was hidden away in his beginnings. Now, you've

escaped from a cave, too. That is indeed heroic of you.”

“I’m not a hero, though,” I point out. “I just want to find my way back to my family. Why was Zeus hidden away in a cave anyway?”

“You do not know the beginnings of my father’s upbringing? Before he grew to be a powerful ruler, he was separated from his own father. Cronus was one of the Titans but he was afraid he would be overcome by one of his children. To prevent it, he swallowed each of them whole. Until the sixth child, Zeus, came along. Zeus was hidden in a cave by his mother, Rhea, while she gave Cronus a rock, wrapped in sheets. He devoured the rock, thinking it was his son.” Hermes snorts as if he is revolted by the thought.

“That’s horrible,” I gasp, sharing the revulsion.

“Yes, but Zeus grew to be more powerful and saved his siblings from their fate inside the stomach of Cronus – Hades, Hera, Poseidon and others, they were all disgorged and survived. From those humble beginnings, Zeus has achieved great things.”

“Now, that’s heroic,” I say.

“You have almost proved yourself, too. I think you are a hero, no matter where you’ve come from. Now, go. The temple is that way. If you make it back, you will be free. But beware – the gorgon will be waiting on the path and you must get past her. Whatever you do, you must not look directly at her.”

“Oh great,” I sigh. “I think I’ll take my chances and go the other way, then.”

“There is only one path, unless you’re going back into the cave. You must take the route ahead and face her. Good luck.”

“So, what happens if I look directly at this gorgon, then?” I ask, thinking that this island could hardly get any more terrifying.

“You will be instantly turned to stone.”

My breath catches in my throat. “But, what…”

Before I can ask any more, Hermes has gone. He flies up and away. I’m left thinking about how

to get past this creature who will turn me to stone if I look directly at her. The story sounds familiar.

Hermes pointed out that I've already escaped the labyrinth and the caves and managed to trick the Minotaur with my phone. I tell myself that if I've done all that, I *can* get past this next challenge. I think of Mum. I think of the strait of Gibraltar. Rather than feel defeated, I tell myself that I'm prepared. My phone is in my hand. It's served me well so far and it doesn't take me long to think of a plan for it to help me again. Holding it ready, I set off in the direction of the temple.



Chapter Twelve

Ghastly Gorgon



The path winds from the exit of the cave through mountainside trees. It's not as dense as where I first came across Zeus and the centaur in the forest but the ground is similarly dusty and uneven. Fewer trees mean that the late-afternoon sunlight is glaring down on me, now. I've quickly gone from being cold in the damp cave to sweating outside in this heat.

As I round a corner, I sense the presence of someone or something. I stop dead. I daren't look for fear of being turned to stone. There's a

quiet murmuring. It's not up ahead but away to one side of me. A whispering. I turn my head a tiny amount, sweeping my gaze across the ground. I see the swishing of robes, three pairs of feet poking out underneath.

"You three again! Who are you? What do you want?" I yell and lift my head up, confident it's not the gorgon I've stumbled upon but those three girls – including the first one I followed before getting lost.

It feels like minutes that they stare back at me, twisting and angling their heads slowly from side to side, studying me. It was an angry yell, I realise. Now, I am more unsettled by their weird staring. Finally, one of them speaks.

"We are the Moirai," says the first.

"The what?" I ask.

"Some call us 'the Fates'. We represent the destiny of all people," answers the second. Her voice echoes the same tone as the first – a screechy sound. Meeting them again, it's harder to tell their age. At first they seemed young, like

me. Now, I'd say much older.

"We spin and measure the threads of life," adds the third in an identical voice.

"What's that supposed to mean?" I ask, feeling creases form across my brow. The girls – or perhaps women – aren't scary. They have caring faces. I have an overwhelming sense that they're just looking out for me.

"Trust in yourself," says the one I followed in the first place. "You have more courage and inner strength than you believe."

"But, I..." I don't get to say any more. They are gone. Right before my eyes, they seem to vanish again. There one second and gone the next. I look around, up and down the path. There's no sight of them but their words are echoing through my mind.

Courage. Strength. Believe.

I return my gaze mainly down to the ground as I set off again. If I can't risk setting eyes on this creature, I wonder how I'll even know it's

there. Every now and then, I sneak a glance in front of me before returning my focus to my own footsteps.

The landscape is alive with the shrill chirping of tiny creatures. I can't see them but, with no other sounds, all I can hear is the singing of these insects in the trees. Maybe they're cicadas. Dad told me he used to love listening to the sound of them in the summer when he was growing up. I love the sound, too. It distracts me as I walk but I remind myself not to look round to see where it is coming from.

I must focus my eyes downwards so I listen, tilting my head from side to side as I walk. The uncomfortable afternoon heat is baking my head and arms. Compared with being in the labyrinth or the caves, I should feel more relaxed. But out here, it's hot, my feet ache and my throat is dry. Any relief from being out in the open is balanced against what is supposedly coming ahead. It's kind of a shame I can't enjoy looking around at the scenery but suddenly, there's a change in the sound. My feet stop still. I tilt my head one way and then the other, eyes looking down at my laces. There's still the

high-pitched hum of the cicadas but, among it, I can also hear a hissing sound. I don't mean hissing like a bike tyre deflating. I mean hissing like a snake. In fact, hissing like several angry snakes.

I'm prepared.

The words of those women (What did they call themselves? The Moirai?) are still in my head. This plan has been formed in my mind since setting off from the cave. After Hermes warned me, my phone has remained in my hand, ready. I swipe and tap the icon to open up the camera.

Desperately hoping this will work, I hold the phone low down in front of me, near my middle. I angle the screen so I can look down at it. At the same time, I'm pointing the lens ahead, balancing the angles. I gasp as the creature comes into view.

I'm not looking directly at her. I'm looking down at her image through the screen of my phone. I can see clearly enough where the hissing noise is coming from. Her body is scaly like a mermaid's but there's no tail. From the waist

down, she has the thick, coiled body of a snake. Her face looks like a woman's but where her hair should be, instead, the head is alive with lots of smaller, writhing, wriggling snakes.

"Medusa," I mutter as a memory comes back to me. Wasn't she killed by Perseus? That's the story that felt familiar earlier.

"How dare you utter the name of my forsaken sister!" the creature hisses.

I scan the path ahead through the view of my phone screen and see that the gorgon is blocking the width of the narrow path. The shrub-laden slopes on either side make it dangerous to try to go round. Somehow, I must get past without looking directly at her. Worse still, if I get too close, I don't fancy a venomous bite from one of those head-snakes. I thought I had it all planned. Now, I realise I only had a plan of how to see the creature – not how to actually get past her.

Out of the corner of my eye, I spot a movement in one of the trees to my right. Just like I thought I saw as I left the labyrinth. This time,

I screw up my face as I squint towards the sun, recognising immediately who it is.

"Hermes!" I cry. "Is that you again? Are you following me the whole way?"

"Just keeping watch," he replies. The leaves rustle and I catch sight of his figure peering out from among the foliage. Now, I see his winged sandals hanging below the branches.

"Can you help me?" I ask.



“You must decide on your own course of action,” he says. I bring my gaze back down from the tree, looking around me. I’m careful not to look at the path ahead where the gorgon’s head is squirming with serpents. Glancing down at my phone again, I think of how I’ve used it so far already. My brain runs through all those apps and games that Dad and I play. Another one of them sticks in my mind.

I wonder what the gorgon would make of the animal voices.

With a swipe of my thumb, I flick from the camera to my phone’s home page full of icons. I know exactly where the ‘Animal Sounds’ app is and I tap to open it up. It would have helped to see both the app and the camera at the same time but there’s nothing I can do about that. A couple more taps and I’m hitting the button to play the meow sound of a cat.

“What isss that creature in your hand?” she says. I’ve definitely got her attention. I shield the phone as much as I can with my other hand, trying to keep it a mystery to her. Back to the app and I tap a sequence of meows that are

more like distressed yowls.

“You watching this, Hermes?” I shout up to him. I don’t get an answer but I continue with the caterwauling.

“Ssstop those noissses. What isss it?” the gorgon hisses. Now, I’ve got her annoyed. She is focused on my phone, still trying to figure out what it is in my hand. I know as soon as my next move enters my head that it’s either brilliant or stupid.

I look up at Hermes in the tree. Technically, he didn’t say that he couldn’t help me. He’s almost directly above the gorgon but slightly to the side, the tree rooted in the sandy soil off the path. With one quick swing of my arm, I launch my phone high up towards him.

“Catch!” I shout as the device spins and hurtles through the air. At the same time, I sprint forwards. I daren’t look up, so my eyes are fixed on the path where my boots are landing, kicking up clouds of dust. My fingers are tightly crossed in the hope that the gorgon will have been distracted by my flying phone. If she has

followed the sight of it whizzing up over her head-full-of-snakes, then my path might be clear. If not, then I'm about to run straight into her.

The moment rushes by in a blur. I sense how close she is. I see a glimpse of her coiled tail as my feet gallop past. I hear the hissing serpents. But I don't make any contact. As soon as I feel her presence, I know I'm past her and on the other side of the path. I don't stop. I keep going for a few more paces before it seems safe. I can't look back. Instead, I look up. I haven't heard my phone crash to the ground anywhere around me so I'm hoping Hermes did as I instructed. When my eyes fix upon him, I see it there in his hands. Yes!

"Now, throw it back!" I shout. It worked. I've done it. Hermes releases the phone and I reach out my hands as it tumbles through the sky towards me.

Thwack!

The phone hits my palms with more force than I expected. I try to clasp my hands together

but the phone bounces away. In slow motion, I watch it flip out of reach and plummet to the ground.

I grab it as soon as it's landed. There's a spidery crack on one side of the screen but the display is still on. Up above, Hermes smiles. Behind me, I can hear the hissing of angry snakes. Running as fast as I can, I set off once again in the direction of the temple.



Chapter Thirteen

Hera and Now



In the distance, the sun almost sits on the horizon as I reach the steps of the temple. Pride surges through my veins at the thought of what I've achieved.

My arrival is greeted by most of the same faces as before. Zeus opens his arms wide and then brings his hands together in applause. My cheeks redden. Apollo tips his golden lyre to me. Artemis leans on her bow and smiles. Hermes clicks his heels together. I glance from them to a scowling Hera who stands with her arms folded.

"He is a trickster. I've a good mind to banish him to the underworld with Hades."

"That's not fair!" I protest. My lungs start to fill with the thoughts of not making it back to the boat and those thoughts are forcing all the air out. My bottom lip begins to quiver again. I wonder if Mum and Dad are even still on the island. "I made it back to the temple, just like you said."

"My dearest Hera," adds Zeus, "the boy has done everything to prove his worth. He has escaped the labyrinth and the sacred caves; he has conquered the Minotaur and the gorgon. If you are simply driven by bitterness, what else could he do? He can't bring you fame and glory, if that's what you still desire. It's not down to the boy how you're regarded."

"Wait!" I say, before turning to face Hera directly. I can't believe this idea has only just come to me. I remember the story that Mum and I read in the news. The two-thousand-year-old statue was of Hera. I think the page will still be readable on my phone without a signal because I've got it saved in this folder for places

we were hoping to visit. “I can show you that you *are* famous – you *are* remembered. There’s a statue of you that was created thousands of years ago and it’s survived all this time. I’ve seen it recovered from under Mount Olympus. My grandma lives nearby in Thessaloniki.”

“Olympus?” Hera quizzes, her tone already softening. “We haven’t been there for millennia. Oh, those were the days, before we retired here – back when we ruled all of Greece. What do you know about it, boy? A statue of me, you say. Even after all this time?”

“Yes. I can show you the story. It was on the news.” I open the web page and scroll quickly past the main picture, which I don’t really want her to see. Instead, I read phrases from the article and show her snippets. “A marble statue of the goddess Hera... over two thousand years old... seated on a throne. Pretty impressive, huh?”

Everyone looks on in anticipation once more. If I’m not mistaken, Hera is almost blushing.

“This is very good news. Very good news indeed,”

she says.

“If I go back, I can tell people that I’ve met you and that you were so wise and powerful.”

“You will do that?” she asks.

“Please. You have your family here. All I want is to go back to mine.”

“The gateway to and from the island closes at sunset,” declares Zeus. We all look to the orange semicircle disappearing behind the horizon. “After that, the boy will remain here for six more decades.”

She eyes me thoughtfully for an excruciating moment. It dawns on me again that if I don’t get off the island, I’m stuck here for all that time. I’ll never see Mum or Dad again. Maybe I won’t anyway. Mum reminded us when we got here that we would have to be off the island by sunset. They know the consequences; they wouldn’t leave it this late and risk being stuck. It’s probably too late. Even if she lets me go now, I’ll never make it back to the shore.

“Very well,” Hera finally announces. “Hermes – transport the boy to the shore and see that he makes it before sunset.”

“Yes!” I shout. Maybe I have one last hope.

“One more thing, boy. Give me your magic device before you leave. I didn’t see all of the statue. I want to keep that picture,” she says. I don’t want to let her have my phone. I definitely don’t want her to see the picture.

“Uh, I... read the best bits to you. It’s cracked anyway – you don’t want this old thing. I’m not



sure if I can load up the story again.”

“Load. What do you mean? Give me the magic weapon and show me the picture, now!” Hera demands. Just when I thought she’d been convinced, her scowl is back and scowlier than ever. I don’t want to give up my phone. It has saved me so many times today. It has all my games, my music, my photos.

“The battery is almost dead,” I say, my one last attempt to put her off. It’s true. The display says two per cent charge.

“Load? Dead battery? What are these things you’re talking about, boy? You should be in fear of battery yourself! It may be you who is dead unless you give me that device immediately.”

I’m out of options. If losing my phone means getting away, then it’ll be worth it. I’ll lose that selfie with Zeus, too. I need an escape plan. When Hera sees the statue properly, she’s not going to be happy.

“You’re going to whisk me away as soon as I give her this, right?” I whisper to Hermes. “No

delay. I give her the phone and we go. Are you ready?"

Hermes nods slowly. I can see he's sceptical. I simply have to trust that he'll do as he promises. I take hold of his hand with one of mine. With the other hand, I turn and hold out the phone to Hera. She takes it from me and looks at the screen. Under the news article headline, the photo reveals the statue that she wants to see. The prized marble statue of her has no arms and no head.

"What is the meaning of this?" she fumes.

"Go!" I shout to Hermes.

We whizz through the island forest. I can't tell whether we're flying low along the ground or simply skimming the surface at such speed we're barely making contact. Everything rushes by in a blur. If we were in a car, there's no way we could navigate at even half this speed without slamming into a tree.

Somehow, Hermes weaves in and out of obstacles. I cling to him. The sun has almost

dipped completely behind the horizon and the sky has a vivid orange glow. Long shadows are cast wherever the light strikes the trees. It could be too late already.

Below us and to the left, in the distance, I see the community of people again. I wonder about those three women, whether they were from this little village – or from this world at all. If I get back to the boat, I'll look up who they said



they were. The sight of the buildings tells me we must be close to the shore. We whizz past and are suddenly thrust out through the trees and onto the beach where I arrived this morning. We've made it!

"Hera's not happy," says Hermes. He looks up to the sky as an invisible rumble roars overhead. "You have incurred her wrath, now. I must bid you the best of fortune. The rest is down to you but beware – her fury knows no bounds."

It doesn't matter. I can get off the island and away, now. Then, I look around and see the beach is empty. No Mum. No Dad. No dinghy.



Chapter Fourteen

Hound of Hades



"Wait!" I call to Hermes. The sun has been reduced to barely a thin, orange sliver between the sea and the sky. A thick mist is descending over the waves. "They've gone. I'm stuck here. My mum and dad needed to leave the island. They must have left me."

I drop to my knees and spread out my palms on the soft sand. The grains slip between my fingers. Looking out to the endless sea, I think about Mum and Dad back on our boat. I think about Catticus waiting to greet all three of us

but seeing only the two of them return. I wonder how long they waited.

Instead of flying away, Hermes perches on a rock where the beach meets the edge of the trees. His face mirrors some of my disappointment. By his side, Apollo and Artemis have appeared. They all look at me like I'm the last puppy in the kennels that no one picks to take home.

Behind them, three more figures appear from nowhere: the three women, the Moirai.

"Why do I keep seeing you and where do you keep appearing from?" I ask, exasperated.

"We guide your destiny. We guide everyone's destiny," says the first, winding a thread in large loops around her hands.

"If you go now, you can still escape. Even the gods must stay here and live out their immortal lives in retirement. None of them can leave the island – with one exception, of course. Once you're in the sea, you're safe," the second explains.

Hermes is nodding in agreement. Artemis and Apollo look worriedly over their shoulders at the Moirai. It's the first time I've seen any of the gods look like they're not in charge.

"But I'm not safe in the sea," I say. "I have no dinghy. I can't see through this mist and I don't know where our boat is. I can't just swim on my own and hope to survive – I'll drown! I'm completely stuck here."

"Have faith. You are who you are meant to be," declares the third woman finally.

No sooner have the words left her mouth than I hear the shouts in the distance. The trio of gods look past me, over my shoulder, as I spin round.

"Att! Atticus!"

I can't see anyone but I recognise the voice, of course.

"Mum?" I say, feebly at first before shouting it as loud as my voice has ever shouted anything before. "MUM!"

“Atticus!” Dad’s voice follows Mum’s.

“DAD!” I shout back. My head lurches from side to side, looking to see where their shouts are coming from. Before my heart beats right out of my chest, I see them. They’re both running out from between the trees on the opposite side of the beach, back out onto the soft sand. Mum’s camera swings on a strap over her shoulder. She drops it to the ground as she sees me and runs faster. I run to meet her. Dad’s just behind and drops his equipment bag, too, as he flings open his arms, ready to grab me.

“Oh, Atticus Grammaticus, where in the world have you been? We were so worried!”

“You didn’t leave me,” I say through tears and sobs. They reach me virtually at the same time and gather me up, enveloped in the most comforting, protective family hug. The feeling of being back in Mum’s and Dad’s arms would be absolutely perfect right now – if only they weren’t squeezing me so tight that I can barely breathe.

“Of course we didn’t,” insists Mum. “We would

never, ever leave you. Even if we were all stuck here for ever. We’ve searched all day. We just hoped you’d make it back before sunset.”

“Talking of which,” Dad says and nods towards the sky. That orange sliver is barely just a trace. Above the last remnants of sunlight, the once-clear sky has turned to the darkest of blues, cloaked by the thick mist. Angry clouds have appeared, weighing heavily above. The sea – calm and inviting only moments ago – looks like someone switched on a blender underneath it. Waves swirl and froth. “We need to go, right now, or we’re in trouble. Where’s the dinghy?”

“I think we’re already in trouble. Who are they and what is that?” asks Mum. She’s looking in the opposite direction of the sea. At the edge of the beach, I instantly recognise Hera. She’s pointing a bony finger straight at us. Another figure that I recognise stands on one side of her. The one who looks like a wrestler: Ares. The same one who I last saw rolling the stone that blocked me into the cave. He looks madder than ever. Yet, on the other side of Hera is a sight even more fearsome. Someone who must be another of the gods I’ve not yet encountered

has his spiteful eyes trained directly on me. Worse still, he has next to him a creature more gruesome-looking than the gorgon and the Minotaur put together. It's like a dog that has grown to the size of a lion. Not just any dog, though. It has three heads – with three growling, drooling, snapping sets of jaws, each spiked with razor-sharp teeth. It looks like someone just took away its last biscuit. In fact, it looks like someone took away all of its biscuits for the last week and has, now, finally offered it the chance to capture itself a meal.

“That’s the boy, Hades!” shouts Hera. “Don’t let him get away.”

“Did she just say ‘Hades?’” asks Mum, more to herself than in expectation of an answer from us. “Hades, as in the god of the underworld.”

“Never mind him – I think it’s his dog that we need to worry about,” warns Dad, “and the fact that the dinghy seems to have floated away to sea.”

“Cerberus. Seize them!” Hades commands gruffly. The three-headed grisly beast leaps



forwards, pounding straight towards us like a greyhound in pursuit of a hare.

“Quick!” I yell, remembering Apollo’s words from earlier. “We just need to get to the sea and we’ll be safe. They can’t leave the island.”

I don’t even know if I believe myself but the three of us set off as fast as our legs will carry us, heading for the waves lapping over the sand. We don’t have the speed of a hare and something tells me that Cerberus could easily outpace a greyhound. Mum grabs one of my hands as we sprint.

“Oh no!” she shouts as she looks over her shoulder. Her suddenly slowing pace yanks me backwards. “The cameras, the equipment. Everything we’ve recorded. All the evidence of the island. We’ve left it all back there.”

“It’s too late,” Dad says as he grabs my other hand and keeps running. For a moment, I’m stretched between them. Behind us, the gruesome creature is already past where our equipment bags lie strewn on the sand. There’s no way we could go back and reach them. We might not

even reach the sea before it’s upon us. With its three snarling mouths, it could grab all three of us in its jaws at the same time.

Mum realises it, too, and she picks up the pace again. The three of us plunge into the shallow waves at the same time and continue forwards. We keep each other steady and upright as our ankles, knees and then thighs splash farther through the deepening water.

We’re wading into the sea with no boat to be seen. Behind us, we are being chased by the hound of Hades and sought by some of the most menacing gods of ancient Greece. Yet, I feel like I’ve been saved. I squeeze the hands of Mum on one side and Dad on the other, my hands connected to theirs – my feeling of safety. Each of us connected together. Whatever happens, I’m with my family. I wouldn’t have made it this far without them. They have taught me everything. I don’t need their genes. I have Mum’s smart thinking, Dad’s bravery and the strength of both of them. I have all I could wish for.

The sea has slowed us down but I turn and see Cerberus, the beast, standing at the edge

of the water, barking angrily with all three of its heads. Hera, Hades and Ares have marched forwards but none appear to be making an attempt to enter the water. The Moirai must have been right. The gods can't leave the land. The sea is their barrier. But the Moirai have vanished again.

We need to be off the island. But we won't survive if we keep wading into the sea. Mum and Dad look at each other and then down at me in-between them. I feel them both give my hands a squeeze. We can't go back. The waves now wash over our waists. For me, the sea is up to my chest. Is this what was meant by our destiny? We can't go any farther.



Chapter Fifteen

End of the Legend?



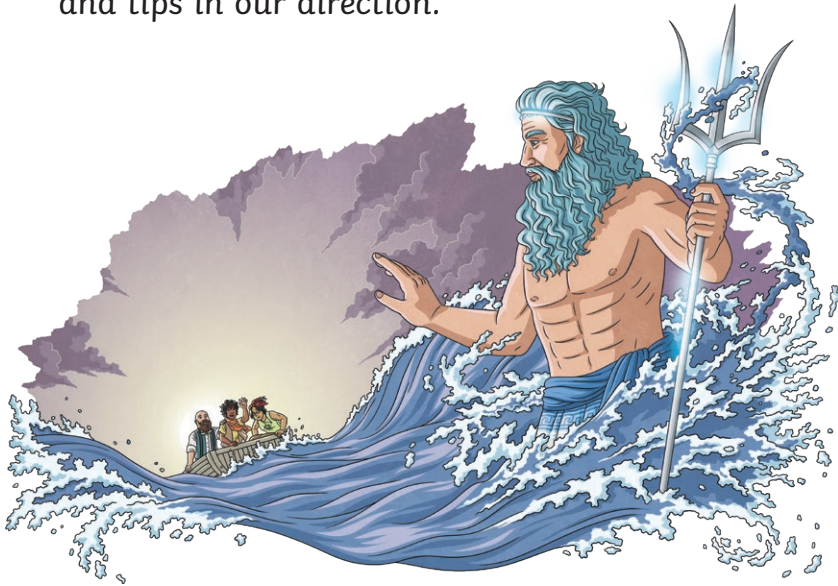
Ahead of us is the vast, swirling sea. Behind us are the gods and that hideous creature. They can't reach us. We can't go any farther but we daren't go back. Everyone waits for everyone else to make a move. I'm shivering so much from the cold that if we stay where we are, then I'm going to freeze to death anyway.

I feel like I'm hallucinating at the sight of what then appears in front of us. Floating towards us is the ancient, wooden boat that we saw on our arrival at the beach this morning. Immediately

around us, the water appears to be calming compared with the enormous waves on either side.

“I don’t believe it!” exclaims Mum.

“The boat or him?” asks Dad. I didn’t notice at first but I see where he’s looking. Not at the boat but past it, where it appears to have floated over from. Farther out from us and away from the shore where the sea should be much deeper, the top half of a figure is towering above the surface of the water. He looks old but strong. He clutches a silver trident, which he raises slightly and tips in our direction.



“Both,” says Mum. It must be Poseidon who is the exception to the rule, then. He is off the island, in the sea that he commands. I wonder just how far from the island he might be able to go – and how much of the sea he’s able to reach.

We clamber aboard the ancient boat. The wooden panels creak and flex. Mum grabs the oars and begins to row. Dad sits me between his legs and hugs me tight as I shiver from the effects of the water. His whole body wraps around me to warm me up.

Away from the island, there are white cotton-wool clouds. Through the mist, I spot our boat. I’ve never been so relieved to see it. Above us, the dark blue, rumbling sky fades into a much paler shade. Through the distant rumbling, I think I can still make out Hera’s bitter shouts of frustration. By the time we reach the side of our boat, the island has been almost completely swallowed up behind us by the mist. Catticus meows as he peers over the edge at our approach.

Dad grabs the ladder and hoists me onto it.

Mum quickly follows me up and then Dad, too. The empty, wooden boat is left bobbing on the waves. We're home.



"Well, Naberis island certainly exists," says Mum as she steps away from the helm. We've set sail and the navigation equipment on the dashboard says we're heading back towards Crete. I've told them all about the gods I encountered but I'm not sure how much of it they believe. "Not that we can ever prove it, now. All of that photo and video evidence would have been invaluable."

"I guess the legend stays a legend," adds Dad. As he does, his phone pings with the sound of a message. One ping, followed by another and another. Mum snuggles up next to us on the sofa. Catticus purrs loudly on my lap.

"Was your phone back here on the boat all day?" I ask.

"Yeah, I never thought to take it with me." Dad frowns as he picks up the phone and looks at the screen. "That's odd. It says it's a message

from you, Att."

"I don't even have my phone any more. It's back on the island with Hera," I say.

"Well, it's a message from you asking for help as you're lost in the forest. Thankfully, you're not and you're here with us where you belong, big guy!" He tousles my hair and I feel a warm blush spread over my cheeks. I *do* belong here. Mum gives Catticus a stroke and then puts her hand on my shoulder as she leans over to see the phone, too.

"Ah, that's the message I tried to send this morning," I say, "but it wouldn't work because there was no signal on the island. Maybe it's just come through now that you have a signal on your phone again."

"Could be but if yours is back on the island, it would still have no signal so I don't know how it would have been sent. Strange, there's a missed call, too. And another message with a photo but it's slow to load. Hang on – it's coming through..."

“Holy Odyssey!” cries Mum.

“Oh yeah, I forgot that I sent that one, too,” I respond as I look over Dad’s shoulder and smile at the selfie of me and Zeus. Mum’s mouth drops open. Catticus rubs against my hand because I’ve stopped stroking him.

“Looks like we do have one picture to show from the adventure, then! The legend of when Zeus met our hero, Atticus!” Dad says and squeezes us all in together tightly.





North Macedonia

Albania

Greece

Turkey

Grandma's house

MOUNT OLYMPUS

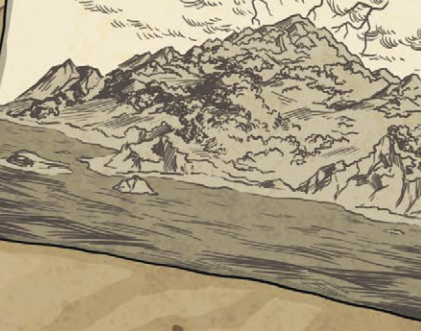
STORM EXPECTED TONIGHT BETWEEN 8pm AND 4am!

Naberos Storms:
-1902
-1962 ← 60 YEARS?
2022
NEXT STORM!

||||| ||| || ?

To Do:
-Check e
-Fill gas
-Buy supp
-Fill water
-Clean so
-Charge cameras

Naberos
IB



Dodecanese

Chania

Heraklion

Rhodes

Thera

Kalamata

Zakinthos

Patras

Athens

Aegean Sea

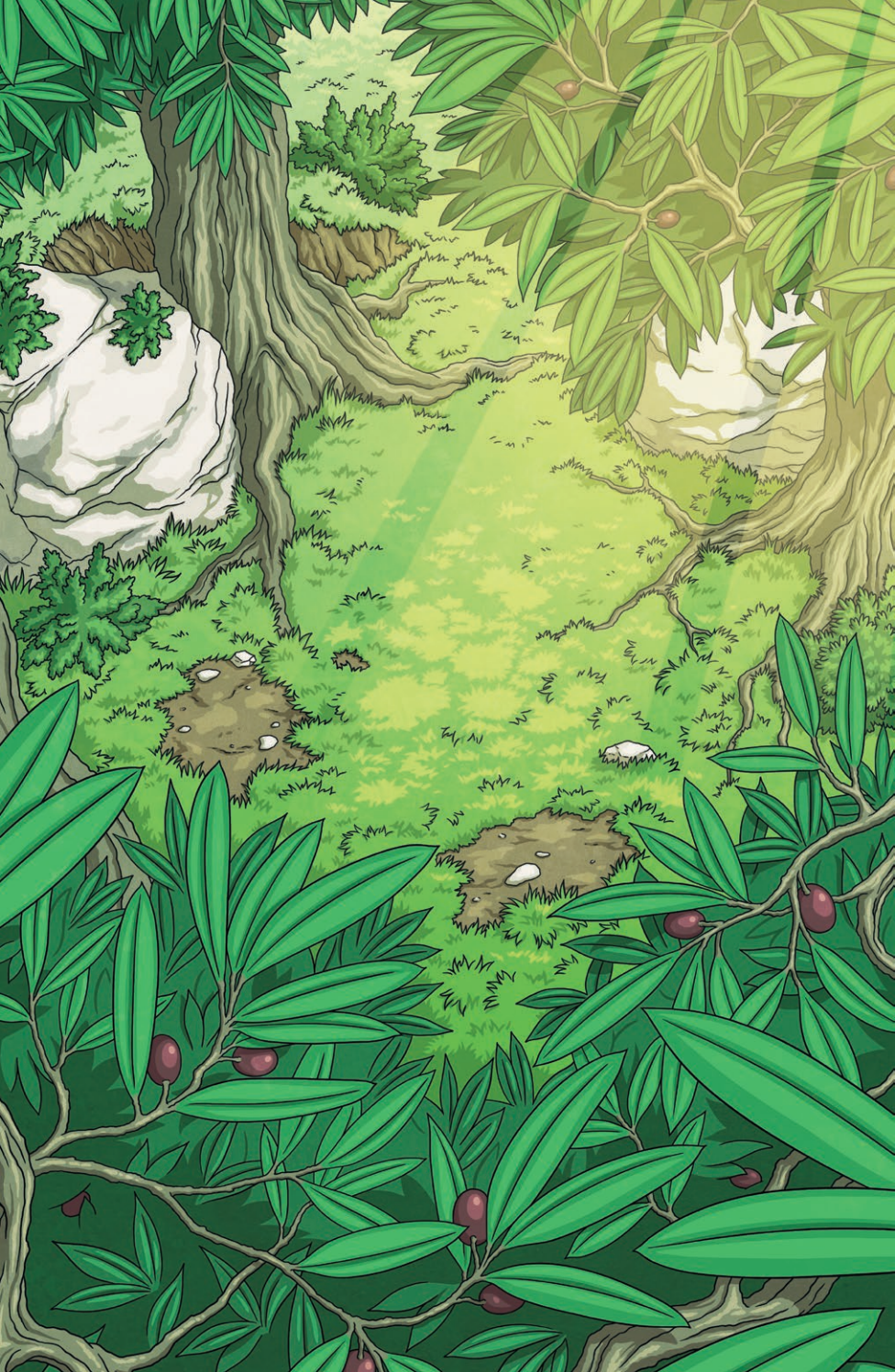
Sporades

Alexandroupoli

Kavala

Katerini

Thessaloniki



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Ancient Greek Adventure? Start Finish

Start: **Who was the Greek God of the Sun?** **Who was the Greek God of the Sea?**

Finish: **Who was the Greek God of the Sky?** **Who was the Greek God of the Earth?**

Take a break! **Who was the Greek God of Love?** **Who was the Greek God of War?**

Take a break! **Who was the Greek Goddess of Wisdom?** **Who was the Greek Goddess of Justice?**

Take a break! **Who was the Greek Goddess of the Moon?** **Who was the Greek Goddess of the Sun?**

Take a break! **Who was the Greek Goddess of the Earth?** **Who was the Greek Goddess of the Sky?**

Take a break! **Who was the Greek Goddess of the Sea?** **Who was the Greek Goddess of the Sun?**

Guess the Ancient Greek God or Goddess

1. Look at the picture and write down the name of the god or goddess.

2. Write down the powers of the god or goddess.

3. Write down the symbols of the god or goddess.

4. Write down the animals of the god or goddess.

5. Write down the plants of the god or goddess.

6. Write down the colors of the god or goddess.

7. Write down the elements of the god or goddess.

8. Write down the directions of the god or goddess.

9. Write down the numbers of the god or goddess.

10. Write down the letters of the god or goddess.

A collection of line art illustrations of various ancient Greek figures, including gods and goddesses, for coloring or drawing.

Life in Ancient Greece

1. Look at the picture and write down the name of the god or goddess.

2. Write down the powers of the god or goddess.

3. Write down the symbols of the god or goddess.

4. Write down the animals of the god or goddess.

5. Write down the plants of the god or goddess.

6. Write down the colors of the god or goddess.

7. Write down the elements of the god or goddess.

8. Write down the directions of the god or goddess.

9. Write down the numbers of the god or goddess.

10. Write down the letters of the god or goddess.

Describing a Storm

1. Look at the picture and write down the name of the god or goddess.

2. Write down the powers of the god or goddess.

3. Write down the symbols of the god or goddess.

4. Write down the animals of the god or goddess.

5. Write down the plants of the god or goddess.

6. Write down the colors of the god or goddess.

7. Write down the elements of the god or goddess.

8. Write down the directions of the god or goddess.

9. Write down the numbers of the god or goddess.

10. Write down the letters of the god or goddess.

Ancient Greek Temple

1. Look at the picture and write down the name of the god or goddess.

2. Write down the powers of the god or goddess.

3. Write down the symbols of the god or goddess.

4. Write down the animals of the god or goddess.

5. Write down the plants of the god or goddess.

6. Write down the colors of the god or goddess.

7. Write down the elements of the god or goddess.

8. Write down the directions of the god or goddess.

9. Write down the numbers of the god or goddess.

10. Write down the letters of the god or goddess.

Zeus

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Lost in the Labyrinth

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Ancient Greek Alphabet Activity

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"What's going on?" I direct my question to Mum.
She turns round. Her face glows with possibility.
"I think this is it, Att. I think we've found Naberos."



Atticus and his parents are on a quest to find a mysterious island that, according to legend, only appears for one day every sixty years and is where ancient Greeks still live. When they arrive on the island's shore, however, Atticus meets an unlikely cast of characters – the Greek gods themselves.

After incurring the wrath of Hera, the wife of Zeus, Atticus faces a series of daunting challenges that test his strength and bravery to the very limit. Will he find the courage of a hero and be reunited with his family before sunset?



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