

Fantastic Phoebe Makes History

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“I’m the only one worthy to compete in the Olympic games!” Ariston boasted to his best and only friend, Andreas, swaggering back from school.

“Definitely, you’ll annihilate everybody. You’re obviously going to win the olive wreath.” Said Andreas, trying his best to flatter Ariston.

“Here’s a little taster,” and Ariston reached into his bag and brought out his philosophy book. With that, he spun round till he was a blur, kicking up dust on the path, and hurled the thick book at a smaller unexpected boy in the head.

Thud! The boy collapsed on the path like a flattened tomato.

Phoebe gasped, thus revealing herself from her hiding place behind the pillar.

“Oh, look who it is,” Ariston sneered. “Hey, feeble Phoebe, how are you today? Have you given up on that stupid little dream about becoming an Olympic discus champion?” he scoffed nastily and Andreas did the same.

Phoebe shook her head. Phoebe mumbled, “I...I....I...”, and sniffed.

“So, feeble Phoebe, a few seconds ago, we were discussing that girls shouldn’t and aren’t with good reason be allowed in the Olympic games. It’s not appropriate. You would never stand a chance against Ariston anyway.” Andreas put in.

She tried to answer back but she felt like her tongue was superglued to the roof of her mouth. Blood rushed to her cheeks and started to pound in her temples.

The two snickered and walked away.

Phoebe’s eyes were red and swollen from sobbing when she came home.

She flung herself onto her bed in disappointment and mumbled into her pillow, “I can’t do the Olympic games. I can’t.” She heard her mother’s familiar footsteps up the stairs and she pressed her quivering lips together to smother the sob that yearned to come out.

In the night, Phoebe pondered about this as she stared into the starry night. ‘Get a grip on yourself,’ she thought. ‘There must be a way. I have trained for years and I know I am more skilled than Ariston. In fact, tomorrow, I’ll ask the council elders if I can somehow join.’

The next morning, Phoebe woke to the songs of birds, feeling much better than the day before. She set off, wondering what the council elders would say and how to best persuade them. ‘Hmm...perhaps I can demonstrate my discus talents and prove my strength’ she thought.

Soon, she reached the heart of the city where the council convened. She entered the building. All the council elders were there, like they were about to have a meeting.

She nervously shuffled up to them and they looked down, sternly. “What do you want, girl?” one said with irritation as he was eager to start the meeting.

Her inner self urged her to say what she wished. "I want to be in the Olympic games," she said valiantly.

Another one scoffed, "Really? A girl?!"

Another burst into fits of laughter. "A girl?" they choked incredulously.

The laughs echoed round the room.

"Yes, me," Phoebe said, standing her ground bravely. "Yes, me." She repeated calmly.

"Well," a councillor said, taking a deep breath. "Would you risk your life in order to take part in this event?"

"Yes!" cried Phoebe without hesitation.

"Then kill the Hydra and prove yourself worthy," he commanded.

The Hydra had been terrorising the local village by devouring the livestock nearby and even some people had mysteriously disappeared. In fact, the meeting earlier had been about how to deal with the Hydra. The Hydra was a monstrous water snake which was a kilometre long. Local heroes had attempted but failed to kill it and only one escaped with his life. He described the Hydra having 20 enormous heads, each with meter long poisonous teeth and could kill its prey with its venomous breath. However, what was most terrifying, was that it was impossible to kill. When one of its heads was chopped off; 2 more gruesome heads sprouted from the wound.

That night, she prayed to the goddess of hunting, Artemis. Artemis took pity on her as she felt that the other gods had always underestimated her as she was a woman despite her superior talent in hunting. She gave Phoebe a set of instructions and a golden magical discus. Phoebe burned a bull as a sacrifice to show her gratitude and set off on her quest.

Phoebe made the long journey to the lake where the monster was last spotted. She started a roaring fire and the gigantic fierce multiheaded beast, attracted by the light, slithered out of its lake. She dipped the shimmering discus into the blazing fire and hurled the burning metal as hard as she could, as if she were in the Olympic games, aiming straight at the stump of one of its heads. It came clean off and to her amazement, no new heads sprouted.

The discus sailed back into her hand like a boomerang. She repeated this with the other 17 heads and on the last two, with beads of sweat pouring into her eyes, she sliced through them but this time, left a thin bit of skin that attached the two heads.

With the heads dangling like cherries, she bounced merrily back to the city. Her toga a complete mess, her matted hair covered in dirt looking like birds' nest, in such a fashion that people came out their homes and simply gaped at the girl who was dangling the gruesome overgrown cherries from her hand. Half dragging them, half carrying them, she entered the council building, drenched in grime and blue blood of the Hydra and held out the grisly trophy.

"Go!" a councillor yelled. "Your wish is granted."

She walked down the village triumphantly with the heads bouncing into one another.

The very next day, she took revenge on arrogant Ariston. Her day had come! She shone like her golden discus and skilfully won the discus game. And so, she had achieved her dream of becoming the first girl Olympian. Up in Mount Olympus, Artemis smiled.