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**Zeus and His Quest for Hera’s Hand**

Long ago on Mount Olympus, there lived Zeus – the God of all Gods. Powerful, worshipped and magnificent, Zeus was loved by all. However, there was only one person that he wanted to be loved by … Hera, the daughter of Cronas and Rhea.

Zeus believed that Hera was the stars to his night sky, the salt to his sea and the jewels to his crown. He was completely and madly in love with her. Unfortunately, Hera’s father, Cronas, did not approve of Zeus, so when he heard that Zeus was preparing to propose to his daughter, Cronas hatched an evil plan.

Cronas told Zeus that he would allow the marriage between Zeus and his daughter, if the wedding ceremony was made official with the Ring of Gyges, which allowed its wearer the power of invisibility.

The magical ring, which people only thought was a legend, lay in the depths of the Volcano of Nisyros, awaiting the right owner to come and claim it.

Believing that Cronas was helping him with his mission of love, Zeus set off on his journey. It took 3 days for Zeus to reach the Cave of The Deep, which was the first destination on his map.

The Cave was as black as night and the only light that he could see came from slight cracks in the cave walls. After a few minutes of exploring the cave, Zeus heard a cracking sound from beneath his feet. As he looked down, he noticed that his feet were wet. The Cave was filling up with water!!! It filled unbelievably fast, within seconds, trapping Zeus in a pitch black pool of cold sea water, with no chance of escape. The pocket of air above his head narrowed faster and faster.

Zeus fell beneath the water and just when all seemed lost, a ray of light appeared before his weak eyes. The ray grew brighter and brighter until the light hurt Zeus’ eyes and suddenly, his brother Poseidon – the God of the Sea – appeared before him, smiling.

“Yassou my brother,” laughed Poseidon, “what have you done this time?”

Zeus was incapable of speaking to his brother, and instead started to sink into the murky depths. Quickly, Posiedon swirled his arms in a circular motion, creating a spherical bubble. He grasped Zeus with his other hand and pulled him up towards him. He gently placed the bubble onto his brother’s head. All of a sudden, Zeus’ eyes popped open and he took a very deep breath. He was amazed that he could now breath under the water. Poseidon waved slowly to his brother and disappeared and Zeus swam deeper into the water. He found a crack in one of the cave walls and pounded against it with his fist, until he made a hole in the wall. The water began to escape through the hole, which led to the water level dropping within the cave.

Zeus carried on through the cave until he saw the light of the sky at the other end.

He continued on his journey to his next destination, The Forest of Lost Souls.

The Forest of Lost Souls was a dark, gloomy, enchanted forest, with tall, looming trees on all sides. Zeus quietly crept through the forest, so as not to wake the unusual creatures within. As Zeus reached halfway through the disturbing forest, he felt a strange, piercing cold breath on his neck. He spun quickly and came face to face with five undead souls. The souls began to inhale deeply, draining the life force from Zeus’ body. Zeus was paralysed! With each deep breath they took, Zeus became weaker and weaker, until he eventually collapsed on the ground. Through weak and weary eyes, Zeus saw the souls drag him to the Underworld. He was powerless to stop them.

When the souls reached the Underworld, Zeus saw blue flames in the distance. He wondered where he was. The flames started to come closer to him and as they got closer, Zeus realised that the flames were a part of a person. As his vision became clearer, he saw that he was face to face with Hades – the God of the Underworld – and his other brother!

“Yassou, brother!” exclaimed Hades “my Souls have explained to me that they have brought you to live in the Underworld, as they do with any travellers caught wandering through the Forest of Lost Souls. However, I have explained to them, that there is only room for one King in my Kingdom, so you shall be expelled back to your world!”

“Thank you brother!” replied Zeus.

Hades clapped his hands with a thunderous clap and Zeus was transported immediately to the next destination on his journey, which was the Toxic Swamp of Doom.

The mossy green waters of the Swamp gurgled and bubbled with their foul stench. As Zeus looked for a way across the disgusting waters, he was ambushed by a revolting, olive green coloured monster, with toxic dribble oozing from it’s mouth. His name was Swamp Dribbler. Zeus had heard of this peculiar creature and so knew to stay away from the toxic mucus seeping from its mouth.

Zeus also knew that the creature would dry out if he was in the sun for too long. As Zeus was the King of the Gods, he commanded Helius – the God of the Sun - to shine the sun hotter and brighter than ever before. As the temperature rose, the disgusting creature fell to the ground and his skin dried to a crisp. Zeus then commanded the God of the Wind – Anemoi – to send a swift breeze, which blew away the remnants of Swamp Dribbler into the atmosphere. Zeus then continued on his mission.

His final destination led him to the Volcano of Nisyros, where the ultimate prize waited for him. If he was to acquire Hera as his bride, it was essential that he defeated the Guardian of the Volcano – Triplehorn.

Triplehorn was a monster with gnarled, twisted horns, which he would use to ensnare his captives and then squeeze and pulverise his victims until their hearts were crushed. Triplehorn’s five, small ears could hear the tiniest of sounds and so Zeus had to be extremely quiet.

The volcano was as tall as the eye could see and every second, gallons of lava cascaded down the colossal rocky hill. It was a place that could only be pictured in nightmares.

Zeus made his way to where the beast lay fast asleep. He saw the Ring of Gyges on one of Triplehorn’s many ears and he suddenly realised that he had been tricked by Cronas… there was no possible way that he could get to the Ring without waking the monster before him.

However, Zeus was not going to give up on his one true love, Hera, and so he crept inaudibly towards the strange creature. Zeus was making good progress until he tripped over a small rock, which had come loose from the volcano. Unfortunately, Zeus could not regain his footing and he collided with Triplehorn, waking him up with the most ferocious roar.

Triplehorn reacted quickly and wrapped his horns around Zeus in a flash. He began to suffocate Zeus, draining the life force out of him. Zeus thought that this was the end of his life, Cronas had won and Hera would never be his.

All of a sudden, Zeus heard a piercing, screeching, shrill sound, which made Triplehorn fall to the ground in pain, covering all five of his sensitive ears. As Zeus gasped for his breath, he saw a vision in white attacking Triplehorn. She was like an angel from heaven, she was a saviour, she was his hero… she was his Hera!

Hera continued to scream like a banshee at Triplehorn until he could stand it no further. He stood holding his ears, with his eyes closed, crying in agonising pain. Whilst his eyes were closed, Hera grabbed the Ring from his ear. She then stopped screeching long enough for Triplehorn to run away into the dark night.

Hera turned towards Zeus, with a big smile on her face, and knelt down before the King of the Gods. Beaten, bruised and weak, Zeus looked upon his One True Love and returned her smile.

Hera held out the Ring of Gyges and looked adoringly at Zeus:

“My Lord, I must apologise for my Father’s actions, sending you into these dangerous trials. His dangerous scheme was not only reckless, but it was totally unnecessary. I have loved you since the beginning of time and I would have married you with or without mystical rings and mythical objects. My Love, will you marry me?”

Zeus laughed heartily and picked up Hera in his blood covered arms, swinging her around with joy.

“Of course I will marry you, my love” he laughed.

Zeus and Hera were married the next day and ruled side by side as King and Queen of the Gods, forever more.