

Daughter of Ares

by Elijah Schoenherr

I wake to a horrified scream. There it is again. I hop out of bed and get dressed. I peek out the door to see if there's anyone there. I don't see anything, so I walk out to the living room. Everything looks fine except for a note on the couch. I pick up the note and immediately recognize my mom's handwriting.

James, I know you're not going to believe me, but your father is the Greek god Hephaestus. That means you're half god, half man. The war god Ares has sent three of his sons to capture me. Phobos, Deimos, and Cole Hallows (a demigod). They're going to hurt me if you don't come to 992 Martin Luther King Blvd tomorrow night. Please James!

My name's James West, I'm fifteen and apparently, half-god. I have braces, but not the kind of you're thinking of. They're on my legs. They suck, and make it really easy for Cole Hallows to beat me up, pretty much all the time.

My mom and I live in a little one-bedroom apartment in San Jose, CA. She has a minimum wage job and my dad left her before I was born.

Oh, and apparently he's a god. Which actually explains a lot, like my leg braces. The god Hephaestus had weak legs when he was born so he made himself the first leg braces. And he's the blacksmith god, which explains why I'm good in tools and machines.

Twenty minutes later I was on train headed to Long Beach. My seat was in the very back cabin. I walk up and there's a girl my age sitting right across from my seat.

"Umm, hey. I'm Atlanta. Do I know you?" she asks.

"Nah. My name's James." I say.

And then all of a sudden I hear Hephaestus in my head. He says, "*James, this girl will help you. She is a daughter of Apollo, the Sun god. Look at her bracelet.*"

I look at her bracelet, it's three of Apollo's symbols: the sun, a lyre, and an arrow.

"Why are you going to the Long Beach" she asks.

I don't think that she'll believe me if I tell her, but Hephaestus said she can help me. So I start talking and tell her the story.

When I'm done she says, "Whoa. Craziest explanation ever. And your dad, Hephaestus said my dad is Apollo the Sun god?"

"Yeah. Your bracelet has three of his symbols on it."

"My mom did say that my dad gave me this bracelet when I was a baby."

“That makes sense.”

“Alright. Let’s make a plan for when we ge-“

BANG!

Our car is slowing down drastically. I run to the front of the car and fling the door open to find out why. The coupling holding us to the next train is melted and I can just see the train taking a turn up ahead. I would have fallen out the door if Atlanta hadn’t grabbed my shirt and pulled me back. Then a huge dragon flies by. Suddenly there’s a flaming hole blown in the side of the car. I take a few steps back and try to remember some of the dragons from Greek mythology. Helios the titan had two dragons called the Solar Dragons. The paintings I’ve seen of them look a lot like the dragon I saw out the hole. When Helios was in charge of the Sun, the Dragons had pulled his chariot, but after titans lost the war to the gods, Apollo took over the sun and maybe...

I turn around and say, “Atlanta, I think that since your dad is Apollo, you should be able to control the dragon if you focus and then maybe we can ride it to the Long Beach.”

“Ok, let me try.”

She walks over to the burning hole in the side of the train car. The dragon is heading right for her. I dive to the floor and shout, “Atlanta—“ I hit the ground and the wind is knocked out of me before I can finish.

I close my eyes and brace myself, but don’t feel anything. Instead, I hear Atlanta laughing so I peek out. The Solar Dragon is hovering right outside the train car, licking her.

“Aww, I’m going to call you Meteor,” says Atlanta.

I get up and say, “Alright Atlanta, let’s get going.”

We steer Meteor in the direction of Long Beach searching for the address. If you have ever been on a Solar Dragon, which I doubt you have, it’s not fun. You get really hot and it’s kinda uncomfortable. But it’s pretty fast and easy to navigate, which is why thirty minutes later, we made it to the address Cole left in the note, a big grey warehouse.

Atlanta whispers something to Meteor and he roars, then starts to burn a hole in the wall but decides to just fly straight through. We crash in and I jump off Meteor’s back and pull out my knife. I see my mom tied up in the corner. Cole is standing in the middle of the room with Phobos, who’s got black hair, the black eyes to match, a crooked nose and a broadsword strapped to his back. Deimos is right next to Cole. He looks a lot like Phobos, but has blue eyes and a much smaller sword.

Atlanta lands next to me and she’s holding a golden bow and has arrows in a quiver on her back. There must have been a blessing on the bracelet or something.

“Hey Cole, how’s life with two maniacs, or brothers, though I still think they are the aforementioned maniacs?” I ask.

“Would you just shut up and just let us kill you already,” Cole sneers.

“You do realize that we have a large dragon on our side, right?” says Atlanta.

“Yes princess, we realize that. Do you know that Deimos and I can trick people into doing things by scaring them?” He and Deimos turn to Meteor and then he roars and flies out the way we came in.

“Meteor!” Atlanta yells.

She pulls an arrow out of her quiver and shoots straight into Phobo’s chest. He screams, doubles over and disappears.

I use Cole and Deimos’s confusion to my advantage and run to my mom. I cut the ropes.

“Mom, hide now! Atlanta and I’ll take care of this,” I tell her.

She hides behind some boxes and I turn to Deimos and Cole. I charge them. Cole is still confused but Deimos realizes what’s going on and draws his sword. I’ve never used a sword in my life but somehow I know every move I need. Deimos comes in for a thrust but doesn’t keep his sword high enough so I swing my body to the left and bring my sword down on his, so hard that it snaps. I pull back up then stab his stomach and he falls over, grunts and disappears.

I turn to Cole.

“Get out of here, Cole,” I say.

He turns and runs.

Suddenly, I feel a piercing pain in my back.

I hear Atlanta scream as I fall to the ground.

In my last moments, I look up to see who stabbed me.

“Mom?”