

“Oh great god Iop! Shine your fiery light in the sky to signal my coming victory!”

The Cra archer rolled her eyes at this plaintive plea to the gods. It never had any effect but leave it to a Iop to actually believe the gods would intervene in a sport in any capacity. She pulled her bow off her shoulder and readied an arrow as the Iop brawler crouched down, grinning in anticipation of the coming battle. “Not going to call a favor from your god?” He asked.

“Don't need one.” She coolly replied.

The referee slowly raised his hand, looking left and then right at both competitors... before bringing the hand down in a fierce chopping motion. Before either fighter could act, however, an earth quaking BOOM echoed throughout the stadium, the sky briefly exploding in a burst of fire and light, a titanic figure suddenly looming high above them all, his face lost among the clouds. Everyone present merely gaped up in silence at the impressively muscular, tanned colossus that had appeared, beads of sweat bigger than houses glistening in the light on his immaculate body. Slowly, the towering pillars of his legs began to lower, the immense torso coming closer and closer, the head of this being coming into focus, showing a glowering visage, clearly annoyed topped by a towering flame of hair. “So...” his voice boomed, the air expelled from his mouth washing over the assembled crowd like a tropical wind. “Who interrupted my training session?”

The Iop warrior stared up at his god, eyes bulging in shock. He fell to his knees, raising his arms as his eyes softened and filled with tears. “Great god Iop! You heard my plea! Thank yo--”

“OOOOOHH!” The titanic Iop's voice rippled over the mortal's words, his thunderous expression turning to one of pure joy. “Are you having a tournament? HEY! Did you call me to help? Where's your pride as a Iop? I'm going to have to take you home and train you properly!”

He slammed his fist into his open palm, the force of it sweeping through the crowd, the power contained within this god palpable to all the mortals gathered below. The archer, whose name was Lorelei, grimaced as she remembered the stories that had been spreading lately, namely that a new Iop had replaced the old and was a much more... active god than the populace was used to. Her opponent blanched and shook his head wildly, stammering as he explained himself. “No sir, no sir! I-I-I just wanted you to see my victory! I never dreamed you'd actually show up, just for me!”

The enormous man proudly puffed out his chest. He had been getting these reactions a lot and it always pleased him to be able to say, “I, Tristepin, the new god Iop, am NOT like the other gods! And I happily accept your invitation to watch!”

Without another word he lowered himself further, his butt connecting to the ground with enough force to crack the earth, the stadium walls trembling, knocking anyone standing onto their backs. Leaning over the top, blocking out the sun, Tristepin watched with childish glee as the referee, once again, prepared to start the match. Some patrons tried to leave the stadium, too rattled by the god's presence to stick around, but found the exits blocked by a dense wall made of fabric, Tristepin's legs circling around the building, blocking all the exits. Some boldly tried to dislodge the fabric, but even if they could have succeed in pushing through the dense wall, the steely muscle of the Iop's legs would prove unassailable. Like it or not, everyone was in this for the long haul.

The referee brought his hand down once more, the fight starting. Lorelei wasted no time; ignoring the looming presence of her opponent's god overhead she loosed a volley of arrows towards the bulky Iop,

aiming each one in a slightly different direction. The larger man grinned, dodging one, grabbing two out of the air, and jumping to avoid the rest. "Nice try little lady! But don't think I'm slow just because--"

His words were cut short as the two arrows in his hands exploded, covering him in a cloud of gunpowder residue. Lorelei smirked as she prepared more arrows, these with blunted ends. She fired them into the cloud, the impacts hitting with the force of a powerful punch. The Iop grunted as he was forced back, Lorelei firing these blunted arrows at such a rapid pace that he couldn't recover or attempt to fight back. Tristepin sighed, the sound having more in common with gale force winds, and softly said, "Reminds me of my honeymoon."

Lorelei felt her cheeks flush at those intimate words blasting out over all of them. It gave her opponent a moment to find his footing and charge forward, closing the distance within seconds, fist raised. The nimble archer jumped back, the meaty fist colliding with the ground, shattering it. The tide of the battle had swiftly turned, Lorelei unable to find a moment to break through the assault. She cursed as she felt her foot land on an uneven spot on the ground, her legs flying up from under her as she lost her balance. Her eyes widened as the Iop fighter loomed over her, moving in what seemed like slow motion, her arms rising with her bow in an attempt to block the coming blow... only for an even more looming Iop to save her unintentionally. An enormous drop of liquid splashed down directly on top of the Iop, stopping him in his tracks as the cascade of liquid flowed away from the point of impact in all directions, dousing the battlefield in the tangy liquid. The Iop shivered, frozen in place, not sure how to react to the bath he had just received in his god's essence, Lorelei covering her nose in disgust at the display. Unfortunately for all of them, this drop wasn't the last. More and more began to rain down from above, splashing not just the battlefield but the stands as well, shouts of disgust rising from all areas of the stadium. Tristepin raised an eyebrow, not understanding what exactly was happening, confused as to why the fight suddenly stopped... only to realize that the sweat that had gathered on his body from his training was now beginning to rain down on the mortals below. He hastily rose up, the sweat now safely running down his body in rivulets, but the damage had been done; the stadium was now saturated in his sweat. He rubbed the back of his head and chuckled nervously. "Whoops! Sorry guys! Forgot I was so sweaty! Just... uh... consider it as a gift from the gods!"

The tournament was largely over now, neither competitor finding the energy to continue the battle after being saturated in sweat, both combatants looking at each other and shrugging. Before anyone could announce the battle had ended in a draw, however, Tristepin suddenly turned his attention to the sky. "Rats... someone else is calling me... okay! Can we postpone this tournament for now? I really want to see how this all turns out! And just so I don't forget where you guys are..."

He rose to his feet, his body expanding even larger, his form looming so high in the sky they could barely see half of him anymore, the entire stadium no larger than a coin. He leaned down, finger digging into the ground, easily scooping the entire stadium and all its inhabitants up onto his fingertip, depositing it on his shoulder with a smile. "There! Nice and safe until I'm finished with my other duties! Sit tight little guys! This shouldn't take more than an hour or so!"

The stadium of people could only gawk as they were all suddenly whisked through space and time towards whatever duty Tristepin had to attend to, trapped at the mercy of this meat headed god until his duties were finished. Lorelei sighed and laid down on her back, closing her eyes and trying to recover her strength. Whenever this little adventure was over she was sure she would be called upon to continue this match and, whatever else happened, she wasn't about to lose to some Iop. "I just hope whatever he has to deal with doesn't take too long..." She thought, already formulating her strategy for

when the fight resumed.

The End