

## Days Of Yore

# "The Riddle Of The Sphinx"

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Arbo grumbled and snarled, as the first rays of light disrupted a too brief sleep, wrestling his still weak eyes.

The old man stood on the hill, fixing a distant point, beckoning the yawning prince to get up and come to him.

Down the hill lied a particular city called Thebes, concealing some odd menace behind its gates hardly welcoming.

A deplorable monster, who was known as the Sphinx, was blockading the Thebans inside the cursed city. It had been sent by the will of the wicked Hera, who wanted the Thebans to pay tribute to the gods.

Descendant of a sinister line of five generations of monsters, the evil creature devoured alive everyone who failed to answer her riddle.

Arbo was on the way leading to the city's gates when he saw an old man who seemed in great distress. The elder was walking in the most laborious way, leaning on a staff and staggering at his every step.

Arbo came up his way and addressed him kindly. The old man then unfolded the lines of a strange prophecy:

"Ancient legends have long foretold  
That a blessed one would come someday

From a far, distant kingdom  
To deliver Thebes from its cruel bane."

Incidentally, Arbo found the insidious Sphinx on his way.

She was standing proud on a rock outside the city's gates.

It was a fiendish creature, like he had never ever seen: having the face of a woman and a lion's body.

The Sphinx disdained as she considered the new visitor.  
With a voice filled with insolence, she posed her deadly riddle:

"Shalt thou tell me what creature  
walks on four feet in the morning,  
stands on two feet at noon and  
on three feet in the evening?"

"O, muse of the dead, listen to the words you want not  
to hear,  
for my voice shall now herald the end of your  
sanguinary reign.  
This creature is man, who crawls on all four in infancy,  
stands on two in manhood and leans on a staff in old  
age."

Upon receiving this unexpected answer,  
the Sphinx hurled herself to death from her rocky  
throne.  
Thus Thebes was freed from the throes of the vile  
monster.  
And Arbo, by the quickness of his mind, proved his  
valor.

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