

Demeter's Revenge

Answer:

1-5	
6-10	
11-15	

Question:

- What initial action by Erysichthon led to a series of tragic events?
A. He disrespected a sacred grove
B. He built a lavish palace
C. He sold his daughter Mestra
D. He defied the gods openly
- Why did Erysichthon sell his daughter Mestra?
A. To purchase more lands
B. To settle a personal debt
C. To buy more food
D. Because he did not value her
- What did the nymph do upon reaching Hunger, goddess of famine?
A. Approached her boldly
B. Became her disciple
C. Called for her and shared a plan
D. Begged for personal help
- What was Mestra's initial reaction when realizing her father's greed?
A. She confronted him
B. She escaped immediately
C. She helped him sell his estate
D. She was horrified and planned to escape
- How did Mestra manage to flee from her captor?
A. By swimming away
B. By transforming into a fisherman
C. By fighting her captor
D. By pleading for mercy
- What did Mestra use to distract her captor during her escape?
A. A chest of gold
B. A performance
C. A bounty of fish
D. A convincing story
- Why did Mestra feel compelled to return to her father after escaping?
A. She wanted to confront him
B. She hoped to cure his hunger
C. She felt responsible for him
D. She had nowhere else to go
- What was Erysichthon's response to discovering Mestra's new powers?
A. Pride for her abilities
B. Shame for his behaviour
C. Indifference to her fate
D. Exploitation for personal gain
- What led to Erysichthon's demise?
A. He was killed by the villagers
B. He fell victim to his own hunger
C. He was cursed by Poseidon
D. He was abandoned by his daughter
- How was Mestra's life affected after her father's death?
A. She was captured again
B. She lived in poverty
C. She was finally free
D. She became a goddess
- What is the main reason Erysichthon's actions are described as disrespectful towards the sacred grove?
A. He cut down the trees for sport
B. He took wood for his hall
C. He ignored the prayer offerings
D. He entered the grove alone
- What was the immediate consequence of the attack on the sacred tree?
A. The tree magically healed itself
B. A wood nymph cursed Erysichthon
C. The tree bled and a nymph cried out
D. The grove was set on fire
- What did the mountain nymph seek from Hunger, the goddess of famine?
A. A blessing for Erysichthon
B. Advice on growing crops
C. Help to exact revenge on Erysichthon
D. Protection from Erysichthon's wrath
- What role did Poseidon play in Mestra's story?
A. He punished her father on her behalf
B. He provided her the power to shapeshift
C. He was an ally to King Erysichthon
D. He protected her from the gods' wrath
- How did Mestra's life situation change from the beginning to the end of the story?
A. From a princess to a slave
B. From enslaved to a goddess
C. From powerlessness to freedom
D. From riches to absolute poverty

Reading: Demeter's Revenge

Mestra, Princess of Thessaly, was far from home. She had watched her father, King Erysichthon, plunge into a ruin of his own making. Now, to save himself, he sold his own daughter to the highest bidder. But Mestra refused to accept this fate. Finding herself momentarily alone, she began to plan her escape.

Months earlier, Erysichthon had decided to build himself a gleaming new hall, declaring that only the finest wood would suffice. The king was well known for spurning the gods, as he was more interested in honoring himself. But in an unprecedented act of disrespect, he marched his men into the sacred grove of Demeter, goddess of food and agriculture. Ignoring the prayer offerings that hung from the trees, Erysichthon headed straight for the most magnificent oak.

As he swung his axe, the tree trembled and turned pale. Blood gushed from the wound, and a strangled cry rang out. It was the voice of one of Demeter's wood nymphs who resided in the tree. With her last breaths, she called out to her patron for revenge. Erysichthon, though, was unfazed. He decimated the rest of the forest and dragged the wood back to his palace. Upon learning of the loss and destruction, Demeter quaked the earth with her anger. Swiftly, she ordered a mountain nymph to go and enlist the help of another fearsome goddess.

In a dragon-drawn chariot, the mountain nymph soared over barren lands and icy seas. At last, she reached the remote lair of Hunger, goddess of famine. She found her picking through weeds with her rotten nails and teeth, clutching her hollow stomach and twisting her knotted limbs. Not daring to come too close, the nymph called for Hunger and shared Demeter's vengeful plan. Hunger usually kept to her lair— but she relished this gruesome mission.

Under the cover of night, she crept into the palace and released her famished breath into the sleeping king. Erysichthon immediately began to dream of a lavish feast, gulping air and grinding his teeth. He awoke to a ravenous hunger, which only seemed to increase as he ate. As Mestra looked on in horror, her father devoured all the food in the palace, before calling for the city's crops and goods. But no matter how many feasts he devoured, he felt empty and weak. Before long, Erysichthon had sold his entire estate for food— with only Mestra left by his side. But not even his loyal daughter could escape the depths of his greed, and he shamelessly sold her into slavery.

As she set sail with her captor, Mestra stared at the sea. This wasn't the first time she'd suffered at the hands of men— years before, she'd been violently pursued and assaulted by the god Poseidon. Now, she demanded his help. As an act of repentance, Poseidon granted her the power to change her shape at will. With this, Mestra immediately transformed into a fisherman. And distracting her captor with a bounty of fish, she escaped.

For the first time, Mestra was in control, able to freely adapt and slip away from any situation. But she felt compelled to return to her tortured father. However, when Erysichthon discovered Mestra's new powers, he only saw an opportunity for himself. He exploited his talented daughter, selling her again and again for food.

Each time, she gracefully transformed herself— morphing into a swift-footed mare, a soaring bird, or an elusive deer to steal more meals while evading capture. But as her father continued to sell her at higher and higher prices, Mestra was left with little hope. One day, when arriving home in one of her many forms, Mestra entered the hollow palace only to discover the king's lifeless body— Erysichthon's hunger had grown so great that he had consumed his own limbs. Gazing upon her wasted father, Mestra's hope returned. She was no longer unfairly burdened with the wrath of the gods that the king had courted. Untethered from her father's selfish agenda and buoyed by her ability to transform herself at will, Mestra was finally free.