

I sleep for most of the day, Nika wakes me up for a late lunch. George and Jewel(which was the ladies name) had graciously provided lunch for us. It was some sandwiches and warm croissants with some hot chocolate. We all enjoyed the meal and chatted with the two. Jewel was in her late forties and had worked at the hotel for years. George was relatively new to the hotel but knew Jewel from a summer program she had taught. The two were the only ones in the hotel which was interesting. I remembered seeing three cars outside. Maybe it was an abandoned car that was already there. I think but the familiar hesitation in the back of my head creeps in. I had learned to trust this sense but I tried to reassure myself. Astraea would warn us if things got bad. I tell myself and try to concentrate. We chat for a bit and then thank them for the meal and shelter. They were happy to help us. I walked back up to my room and crashed in my bed again. Mistake. I was thrown into a dark room. It was like real life but I knew it was a dream. I hear a ruffle and click. Hello? I say. Silver blinds my vision and I'm blinded. When I regain my vision I find myself in a work room of some sort. Millions of maps, papers, and books are scattered. I hear a frustrated groan ahead and find desk where a woman sat scribbling on a piece of paper. Hello? I ask her. She turns around. MOM?! I say in shock. Sure enough, it was Athena. She wasn't in armor anymore but wore a simple sliver sweatshirt and sweatpants. About time you got here. We have work to do. She says and waves her hand. Everything disappears and we stand in a field. The wind blows across my face pushing the hair out of my face. Where am I? And why? I ask Athena as she holds a spear. You have a great destiny ahead of you, a difficult one but great. It will bring honor to the Athena house. But you need more training to be ready. She says and twirls her spear. Arm yourself. She says. Wait, you want ME to fight YOU?! I ask her. She shrugs like it wasn't that big of a deal. Yes, how else will you learn to fight? She says. Valid point. And you wont fight me, not yet. You will fight these. She says and snaps her fingers. A silver gladiator appears. It stands at attention, waiting for instructions. I fumble but grab my glasses and they shift into my sword. Remember what Annabeth taught you. I tell myself and shift into my fighting stance. Good, at least Annabeth taught you something. She says without a smile. The gladiator rushes me and I throw up my sword in defense. The opponent was strong and fast, catching me way off guard. I tried to use a more advanced parry but the thing anticipated it

And used the counter attack. I stumble and fall down. Athena gives me a disappointed look. My cheeks flush with shame and I stand back up. Again. She says and the cycle repeats. Strike, defend, thrust, stumble. Athena didn't let me stop to catch my breath, the next attack coming. I used every move I knew but couldn't catch the thing off guard. After the millionth time I fell, I stayed down. Get up. Athena says. I was so mad and tired that I didn't care. No. I say through gritted teeth. No?! Get up! She says. No! I will not. I won't learn how to fight if you keep making me go into fights I have no idea how to win. I tell her and stand up. She was taller than me by a few inches but I walked right up to her. I looked right in the eyes. I had never done something like this before but I was too mad to care. No, I won't learn like this. There is no way I can unless I have some sort of instruction. I tell her. You don't want me to win so I survive. You want the honor. I tell her. I hit something because a slight emotion flicked in her eyes. It was gone in the blink of an eye but I had seen it. We stood there in silence, staring at each other waiting for the other to break. Fine, have it your way. Athena says, voice dripping with venom. When someone rushes you with a sword, always use the third man parry to unbalance the opponent. She says and shows me how. The rest of the time, she shows me different combinations of blows and parries to use in almost every situation. I was finally learning something. And I was actually enjoying myself. Not a lot but the motions and having something to do was a positive. I don't know how long we trained but time must have gone by differently in this reality than the real one. I was exhausted when Athena called for it to stop. I was proud of myself. I had finally beaten the thing. That's it for now, your friends need you. She says and I nod. And need me they did