

The Bennu Bird and The Three Mountains

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There are pockets of land, that exist outside our concepts of time and space. Places that hold the most ancient and archetypal of creatures.

One day, in one of these pockets, a Bennu bird woke up in her nest. She had no memory of how she got there, nor did she have anyone around her. Her nest consisted of several cleverly designed pieces of furniture, including a twig rocking chair. As she shook the ashes off her feet, she stumbled toward a meadow. The Bennu bird scanned the environment and was in awe of the surrounding.

Her nest was positioned in the center of three great mountains, each one, more magnificent than the next. "What a beautiful sight", she thought. "This is my goal; I will reach the top of all three of these mountains. I don't know how long my life span is, I don't know what my name is, but I know what I want in life".

The Bennu bird looked back at her nest with disgust, the rocking chair was a symbol of complaisance in her eyes. She marched to the base of the first mountain with pure intent. Someone obviously had been here before. At the base, carved into the stone, was a message. "Beware of the sure-footed, vulnerability is not the same as weakness." The Bennu bird felt a weird familiarity while reading these words.

Her wings were new, and not strong enough to fly to the top, she would need to climb the steeper portion of the mountain. Through various weeks of climbing and rock hopping, she had made it to the higher portion of the mountain. The beautiful flowers and incredible creatures she saw along the

way fueled her imagination and curiosity. She could not wait to reach the top of the mountain. There was one thing that was a constant and building concern. Along the way, she notices several carvings of an animal with long curved horns and an angry depiction. Finally, she stood less than 100 yards away from the top, and the scratched images were given life as she stared at a huge mountain goat blocking the path.

The Bennu bird, however, was determined to reach its peak. The bird had a feeling of purpose and a sense of adventure that drove her forward. As she continued her ascent, the Bennu bird noticed the goat was perched on a rocky ledge, its eyes fixed on the approaching bird. The goat snickered, knowing that it had scared off many animals before.

But the Bennu bird was not afraid. She landed on the ledge and stared straight at the goat. The two animals locked eyes for a moment, neither of them backing down.

Suddenly, the goat charged forward with its sharp horns aimed straight at the bird. The Bennu bird dodged to the side, but the goat was quick and relentless. It continued to charge, its hooves pounding against the rocky ground.

The Bennu bird flew into the air, narrowly avoiding the goat's horns. She swooped down and pecked at the goat's back, but the goat was too tough and brushed off the attack. It lunged forward again, determined to defeat the bird.

The two animals battled on the rocky ledge, each refusing to give up. The Bennu bird used her wings and sharp talons to defend herself, while the goat used its brute strength and sharp horns to attack.

As the battle raged on, the Bennu bird began to feel exhausted. She had never used her wings to such a degree. It was clear that the goat was stronger and more powerful than the bird had anticipated.

But the Bennu bird refused to give up. She drew on her inner strength and resilience, and with a burst of energy, she finally defeated the goat.

The bird emerged victorious, but it was battered and bruised. As she gazed out at the breathtaking view from the mountaintop, she knew that the battle had been worth it. She had faced a powerful adversary and emerged stronger for it. From that day on, the Bennu bird was known as a fearless and resilient creature, one that could overcome any challenge that came her way. For this reason, she called herself, Andrea.

The climb back down took longer than the climb up, due to her injuries, but by the time Andrea reached the bottom she was healthy. She had a name, a little wisdom, and strong wings. She had a better idea of how long her life would be, she didn't want to waste any time getting to the next mountain.

The second mountain was the largest of the three, she knew she could only fly up so much of it. At the bottom was another carving. "Chaos comes in many forms; it can fly higher than you and its words are like fire." These words filled her with fear and curiosity. She was just under the peak of her lifespan, young and strong, but old enough to prepare. Andrea looked back at her nest and had a little more compassion for the rocking chair. She stood strong, flapped her long red wings, and started the ascent.

In a rush, she flew over half of the mountain and missed all it had to offer. Unlike the first mountain, she only saw blurry images of the flowers and animals from an aerial view. Andrea was almost $\frac{3}{4}$ up the mountain when the air got too thin. She could no longer fly, and she had to climb at a slow pace. The ascent of the last quarter took longer than the entire first mountain.

Almost to the top, she saw another carved message. "Andrea, the brave Bennu bird, had always been fascinated by the stories of the dragon that guarded the peak of the mountain. Many animals had attempted to climb the mountain to reach the dragon's lair, but none had ever returned."

"I have never heard of any dragon, could this story really be about me? It is my name, is this my story?", she thought.

But Andrea was determined to reach the top of the mountain. She knew that it would be a dangerous and difficult journey, but her curiosity and sense of adventure drove her forward.

As she climbed higher and higher, Andrea noticed that the air was growing thinner and the winds were becoming stronger. She was still able to fly, but only for a small amount of time, and not very high. But continued to press forward, her wings and talons carrying her higher and higher.

Finally, she reached the top of the mountain and came face to face with the dragon. Its scales glinted in the sunlight, and its fiery breath sent shivers down Andrea's spine.

But Andrea was not afraid. She drew on her inner strength and resilience, and with a fierce cry, she launched herself at the dragon.

The dragon swung its massive tail, trying to knock Andrea out of the sky, but the bird was too quick. She dodged to the side and launched a series of attacks with her sharp talons and beak.

The dragon fought back with its sharp claws and fiery breath, but Andrea refused to give up. She flew circles around the dragon, darting in and out of range, and slowly but surely, she began to wear the dragon down.

Finally, with a final flurry of attacks, Andrea defeated the dragon. The massive creature collapsed to the ground, defeated but not dead.

Andrea stood over the fallen dragon, breathing heavily but victorious. She had proven that even the most fearsome creatures could be defeated with bravery, determination, and a bit of cunning.

Standing at the top of the mountain, she gazed at the most beautiful sight she could ever imagine, but something bothered her. She knew she skipped over the beauties of the journey; she knew she missed the mountainside. For this reason, she decided to climb back down and not fly.

After witnessing all the beauties of the mountain, she reached the bottom. She was much older now and was feeling pain in her body. She looked at her nest with new eyes. The rocking chair looked very inviting, to a bird with pains from adventure. Andrea knew she had one adventure left. The last mountain was the smallest but faced the sun. There was no doubt it would show the side of the world she had never witnessed.

At the bottom of the mountain was another carved message. "He was the most cunning of all the animals, he had mastered death and rebirth." She was beginning to have a good idea of the author for all these messages.

At her age, she had to pick and choose when to fly, for she feared the ability would not be with her long. It took her a very long time to get up the mountain. She spent more time admiring the flowers and creatures on this mountain. Andrea found herself loving more, and feeling more than ever before. Finally, she reached the top, she knew she didn't have much time left. Just before the top, was another sign.

"Andrea was an old Bennu bird, a legendary creature known for her regenerative powers and connection to the sun. She had spent her short life exploring the mountains that surrounded her home, but now she could no longer fly due to her advanced age. One day, as she hobbled along the rocky slopes, she spotted a large snake coiled on a boulder....."

Before she could read anymore, she was interrupted by a pair of red eyes in the shadow of the sign. The snake hissed and lunged at her with its fangs bared, and Andrea realized that she was facing a formidable opponent.

Despite her physical limitations, Andrea refused to back down from the challenge. She knew that her intelligence and cunning could help her win the battle.

As the snake circled her, Andrea engaged in a battle of wits. She used her knowledge of the mountain terrain to outmaneuver the snake, ducking behind rocks and using her sharp beak to strike when the snake came too close.

For hours they fought, their movements becoming more and more frenzied as the sun began to set behind the mountains. But Andrea refused to give up. She knew that her experience had taught her how to outsmart even the most dangerous opponents.

Finally, as the last rays of sunlight disappeared, Andrea saw her chance. She spotted a narrow crevice between two rocks and lured the snake towards it. With a sudden burst of speed, she lunged forward and pushed the snake into the crevice, trapping it with her powerful beak.

The snake thrashed and writhed, but Andrea held on tight. She knew that her strength and determination would see her through to victory.

Finally, with a fierce cry, Andrea emerged from the crevice, victorious. She may have been old and unable to fly, but her mind and spirit were as strong as ever. With the blows she gave the snake, she was sure he had died. She hobbled the last few feet up to the peak.

With old eyes in age, but new eyes in wisdom, she gazed at the most beautiful sight she had ever seen. Her heart was filled, but she knew she had one more thing to do. She turned to go down the trail and noticed something strange where the snake's body was. It was just the skin of the snake, and a

serpentine pattern in the dust proved he was still alive. She smiled with love and whispered, "I'll see you again, my old friend".

Andrea used her last bit of energy to sore down the mountain. The landing was very rough on her fragile body, but she managed to hobble over to her rocking chair. She chiseled a message in the wood of the chair and sit down. The chair that symbolized complaisance now represented something different. It was her next journey. As she slowly closed her eyes, she was engulfed in a beautiful flame of many colors.

After the flames slowly disappeared, a young Bunnu bird opened her eyes. She had no memory of how she got there, nor did she have anyone around her. As she looked back at her nest, she noticed a message in the chair.

"Your name is Andrea, and you are capable of anything. Remember, life is full of endless possibilities and opportunities for growth and transformation. Embrace each day with an open heart and a positive mindset, and you will find that the journey of life is as beautiful as the journey of death".