

Actaeon

One hot summer's day a long time ago, a rich youth called Actaeon was out in the forest with his friends and bloodthirsty dogs, hunting stags and any creature of the forest that came across their path. After hours of hunting and slaughtering petrified animals Actaeon and his friends took a rest and sat under a tree, on the roots that stuck up from the ground to rest their weary limbs! Actaeon was sitting under the tree sipping his water when he heard the most beautiful noise he had ever heard! The voice of a Goddess singing harmonies while she bathed!

Of course at the time Actaeon did not know any of this, so as he was a curious type he followed his gut and started to chase after the sound of the goddess's beautiful voice, he couldn't resist swaying to the tune as he walked. As Actaeon got closer to the sound he heard other sounds, the sound of water flowing and little giggles and squeaks but these other peculiar sounds did not scare or distract him, he kept on following the sound of the goddess's beautiful voice. At last Actaeon reached the place where the goddess was splashing in the shallows!

Actaeon rubbed his eyes many times over. He could not believe what he was seeing, she was so beautiful and stark naked, the goddess of wild animals and the hunt, Artemis. She was bathing in a spring with a fountain flowing over her head and her nymphs and servants surrounding her. He could not move, he was frozen to the spot, like he was stuck inside a block of ice. He fell instantly in love with Artemis. Actaeon stayed and watched as she bathed, not even thinking of the consequences if he was caught for he could not resist her and the sound of her voice. Although after minutes of intense watching Actaeon was at last spotted by the nymphs. All giggles of joy and sense of happiness were gone, all that was left was fear!

The nymphs all gathered around the naked goddess, trying to cover her upper body but it was no

use for the goddess was tall and the nymphs covered nothing more than a single breast, the goddess flushed red with embarrassment and turned her back on him! The goddess wished him dead that second for no one should ever stare at a goddess like he was (especially when bathing). The goddess started to shake with anger and fury, she turned her head to face him, “run along” she shouted “run along and tell your friends how you saw a goddess naked!” Although she had no weapons in her hands, without a second thought she splashed a handful of the enchanted water at Actaeon transforming him into a handsome stag!

Actaeon could feel his body changing, he panicked as pain rushed through his body, he even screamed for help but it was no use for all that came out was the sound of a stag in agony, which to his misfortune alerted the hunting party and his dogs. Actaeon trembled he could hardly walk, a second ago he was a man but now he was a four legged beast with no dignity! As he found his balance he felt the ground trembling below his feet, THE DOGS WERE COMING!!!!

Actaeon's legs started to move, they got quicker and quicker, he couldn't stop himself from looking back and when he did all he could see were the faces of six once-loved pets with their tongues out and drool pouring from their mouths ready to pounce. He turned his head back and continued to gallop, winding round the nettles and prickly bushes he passed. His heart felt like a heavy stone weighing him down. He couldn't take it much longer, his legs began to slow him down, but he wasn't going to give up and pushed himself as hard as he could but it was no use, the dogs were gaining on him! The time had come....

The dogs caught up to Actaeon, jumping on top of him so he fell to the ground with a thud. The dogs jumped on top of him trampling all over his body, making him howl like a wolf. Seconds later the rest of the party arrived with their bows and spears to hand! Actaeon looked into their eyes and saw himself, but he wasn't himself he was a beast.

All of a sudden Actaeon could feel a sharp pain in his back. It was like he was being stabbed in the back with daggers, the dogs ripped away at his skin and flesh grinding him down to his cold hard bone. Before Actaeon died he opened his eyes, one final time, and looked around him at his friends and dogs and then he gave a final bellow of agony.....



