

Arraúl's Odyssey

Once upon a time there was a kingdom called Marim, an enchanted place of leafy pine forests, in the heart of the Ria Formosa, ruled by Leía and Arraúl.

However, when the couple failed to have children, the shadows Sadness, Bitterness, Wrath, Fear, Discord and Discouragement took over, turning everyone to stone and plunging the kingdom into darkness.

Arraúl managed to escape, taking refuge in the domains of his friend Zephyrus, the West wind. The shadows were a very powerful foe and only Hope, Friendship, Respect, Joy, Determination and Courage light spheres, combined with the strenght of Zeus, the Greek God, could defeat them.

The hero left at night, brightened by Hope. He didn't like asking favors to the one who had destroyed his homeland Atlantis, but he had no choice.

After completing a first stop in Anapote¹, Esuri's capital, where he was gifted the sphere of Friendship, the atlantean continued along the coast, trying to cross the columns of Hercules² without being spotted by the greedy giant Geryon.

Even though the monster was lurking, the King of Marim felt no scare. Insightful, he convinced him to look for a huge piece of gold on the ocean floor.

Seeing himself deceived, Geryon's fury aroused a heavy storm, sinking Arraúl's boat. The hero was saved by Tounarouz, the whale who had rescued him from the atlantean disaster. They were close to Gourbata, an opulent city in North Africa.

There, Arraúl encountered selfishness and intolerance. He was helped by Olhão, a child whose dream was to find his parents. From then on they would join efforts!

One day, when the sultan's son fell seriously ill, the hero offered his services. He knew about medicine and, despite everyone's distrust, ended up saving prince's life.

¹ Present day Ayamonte (Spain)

² Present day Stait of Gibraltar

The ruler covered himself with shame, but he had learned his lesson. So he decided to offer them a ship and the solemn sphere of Respect. They would head north towards Cape Accra.

The strange headland was a desolate place, dominated by dangerous volcanic structures. Up above, an old man was shouting old hatreds at Zeus. How could an atlantean bow down to the God who annihilated his own people? He tried to convince them to give up, but Arraúl's spirit prevailed. He would not give in to pride or resentment.

It was in Alacante³, a port on the spanish coast, that they found new clues. These indicated the way to the Pitiusas' Islands⁴. Nevertheless, a sinister danger awaited them on the crossing.

Obedient to the shadows, the goddess Eurybia stirred the heavens and stirred the waters; that's when Tounarouz returned, leading them out of harm's way.

Still not recovered from the fright, Olhão discovered a group of bandits nearby, anchored off the island. The thieves made no threats; they were desperate; their captain had been bewitched and only the fearsome Cyclops Orgismenus had the antidote's key.

Those pirates wanted the use of force. Arraúl convinced them of a peaceful solution. He trusted the power of music, so instead of a sword he chose a lyre.

Against all expectations, musical notes' delicacy worked. With the cyclops' temper defeated, the captain was saved and joy took over. From that moment on, it would belong to the two heroes.

While seeking the remaining lights, Arraúl and Olhão reached Ares⁵, an overwhelming fortress, in the south present-day France, where unjust laws and pervert judges were kings.

Gran Valira was a storyteller, caught up by soldiers' intolerance. Olhão did not conform and the confrontation was inevitable. With a bit of luck, they managed to escape. In the company of this new friend they reached Taurini⁶, at the foot of Italian Alps.

³ Present day Alicante (Spain)

⁴ Present day Balearic Islands (Spain)

⁵ Present day Toulon (France)

⁶ Present day Turin (Italy)

This town was famous for the Anipérvlito's climb, an enormous mass of craggy stone where, at the top, the sphere of Determination shone.

For years, many had tried to win. For some reason, they all ended up failing. Sneaky, the boy discovered the reason: the demotivating screams from the public! The little boy advised his colleague to cover his ears with resin; Arraúl was surprised, but agreed.

The test was grueling. Once again, the other athletes gave up, but not the atlantean. Immune, he completed the challenge with will, rescuing Determination.

Those who would not give up were the forces of evil. In the chaos that followed, Mantus and Ochus kidnapped the boy. They were evil deities leading an army of demons.

Realizing it, Marim's king went to the rescue. Their dark fortress was well protected; unsurprisingly, he was captured.

The Etruscan⁷ god of the underworld enjoyed humiliating his victims, so he proposed the hero to play in a dishonest and biased game. Arraúl put confidence above fears. With intelligence, he overcame the challenges, irritating the one who had challenged him.

Unable to control his rage, Mantus rose to deliver a fatal blow. Gran Valira arrived just in time to avoid it; at the head of a group of brave men, he came to repay friendship!

The atlantean freed Olhão and together they followed river's course until they reach beautiful Razena⁸, pearl of the Adriatic Sea; they needed transport to take them to Greece.

Boarding Tipolemo, the two friends discovered the charms of several coastal towns. But danger always lurked and the ship ended up running aground in some shallows. Luckily, the whale came up again to save them. They were now on greek soil, a scene of contrasts, where mediterranean landscapes coexist with majestic icy mountains.

In Elis, the city-state that organized the Olympic Games, an event dedicated to Zeus, they discovered that those took place only every four years and were reserved for greeks; any attempt to enter the Olympia's sanctuary would be severely punished!

It didn't stop them. They knew the importance of finding the Alpheio's river mouth, even though the forest's density made it a difficult task.

⁷ Ancient italic civilization

⁸ Present day Ravenna

Then a wolf pup appeared. Affable and affectionate, he wanted to guide them through new moon's darkness. They followed him into a clearing, inhabited by the flickering of fireflies.

Arraúl walked the deserted place. He didn't have much faith. He was missing a light orb and he didn't know where to look for. That's when an old man blocked the way. They exchanged a few words. Where could Courage be? The old man pointed to his heart.

Suddenly, an intense glow emerged from hero's chest; the old man transformed. It was Zeus and he was willing to deliver divine fire.

The atlantean and the greek God chose forgiveness. Olhão learned the story of his past: he was a refugee and his parents had died in an unfortunate shipwreck. The boy wiped away the tears. He had felt for a long time that he had found someone capable of looking out for him. He would accompany him and together they would save Marim!

In fact, Arraúl couldn't understand that the son, for whom he had wished so much, was there, just a hug away; when the little boy got up the courage to call him father, he despised him.

Marim was in sight and the shadows were waiting, invulnerable to divine fire. Olhão rose from the deck, ready to sell defeat face to face. The momentum surprised the bad guys, but they ended up managing to throw him overboard. Trying to save the boy meant losing the flame; the king made a decision.

Against all odds, the atlantean rescued Olhão from the dark sea, carrying him to the beach in his arms. He wasn't breathing; he was cold and inert, like Leia's figure, turned to stone. Shadows surrounded him. They longed for a tragic end. Arraúl looked to Heavens and asked for his son's life.

The words ignited an infinite fire. Coming from Anapote, the Esuri rushed over the tenebrous ones, making good triumph over evil. The darkness faded, and in its place came a wonderful spring day. They were all saved!

A year later, Leia gave birth to a baby girl named Quelfes. She was the symbol of an eternal truce between the greeks and the atlanteans. In his name, the Olympic Gods invited all children of mankind to celebrate a new era of peace and friendship: the Quelfes Games!