I doubt you’ve ever been sent on a quest to retrieve a magical necklace guarded by a hostile four-headed reptilian creature, but if you’ve have, you would understand how truly terrifying it is. I mean, how can a thing like that possibly be friendly? It’s not like it’s going to greet us cheerfully and say,

“Oh, you’re here to steal the precious necklace that I dedicate all my time and effort into guarding, and ensuring its safety? Yeah, sure, take it.”

Hopefully, it wouldn’t be as hostile towards us as Annabeth described, because her prediction was not quite as optimistic.

It had been a week of walking through the dry desert of Arizona until we finally came upon the area where the necklace was supposedly kept. We cautiously crept down the steep tunnel that formed the entrance to the cave. It was so dark that we could hardly see three feet in front of us. And unfortunately, the ceiling was too low for me to try to use Anakalusmos as a source for light, because if I tried to, I would probably impale Grover.

The silence of the tunnel was broken by a sudden crumbling of dirt, “It shouldn’t be too much farth- ahhh!”

It sounded like Annabeth had fallen into some sort of deep hole, because her voice faded as she fell. About thirty seconds or so later, there was a loud splash. I hoped it was water she had fallen into. The splash echoed, and I assumed the hole opened up into a larger cave. She verified that it was safe to jump, so Grover and I both leapt down. The fall had to be at least forty feet, and it was fine for me. I slid down the side of the tunnel until it widened into the cavern, and then fell the rest of the way down, landing with a small splash. On the other hand, Grover waved his arms frantically, screaming as he fell at a quickening speed. He landed with a very painful sounding belly flop, and a huge splash that left ripples in the water.

Grover crossed his arms, “They said nothing about swimming in the job description.”

The ceiling was about forty or so feet above us, with huge stalactites hanging down. Eerie fog hung in the air, intensifying the creep factor. Even Annabeth, who was usually brave, seemed kind of freaked out. Water filled most of the cave, but there was a small ledge by the side that was dry, and had a small camp fire going. It almost was like the water was glowing slightly, because the vibrant turquoise color didn’t seem natural. But other than the fire’s light, and the faint glow of the water, it was pretty dark.

The silence and tranquility made it seem like the necklace’s guardian was either on Christmas vacation, or was hiding from us.

“Have any clue where this thing might be?” Grover asked. I shook my head.

“I think it’s supposed to be on some sort of podium,” Annabeth replied.

We swam around for a bit, searching for any hidden doors or entrances, but all we could find was moss, vines, and various types of exotic flowers. And right when I felt like giving up, the silence was pierced by a shrill shrieking sound. I snapped my head in the direction of the sound. Suddenly, a large four-headed reptilian creature emerged from the water. Its roar clearly showed that it was not thrilled about our intrusion. But, I mean, if I was that ugly, I would be pretty grumpy too. It looked like the thing was a child of the Hydra, a komodo dragon, and a wart-covered toad.

“Oh gods, oh gods. It’s Onyx, one of the three Cretian Water Dragons still left. Be careful of its poison!” Annabeth called out.

“Here, froggy, froggy,” Grover cooed, which probably wasn’t the best idea. The dragon turned towards Grover and spewed a black sticky from two of its heads. He dove underwater, just barely able to dodge it. I managed to create a wave of water for me to stand on, about ten feet high, and uncapped Riptide, holding it high above my head.

“Annabeth, create a distraction!” I called out to her.

She slipped her Yankees cap onto her head, disappearing from view. Quickly, she swam over to the dry ledge and began throwing pebbles at the creature, attempting to distract it.

In the short time I had, I carefully moved my wave over to behind the monster, nearly falling off a few times. I leaped off my wave and landed on its scaly back. It roared, trying to shake me off, but I somehow managed to hold on. Its head to the far right turned and snapped at me, almost nipping my arm. I managed to get a swipe at it, but my sword clinked off its hard protective scales.

“Uh, Annabeth, how do we kill this thing?” I yelled to her, starting to panic.

“It has to have a weak spot somewhere. Like Achilles had his tendon that was his vulnerability, Onyx has to have one somewhere.” She replied, diving into the water.

In the corner of my eye, I saw Grover starting to climb up one of the walls, but I didn’t have time to ask what he was doing. Annabeth swam beneath the dragon, her dagger ready. But she couldn’t swim fast enough, one of its heads used its teeth to grab the back of her shirt, and lifted her out of the water.

“P-Percy! Do something!” She screamed, not taking much enjoyment in being flung about.

The dragon continued to hiss and bite at us,

There was a sudden bang, and Grover swung in, hanging onto a vine. He let out a yell that sounded like a failed attempt at imitating Tarzan. If our lives weren’t being threatened, I would’ve laughed. He grabbed my arm, and Annabeth’s leg, pulling us away from the vicious creature. Before we crashed into one of the stalactites, Grover let go and we all fell. Luckily, I managed to create a current to break our fall. If I hadn’t we would’ve been flattened like demigod and satyr pancakes. Annabeth put her cap back on and dove back underwater, for a second attempt at finding its weak spot. All Grover and had to do was distract it until Annabeth was done. Yeah, well, that’s not so easy.

I created some waves, to try to disorient the creature. That worked for a little bit, but then it just went underwater. Grover jumped into the water and started swimming around, attempting to avoid having his tail become the dragon’s lunch. After a few minutes of that, Annabeth finally found it. She lodged her dagger into the small vulnerable area in its scaly armor, and a loud roar of pain filled the cavern. It echoed against the walls. Annabeth emerged from the water and removed her cap. The dragon splashed around, wailing like a banshee. The sound made my ears want to climb back into my head. As it sank to the bottom, a hole in the stone wall opened, revealing a wide opening.

“Good job, wise girl.” I said, high fiving her.

“And you, too. Grover.” He frowned, trying to pat his matted wet fur dry.

We retrieved the jeweled necklace from its podium, and I held it up in victory. This would make a cool story to tell Chiron.