

The Quest of Hedgehog Bobus

Bobus vs Spike in the Labyrinth

By Tilly P

“Pop, pop, click, click, hooray for Bobus and Spike!”

In the shining moonlight, Baron Von Mercury of Mulchspittle Cove stood proudly on the top of his upturned bucket. He announced the two finalists about to compete for Princess Ariadne’s hand in marriage inside the mighty and dangerous labyrinth. In his elevated position, he saw a sea of excited hedgehogs bobbing up and down, forming a rippling quill wave.

Then, the sea of quills parted into two halves to let the finalists through to the front, as the opening ceremony unfolded.

The first finalist to enter through the crowd was Spike, strutting around in a cloak of bright coppers, crimson fires and golden-brown leaves. The crowd gasped in awe at its daring colours of daylight. A black slimy grin began to spread underneath Baron Von Mercury’s snout as he saw the cunning design – a fox! A very fearful, stealthy fox that looked like it was about to POUNCE!

The Baron’s croaky voice continued: “Indeed, speed and skill will be needed and tremendous courage whilst inside this very mighty labyrinth, for as we all know, dangers lurk in every direction. Not even forgetting, my dear Mulchspittlians, the notorious speed of the beast with roller crushers. We have not yet had a single hedgehog return alive from this strange and deathly silent labyrinth.” The young hedgehogs quivered in fear while their mothers petted them, coaxing their tiny scrunched up faces to come out.

The Baron jumped right down from his bucket to receive his son, Spike.

Next out was Bobus, adorned by a lustrous cloak of regal purple leaves, intricately woven with glistening silvery spider thread. In the magical moonlight, the spider thread shimmered into a field of flashing stars. The spectators now rose on their chubby hind legs, displaying a crowd of

twitching noses, as a roar of cheers and a stamping of feet among the hedgehog community arose to a deafening pitch.

Baron Von Mercury was becoming impatient. So, with a furtive look around him and an agile flick of his fat little wrist, he sneakily pushed into his son's hand a small acorn cup full of Hibernation Dust. The Baron whispered, "Spike, my dear son, I have confidence in you. Remember the plan. Once the King hands over his daughter to you in marriage, you will be next in line to have power over Mulchspittle Cove. Pick that precious moment wisely to sprinkle the Hibernation Dust over Bobus and gain speed into the labyrinth. The King is overprotective and keeps Ariadne hidden away in the chambers, buried deep inside the labyrinth. Make haste Spike!"

The Baron knew that his son was not at all as fit as the streamlined Bobus. He had been spoilt with too many nectar-basted slugs and the comfort of a soft weasel pelt for his soft bed.

"Roll back the stone from the entrance to the labyrinth!" The snap-dragons trumpeted.

"On your marks.... **GOOOOOO!**"

At first, Spike scampered ahead into the darkness, mud flying from his jerky, tiny feet. Bobus followed with a flurry of his cloak. Both had been running for miles. Spike out in front, Bobus close behind. Spike's chest was starting to tighten. He was built for short sprints but not for running long distances. He started to feel anxious about Bobus overtaking him. He would have to use the Hibernation Dust before he was overtaken by Bobus. So, turning a corner, he waited silently in the shadows, ready for Bobus.

Before Bobus knew what hit him, Spike had flung the Hibernation Dust into his eyes. "Ow, ow, ow," cried Bobus, giving out a most terrifying squeal. The dust was stinging his eyes. He staggered forward. The last thing Bobus saw was a cunning design of a fox on Spike's cloak dashing away.

Bobus soon drifted off into a deep sleep. Only to be awoken a few hours later by a warm rejuvenating feeling creeping back into his aching muscles and then a spider looking closely into his eye. "Hello," whispered the spider soothingly. "I discovered your energising slug juice under your cloak and poured it all over you. It went on like a warm sticky sauce over a roast bee dinner...mmm, yummy. Oh, I am sorry, my mind is as wandering as webs sometimes. You see,

I followed you into the labyrinth. I witnessed the dirty trick played on you, so I came to you quickly.” Bobus was now standing up, feeling as strong as iron, looking down at this tremendously kind spider. “Thank you ... but I fear Spike has gained so much ground on me that he surely must have already discovered the chambers holding Princess Ariadne.”

“That is where you are mostly mistaken,” chuckled the spider. “Look into the distance, and you will see every now and again, Spike running back and fore like a headless fox, up and down the same tunnel. He is confused and lost. Come on, let’s go, we have got time ... I know these tunnels well, like the back of my eight feet – that is to say, if I *still* had eight legs. I lost two in a tunnel.”

Before Bobus could collect his thoughts, the roof was starting to cave in overhead, exposing the horror of gigantic rollers of a deathly beast. “QUICK! Dive under my cloak!” In an avalanche of mud, they started to roll and rock together down one tunnel and then another towards a ravine. Falling forever it seemed through the chaos of sound and debris until they smashed straight through the very same door to the secret chamber that held Princess Ariadne.

“Bobus you’ve really done it! You have found the lovely Princess Ariadne. And Look!” chuckled the surprised spider. “My silvery web trail has been made illuminous from your slug juice. It will guide us home to Mulchspittle Cove.”

“Pop, Pop, Click, Click, Hooray!” they all cheered.