

## CHAPTER THREE

# THE CHOSEN ONE

“EVERYONE, DOWN ON YOUR KNEES!” ordered one of the soldiers. He pushed Milus into the sand with the butt of his spear.



The soldier, who was obviously in command, stepped forward to examine the strange animals, his red and white striped headpiece flapping in the wind. He prodded Julius with his spear.

“Who are you that enters our land UNINVITED?” he barked.

One of the other soldiers called out from behind, “And what a mess you’ve made of our beach!”

All the other soldiers nodded and grumbled in agreement.

The commander leant in towards Julius, “Yes,” he rasped, “and what a horrible mess you have made of our beautiful beach.”



“Look, we’re sorry about your beach,” said Julius, “but we arrived here by accident. We were SHIPWRECKED!”

“PAH!” the commander scoffed, forcing Julius to the ground. “A likely story! You are SPIES, and in Egypt we KILL all spies!”

Cornelius slapped his forehead. “EGYPT! Of course! I knew it!”

“No, you didn’t!” retorted Julius crossly. “You said *Africa!*”

“Egypt is IN Africa!” corrected Cornelius. “So I think you’ll find I WAS right!”

“I’m with Julius,” interjected Felix. “You can’t take credit just by saying a whole CONTINENT; that’s cheating!”



“I think you’ll find it WAS a competition!” Felix said indignantly. “I personally said we were in Greece and Rufus said we were in Carthage. We ALL had a go!”

“Well, if it was a competition,” agreed Cornelius, “what was the prize, hmm?”

Felix looked blank for a moment. “Er ... a starfish?”  
“You’ve just MADE that UP!” protested Cornelius.



“I don’t know where you spies are from,”  
thundered the commander, “but it must be a land full  
of IDIOTS!!!”

“Actually, Mr Soldier, sir,” said Julius, “we’re  
not idiots from Idiotland; we are GLADIATORS,  
FUGITIVES from ROME!”

The soldiers nearly choked.

“Yeah, and you’d better not mess with this one,”  
added Cornelius, pointing at Julius. “He’s their world-  
famous CHAMPION!”



The commander wiped a tear from his eye. “That  
is possibly the funniest joke I have ever heard, beast.  
I am going to be VERY sorry when we have to kill  
you.”

Julius quickly grabbed two big sticks and adopted  
an attacking stance.



The commander stepped back, shocked and wide-eyed.

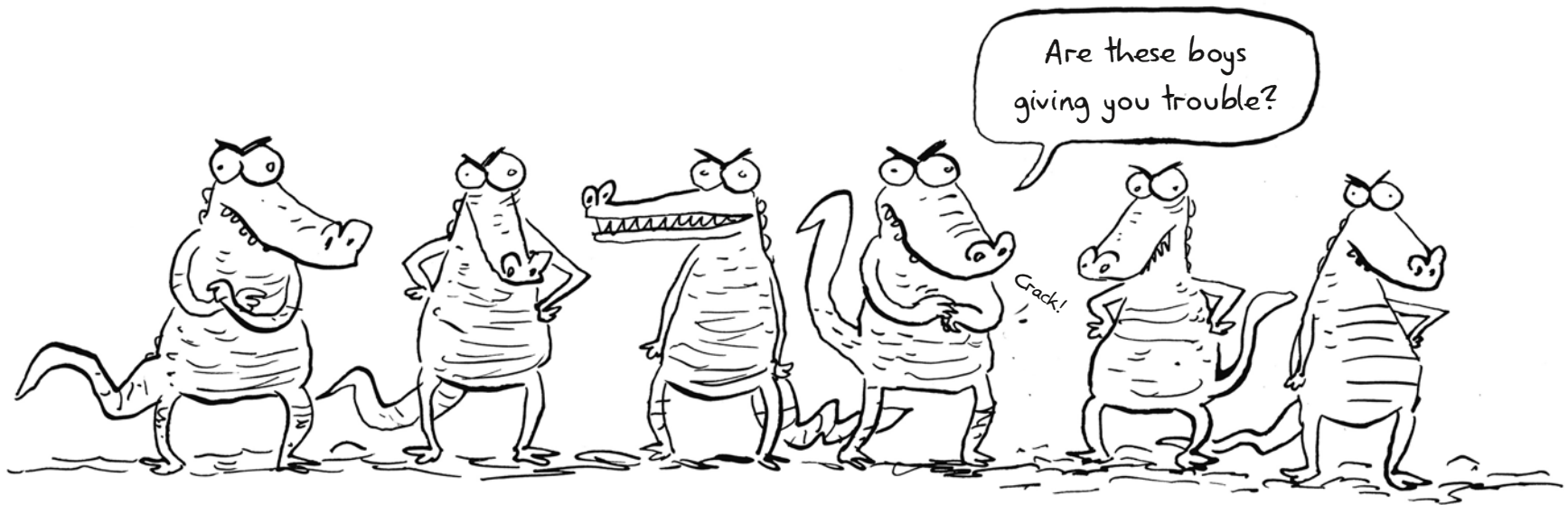
“Good work!” whispered Cornelius. “You’ve caught them off guard!”



The commander shook his head in disbelief. “No, no! Don’t be RIDICULOUS! He couldn’t possibly be...”

He didn’t complete his sentence; instead he narrowed his eyes and thrust his spear at the zebra. “For a horse, you are either very brave, or very, very stupid,” he spat.

“Oh, don’t YOU start! I’m not a horse; I’m a—” But, before Julius could finish, he became aware of the ground shuddering underfoot. Startled, he quickly spun round.



Julius waved them away. "No, it's OK, thank you," he said gratefully. "This isn't anything I can't handle!"

The crocodiles bowed dutifully and stood back as requested.

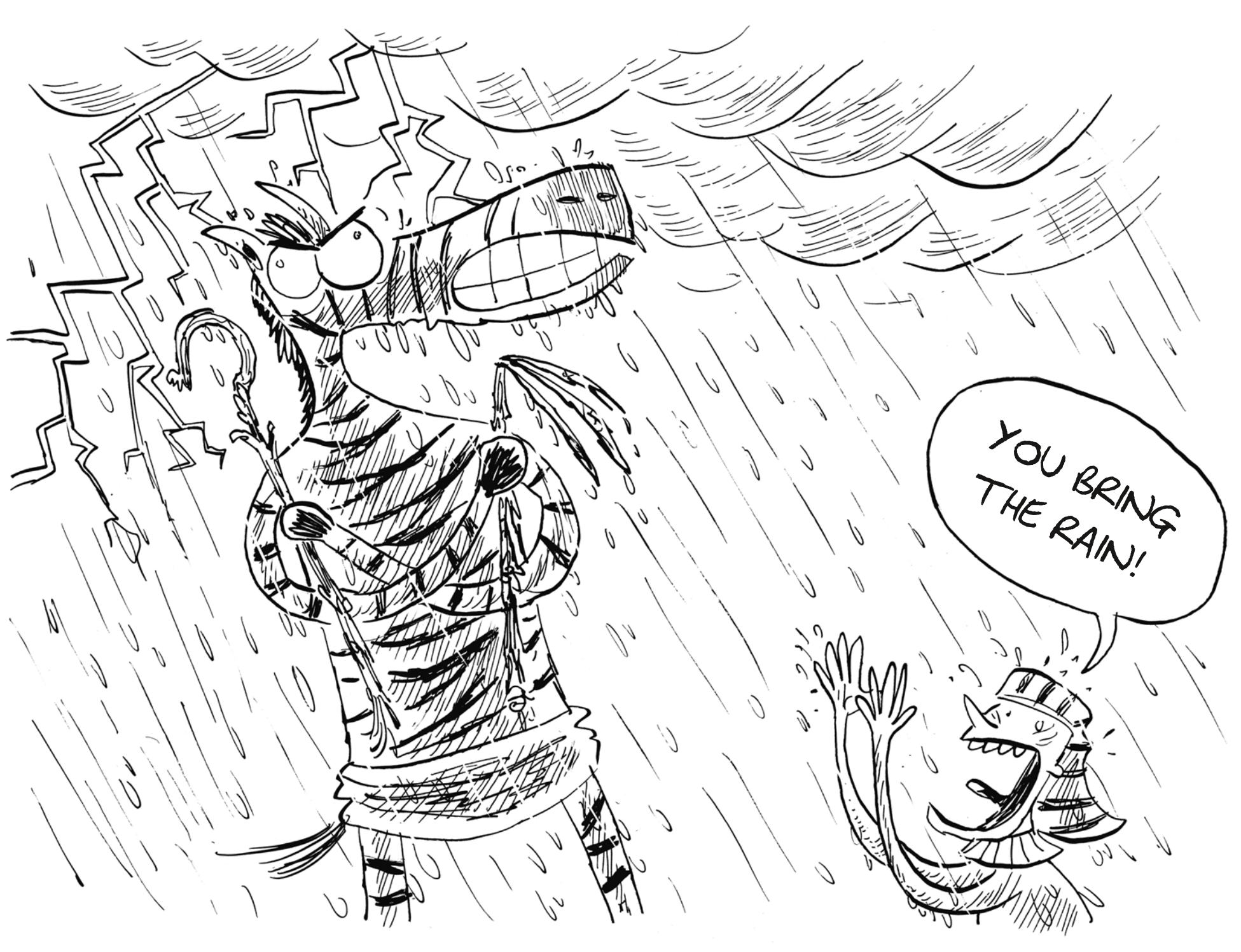
The frightened soldiers were flabbergasted.

"Who are you that enters our lands, bears the symbols of our long-dead pharaohs and commands the crocodiles?" cried one of them.

"Look," Julius said, raising his arms. "I just want everything to be cool!" And he gave them a big friendly smile.

Suddenly, as if on cue, dark storm clouds gathered overhead, there was a crack of thunder and the skies opened with a huge downpour of rain.





YOU BRING  
THE RAIN!

“Oh, he’s good at that!” laughed Felix. “You should have seen him in Britannia. It rained everywhere he went!”

The soldiers threw themselves down at Julius’s hooves. “Then it is as we suspected! You are the bringer of good fortune; you are THE CHOSEN ONE returned!”



“Now I’ve seen EVERYTHING!” Milus scoffed, laughing uncontrollably.

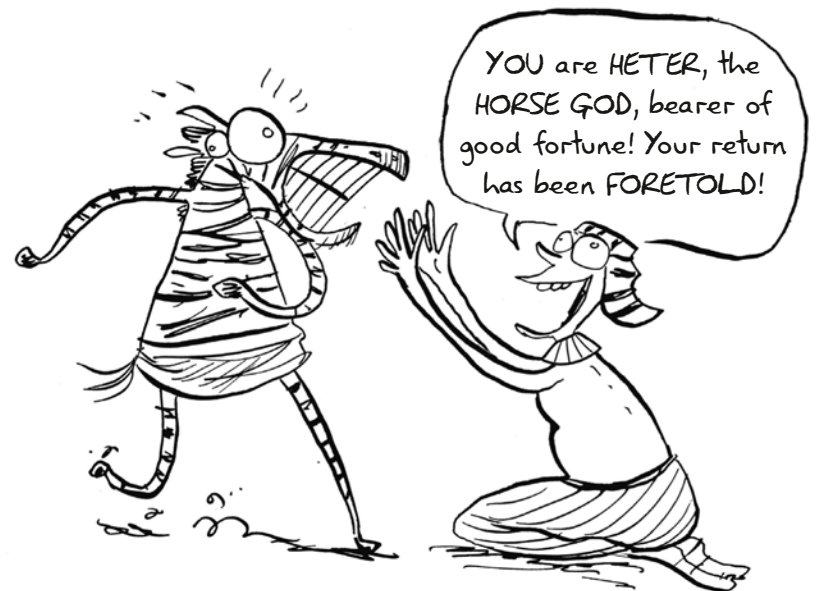
“But I don’t understand,” said Cornelius. “Why do you think HE is the Chosen One?”

“Because he brings the RAIN!” said one of the soldiers.

“But surely you must have had lots of rain during last night’s storm?” Cornelius was very confused.

The soldier shook his head. “The storm at sea never reached our shores. Our crops are failing, but HETER has renewed our HOPE! He has answered our prayers!”

Julius was feeling even more perplexed. “HETER? Who’s HETER?”



“Did ... did he just call me a horse?” Julius protested. “I’m nothing like a horse!”

The commander turned to one of his soldiers. “Make haste to Alexandria. Tell them to begin preparations!”

