

Artemis Vs. Zen: An unexpected situation

Zen followed Artemis into the woods that night. Zen felt the tension she emitted despite the cold air. He felt she was angry with him for having left the lab, but Zen couldn't handle that situation anymore. He didn't even remember how he got out in the first place. At that time Zen knew she wasn't trying to harm him but he was close to dying in there. The long walk gave Zen a lot of time to think as he moved silently and undetected. How would he apologize for what he did? Even though Zen felt he did nothing wrong, he could sense Artemis' anger and this made him feel guilty.

Artemis stopped in the middle of a clear opening. The wind was blew loudly that night. "I don't know who you are but I can smell you. Come out here now and stop hiding."

Zen came out from the shadows of the trees and after taking a glance at him, Artemis put her face in her hands and groaned.

"Go away Vulpisdeum, I'm not in the mood right now. It's a full moon and... just leave."

"Sorry," Zen thought, speaking to Artemis' mind. "When can I come back later?"

Artemis looked stunned for a moment, and then shook her head. "I don't want to see you for a long time and I don't know want to hurt you for what you did to me."

Zen nodded his head and began thinking about all the stuff he did in the past. Artemis watched irritated, wanting him to leave. *"I'm sorry but I don't know what I did."* He responded, titling his head as usual.

Artemis dashed instantly and punched a tree to the right of Zen. Although Zen's face never changed expression, his body trembled in that instant, shaken by the fact that he couldn't have moved fast enough to dodge the blow. His trembling stopped just as quickly as it began. Artemis told Zen once again to leave and backed up after making an imprint on the tree.

"What did I do to make you angry with me?" Zen thinks.

She sighed. "Technically you did nothing wrong. It's my fault for trying to mess with you, but because of my mistake I'm out of the job and can't do anything about it."

"Can't you get a new 'job'?"

Although she laughed ironically (to Zen it seemed like a normal one) underneath that smile Zen could feel Artemis getting angrier.

"Vulpisdeum, do you understand why I'm like this?"

"Is it because I left? I didn't mean to and-" he trails off for a second, trying to remember how he left. He looks at Artemis and his thoughts change to a more childish tone. *"And I don't remember how I did it."*

"Listen," Artemis said, trying to maintain her composure. "I know what I did and I'm sorry but because you reacted in the way you did, I lost my job and I'm angry."

"Let it out," Zen thought immediately, as if struck by a simple solution. "Let your anger out and you'll be calm again."

"If I do, you might die," Artemis cautioned.

"Oh I was killed once and that didn't work. If you let it out, you'll feel better." Zen's head and ears drooped. "I don't like seeing people upset, and it kills me knowing that I caused it."

Artemis, who gave up trying to convince Zen to leave, shook her head. "Fine, I'll let it out, but stay out of my way."

Zen retreated to the top of the same tree Artemis left a mark on and watched. Artemis walked to the middle of the field and looked straight at the full moon. The wind blew steadily and Zen sensed the changes happen to her. Artemis began to grunt and the sound of her skull cracked as her antlers began to shrink down, her nose and mouth grew longer, her teeth became fangs and she let out a massive roar. Although Zen didn't read her mind, he knew the physicist Artemis was gone and a beast emerged from her, the wolf form of her lupindeer ancestry.

She let out a roar and began clawing at trees, relieving as much anger as she could under the full moon's influence. Zen watched for hours, but he still felt something strange. From his mental connection with Artemis before she transformed, he could sense her anger towards him and up to this point it hadn't decreased. Zen wanted to help her relieve her true anger but realized he might die again. He was still inexperienced in fighting and even though he fought a beast in the clouds, he still didn't understand how to summon that courage, power, and focus as before. Suddenly an idea popped into his head and he put it into action.

Artemis was still on a rampage and continued to claw away at random trees. In the midst of her destruction, she saw Zen stand in front of a tree that she was aiming for. Her mental reasoning was gone and after seeing Zen's face, her anger grew. He rushed towards him and swung her claws at his face. Zen was frightened, but knew of no better way to calm her down. He stood still and as her arm came down for a strike, Zen's imagination took flight. Before the claws reached his face, he imaged a small but powerful bubble form between his face and her claw. When she made contact, there was no damage but the impact was enough to knock Zen over as if receiving the hit with full force. In that moment, Artemis regained some level of consciousness and recoiled. Zen's connection to her mind proved that he was right. If she didn't relieve her anger by attacking him, she'll never get calm again.

Zen got up and proceeded to try and provoke her. Thinking back, he summoned the staff he used to fight against Dark Zen and began poking Artemis. He was careful in avoiding her by jumping back every time he did so. The anger in Artemis rose to new heights and she began slashing, howling, breathing heavily, and became focused on killing Zen. She went for a leap at Zen, and as she slowly descended on him for a final blow, Zen closed his eyes and in seconds, duplicated himself. Now two Zen's stood on opposite sides, poking her at a distance. Artemis continued to lash out at both of them but their distance from her helped them to escape her attacks. She finally set her sights on attacking one of the Zen's. Zen continued to back up but bumped into a tree. Artemis struck out with a finishing blow and slashed him across the chest. He was a fake.

That Zen turned to ashes and faded into nothingness. Zen couldn't hold focus on that Zen for too long and he stood in the middle of the field waiting for Artemis to notice he was the only one standing. Artemis turned around. Fueled by rage, she rushed at incredible speed towards him. Zen was prepared

and made certain he didn't harm her.

The fight was intense. Zen blocked as Artemis continued to lash out randomly. Zen could feel his methods working as he could sense Artemis beginning to tire and lose the stress of her anger. However, Zen was tiring as well. His movement slowed down and his grip on his staff began to loosen. Artemis delivered a powerful blow and knocked his staff into the air. Zen fell to the ground and Artemis growled as she raised a paw and aimed for Zen's face. She gave him a glance and stopped midway through her attack. Her senses began to return to her. Her hand came down to the ground and her antlers began to grow again. However, she was struggling to maintain her sanity and backed away from Zen. Zen stood up and watched as she was midway between her transformations. He walked towards her while she struggled. Mentally, Zen could see the images going through her head. He could see the office he destroyed, the way she was fired, and the pain in her eyes as she lost her job. He walked to her slowly and looked her dead in her eye. She had enough consciousness to realize what he was saying to her.

"I'm sorry," Zen thought, transferring it to her.

Artemis shed a tear and with those words he seemed to gain control of herself again. However, her emotions got the better of her. Her hand transformed back into a claw and delivered a fatal blow to Zen. Zen glided into the sky coming to a hard landing on the grass. Artemis looked at Zen and immediately her transformation dissolved. She was back to her lupinideer self. Her antlers returned, her paws turned to hands and her feet paws returned to hoofs. She ran to Zen, slid her hand under his head and tried to pull him up. In that moment, Zen turned to ashes and faded into the wind.

"I'm glad you came back," Zen thought to Artemis. Artemis turned around and saw Zen still in the tree. He had never left his spot. He suddenly felt dizzy, lost his balance, and fell out the tree landing near the bottom. Artemis ran to him, teary eyed.

"Zen I'm so sorry, can you forgive me?"

He shook and rubbed his head after landing. *"Are you still angry with me?"*

"No, I've forgiven you; even though you didn't do anything wrong. You've only made me feel peaceful. I don't even know why I was angry with you. Can you forgive me?"

Zen looked confused. *"I forgive you but I don't know why."* Artemis was baffled and blushed for a moment. *"You said you wanted to help me and through this I know some things I can do with dark matter. You were angry and now you're calm and you said you didn't know why you were angry, so what's there to forgive?"* Artemis chuckled then burst out into laughter. Zen flicked his ears and smiled.

"You're too nice Zen, too nice." She said.

They laughed for a little while, but Artemis felt she still needed to get some anger out. It was still a full moon night and she needed to give in to her instincts as a part wolf. Zen asked to stay with her and she agreed only if he was at a respectful distance. She asked Zen if he was hungry and while Zen said no, his stomach growled. Apparently Zen didn't eat after visiting his friends back in the city. Artemis said she'd return with food and when she did, Zen was sleeping, curled in a ball.