

## **The Riddle of the Sphinx**

*A famous Greek myth retold and dramatised by Ellie Hallett*



*Thebes (Θήβα) in ancient Greece was a rival city to Athens.*

*It was destroyed by Alexander the Great in 336BC.*

**Storyteller**

This is a deep and dark story about a riddle. It is probably one of the very first riddles ever recorded, for it comes from the time of Greek mythology, stories several thousand years old, and which have been handed down from one generation to the next.

Let me now draw you into the strange and wonderful world that is the setting for **The Riddle of the Sphinx**.

*(sits on a chair to one side of the audience in an inconspicuous place)*

*The Riddle of the Sphinx*

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|--------------------|---|
| <b>Sphinx</b>      | <p><i>(enters with a menacing stance and speaks to audience in a threatening manner)</i></p> <p><b>What creature has four legs in the morning, two legs in the afternoon and three legs in the evening?</b></p> <p>You don't know, do you! I am the Sphinx, and I guard the Greek city of Thebes. Nobody – from prince to pauper - can enter Thebes if they cannot answer my riddle. And for those of you who don't know what a Sphinx actually is, let me describe my fine attributes.</p> <p>But before I go any further, realise that I am <b>not</b> the Sphinx that is in Egypt, so don't get me muddled up with <b>that</b> big lump of rock on the Nile.</p>   |
| <b>Storyteller</b> | <p>Yes, yes – I know the one you mean. It's the one that is still in the future at the time of this story, so it hasn't even been built yet.</p> <p>But what are you talking about when you say you are a sphinx?</p>   |
| <b>Sphinx</b>      | <p><i>(said with anger and increasing volume)</i></p> <p>Not a sphinx! <b>THE</b> sphinx!</p> <p>Now listen carefully, because I will tell you just once about myself – so sit still and concentrate!</p> <p>I have the head of a woman, the body of a lion, the wings of an eagle – and <i>(dramatic pause)</i> the tail of a snake. Oh – and take note of this, my friend – I <b>eat</b> anyone who gives a wrong answer to my riddle, so <i>(angrily to storyteller and then to the audience)</i> <b>WATCH OUT!</b></p> <p><i>(in a more relaxed tone)</i> But the secret of the riddle is safe forever because I don't think anyone is smart enough on this earth to work out the answer.</p> <p>However, if they do, I am doomed to a deadly end - but I don't want to think about that because it's too horrible and it's not going to happen.</p> <p>Now I'm going to wait quietly over here for my next victim ...</p> <p><i>(moves to one side of stage with a flourish)</i></p> |