

CLASH OF THE TITANS

by

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based on the 1981 film
Clash of the Titans

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FIRST DRAFT

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DARKNESS. A poet's voice, CHEOPS, invokes the Muse.

CHEOPS (V.O.)

O Muse, paint in me the world forgot
so it may live again in my tale of
war. And the birth of a hero.

Morning sunlight spills across a vivid Mediterranean-

TILE MOSAIC FLOOR

depicting men posing under the celestial sphere. The painted tile figures animate. They pray to the heavens.

CHEOPS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

In those vanished days, when Man was
young, he prayed to the Gods. But
Man grew up, as children do...

One tile figure stands, turns away from the stars, and sits at a work bench. He tinkers with a small invention.

CHEOPS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

He turned from darkness, fear, and
superstition to invention, art,
learning, self-determination...

The figure stands and lifts his invention, a spyglass, to study the stars he once worshipped.

CHEOPS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

But the Gods hungered for worship as
lions for blood. They breathed our
prayers to survive.

The animated mosaic stops. The colors age.

CHEOPS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And they would claim our awe again.
If not by love, then by fear. To
ensure their continued existence.

Dry leaves rustle over the floor.

CHEOPS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

This is how war broke between Man
and Gods...

A trickle of blood runs between the tiles. Tilt up to-

INT./EXT. TEMPLE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Past the blood trickling from a human soldier dead on the tile floor and beyond the toppled pillars...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A storm rages over ranks of human armies and their clockwork soldiers of rain-slick bronze. A charging wave of MINOTAURS, RHINO-HEADED GIANTS, and others crests the hill.

The bronze automata ratchet their arms, raising battle-axes. The storming beast armies crash into the charging humans. The spring-loaded arms of the clockwork soliders SNAP down in a wave that rolls along the front. Battle is met.

A fury of clubs, swords, and spears. Cogs, springs, and steaming hot blood spills. A sea of rippling muscle and firm armour gleaming with mud, rain, and lightning.

Flashes back-light vast GOD-SHADOWS in the stratospheric fog of thunderclouds as lightning bolts splinter from their hands to strafe the human forces on the ground.

Catapults respond with blazing bombs of oil and tar.

CHEOPS (V.O.)

The war escalated. Humans were slaughtered as starving Gods faded.

EXT. VILLA - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Torches flicker along the stone parapet.

CHEOPS (V.O.)

But one wise God foresaw the unending deadlock and formed a plan to bring peace to both sides.

A shadowed horse and GOD rider breaks the fog and trots up to the gate.

CHEOPS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

So, cloaked in magic, he descended to an outpost of Man. Disguised as its King returned from war.

INT. ROYAL CHAMBERS - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

The God's hands rest his helmet on the nightstand as behind silk curtains, the bewitched Queen DANAË unties her gown.

CHEOPS (V.O.)

And the spellbound Queen believed the impostor to be her husband even as he took her to bed.

Their silhouettes join in the dark.

INT. ROYAL CHAMBERS - MORNING (FLASHBACK)

CHEOPS (V.O.)

And by dawn, his seed sowed, the God
was gone. Leaving only memories of
her husband, if not a dream.

Danaë wakes, mystified, to an empty bed.

INT. ROYAL CHAMBERS - DAY (FLASHBACK)

The Queen hums and fondly strokes her round tummy. The doors explode open. The real King- ACRISIUS enters. Danaë stands and smiles. She doesn't understand his fury.

CHEOPS (V.O.)

But the true King returned. And
where his wife saw cause for joy, he
saw only evidence of infidelity.

EXT. WARSHIP - EVENING (FLASHBACK)

On the rocking deck, Acrisius watches as soldiers force Danaë, bound-up, into a big cedar trunk.

CHEOPS (V.O.)

Mad with jealousy, he cast his wife
and the unborn to the deep.

They close the trunk, chain it, and toss it overboard.

EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

The trunk bobs on the violent rolling waves. The faint sound of a BABY CRYING under the CRASHING surf.

CHEOPS (V.O.)

There- In that dark tomb, the Queen
gave birth. And died.

EXT. TRAWLER - MORNING (FLASHBACK)

A net rises heavy with writhing fish and the trunk. FISHERMEN set it down for closer inspection. Silence.

The Fishermen hammer the lock. CRACK. CRACK. POP. They open the lid.

DARKNESS. An infant CRIES.

CHEOPS (V.O.)

Sired by God and Man. He doesn't
yet know. But he will be history's
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHEOPS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
greatest hero. This is how it came
to pass. The story of Perseus.

From the black, we...

FADE IN:

INT. CONCLAVE OF OLYMPOS

A wide rotunda extends into black above and below.
Bottomless and summit-less.

CHEOPS (V.O.)
A quarter century of war passed.
Perseus came of age in the shelter
unaware that his name was being
uttered deep in the halls of Olympos
as the Gods debated the peace he
would bring. And so, the fate of
Perseus and all Man is put to a vote
by the mightiest Gods...

Flickering candles hang mid-air. The Olympians, in hooded
robes, hover. They cluster according to their philosophies
with imperial ZEUS presiding over...

Four pacifists (including ISIS). Four undecided (including
APOLLO). And the three militants --

1) Bronze-helmeted ATHENA...

2) SET the Void, the dry, scaled skin of a Nile croc with
rows of scutes tracing the curve of his bald head. The
frayed hem of his red cloak licks like a flame's edge...

And 3) Tiamat (who we will later witness in her full divine
glory) now hooded in her cloak of black liquid fabric.

(NOTE: Hereafter, passages in English italics indicate
subtitle text accompanying spoken God-language.)

TIAMAT

*Peace? Never. Many of you feel
hunger pangs from scarcity of worship.
But there are those- Gods of War and
Chaos- supping power from the blood
of war in worship's absence,
invigorated as others starve. If
you cannot give us victory then give
us the reins and we will finish the
war.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

APOLLO

Your argument is tedious. You may draw consecration from the purge of Man but the rest of us need them with breath enough to pray.

ISIS

Our mercy will give them reason to be grateful. They will bow down and whisper our names with more passion than ever before.

TIAMAT

They will bow when we snap their backs!

Mercy? We are Gods!

(testing Zeus)

Why should the mighty uphold this servile treaty drafted by an enfeebled leader barely clinging to his rank as the Prime?

Zeus suddenly lights up. Furious arcs of lightning jump to the walls as his voice booms like thunder.

ZEUS

Silence, Tiamat! Lest you wish to discover how enfeebled I truly am.

(beat)

Arguments have been heard. Let us put it to a final vote. All those in favor of the proposed treaty...

The pacifists raise their hands. The undecideds join them. Much to Tiamat's dismay, Athena raises her hand.

TIAMAT

Athena! You are a Goddess of War!

ATHENA

I am also Goddess of Reason.

She leaves Tiamat and Set and coasts to join the ranks of the treaty's supporters. Zeus takes stock and nods.

ZEUS

Thoth, bring this to the Humans. Athena, give our forces standing orders to defend our strategic interests until the treaty's execution. Henceforth, there is a local armistice shielding the signers. The bridegroom and the Joppan Royal Family are not to be touched. We will not intervene unless invoked by name.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THOTH

And if they refuse our terms?

ZEUS

Our losses are hidden. Theirs are plain to see. They know not the depth of our reserves, hence they have no choice but to assume we are paying them a favour.

INT. CONCLAVE OF OLYMPOS - LATER

Only Set and Tiamat remain in the dark, huddled close and conspiratorial in the glow of a single hovering candle. They whisper in a language we understand.

TIAMAT

He's grown weaker than I assumed. They all have. They can no longer see the future as clearly as before.

SET

Not as clearly as we can see it.

TIAMAT

The Humans will revel. They will drop their guard, pacified by joy and wine. Someone will be careless. Someone will misspeak. It is fated to occur. And when it does, we shall strike.

She pinches out the flame between her fingers.

EXT. THE AGORA OF JOPPA - EVENING

A market of tri-storied stoas. MERCHANTS' rugs laid out in colonnades bristling with crowds. SHEDU bull-men with thick assyrian beards and wild angel-wings. Tall CYCLOPEAN TRADERS. NAVIGATORS and EXPLORERS in armour and pelts.

SUPERIMPOSE: "*Joppa, Capital of the Dominion of Illyria...*"

Bushels of garlic and cinnamon. Lush byzantine carpets. Smoke, performers, noise, and music.

CHEOPS clumsily pushes thru carrying his lyre. A youngish man with eyes blindfolded. He taps the ground with a stick like an invalid.

CHEOPS

Epics, ballads! Cheops knows the classics! Help a blind rhapsode?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He bumps into a COUPLE, mumbles an apology. They pass. Cheops clutches the lady's pearls. He lifts a corner of his blind to peek, pockets his prize.

CHEOPS (CONT'D)

Hymn of Akhilleus! The Promethiad!
Cheops sings for only three obols!

He passes an evangelist (FANTASOS) haranguing the crowd.

FANTASOS

(mid-speech)

-one true God is not Zeus but she
called the Deep- Tiamat! "Before
the first dawn, the eyes of the Deep
watched the earth." Succumb to the
Goddess of Chaos or know despair!

Cheops moves under sun-dried octopus tentacles hanging from a line and stops at a fruit stand.

CHEOPS

Hear a verse for three obols!

As the MERCHANT is distracted, Cheops grabs a handful of grapes and stuffs them in his mouth. The Merchant turns.

CHEOPS (CONT'D)

(mouth full)

Pity a blind rhapsode, friends!

Before the Merchant can speak-

The lively market falls suddenly SILENT, as if startled by unheard thunder. They exchange glances of quiet panic.

A LITTLE GIRL spills a basket of dates.

The clouds surge and stop dead. Time stops. And grinds backwards.

The spilt dates roll into the basket as it leaps to the Little Girl's arms.

A string on Cheops's lyre plucks itself. One SHRILL NOTE. Over and over again. Other instruments do the same. Cheops tears off his blindfold.

All recognize the signs with dread- An Olympian approaches.

THOTH the Quick floats down the uneasy street. A black cloak and hood. His cape billows in brief shapes of raven wings, trailing feathers that melt into smoke.

All eyes try not to watch as Thoth makes for the marble domes and columned peristyles of the Basilica- the royal residence and assembly hall.

INT. ANTE ROOM - SAME

A long table. KING KEPHEUS, the grey-haired, worried ruler of Joppa, sits at one end nervously drumming his gold ring on the marble tabletop. Expecting someone.

AMOUN, Magi Strategos and special advisor, stands behind the King. This dour, cryptic scholar sports a dark mantle, a necklace of bones, and a cleanly shaven head.

AMOUN

Be humble and speak scrupulously.
The Olympians can be mercurial and
they don't take offense lightly.

KEPHEUS

I've received ambassadors before.

AMOUN

Not like this, you haven't.

The door creaks open. Kepheus holds his breath and stops drumming. A PAGE enters and stutters.

PAGE

Thoth the Quick, Ambassador of the
Gods is -

Kepheus motions urgently. The Page steps aside. Thoth floats in. He removes his hood. His head has the look of a crystal skull poured with night. Stars and galaxies shine dimly thru swirling black nebulas.

THOTH

Kepheus, I've come to talk of peace.

EXT. THE AGORA OF JOPPA - LATER

The crowded, quiet market tries to return to normalcy. But the Basilica looms, pregnant with the gravity of the God's presence inside. Cheops anxiously eyes the building.

INT. ANTE ROOM - SAME

The room seems to breathe. The walls GROAN as the room ethereally compresses and expands- a constant vertigo.

A tabletop war-game map and inlaid grid with legion marbles in pits at each grid point. The marbles roll from their pits, to and fro over the board, as if on a boat at sea.

The liquid in wine cups tilts back and forth.

KEPHEUS

A treaty marriage?

CONTINUED:

They talk diplomatically but there is an underlying rift.

THOTH

You have a daughter of age.

KEPHEUS

Andromeda? You'll no doubt understand
my hesitation to give my only daughter
to a God.

Amoun swallows hard. He tries to gauge Thoth's reaction.

THOTH

No. Such a union would be unclean.

KEPHEUS

Then what are we talking-?

THOTH

A scion of tangled blood would satisfy
the terms of the marriage.

KEPHEUS

A demigod. You're talking about
Andromeda marrying a demigod.

THOTH

A demigod prince. A boy has been
sired for just this purpose. Son of
Olympian and Human royalty.

KEPHEUS

And I'm to take your word?

AMOUN

Majesty, if I may- the boy does exist.
Perseus. He lives in a small fishing
village to the West.

Kepheus turns, surprised at Amoun's foreknowledge.

KEPHEUS

You knew about this?

AMOUN

I was the boy's tutor. He doesn't
know from where he came, but he is
the one destined to bring peace.

Kepheus weighs his daughter's joy and the greater good.

KEPHEUS

If this proposal means an end to the
war, what choice is there? Don't
think me blasphemous. But I still
don't trust you. And if any harm
comes to my daughter...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Amoun gapes, stunned at Kepheus's audacity.

Thoth sits still, hands folded. The ebb and flow of his influence on the room breaks rhythm and shifts...

The rolling marbles cascade and pile up on one side of the war-game map. They hold there without rolling back.

The wine tilts more and more in Thoth's direction. So far it begins to dribble from the cups.

THOTH

The Princessa shall not be harmed.

The wine continues to seep over the cup's brim. A couple of marbles finally spill over the lip of the tabletop map and PATTER across the stone floor.

Kepheus recognizes he has no control and scrawls his name at the bottom of the treaty.

KEPHEUS

Where's the suitor?

The spatial distortions resume their metrical rhythm.

THOTH

An attache has already been dispatched to bring him to Joppa.

CLOSE ON PERSEUS

underwater, face intense with effort, holding his breath for a grueling span. He dives deeper and deeper.

At the bottom, a shining coin rests in the silt. Perseus strains as he kicks further down.

EXT. TRAWLER - DAY

The crew of shabby YOUNG FISHERMEN acutely watch the ocean's still surface. An hourglass rests on the deckrail. The sand empties from the top. One Fisherman flips it.

FISHERMAN 1

How many turns is that?

FISHERMAN 2

Twelve...

The others react, astounded but suddenly troubled.

FISHERMAN 3

Something's wrong.

CONTINUED:

They look at the still water. Unsure of what to do.

Perseus suddenly breaks the surface with a gasp. He holds up his empty hands. The Fishermen collapse in a playful chorus of "Aaaww!" "No!" And "So close!"

FISHERMAN 1
(impressed nevertheless)
Twelve turns, Perseus! Twelve!

His friends pull Perseus up from the water and we get our first clear daylit look at him.

The wiry sun-roasted body of a young mediterranean man, aged 21, with a finely stubbled jaw. A tousled snarl of dark hair hangs over keen hazel eyes. He's incisive, deep, and haunted by the unease of youth.

PERSEUS
Twelve. That a record or something?

FISHERMAN 1
"Is that a record?" This bastard...

Fisherman 1 puts Perseus in a teasing headlock.

EXT. TRAWLER - LATER

Perseus sits on the prow as the sun sinks in the shimmering sea. He has a hungry way of looking at the horizon.

He watches the shore sail by. The sun pops the reds and blacks in the rocks, the yellow and lavender blooms.

Perseus spies a girl on shore. Her eerily washed-out color cuts a pure, bleached contrast against the natural colors around her. The boat nears. A closer look-

A huntress. A pagan leather bandeau and braided belts hug her lithe gazelle figure. Wilted dahlias in her cornsilk-gold hair. Young yet ancient. THE WILTING GIRL.

She watches Perseus intently as the boat passes. He turns to see if his friends see this curious fair girl, but no one pays attention. When he looks back, she's gone.

INT. PERSEUS'S LOFT - NIGHT

Perseus sits on the floor with a scroll titled "Periplus of Memnon the Navigator" -a lushly illustrated travelogue of exotic places and things- unfurled on his straw bed.

Perseus reads with deep curiosity. He scans entries on Cyclopes, Lost Worlds, the Medusa-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He pauses, chilled by the crude charcoal contour of a woman's torso on a snake's tail, a head ringed by vipers. Details blotted by slag-ink except her shining eyes.

A clatter of pots and his Mother's voice snaps him out.

MOTHER
Perseus! Come and eat!

He rolls the papyrus and stuffs it aside many others.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Perseus's adoptive family sits around the dinner table-mother (YAYA), little brother (IASON), and grandfather (PAPOUS) who's in the middle of a rant.

PAPOUS
I'm just saying-- back when we prayed to the Gods, gave them the glory, they looked after us.

PERSEUS
No God's cooled my brow in illness.
Or picked me up when I've fallen.
You may as well pray to stone.

PAPOUS
Spoken like all those other young idiots who joined the war. Remember what happened to those heretics?

YAYA
Papous! Those boys were our neighbors--

PERSEUS
Those boys were my friends!

Perseus glares at Papous who just chews and squints, unapologetic. Yaya, the consummate peacemaker, sighs.

YAYA
Perseus, do you know what you're doing for the off-season yet?

PERSEUS
There's a voyage passing thru.
Sailing around the subcontinent to find a sea route to the Iron Horde.

PAPOUS
What, you're some kind of argonaut now? I thought we decided you'd stay here and man the trawlers.

A discouraged Perseus sees what's coming.

CONTINUED:

PAPOUS (CONT'D)

But no, you're too big for that,
aren't you? Too clever to work...

PERSEUS

I just want my existence to have
made a difference. I want to matter.
Just like anyone, Paps.

PAPOUS

Your scrolls. Tinkerings. Dreams
of heroic argosies. Nothing. The
fish on your plate is what's real!

PERSEUS

But there's more to us than that. A
Man strives. He dreams. He risks.
He hungers for wisdom. And he
outgrows his limits.

PAPOUS

What do you mean by "his limits?"

Perseus glares. He refuses to take the bait.

PAPOUS (CONT'D)

We are as they made us. You're a
fisherman. We pulled you from the
sea and you'll belong to her always.

(beat)

Fate's something even the Gods can't
rewrite.

Perseus wipes his mouth and tosses his napkin down. He
starts away. Yaya gently takes his arm and stops him. She
gives him a warm smile.

INT. PERSEUS'S LOFT - LATER

Candlelight shimmers on shelves of polished spyglasses,
astrolabes, and other devices.

Perseus sits and studies a scroll- a schematic. He compares
the drawing to the device on his table...

An amber wheel and a crank. A vise with copper rods holds
a strip of hide against the wheel.

Eyes sharp, Perseus turns the crank. The wheel HUMS against
the hide. Perseus cranks faster. The HUM RISES.

He lets go. The disc spins. The amber WHIRS on the hide
strip. He catches his reflection in the wheel. He reaches.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

An arc of static electricity jumps from the copper orb to Perseus's fingertips. He draws back, startled. He looks down at his fingers, more surprised that it didn't hurt.

The plate keeps spinning. Perseus reaches out again. A crackling arc leaps to his hand from the orb. He doesn't pull back this time. He reaches slowly closer.

The arc glows. It shivers and flexes as it kisses his fingertips. He laughs, astonished as he fineses the arc.

Suddenly, a KNOCK at the door. Loud. Perseus pulls back his hand. He holds the crank to stop the amber disc.

He listens and waits for someone else to get it. Another KNOCK. No one stirs. Perseus climbs down and heads to

THE FRONT DOOR

as another KNOCK sounds. Perseus opens the door.

The Wilting Girl stands in the doorway.

Up close, her strange beauty strikes Perseus like lightning.

PERSEUS

You... I saw you... Watching.

He stands, rapt by her eyes, one lucid blue / one like burnished copper, shining loud on her whisper-white skin.

He doesn't notice the black widow spider scurry inside between her feet like a scuttling black cherry.

Followed shortly by another. Then a slithering centipede. Then swarms of velvet cow killer ants and scorpions. All trickling silently towards a mesmerized Perseus.

WILTING GIRL

I'm sorry.

Perseus looks confused and about to speak.

He feels that first black widow on his ankle, lifts his foot and quickly swats the spider off. More spiders and centipedes climb his other leg.

He winces as they bite and brushes them off- a futile fight, the swarm finds which ever foot touches the ground.

The Wilting Girl stands patiently in the doorway.

Perseus backs away as he smacks the biting, stinging creatures. He backs into the dinner table.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He grabs a handful of forks and knives and flings them like darts into the growing black flood of feelers and scuttering legs pouring inside.

He hops on the table and jumps to the loft ladder. He clammers up and slips, weakened by the venom in his system.

He hits the floor. Within seconds, he's blanketed by the swarm. He falls still as the Wilting Girl calmly watches.

EXT. BASILICA - DAY

A long stone wall at the Basilica's foundation facing the open piazza. The stones, chalked up and down with rows and rows of countless tally marks.

A HERALD climbs up on a box and unrolls a scroll. A SCRIBE, chalk in hand, searches for the end of the tallies. The Herald clears his throat and reads...

HERALD

A bulletin from the War Ministry.
The monthly death tolls. The Witchloams Campaign reports forty-two hundred casualties. The Anotuulian Front reports sixty-five hundred. The Naval Campaign in the Agyros has ten warships and seventeen hundred men lost at sea. In the Eastern Theater, the Iron Horde is, as usual, not reporting...

EXT. PERISTYLE - SAME

SERVANTS hang laundry in the atrium. A nimble girl slinks behind the columns- a cleopatra-bob bounces over- cat ears?

She's PESHER, a Sfinx girl- humanoid/feline. Slit nostrils and yellow eyes. Fine tawny fur. Lean arms end in paw-like hands. Her cat tail snakes nervously.

She scouts the hall and whistles. A girl (18) steps out.

Silks cling to her pert cinnamon skin. Plunging jet curls shine like spilt ink. Warm coffee-dark eyes hide a spark of mischief. ANDROMEDA. A princess- willful and impish.

She catches up with Peshet, her nursemaid. Andromeda puts her hand on the doorknob and quietly enters the scullery closet. Peshet sighs and keeps watch.

INT. SCULLERY CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

Sweltry. A cauldron boils cookware clean. Iron pans hang, dripping steam. AGENOR -a grimy, ripped scullion boy- scours a pan. Andromeda watches with a rakish grin. He looks up.

AGENOR

Princessa... You tart...

They kiss with familiarity. Break, smiling slyly.

ANDROMEDA

Muggy in here, isn't it? I feel a little overdressed...

EXT. PERISTYLE - SAME

Peshet hears RIPPING FABRIC and a GIRLISH PEAL. A MAID spies Peshet.

PESHET

Just catching some fresh air.

MAID

I bet you need all sorts of breaks from minding that pampered minx.

Peshet gives an uneasy affirming smile as the Maid passes.

INT. SCULLERY CLOSET - SAME

Andromeda listens appalled as Agenor necks her.

ANDROMEDA

Pampered minx! Are they so bold?

AGENOR

Are you always so accustomed to getting what you want?

ANDROMEDA

I am the Princessa. And you, little boy, have lost your chatter rights.

He glares bravado and rolls his hips into her. She feigns an unexcited smirk even as their bodies find a rhythm. The heaving of her ribs doesn't show on her cool face.

ANDROMEDA (CONT'D)

I'm really quite serious.

Sighs seep between her words but she holds eye contact.

ANDROMEDA (CONT'D)

I... don't want... to hear... another... peep... out of... you...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The room fills with HUSHED PANTING. Cookware CLATTERS.

EXT. PERISTYLE - SAME

Peshet watches QUEEN CASSIOPEIA, Andromeda's prim and proud mother and queen of Joppa, stride down the colonnade.

CASSIOPEIA

Peshet, have you seen my daughter?

Peshet keeps her cool. The BANGING cookware in the closet behind her could easily be routine kitchen sounds.

PESHER

Is she not in her chambers, ma'am?

CASSIOPEIA

She is not and-

The BLISSFUL MOANS however could only be one thing. Cassiopeia knows it. She purses her lips and squints at the closet. Peshet shamefully lowers her head.

CASSIOPEIA (CONT'D)

Tell Andromeda, should you find her,
that her father and I request an
audience at her convenience.

She sharply turns and storms away, furious and embarrassed. Peshet raps urgently on the closet door over the MOANS.

PESHER

My lady, your parents...

INT. THE TABLINUM PARLOUR - LATER

Small, lavish, open at both ends-- curtains drawn at one, flower gardens spill from the opposite. Cassiopeia rests on a settee. Kepheus paces. Andromeda stands aghast.

ANDROMEDA

What do you mean a treaty marriage!?

KEPHEUS

You dare protest on the heels of
debauching with a servant boy!

ANDROMEDA

I can't be married! Not now!

CASSIOPEIA

Oh god's blood, she's in love with a
scullion.

CONTINUED:

ANDROMEDA
(laughing- that's mad)
I'm not in love.

KEPHEUS
Who is he? Which one sullied you?

She cocks an eyebrow and clenches her jaw.

ANDROMEDA
You want me to name just one?

Kepheus's face turns bright red as he blunders for words.

KEPHEUS
Of all the things to say-

CASSIOPEIA
She's joking. Please be joking.

ANDROMEDA
And why not? First of all, I am not in love. I'm too young. And I'm too young to be a wife. I'm an eighteen year old Princessa of Joppa. I shouldn't have to worry about ceremonies or politics. I should be drinking the joys of life while I still have the taste buds for it. I'm saying I'm happy now. Does that count for anything?

KEPHEUS
I'm sorry. But this is bigger than your amusement. This marriage means peace between Gods and Man. The suitor is a demigod prince who-

ANDROMEDA
A mongrel?!?

KEPHEUS
He is of royal blood.

ANDROMEDA
Papa, please. Call it off.

KEPHEUS
He's already on his way.

Andromeda fumes, her eyes heavy with angry tears.

ANDROMEDA
Fine.

She stomps away and slams the door.

CONTINUED:

KEPHEUS

I pity her suitor. She'll never abide the word "no."

CASSIOPEIA

You're worried about her. Don't. She'll make a good ruler one day.

KEPHEUS

How are you so sure?

CASSIOPEIA

Because she'll not abide the word "no."

(beat)

But I do pity the suitor.

EXT. SAILING DHOW - AFTERNOON

A white sail, swollen with wind, draws the small boat swiftly across the sea.

The Wilting Girl sits quietly at the stern. She stares at Perseus's back expectantly. He sits on the prow grappling with recent revelations.

WILTING GIRL

It's a lot to absorb, I know. But I can't answer your questions if you don't put them to words...

PERSEUS

You've got the wrong man. I'm no demigod. A demigod is- I don't know. But it's something else.

WILTING GIRL

You ever lie awake and noticed how when it storms, the thunder syncs to the beat of your heart?

He doesn't have to answer. It's written on his face.

WILTING GIRL (CONT'D)

How long can you hold your breath? Longer than the other boys?

PERSEUS

None of that means anything.

WILTING GIRL

Look at your arms, Perseus.

Perseus watches the few bites on his arm heal visibly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PERSEUS
More of your tricks.

WILTING GIRL
Is this what you think we do? Kidnap
fishermen to marry princesses? You
are special, Perseus. Your birth
was ordained for this very purpose.

The Wilting Girl looks up at the sail and squints,
concentrating. The wind shifts. The boat turns slightly.
Perseus looks at the billowing sail.

PERSEUS
And who is "we" exactly? What are
you? Are you a demigod too?

WILTING GIRL
I'm a Chthonian.

PERSEUS
A Chthonian?

WILTING GIRL
An Earth Goddess. We have caste-
systems like Man. Nobility in the
Olympians- few but cosmic. And
peasantry in the Chthonians-
numberless but local and intimate.

PERSEUS
And demigods, where are they on your
hierarchy?

WILTING GIRL
They aren't. A demigod is what
happens when a God, any God, lays
with a mortal woman and --

PERSEUS
Don't patronize me. I was asking--
Look, if demigods are so lowly then
why do you need me to-- ?

WILTING GIRL
No God can wed a Mortal. It's an
anathema. A demigod may be less
than a God, but he's more than a
Man. One foot in Humanity and the
other in Divinity. A symbol of accord
between our races.

PERSEUS
But why me? Are the Gods really so
chaste that I'm the only bastard
child in the world?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILTING GIRL

It's a risky stew. Too little of one ingredient and you'd be running thru the woods, ripping out dragons throats with your teeth. Too much of another and your mind would be drifting in space. There are twelve living demigods. Seven are languishing in a sanitarium, four got bored and tore off into the wilds of the dark continent, and then there's you.

Perseus smirks sardonically and shakes his head.

PERSEUS

Only a Goddess would reach down and pluck a man from his life like he was just her game piece.

WILTING GIRL

Do you miss that life already?
(no reply)
I couldn't take the chance you'd refuse. The stakes are too high.

She stands. Perseus looks up. His jaw drops. He stands.

HIS POV

A breathtaking view of Joppa- a city in two parts.

At sea level, tangled hovels, boats, and docks crowd the working-class area- the Lower Wharf.

Above, twisting stone stairs climb plunging cliffs to the Acropolis with its gleaming villas, temples, statues, and colonnaded towers all stacked and hugging the clifftops.

PERSEUS (O.S.)

Why Joppa?

EXT. THE AGORA OF JOPPA - AFTERNOON

Towering, cloven-hooved CYCLOPEAN TRADERS lug wine casks one-handed. SFINXES, bark-skinned DRYADS, angel-winged BULL-MEN, and OTHER ESOTERICS mingle.

Perseus rubbernecks, awestruck as he passes a BLACKSMITH who takes a dragon skin from the coals and pounds the white-hot scales over a stone mould to fashion armour.

The Wilting Girl walks alongside him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILTING GIRL

Nestled on the peninsula square in the middle of every major shipping lane on the Mezzosea. Joppa controls the flow of goods, armies, and culture thru the dominions of Man. Why Joppa? As goes Joppa...

PERSEUS

...So goes the world.

They round the corner to the first view of the regal marble Basilica. SERVANTS hang banners and scatter flower petals on the steps, decorating for the betrothal.

PERSEUS (CONT'D)

What are they celebrating?

WILTING GIRL

You.

EXT. THE TABLINUM PARLOUR - EVENING

Perseus sits before Kepheus and Cassiopeia in the awkward silence of the dim candlelight.

KEPHEUS

The attache apprised you of the arrangement, I expect? The importance was duly conveyed?

Perseus nods and shifts uncomfortably. Kepheus paces with mounting impatience.

CASSIOPEIA

I'm sure she'll be right down.

KEPHEUS

Where is she? You should at least exchange pleasantries with her before tomorrow's ceremony...

PERSEUS

Ceremony? I didn't realize the wedding was so soon--

CASSIOPEIA

The wedding comes later. This is the public announcement and a celebration of the peace.

KEPHEUS

I want to be clear. At the bitter end, I'm a father. Before I'm a King or a peacemaker. I didn't wish
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KEPHEUS (CONT'D)
 for her to cut her springtime short
 and play the pawn in this. And you're
 just an outsider. Be very good to
 her or I will end you.

Perseus looks away. He can't help but chuckle a little.

KEPHEUS (CONT'D)
 That amusing to you?

PERSEUS
 I was waylaid. I agreed to nothing
 and I'm only abiding this insofar as
 it solves a bigger problem.

For a moment, Kepheus glares, furious enough to slug Perseus.
 A Page enters and hurries to whisper in Kepheus's ear.
 Kepheus listens, surprised but not shocked.

KEPHEUS
 Seems our Andromeda has slipped out.
 Well, seeing as how you're not yet a
 Prince, you'll abide a King's request--
 Go fetch my daughter from the
 barrelhouses won't you?

EXT. BASILICA - EVENING

The Wilting Girl comes down the petal-strewn steps.

Colour washes from the environs. CITY SOUNDS deaden. The
 CITIZENS talk and stroll, oblivious- moving with the crisp,
 choppy look of a battle. The Wilting Girl's movement remains
 "normal" by comparison, removed.

WILTING GIRL
 Zeus?

An eerie voice replies. It shifts about, never seeming to
 come from the same place. And speaks a language at once
 flowing and clipped. Foreign but almost familiar.

ZEUS (O.S.)
 (subtitles)
 You aren't leaving.

WILTING GIRL
 (comprehending)
 My part is finished.

ZEUS (O.S.)
 It's only just begun. Have you
 forgotten your place in this?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILTING GIRL

The future's not as lucid to me as
it once was but...

ZEUS (O.S.)

Close your eyes and see your tomorrow.

She closes her eyes and takes a deep breath. A single tear runs along her cheek. She opens her eyes.

WILTING GIRL

I- I can't involve myself. Please.

ZEUS

*You will, you are, and you have
already. Such is fate. We spare
not ourselves the trials of our future
by living only in the present.*

She looks to the Basilica with profound, sad tenderness.

EXT. STREETS OF JOPPA - NIGHT

Perseus roams, half purposefully. He stops where MUSIC spills from a rough stucco facade. Painted letters blaze across the dark timber awning-- "PLUTO ORKESTAR"

EXT. PLUTO ORKESTAR - NIGHT

A festive, crowded terrace overlooks the wide mirror sea. The last rosy fingers of the downed sun trace furrows of violet fading to dark blue and the first twinkling stars.

A HOUSE BAND stomps out a SWIFT-TEMPO ARPEGGIO on a mandolin, a fiddle, balkan bagpipes, and a JANGLING tambourine.

Bronze lanterns hang from the sailcloth canopy, casting sparse oily light on laughing faces, smoke, wine bottles cluttering tabletops, clapping hands, and whirling dancers.

Perseus moves thru dizzying revelry. He spies someone, dancing in the clustered center of attention -- a singular dark-haired beauty that can only be Andromeda...

Arms out, she rolls her hips to the music. The sheer pleats of her gown trail her movements. The music ends.

Andromeda laughs and flicks her hair back. Her sleeve slips thoughtlessly off one shoulder.

She sights Perseus over her bare half-moon shoulder. Sweat glistens. Damp, dark curls fall before her eyes. With a smirk, she realizes who he must be.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANDROMEDA (V.O.)
You come here to rescue me?

EXT. PLUTO ORKESTAR - NIGHT

Andromeda and Perseus lean by the bar, talking.

ANDROMEDA
You supposed to be half-God?

PERSEUS
It's what they tell me.

She cocks her head and sizes him up.

ANDROMEDA
I don't see it.

PERSEUS
Look. Your father just sent me to
bring you home.

ANDROMEDA
I've got a better idea.

PERSEUS
What's that?

She takes a gulp of wine and slams the bottle down as the
MUSIC starts up again.

ANDROMEDA
Dance with me.

She moves out into the crowd. They form a wide circle.
Perseus lingers by the bar.

ANDROMEDA (CONT'D)
Well? Come on, trawler-boy! Don't
they dance out on the islands?

Perseus smirks, shakes his head, and grudgingly joins her
in the middle of the circle.

They begin by slowly circling each other, mirroring
movements, face to face, eyes locked, but no physical
contact. The slow tempo, marked by CLACKING cymbals.

The tempo gradually quickens. The pair draws near and parts
again and again, all in the flow of the dance...

...Until Perseus catches his arm about her waist. Andromeda
looks briefly surprised but rolls with it.

A salty fandango. Hand to hips and hand in hand, whirling,
heels kicking back. Fast, confident, plucky.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Perseus spins Andromeda. She sharply snaps back around to lock eyes. Smirking, defiant of vertigo or exhaustion.

The music stops.

Perseus dips her parallel with the floor. She holds the pose, tense but controlled -- one leg arrow-straight with her body and the other hooked round his hamstring.

ANDROMEDA (CONT'D)

(teasingly sassy)

No... I don't see it.

Perseus chuckles. She leans up to his ear.

ANDROMEDA (CONT'D)

Now you can bring me home...

INT. GUEST CHAMBERS - MORNING

The atrium outside the open window fills with noises of the house waking up. Laying in bed, Perseus yawns.

PERSEUS

(mid-yawn)

Androm--

He opens his eyes and sits up, naked and alone in a bed big enough for two.

Twisted sheets snarl over the skewed bed and spill onto the floor where a trail of Perseus's matted, hastily-shed clothes cuts the otherwise neat room back to the door.

A dumbstruck grin crosses his face as the previous night comes rushing back to him. He laughs and shakes his head -- "How the hell did I end up here with -- ?"

PERSEUS (CONT'D)

The Princessa of Joppa...

INT. GRAND RECEPTION HALL - EVENING

Long and hemmed by columns and niches with statues. Every square of the marble floor, packed with REVELERS.

SYLPHS, subtle creatures of incense smoke, perform under the dais, whirling and sinuating to GALLOPING DRUMS.

Perseus moves thru the crowd, late to the party, decked out in a white tunic and polished ceremonial armour. A hand lands on his shoulder. He turns and recognizes Amoun.

PERSEUS

Master Amoun!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AMOUN

My boy! Good to see you!

PERSEUS

You're-- what? Advisor to the King,
is it?

AMOUN

Magi Strategos...

PERSEUS

Provincial tutor to Magi Strategos--
not a bad step up!

AMOUN

And the teacher becomes the-- well--
the greater teacher, I suppose. And
how are you, my boy?

PERSEUS

Treading water. It's a lot to absorb.
But this-- what were the odds I'd
chance on you here?

AMOUN

(brushing it off)

Right. Right.

PERSEUS

I'll find you after?

Amoun nods and salutes with his wine cup as Perseus moves towards the dais where Kepheus and Cassiopeia sit.

Andromeda motions from an apse to the side of the dais.
Perseus climbs the steps to take his place beside her.

ANDROMEDA

Just smile tranquilly and look over
the crowd... You're late.

PERSEUS

It's a complicated vestment.

(beat)

So... last night--

ANDROMEDA

Oh, I meant to thank you for seeing
me home. I was so flushed with wine
I'm embarrassed to admit I can't
recall a tenth of the evening.

Andromeda briefly meets his befuddled gape with a quick,
impishly playful wink -- "That's our story, get it?" Perseus
half-smiles and turns to the crowd.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HIS POV

The Wilting Girl watches from the back of the hall, set apart by her spectral pale beauty.

She makes eye contact and quickly turns, letting her flaxen curls hide her face. She chews her fingernail.

BACK TO SCENE

Perseus narrows his eyes warily. The DRUMS stop.

CASSIOPEIA (V.O.)

I just want to say a few words.

INT. GRAND RECEPTION HALL - NIGHT

Cassiopeia stands front-and-center of the dais with a wine cup. She's a little tipsy but not dead drunk.

CASSIOPEIA

This betrothal is more than a celebration. This betrothal is hope. And it's peace. For the first time in over half a century. That is a truly honorable mandate.

(takes a drink)

And not one my daughter adopted lightly, believe me.

Nervous laughter at her apparent joke.

CASSIOPEIA (CONT'D)

(dewy-eyed)

This betrothal is my daughter growing into a fine young woman. I'm so proud of her. Look at her. Isn't she beautiful?

Andromeda rolls her eyes. Cassiopeia raises her glass.

CASSIOPEIA (CONT'D)

More beautiful than all the women of Joppa. More beautiful than the Terraced Gardens. More beautiful than the turquoise ocean and its sublime Goddess Tiamat herself. Look upon the beauty of Humanity-- a beauty even the Goddess envies.

The crowd falls quiet, a little uneasy from the invocation. Even Andromeda looks wary. Cassiopeia seems oblivious.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CASSIOPEIA (CONT'D)

(blotting tears)

I'm sorry. I'm pretty muddled so I
may not sound as poetic as I-

She stops herself. A shiver and a look of sudden dread.
Gooseflesh prickles the nape of her neck.

The room darkens. The torch-flames turn black.

The crowd's restive breaths show like plumes in winter.

The statues lining the hall shut their eyes.

The doors to the hall burst open.

TIAMAT the Deep walks down the aisle.

Her liquid cloak stitched from the oily murk of the
bottomless sea. Its folds sound like SURGING TIDES. Not
dark, but ultraviolet light flares from under her hood.

Tiamat steps onto the dais before Cassiopeia. Shaking,
Cassiopeia gets to her knees.

TIAMAT

You stand before the masses and dare
put that frail suckling on a pedestal
above the timeless Deep. You've
blasphemed powers past understanding.
You are a braying goat before the
unfathomable. And you will be
slaughtered.

She tears off her cloak which scatters to a fine mist.

The Goddess stands naked. Every inch of skin smolders with
the frigid bioluminescence of a deep sea creature. Swirling
fins in lieu of hair. Sublime and terrifying.

Everyone looks away. But Cassiopeia's too close. Stricken,
her eyes wide. Color drains from her face. White creeps
up the roots of her hair.

TIAMAT (CONT'D)

Look on the raw body of a Creator of
Universes and know your fault. You'll
not blink. Tell me now, mortal, how
bright your preening urchin shines.

Cassiopeia's strained eyes well with stinging tears. Tiamat
addresses the hall without averting her terrible glare from
the Queen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIAMAT (CONT'D)

People of Joppa, hear me. For this boastful creature's sacrilege, I will loose the Leviathan on you.

The crowd shudders at her mention of "Leviathan." Cassiopeia's body begs to buckle under. Her eyes flutter and roll back, but Tiamat snaps her back to consciousness.

TIAMAT (CONT'D)

I'm not finished. Hold your gaze.
(to the people)

For thirty days, Joppa shall suffer the scorn of the Leviathan. And on the final day, what's left of you will be wiped from the earth... Unless you sacrifice that body so boldly measured against the cosmic-your darling Princessa.

Andromeda gasps. Peshet comforts her.

Past mortal stamina, blood-tears trill from Cassiopeia's eyes, but her stare stays frozen by Tiamat's will.

No one in the hall can bear to look for so long. No one except for Perseus.

TIAMAT (CONT'D)

This is my will, Joppa. Desolation or sacrifice. Choose your penance.

Clouds of black sea-ink swirl and swallow Tiamat. The bloated cloud implodes and Tiamat is gone.

In a flash, the room returns to its prior state. Cassiopeia crashes, palsied and white-haired. Kepheus and Royal Aides rush to her.

EXT. OCEAN FLOOR - NIGHT

Monkfish in the dark with their "lantern" orbs shining on their thistly teeth. They swim above the gray floor over undulating tube worms like a meadow of fleshy red tongues.

Something spooks them. The monkfish scatter into the black. The tube worms vanish into their mud tubes.

A soft, eerie glow swells in the dark- Tiamat. The Goddess glides over the sea bottom. She stops and raises her palm. The silt swirls and ripples.

Vast primordial bones rise from the clouds of ocean mud. Gaping jaws. Cavernous ribcage. All organizing themselves at Tiamat's behest. Growing muscle and connective tissue.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tiamat snaps her fingers.

And even she shades her eyes from the blinding flash of green light that envelops the bones. The beast's throbbing roar drives an ultrasonic shockwave across the silt.

EXT. OCEAN SURFACE - NIGHT

The sea bulges. And explodes a tower of roiling steam. An apocalyptic surge unrolls from the epicenter and thunders for the shores of Joppa.

EXT. JOPPA'S LOWER WHARF - NIGHT

Docks and shanties under the cliffs. Dark. Asleep.

A FISHERMAN tosses his nets from his boat to the dock. He turns to throw the last net and finds the dock rising out of reach. Rather, the water level under his boat, falling.

The sea pulls away from LOVERS in the shallows. Exposed, a Sfinx Girl SHRIEKS and retreats in one direction as the water retreats in the other. Her Boyfriend watches.

Stirred by the girl's scream, RESIDENTS of the Wharf come out of their hovels and join the boy on the shore.

Befuddled, they watch the sea draw back from rocks, shells, and rotting wrecks. A deep RUMBLE shakes the ground at their feet. A few Residents back away, uneasy.

Most stand, mesmerized by the darkening horizon that seems to climb. Higher and higher. Eclipsing even the full moon which now shines thru the green-blue wall of water.

By the time they realize it's a colossal wave, it has already begun to break and fall upon them.

The torrent of churning white foam rips thru the crowd and splinters the docks.

It surges thru the streets, pulverizes houses, and dashes Residents into the sheer rock and plunging stone stairs as it finally crashes against the cliffs.

INT. ROYAL CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Cassiopeia lies blank and vapid with wide glassy eyes. A NURSE wipes the drool collected on Cassiopeia's drooping lip as Kepheus worries at the window.

A LOW DRONE grows loud and louder. It swallows all sound. A deep, EARTH-SHAKING BELLOW like some cosmic crocodile.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

At its peak, the room shudders from the ultrasonic shockwave. Brief but violent. All furniture lurches. Dust jumps from the seams in the stone floor.

Then... Silence.

KEPHEUS
The Leviathan wakes...

EXT. ANDROMEDA'S BALCONY - NIGHT

Andromeda stands at the rail, looking out. She watches as PEOPLE scramble and SHOUT thru the streets, all running from the seaside of the city.

She spots Perseus moving in the opposite direction.

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE ANTE ROOM - NIGHT

Perseus moves thru the dark, following the sound of urgent voices speaking in hushed tones.

AMOUN (O.S.)
...Leviathan- First dweller of the deep. Hewn by Tiamat from the dark blood of the earth...

Perseus follows the sound to the lone pool of dim lamplight oozing from the entrance to the Ante Room. He backs against the wall and listens...

INT. ANTE ROOM - NIGHT

A somber council of VICEROYS and MINISTERS gathered before Kepheus-- who listens with figertips steepled between his closed eyes as Amoun reads from a scroll.

AMOUN
"....All beasts of the sea are but shadows of his aspects. Iron is as straw to him, brass as rotten wood, fire as--"
(rolling the scroll)
All nothing we didn't know as schoolboys: it's colossal, rapacious, and nigh indestructible.

A grim silence. All eyes turn to Kepheus for his reaction. The King places his palms flat on the table. His eyes, bloodshot. His face, exhausted. He breathes deep.

KEPHEUS
There's only one thing to be done...

CONTINUED:

AMOUN

Majesty, you can't be considering--
We have thirty days to respond. We
should not rush to--

KEPHEUS

Yes, thirty days, just long enough
to toy with us! You think it'll get
easier to sacrifice my girl?! After
a month of whatever plagues are in
store?! You think I can gamble the
whole city for one extra month with
my ill-fated daughter?!

No one presumes to respond. Kepheus stands and faces the frescoed wall, his hands clasped firmly behind his back.

KEPHEUS (CONT'D)

She's already dead. Just like her
mother... Make the preparations.

Incensed, Perseus suddenly bursts into the Ante Room.

PERSEUS

No! Coward! You can't! She doesn't
deserve this fate!

KEPHEUS

What is this?!

PERSEUS

How can you give in?! We are Man
and we are finished bowing to the
Gods! You have a month to find
Leviathan's weakness...

KEPHEUS

I could have a year and it would
still be a cruel joke! I defy you
to find anyone in Joppa mad enough
to pursue such a hopeless quest!

Perseus swallows hard and sets his jaw.

PERSEUS

I will. I'll do it.

Amoun looks up, barely able to conceal a swell of pride for his former student.

PERSEUS (CONT'D)

If there's a trick to slaying
Leviathan, I'll find it. If I fail,
the losses will be great, yes. But
at least you can face your daughter
for the next thirty days and yourself
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PERSEUS (CONT'D)
 for every day after. But if I
 prevail... The city and its Princessa
 are saved and the War is over.

KEPHEUS
 You're just a --

PERSEUS
I don't know what I am... But I was
 vital enough to be stolen here, so
 maybe some benefit of the doubt isn't
 ill-suited!

KEPHEUS
 Amoun?

AMOUN
 He is the one foretold to bring
 peace...

KEPHEUS
 And you've heard this Leviathan is
 indestructible?

PERSEUS
 I don't believe it is. Do you?

AMOUN
 He could lead an expedition...
 Majesty, we could seek the counsel
 of the Norn Sisters of Skolothia.
 Powerful oracles who know much of
 Gods' hidden ways. If Leviathan can
 be slain, they'd know how...

Kepheus approaches Perseus and studies him carefully.

KEPHEUS
 You really believe you can do this?

PERSEUS
 Majesty... I was born to do this.

The thunderous sound of GALLOPING HOOVES...

AMOUN (V.O.)
 You won't be alone, Perseus. Your
 labour will be bolstered by the full
 brunt of Joppa's resources...

EXT. THE STEPPE - DAY

Horse HOOVES BEAT the short blue grass. Two hard riders
 dash across the stark, endless plain.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AMOUN (V.O.)

We've hired two guides. Mongke and Tamburlane. Father and son monster hunters from out of the steppes of the Far East. The Kingdom of the Iron Horde.

MONGKE (father) and TAMBURLANE (son), surly nail-eating Mongol warriors with plates of boiled leather armour.

Their hair and fu manchus braided with talons and fangs whip like black flames on the wind as they ride to Joppa.

INT. PRAETORIUM ARMORY - DAY

Rows of gleaming helmets, swords, shields.

AMOUN (V.O.)

Your escort, a special detachment of the elite Praetorian Guard.

The Praetorian Guard (eight in all), commanded by the square-jawed old soldier- DRACO, select their arms and strap on their armour and belts.

KOSMO (Draco's lieutenant), ABAS, ICOS, THAD, BOREAS, KRIKOR, and POLLUC round out the two-fisted lot.

INT. TRIBUNAL CHAMBERS - DAY

Cheops stands at the center of a semicircular room in manacles before an ARCHON who sits at a marble lectern.

AMOUN (V.O.)

We've even retained an embedded rhapsode, tasked with documenting the expedition for posterity.

ARCHON

Time served and an allotted interval of civil service. Dictum.

The Archon STRIKES a granite pestle on his lectern.

INT. ANTE ROOM - NIGHT

Amoun sweeps clear the central table and unrolls a map. His finger traces the dotted route.

AMOUN

We take the Via Dahlia North until it hits into Disputed Territories. Then, we'll liaise with Commander
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AMOUN (CONT'D)
 Kalibos' desert legion and they'll
 get us safely to our destination.

Amoun takes a step back from the maps and crosses his arms in approval. Perseus stares, tense.

PERSEUS
 We go to the oracles. They tell us Leviathan's weakness. We come back before the month is out and we-- I... I slay the Leviathan.

EXT. JOPPA CITY GATE - DAY

The expedition assembles at the big cedar doors.

Amoun and Draco look over a map. The Praetorians linger.

Mongke and Tamburlane organize their gear. The outsiders-indigestible, hard-bitten professional monster killers who speak only their language and not a word of english.

Perseus talks to Cheops.

PERSEUS
 Civil service? What was the charge?

CHEOPS
 Indecency. I'd forgotten a bit of the *Promethiad*. And some stuffy old dotards took offense at my rescript. Gods forbid we spice the yarn with a pinch of carnal intrigue. As if my brilliant improvisation wasn't an improvement.

PERSEUS
 And how's that?

CHEOPS
 (schoolboy glee)
 Well, Pandora's bathing and Jove's peeping from underwater, right?
 When he gets very aroused. So he turns himself into a strapping sea-mule with a colossal priapus-

He indicates with outstretched hands, Perseus stops him.

Draco interrupts, back-slapping Perseus and squeezing his shoulder. Draco chews on the end of a reed, a facetious twinkle very slightly colours his stolid soldier's mug.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRACO

So this must be the demigod that's going to lead us all into history.

PERSEUS

I'm just trying to matter.

DRACO

Good for you, son. I'm Commander Draco and those are my Praetorians--

Perseus looks to a cluster of hardened soldiers. They look Perseus over, make knowing eye-contact with Draco, and chuckle before turning to talk amongst themselves.

DRACO (CONT'D)

And son if you need help with anything, don't hesitate to ask.

Draco moves on to muster his soldiers. Perseus spies the Wilting Girl lingering among the retinue. He finds Amoun without taking his eyes off the Wilting Girl.

PERSEUS

Amoun, the Goddess won't be joining us, will she?

AMOUN

Who? The Chthonian? She offered and I'm not of the inclination to turn away a resource of her powers.

PERSEUS

She didn't leave me with the rosiest of first impressions is all.

AMOUN

Loosen the snare on her. She was only doing her job.

The Wilting Girl looks up. She didn't hear them. But she knows what they've been talking about.

AMOUN (CONT'D)

Everyone! Let's get moving!

The heavy cedar doors to the outside world swing open. The expedition musters and leaves the city walls.

EXT. THE EDGE OF SPACE

Tiamat floats two-hundred miles above terra firma, the Mezzosea and peninsula of Illyria sprawls across the soft, glowing curvature of the earth below.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She draws lazy circles with her finger, as if stirring tea. A massive vortex of storm clouds follows her motions, winding itself around a tight "eye."

Set the Void approaches.

SET

You hailed me?

TIAMAT

The demigod and his retinue are joined. They march for the counsel of the Norn Sisters as we speak. To seek the frailty of my Leviathan.

SET

The Norns have not the power to see such knowledge.

TIAMAT

Nonetheless, I beseech you, track the expedition.

SET

To plainly thwart them would betray our stratagem before it's end and draw the ire of the other Olympians.

TIAMAT

And that, we cannot have. No Set, my confidant, I merely suggest that the road to Skolothia is hazardous. I'd be entertained by your account of any "accidents."

SET

I understand.

Set dissipates in a cloud of dust particles that whirl streak back to earth, a fine drizzle of light.

Tiamat smirks as she resumes stirring the storm clouds tighter and tighter. Bigger and bigger. Engulfing Joppa.

EXT. JOPPA'S ACROPOLIS - DAY

A torrential deluge batters the high city of the clifftops. White water streams thru the sloped streets and alleys and cascades down the cliffs as new waterfalls.

INT. ANDROMEDA'S CHAMBERS - DAY

A doorless arch to her balcony provides an outside view. A jagged web of lightning crackles thru the menacing clouds. Rain pounds the tiles of the balcony.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Just inside, in a room painted with lush frescoes and furnished with all the trappings of a king's only daughter, Peshet keeps a very bored Andromeda company.

Andromeda mopes over to the balcony and cranes her neck to take stock of the gliding torch-lights from the guards.

ANDROMEDA

He's stepped up the guard rotations?

PESHET

I believe so...

ANDROMEDA

This ennui is just crushing...

PESHET

We'll wait it out.

ANDROMEDA

Peshet, you and I... We're mates, yes? We're comrades in mischief.

PESHET

My Lady, no... Don't do this...

ANDROMEDA

I can't just sit in here, Peshet!

PESHET

I don't think you understand the gravity of the situation.

ANDROMEDA

No? Tell me where your outlook would differ... In thirty days, life, as you know it, is ending. Either by the knot of a hastily arranged marriage or by the wrath of a Goddess. And you have no sway in it. For one month, do you really sit, politely waiting for the verdict? Or do you raise almighty Hades like it's the last month of your life?

PESHET

You can't sneak out...

ANDROMEDA

Peshet--

PESHET

I would have to stop you, my Lady. It's too dangerous.

Andromeda turns away and superficially busies herself.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANDROMEDA

No. You're right.

PESHER

I'm sorry, my Lady, but I --

ANDROMEDA

I understand, Peshet. Don't worry.

PESHER

You're not going to sneak out?

ANDROMEDA

(lying)

No... No, I won't sneak out.

EXT. THE VIA DAHLIA - AFTERNOON

The road weaves thru fertile terraced vineyards...

SUPERIMPOSE: *The Via Dahlia, Outbound from Joppa...
28 Days Remaining...*

A crumbling, limestone triumphal arch. Time-worn letters on the arcing bricks read: "VIA DAHLIA."

DRACO

Alright men. We make camp here for the night.

The expedition stops. The Praetorians set up camp.

DRACO (CONT'D)

And don't steal the farmer's grapes.

Vidalia keeps an eye halfway on Perseus.

He sits nearby on a broken pillar, looks over the rolling vineyards to Joppa's skyline, still barely visible behind the curtains of rain from a distant storm.

She looks away just as he turns and sees her sitting there.

PERSEUS

Lo, you, over here.

She ignores him.

PERSEUS (CONT'D)

(louder)

Oi!

Still no acknowledgement.

PERSEUS (CONT'D)

Chthonian!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He tosses a pebble to her feet. She looks up.

PERSEUS (CONT'D)

I can feel you inspecting me from
the corner of your eye. Makes me
nervous.

WILTING GIRL

I apologize.

PERSEUS

What am I supposed to call you anyway?
You have a name mere mortals are
allowed to say?

WILTING GIRL

I don't have a name.

PERSEUS

Who do your worshipers pray to?

WILTING GIRL

I can't remember.

PERSEUS

What sort of goddess forgets her
own name? Goddess of Fugues? Goddess
of Amnesia perhaps?

The Wilting Girl humbly takes the beating in silence,
suddenly leaving Perseus a bit self-conscious of his cruelty.

PERSEUS (CONT'D)

Well I have to call you something...

He looks around. He sees the triumphal arch and the words-

PERSEUS (CONT'D)

What about... "Via Dahlia?" Or...
"Vidalia?" What about "Vidalia?"

She whips about with an angry frown...

PERSEUS (CONT'D)

Alright, maybe that's not-

...but instantly softens when she sees his candor.

VIDALIA

No. No, I was afraid you were
mocking... "Vidalia" is... nice.

EXT. THE VIA DAHLIA - LATER

Ever the loner, Perseus broods restlessly at the periphery
of the group.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mongke and Tamburlane emerge from the woods with armfuls of timber and kindling. They dump it in the fire pit.

Draco glances up from striking his flintstone on the blade of his dagger. He examines the pit.

DRACO
A little more yet.

Mongke and Tamburlane just stare at him, unreadable. Either not comprehending or annoyed by the order.

DRACO (CONT'D)
It has to last all night.

PERSEUS
(interjecting)
I'll find some more.

He grabs a gladius sword and hacks into the woods.

EXT. VIA DAHLIA WOODS - AFTERNOON

Perseus hacks low-hanging branches as he climbs thru the dense rocky wood.

Not paying attention, he slashes at a trunk. TING. The steel sparks on the "trunk." Perseus pulls away the vines to find not a trunk but a stone column.

He notices mossy steps cut into the limestone rise. Overcome with curiosity, he climbs the steps.

He crests the top to find an overgrown building.

EXT. DILAPIDATED THERMAE - AFTERNOON

The ruins of a public bath. Roof, long stripped away. A rectangular pool under sky, cloistered by a peristyle.

Vines wrap the columns and crumbling sculpted supports. Blue-violet water lilies float on the forgotten pool.

Perseus enters and pauses at the water's edge, taken by this pocket of derelict beauty.

He pans his eyes over the scene and finally sees Vidalia standing on the cornerwise rim, her back to the water.

He opens his mouth to catch her attention but...

She loosens her bandeau, slips it over her head, and off.

Perseus freezes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She hooks her thumbs under her belt and slides the feathered linen strips of her skirt to the stone floor. Naked and still oblivious, she begins to turn around.

Perseus quickly crouches behind a sculpted support. He peers thru the leafy vines that snarl the sculpture.

The space between leaves offers a tantalizingly broken view of her body as she dips her toes in the water. She dives in with a sleek SPLASH.

PERSEUS

(whispering to himself)

Rein yourself in, Perseus. Just turn around and walk away.

He doesn't. He locks onto the pool, unblinking...

Vidalia surfaces and throws her hair back to shake off an exquisite arch of water.

She drifts on her back and looks sadly into the sky.

Perseus fixates on the sadness in her eyes. It worries his brow and alters the tenor of this whole stolen vigil.

The first raindrops peck sparse concentric ripples.

Then the sky opens up. A minor outgrowth of the Joppa storm. The cloudburst pelts the pool.

Vidalia floats on her back, her contours tease the roused surface. The water spikes and bounces in the downpour. She closes her eyes and cracks her lips to taste the rain.

A tentative smile moves over her serene face.

Perseus's HEART POUNDS in his ears as he watches. A flash of lightning.

KRA-KOOM!- the thunder hits on his heartbeat uncannily.

Even Vidalia seems instantly clued to his presence. She quickly looks over her shoulder. She huddles in the water.

Perseus sinks unseen into the shadows of the peristyle.

Vidalia cedes and swims back to her clothes.

Safely out of sight, Perseus rests his back against a wall and catches his breath. His face flushes with brio and a premonition of a new dilemma.

PERSEUS (CONT'D)

Pull it together...

EXT. THE VIA DAHLIA - NIGHT

A wet sheen from the departed rain glistens over everything in the ochre light of the campfire. Vidalia rests in the dark bough of a tree.

The Praetorians laugh and cook meat over the cinders. Mongke and Tamburlane have the biggest slabs and, in their language, unsubtly mock the soldiers' girlish appetites.

Perseus nearby- his raw, skinned rabbit laid aside. He putters with his extra firewood- a sharp stick and two Y-branches. He idly smoothes the cleft in one of the Y's.

Cheops tunes the fret of his bouzouki and strums.

CHEOPS

A fright story, eh? Well which one?
The Abduction of Persephone?

Perseus cleaves a slot down the end of his sharp stick. He leaves his dagger wedged and lashes it with strips of bark.

PERSEUS

You know the *Gorgoneion*?

Cheops looks up from his bouzouki. Everyone falls silent. Only CRICKETS. The soldiers shift, suddenly nervous.

Mongke and Tamburlane cock their heads, riveted. Chewing on a blade of grass, Amoun shakes his head and scoffs.

CHEOPS

The Rape of Medusa... Of course...
What? I look like an amateur?

KOSMO

Rhapsode, I'll give you a fifty obols
not to recite that black verse.
You'll bring the sky down on us.

CHEOPS

What's wrong, soldier? Afraid of a
story? It's the Illumined Age.
Superstition belongs in the past.

He plucks a GHOSTLY, STARK AURA on his bouzouki.

CHEOPS (CONT'D)

Medusa was a tender young woman once-
a rare mortal creature born with
beauty to tempt even the Gods. And
it would prove her undoing. For one
night, on the road home, she caught
the eye of Set the Void, God of
Deserts and Entropy.

CONTINUED:

SERIES OF SHOTS

- Night- A dark-haired beauty, YOUNG MEDUSA, strolls home. She hums and carries a pitcher.

CHEOPS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

A hungry breath prickled her neck
and her blood ran like ice.

- A wind chills her. She turns, quick. She drops the pitcher and runs.

CHEOPS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

She hastened to hallowed ground.

- The shattered pitcher. Broken shards of an etched woman carrying water, painted in ochre. A shadow passes swiftly over the pieces, in pursuit of Medusa.

CHEOPS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

But Set followed. He smelled his prey hiding in Tiamat's Temple.

- A thickly columned hypostyle hall in a temple of Tiamat. A hooded SET crouches low in the shadows enfolding something obscured by his windswept red cloak.

CHEOPS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

He held her to the stones. And she fathomed with revelatory horror the heartless passion of a God.

- The cloak ripples as shapes push thru the flowing spectral folds- reaching fingers, a screaming face.

CHEOPS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Left despoiled and broken in the shadow of Tiamat's altar, she prayed for comfort and pleaded for courage.

- Her bloody fingernails dig into the stone as she drags herself across the floor, shivering and broken.

CHEOPS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

But the Deep regarded Medusa as a used-up object of euphoria; a soiled passion-doll or a drained hookah. The prayers of such a frail and filthy instrument angered Tiamat.

- A nearby idol of Tiamat chiseled from black crystal opens her searing eyes, throwing a long shadow of Medusa down the hypostyle.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHEOPS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

So the Goddess responded with an
unthinkable reckoning, twisting Medusa
into a loathsome new thing.

- That contorting shadow tells the process of transformation.
Legs cross and twist and snap until joints turn pulpy and
vague and become a single slithering tail.

CHEOPS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Cursed with a vitriolic stare that
would petrify flesh to look upon.

- In the crackling light from the idol, the shadow yanks
her hair out in handfuls. Snake heads peck and wriggle
from her skull like hatchlings from a leathery egg.

CHEOPS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Banished to the world's end- Tartaros,
beyond the frozen Tethys Sea. There,
she dwells still.

- A scorching and frigid land of cracked volcanic glass and
veins of magma. Thru the silently clashing elements of
rippling heat and swirling snowfall, a 'Pitched Temple'-
foundation sunken crooked into a dried lavaflow.

CHEOPS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Her warmth long stripped like flesh
from bone, leaving only cold,
reptilian instinct. And one raw
shrieking memory of pure hate...

- The shadows between the temple's broken pillars- a
woman/serpent-shaped darkness crawls and slithers. It looks
up. Glowing eyes. And a vicious HISSING SCREAM-

BACK TO SCENE

CHEOPS (CONT'D)

And all those rogues and travelers
who've hunted her?- Their bodies are
dead stone casts adorning her Pitched
Temple...

Grave silence.

Mongke misreads it and lets loose a sidesplitting GUFFAW.
Tamburlane nudges his dad and shoots him a look- "you've
mistaken the genre." Mongke abruptly clears his throat.

AMOUN

(scoffing)

Just the sight of her turns you to
stone, is that about right?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHEOPS

Inconceivable as it is- yes, her look is literally petrifying.

Amoun shakes his head. Draco realizes his dinner remains on the fire, a casualty of his preoccupation with the story. He removes the meat- charred and hardened by the heat.

Perseus gathers his scraps of wood and his rabbit. He plants each Y upright on the sides of the fire, skewers the rabbit, and fixes the sharp stick across the Y's.

He cranks the spit with the hilt of his lashed dagger, evenly roasting the rabbit. Draco balks with an "aren't you clever" look. Perseus smirks right back- "I am."

INT. ANDROMEDA'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Peshet enters carrying a tray and a bowl of stew.

PESHET

My Lady, I have your--

She stops dead in her tracks. Her cat eyes dart around the empty chambers. Her pupils shrink to shocked slits.

PESHET (CONT'D)

No...

She drops the tray and runs out.

EXT. PLUTO ORKESTAR - NIGHT

Andromeda stands alone on the empty, ravaged terrace. The plaintive, whistling wind tugs at her drab shawl.

The sailcloth canopy hangs in shredded, tatters. Andromeda's sandals CRUNCH shards of broken wine bottles that litter the floor as she steps with mounting gloom.

She moves past the broken, upturned tables and chairs to the edge of the terrace.

She looks out over the black ocean and catches CROWD SOUNDS on the wind, wafting up from the Lower Wharf...

EXT. JOPPA'S LOWER WHARF - NIGHT

Andromeda navigates the steep, winding, narrow stairs and roads choked with debris, decay, and traumatized survivors of the tsunamis.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Andromeda watches as the LONG-HAIRED SFINX GIRL weeps and mumbles as she drags her boyfriend's broken corpse by the arms across the cobblestone.

SFINX GIRL
I'm sorry I'm sorry I'm sorry I'm-

A feeble OLD MAN leans on a cane as he wanders confused amidst the rubble of his house and bodies of his family.

Andromeda calls out to him, her voice weak and uncertain.

ANDROMEDA
Sir...
(steadyng herself)
Sir, do you-- ?

She stops, surprised when the Old Man looks suddenly up.

ANDROMEDA (CONT'D)
Do you need any help?

The Old Man narrows his eyes at her, conjuring the whole thought from his mind. He raises a bony finger.

OLD MAN
I know you... I know you!

Andromeda shakes her head and slowly backs away.

ANDROMEDA
I'm sorry to disturb you, sir. I
was just-- I was trying to help.

OLD MAN
I know you! You're the one she wants!
You're the reason for this!

Andromeda draws her shawl tight. She turns and bolts away before the Old Man calls any more attention to her.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
We're dead because you live!

EXT. JOPPA'S LOWER WHARF - LATER

Peshet searches the ruined Wharf for Andromeda.

But the devastation abruptly swerves her shocked attention.

A spotted LEOPARD SFINX TODDLER tries in vain to nurse at his dead MOTHER's bosom.

Too much for her, Peshet holds her mouth, trembling as tears spill down her cheeks. A human boy, an ALLEY URCHIN suddenly taps her shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALLEY URCHIN
(hushed)
Appalled? Take action...

He hands her a scrap of papyrus and quickly moves along.
She faintly hears him say something similar to someone else.
She looks down at the papyrus and reads...

"the Taverna Charybdis - Become the Cataracts"

INT. TAVERNA CHARYBDIS - NIGHT

The PROPRIETOR leads her down a short, narrow hall and raps on the heavy wooden door.

A slot opens. The Proprietor takes the papyrus from Peshet and passes it thru the opening.

The slot closes. BOLTS SLIDE. CHAINS RATTLE. The door swings open. Peshet cautiously enters the smoke and noise.

INT. BACKROOM OF TAVERNA CHARYBDIS - NIGHT

She finds a crowded cloak-&-dagger rally in progress.

A standard hangs at the head of the chamber- a sheet crossed by a pattern of rolling whorls suggesting waves breaking on the ocean- deep blue on white.

A man shouts to the hot-blooded crowd from the rostrum. We may recognize him as Fantasos, the evangelist briefly glimpsed on the streets at the start.

Here he bellows not about religion but revolution. To a far more alert audience at that.

FANTASOS
Devastation. Ruin. And does he care? No! The only thing Kepheus cares about is the Princessa- An epicure, rank and rotten to core! She's just another up-and-coming ruler who won't give a bilge about the strife of Joppa's Lower Wharf.

Peshet moves thru the crowd.

FANTASOS (CONT'D)
Last night, we lost homes, trades, families to the wave. And where are our leaders? Cloistered away on the high ground, that's where!

Peshet looks at the people around her. Angry applause. Fists shaking in the air.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FANTASOS (CONT'D)

And still, the Leviathan comes! Who here believes Kepheus has dug the trench at the water's edge?

Furious cries of "NO" from the crowd. Maybe it's the sting of Andromeda's spite, maybe sympathy for the people, but Peshet finds herself replying along with them.

FANTASOS (CONT'D)

No! He's dug it at his daughter's chamber door! I say let's show Kepheus we're not disposable. We're more than just the bricks in his bulwark! We're an angry torrent! A surging cataract! And we will tremble the walls of his Basilica to the very foundation!

The small room explodes with approval. The energy overcomes Peshet. She shouts and raises her fist too.

FANTASOS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

"Peshet" is it? It must be fate that you are here tonight...

EXT. BEHIND THE TAVERNA CHARYBDIS - NIGHT

A dank alley. Peshet talks with Fantasos as he locks up.

FANTASOS

...You work in the inner corridors of the Basilica and you could be indispensable to our cause...

He sighs and thinks. He finally leans close to Peshet and speaks- hushed, measured, and with great import.

FANTASOS (CONT'D)

The question is-- what are you willing to do to help?

Peshet draws a deep breath and doesn't answer right away.

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE ANDROMEDA'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Peshet moves in a fatigued daze. She cracks Andromeda's door and peers in...

INT. ANDROMEDA'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Dark. Lamps doused. Peshet's eyes adjust.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She sees a modest lump under the sheets and tendrils of black hair splayed across the white pillows. She breathes a sigh of relief and quietly shuts the door.

But Andromeda is not asleep. She lays motionless in bed. Eyes open, preoccupied and frightened.

EXT. CEDAR FOREST - AFTERNOON

The huge trunks of oldgrowth cedars shoot up and mushroom into a broad canopy of fir branches, eclipsing all but the most modest streaks of sun from the mossy stones below.

*SUPERIMPOSE: The Cedar Forest of the Illyrian Border...
24 Days Remaining...*

There, HUMBABA slumbers. A dinosaurian dragon. Leathery hide- scales and spines- sagging. Short arms. Strong, three-taloned legs. Eyes in the shadows of duel horns.

It's ribcage rises and falls. A wind stirs the shrubs and leaves around it.

Suddenly, Set is there. He soothingly strokes the sleeping monster's head. His hand turns partially transparent.

With that spectral hand, Set reaches inside Humbaba's skull. The animal goes stiff. Its leg twitches.

SET

Listen, creature. Let my instructions be seared to your humble mind as natural law. Listen.

Its eyes shoot open. Its pupils shrink to pinpoints.

SET (CONT'D)

You're starving. Your gut says you'll soon perish. And no earthly meat will still that ache. You hunger for the flesh of a demigod...

EXT. CEDAR FOREST ROAD - AFTERNOON

Nearby, the expedition rests in the midst of a break. Not present, Perseus, Draco, Icos, and Boreas.

EXT. CEDAR FOREST CLEARING - AFTERNOON

A heard of PEGASSI graze, but none the white winged horse. These Pegassi brandish the motley colours of wild mustangs- piebald, roan, gray, dappled- all with matching wings.

Perseus, Draco, Boreas and Icos crouch in a thicket.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRACO
Aren't they something. Stallions of the Gods.

ICOS
Perseus. How long do you think you could stay on one of those?

Perseus doesn't know but he grins ambitiously at the idea.

DRACO
Don't goad the boy. Nobody can ride a Pegasus.

ICOS
Didn't Bellerofonte tame a Pegasus?

BOREAS
Yes, Icos, I believe you're right. And he was a demigod too...

DRACO
I'm just not wild about explaining to Amoun how we got our boy here bucked from a thousand feet.

Boreas and Draco burst into hushed laughter.

PERSEUS
What's so funny?

DRACO
A thousand feet, Commander? He's not even getting on its back.

Perseus squints defiantly at them. He pushes out of the underbrush and purposefully marches towards the Pegassi.

The Pegassi prick up their ears at the intruder. Perseus shoots a "watch this" look over his shoulder and confidently approaches a dappled gray and black Pegasus.

He holds up his palms. The Pegasus WHINNIES and skittishly backs away. But Perseus keeps coming for it.

And it keeps backing up, increasingly agitated. It threshes its big wings at Perseus, smacking him with gusts.

When Perseus still continues to advance, the Pegasus rears up, flaps its wings and leaps clear over Perseus's head.

It lands behind Perseus before he can turn, bucks its hind legs, and kicks Perseus face first into the dirt.

Perseus rolls over and spits sod from his mouth. He looks over to Draco, Boreas, and Icos laughing in the bushes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Humbaba storms from the thicket. Perseus clammers back.

The Pegassi take flight. The Humbaba lunges and grabs one in his compact, bulldoggish muzzle, rips the wings in a fit of bloody feathers, and swallows the rest whole.

Humbaba turns his thickset head to face Perseus and the others- his jagged toothy chops bloody and slavering.

DRACO (CONT'D)

Icos- fetch the beast slayers. Boreas- flank me. Perseus- get out of here.

Icos bolts. Draco and Boreas plant their feet and draw their swords. Perseus sees this and does the same.

DRACO (CONT'D)

I thought I told you to run, boy.

PERSEUS

You going to chase me, old man?

DRACO

Alright, just stay at my back.

The monster looms over them.

PERSEUS

What is it?

EXT. CEDAR FOREST ROAD - AFTERNOON

The rest of the expedition already look wide-eyed into the woods, hearing the echoing predatory ROARS. Icos bursts from the tree line, out of breath.

ICOS

It's a Humbaba... Perseus, Draco, Boreas- all still out there. They need the monster hunters.

Mongke and Tamburlane, already rushing into the woods. Vidalia follows.

EXT. CEDAR FOREST CLEARING - AFTERNOON

The reinforcements arrive just in time to see Humbaba pin Boreas with its hind talons. It leans down, swiftly rips the soldier's head off, and swallows the ragged morsel.

DRACO

Boreas!

VIDALIA

Commander! What happened?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRACO

Perseus was trying to climb on a
wild Pegasus and-

She shoots Perseus a reproaching look over her shoulder.

DRACO (CONT'D)

The thing just came out of nowhere.

Vidalia spins her shepherd's sling and pitches lead sling-bullets, her aim sharp and speed fierce. The glinting streaks punch clean thru the monster's body.

Tamburlane unwraps a gun, or *gonne* rather- a tube of iron, cast in the shape of an open-mouthed lion, a shoulder-mounted cannon, an ancient bazooka.

He shoulders the *gonne*. Mongke loads a cannonball, stuffs the muzzle, and backs away. Tamburlane lights the fuse.

KA-BOOM! The iron lion belches a spume of smoke, throwing a slash of fire and metal that slams into and bounces off the Humbaba's hide.

The Humbaba staggers, steps forward, chomps down on Mongke, and swallows. Tamburlane doesn't seem moved.

PERSEUS

How can it take such a beating?

VIDALIA

Something planted a cruel delusion
in its mind. It's healthy but it
thinks its starving.

The Humbaba's eyes bulge with surprise. A saber ruptures up thru its nose. Its jaws prize open from inside...

Mongke lifts the roof of the beast's mouth with his saber.

VIDALIA (CONT'D)

It's a powerful curse. I can't
reverse it. But if the monster's
hungry, I can feed it.

Vidalia raises her arms and shuts her eyes. A growing cyclone of CAWING ravens descends from the sky in the hundreds. The Humbaba ROARS.

The ravens dive straight into its mouth. A constant stream of mad black birds throwing themselves desperately into its jaws, scrambling and squeezing down its throat.

The Humbaba panics and tries to shake them away but they keep forcing themselves in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

It throws its head back in a desperate effort to swallow the choking swarm.

VIDALIA (CONT'D)

Now! The belly! Slash the belly!

Mongke runs, lunges, and sweeps his blade up Humbaba's exposed belly. Steaming purple entrails spill over Mongke and across the ground. Humbaba crashes to the ground.

In the dusty aftermath, crows liberated from Humbaba's gut shake the viscera off their feathers and take flight.

EXT. THE CEDAR FOREST - AFTERNOON

Vidalia storms back to the road. Perseus catches up.

PERSEUS

What was that look for? That look when Draco told you I was trying to mount a Pegasus?

VIDALIA

What do you think?

PERSEUS

I didn't beckon the Humbaba.

VIDALIA

That's not the point at all.

PERSEUS

What is?

VIDALIA

Next time you have a bad idea, try not to be so human about it.

PERSEUS

I am half God too, you know...

VIDALIA

Right, that's not the hotheaded half. That's not the sophomoric, head-in-the-clouds, arbitrarily overbold, tries-to-ride-a-pegasus half.

PERSEUS

You are a Goddess. Of course you're aloof to the Spirit of Man.

Vidalia stops, turns, and confronts Perseus dead-on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VIDALIA

Oh yes, just another tyrannical Goddess, denying you that uniquely human privilege of destroying yourself. How little I must care for the Spirit of Man.

She whirls around and leaves Perseus in her dust.

EXT. PHRYGANA SCRUBLAND - NIGHT

Perseus sits by the dimly blazing campfire on the moonlit thorny scrub. He reaches in his satchel for an astrolabe-- a geared device slightly larger than a pocketwatch.

On its face, a dial, date meter, and rotating zodiac wheel- *Helios* the sun, *Selene* the moon, and unfamiliar symbols- *Pandora*, *Luxifer*, *Pyroeis*, *Isis*, and *Chronos*.

Perseus holds it to the sky, turns the dial until the moon and another symbol line with the real moon and a nearby star. The date rolls to *Elfabolion 10th, Ano 3110*.

AMOUN (O.S.)

Can't sleep?

Perseus turns. Amoun approaches from behind.

PERSEUS

Twenty days.

AMOUN

Did you make this?

Perseus hands him the astrolabe.

PERSEUS

From a set of specs...

AMOUN

(studying it close)

You improvised.

PERSEUS

Perhaps a little.

AMOUN

What clever craftsmanship...

Amoun hands him back the astrolabe.

PERSEUS

Amoun... You knew about me, didn't you? You knew what I was...

Amoun doesn't say anything for a moment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AMOUN

How do you suppose a common tutor
ends up in the service of the King?

PERSEUS

Unless he's not so common after all.
So just how uncommon was he?

AMOUN

Perhaps the foremost Scholar in all
the world. Not some wayfaring
schoolmaster who simply happened
upon the right place at the right
time. There are no coincidences.
Your birth was written in the stars
and I read them like a book. I sought
you out. I took it upon myself to
teach you and to watch over you.
For the good of Mankind.

PERSEUS

How much of this was omened in your
studies?

AMOUN

All of it. You. The treaty union
with Andromeda. The Leviathan.

PERSEUS

If you knew what would happen, why
didn't you warn anyone? Why didn't
you warn Kepheus or Cassiopeia?

AMOUN

It would have happened regardless.

PERSEUS

I chose to slay Leviathan. That
wasn't the stars. It wasn't fate.
It was my choice.

AMOUN

The choice you were fated to make.

PERSEUS

You're saying my choices were marked-
out on the sky before my birth?

AMOUN

I'm saying that "choice," for all of
us, is only an illusion.

PERSEUS

No. No. I've acted only on will.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AMOUN

And you've yet to take a single road
 I didn't anticipate just by reading
 your star chart. You will matter
 and endure in ways most men only
 fantasize about. Apotheosis to the
 Gods. Liberator to Man. You'll
 become the kind of champion they'll
 sing of forever. *Amor fati*, Perseus.
 "Love thy fate." Is it really so
 difficult a fate to love?

And with that, Amoun starts back to bed.

PERSEUS

I'm not a slave to it, Amoun.

AMOUN

(stopping)

Get some rest, Perseus.

INT. ANDROMEDA'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

She tosses and turns as the RAIN DRUMS the balcony outside.
 The pounding RAIN blends with DRUMSKINS BEATING...

EXT. THE AGORA OF JOPPA - DAY - FLASHBACK/DREAM

A MERMAID BELLY DANCER gyrates in a big glass cauldron in a market stall. Her fish scales scintillate thru the tinted glass. A voice calls thru the crowded market.

A YOUNG ANDROMEDA (aged 8) walks alongside a YOUNG PESHET (aged 16/17) past narrow stalls packed with fish, clams, prawn. Peshet moves down a row of watery barrels.

YOUNG ANDROMEDA

What are you looking for?

YOUNG PESHET

Dinner.

Andromeda curls her tiny fingers over the lip of the barrel and stands tip-toe to peek inside...

Packed full of squirming, sliding octopi in just a little mucky dark water.

YOUNG ANDROMEDA

They're alive!

YOUNG PESHET

Your father wanted fresh octopus.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

YOUNG ANDROMEDA

You can't eat them! Look! They're just trapped. They can't get away!

YOUNG PESHER

Nobody will miss them, my lady. They're slimy and slithering. It's disgusting.

YOUNG ANDROMEDA

They're just trying to get away!

YOUNG PESHER

How are you the only little girl who isn't disgusted by live octopus?

Andromeda bunches her tiny fists and tightens her jaw as she glares up at Peshet.

YOUNG ANDROMEDA

Peshet, if you take one octopus, I will scream and scream all the way to the Basilica. I will scream that a murderer is abducting the Princessa...

YOUNG PESHER

Oh, very well, my lady. No octopus tonight.

Peshet takes Andromeda's hand. They walk away.

YOUNG PESHER (CONT'D)

Why do you care so much?

YOUNG ANDROMEDA

Someone has to. They're just all trapped in that barrel.

YOUNG PESHER

Such a brave little girl... Such a mighty compassion...

Andromeda eyes Peshet. She looks down at Andromeda... It's Tiamat...

TIAMAT

A worthy sacrifice...

Andromeda (suddenly at her present age) yanks her hand away and opens her mouth to scream but only air bubbles come out. The whole market is under water.

The sailcloth awnings billow to the slow fluid currents. All the dead fish in the stalls and on the lines come alive and swarm around. Tiamat drifts close to Andromeda.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIAMAT (CONT'D)

You shall save your people. They shall come for you in the night. And feed you to Leviathan. Your compassion bids you to succumb. You would not fight it. You cannot fight it. Your future is merciful desolation. Irrevocable...

A huge shadow darkens the alley. Andromeda and Tiamat look up. A monstrous silhouette swims overhead.

TIAMAT (CONT'D)

The Leviathan... It hungers...

INT. ANDROMEDA'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT - PRESENT

Andromeda wakes with a start, drenched in a cold sweat as if she truly had just surfaced from the sea. She gasps to catch her breath, still terrified.

EXT. ROAD IN THE SIROQUE MOUNTAINS - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: *The Siroque Mountains, Disputed Territory...*
19 Days Remaining...

The expedition moves thru barren, jagged mountain passes. A dry, rocky desert of gouged and frayed sierras.

CHEOPS

This all seems a little much, no? A city held hostage and a hero's quest. Because- What?- the Queen insulted Tiamat's hair?

KOSMO

What do you expect, rhapsode? They're Gods and they went to war to make sure everyone knew it.

AMOUN

And Tiamat, as a Goddess of War, has absolutely no use for the peace she's obstructing.

VIDALIA

There is more to her plan than is visible. What is war if not subterfuge?

As they've been talking, Perseus lingers on a rise, eying a distant shelf of rock thru the pass.

Curious, Amoun stops and looks in the same direction. He sees glimpses of cloaked figures behind boulders.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AMOUN

(to Perseus)

Djinn Raiders. Look sharp. They're godly zealots and they fight like Hades is keeping count.

DRACO

Commander Kalibos' Skirmishers have been fighting them thru these mountains for years. It's his own personal war. I'm talking about an élite force trained to fight behind the lines. A fierce pack of men. Kalibos -- It'll be good to see the old wolf again.

CHEOPS

How "fierce?"

DRACO

Well the rest of us warhorses call them the "God-Slayers" so... I'm not ashamed to say I'll be relieved to be behind their bulwarks.

EXT. VALLEY - DAY

The expedition moves into a wide desert valley thru drifting fetid yellow dust. A flower peppers the scrub of the valley floor. Small but loud magenta blooms.

VIDALIA

(a pang of foreboding)

It's the Alkali Lotus...

About to ask her what she means, he stops when he notices her attention snagged by something ahead.

VIDALIA (CONT'D)

What is it?

They all see it shimmering on the path ahead thru the rippling desert heat- tents and streaming flags.

DRACO

An army bivouac...
(smiles)

And they're flying Joppa's colours...
It's Kalibos.

EXT. RUN-DOWN BIVOUAC - DAY

Abandoned. Tattered tents and sun-bleached bones. The breeze blows uneasily thru the ragged camp.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRACO

So much for that...

Perseus hears something. He follows the sound to a tent.

INT. TENT - CONTINUOUS

A cauldron BUBBLING over a fresh fire. Perseus looks inside. Alkali Lotus blossoms bob on the boiling broth. Uncertain, but uneasy, he backs away and goes outside.

EXT. RUN-DOWN BIVOUAC - CONTINUOUS

Perseus leaves the tent talking.

PERSEUS

Something's not right.

He notices everyone standing perfectly tense and still. And slowly, it dawns on Perseus why...

Dark figures hiding all around. Shadows perched atop rocks and flickering eyes in dark tents. The soldiers never left the camp. They became something.

They look like human soldiers from the flashes of old armour, scuffed and dented. But a closer look reveals- creatures, altered humans. LOTOPHAGI.

A buzzard-taloned hand draws back a tent flap and the electric-blue and flame-red face of a mandrill peers out.

A gorilla face looms behind a rock. Boar tusks curl and rupture his cheeks.

Ahead, a foot plants in the dust- not quite human, more chimp-like, with toes more like fingers. The companion foot. Strangely- completely different- a cloven hoof.

KALIBOS - apish face, black eyes, a pair of twisting kudu antelope horns jut from his scalp. He still wears battered armour, clinging to the little in him that's still human.

As he approaches the tense expedition, Draco recognizes something in the malformed face.

DRACO

Kalibos?

Kalibos speaks in a rough, deeply animalistic voice.

KALIBOS

You know me... But I does not know you...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Draco swallows hard to retain his composure. He salutes.

DRACO
Commander Draco of the Praetorian
Guard! Stand down, Commander!

Kalibos backs tentatively away, still squinting at Draco with suspicion. He doesn't return the salute.

DRACO (CONT'D)
Commander... What happened here?

The jittery Kalibos moves erratically. He alternately comes close to sniff and backs away as he finds the words.

KALIBOS
Always losing. Tired of war. So we ate lotus. We all ate lotus.

Kalibos circles them like a jackal.

KALIBOS (CONT'D)
Lotus gave euphoria in battle. Made blood taste sweet. So we ate more. More.

VIDALIA
(whispering)
They became lotus-eaters. The Lotophagi. We should leave...

Kalibos snarls and circles them faster, penning them.

KALIBOS
You cannot trick it. It smells something on you. Oozing out your pores. Soaking your cloth. A tang what burns its nostrils.

Gradually the other Lotophagi begin to clear their shadowy hiding places. Kalibos stops pacing.

KALIBOS (CONT'D)
You have the stink of Gods on you.
The enemy. We war with Gods. We rape Gods. We eat Gods.

Draco makes for the hilt of his sword.

The Lotophagi attack, swift and brutal. The rabid bestial zombies quickly fill the bivouac. Long arms thrash and effortlessly rip Praetorians like a frenzied pod of baboons.

Mongke and Tamburlane BLAST the swarm with *handgonnes*-smaller versions of the gonne, iron barrels on wooden stocks with a flash pan ignited by a sparkler match.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Amoun opens a leather sack of black sand.

AMOUN

Muster to me!

Cheops and Perseus are the first there. Amoun tosses an arc of the black sand around them.

The ring of sand ignites and throws up a mystical glowing barrier like a bubble of molten glass or rippling amber. Amoun shouts to Draco and Kosmo, still fighting.

AMOUN (CONT'D)

Come on! You can pass thru!

Draco bolts for the barrier. A Lotophagi crashes into Kosmo and twists his head almost clean off. Draco slides thru the barrier with a splash as it quickly reseals behind him.

The tide of HOWLING and SHRIEKING Lotophagi claw and hammer at the barrier to no avail.

AMOUN (CONT'D)

It's impregnable to inhumans.

Perseus takes quick stock of the survivors under the bubble. He realizes something...

PERSEUS

Impregnable to inhumans...

...and looks quick over the frenzied troop of Lotophagi. He sees Vidalia, still out there, alone, flinging sling-bullets as she tries to fight her way to the barrier.

PERSEUS (CONT'D)

Drop it, Amoun...

AMOUN

I can't.

PERSEUS

Drop the barrier!

AMOUN

No! She's already dead to us!

Kalibos grabs Vidalia by the hair and drags her to the top of an outcrop of boulders. He snarls and screams his intentions to the other Lotophagi- This one's his.

Vidalia fights to escape, but Kalibos grabs her by the head and presses her face against the rock.

CONTINUED:

KALIBOS

You are not of the Gods, are you?
 You are a God! Frail and lame.
 Fallen behind the herd. Perfect.

He hungrily rips her leather bandeau. Perseus, helpless to watch, turns to Amoun.

PERSEUS

Take this barrier down or I will.

AMOUN

You can't. You're inhuman as well.

On the boulder, Kalibos grabs Vidalia's white flesh, his fingers trembling with giddy, mad, anticipation.

KALIBOS

So soft, pretty. Going to split you open. Split you like a ripe peach.

In the bubble, Perseus draws his gladius.

PERSEUS

Cheops, get on your knees.

Perseus pushes Cheops to his knees and plants a foot on the rhapsode's back.

PERSEUS (CONT'D)

You boys better prepare to defend yourselves.

And with that, Perseus ducks his head under his forearms and leaps up... He shatters thru the barrier.

DRACO

I didn't know that was possible...

AMOUN

It's not...

But they have less than a moment to be stunned as the equally stunned Lotophagi come to their senses.

DRACO

Men to arms!

Perseus scrambles swiftly over the thick multitude of berserker Lotophagi. He jostles over their packed heads and backs as they reach to pull him down into the delirium.

He bolts up the side of the boulder and sacks Kalibos off Vidalia. Kalibos rolls and flips onto his feet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Perseus swings his gladius. Kalibos catches the blade in his slavering jaws and rips it from Perseus's hands, flinging it out of reach. Bloody spittle flies from his split tongue.

Kalibos leaps and pins Perseus. He opens his jaws and pulls his lips back from long white fangs. He sinks his teeth into Perseus's shoulder.

Suddenly, Vidalia cracks Kalibos in the back of the skull with a big jagged rock.

Kalibos leaps up. He whirls clumsily to face Vidalia. He careens towards her. Perseus sees the back of his head, concave and splattered from the rock.

The monster staggers and reaches blindly for the Goddess.

Perseus kicks the dazed Kalibos off the boulders. The beast CRUNCHES and ricochets off the lower rocks. He pinwheels thru the air akimbo and slams into the dust.

Perseus trips, his legs rubbery. Vidalia catches his arm under shoulder and braces him.

VIDALIA

It's okay. Sshh. You're okay.

She looks at the deep, wide puncture wounds from Kalibos's bite and the blood still welling up.

VIDALIA (CONT'D)

He really sunk in...

A THUNDEROUS sound surges in the distance. Perseus walks to the precipice of the boulders and looks down...

Down to where Draco, Amoun, and the others hack and fend off the Lotophagi. But the NOISE comes from elsewhere.

SCORPIOCHS, rhino-sized scorpions, stampede down the ridge.

They lay into the Lotophagi, they skewering and guillotine the the beast-men with huge pincers.

Perseus spots something else riding atop the glistening black carapaces of the Scorpiochs, DJINN RAIDERS.

Flowing black silk and tightly wrapped veils cover all save for their blazing blue eyes. They whirl sabers and cut down Lotophagi. The beast-men flee on all fours.

The last thing Perseus sees- the Djinn Raiders atop their Scorpiochs surround the expedition. Closing in.

PERSEUS

They're in trouble... Vidalia...

CONTINUED:

Perseus's balance wobbles. He reaches up and grabs the bite from Kalibos. Finally, he blacks out.

INT. ANDROMEDA'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Andromeda sits before a mirror, carefully lining her eyes with a coal pencil. Peshet stands by the door.

PESHET

I couldn't find you.

ANDROMEDA

Well, I was right here the whole time, so...

Lightning followed by a very close CRACK OF THUNDER. Andromeda jerks and pokes her eye. She covers her eye and slams down the eyeliner pencil.

PESHET

Why are you putting that on? You aren't planning on sneaking out again?

ANDROMEDA

No. I just needed to feel --

She sighs gives up on the eyeliner, moistens a rag from her pitcher, and wipes it off. She pours herself a cup of water from the pitcher.

ANDROMEDA (CONT'D)

I can look after myself, you know. I don't need you to --

Lightning flash. Loud thunder CRACK. She jolts and spills her water on the floor.

ANDROMEDA (CONT'D)

Gods! Can I get five quiet minutes?!
(resuming)
I don't need you to protect me.

PESHET

You don't get the danger you're in.
That's what I've been trying--

ANDROMEDA

Stop it.

PESHET

You don't understand how severe--

ANDROMEDA

Peshet...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PESHET

You saw what happened to your mother.
A God wants you dead.

Bright flash. BOOM. Andromeda jumps. Furious, she grabs a water pitcher and hurls it. The pitcher shatters on the wall by Peshet's head.

ANDROMEDA

Stop saying that!

Andromeda sits back down and composes herself like the outburst didn't happen.

ANDROMEDA (CONT'D)

I'm not... I'm not in any danger.
This is just one of those things.

Peshet slowly stands back up.

PESHET

I won't let anything happen to you.
You know that right? You know I'd die first, right?

Andromeda buries her face. Her shoulders spasm.

PESHET (CONT'D)

Please don't cry...

Peshet nears. Andromeda turns. Genuine tears stream down her cheeks, but she hides under feigned laughter.

ANDROMEDA

Peshet, what a wretched cliche.
"I'd die for you..." What? Are we living in a stage tragedy now?

Embarrassed and hurt, Peshet lowers her head.

PESHET

May I be dismissed, my lady?

Andromeda can't keep up the ruse, she covers her mouth and turns. Still faking laughter, she waves Peshet away.

Peshet curtsies and hurries out on the brink of tears. As soon as she's gone, Andromeda uncovers her mouth. She's not smiling. She wipes her eyes.

Another flash and CRACK of lightning.

Andromeda rushes to bed and pulls the sheets over her head like a scared child. She weeps. Mortified.

CRACK. She covers her ears and shuts her eyes tight.

EXT. DJINN CARAVAN - NIGHT

A string of lights snakes thru the dark mountains.

Each light- a lantern hanging from a Scorpioch's tail stinger. Most carry only a Djinn rider, but some hoist palanquins- small box/rooms slung between two poles.

The Scorpioch's carry the palanquins in pairs- front and back- carrying either end of the poles in their pinchers.

The surviving expedition members ride on the Scorpioch backs alongside the Djinn.

INT. PALANQUIN - NIGHT

The small, portable room jostles with the caravan. Oil lamps rock, flicker, and cast a shaky light.

Perseus lies sprawled on a rug, unconscious. Vidalia rings a cool, wet rag and places it on his brow.

She removes the dressing of the bite wound at his shoulder. A fat, swollen canker. Black "lotus roots" spiderweb from the puncture holes, spreading thru his veins.

VIDALIA

I don't know if it's turning you into Lotus compost or into one of them. Either way...

She smiles warmly and runs her fingers thru his hair.

VIDALIA (CONT'D)

You shouldn't have tried to save me. That's the sort of stunt I was talking about. Anyway. Thank you. Thank you for having stupid ideas.

(a novel thought)

You're really going to be a hero aren't you?

She kisses his forehead. She sighs deep and sits back.

VIDALIA (CONT'D)

I hope so. I'm getting too weak to do spells more than once.

Vidalia holds her palm above the floor and mutters a quick incantation. Threads of electricity dance between her hand and the floor.

Something sprouts. A small shoot buds. And quickly, it balloons into a bulbous cluster of fat pods- like a cross between a mushroom and a cactus. Vidalia plucks a pod.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She squeezes out the pod's salve and warms it between her palms before spreading it on Perseus's wound.

The infection under the wound bulges, seeming to come "alive." The bulge squirms deeper into Perseus.

Perseus instantly shoots up and grabs his chest. Digging his fingers in. Vidalia holds him down.

Perseus gags. His face turns blue. He opens his mouth. A viper wriggles its way from Perseus's throat.

The snake slithers away, a fat lump in its stomach- it ate the infection. Vidalia smoothes Perseus's hair.

VIDALIA (CONT'D)

It's gone now. You're okay.

PERSEUS

Where... Where are we? The Djinn-

VIDALIA

The Djinn helped us. We're in their caravan. Their Shaikh Suleiman seems to have some interest in you. They volunteered to take us to the Skolothian border.

(beat)

Don't worry about it. Just sleep.

He does.

EXT. RUN-DOWN BIVOUAC - MORNING

The pack of Lotophagi walk on their hooves and knuckles as they chew on the bones of the slain Praetorians.

One spots an Alkali Lotus in the sand. He hungrily scuttles.

The wind shifts. The petals blacken and curl. The Lotophagus looks up. The other Lotophagi sniff the air.

Their hair grays. Their skin wrinkles. They age years in minutes. They keel over, clutching their chests. Their bodies rot. Scarab beetles swarm over them.

Set glides over, following the trail of the expedition, uncaring of the side effects of his presence.

A sharp swathe of desiccation and death stretches in his wake back to the horizon.

EXT. VILLAGE IN SKOLOTHIA - AFTERNOON

Cooler, wetter terrain. Pines, fog, and mountains. The road cuts thru a quiet village of stucco and thatch.

SUPERIMPOSE: *The Frontier of Skolothia...*
15 Days Remaining...

The expedition walks. Perseus, Vidalia, Amoun, Draco, Thad, Abas, Icos, Mongke, Tamburlane, and a new addition- SHAIKH SULEIMAN, a veiled Djinn priest.

They notice scars of war on the village, ruptured walls covered by curtains and canvas and scorched thatch. They hear and see doors and shutters CREAK shut as they pass.

DRACO

The Skolothian Theater was a brutal one. In the end, the Gods' Legions didn't sack Skolothia, but they certainly battered her.

Perseus hurries to catch up with Vidalia. She smiles. Perseus searches for words.

PERSEUS

So, back there in the mountains...

VIDALIA

You shouldn't have risked your life to save me.

PERSEUS

Yes I know. Reckless. How very human of me. How perfectly--

VIDALIA

I'm dying.

Perseus quickly shuts up.

VIDALIA (CONT'D)

There is no one alive who speaks my former name and so it was forgotten to me. I have no worshipers and I am slowly fading... You shouldn't risk your life for me. I'll be gone soon anyway.

Perseus walks in silence.

PERSEUS

Right... Except I feel like I'd do it again...

They exchange smiles. Warm. Deeply grateful. And something less than platonic. Amoun notices.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PERSEUS (CONT'D)

(low, re: Shaikh)

So I thought they were just going to take us to Skolothia.

VIDALIA

I suppose the Shaikh just wanted to come along.

PERSEUS

Did I imagine this or did you say he seemed to have some sort of interest in me in particular.

VIDALIA

You're the reason they intervened.

PERSEUS

Why?

VIDALIA

I don't know. Why don't you ask?

PERSEUS

I thought they didn't speak.

VIDALIA

(smiles)

They don't have mouths.

PERSEUS

Alright then.

The expedition rounds a curve in the road. There, dead ahead, rising high from hills and fog- a series of sheer granite pinnacles crowned in pines.

PERSEUS (CONT'D)

Amoun. What is that?

AMOUN

Our destination. The Pillar of Moirai. Lair of the Norn Sisters.

PERSEUS

Will the Norns give us any trouble?

AMOUN

No. They owe me. In the war they broke ranks and augured for the Skolothians in return for infant sacrifice. It was Tiamat who struck them blind for the treachery. So when they came to me for help, I fashioned them one artificial eye, thru which they could channel their Second Sight.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Amoun turns to the rest of the expedition.

AMOUN (CONT'D)

We'll rest. Wait for dark to ascend
the Pillar. The Norns awake only in
the blackest hours.

EXT. CAMP IN SKOLOTHIA - NIGHT

The whole expedition sleeps. Perseus slumbers under a flysheet tent. Drizzle PECKS the canvas. WHISPERS. Perhaps another language but indistinct.

Nearby, Shaikh Suleiman kneels, thumbing prayer beads. He slowly stands and pulls a gleaming bronze sickle from the folds in his cloak. WHISPERS.

He walks carefully towards the sleeping Perseus with the hooked blade at his side. WHISPERS- more frenetic.

Still asleep, Perseus squirms. The Shaikh crouches and lifts his sickle. WHISPERS. Perseus jolts awake.

To find the Shaikh kneeling right before him. Head bowed. Bronze sickle blade resting in his outstretched palms.

The WHISPERS continue, pervasive and indistinct, but Perseus appears to comprehend them.

PERSEUS

I hear you. How can I hear you?
You don't have a mouth.

SHAIKH SULEIMAN (V.O.)

(whispers)

Moi ne epos ae'prositi, méne daeva.

PERSEUS

A what? A prayer? Are you- Are you
praying to me? Why?
(the sickle)
An offering...

SHAIKH SULEIMAN (V.O.)

Kos drépanon ashuna hei bala temos.

PERSEUS

I don't understand.

SHAIKH SULEIMAN (V.O.)

Ae'zti ke ishir'arkah, méne daeva.

PERSEUS

You're a High Priest of... of my
father? Who is he? Who is my father?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Shaikh looks up. The gap in his headdress bares scaled black and white skin of charred wood, and eyes like slots in a hollow body- a furnace of licking blue flames.

SHAIKH SULEIMAN (V.O.)
*Tuj patír esti hó theos kosmosr. Hó
 Zeus Patír. Zeus... Zeus...*

Perseus's eyes widen as he listens. He studies the sickle in the Shaikh's palms. Perseus takes the sickle carefully.

PERSEUS
 Thank you, Shaikh.

The Shaikh bows. He leaves Perseus to contemplate.

EXT. MOIRAI PILLAR - NIGHT

The expedition ascends the sheer rock pinnacle via a series of narrow rain-slick stairs and GROANING rope ladders.

EXT. SUMMIT OF MOIRAI PILLAR - NIGHT

The expedition enters a round henge of free-standing monoliths and a slab altar in the clustered pines and low fog. A stone age pagan sanctuary.

White bird feculence spatters and smears the monoliths. Fat pellets of regurgitated food matter litter the ground-packed with cloth and tiny human baby skulls and ribcages.

CHEOPS
 They eat... babies?

AMOUN
 They're very old. Tender food and whatnot. Let me do the talking.

A soft, stealthy flap of wings, the SCRAPING of gnarled talons on stone, and suddenly the Norn Sisters perch atop the scattered monoliths-

URD, VERDANDI, and SKULD- *Strix*, that is, human-sized owls with the gray feather-hemmed faces of old crones.

Eyeless save for one artificial Eye which they share- tiny copper cogs, apertures, and lenses enclosed in a polished sphere of intricate etched crystal.

They toss the Eye between them and pop it into their empty sockets to take turns at scrutinizing the expedition.

URD
 Amoun... So nice to see you again.

CONTINUED:

AMOUN

This isn't a social call. I've come
to seek your counsel on-

VERDANDI

You want to know about Leviathan.

URD

I'm afraid you've wasted a journey.

AMOUN

Is there nothing that can stop it?

The Norns let the query hang. Skuld glides across the henge, from one perch to another.

AMOUN (CONT'D)

Well? Don't play games. You owe me this answer at least.

URD

Don't presume to tell us what we may or may not owe you, human.

Watching the trio toss the Eye (the only thing they see) back and forth across the henge, Perseus makes his move...

He jumps the slab altar and catches the Eye midair. He rushes to the edge of the pinnacle and holds the Eye out.

PERSEUS

Tell us what we want to know. Or I drop the Eye.

The Norns flap their wings and puff up their feathers.

VERDANDI

Amoun! Calm him! He's a madman!

PERSEUS

He's a demigod. Now, are you going to help us or do I play clumsy with your delicate little toy?

URD

We can't tell you what you want. We can't betray Tiamat again.

SKULD

For a second offense, she would destroy us!

PERSEUS

Very well. You'll go on living... As blind as she made you...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SKULD

No! Give us the Eye and we'll tell.

PERSEUS

Tell me first. If I like the answer, you get your Eye.

VERDANDI

We need the Eye to see the answer!

PERSEUS

You're lying! You know the answer sure as you already knew the question!

SKULD

Leviathan can be destroyed...

VERDANDI

But it has only one weakness.

PERSEUS

What is it?

The Norns say nothing for a moment, but ultimately they have no choice.

URD

The stare of Medusa...

The answer hangs in the silence of the stunned expedition.

AMOUN

They're lying, Perseus.

Perseus watches the Norns, carefully weighing the revelation.

He throws back the Eye. Verdandi catches it and pops it in her eye socket.

AMOUN (CONT'D)

(not satisfied)

There's no such thing as Medusa. Is there?

PERSEUS

(to the Norns)

And Medusa? How can she be slain?

VERDANDI

With extraordinary cunning and unimaginable luck.

Skuld glides and alights on a crossbeam of a monolithic doorframe bracing an opening in a sagging earthen mound.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SKULD

And the proper tools. You're welcome
to pick thru our cache of spoils.
You may find such a tool.

Perseus stares into the black entrance to the mound.

AMOUN

Perseus, I'd strongly recommend not
going in there.

VERDANDI

Customarily, you'd do right to heed
such a warning, boy. But we've
already invited the ire of Tiamat
with this intimation.

SKULD

We may as well reap the balance of
the whore's gratuitous vengeance.

PERSEUS

I need a light.

The Shaikh grabs a fallen branch and holds it near his eyes
until the end catches fire. He passes it to Perseus.

Perseus starts towards the entrance.

INT. THE NORNS' CACHE - NIGHT

Perseus presses thru cobwebs and hanging roots. The narrow
passage opens up to a cavity.

The torchlight shines over haphazard piles of armour, swords,
bones, and broken clockwork inventions.

Perseus carefully looks over the room, not sure what he
should be looking for, but his sharp eyes work for it.

A round edge protruding from the heaps of junk catches his
attention. He grabs it and heaves it up-

A shield. Bronze, tarnished, and dinged. Not instantly
impressive. He looks it over in the light, still unsure.

But slowly he tightens his lips and nods. He straps the
shield to his back and leaves with it.

EXT. CAMP IN SKOLOTHIA - NIGHT

At the campfire, Draco and Amoun plot the next move. Perseus
and Vidalia listen nearby. Perseus idly works to wipe some
of the tarnish from his shield.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRACO
Head South. Back to Joppa.

PERSEUS
No--

DRACO
(ignoring Perseus)
We can marshal more men. Better
armaments. And then--

PERSEUS
Draco--

DRACO
--then return to Tartaros to claim
the head of Medusa.

PERSEUS
It took us half the month to get
here! We can't go back, disembark
for an even more remote destination,
and hope to get back in time to make
any difference! It is madness!

DRACO
Madness is sending anything less
than an army after that nightmare!

All eyes lock on Perseus- Draco annoyed to be contradicted,
Amoun twinkling with a glimmer of pride, Vidalia concerned.

PERSEUS
The road may lead into the jaws of
Hades and we may be unready for what
waits for us. But that's what makes
it important. I never expected this
to be easy.

DRACO
Perseus, we can't slay Medusa.

PERSEUS
Then go home, Draco. I'll do it.

DRACO
Like you rode that Pegasus.

PERSEUS
More like I slew Kalibos, you smug-

AMOUN
Perseus.
(to Draco)
He's right. And there's no time for
a second expedition. Leviathan is
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AMOUN (CONT'D)
bearing down on Joppa and we know
how to stop it.

PERSEUS
We're not going back without the
head of Medusa.

EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT

A fleet of ships stocked with armoured CREWMEN rises and falls on hundred foot mountains of water. The storm rages.

EXT. DECK OF LEAD SHIP - NIGHT

The FIRST MATE shouts to the stalwart CAPTAIN.

FIRST MATE
Captain, the swells!

CAPTAIN
Joppa's under siege! King Kepheus
needs the provisions!

Nearby, something huge breaches the surface.

The Captain squints thru the dark sheets of rain... And sees a tail coming down thru the haze like a falling tower.

With a BOOMING CLAP, the entire fleet vanishes under the massive tail cleaving the water into walls of spume.

UNDERWATER

hundreds of drowning Crewmen tug at their armour as they sink deeper and deeper.

The dark Leviathan reels around them, spewing rolling clouds of ink like an octopus.

The ink-thunderhead crackles with jagged bursts of green lightning. It billows over the drowning Crewmen. Their skeletons flicker, agonizing, gnarling, changing.

EXT. JOPPA'S LOWER WHARF - NIGHT

Rain pounds the bedraggled heaps of debris, the makeshift shelters of torn sails and planks, and the water choked with driftwood and rotting corpses.

From the water, a hand reaches- inhuman, oily and seaweed-coloured. Five suckered-tentacles, aligned like fingers, grip the top of a splintered pylon stump.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Creatures loom from the surf, formerly the Crewmen now altered CETOS- humanoid but ambiguously molluscan with unctuous feelers and frills, sacs bloating and deflating.

The Cetos climb from the brine in total, predatory silence. The horde of low, muculent creatures crawls up walls, lurks down alleys, and fans thru the Wharf.

EXT. TOPPLED HOUSE - NIGHT

A JUNKMAN with a cart full of finds forages thru the debris. He sees something twinkling in the heap in front of him. He approaches.

On closer inspection, he sees the twinkling thing as a glistening black eye. It blinks.

The heap floods with colour, scintillates and clarifies- not a heap of garbage at all but a camouflaged Ceto.

The Junkman tries to run. But the Ceto spits its tongue, a barbed venomous harpoon, lightning quick. The Junkman freezes, instantly. Paralyzed.

The Cetos opens its mouth... opens its whole skull- pink and bristling with teeth. Flaring and peeling open to the very back of its tooth-lined gullet.

It draws the twitching helpless Junkman in with its harpoon-tongue. It enfolds the Junkman's head with its throat, mouth, and skull. Slowly, it works the living meal down.

EXT. PLANK HOVEL - NIGHT

A prowling Ceto finds a notch in the planks. It slowly works its man-sized pulpy body thru the fist-sized hole with the POPPING of folded cartilage.

INT. PLANK HOVEL - CONTINUOUS

The Ceto bulges, distends, and POPS slowly and grotesquely back into shape as it emerges from the notch. It slinks across the floor to a SLEEPING LITTLE GIRL.

EXT. JOPPA'S LOWER WHARF - NIGHT

The Little Girl's CLIPPED SCREAM fractures the night. Soon, more and more screams follow from across the Wharf.

EXT. BASILICA BALCONY - NIGHT

Kepheus stands by the rail. Rain falls and threads of smoke rise from the massive tent town in the piazza.

Voices- frequent, angry, and disorganized- SHOUT CURSES at the Basilica.

Peshet comes out on the balcony.

PESHET
You sent for me, Majesty?

KEPHEUS
(without turning)
Peshet. Do you sympathize with Humanity?

PESHET
Sir? The Sfinxes are neutral.

KEPHEUS
Do you sympathize with humanity?

PESHET
Oh yes, Majesty. Very much.

KEPHEUS
Do you think we'll weather the storm?

PESHET
I hope so, Majesty.

KEPHEUS
Do you think my daughter has what it takes to clean it all up? Do you think she'll make a good ruler?

PESHET
(lowers her eyes)
She's... She's very tenacious... and...

KEPHEUS
Me neither... But she's my daughter.
She's my only daughter...

PESHET
Yes, Majesty.

KEPHEUS
The relief fleet is lost and now there's accounts of monsters coming out of the sea in droves to stalk the Lower Wharf. And still there's no word from the expedition. I fear a day is swiftly coming when I'll no
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KEPHEUS (CONT'D)
longer be able to keep my people at bay.

(facing Peshet)
I remember first seeing you with Andromeda. She was a newborn and you still had your cub-spots. But you cradled her so tenderly and sang so soft. You remember that?

PESHET
(a soft smile)
Yes, Majesty, I do.

KEPHEUS
Peshet, if they finally come for the Princessa... It falls on you to keep her safe. You're her last safeguard. Understand?

With a secret pang, Peshet takes a deep breath, and nods.

EXT. JETTY-AT-WORLD'S-END - DAY

A bleak shore. Icy rocks under a slate sky. A boulder jetty juts into the cold pewter sea and fades into the fog. Chunks and sheets of ice bob on the lapping waves.

SUPERIMPOSE: *Jetty-at-World's-End on the Tethys Sea...*

The expedition waits on the frigid beach. Draco finds Perseus sitting on a boulder, examining the shield he got from the Norns. Cheops sits nearby.

DRACO
That was the best thing you could find in the cache?

PERSEUS
I don't know.

DRACO
(shaking his head)
You know, it's her eyes that get you. Not her talons.

He gives Perseus a well-intentioned but patronizing slap on the back and starts away.

DRACO (CONT'D)
It's dead weight. It'll slow you down. You should toss it into the sea before we board the ferry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Perseus thoughtfully examines the shield. He returns it to his back. Pulling one of the straps over his shoulder, he catches sight of Vidalia.

CHEOPS

Perseus, can I ask you a question
they'll ask me a thousand times-
(beat)

Why?

Perseus watches as Vidalia touches her sparse leather clothes. The leather regenerates and reworks itself into a long thick wool pelt. She wraps herself tight and sits.

PERSEUS

(still on Vidalia)

I've always been drawn to lost causes.
It's the romantic in me.

CHEOPS

How is this a lost cause?

PERSEUS

What's that?

CHEOPS

I said how's this a lost cause?

PERSEUS

They are Gods. I don't worship them.
I don't pray to them. And I believe
they should be defied to the last
breath of mankind. But in the end,
they are Gods. How can it be possible
to win a fight against the ones who
make the rules?

CHEOPS

Possible? It's been done. You hear
of the Titans?

PERSEUS

You mean like Atlas, Hyperion,
Prometheus...

CHEOPS

Creators of the Gods. Gods to the
Gods, as it were. Yes, even Zeus
said his vespers just like us. Until
Zeus grew up, grew restless, and led
an uprising against the twelve Titans.
Know how that ended? The Gods slew
their Titan creators, is how. And
took their place in Olympos. The
Titanomachy- Clash of the Titans.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PERSEUS

Those are just stories.

CHEOPS

The only story. Son transcends

Father. Creation defies Creator.

"Just stories-" What else is there?

(one last thought)

And anyway... How do you win a fight
against the ones who make the rules?

You ignore the rules.

A distinct series of noises drifts from the fog. SNAPPING
ice. Oars SLOSHING water.

A shadow darkens the fog. A tall ice-cutting trireme, a
three-tiered galley, resolves. It's oars move with uncanny
precision and synchronicity as it eases next to the jetty.

PERSEUS

Is that?

AMOUN

Charon's ferry.

EXT. THE TETHYS SEA - DAY

The prow of the trireme cuts the ice sheets. Rows of oars
slice the ice with a mechanical rhythm like the legs of a
millipede, pulling the boat thru at an arrow's pace.

INT. BELOW DECK - CONTINUOUS

Sweltering, dark, and loud. SHUDDERING pipes. HISSING
steam. RUMBLING gears and pinions.

CHARON, a grizzled old explorer who never went home, shovels
coal into the furnace and slams the hatch.

He walks past rows of benches and his "crew"- mechanical
oarsmen of tarnished brass, clockwork automata powered by
the boiler. Rowing, tireless.

Charon dons heavy furs before climbing out onto the-

EXT. UPPER DECK - CONTINUOUS

Caked in an icy slick. The men huddle around meager coal
stoves in a gray mist, slashed by flecks of snow.

No one speaks. Just the STACCATO RHYTHM of the oars, the
GROANING of the hull, and the deep SNAPPING of the ice.

INT. HOLD - DAY

Cluttered with barrels and bundles of rope. Perseus wears a blindfold and holds a fighting stance as he slowly turns. Vidalia, not blindfolded, circles him.

Both have rags around their knuckles to dull the hits.

PERSEUS

Don't go easy on me...

VIDALIA

I'm not.

She delivers a hit to the lower back. He winces.

PERSEUS

Changed my mind. You can go a little easy on me.

VIDALIA

I don't think so.

PERSEUS

Well can I take off the blindfold?

VIDALIA

Want to be part of Medusa's decor?

PERSEUS

I was kidding.

VIDALIA

I know.

She tries to punch his stomach. He blocks. She sweeps his legs out from under him. He falls on his ass.

VIDALIA (CONT'D)

She's got a tail. She's going to try things like that.

PERSEUS

(a joke)

Yeah. Should've seen that coming.

He climbs back up and resumes the defensive position.

VIDALIA

Just forget your eyes. Forget you ever had eyes. Sense your prey. Hear my muscles coil before the pounce. Taste my sweat in the air. Feel my hunger in your own gut. Ask, "How will she feed it? What's her next move?"

CONTINUED:

PERSEUS

I can't see the world like that. I
can't do those things.

VIDALIA

You really can, Perseus. You're the
son of a God. You can do those things
and quite a bit more. Focus.

He turns slowly. She circles him. Gradually, he syncs to
her orbit, holding face to face.

PERSEUS

There you are. It's like you think
a room is silent until someone points
out the wind. Then the wind is all
you hear.

VIDALIA

Exactly... Now try an attack.

PERSEUS

(brow furrows)

Wait...

She goes for the strike. He dodges, moves behind, and
gingerly locks her neck.

PERSEUS (CONT'D)

You are going easy on me. You're
afraid of hurting me...

A brief rush of surprise in her eyes. She hides it.

VIDALIA

Is that so?

She escapes the hold by flipping him on his back.

PERSEUS

Yeah... Yeah, I think it is.

He sweeps her legs. She falls on him. He rolls and pins
her. She looks up, anxious, worried. Her chest rises and
falls quickly, but silently.

PERSEUS (CONT'D)

What was it? I touched an idea you
thought was buried. A tightness in
your chest. A feeling like- falling.
Vidalia, what's wrong? What are you
afraid will-

She covers his mouth with a deep, tender kiss. He dissolves
into it. They roll together, she on top.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She pulls back and stands up. She quickly turns away and touches her mouth, surprised at herself.

PERSEUS (CONT'D)

(takes off blind)

Vidalia. Wait. Where are you- ?

VIDALIA

You're ready to hunt. You read me like a book, Perseus. You're ready.

EXT. UPPER DECK - AFTERNOON

Cheops stands at the deck rail, looking over the fog-choked ocean of ice. He warms his shoulders. Perseus approaches, slow and troubled. He leans on the rail.

CHEOPS

Preparing for this madness?

PERSEUS

What? Oh. Yes. Yes, I was--
(touching his lips)

Just now something happened... Can I ask you-- You're a rhapsode so maybe you can tell me--

He stops himself and stares out into the fog.

CHEOPS

What?

PERSEUS

Nothing. It was nothing. Forget I asked.

CHEOPS

Tell you...

(smirks knowingly)

...about certain *rhapsodic* pursuits?

Perseus looks up.

CHEOPS (CONT'D)

Yes, I recognize that look. They always ask the poet, don't they, about affairs of the heart...

(beat)

Look, that's not my poetry. For what it's worth, I say-- Our time on the stage is so brief. We have the crowd's short attention but for a flickering moment and we exit to dust and regrets. I say if, in that moment, you didn't speak and act from the heart...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHEOPS (CONT'D)

(fist on his chest)

...and I mean that deep well in your soul... well then what were you doing up there?

Perseus sighs and shakes his head, not satisfied.

PERSEUS

My heart? I act from my heart and the whole world topples from Atlas's grip into the pit of fire and ruin.

Cheops laughs.

PERSEUS (CONT'D)

Something amusing?

CHEOPS

That -- what you said -- it's really the only excuse I ever hear. But... It's your moment. Do as you please.

EXT. SHORES OF TARTAROS - AFTERNOON

A stark landscape of cracked volcanic glass. Falling snow melts in the glowing heat from open lava fissures. Lava rolls into the sea, boiling up HISSING veils of steam.

SUPERIMPOSE: *Tartaros...*
11 Days Remaining...

The expedition walks down Charon's flimsy gangplank and sets foot on the harsh ground.

EXT. TARTAROS - EVENING

The expedition navigates the terrain of black glass, ruptured and buckled. A glowing lava vent here or there. Silence save for the CRUNCH of the ground.

In the distance, darksome ruins. A scraggy column facade, tilted, leaning, half-sunk into the dried lava-flow.

CHEOPS

Is that it?

PERSEUS

The Pitched Temple of Tartaros.
 That's where she is.

DRACO

Then those must be her guards.

He points to a ridge and a pair of strapping Centaurs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NESSUS and IXION, two Centaur huns with blood-painted barrel chests and big clydesdale bodies. Their eyelids pierced shut with crisscrossing snake fangs.

VIDALIA

Their eyes are stitched shut.

CHEOPS

Makes sense.

Suddenly, Nessus and Ixion stand and face the expedition.

AMOUN

Did they hear us?

The Centaurs slide down the ridge and launch into a gallop.

PERSEUS

I think they see us.

AMOUN

Nonsense, they can't see anything.

They charge at the expedition, raising crude spiky mace of scrap iron. Their hooves shake the ground.

VIDALIA

(loading her sling)

Then that's one spectacular sense of smell because they're coming right at us.

As they advance, their true size slowly becomes clear- eight feet? Ten? Thirteen?

AMOUN

Perseus, Draco- go take down the Medusa. We've got the Centaurs.

CHEOPS

We do?

Perseus and Draco make a run for the temple.

Vidalia spins her sling. The Shaikh draws his saber. Mongke and Tamburlane load their handgonnes. And the three Praetorians- Thad, Abas, and Icos ready their swords.

Nessus and Ixion arrive towering fifteen feet tall.

CHEOPS (CONT'D)

Is it too late to swap with the Medusa team?

The Centaurs swing their maces.

EXT. PITCHED TEMPLE - EVENING

Perseus and Draco tie blindfolds and catch their breath on the steps. Perseus tightens his shield to his forearm.

DRACO

You scared?

PERSEUS

Of what?

DRACO

Good boy. Now stay close and I'll steer us thru this.

They feel their way into the shadows of the temple.

INT. PITCHED TEMPLE - EVENING

Dark and slanted. Broken by cascades of cold sky light from caved in portions of the roof. Toppled pillars and walls. Stone debris everywhere.

Draco and Perseus pick their way blindly thru the mess. Perseus steps over what he believes to be a pile of rubble-

A cringing petrified corpse, knotted and porous flesh, fingers curled excruciating, real human teeth still jutting from the twisted stone hole of a screaming mouth.

Everywhere. Bodies of men locked in cowering moments of pure soul-stripping horror. Looking as if flash-fried in searing ash. Hollow eye sockets. Skull-toothed screams.

Wind-scoured silence. A silhouette- MEDUSA...

A head of writhing hair atop the sharp lank shoulders of a woman's torso, crawling, savage, on her knuckles, and dragging, waist-down, the slinking tail of a rattlesnake.

She lurks thru pools of shade and light, baring charcoal scales head-to-tail shedding in dry flaking tatters. And hair of snakes- cobras, taipans, coral, adders- HISSING. Striking one another. Striking Medusa herself.

She flinches stiffly from the constant bites but skulks ahead, stolid and cold, towards her prey. Her forked tongue, purple-black, tastes the air.

EXT. TARTAROS - EVENING

Ixion's spiked mace wallops two Praetorians in one blow, snagging them on the spikes. The centaur flings the flailing bodies into an open lava vent.

CONTINUED:

Nessus goes for Amoun. Amoun reaches into a bag of sand and throws a handful at Nessus. The sand becomes a hail of steely barbed flechettes in midair.

The barbed hail lashes the centaur's flesh. Nessus recoils and resumes his advance, undaunted, skin twinkling with countless steel splinters.

Tamburlane rolls between and unloads his handgonne in the Centaur's heart- or rather where it would be in a human. The slug punches clean thru his chest and knocks him back.

Nessus touches the bleeding hole in his chest. Then angrily grabs Tamburlane by the throat and hurls him away.

The Shaikh jumps into the fray with his reeling saber. He gets in a few choice slashes on Nessus.

The centaur raises his mace. The Shaikh lets his saber fall and lodge in the ground. He bows his head.

Nessus swings his mace and shatters Shaikh Suleiman's head like a clay pot.

His insides spill as blue fire from his neck, spiraling up and out as the hollow corpse collapses. The blue-hot fire flares towards Nessus and consumes him like napalm.

Nessus shakes and bucks wildly. Tamburlane takes the opportunity to BLAST a well-aimed slug thru Nessus's skull.

The burning centaur crumples, dead. The blue fire slips loose from the dead creature and dissolves into the air.

INT. PITCHED TEMPLE - EVENING

Both Perseus and Draco on opposite sides of the room, dare not make a sound. They turn slowly, weapons ready.

Medusa stealthily circles Draco. He listens to the RASP of scales on stone.

DRACO

I hear her, Perseus.

She coils and surrounds Draco without touching him.

DRACO (CONT'D)

She's over here. I've got her.

Her torso safely behind him, she lures her tail in front. She RATTLES it.

Draco spins and slices the air towards the sound. The RATTLE stops suddenly. A relieved smile on Draco's face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Medusa reaches and gingerly tugs the loose end in back of Draco's blindfold, pulling the knot out.

The blindfold flutters to the ground.

Draco sees just the tail before him. Startled and not thinking, he instinctively looks behind.

PERSEUS
(sensing her strategy)
Draco don't- !

Draco sees Medusa. His eyes widen. Muscles lock.

His flesh scorches, shriveling close to his bones. Hardening to scabrous pumice-stone.

Anything soft- blood, internal organs, hair, eyes- boils away as hot sulfurous gas spewing from his mouth and pores.

Medusa seems to get a high from the vapors. She succumbs to a brief but euphoric shudder. She eyes Perseus, hungry.

EXT. TARTAROS - EVENING

Ixion tramples the last of the Praetorians.

Cheops charges in and plunges his sword between Ixion's horse-ribs. His sword sticks.

Furious, Ixion swings his mace. Cheops grabs the hilt of his stuck sword and draws his knees up. He finally yanks his sword free and falls flat on his ass.

Ixion brings his mace up to smash Cheops... Suddenly, a blitz of sling-bullets cuts the air. The lead bolts PING off Ixion's club and slit his flesh.

He forgets Cheops and rampages for Vidalia and her sling. He raises his mace high and slams it down, just as Vidalia deftly rolls out of the way.

The mace-hit caves a thin sheet of rock above a lava tube. Ixion's hooves scramble and slide.

Mongke seals it. He throws a snare. Its sinkers and chains cartwheel thru the air.

It snags Ixion's ankles and wraps his legs together. Ixion slides into the lava tube.

Suddenly, his hand grabs the ledge. He heaves himself out- what's left of him. His horse-half severed and swallowed by the rushing lava.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

His humanoid torso terminates in burning flesh and a segment of spinal column that glows like molten iron. He drags himself towards Vidalia.

She kicks his face, over and over, until he finally slides back into the lava.

INT. PITCHED TEMPLE - EVENING

Perseus shakes and breathes hard, losing it. His HEART POUNDS. He jerks at the slightest sounds. He holds his shield close.

At first, Medusa doesn't seem to be anywhere around him. Perseus gradually steps back.

Until he bumps into a column. He jolts with fear, but quickly steadies himself.

On the column above, Medusa clings, her snake body coiled tight around the top. She slowly crawls down towards the base of the column. Towards Perseus.

Yet Perseus insists on keeping his back flush against the column- a false security blanket.

Above, Medusa reaches slowly for his blindfold with the meticulous patience of a snake.

She pulls the knot out. The blindfold falls. Perseus instantly lowers his head and squeezes his eyes closed.

He slashes the air in front of him. He rakes the sickle back to one side. Nothing. He sweeps the other side. Nothing. Where is she?

Perseus reins in his panicked breath. He listens and thinks. His brow furrows with dawning clarity.

He cracks his eyes and peers down into the basin of his shield. His darting eyes find a patch of polished bronze.

Above, unseen, Medusa nears. Her hair of snakes tenses and focuses on Perseus. They coil for the strike, to startle him into turning about.

Perseus angles the shield to reflect behind. No Medusa. He tilts the shield to see above. He watches the scrap of scenery glide over the slash of burnished metal.

Sky.

Ceiling.

Movement. Poised snakes. Cold eyes. There.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He shuts his eyes and windmills his sickle in a vertical arc. Medusa's talons quickly deflect.

The sickle flies from his grip and spins across the floor.

Perseus scrambles, searching for it on his hands and knees, eyes closed. As Medusa slithers down from the column and drags herself towards Perseus.

Perseus fingers paw the ground, nowhere near the sickle. He has to open his eyes.

He instantly spots the sickle. He grabs it.

His eyes dart to the bowl of his shield and the menacing shadow that grows in the reflection.

He shuts his eyes and wheels around to cut again. A soft F-THMMP as the blade slices thru something...

A fractional silence. Perseus holds his breath. His eyes dart again to the reflection-- the shadow still looms.

But suddenly, Medusa's head THUDS and rolls on the ground.

The headless reflection topples over, dead.

Perseus laughs with relief.

EXT. TARTAROS - EVENING

In the aftermath of the battle, the survivors (Vidalia, Amoun, Cheops, Mongke, and Tamburlane) breath exhausted sighs and take silent stock of their losses.

VIDALIA

How long do we give Perseus before-

CHEOPS

(pointing to the temple)

Look...

They all turn, jaws-dropped. Perseus shuffles, weak-kneed, down the temple steps. In one hand, his blood spattered sickle. In the other, a dripping sack.

INT. BASILICA CUPOLA - NIGHT

A small widow's walk at the highest point on the Basilica.

The wide view reveals the Basilica's multi-storeyed colonnades and staggered terraces descending to the piazza, the buildings and streets of the Acropolis, and beyond.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Kepheus focuses on the "beyond" thru a long, mounted spyglass. His Consul of War at his side.

SPYGLASS POV

Bonfires rage outside the city walls. Blurred silhouettes pass in front of the flames... Minotaurs march. Centaur regiments gallop.

And bigger things... Living things that don't fit in the spyglass' view. Ranks of siege towers roll into line.

Movement everywhere.

BACK TO SCENE

KEPHEUS

(looking thru eyepiece)

Like hyenas come to pick our bones.
I had no idea the armies of Tiamat
were so great in number.

CONSUL OF WAR

Set too, we think. Contingents of Nephilim Giants and Anubites, steadily coming ashore from the Witchloams to augment Tiamat's Centaur and Minotaur legions.

Kepheus pulls back from the eyepiece and meets his CONSUL OF WAR with worried eyes. He looks out into the distance.

KEPHEUS

If we could ignite the Sun-Lenses.
Open the apertures wide and scour
their ranks with shafts of fire.
Roasting them where they sit.

CONSUL OF WAR

There's no sunlight to harness.

KEPHEUS

I know, I was only--
(beat)
This damnable storm. Closing in.
Suffocating us by sky, by sea, and
by land. How many--

CONSUL OF WAR

Four days, Majesty...

KEPHEUS

I thought it was seven... at least.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CONSUL OF WAR
No, I'm sorry, sir.

Kepheus looks suddenly defeated.

CONSUL OF WAR (CONT'D)
We've more tricks yet. The engineers
are tuning the Automata. We'll buy
every last second.

KEPHEUS
You'll have to, Consul. Because
I've grown rather attached to this
notion of "hope."

INT. ANDROMEDA'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Andromeda eats plump grapes from a silver dish. Peshet plays a SOMBER TUNE on the lyre. Distant CRIES and SHOUTS in the streets outside.

ANDROMEDA
Can you play something a little more
airy? Not so melancholy.

Peshet thinks. She plucks out a sweeter tune.

ANDROMEDA (CONT'D)
Something- I'm sorry- something more
brisk. More mercurial.

Peshet plays a bit faster. Andromeda taps her toes lightly. She sways her hips as if not thinking about it. Still, WAILING from out in the city starts to leak in.

ANDROMEDA (CONT'D)
Maybe a little louder.

Peshet stops playing and slams the lyre down.

PESHET
Can you really be so self-absorbed
that you don't hear what's happening
out there or are you just heartless?

ANDROMEDA
You forget yourself, Peshet!

PESHET
You forget, Andromeda! When I went
down to the Wharf looking for you
and I saw such--
(beat)
You forget I grew up down there.
Before I was brought to the Basilica.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PESHET (CONT'D)

Before I cradled the baby Princessa
close to my heart. Before I sang
her to sleep every night. Before I
taught her to read and write. I see
her now and I'm ashamed to have nursed
her. I'm ashamed of my devotion to
her.

ANDROMEDA

(lip trembles)

Peshet... I...

PESHET

It's a shame all those people have
to suffer and die to protect someone
so unmoved. So numb. So cold.

EXT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE ANDROMEDA'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Peshet storms out and slams the door. She softens a bit
and turns to go back inside... But she hears the distinct
far-off sound of a GONG. Peshet reluctantly leaves.

INT. ANDROMEDA'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

The pained SHOUTS and WAILING outside continue to bleed in.
Andromeda snaps. She storms out onto

THE BALCONY

and screams with red-faced fury at the city.

ANDROMEDA

Silence! What are you screaming
for?! What do you want me to do?!
Do you want me to die for you?!

Her anger melts to sadness. Tears fall down her cheeks.

ANDROMEDA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry! I want to help you! I
wish I wasn't so scared!

She collapses to the floor.

ANDROMEDA (CONT'D)

I wish I wasn't so scared...

EXT. BEHIND THE TAVERNA CHARYBDIS - NIGHT

Peshet wears a shawl as she meets Fantasos in the alley.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FANTASOS

One night soon, a gong will ring
three times. When you hear it, unlock
the back gate. Then go to the
Princess's chambers...

Fantasos hands Peshet a dagger.

FANTASOS (CONT'D)

...And bring us Andromeda, dead or
alive, to be offered to Leviathan.

PESHET

What about Perseus and the--?

FANTASOS

Our sands are out in four days. And
if he returns on the fifth, I wonder
what he'll find in place of Joppa.
Charred ruins or just a black abyss?
Or he could already be dead, and
never return at all.

Peshet just stares at the dagger, hands trembling.

FANTASOS (CONT'D)

What choice is there?

EXT. OLIVE GROVE - DAY

A deep and narrow walled path unrolls over the pastoral
orchard hills.

SUPERIMPOSE: *Somewhere in the Hills of Illyria...*
3 Days Remaining...

The expedition once fourteen strong now carved to six-
Perseus, Vidalia, Amoun, Cheops, Mongke, and Tamburlane.

They arrive at a milestone, drained.

AMOUN

Perseus... Let's stop for the night.

PERSEUS

We have little more than three days...

AMOUN

We've been running as straight and
swift as an arrow for the past week,
often quitting the clear roads in
favour of the more direct routes.
You need rest or they'll be nothing
left of you to face Leviathan.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Perseus begrudgingly hears him. He stops and reads the ancient words carved into the milestone-

"the Polis of JOVE PATER : { XI stadia S. }"

Cheops sees it too.

CHEOPS

What's eleven stadia to the South?
Never heard of "Jove Pater."

VIDALIA

It's another name for Zeus.

AMOUN

It's an ancient milestone. From a time when cities were named for their patron deities.

As Amoun explains, Perseus notices, in leaning on the monolith, how his palm casually covers the letters "-TER." He brings his other hand to cover the "-VE."

AMOUN (CONT'D)

You see, Cheops, "the Polis of Jove Pater" is the ancient name of-

PERSEUS

Joppa...

Perseus stares intently at the partially covered milestone which now reads under his hands-

"the Polis of JO-- PA--- : { XI stadia S. }"

AMOUN

Right, it was once the most sacred sight in the worship of Jove.

PERSEUS

I know what Tiamat's doing...

Everyone looks up expectantly.

PERSEUS (CONT'D)

Tiamat has been gorged on decades of bloodshed. Now the Gods want peace and she must make her move. She's holding the city of Zeus hostage. Striking terror in its citizens. Compelling them to make a human sacrifice. Is there a more potent offering? She's forging Joppa into her new church.

CONTINUED:

VIDALIA

(gets it)

And with the sacrifice to Leviathan,
the ancient abode of Zeus becomes
the new abode of Tiamat, granting
her final sway to supplant him as
the new God of Gods.

PERSEUS

That's her plan. Overthrow Zeus by
seizing his "home" . . . Before his
son can stop her.

A beat as the casually dropped revelation sinks in.

CHEOPS

Wait, what did he just say?

VIDALIA

How did you know?

PERSEUS

The Shaikh was a priest of Zeus. I
heard his prayers in my head.

Vidalia draws his eyes with a look of great import.

VIDALIA

Tiamat can't ascend Olympos, Perseus.
It would be catastrophic. The War
would last forever. She'd feast on
the prayers of her subjects and the
blood of her enemies. There'd be no
defying the Gods again. The War
Goddess must not be allowed to rule
the Gods.

AMOUN

Perseus will never let it happen.
Let's rest here tonight, shall we?
Tomorrow, we reach Joppa.

Perseus holds her eye contact in silence. His eyes suddenly
full of regret and conflict. Amoun glances between the two
with awareness and severity.

AMOUN (CONT'D)

You won't let it will you, Perseus?

Perseus holds on Vidalia. She creases her brow at him.
Concerned. Pained. Imploring.

PERSEUS

No, Amoun. No I won't.

EXT. OLIVE GROVE - EVENING

The fat red sun dips down to the olive-forested hills.

VIDALIA (V.O.)

I don't remember the tribe that prayed
to me...

EXT. OLIVE GROVE - NIGHT

Vidalia and Perseus traipse side by side down the path
between unkempt rows of knurled olive boughs.

VIDALIA

I remember I loved them. I brought
rain to their fields. Sheltered
them from the harsh world. Because
I was sure it would break them.
They seemed so fragile and beautiful.
I underestimated them.

(shaking her head)

When I saw you emerge from the temple
with Medusa's head, I knew I
underestimated them. Beautiful,
yes. But not fragile. Resilient.
Bold. Surprising. I saw a Man do
an impossible thing. Vanquish the
last living Nightmare.

Perseus doesn't respond right away. They walk in silence.

PERSEUS

I was mad with fear. I could barely
think. It was no heroic feat. I
just didn't want to die.

VIDALIA

But so many Men had died, trying to
do that very thing.

Perseus looks away, unconvinced.

PERSEUS

I'm no hero. A hero believes. A
hero has something to fight for,
something more than fear- a purpose.
My heart needed this. This Labour.
But now it feels so-

He looks up and sees Vidalia transfixed by the dark grove.

PERSEUS (CONT'D)

What is it?

She hurries to the base of an ancient, gnarled tree. She
probes. She carefully places her foot in a tangle of small
shrubs. And then descends into the ground.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Perseus cocks an eyebrow, a bit baffled.

VIDALIA (O.S.)

Come here!

Perseus approaches and pulls back the shrubs to find a small opening in the cleft of the tree's twisted roots.

INT. SHRINE IN THE SEDGE - NIGHT

Perseus drops into a dark, but cozy earthen den, walled by roots and old timber supports. Vidalia stands motionless before a bare altar.

PERSEUS

Are you okay?

VIDALIA

This is- This is my church.

PERSEUS

What?

VIDALIA

This is where I was born to the world.
Where they prayed to me.

PERSEUS

I thought you didn't remember.

VIDALIA

I don't. But you know your home
when you see it.

She sees a clay tablet on the altar with illegible fragments of letters- remains of a word gouged away long ago. Vidalia runs her fingers along the scoring.

VIDALIA (CONT'D)

In the early days of the war, rangers fanned thru the hills. They drafted the men and boys from the rural tribes. And stamped out whatever traces of religion they came across. No matter how apparently innocuous. My name would've been carved here.

She turns from the tablet. She looks around and presses her hands lovingly to the dirt walls.

PERSEUS

How long do you have left?

VIDALIA

I don't know.

CONTINUED:

PERSEUS

How will it-?

VIDALIA

I will simply vanish. It won't be theatrical tragedy or blood-and-thunder. It will happen quick and quiet like a dream evaporating at dawn. No one will notice the moment. Because it will be when no one's thinking of me.

Perseus approaches the altar. He kneels by the clay name-tablet and pulls the dagger from his sandal-straps.

VIDALIA (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

PERSEUS

What does it look like?

He starts to scratch a "V" on the tablet. Vidalia's curious face wrenches with anguish when it dawns on her. She squeezes her tearful eyes closed to find restraint.

VIDALIA

It doesn't work like that. I'm terminal. Faded past the point of remedy. Nothing can save me.

PERSEUS

(standing, determined)

No, you're wrong! Is there no amount of devotion that would be enough?! No compassion?! Gods, Vidalia, no amount of love? Love! Does it not buy at least a day?!

(closer, softening)

I won't believe it doesn't.

VIDALIA

(shaking her head)

Why did you have to give me a name?

They kiss. Tongue-tips press, cautious, still foreign. But with a mounting alacrity that quickens their breath and opens their lips. Until Vidalia pulls back.

Perseus exhales and reluctantly starts to pull away. Vidalia tightens her grip on his arm.

A soft collision of bodies, mouths, and hands.

Vidalia pulls at the cords and bonds on Perseus's armour.

His shirt of leather scales RATTLES to the ground.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She draws up his wool tunic, over his head, and off.

He paws at the elaborate straps and ties at the back of her bandeau. She stops him.

VIDALIA (CONT'D)

Mmmf...

(breaks away)

Hold on.

She grazes the hem with her fingertips. The leather untangles, restyles, and enfolds her in a thick wool pelt.

Perseus cradles and kisses her neck. He slides the pelt off her shoulders, pecking the skin of her collar. She lets it fall to her hands and tosses it to the ground.

Perseus pulls her bare body close to his own.

She tenderly pushes, motioning him down to the unfurled pelt. He lays on his back. She falls on top and covers his mouth with a kiss.

He runs his fingers thru her washed-out flaxen curls, trailing fine wakes of gold. A frail involuntary SIGH. The wilted blossoms in her crown slowly open with colour.

Tree roots twist and curl from the dirt wall. They tangle and braid to form a natural canopy over the lovers.

Between the gaps, flushed skin, sliding hands, panting ribs, tense legs, all moving in slow fluid accord.

EXT. OLIVE GROVE - NIGHT

The ancient tree above the shrine. Its bough GROANS, POPS, and stretches. The leafy canopy reaches and expands in all directions. It grows slowly but palpably.

INT. SHRINE IN THE SEDGE - NIGHT

Perseus and Vidalia rest on the pelt. He, on his back. She, diagonal, chest pressed to his, hands folded under her cheek. Sweat cools on their skin.

They listen to the night sounds- the CHIRRUPS of a nightingale and the plaintive COOS of an owl. They lay there awake, silent, and still

PERSEUS

When you vanish, I'll find you.

VIDALIA

There won't be anything to find.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PERSEUS
I'll search. And I will find you.

VIDALIA
That's impossible.

PERSEUS
I thought you'd leave some room to
be surprised when it comes to Man.

VIDALIA
Why? Why would you try?

PERSEUS
Because I'm the hero.

VIDALIA
But I'm not your Princessa.

No reply from Perseus. Vidalia props her chin on her folded hands to face him.

VIDALIA (CONT'D)
I want to give you something.

Perseus looks at her, inquisitive.

VIDALIA (CONT'D)
A spell. It's nothing. A small
spell. I could use it one last time
and forget it forever or I could
pass it on. I'm not going to need
it but you might. At the very least,
you'd appreciate it.

PERSEUS
Don't start giving away your secrets
like this is the last-

VIDALIA
Please, Perseus. I want you to have
something of me. Just let me give
you this slight bit of magic.

He frowns, still unsettled by the gloomy implication, but he sees in her face what it means to her.

PERSEUS
How will I know how to use it?

VIDALIA
I'll write it on your instinct.
When the time comes, you'll know...

He silently considers.

CONTINUED:

VIDALIA (CONT'D)

Close your eyes.

He does. And so does she. She takes his head tenderly in her hands and presses her forehead to his.

She delicately slips her fingers into his mind as a tear runs down her cheek.

PERSEUS'S VISION - ESSENTIA OF VIDALIA'S SPELL

- A white lid opens to a black eye. Reflected in the eye- white clouds roll and stream over a crisp blue sky.

QUICK CUT:

- Feathered white wings flutter.

END PERSEUS'S VISION

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PITCHED TEMPLE - NIGHT

Tiamat and Set stand over the beheaded body of Medusa. The baby snakes and beetles nesting in the corpse come and go by way of her neatly sliced neck.

SET

This is a point of divergence. Fate has already begun to shift. Subtly. This sends uncertain ripples into the future.

TIAMAT

They were not even to reach Medusa.
How did he take her head?

SET

He's bending the path. Moving off the board. Sidestepping the rules.

TIAMAT

Very well. Then we shall break the rules. The time has come to make your presence known.

SET

Are you asking me to directly involve myself.

TIAMAT

If he vanquishes Leviathan, our coup ends. And so do we. Oh yes, Set. Bloody your hands.

INT. SHRINE IN THE SEDGE - MORNING

Perseus sleeps, nestled in the folded-over pelt. He draws in a sudden, long breath and cracks his eyes. He opens them wide when he finds he's alone in the pelt.

He presses his hand into the furry wool, feeling for warmth. He sits up quick and looks from side to side.

PERSEUS

Vidalia? Vidalia!

He peels back the close canopy of roots and peers out into the shrine. Amoun leans on the altar, arms crossed.

AMOUN

I see now I've allowed this infatuation to progress too far.

Perseus pulls his tunic on. He tears out of the roots.

PERSEUS

Where's Vidalia?

AMOUN

I did nothing to your Chthonian.

PERSEUS

Where is she? Did she- ? Vidalia!

Vidalia descends the ladder into the shrine.

VIDALIA

Perseus? Was that you? I just left to pick olives but they weren't ripe so I had to settle for-

She turns and nearly jumps out of her skin to see Amoun. She spills an armful of raspberries. Her eyes dart to Perseus. He can't hide his relief.

AMOUN

I hope you've got it out of your systems. Now, stonewall it.

(to Vidalia)

And you. You should know better. He's engaged to a Princessa.

PERSEUS

I won't marry Andromeda.

AMOUN

You're not serious. That's the easy part. That's the reward. The fabled beauty of Illyria and you were born to share her bed. And in so doing not only are you heir to the richest

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AMOUN (CONT'D)

thrown in all the Wards of Man, but you save the world just by showing up. It's the happy ending to the story that will be told back home for centuries! Your story, Perseus!

PERSEUS

No Amoun. It always sounded like a good story to me. But I can't be in it. I found a better ending.

AMOUN

You selfish fool. The people of Joppa. The end of the war. Mankind's very existence. You would risk it all for what? Love for a fading Goddess?

A hot desert breeze blows traces of sand into the den. Vidalia's spilt raspberries turn brown and shrivel.

Amoun grabs his chest and drops to his knees. Even Perseus and Vidalia crumple in agony.

Sand swirls and coalesces into the God Set.

Amoun tries to mumble a spell. Set softly touches his chest. Amoun bloats and splits open. Scarabs pour out.

Perseus plants his feet and readies for a fight.

Set moves next for Vidalia. She backs into a wall. Set grabs her neck and hoists her up, strangling her.

Perseus throws a punch... But Set easily catches it in his free hand. He holds Perseus's fist. The veins stand taut and Perseus doubles over, paralyzed by the dead touch.

The pale Vidalia fades more. Her pink lips and green eyes turn grey. Last whispers of gold drain from her flaxen hair as Set chokes her, one-handed, bored.

Perseus's eyes burn. He clusters the fingers of his free hand into a fist. He reels back and clocks Set with an ear-splitting CRACK OF THUNDER.

Set drops Vidalia and staggers back, perplexed and aghast. Beams of light shoot from his split lip.

The hairs on his forearm bristle with a crackling charge as Perseus lifts Set by the collar.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PERSEUS

You tell Tiamat that the Son of Zeus
knows her plan and tell her to sit
down and watch me stop her. And if
you ever touch that Goddess, I'll
pound your teeth into stardust.

Set dissolves into a cloud of sand and slithers out on the wind. Perseus rushes to Vidalia's aid.

VIDALIA

Perseus. How'd you do that? I've
never heard of anyone drawing the
blood of an Olympian. How'd you-

He takes her head in his hands. They hold each other on the dirt floor.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WOODED RIDGE - EVENING

The wearied survivors, Perseus, Vidalia, Cheops, Mongke, and Tamburlane crest a wooded hill.

Vidalia appears more colourless after Set's attack than we've yet seen her- almost completely black and white from head to toe.

They all clear the woods and find themselves on a shelf that slopes sharply into a wide, flat basin. The rain-lashed walls of Joppa's acropolis rise in the distance.

SUPERIMPOSE: *The Eve of the 30th Day...*

But what stops them dead is the limitless inhuman army that fills the plain, right up to the city walls.

CENTAURS, woolly MINOTAURS, the capering jackal- and hyena-man figures of ANUBITES.

NEPHILIM rise over the hordes with their elephant, rhino, or hippo heads atop wide leathery humanoid shoulders. They tow a city of siege towers towards Joppa's wall.

VIDALIA

If you don't go back to Joppa, Tiamat
will win.

Perseus turns to look Vidalia in the eye.

PERSEUS

I can't leave you, Vidalia.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VIDALIA

You must. Look. They need a hero.
They're waiting for you.

PERSEUS

Vidalia...

VIDALIA

I loved you when I saw the Man in
you. You made me believe in what
Mankind could grow to become. In
what they should grow to become.

PERSEUS

What's that?

VIDALIA

You.

Perseus doesn't know how to reply.

VIDALIA (CONT'D)

Look, Perseus. Look.

He turns again to look out over the plain of invaders.

VIDALIA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

They don't deserve to end. Show
them what you showed me. Show them
the impossible.

Perseus slowly nods as he shades his eyes towards Joppa.

PERSEUS

Alright. I'll finish this... But--

He turns. Vidalia is gone.

PERSEUS (CONT'D)

Vidalia? Where--?

He scans back and forth. Up and down. Nothing.

PERSEUS (CONT'D)

No. Not now. Please not now.

We pull back as he ransacks the underbrush. He dives into
the wood, searching. But it's too late. She's gone.

INT. BACKROOM OF THE TAVERNA CHARYBDIS - NIGHT

The true leadership of the Cataracts Resistance gathered in
the dark around a fire pit. Six men in robes and hoods.

They sit on the floor, rocking in trance-like ecstasy. The
room throbs with their MUTTERING SUSURRATION.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FANTASOS

We invoke thee.

Fantasos throws a handful of leaves on the coals. Thick hallucinogenic smoke balloons up.

FANTASOS (CONT'D)

We wait this night to hear and obey.

Fantasos steps onto the rostrum and pulls the Cataracts standard back from a sunken alcove...

FANTASOS (CONT'D)

We desire only your Will. To hasten your Ascension. We await to be devoured by you- distilled and absorbed into the sum of your perfection. Holy of holies. Goddess of Gods. Tiamat the Deep.

Incense burns. A marble idol of Tiamat hangs over a bronze tripod and cauldron filled with oil-black water.

TIAMAT (O.S.)

My followers...

Fantasos looks around and realizes the voice comes from the cauldron. In the reflection and only in the reflection on the mirror-flat surface of the water, the idol moves.

It regards Fantasos and reaches for the cauldron's lip. Fingers rise from the liquid and curl around the rim. It climbs up, rising from the water as the real Tiamat.

The viscous black water clings to her shape in a film, forming into a dark gown as she ascends.

She floats above the rostrum and surveys her followers. Quiet. Still. Their heads bowed. None dare to look.

TIAMAT (CONT'D)

My devoted apostles, you've done well.

She leans down and whispers to Fantasos.

TIAMAT (CONT'D)

You've sown the seeds of revolt. Now comes the harvest. My holy armies stand ready at the gates. Now is the final rite of consecration.

She runs her fingers sensually thru his hair and gently, spectrally reaches into his brain.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIAMAT (CONT'D)

Offer your Princessa to Leviathan in exaltation of the Deep. The hour of sacrifice has arrived.

INT. ROYAL CHAMBERS - NIGHT

A GONG sounds once in the night. Kepheus sleeps soundly on a divan by Cassiopeia's bed.

INT. ANDROMEDA'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

A GONG sounds again. On her balcony, Andromeda looks out into the wet, tortured city night.

EXT. BASILICA BACK GATE - NIGHT

The GONG sounds once more. Peshet stealthily pulls back the lock bolts. She props the heavy gate ajar.

She takes one last hard look at that open gate.

Then looks down at the dagger in her palm. She closes her fist around the hilt and hurries inside.

INT. PERISTYLE - NIGHT

Inside the Basilica, three hooded, CLOAKED REBELS glide thru the shadows, brandishing daggers of their own.

INT. ANDROMEDA'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Peshet enters, dagger at her back. No sign of Andromeda.

PESHET

My Lady? Andromeda?

She looks out on

ANDROMEDA'S BALCONY

and gasps. The dagger CLATTERS on the floor tiles. Andromeda turns at the sound. She stands on the baluster, about to jump. Her face, streaked with tears.

Peshet forgets her mission and rushes to Andromeda's aid.

ANDROMEDA

Peshet, stop! I know what I'm doing...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PESHET

My Lady-

ANDROMEDA

You're right. I've just been-
 (whispering)
 -worthless. Just worthless.

PESHET

I didn't mean any of that, my Lady.
 It was cruel. Just give me your
 hand. Andromeda, please. Please.

ANDROMEDA

My people are suffering. Because of
 me. And if I can end their pain...
 Maybe dying is the most important
 thing I'll ever do.

PESHET

I've never... I've never heard you
 call them "my people" before.

ANDROMEDA

I was afraid, Peshet. Afraid of
 understanding that the fate of so
 much could pivot on me.
 (inhaling strength)
 I'm not afraid any more. I must
 make it right... I'm sorry for being
 such a- I'm sorry, my Peshet...
 Goodbye.

She takes one step back. And falls.

Peshet grabs her wrist.

PESHET

You'll not die, my Lady. I won't
 let it happen. I'll keep you safe.

She pulls Andromeda up. She embraces her tight on the
 balcony floor as the Princessa weeps softly.

PESHET (CONT'D)

Today, you're only Princessa. One
 day your people will need a Queen
 who's not afraid to die for them.

Peshet glimpses the dagger where she dropped it.

PESHET (CONT'D)

Oh, Gods... What have I done?

She urgently helps Andromeda to her feet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PESHET (CONT'D)

We have to get you out of here right now. We have to hide you.

EXT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE ANDROMEDA'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Peshet leads Andromeda out.

ANDROMEDA

What about my father?

A voice answers from the darkness behind them.

VOICE

Your father is dead.

The three Cloaked Rebels step into the light from Andromeda's door. The voice pulls his hood down. Agenor, the scullion boy. He wipes his bloody dagger on his cloak.

AGENOR

Peshet, hand over the Princessa.
She's coming with us now.

Peshet bares her teeth. She stands between the Cloaked Rebels, plants her feet, and unsheathes her lioness claws.

PESHET

(snarls)

Come and take her!

Agenor and the Cloaked Rebels rush Peshet.

She fights all three with nimble, feline agility. She dodges and darts. She leaps over them.

In a single move, she rakes the gut of one, instantly eviscerating him, and high-kicks the other behind her, slashing his face with the claws on her lioness feet.

In that instant, Agenor sinks his blade into her exposed ribs. She totters and coughs, deep, wet, and bloody.

She clutches her collapsed lung. She gurgles and hacks for air. Agenor just laughs at her.

She falls against the wall and starts to slide towards the floor, coughing and gulping, leaving a slick trail of blood down the wall. The Rebels advance towards Andromeda.

Peshet explodes up. Sweeps her claws. One last stand.

But the energy she spends and the air she gasps for don't balance. It gets the best of her. A slip-up. She takes a thrust of steel in the spine.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She turns and lurches for Andromeda. Her leg muscles fail and she pitches to her knees.

Her tearful eyes meet Andromeda's with deep regret. She wheezes her words with blood frothing on her lips.

PESHET (CONT'D)

Andromeda... Run... Please run...

Agenor yanks Peshet's head back by her hair and slides his blade across her throat.

M.O.S. Andromeda opens her mouth and wails.

Agenor drops Peshet in a quickly spreading pool of blood. He and the surviving Rebel drag Andromeda away.

She kicks and struggles. She reaches forlorn towards Peshet's body as she falls into the dark.

EXT. CLIFFS OF JOPPA - MORNING

Grey, stormy. ONLOOKERS gathered silent in the dismal rain. A granite platform on the cliff's edge with a big iron winch. Fantasos waits there next to a bronze gong.

Agenor and the Cloaked Rebels drag Andromeda in her soggy nightgown, barefoot thru the mud and the people. She looks over the faces of the Onlookers.

Most have the look of humble, working-class folk- weary eyes and resigned expressions. Not spiteful or relieved. Not happy with the conclusion. But what can be done?

Agenor pulls her to the platform. He shoves her to her knees. Fantasos passes Agenor a quill, thick black ink dripping from its barbed point.

She flinches as Agenor rips the back of her gown. He smiles coldly and with the sharp quill gouges symbols into her back- baroque, meticulous, and excruciating.

Agenor finishes the ceremonial symbols and stands her up. Her tight, white-knuckled fists, shaking with anger, pain, and fear hold up her ripped nightgown, heavy with rain.

Fantasos inspects Agenor's symbols. The raindrops streak the loose ink down Andromeda's back. Fantasos nods.

Agenor pulls her to the winch on the windswept edge hundreds of feet above the raging sea.

AGENOR

(pushing her)

Lie down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He binds her with heavy ankle and wrist cuffs. He crisscrosses iron chains from knees to shoulders.

Agenor cranks the winch. The winch-chain pulls taut and lifts Andromeda off the ground by her ankles.

She straightens her neck to look straight down the sheer cliff wall and the churning waves that await her.

FANTASOS

O Leviathan, firstborn of the Deep,
please accept our mortal offering of
flesh and blood for the exaltation
of your Cosmic Mother. And may it
sate your hunger for a thousand years.

Agenor pulls Andromeda, dangling there upside down, and flashes his cruel smile.

She spits in his eye.

Agenor laughs. He wipes his eye and lets go of Andromeda. He lets her dangle helplessly.

One of the Cloaked Rebels strikes the GONG.

GONG.

GONG.

Silence. All look out to sea. Waiting.

The wind softly rocks Andromeda on her CREAKING chain. But she holds her wide eyes on sea.

Out on the sea, a bulge of water swells and plows ahead.

The Onlookers watch in awed, terrified silence.

Andromeda's throat trembles and tightens as her eyes follow the advancing bulge of water to the base of the cliffs.

The LEVIATHAN breaches the surface...

Colossal, it surges up the full three hundred foot cliffs, still with only a fraction of its total length exposed.

A prehistoric master-mold from which a Creator cast all creatures in the deep- crustacean carapace, croc scutes, clawed flippers, bristling swimmerets. Jaws lined with rows of crooked teeth chocked tight...

Jaws hurtling up towards Andromeda. They open, big as the earth herself opening up- BELLOWING from a hooked black squid-beak at the back of its gullet.

CONTINUED:

At the apex of its jump, it snaps those jaws shut with a booming CRACK LIKE THUNDER...

Just millimeters from Andromeda's dangling head- actually catching a few stray strands of hair before it falls back.

It's vast shadow circles in the water below.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

The Esoteric legions of Tiamat and Set move into action.

They draw their weapons and begin to rush the city, BELLOWING and ROARING savage battle cries in the thousands.

Waves of monsters roll across the plain to break on the walls of Joppa.

INT. TALOS ARMORY - DAY

Ranks of fifteen-foot clockwork Talos soldiers stand under scaffolds. Metallic muscles and corinthian helmets shine.

On their backs, open panels reveals rows of keyholes with labels like "hip," "shoulder," "logic," "hostility," "pneuma," and "energeia" among many many others.

OPERATORS with chains of the matched keys run up the scaffolds and hustle to wind-up each keyhole plug.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

The Talos march from the city gates. Their actions ratchet and spring mechanically. Legions of Human HOPLITE (infantry) soldiers stream out between the Talos legs.

With their spears and swords the Hoplites slam into ranks of Centaurs, Minotaurs, and the snarling Anubite packs. A frenzy of skewering steel and throat-ripping teeth.

The Talos make directly for the big threats. They splinter thru the siege towers. They assault the Nephilim giants, the leathery mud-painted barbarians with elephantine heads.

The Talos lift their battle axes with a slow CLICK-CLICK-CLICK... Then- WHAAAM- the spring releases with the force to chop off a Nephilim's head in a single blow.

Here and there on the battlefield, the Nephilim prove sometimes too quick- charging and twisting thru the metal Talos with their tusks, horns, and teeth. Battle is met.

EXT. SOLAR COLLECTOR - DAY

On a central roof, OPERATORS man a room-sized concave lens of numerous finely polished glass panels. It sits atop an array of hand cranks and gears.

FIRST OPERATOR

Try it.

SECOND OPERATOR

But the clouds...

FIRST OPERATOR

Just try it!

The Operators work the cranks. The gears turn and CLACK. The dish slowly tilts.

EXT. CITY WALLS - CONTINUOUS

A network of prisms, mirrors, and segments of angular brass tubing line the tops of the walls.

The web directs flickering beams of light from the collector to...

EXT. SUN LENS TURRETS - CONTINUOUS

Where GUNNERS man massive arrays of stacked magnifying lenses on adjustable platforms.

The Gunners twist open the bronze apertures of the lenses. No use. Not enough sunlight.

EXT. WOODED RIDGE - DAY

Cheops, Mongke, and Tamburlane look past the clashing armies to the distant skyline of Joppa.

They hear the far off GONG GONG GONG.

CHEOPS

It can only mean the sacrifice has begun.

Detached, Perseus gets his things together. He stands and starts off in the opposite direction.

Mongke shouts something in his native language. The general idea is clear- "What? Where are you going?" Discouraged, Cheops too provokes Perseus as he walks away.

CONTINUED:

CHEOPS (CONT'D)

Giving up, is that it? Your lady is
gone and now, after all this, there
are just some things too big to-

Perseus stops at the tree line as something comes to him.

PERSEUS

I'm not giving up... Not on Vidalia
and not on Man...

PERSEUS'S VISION - ESSENTIA OF VIDALIA'S SPELL

- The white eyelid opens to the streaming clouds and blue
sky reflected on the dark eye.

QUICK CUT:

- The white wings beat the air.

BACK TO SCENE

Perseus smiles and starts to laugh. He gets it.

PERSEUS (CONT'D)

You don't understand, rhapsode. She
was right. They need to see something
they once believed impossible.

He turns to the wood. He lowers his head and raises his
palms. He concentrates.

A wave of wind RUSTLES out from him thru the underbrush and
the trees, fanning out thru the woods.

The vein on Perseus's temple tightens from sustained focus.

The wave of wind bounces back to him, RUSTLING, growing to
a HOWL. The wind converges on him and abruptly ceases.

He looks up to the sky and waits.

PERSEUS (CONT'D)

Something like this...

The majestic wingspan of a pure, white Pegasus WHOOSHES
over the treetops. The Pegasus banks, descends and lands.

Its powerful hooves plow billows of dust as it slides to a
stop right in front of Perseus.

Cheops, Mongke, and Tamburlane just gawk dumbly as the un-
tameable animal bows and flattens its wide wings to the
ground, beckoning Perseus to climb on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Perseus straddles the animal's back. The Pegasus stands and flexes its wings. Perseus rides up to Cheops.

PERSEUS (CONT'D)

Rhapsode, when you tell this story,
don't you dare say it was the God-
half.

He spurs the Pegasus on. It stretches its wings and launches off the ridge with astounding power. It leaves swirling vortexes of dust in the wake of its wide wings.

Cheops, Mongke, and Tamburlane watch Perseus drive the soaring animal high into the sky.

CHEOPS

There's the Mankind I know.

Perseus and Pegasus sail high above the battle, to Joppa.

Tamburlane gives Cheops a sword and slaps him on the back. The pair don't wait. They slide down the slope, rushing to the raging battle, eager for monsters to kill.

Cheops raises his eyebrows at the battle, skittish. He looks to the Pegasus in the sky. He tightens his jaw.

CHEOPS (CONT'D)

Right then. We fight.

He boldly slides down to join Mongke and Tamburlane.

EXT. CLIFFS OF JOPPA - DAY

CLICK-CLACK-CLICK-CLACK. The chain lowers Andromeda upside-down, to the sea. She looks straight down at the water.

Not content to be left to her fate, Andromeda swings her chain as the Leviathan lets its eyes break the surface below, watching and circling anxiously.

Andromeda swings back and forth until she builds enough momentum to reach up and grasp the links above her ankles.

She pulls herself up and climbs the very chain she dangles from, leaving a slack sweep drooping under her.

The skyscraping Leviathan hurdles up. It opens its jaws.

And SNAPS down on the drooping slack of chain.

It slides back down, clutching the section of chain between Andromeda and the winch tight in its jaws. The Princessa's grip slips and she careens down with it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

On the cliffside platform, the spool spins, wildly unreeling the chain. It catches tight. And rips the whole winch out of the marble.

A shadow glides over the Onlookers.

They turn one by one from the sea and look up. They gasp. They point up towards

THE SKY

as the stark white Pegasus cuts thru the dismal rain with Perseus on its back.

Perseus looks down, and dives from Pegasus. He plunges after the falling chain end.

He catches it. And rides it hundreds of feet down.

Down into the sea...

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

KA-BOOM! Mongke and Tamburlane's shoulder-mounted gonnes hurls a round at the rhino Nephilim that looms over them.

The shot knocks its shoulder out with a CRACK. The Nephilim stumbles and slams into a siege tower. Both the giant and the tower crush a patrol of Minotaurs.

Cheops nimbly hacks away at a pack of barking Anubite warriors. Too many. He runs. The pack stays on him weaving thru the chaotic battlefield.

He leads them right under the thundering hooves of a quartet of Centaurs, just barely squeezing thru himself.

One of the Centaurs stops, turns, and sees him. It gallops right for Cheops. Cheops quickly ducks and hacks one of the beasts legs out from under it.

Mongke and Tamburlane have been having immense fun bringing down giants with their cannon. But now, three bear down - two elephantine and one hippo Nephilim.

The pair dumps what's left of their gonnes-powder into the big shoulder-mounted cannon. They quickly upturn it, plant the muzzle firmly in the mud, and light the fuse.

The whole cannon shoots up like an rocket. It smacks the hippo Nephilim upside the chin, SNAPPING his neck.

The improvised missile explodes in a shower of twisted iron shrapnel that shreds the other two giants.

EXT. UNDERSEA - DAY

The Leviathan hurtles towards the continental shelf. Andromeda flails, tiny and trifling, bound to the chain towed in the vast monster's jaws.

Far behind, Perseus holds doggedly to the other end of the chain as the water ROARS around him.

The Leviathan comes to the edge of the shelf and dives spiraling into the dark blue.

In the darker water, the Leviathan stops. It furiously shakes and whips the chain.

A link snaps. Andromeda plummets, weighted by her shackles. She struggles.

Perseus dives after her.

But drops the sack with Medusa's head.

He looks back and forth. Andromeda. The sack. Both shrinking into the dark.

He chooses the sack. And dives.

Above, the Leviathan shakes the winch like a rag doll. Until it realizes it's lost the tiny morsel. It spots Andromeda. It swoops down after her.

Andromeda, exhausted, cheeks puffed up with air, passes out. Her eyes flutter and roll. Her neck falls slack. Tiny bubbles of air leak from her lips and nose.

The Leviathan swims up next to her. It takes a close look, its eye as big as Andromeda's entire body. It circles her. It savors the anticipation. No rush.

Perseus chases the falling sack deeper and deeper. His face, tense, straining to contain the urge to breathe.

Below, the wreck of sunken whaler rests in the silt overgrown with corral.

The sack falls into view. The twine catches on a harpoon barb on the sunken whaler. Perseus grabs the sack. He has a quick idea- he takes the harpoon and kicks up.

The Leviathan opens its cavernous jaws before Andromeda.

Perseus "charges" his fist. Lightning CRACKLES and boils the water around his hand. He swims for Leviathan's tail.

He grabs the thick hide. And plunges the harpoon in...

Just as the Leviathan inhales the unconscious Andromeda.

CONTINUED:

Perseus grabs the iron harpoon with his crackling fist.

Contact- an electric flash-point flares on the harpoon. A convulsion shoots up the Leviathan's spine.

Startled, it spits Andromeda out.

Still jittering, it curls its tail to get a better look at the nuisance. It looms mountainous over Perseus as it draws him close. It locks its cold angry gaze on him.

Perseus shuts his eyes. He yanks out Medusa's head.

The dead eyes ignite channels of boiling energy to the Leviathan's own eyes.

The hair-snakes spring to life and strike Perseus's forearm. Perseus grits his teeth and holds it steady.

Churning, hellish gasses billow from the SCREAMING Leviathan. The gases overtake everything in darkness.

EXT. CLIFFS OF JOPPA - DAY

The Onlookers gather with bated breath on the precipice.

They all stare out over the sea.

EXT. OCEAN SURFACE - DAY

The ocean roils and glows with a fiery light.

CHOOM. A tower of energy explodes from the sea. It punctures the storm clouds and strips them away from horizon to horizon. Nothing but blue sky.

The water stills. The sea calms. No sign of Perseus or Andromeda. A painfully long silence.

Suddenly, Perseus surfaces with Andromeda in his arms. They both gasp and cough. Andromeda makes eye contact.

ANDROMEDA

(still catching breath)

Right... Now I think I see it...

Perseus laughs.

EXT. CLIFFS OF JOPPA - DAY

The Onlookers burst into applause and tears.

EXT. SOLAR COLLECTOR - DAY

Operators hurriedly spin the cranks.

CLACK-CLACK-CLACK- The dish tilts to face the new sun.

The glass basin flares with light.

EXT. CITY WALLS - CONTINUOUS

The light shoots thru channels and prisms in a growing web that finally connects with...

EXT. SUN LENS TURRETS - CONTINUOUS

One by one, the GUNNERS swing their massive lenses onto the battlefield and twist open the bronze apertures.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - CONTINUOUS

The tide quickly turns as support fire rains on the battle. Shafts of focused light rake the enemy ranks. Siege towers ripple and burst into flames.

Fighters like the Anubites quickly crumple and incinerate in the searing channels of heat.

Even the hard-skinned Nephilim begin to blacken and smoke.

Chaotic retreat spreads across the dwindling enemy ranks.

Mongke and Tamburlane roar and lift their swords high. Cheops smiles wide and joins them in the sentiment.

EXT. BASILICA - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: "The Next Day..."

The Queen Andromeda stands in a dense crowd of CITIZENS on the steps. Mongke and Tamburlane hold the crowd back.

Everyone. Everyone talks to Andromeda at once and she listens. As Cheops, at her side, furiously transcribes.

ANDROMEDA

What? No, there are plenty of funds in the royal treasury. You'll get whatever-

(someone else)

No, miss, listen. Miss, we'll take care of you. We won't abandon-

(to everyone)

Listen. This is important. We will not rebuild this city!

CONTINUED:

Silence slowly spreads thru the crowd. Andromeda looks over them.

ANDROMEDA (CONT'D)
We won't rebuild this city.

Scared faces suddenly look terrified.

ANDROMEDA (CONT'D)
We're going to build a new city.

Hope moves over the crowd.

ANDROMEDA (CONT'D)
A whole city. For all of us. And we're going to do it together. I know you're tired and you're afraid and you're worried we don't have what it takes. We do. I promise you, we do. Because something impossible happened on this ground. Man beat the Gods and all of you saw it happen. The Gods wanted me dead and I stand before you in the flesh... We can do so much more than we believe. We're more important than we know and it's nothing to fear. May the Gods strike me down if I'm wrong!

Dread silence. Everyone waits for something bad to happen. Nothing does. Only wind. Lonely hands CLAPPING break the silence. Then another. Then a flood of CHEERS.

Cheops pokes his head up looks around.

CHEOPS
Wasn't Perseus just here?

Perseus watches unseen, hiding literally outside human perception- a smooth colourful figure in the choppy, monochromatic crowd. (We saw Vidalia go "here" once...)

He listens to the strangely echoing sounds of Andromeda's speech and the crowd's approval. He smiles to himself- "They're going to be fine." He turns and parts.

He stops cold. He sees ZEUS the Prime, God of Gods. Luxuriant furs and armour. He gleams and crackles like a storm. Visible only to Perseus and vice versa.

ZEUS
My son...

PERSEUS
Father...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ZEUS

You have a wedding to attend.

PERSEUS

I slew Leviathan. That's the end of it. I'm not marrying Andromeda.

ZEUS

You would condemn Man, your own people, to this grueling War that's already caused so much devastation?

PERSEUS

I don't have a people. My heart belongs to Vidalia. I won't live a lie to pacify Mankind for you. I won't be a pawn of the Gods.

ZEUS

Even the Gods are subject to the tides of fate.

PERSEUS

But maybe Man isn't. Perhaps Man has a power unmatched by the Gods. Free will. What if it makes them immune to fate? Maybe Man makes his own fate and the Gods simply can't see into that future. I've felt a courage in my heart strong enough to defy the Gods. I know which half of me it comes from.

Perseus climbs on the back of his Pegasus.

PERSEUS (CONT'D)

You say I was made for it, but who's idea was I? Who wanted the treaty? I think you want peace not because you're scared for them. I think you're scared of them. They don't need me.

ZEUS

And what will you do with yourself?

PERSEUS

I'm going to find Vidalia.

ZEUS

My son... That's impossible.

PERSEUS

You know what my problem is? "Impossible" just doesn't have the teeth it did yesterday.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Perseus smiles at his father. He spurs the Pegasus and launches into the sky, soaring away.

CHEOPS (V.O.)

Every Age has its heroes. Heroes to venerate. Heroes to lionize. Ours bore a new hero. Here was a hero to become. A hero to embody...

EXT. JOPPA'S LOWER WHARF - DAY

Reconstructed. Idyllic cottages shine with fresh whitewash. Bright flowers and greenery spill from open windows. The sun sparkles on the piercing blue sea.

CHEOPS (V.O.)

He lifted us from darkness to show it could be done. For his greatest power was not among those bestowed by the Gods, but a power that sleeps within the hearts of us all...

Young SPHINX CUBS play in the lovely cobbled street. They toss a ball to each other. One Cub misses the catch and scampers after the rolling ball.

She slides into someone rounding the corner. The Cub looks up, wide-eyed at-

Queen Andromeda- matured, strong, regal but not lavish. She smiles warmly at the Cub, hands her the errant ball, and scratches behind her ears. The Cub squints and purrs.

As the WHARF RESIDENTS notice Andromeda and her ATTENDANTS, they drop to one knee. She motions for them to stand up.

The Residents eagerly surround her and kiss her hand. She gracefully indulges each in friendly conversation as she strolls thru the Wharf.

CHEOPS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

...The will to forge our own path, to reach beyond our limits, to defy even the Gods. And to win.

EXT. TILE MOSAIC FLOOR - DAY

From the prologue- the mosaic man with the spyglass, looking up at the stars. A pattern of stars within that painted sky slowly glows brighter than the others.

CHEOPS (V.O.)

Thus is the might of Perseus. Thus is the might of all Mankind.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

We push in on that glowing constellation- an outline clarifies around it- a Pegasus, wings unfurled, and its stalwart rider, Perseus.

CHEOPS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Thus... is only the beginning of
his story...

We push quickly past the stars and...

TO BLACK.